

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

INVITED COMMITTEES:
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE

HEARING OF ANDRIUS KUBILIUS

COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

(Defence and Space)

WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2024

BRUSSELS

1-0002-0000

IN THE CHAIR:

DAVID McALLISTER
Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

BORYS BUDKA
Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

1-0003-0000

(The hearing opened at 18:30)

1-0004-0000

David McAllister, *Chair of the AFET Committee*. – Ladies and gentlemen, may I please ask you now to be seated? So, once again, may I ask you now to be seated?

And with that, dear colleagues, dear guests, I would like to warmly welcome Mr Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate for Defence and Space, to this joint confirmation hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. A warm welcome to you, Andrius also personally.

I'm happy to welcome all the colleagues from the AFET Committee and the ITRE Committee, as well as the invited committees, namely the Committee on Transport and Tourism and from AFET's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE).

I would like to recall that the purpose of this hearing is twofold: on the one hand, to evaluate the Commissioner-designate on the basis of his general competence, European commitment and personal independence and, on the other hand, to assess his knowledge of his prospective portfolio. This hearing does present a key moment in parliamentary scrutiny over our executive, because it increases the accountability of the Commission to Parliament.

Before the hearing, Mr Kubilius has replied in writing to a questionnaire. The written answers have been distributed to Members in all languages. We acknowledge Mr Kubilius's readiness to cooperate with the European Parliament. This is important in the context of the revision of the Framework Agreement between Parliament and the Commission, in particular regarding your engagement to be regularly present in committees and plenaries, to follow up on Parliament's initiatives and to timely share information with Parliament.

Dear Andrius Kubilius, we count on the full implementation of these commitments and emphasise the Commission's role as an honest broker, ensuring equal treatment, equal treatment of Parliament and Council. We equally count on your full cooperation to inform our committees in advance of all upcoming proposals, with detailed justifications for those requiring urgent action.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Committee on Legal Affairs has not raised objection to the holding of this hearing. And as we are co-chairing this hearing, I will now pass the floor to the Chair of the ITRE Committee, Borys Budka, to explain the structure of tonight's hearing. Please.

1-0005-0000

Borys Budka, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Thank you, Chair. This is a great honour and privilege to cooperate with your Committee.

So, I will briefly explain the procedure. Before we start, we must remember that, firstly, the Commissioner-designate is invited to give an opening oral statement, which shall last not longer than 15 minutes.

After this, we will have the following rounds of questions and answers. The first round of representatives of eight political groups with five-minute slots each, with one minute for the question and two minutes for the answer, with the possibility of a follow-up question from the same Member no longer than one minute, and one minute for the reply.

The first round will be followed by a three-minute slot for the Chair of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, with one minute for the question and two minutes for an answer.

The second round of questions is based on the overall distribution of speaking time among the political groups, including a representative from the non-attached Members, with three-minute slots each.

The second round will be followed by a three-minute slot for the Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, with one minute for the question and two minutes for the answer.

A final round of questions by eight political groups in reverse order, also with three-minute slots each. All slots of three minutes will be divided into one minute for a question and two minutes' answer from the Commissioner-designate.

Interpretation is provided in all 23 languages. Please do not speak too fast, in order to ensure efficient interpretation.

I'd like to recall that, under our Rules, the hearing shall aim to develop a pluralistic political dialogue between the Commissioners-designate and the Members, and that the Commissioners-designate should enjoy a fair opportunity to present themselves and their opinions.

Last, but the most important: note that the total hearing is strictly limited to three hours. We have a lot of speakers, and there is absolutely no reserve. Therefore, I ask all speakers to respect the allocated speaking time. You will have only one minute to ask your question, so please ask your question and don't use up your time for making statements. We will have to strongly enforce the time limits, and we have to switch off your microphone if you exceed your time. So these are our rules.

The hearing will be streamed live on Parliament's website, and it will also be possible to access a video recording of the hearing on the same site.

Now I give back the floor to Chair McAllister.

1-0006-0000

David McAllister, *Chair of the AFET Committee*. – I would also like to welcome all those who are following us online.

So, colleagues, let us now move to the debate. Before I give the floor to Mr Kubilius, I would just like to stress the importance that our committees put on a close cooperation and dialogue between the Commissioner-designate and us in the European Parliament. The growing instability and the rise of unprecedented challenges in the immediate European neighbourhood, and the international

environment certainly demand a close and efficient cooperation for the EU actions on the global scene.

Dear Mr Kubilius, you now have the floor for your opening statement of not more than 15 minutes.

1-0007-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Honourable Chairs, Honourable Members of the European Parliament, dear colleagues. Being twice a former Prime Minister and a member of the Lithuanian and the European Parliaments for the last 32 years, I am humbled to return to this House and stand in front of you today as the European Union's first ever Commissioner-designate for Defence and Space.

As you know, defence is one of the top priorities for the next Commission. The mission letter tasks me to help you prepare yourself for the most extreme military contingencies, which means to prepare for possibility of Russian aggression against EU Member States. Are we ready for such contingencies?

Today we are facing urgent and long-term challenges for European defence.

First one: we face existential and emerging threats, including conventional warfare, cyber warfare, hybrid attacks and the militarisation of space. A recent intelligence assessment suggests that Russia may test the resolve of the EU and NATO by the end of this decade. That is why we must urgently enhance the EU's readiness for potential military aggression.

This is a way how we can deter it. Despite the fact that for the time being, it is difficult to predict what will be the policies of new United States Administration in the near future, we can nevertheless predict that during forthcoming decades, the United States is likely to increase its focus on the strategic challenge posed by China. This longer-term shift necessitates a more self-reliant European defence structure.

Second challenge: EU Member States have accumulated significant underinvestment in defence – more than EUR 1 trillion over the past decades. Such chronic underinvestment has left critical gaps in our capabilities and readiness.

Third challenge: the European defence equipment market remains highly fragmented, which leads to inefficiencies, duplication of efforts and lack of interoperability. Our defence capabilities are lagging behind from what is needed for our preparedness, as it is stressed in the recent President Niinistö report.

Fourth challenge: our adversaries and strategic rivals are rapidly outpacing us. Countries like Russia and China have seen much more substantial increases in their defence budget than in the EU 27 of the over the past two decades. It looks like Russia in 2025, in purchasing power parity terms, for military needs will spend more than all EU 27 are spending for defence.

To address these challenges, I count on your support to bring a genuine European Defence Union in life. Again, as President Niinistö says in his report, we need a European Defence Union not to wage a war, but to maintain peace. This calls for a paradigm change and systemic overhaul of European defence based on close cooperation between us Member States and NATO.

There is no competition between NATO and the EU on defence issues. On the contrary, the EU needs to use its unique budgetary and legislative powers to help develop the capabilities and resources needed for the implementation of NATO military deterrence and defence plans.

The three reports of Enrico Letta on the single market, of Professor Draghi on competitiveness, and of President Niinistö on preparedness have provided food for thought. We now need to act and implement those recommendations.

We find ourselves at a time when our peaceful future is challenged not only in defence, but also in space, which is becoming more and more important for our defence capabilities. We need urgent and bold solutions to ensure that future. Such solutions demand maximum unity on our side. That is why I look forward to work closely with you in achieving this task.

If I am confirmed, within the first 100 days of my mandate, I will present, together with the High Representative, a white paper on the future of European Defence. It will frame a new approach to defence and identify investment needs to deliver full spectrum European defence capabilities based on joint investments, and readying the EU Member States for the most extreme military contingencies.

We must ensure a close alignment between the identification of the European Union's defence capability needs and the corresponding investments. We need to spend more, spend better, spend together and spend European. That is why I propose:

First, immediate actions to continue implementation of ASAP and European EDIRPA programmes, as well as of the new European Defence Industry Programme, EDIP. I stand ready to provide all the support needed to deliver on this key file.

Second, scaling up the European Union's defence equipment production and demand by fostering information exchange between EU Member States and NATO on defence resources and capability needs, in such a way potentially creating an aggregated EU defence industry output plan.

By promoting joint procurement, with the possibility to scale up aggregated demand, we can help lower prices and stimulate longer-term contracts. We should also explore options for readiness pools and joint stockpiling based on EU military security criteria.

Third, long-term planning for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, MFF. We need to maximise the impact of the Union action, leverage the EU budget to deliver on key urgent EU priorities, give predictability to investment, strengthen synergies and simplify the EU financial landscape.

Fourth, proposals for urgent defence investment needs. According to the Draghi report, Europe's defence industry needs additional EUR 500 billion over the next decade in order to remain competitive and meet current demand. We shall look into how to optimise EU financial support, increase national investments and leverage existing assets now even before the next MFF.

Fifth, innovative financing options. The European Investment Bank must play a larger role in defence financing through further expanding its lending policy. This will also help to change lending policies of other European financial institutions.

Sixth, I will work closely with Member States and their representatives towards the design and implementation of defence projects of common European interests, including a European air shield and enhanced cyber defence capabilities, which cannot be developed by any country alone.

Seventh, we need to significantly increase both public and private investment in defence research and development while preserving defence specificities, and we need to reinforce the European Defence Fund. We should also explore means to better mobilise EU support for high risk, high reward research projects like it is done by DARPA agency in the United States.

Most important, purchasing across borders within the EU should be equivalent to purchasing nationally. We must achieve a true single market for defence. This will involve further promoting the use of agreed civil and defence standards – NATO STANAG standards – and supporting mutual recognition of certifications to ensure interoperability with allies.

Reviewing and strengthening the directives on defence procurement. Improving market access to all companies, especially small and medium-sized companies, to foster innovation, and fostering more cross-border cooperation to create economies of scale.

Military mobility is vital for European security and defence, and we must speed up action. The EU can add significant value by facilitating movement across the EU and supporting necessary infrastructures and logistics.

Finally, as stressed by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the best investment in European security is investing in the security of Ukraine. As NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte recently said in Politico: 'so far our support has kept Ukraine in the fight, but we need to do much more in order to shift the conflict's trajectory'.

Through urgent implementation of European Defence Industry Programme, and with the help of the European Innovation Office in Kyiv, we will further strengthen our assistance and we will support mutual integration of the EU and Ukrainian defence and space industries. This is one of the ways how we can do more in the area of my responsibilities.

Now I want to focus on space. Until now, the European Union has developed world-class strategic space assets and worldwide recognised industrial competences and know-how, such as Galileo, Copernicus and forthcoming IRIS², which are crucial also for our defence.

Our space capabilities are a great example of what the European Union Member States can achieve, working together in an area where none of them alone would succeed.

Looking into the future: according to experts, in ten years time, the global market for space industry can be larger than EUR 1 trillion. As some experts are saying, the space economy is now playing the role that 20 years ago was played by the internet economy. Europe must be part of the space revolution. However, we are confronted with a new set of challenges.

First, our space industry competitiveness is at risk. Due to a lack of growth funding, we risk losing industrialisation and commercialisation of innovative European space start-ups. Our fragmented regulatory landscape further complicates matters.

Second, our space assets face increasing security pressures and vulnerability to hostile activities. Our supply chains risk falling and unfriendly control.

Third, space remains underused in defence, despite its critical role in modern military operations. To address these challenges, and with your support, if confirmed, I will continue advancing the EU space flagships Galileo, Copernicus, and IRIS², also enhancing their capabilities to provide special governmental services for our security needs. I will work closely with the European Parliament, Member States, and the space industry. I will rely on European Union agencies for space programme and European Space Agency, striving for improving efficiency and effectiveness in implementation.

In addition to exploitation of established services, we shall concentrate on five key initiatives.

First of all, ensuring European autonomous access to space. We must diversify the European launch service solutions and hope for more competition. I expect positive outcome from the recent Flight Ticket launch challenge and other initiatives announced by European Space Agency and the Commission, which will stimulate new launching projects. We need to step up the efforts for securing autonomous access to space and to secure our European sovereignty.

Second, tabling the EU space law to create a single market for space and provide a common framework for security, safety and sustainability in space that would ensure a consistent and EU-wide approach.

Third, building upon the Draghi report. We must support the competitiveness of the EU space industry. It includes fostering the space data economy, boosting public investment in research and innovation, and intensifying support to innovative start-ups and scale-ups, including through agile and fast procurement.

Fourth, preparing the legal framework of the EU space policy for the next MFF, reflecting a new level of ambition of the Union as a global space power and international partner.

Fifth, preparing our space assets to respond to all threats in the space domain that may affect the security of the EU and its Member States, including the most extreme military contingencies. We shall build upon the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence of 2023, in close cooperation with the High Representative.

We shall further enhance our cooperation with Ukraine in the field of space. These initiatives will enable European leadership in space, thereby enhancing our technological sovereignty, competitiveness and our security and defence capabilities, and ultimately our strategic autonomy.

Until now, our achievements in space were unique. The EU space policy achievements demonstrate what we can achieve through unity, ambition and strategic foresight. Let us continue to be ambitious. It should also inspire our approach to European defence to be ambitious.

To conclude: we do not want war; we want peace. Therefore, we must become ready for defence, both on land and in space, so that our challengers are not tempted to test us. Only by working together can we build a stronger, more resilient and more autonomous European defence and space sector, so that the EU is ready for the most extreme military contingencies, from wherever they will come. This is the only way to peace. Thank you for your attention, and I am standing ready to answer your questions.

1-0008-0000

David McAllister, *Chair of the AFET Committee*. – Thank you, dear Andrius Kubilius, for your opening statement. Colleagues, it is now my honour to chair the first round of the Q&A session.

These are five minute slots for the speaker. It's a one minute question. Two minute answer by the Commissioner-designate, a one-minute follow-up question and a one minute answer.

For those of you who are not 100 % familiar. One minute is 60 seconds. It's not 70 or 80, it's 60 seconds. And Borys and I have the task to chair this meeting in exactly three hours. We have this wonderful wooden hammer here. If we knock it after one minute, it means come to an end. If we knock the hammer twice, it means we mean it! Come to an end! Please don't force us to switch off the microphone. Please be collegial and then we can get it done in three hours, as requested.

1-0009-0000

Nicolás Pascual De La Parte (PPE). – Señor comisario propuesto, no puedo comenzar esta intervención sin recordar, con hondo pesar, la situación que vive mi país —en concreto, la Comunidad Valenciana— a consecuencia de unas inundaciones devastadoras la semana pasada, que han sembrado de dolor, sufrimiento humano y daños materiales. Me uno al duelo por las víctimas y agradezco el compromiso de las instituciones europeas de movilizar los instrumentos para la reconstrucción.

Justo en medio de la conmoción de estos días se presentó un informe del ex primer ministro finlandés, Niinistö, que usted, señor comisario propuesto, ha mencionado en sus palabras y que nos debe hacer reflexionar. En él, se afirma claramente que los acontecimientos de estos últimos años han sido llamadas de atención: la pandemia, la guerra o los fenómenos meteorológicos extremos son la nueva normalidad. Y Europa se está dando cuenta de que las grandes crisis de los últimos años no son aisladas, no son transitorias, sino que reflejan fallas más profundas y cambios tectónicos, geopolíticos, climáticos y tecnológicos.

Mi primera pregunta tiene que ver justo con el concepto sobre el que gira este informe: la preparación y la resiliencia. ¿Cómo piensa garantizar que las capacidades civiles y militares necesarias serán adecuadas para prevenir las crisis de distintos orígenes, recuperarnos tras estas crisis y responder a ellas, garantizando al mismo tiempo que los mecanismos y las estructuras de nuestras respuestas estén bien coordinados a nivel europeo? Y ¿cómo podríamos mejorar la concienciación y la resiliencia de los ciudadanos y las sociedades de la Unión Europea?

1-0010-0000

David McAllister, Chair of the AFET Committee. – So, Mr De La Parte, that was nearly 100 seconds. You're the first speaker, so we forgive you, but we won't forget. So, Mr Kubilius for two minutes.

Try to be 60 seconds next time. Thanks.

1-0011-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, of course, all the sympathies and condolences with the Spanish people who have suffered such a tragedy, sympathies with all of the Spanish Members of the European Parliament. Definitely such a tragic situation asks us a lot of very important questions, first of all, of course, about our preparedness. And that is where President Niinistö's report is very crucial. Of course, my responsibility is a little more on defence preparedness, but definitely as President Niinistö was saying, it's very difficult to define what are the boundaries.

I would say it is very simple, you know. First of all, we need to understand that preparedness costs a lot, but no preparedness costs much more. Not only when, you know, nature is bringing such kind

of disasters, but also non-preparedness in defence of our peace – now we can imagine what it can bring.

What do we need to do? You know I would say first of all really we need to look – and again I'm quoting from my memory President Niinistö's report – we need to have much more precise information on what can come on both sides, either disasters or some kind of aggressive action from wherever they can come. That is why definitely now what President Niinistö is saying is that we need to have some kind of more united intelligence reports, that's for sure. Now, space is very crucial from that point of view. And I will conclude here that we shall look very clearly when we are preparing the next paper during the first 100 days into all those issues.

1-0012-0000

Nicolás Pascual De La Parte (PPE). – Muchas gracias por su magnanimidad, señor presidente.

Señor comisario propuesto, el otro informe importante que también ha citado en su presentación es el del profesor Draghi, en este caso centrado en la competitividad en los distintos ámbitos.

En este sentido, tengo otras dos cuestiones sobre las cuales me gustaría conocer su opinión. La primera cuestión es si el futuro de la Europa de la defensa dependerá en gran medida de la voluntad política de los Estados miembros de participar activamente en ella desde el principio, desde su creación. A la luz de las diferentes evaluaciones nacionales de riesgos y amenazas, las prioridades estratégicas y las capacidades militares, así como las culturas de seguridad nacionales, ¿cómo piensa establecer una serie de incentivos positivos, atractivos, para que los veintisiete Estados miembros se sumen a la Europa de la defensa?

La segunda pregunta es, si queremos desarrollar en la Unión un tejido industrial, una base industrial y tecnológica que nos permita una autonomía estratégica y dado que en Europa hay un porcentaje muy elevado de empresas del sector privado, ¿cómo piensa facilitar la imprescindible colaboración público-privada? ¿Qué medidas piensa proponer para fomentar la creación y la consolidación de pymes en las distintas etapas de la cadena de suministros?

1-0013-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Thanks a lot. Again, I can perhaps say just a few words on that very important question.

First of all, I hope that we shall be able to consolidate political will among all the Member States. Here the European Parliament can play a very important role, because that consolidation should come from our common understanding what threats we are facing. When there are reports that the Russians can produce during six months everything the German army has in their stocks, that should be a warning signal to all of us.

Of course you know the old saying, 'If there is a will, there is a way'. We shall find in that case all the needed measures which we need to implement, including doing a lot with private business. Because in my view, the same is happening in the space industry, the same should happen in defence industry. New defence and new space economies are coming into place.

1-0014-0000

Sven Mikser (S&D). – Commissioner-designate, a large part of your mission letter is dedicated to improving the European defence industry. We already have fine instruments and programmes and initiatives, but the key challenge, obviously, is financing – or the lack thereof.

You mentioned briefly the EIB's lending policy, but can you elaborate beyond that on how you intend to raise the necessary funds to increase investment in the defence sector, ensuring that the industries have sufficient access to public and private finance on a sustainable basis?

Will your proposals, for example, include a dedicated defence investment fund or issuance of a common debt or the reallocation of existing EU money? And if so, then from which sectors?

1-0015-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot, dear Sven, for a very important question. Because definitely, you know, we can talk a lot about how we shall improve our defence industry and how we prepare our capabilities, but if we shall not find a way how really to spend much more of our financial resources for defence, then nothing will happen.

So, first of all, I expect that, in the next MFF, we shall have really substantially larger spending lines, both for defence and space. Because if you look into the political guidelines, it's very clear that the defence is a strategic priority.

Second, of course, the EIB. As you know, one of the possibilities to convince the EIB to change their lending policy also should be discussed very intensively. I had several meetings with the leadership of the EIB during preparation and I see possibilities really that we can achieve a good understanding and to find a way how we can open the doors, not only for the EIB to spend more money on dual-use and also on defence, but also in such a way to show an example to other financial institutions.

In addition to that, of course, we should not forget about the plans, not to wait until 2028, when the MFF will be, and to look for possibilities to raise also now 500 billion. And here are all the different options on the table. They are discussed by experts. I hope that we shall elaborate more on our forthcoming white paper on European defence. Perhaps that will be a mixture of different ideas.

I would again quote the Draghi report, where he has said that if all the EU Member States would spend 2 % on defence now, it would be additional 60 billion per year. So, let's look also into such a possibilities.

1-0016-0000

Sven Mikser (S&D). – Thank you for the answers. My follow-up question, I believe, has particular salience given the outcome of last night's elections in the United States. You said that we should be using our scarce money to develop European industry, and I very much agree with that. So can you commit here today that any proposal you will be making in the area of defence procurement will contain a 'buy European' principle, ensuring that European taxpayers' money goes primarily to European companies, thereby reducing our dependency on external suppliers, but also making sure that our industries remain competitive or become again competitive and that we spend money on creating European jobs?

1-0017-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – I think that this is an important question, and that is why I said in my opening statement – I repeat, really, you know, Mrs Ursula von der Leyen – that we need to spend more. We need to spend better together, and European. Why do we need to spend European? It's not just we love European production, but I'm again looking into possibility of those most extreme military contingencies and possibility, you know, to have aggression and prolonged war. When such a situation comes, you need to have industry somewhere not far away from front line. That is why when I'm talking about investment into industry, I'm talking about industries on

the European continent. That is what is very clearly now described in EDIP. Yes, we are going to invest into European companies, but also companies which are operating on European soil would have a possibility if EDIP, you know, language will be approved.

So EDIP is really very much needed. I hope that we can agree that very soon we shall start to work on approval of that very important programme.

1-0018-0000

Aleksandar Nikolic (Pfe). – Je vais rebondir sur ce qui vient d'être dit, Monsieur le Commissaire. Nous n'avons pas attendu l'élection d'hier pour réagir sur la volonté de réindustrialiser, notamment en matière de défense. L'industrie américaine a un avantage majeur: non seulement elle jouit de commandes publiques nationales abondantes, mais elle peut compter malheureusement sur des pays comme l'Allemagne et la Pologne, qui privilégient l'industrie outre-Atlantique pour bénéficier du bouclier américain. Finalement, on renforce à la fois leur industrie et leur influence, et on n'est par exemple même plus en mesure de nous opposer à la Turquie qui nous menace explicitement, parce qu'on est soumis depuis trop longtemps à la ligne de Washington.

Et quelle est la réponse européenne? En mars 2024, la Commission avait comme objectif pour 2030 que 50 % des investissements pour les équipements militaires européens soient à destination de l'industrie européenne. Nous, on trouve que c'est un aveu de faiblesse. Vous vous réjouissez d'avance que notre défense ne soit qu'à moitié vassalisée. Alors, plusieurs questions: jugez-vous que ces 50 % soit suffisants? Et surtout, comment allez-vous les atteindre? Est-ce que c'est uniquement par EDIP, ou est-ce que c'est aussi en contraignant des États souverains à acheter européen? Est-ce que c'est par un protectionnisme amplifié dans ce secteur clé? Est-ce qu'il y aurait d'autres incitations?

1-0019-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, I can again repeat how we shall spend the money. It will be decided by all the Member States, and the measures which we can finance are also very much included into the forthcoming EDIP programme. So let's agree that this programme is very much needed now.

In addition to incentivising industry and ramping up conventional production, of course we shall pay a lot of attention to the development of the so-called defence projects of common European interest, including air shield or air-defence shield, which is a huge project.

As I understand, there are discussions among Member States, there are discussions in Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space. It will cost to implement – at least how it's now discussed – it will cost around EUR 500 billion. So the question will be in which stages we can start to do that and which technologies we shall use.

There are proposals which are based on joint technologies together with American ones. There are proposals which are based more on European technologies. That is what we shall need to discuss and we shall need to come to a prudent decision, because of course from one side, we need to have the best available products, from another side we need to take care about our own industries, especially looking into longer-term perspective. As I said, in the decades to come, we need to foresee that we shall need to take more and more responsibility for European defence on our own shoulders.

1-0020-0000

Aleksandar Nikolic (PFE). – J’aborde la deuxième question. Pour nous, plus globalement, l’Europe est face à deux voies.

La première, celle que nous défendons, c’est une Europe des nations où nos armées nationales sont interopérables, c’est-à-dire que nos militaires sont capables de travailler ensemble sur un champ de bataille. Ils utilisent des matériels similaires et européens. C’est une Europe dont les intérêts communs seraient défendus par 27 armées travaillant de concert. Pour rappel, l’Europe n’a franchement jamais été aussi puissante que lorsqu’elle était constituée de nations soucieuses de leurs armées. Dans ce cadre-là, votre rôle, pour nous, c’est de lier ces armées, de les soutenir, mais pas de les effacer, parce que c’est ce qui efface les nations, lorsqu’il n’y a plus d’armée.

Il y a une autre voie. C’est une Europe de la défense qui pourrait nous inquiéter, que vous avez partiellement évoquée, par exemple quand vous évoquiez il y a quelques minutes une défense aérienne commune ou, dans le domaine cyber, déjà quelque chose en commun qui dépasse les nations. À terme, nous craignons que les armées nationales disparaissent, que les drapeaux de nos uniformes soient remplacés par l’étendard européen ou que l’état-major parle anglais, que les décisions soient prises non plus par des chefs d’État, mais par des technocrates et un commissaire européen à la défense basé à Bruxelles.

Alors, Monsieur le Commissaire, ma question est simple: pouvez-vous nous garantir, justement, que les nations et leurs armées ne seront pas effacées dans le modèle que vous allez prôner, à l’avenir, d’Europe de la défense?

1-0021-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – I can guarantee that nations really will not disappear. That’s for sure. As a proud Lithuanian, I’m sure that nations will not disappear. But from another side, I can tell that the European Union is really a union of solidarity and of shared responsibilities and shared sovereignty.

And again, since I’m in politics – I will not tell since when, you know, even since the 1990s – so, for me, the European Union is something like a historical miracle for Lithuania, which brought, you know, both our security and our success.

So, now how we can develop, how we can look into the future – I will tell again, in a very simple way: the European Union can bring a lot of added value to all the nations in bringing what the European Union can do, what countries cannot achieve alone, including in defence.

1-0022-0000

Adam Bielan (ECR). – Dear Prime Minister, dear Commissioner-designate, today, as we hold this hearing, we find ourselves facing the reality of Donald Trump’s impending return to the White House. President Trump, as we know, has previously threatened to withdraw the United States from NATO due to insufficient defence spending by European allies.

Given this development, how do you plan to navigate the interests of the European defence industry?

On one side, we see even today growing protectionist tendencies in the defence production from countries like France and Germany, while on the other, eastern flank nations, like yours and mine, are striving to strengthen their military capabilities as soon as possible.

How will you balance these dynamics with the need to maintain a strong and cooperative relationship with the United States, which continues to be a vital partner for the EU?

1-0023-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, thanks a lot, dear Adam, for a very good question. I absolutely agree: we need to spend more, but not because that is a demand from President Trump, but because of Putin, because of the threats of Putin. And that is what we're starting to do. All of us, of course, some countries are spending more because we feel that threat much more closely to our homes, to our families. Other countries are moving ahead.

If before 2022, before the war started, the general spending of EU Member States was around EUR 200 billion per year for defence, now the spending is more than EUR 350 billion and it's increasing and we can look even more, how much we need to increase our spending.

I can give you a Lithuanian example. Recently our experts, together with the American ones, did a wargame simulation asking a very simple question: what will happen with us if Russians or Putin's troops are coming, as German intelligence services are predicting, somewhere around 2028? So, the simulation gave a very clear answer: with the resources which we have now, during ten days when we shall be waiting for NATO to come in to help us, we shall be occupied. If we want to defend ourselves, we need to spend till 2028 more than EUR 10 billion additional, which will mean that we need to increase our defence spending from 3 % up to almost 6 %. So that is the reality.

How we shall do it? How much the European Union can help us? That is the question to which we need to find an answer altogether. And that is where, of course, our industry will play a very important role, because we need additional equipment. From where we shall buy it?

Now I know Poland is spending a lot of money buying Korean products. It's very good. And so on and so on. But we need to look also how to strengthen our own defence industry. Because, again and again, I can repeat, during the war that will be a crucial resource.

1-0024-0000

Adam Bielan (ECR). – Yes. Our 2030 deadline brings an urgent horizon for potential security challenges, including your own warning of a possible conflict with Russia by then.

Could you be more precise on how will you navigate the delicate balance and plan to address the immediate defence needs of Member States while preparing for potential tougher negotiations with the incoming US Administration, especially if the EU follows France's and Germany's more protectionist stance that could risk complicated transatlantic defence cooperation?

Many Member States, such as Poland, have highly-developed defence industries that depend on vital third country partnerships, notably with the US and the UK.

How will you ensure that the EDIP framework does not inadvertently compromise these crucial partnerships?

1-0025-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, it is for the European Parliament to decide what will be the language in EDIP. But again, you know, the so-called issue of design authority is of course a very important issue. And to those who are asking about the EDIP programme and what it means, I would say very simply that we need to have weapons in European Union, in our Member States,

which should not have any kind of strings attached or conditions if they are using components from the third countries. That is my very clear understanding what we need to avoid and what we need to look for.

I am very much a transatlanticist, and I'm very much in favour of keeping all the possible relations with the United States, despite who is President and how they will go ahead. But, you know, it's very clear that our own responsibility to defend Europe should not depend on what is happening in the United States.

1-0026-0000

Nathalie Loiseau (Renew). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, ce n'est pas à vous que je dirai que l'invasion illégale et non provoquée de l'Ukraine par la Russie a montré que nous ne pouvons plus considérer la paix en Europe comme acquise. L'Union européenne doit poursuivre son soutien militaire à l'Ukraine. C'est vital non seulement pour Kiev, mais aussi pour notre propre sécurité. Pourtant, en l'état actuel, notre soutien n'est absolument pas suffisant, sans parler des risques que le soutien américain lui-même ne décroisse. Nous devons faire plus et plus vite, par exemple en soutenant le développement de la production d'équipements militaires en Ukraine et en facilitant l'association de l'Ukraine à l'industrie de la défense de l'Union européenne.

Vous en avez parlé, vous avez mentionné le bureau d'innovation en matière de défense de l'Union européenne, qui a récemment été établi en Ukraine. C'est très bien. Simplement, comme beaucoup d'autres initiatives de défense de l'Union européenne, ce bureau est confronté à un manque de financement. Il ne fonctionne actuellement qu'avec deux membres du personnel à temps plein. Quelles mesures immédiates comptez-vous prendre pour que ce bureau puisse recevoir les ressources nécessaires à la réalisation de ces objectifs essentiels?

1-0027-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, dear Nathalie, thanks a lot for that very important question on Ukraine. My portfolio is maybe not so much directly related with Ukraine, but I have a very clear responsibility for the implementation of the EDIP programme, which is very important because it opens the doors to a very special programme related with Ukraine, for the integration of the Ukrainian defence industry with the European defence industry.

Well, of course, financially still the whole EDIP has only EUR 1.5 billion till 2025. We need to look how we can additionally find the money (*inaudible*) we dream to have as soon as possible.

But in addition to that, I would say this Office of Innovation is very important. It's important not only for Ukraine, but it's important also for the EU defence industry, because I think that our industry needs to learn a lot from the Ukrainian defence industry, which is creating sometimes miracles. And I would say exactly what I was trying to tell a little bit before: in the space industry, we are facing some kind of 'new space industry' and very, very dynamic start-ups and a small business community. We should do the same and look into Ukraine as an example of how they are having what I would call a 'new defence industry', with such an achievement, for example, in production of drones and so on, which is remarkable.

In addition to that, I would say that what we can do and what I would be very happy to see if our support, which we are giving - financial support - for the military needs of Ukraine would be spent really like it was done recently by Denmark, buying from Ukrainian defence industry the goods, the equipment which is needed for Ukrainian defence.

Ukrainians have now - I will quote several numbers - a special programme about which I was talking with the deputy Prime minister responsible - okay, again, I cannot tell. I will tell later, but that's very important.

1-0028-0000

Nathalie Loiseau (Renew). – Vous mentionnez EDIP, programme dans lequel on trouve un instrument de soutien à l'Ukraine. C'est très bien, là encore, simplement, il n'est pas financé. Vous l'avez dit, EDIP, en tout et jusqu'au prochain CFP, c'est 1,5 milliard d'euros, et l'instrument de soutien à l'Ukraine n'est aujourd'hui pas financé. Alors comment pensez-vous aborder cette question de manière très pratique? Quelle approche concrète est-ce que vous proposez et quel devrait être le montant du financement supplémentaire nécessaire dans le cadre d'EDIP?

1-0029-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, again, you are absolutely correct. For the time being in EDIP we do not have money for that very important programme to assist the integration of Ukrainian defence industry with the European defence industry.

So we can hope that, as it was said also in the Political Guidelines, before the next MFF we shall have additional finances which were discussed – that 500 billion issue – which is not easy perhaps to agree, but I hope that we shall do it.

Second, of course, we can spend our money which Member States are spending in helping Ukraine in a more prudent way. Again, I repeat the Danish example and the Ukrainian Zbroyari programme, whereby they are asking that all the assistance given by EU Member States for their military development is spend on their industry.

This programme is showing that, for example, the self-propelled howitzer, which Ukrainians are producing, and of very good quality, would cost two times less than buying in Europe. So that's what we can do.

1-0030-0000

Mārtiņš Staķis (Verts/ALE). – Mr Kubilius, both of us are from the Baltics and we know how important defence is for our citizens there.

In the first months in the Parliament, I have been talking with other MEPs about defence, especially the EU commitments to invest in civil and military defence infrastructure as well as military production. And I have noticed that there is a lot of support in Parliament for these ideas, but not that much from the European Commission and I hope that this might change now.

So, my first question is about the support of small and medium enterprises in the defence industry. Right now, we see that one third of the recipients of the European Defence Fund are SMEs. However, they got very little from the overall EDF budget. In your written answers, you say that the EU needs to reduce fragmentation and small-scale production, but in both of our countries we only have small-scale production.

So, what kind of investments have you planned to boost the military research, development and production capabilities of SMEs, and what investments will be made in smaller Member States such as the Baltics?

1-0031-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, thanks a lot again for a very good question. Civilian-military, or dual-use projects, are very crucial. We can name and name them, starting from military mobility, where 99 % of investment is EDIS or that infrastructure is 99 % used by civilians, but it's crucial for military developments on EDF, the European Defence Fund, which is really spending around 30 % for SMEs.

Of course, it would be very good to have EDF, a much bigger one because it's a very successful programme with research and development and really pushing forward – very important for the whole defence projects. But for the time being, the whole budget for seven years is only EUR 8.5 billion. So, you know, then, of course, definitely, it's not such a big amount which can make a very big impact on the whole development.

Of course, we are looking how we can agree with the European Investment Bank, because opening banking financial resources would be crucial, especially for small business. Big businesses, big enterprises, they can survive one another way. But for most small businesses, one of the crucial obstacles is, of course, access to the financial resources. We can look into different ways how we can help small businesses, even in some countries like the Baltic countries, where we do not have a large defence industry.

But again, that will come perhaps from much more of our joint efforts, not just to look into our own industries, but to look at how we can integrate industries. The integration of industries, the clusterisation of industries would be very beneficial also for small businesses because they will participate in much larger networks.

1-0032-0000

Mārtiņš Staķis (Verts/ALE). – I wanted to follow up with a question on how Parliament will be involved in these and other plans for implementing EU defence readiness. As you know, Latvia, Lithuania, we don't have a lot of MEPs in the Parliament, so there are very high expectations on us to deliver on promises that we have made, especially on defence. For this we need transparency and to be very well informed about how instruments are being implemented and why and how priorities are set on the project level.

My colleagues tell me that in the past, proper parliamentary oversight on how we implement priorities in defence industrial programmes has been missing, and we have even seen a case in the European Defence Fund where the EU budget was spent on identical projects. So my second question is, are you willing to commit to regularly meet with us, the SEDE coordinators, to present draft work programmes on existing and future defence industrial programmes and take into account our input on them?

1-0033-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – I don't know if I can promise to increase Baltic delegations in the European Parliament, maybe at some time, you know, but really looking into partnership with the Parliament, I consider that as a crucial one. As I said, I have some experience being a parliamentarian and being in the government, a parliamentarian in all the different positions, in ruling coalition and opposition. I know what it means.

And second, again, from my own experience, when you are coming into a new field, and my understanding is that really defence is becoming very important, but this is some kind of new area for the European Union, for the collective actions of the European Union. Then really in that new field you need to have new visions, new ideas, and that usually comes from politicians, from

parliamentarians. That is why I have a very crucial interest to be together with you, especially I have crucial interests to have SEDE established as quickly as possible. And I don't know how a Commissioner's calendar is looking like, but I would be really very happy to spend as much time as possible together with you.

1-0034-0000

Marc Botenga (The Left). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, je m'attarderai d'abord un instant, quand même, sur la symbolique. Pour la première fois de l'histoire, l'Union européenne n'aura pas de commissaire aux affaires sociales et à l'emploi, mais bien un commissaire à la militarisation: tout un symbole! Cela va évidemment se voir dans les politiques, parce que la Commission européenne ne cesse de nous répondre qu'il n'y a pas d'argent pour les pensions, pour les hôpitaux, pour les écoles, mais évidemment, maintenant, on va mettre pleinement le paquet sur les multinationales de l'industrie de l'armement.

Cela m'interpelle pour trois raisons. Tout d'abord, parce que beaucoup de ces entreprises font déjà des surprofits. Est-ce que l'on va maintenant subventionner leurs profits? Deuxièmement, parce qu'on dépense déjà beaucoup plus que d'autres pays, notamment la Russie, l'Inde, l'Afrique du Sud, le Brésil. Si, avec cet argent dépensé, on n'est pas capable de se défendre, c'est qu'il y a quand même une mauvaise gestion de ces budgets. Et finalement, et c'est là ma question, vous nous aviez promis qu'on pourrait, avec l'Europe de la défense, faire 100 milliards d'économies par an. Où est passé cet argent-là? Est-ce qu'ils sont dans vos calculs, ces 100 milliards?

1-0035-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, you can call me Commissioner for Peace, not Commissioner for Militarisation. Because my understanding is very simple. There is an old Latin saying, 'If you want peace, prepare for war'. That's what we need to do.

Perhaps we were enjoying for quite a long period of time so-called dividend of peace. Now we need to repay our debt for peace. That's very simple.

Of course, it will require financial resources. It will require to ramp up production to strengthen our defence industry. When you are spending money and defence industries are producing something, they are getting profits. What can we do how to try to achieve that the profits would be at normal level?

Of course, that can be achieved if we shall go with much more joint procurement, because joint procurement definitely, with aggregated demand, scale of economy, will push industries to go down with their prices. Second, of course, that would be beneficial for industries because they will have long-term contracts.

I would say even more. I would like to see that together with NATO, which are developing so-called defence plans – and they are calculating what kind of resources we need to have, and they know what we need, what we have now – it would be not so difficult for us to have something that I call industry output plan, giving very clear perspectives for our industries, what will be needed, what we shall procure in a joint way, all together for our European Union, and that is where perhaps we can achieve that both us and industries will be in some kind of balanced cooperation.

1-0036-0000

Marc Botenga (The Left). – Je vous appellerai «commissaire pour la paix» quand vos références ne seront plus celles de l'Empire romain, qui organisait des génocides en Gaule et occupait la moitié du monde illégalement.

Par rapport à la question de l'investissement, vous dites dans vos notes que vous allez définir les besoins d'investissement, donc vous ne l'avez pas encore fait. Cela pose question: que veut-on faire de cet argent? Quelle est votre vision de la défense européenne, à défaut d'avoir une politique étrangère européenne? Est-ce que c'est une défense du territoire ou est-ce que nous voulons utiliser cette militarisation – mot que vous n'aimez pas parce que voilà, ça ne fait pas joli – pour aller déployer des forces plus loin, à l'extérieur du territoire européen? Parce que, quand le Fonds européen pour la défense a été lancé, la Commission se plaignait de ne pas avoir assez de soldats à l'étranger, contrairement aux États-Unis. Et donc ici, quelle est votre vision de la défense? Défendre le territoire et les gens ici, ou aller déployer des forces ailleurs dans le monde?

1-0037-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, my portfolio, the defence portfolio is, of course, related only with the defence of the European Union. We have no imperial past, so we are not looking to restore empires or whatever. And that's why, really, defence for us is crucial. And NATO is exactly the organisation which knows how we can defend ourselves.

I would remind that recently NATO, at least in the media, in the press, *Die Welt* published an article about so-called new defence plans of NATO, where it was very clearly said that there is a need, NATO is planning that there is a need of having additional 49 military brigades, which means, you know, more than 1 500 additional tanks, more than 1 000 additional pieces of artillery and so on. So that is what we can calculate in a very clear way. And then we need to answer ourselves, are we able to have all that needed equipment or not?

1-0038-0000

Hans Neuhoff (ESN). – Herr Kubilius, die Amtszeit der neuen Kommission, der Sie angehören möchten, entspricht der Amtszeit des neugewählten US-Präsidenten Trump. Der Sieg Trumps ist nicht nur ein Sieg der Demokratie, sondern auch ein Sieg der Realpolitik. Man kann nur hoffen, dass auch die neue Kommission endlich Realpolitik im Interesse der europäischen Staaten betreibt. Die neue Weltordnung, die sich gegenwärtig herausbildet und in der Sie agieren wollen, wird eine multipolare Weltordnung sein. Sie sprachen in Ihrer Vorstellung von europäischer Souveränität.

Meine Frage: Sind Sie der Auffassung, dass Europa in der neuen multipolaren Weltordnung einen eigenen unabhängigen Pol konstituieren sollte? Wenn ja, in welchem Maße wollen Sie dann eine militärische Unabhängigkeit Europas von den USA anstreben und eine eigenständige europäische Verteidigungsfähigkeit entwickeln? Wenn nein, wie verantworten Sie es, uns in Abhängigkeit von einer Großmacht zu belassen, deren Interessen mit den unseren nicht identisch sind?

1-0039-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well maybe let's look in a very clear and maybe more simple way: are we facing possibilities of most extreme military contingencies on the European continent? My answer is yes. Do we need to take care and to look how we can defend ourselves? My answer is yes. Is the world becoming more stable during recent decades? I would tell no. Why is the world not becoming more stable? My answer is very simple: because we see quite a number of authoritarian countries which are becoming more and more aggressive. One of them is in our neighbourhood: Russia. Another one is North Korea, which now is joining military forces with

Russia and coming to Ukraine. Third one is, we know very well, Iran. We can consider also China like being part of that network.

The question is how we are going to defend ourselves, all the democratic world, from all those threats. I would say, very simply: by division of labour. We need to take more and more in our responsibility of our security on our own shoulders, together with the United States, as much as they can be together with us. And, you know, we need to very clearly see the possibility that if China will become much more militarised and aggressive, which is now going that way, that United States of America – not because they will lose their love for Europeans, but simply because they will need to mitigate Chinese threats. They will spend much more of their defence capabilities in mitigating that threat.

So this is the picture. I don't know if that is multipolar or two polar, or whatever. I see two poles: on one pole democracies and on the other pole authoritarian regimes. And that is where we Europeans need to be very clear.

1-0040-0000

Hans Neuhoﬀ (ESN). – Herr Kubilius, Sie haben mit Ja geantwortet. Wollen Sie also eine neue Partnerschaft mit der Regierung Trump aufbauen, die statt der Universalität des Westens die Multipolarität der Weltordnung anerkennt? Sehen Sie dabei spezifische Möglichkeiten, die Interessen Europas besser zur Geltung zu bringen als bisher? Wie kann Europa durch mehr Selbstständigkeit in der Verteidigungs- und Rüstungspolitik so stark an Einfluss gewinnen, dass wir wieder gemeinsam eine defensive NATO aufbauen können?

1-0041-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – We shall continue to cooperate with the United States, whatever administration they will have. That is our crucial interest. But, I think that sometimes we're spending too much time trying to discuss American politics, sometimes trying to find a way how we can collaborate or even influence their policy. That's very important among friends, but we should spend much more time, at least my wish is, on our own affairs: how we can strengthen our defence capabilities, how we can be ready for whatever military contingencies can come. And that is what I see as the priority, at least in my own responsibilities.

I am sure that we can do better. I am sure that we can deter whatever aggressors are planning. But we can deter aggressors only if we shall be much stronger ourselves.

1-0042-0000

Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, Chair of the SEDE Subcommittee. – Dear Andrius, on behalf of the SEDE coordinators, I confirm that SEDE is ready to work with you to build a genuine European Defence Union. Following the United States elections, it must be done urgently. Europe has talked defence for too long, and now we must act defence.

This is a big responsibility for you. A full EP defence committee would support you to strengthen European defence. You know the strategic importance of Ukraine. After the US election, we cannot allow Ukraine to be bullied into any bad deals. Will you commit to ensure Ukraine benefits from all EU defence instruments, and tell us how we resolve the lack of budget for Ukraine's defence industrial base in the EDIP proposal?

You have said you will build on the EU space strategy for security and defence. This is essential for a genuine European Defence Union. Please concretely explain your ambitions to make Europe a global leader in this sector.

Finally, should you receive a positive evaluation, will you come to SEDE on 4 or 5 December to discuss all of these urgent matters, including the possible role of EP legislative initiatives?

1-0043-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – I would be happy to say yes to the last sentence! Of course, again, I don't know, if I will be approved, what the calendar will be, but definitely I would be very happy to spend the good time together with SEDE looking into all the issues which we are discussing today, and perhaps it's not enough time, but also I am looking that SEDE will assist me and Kaja Kallas in preparing what we have as a first task during the first 100 days to prepare a White Paper on European defence. I am looking for input from Parliament also.

Now on Ukraine, yes, as I said European Defence Industry Programme is creating additional possibilities on how we can support Ukraine and its defence industry. But I hope that also, despite the fact that this is maybe not directly in my responsibilities, but together with Kaja Kallas, together with the whole Commission, I am looking forward to how we can be much more clear in what I would call our assistance towards Ukraine's victory.

Last year I looked into the numbers and my understanding was very simple: the Russians spent for the offensive in Ukraine more than 120 billion; all our support from EU and United States was reaching only 40 billion. And that is why Ukrainians have got only 80 billion altogether for their defence. This is not what we want to have, and I hope that together with NATO we can look also into how we can strengthen all our assistance to Ukraine, finding a way how to spend more money. And of course space policy continues to be most important also from that point of view.

1-0044-0000

Christophe Gomart (PPE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, merci de vos réponses aux questions. Ce qui m'a beaucoup plu, c'est que vous disiez que l'Europe et les États de l'Union européenne devaient être capables de se défendre seuls. Cela me rend impatient de travailler avec vous dans le domaine crucial qu'est, pour nos pays européens, leur défense. J'espère de tout cœur que votre portefeuille comme vos moyens seront réévalués à la lumière de la menace sécuritaire croissante qui pèse sur l'Europe et du retrait d'intérêt réel des Américains.

Ma question portera sur l'espace. L'espace est une nouvelle zone de conflictualité que l'on aurait tort de négliger. Vous l'avez dit, aucun État ne peut développer ses capacités spatiales sans les autres. L'espace est un démultiplicateur de force pour les armées de terre, de l'air et navales. C'est un outil de puissance pour les États, indispensable à nos vies modernes. Les constellations de satellites dans l'espace, c'est à peu près 10 000 satellites, dont 6 000 mis en place par Elon Musk, ce qui montre la faiblesse de l'Europe. L'espace est en plus l'objet de convoitise, de chantage, d'espionnage. Ma question est la suivante: quelles seront les conséquences pour ceux qui s'en prendront à nos systèmes et services spatiaux? Comment comptez-vous montrer nos muscles, face aux Chinois et aux Russes en particulier? Peut-on aller vers une doctrine européenne de dissuasion spatiale?

1-0045-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot for this question, because I was not able to answer the previous question, a very similar one.

What are we going to do with space policy? As I said, from one side in space policy, in space achievements, we can be quite proud because Galileo with navigation and positioning is three times more precise if you compare with American installations. And it has more than five billion users.

The same with Copernicus for OSS observation, the best service among similar services globally.

Now we are coming to new developments with the so-called IRIS², which is for secure satellite communication. That's very good, very important. And really we are looking also on how to expand or find new services with also new installations, which will be even more devoted to security services, because, of course, those installations are very important for civilian use, but also for defence and security use.

In addition to that, it's very important to see that space with all those developments, with those services which they are providing is becoming also very much threatened by the possibility of whatever attacks – cyber attacks or physical attacks.

I would remind you that Russia, just before the war, if I'm correct, in 2021, showed an example of how they destroyed in space their own satellite, which was a signal of what they can do with our satellites. So that's where, again, our attempts to build what we call a 'space shield' are of crucial importance.

We have a good system with space situational awareness and space surveillance and tracking and we need to develop them further.

1-0046-0000

Yannis Maniatis (S&D). – Mr Commissioner-designate, small and medium enterprises from across the Union form the backbone of the European defence industry and the defence supply chain. Can you commit to ensure (and how?) their adequate participation in the formulation of defence industry initiatives, access to relevant financing, and protection of their investments?

Second, will you ensure (and how?) that there will be a level playing field for all defence industry actors from all Member States, rather than allowing a select few large companies from a limited number of Member States to dominate the industry.

1-0047-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Thanks a lot, a very good strategic question. I would be very happy if the EU had the possibility to influence the defence industry at the level which would be comparable with Member States.

I would remind you that now EU Member States are spending more than EUR 350 billion per year for defence, on top of that, somewhere around of EUR 70 billion for investment. The EU - the Commission - is spending around EUR 10 billion for defence. The whole budget for the European Defence Fund is EUR 8.5 billion. In addition we have EUR 1.5 billion reserved for the so-called EDIP programme.

So our influence on, in general, the development of small and medium-sized business is quite limited by our resources. So I hope that next time the MFF will be much more with a large alliance on defence. I hope that next time there will be a nice EUR 500 billion for defence, additional money, and then we can spend also for small and medium-sized businesses.

Now, I can tell again, I can repeat what perhaps everybody knows. The European Defence Fund is now spending around 30 % of the resources for small and medium-sized business. There are specific instruments, additional ones, targeting small and medium-sized businesses. There's also the Defence Equity Facility, with the European Investment Fund, and also a European Defence Fund.

In EDIP, we shall have an additional instrument fund to accelerate the supply chain transformation, the so-called fast fund. And here is also the so-called EUDIS (EU Defence Innovation Scheme) in EDIP with EUR 1.5 billion for innovation, start-ups and so on.

In addition to that, again and again I can't repeat enough how important EIB policy is and changing, in general, conditions of financial institutions for investing in defence.

1-0048-0000

Ana Miguel Pedro (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhor Comissário indigitado, o Mecanismo Europeu de Apoio à Paz foi inicialmente concebido com o propósito de apoiar os parceiros africanos na defesa da sua estabilidade e segurança.

A invasão da Ucrânia pela Rússia em 2022 trouxe consigo uma mudança significativa no seu uso, com o mecanismo a ser adaptado para fornecer assistência letal, de forma a proteger a liberdade e a soberania da Ucrânia. Este desvio na aplicação do Mecanismo Europeu de Apoio à Paz levanta questões cruciais sobre a coerência e justiça das políticas da União Europeia em relação à ajuda militar, especialmente para os países africanos, como Moçambique, que enfrentam ameaças igualmente graves, como o terrorismo e a violência armada. Se as forças armadas ucranianas têm acesso e equipamento letal para proteger o seu povo contra uma agressão, então as forças armadas moçambicanas também merecem o mesmo apoio.

Pergunto como pode a União Europeia garantir que a futura assistência a nações africanas como Moçambique assegure o mesmo acesso equitativo e equipamento militar letal, como armas ligeiras e sistemas anti-drones, e híbridos, como veículos blindados e drones de longo alcance, para enfrentar ameaças de segurança como o terrorismo, sem cair no erro de aplicar um duplo critério entre regiões.

1-0049-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – The Peace Facility is playing a very important role in support of Ukraine for the time being. It could be even more if some Member States did not create artificial obstacles, but the Peace Facility is in Kaja Kallas' portfolio, so I can elaborate what we want and what we would like to have in this facility. But that would be just my thoughts.

That is why I cannot elaborate too much about Mozambique. Definitely it's a foreign policy issue whom we are supporting and how we are supporting. I do not consider myself a big expert on Africa countries, but of course I see that in many cases we are facing issues related with Wagner Group or other Moscow instruments. So this is where we need to see how we can help democracies to defend themselves against the same threats as we see in Ukraine.

1-0050-0000

Elena Donazzan (ECR). – Lei è stato molto chiaro sul rapporto difesa-spazio, il che significa sicurezza, e anche sul tema del controllo satellitare, dicendo che proseguirà su IRIS2 e Galileo, e questo ci conforta, era una domanda a cui Lei ha già risposto. Ma come garantirà una equa rappresentanza degli Stati membri e delle competenze?

La seconda domanda è quella degli investimenti. Lei ha già detto che dobbiamo aumentare il fondo e dobbiamo cercare fondi altrove. Sosterrà la richiesta del governo italiano, che chiede di togliere le spese per la difesa che sono investimenti dal Patto di stabilità?

Inoltre, come ampliare il *dual use* per una componentistica europea maggiore? Spendere europeo vuol dire aiutare le piccole imprese.

Infine, l'Europa ha differenti posizioni sul servizio obbligatorio. Il suo paese ce l'ha, il mio l'ha sospeso. Eppure, larga parte della protezione civile poggia su questo. In Italia poggia sulla fanteria da montagna diventata ormai volontaria. Come intende muovere una riflessione attorno a questo tema?

1-0051-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot for a large question on different issues. I will try very briefly to run through.

Especially in space, I see that Member States are participating in different ways. One way is through European Union institutions and Commission and also a very special agency, the European Union's Space Programme Agency. But also there is an independent agency, the European Space Agency, where Member States are participating directly, and it is a very important institution.

Now on the proposal to look into the growth and stability pact and on the criteria which are in that pact, I agree with you. I need to look more deeply and maybe we shall talk with other Commissioners, because at least early in the spring I saw a discussion, perhaps among the EU ministers of finance, about the possibility really not to consider defence spending as the spending which is increasing the deficit, which would be very crucial, very important. The same was done earlier during pandemic and some other challenges. So that's what we can do. I would be very happy if we would agree, and really that Italian proposal is a very rational one.

Now on dual use, again, there are plenty of different areas where dual use is crucial, starting from a very practical one like the mobility, but also looking into all other areas, starting from the drone industry where drones are developed for civilian use and then used also in the defence industry, and so on. So here again I can repeat and repeat that small business is a crucial one, especially in the modernisation efforts of our defence capabilities.

1-0052-0000

Pierre-Romain Thionnet (PFE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, de nombreux projets européens de défense sont nés en réaction à l'invasion à grande échelle de l'Ukraine par la Russie, en faisant le constat de la faiblesse militaire collective des nations européennes. Nous nous félicitons de cette prise de conscience. Néanmoins, des inquiétudes demeurent. Vous avez évoqué à plusieurs reprises la possibilité que la Commission puisse gérer des stocks d'armements. Pouvez-vous nous en dire davantage?

Je m'interroge aussi sur l'enjeu des exportations. Estimez-vous que la Commission ou le Parlement doivent intervenir dans les choix d'exporter des armements qui seraient subventionnés par des instruments européens?

Enfin, si l'Ukraine et le flanc oriental demeurent l'enjeu premier de notre sécurité, l'Europe ne peut pas oublier les autres théâtres. Serez-vous attentif aux besoins industriels spécifiques des forces armées européennes pour répondre à des crises en Afrique, par exemple, mais aussi pour faire face aux nombreux défis sur les mers et océans proches ou lointains?

1-0053-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – You asked about stock of arms, and things like that, and who will own them. I don't know. I did not say that the Commission will own them, and I am not looking into such a perspective.

But the so-called possibility of stocking the arms and, for example, having so-called 'readiness pools' are the instruments which are described again in the same EDIP programme. I consider that as a very important proposal, looking in general from a defence point of view and a defence industry point of view. Because creating in such a way also a permanent demand or a longer-term demand for the industry is exactly what industry needs to have in order to be sure that they can invest into expanding their facilities.

From another side, those stockpiles or readiness pools would allow us to avoid such a problem which suddenly appeared exactly when the war against Ukraine started and we promised 1 million artillery shells and then it appeared that our stocks are empty, Member States' industries are not able to produce immediately.

So, in order to avoid such kind of supply crisis, that is why it would be good to look into all those possibilities of stockpiles. I see it as a really important thing.

Having joint stockpiles or joint armament also is something which we can consider, because that is what is done now recently – not by EU, maybe more by NATO and Member States – but creating this strategic enabler, with having those flying tankers – I don't know how to call them even – as a joint property, and resolving some kind of this deficit which they had.

1-0054-0000

Christophe Grudler (Renew). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, parlons espace, encore. Le secteur spatial européen est dans une crise majeure et j'ajouterais, depuis les élections américaines de cette nuit, que l'Europe est maintenant seule. Comme vous l'écrivez, un changement de paradigme est plus que jamais nécessaire dans le secteur spatial européen civil et militaire. Le changement doit être inédit et pour cela, j'ai deux courtes questions.

Tout d'abord, quelles mesures urgentes et à moyen terme proposez-vous pour renforcer notre industrie spatiale européenne, afin d'assurer notre indépendance et un modèle économique viable, notamment face à une concurrence étrangère en situation de monopole?

Enfin, nous avons besoin de simplification et d'unité européenne. Pouvez-vous vous engager à restructurer les agences publiques spatiales européennes avec un rapprochement inédit entre la Commission européenne, l'Agence spatiale européenne, l'EUSPA et les agences nationales pour créer une sorte de NASA à l'européenne?

1-0055-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot. You know, I was trying to speak a little bit about that in my opening statement. From one side, we have really good achievements in space with all those services which are established and really world class services. From another side, we are facing what I was calling and what some experts are calling a 'revolution in space'.

Even if you will look into satellite numbers, if ten years ago in space it was around 1 500 satellites. Now, we are facing that satellite numbers will perhaps be, at the end of the decade, somewhere around 30 000.

First of all, I see the priority in coming back with launching possibilities now, because here, we are losing very much competition and small space business is suffering because of that. Then we need to come out with space law, which we are planning to do very soon.

Second, much more attention and much more possibilities we need to create for the so-called 'new space industry', which is dynamic, which is innovative and which is able to change a lot if we shall create exactly for them the conditions which NASA created back in the United States quite early. And that is how Space-X was created; by NASA in our approach how to invite private industry into the development of very important space projects.

1-0056-0000

Giorgio Gori (S&D). – Signor Commissario designato, resto sul tema dello spazio. Oggi l'Europa ha la seconda industria spaziale del mondo. Gli Stati Uniti investono però in questo settore cinque volte più di noi e la Cina prevede un forte aumento di investimenti pubblici. Negli ultimi quindici anni, inoltre, come lei accennava poc'anzi, la NASA ha coinvolto i privati nell'implementazione delle tecnologie spaziali e oggi imprese come SpaceX e Blue Origin stanno facendo la differenza.

Come pensa che l'industria spaziale europea possa rimanere competitiva? Si batterà per un sostanzioso aumento degli investimenti per lo spazio nel budget dell'Unione europea?

L'Europa ha tante piccole e medie imprese molto dinamiche, ma il settore richiede anche grandi aziende con elevate capacità di investimento. Come pensa di favorirne lo sviluppo?

Rispetto poi allo sfruttamento dei dati derivanti dall'osservazione della Terra, come pensa di sviluppare il settore del *downstream*? Come intende realizzare una leadership europea nell'utilizzo dei dati spaziali?

1-0057-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Thanks a lot for quite a broad, but very important question.

Yes, absolutely. We can be proud that we are second in the world with our achievements in space, but it's absolutely clear that we are facing a huge challenge. And as you have mentioned, the United States are spending five or even more times more than we are spending, the whole EU budget for space in this MFF, if I am correct, is only EUR 14 billion with some additional sums, but not very big, for IRIS², which means that we're spending EUR 14 billion for seven years, so we are spending EUR 2 billion per year, which is really a very small amount.

And definitely, I see the challenge that, in the next MFF, we need to have larger numbers, I cannot predict what. But I know that in order to keep even, just in order to keep those services which we have now, like Galileo, Copernicus and IRIS², we shall need much more substantial finances from EU budget.

Then, of course, the same with SMEs and all that new space industry which need access, first of all, to risk capital, to growth capital, to financial resources. Here, the Commission is doing what we can. We have good experience with some of our initiatives, which are really very important for the space industries. And we shall continue that, but definitely additional funds would be very crucial.

Data economy is again the area which we shall spend a lot of attention to. I see really that the big data economy is a new development in the world and space data can be used even much more effectively than used until now.

1-0058-0000

Michał Szczerba (PPE). – Panie Komisarzu! Wiatr historii wieje jeszcze mocniej. Europa musi przejąć większą odpowiedzialność za swoje bezpieczeństwo i wszyscy musimy stanąć na wysokości zadania: Komisja, Parlament, ale również, za osiem tygodni, polska prezydencja w Radzie Unii Europejskiej. Europejska Unia Obrony będzie priorytetem. Będą priorytetem również polskie projekty flagowe, które, mam nadzieję, staną się europejskimi: Tarcza Wschód czyli zabezpieczenie granic zewnętrznych Unii, a także Europejska Żelazna Kopuła czyli program związany z obroną powietrzną.

Trzy pytania bardzo konkretne. Pierwsze, dotyczące strategicznego partnerstwa między Unią Europejską i NATO: jakie są Pana priorytety w tym obszarze?

Drugie to współpraca z krajami trzecimi. Myślę o przemyśle obronnym i o współpracy przede wszystkim z naszymi sojusznikami z Europy: z Norwegią i Wielką Brytanią.

I trzecia kwestia to relacje transatlantyckie: jaki główny obszar w obliczu dzisiejszych rozstrzygnięć wyborczych?

1-0059-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, again, I wish all the best for Polish Presidency. That's very important, that's very crucial – a country from our region is taking responsibility. I hope that it will be a very successful presidency, especially if we compare it with some presidencies which we are witnessing at the moment.

Second, the Air Shield and the north and east border defence shield are projects which we are discussing with people in the DG, and we hope that during next year we shall proceed very much, both in finding an agreement with Member States and pushing ahead. As I said, it costs money. We need to find money. Air Shield is 500 billion, north and east border shield, if I am correct, it's also billions. And it's not only a physical shield but also an electronic shield, I would call it.

So now NATO. NATO is crucial and I will look for all the possible cooperation. As I said, we are not competing. NATO is really making military defence plans and high military command. We are not going into that area, but we can come with what I call our added value on resources, on capabilities. We can raise money and we can have additional legal regulations.

Now, I met, as I said, with some NATO people. It's very clear – at least my vision is – what we can do together with NATO. We need to have clear a understanding of what resources are needed for defence. And as I said, NATO updated the plans. And there are numbers which are even published in media, like 1 500 additional tanks and so on. We need to see how we can proceed, either on EU level like it was done during the pandemic or whatever else, but with all the partners I would like to see a good cooperation.

1-0060-0000

Markéta Gregorová (Verts/ALE). – Dear Andrius, I would like to ask you about two domains of conflict, namely cyberspace and then also space.

Firstly, cybersecurity is of course now a common buzzword. But now it's not just Russia who is a threat to our critical infrastructure. Even the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese companies are trying to interfere in it. In some European countries, Huawei and others are even a big and undisputed part of it. How do you intend to protect our physical cyberspace infrastructure from hostile actors, when or if Member States are failing?

Secondly, and simply, what has not been said on space yet: do you believe that we should keep our space programme under civilian control and focus? And in any upcoming legislation on space, will you make sure that we allocate enough funding and attention on our impact on the atmosphere as we increase space flights?

1-0061-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Of course, this is becoming a crucial area where we need to look how we can strengthen our cyber-defence capabilities. That is why, again, among those so-called defence projects of common European interest, one of those eight which we are discussing, besides air shield and some other shields, we are talking also about what we could call a cyber shield.

It demands implementation of those strategies which were approved by the Parliament and of some acts to have a much better cyber-defence on a national level, and also coordination and cooperation on EU level.

Of course, all the dangerous or suspicious technologies should not be used. Huawei, at least in Lithuania – Lithuania was the first one where our experts made a very simple conclusion, testing Huawei and they showed what are possibilities of cyberattacks. So we need to restrict uses of such technologies.

We need to look for new technologies. EDF is working for example on so-called quantum technologies, which really can bring a strong impact on how to make our communications secure. And that is where IRIS², for example, in space, is going to use exactly those quantum technologies. Don't ask me about the details of the technologies, despite the fact that I come from physics. But it's quite difficult to explain.

Now, space will stay a civilian area. I don't see who can take from us – either the EU Space Programme Agency or the European Space Agency. But of course we shall look how we can have some dual-use more strengthened exactly on using space for defence capabilities.

Space law will bring, I hope, a clear vision how we can make space more clean from all what is happening now.

1-0062-0000

Riho Terras (PPE). – Dear Andrius, my question will bring us back down to earth again and concerns the defence SMEs' access to the finances and the role of the European Investment Fund in this context.

The European Investment Fund is an institution designed to support SMEs by providing financing. At the same time, it has excluded any financing of production of weapons and ammunition. The same goes for the whole European investment bank: no financing of lethal weaponry and only dual-use technologies are financed.

If the European Commission has declared that our SMEs should have a stronger role in the field of the defence industry, this requires access to adequate financing schemes. What would you suggest to the Commission to do to open the EIF financing for the defence SMEs of Europe?

It is paramount that the EU institutions lead the way, even for private investments. And this brings me to the other issue of the business: the EPP has been calling for a 'one in, two out' principle. Would

you commit to ensure the significant reduction of the regulatory burden, either by applying this principle or by alternative measures?

1-0063-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, dear Riho, of course the last point is the whole programme of the European Commission, very clearly written both in political guidelines and in our mission letters, how to simplify, how to not introduce new regulations which are demanding additional efforts from the business. Sometimes we are introducing regulation on how to simplify regulation, but then we are asking business to report on do they feel that things are simplifying. And those reports again are becoming a problem. So let's be very practical.

Now on the financial side, yes, the European Investment Fund is important. You know we are doing together the defence equity facility with EIF. But it's too small. Everything is too small. That is why I said I was contacting with and speaking with the leadership of the EIB, with the President and Vice-President. We are looking for continuing our discussions, including not only with the EIB, but inviting also businesses and inviting the private banking sector, other financial institutions, to find a way how we can not only improve the conditions for our defence industry, but create conditions which would be in one or another way similar to what the defence industry is facing, for example, in the United States of America. Because we are suffering because our defence industry is losing competition, because access to the finances are totally different if you compare EU and the United States. So that's one thing.

Second, I would again quote President Niinistö. We need to look more deeply into his proposals to create several additional financial facilities. One is called the Defending Europe Facility. Another is called the Securing Europe Facility, and also the investment guarantee programme, when he speaks exactly about defence industry and defence situation.

1-0064-0000

Jussi Saramo (The Left). – Thank you, Mr Chair. We on the Russian border understand the need to prepare. According to the Draghi report, EU countries spent EUR 75 billion on defence between June 2022 and June 2023. 78% of the money went outside the EU, and 63% to the United States of America. This has been very bad for our economy, employment, security and global influence. A big amount of money goes to countries like Israel that despise international law, use weapons for terror and kill innocent people.

After the shocking US election results it is more important than ever to stop supporting the US military industrial complex and build an autonomous situation here in Europe. So, Mr Kubilius, how should we quit reliance on the unreliable United States, and how could we build our defence on a morally sustainable basis?

1-0065-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – First of all, I would not call the United States an unreliable partner. We have some experience being very important partners with the United States. Yes, sometimes politics is changing. Leaders are changing. Policies are changing. But nevertheless, I would say that we are reliable partners in defending democracies globally and that we should keep looking into the future.

However things will change, I am a convinced transatlantist and I do not see why we should start to think in a different way. Yes, it can be that the United States will be forced by the Chinese rising

power to diminish their presence in Europe. But that is, again and again, not because Americans are not reliable partners, but simply because different geopolitical challenges are starting to appear.

Now, on how we are spending our money: those were really very important numbers presented by Draghi and by some other experts. Yes, we are spending too much money outside of the EU when we are buying equipment. It will be good to spend much more money buying European equipment. I would comment that there are experts who are saying that those numbers, like that Europeans are buying only 20 %, are not very correct, because it was exactly at the moment when, after the war started and the Europeans were very much keen to buy an F35 or F16, whatever they were buying from the United States at that moment.

So, numbers, perhaps, are more beneficial for European industry. But in any case, as I said at the very beginning, we need to develop our industry and we need to spend money exactly in order to develop our industry, because that will be very much needed if we shall face a real military contingency.

1-0066-0000

Raphaël Glucksmann (S&D). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, il s'est quand même passé quelque chose cette nuit qui doit nous interroger. Un homme qui a promis d'arrêter l'aide à l'Ukraine a remporté la présidence américaine. Quelle discussion comptez-vous donc avoir avec les autres membres de la Commission concernés par l'aide à l'Ukraine pour voir comment faire afin de pouvoir remplacer l'aide américaine si elle vient à s'arrêter?

Vous avez raison d'insister sur la nécessité d'une défense européenne souveraine, d'une industrie souveraine. Il ne s'agit pas simplement des commandes passées à nos industries, mais aussi de s'assurer de notre souveraineté sur les technologies critiques. Quel est votre plan pour faire en sorte que nous ne soyons pas dépendants des décisions de fournisseurs étrangers qui sont très utiles à nos industries, mais qui peuvent imposer des restrictions? Quelles mesures prendre pour garantir aussi que nous puissions constituer des stocks minimums de matières premières critiques pour l'industrie de défense de l'Union européenne?

1-0067-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, thanks a lot, Raphaël, a good question on Ukraine and how things can change. Well, of course, I would expect that the United States will keep supporting Ukraine. But if that will not be the case, of course, we need to look how we can take that share of responsibility.

I would remind that Estonians have shown very well in one of their papers that, if all the Member States of NATO would support Ukraine by 0.25 % of their GDP, then Ukraine would be able to prevail.

So, yes, if Americans are diminishing their support, then we need to look at how we can cover, at least partly, that support which is now given by the United States, we are giving also quite a lot. But we need to be ready.

Now, on everything else, I agree we need to look how to develop our industries, as said. Not just because we want to compete with the Americans, with our industry, but because during the war, to have industrial capacity on European soil is a must, it's crucial. And that industry should be safe from both raw materials supply problems or critical technologies.

Again, there are a lot of European strategical documents which we need to implement, including on critical technologies. If I am correct, I remember that four of them, like semiconductor chips, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and biotechnologies were named as critical technologies.

And we need to take care about development of our technologies. We know that with chips we are very much dependent on Taiwan. We could invite the Taiwanese maybe to invest more in Europe.

On quantum, as I am told by experts, we are quite good, but we need to develop industry on that, not just research and development. So we need to do our job.

1-0068-0000

Roberto Vannacci (PFE). – Commissario, Lei ha incentrato il Suo intervento su munizioni, armamento, equipaggiamento, finanziamento e ricerca. Ma, dice lo slogan di un famoso produttore di pneumatici, che la potenza è nulla senza il controllo.

Come futuro Commissario alla Difesa, Lei sa benissimo che senza la funzione di comando, controllo, comunicazioni e *intelligence*, nessuna operazione militare può essere condotta con successo. Allora le chiedo come – e non ci dica che è necessario, perché quello lo sappiamo – Lei intende realizzare una *intelligence*, la produzione di *intelligence*, la condivisione di *intelligence* e la disseminazione di *intelligence*, sapendo che questa funzione è strettamente connessa con gli interessi nazionali e con la sovranità nazionale di ogni Stato membro.

1-0069-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – When I was nominated as a Commissioner, *The New York Times* called me 'a King without a kingdom'. It means defence minister without army and without all other things which usually defence ministers have in other countries. I joke that some kings, maybe, or some ministers, have an army, but they do not have guns. I am pretending to be that guy who is responsible for guns. So that's my responsibility – for defence industry and for defence armament.

So I cannot speak too much about how as Europeans we should organise command and control systems. This is not in my portfolio. This is what NATO is doing. Maybe it can be discussed also together with the High Representative.

I would look into intelligence as some kind of resource which we need to have in addition to all other resources. Good intelligence, consolidated intelligence. And that is what, as I understand also, President Niinistö was very much focusing on in his report. So let's look into the report, into the whole logic and language, why we need to have that.

And again and again I can repeat that in my view when we are talking about defence as a symbol of our sovereignty, yes, sovereignty is very important, but sharing sovereignty in NATO or EU for our common benefit I see as really very big advantage for all of us. So how to create a good intelligence service which everybody would be trusting, that of course is very important to discuss, but that is not my portfolio.

1-0070-0000

Beata Szydło (ECR). – Szanowny Panie Premierze! Jednym z Pana zadań jako komisarza ma być zaproponowanie działań mających na celu obniżenie barier dla współpracy transgranicznej i przyczynienie się do tak zwanej specjalizacji. Proszę więc o odpowiedź, co dokładnie Pan i również

pani przewodnicząca Ursula von der Leyen mają na myśli pod tym określeniem, ponieważ w Pańskiej odpowiedzi pisemnej nie zostało to doprecyzowane. Czy jest to zgodne z postulatem Maria Draghiego, by państwa członkowskie podzieliły się specjalizacjami tak, by w jednym na przykład były produkowane czołgi, a w drugim być może, mówiąc kolokwialnie, tylko pokrowce do łuf? I czy tak, jak sugeruje to pan Draghi, państwa członkowskie powinny być przygotowane do dobrowolnego wygaszania własnego przemysłu, by wpisać się w zaplanowaną tutaj, w Brukseli, mapę specjalizacji?

Dotychczas wspólnym postulatem krajów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej i państw bałtyckich był rozwój europejskiego przemysłu zbrojeniowego w całej Unii. Czy jest Pan zatem za podejściem Draghiego do kwestii specjalizacji?

1-0071-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – I'm in favour of transborder cooperation. And the outcome of that cooperation has the possibility of more specialisation. You know, all those reports that, again, some experts are saying are truthful, some others are saying, there are some misleading numbers, that in Europe we have something like 180 different platforms for defence, which are produced by industry, when in the United States they have only 30, and the United States at the beginning of 1990s went through some kind of consolidation and specialisation of their different industries.

I would again come back to what we need to have. In my view, we need to take very clearly the challenge which we are facing. Talking about all those most extreme military contingencies, we need to take NATO's very clear defence plans, and what does it mean in practical terms? How much we need to increase the number of tanks, of artillery pieces, of infantry vehicles and so on?

And then to ask ourselves, how are we going to go in implementing all those defence plans? How is EU going to assist Member States to implement those plans? My question is do I understand the urgency of implementing those NATO plans with all the resources? In my view, one of the ways that we can do it, knowing very clearly what is needed to be done, what resources, what capabilities we need to have, to go to the industry and to ask who is going to produce during the next five years, or something like that, 1 500 tanks. And that will move towards specialisation. But this will be a natural way, not artificial.

1-0072-0000

Petras Auštrevičius (Renew). – Dear Andrius, thank you very much for your ambitious plan and a personal commitment in building up EU Defence Union. It's not a task for tomorrow. It's a task to be happening starting from today. It's about time and money.

Concerning money, the European Union spends on the common agricultural policy around 30 % from its annual budget. On defence, which is not less important – let's be clear – less than 10 %.

Well, it's about public money. Raising public money. Are you in favour of issuing European bonds – let's say long-term bonds – for safe future and great future for Europeans, having in mind that those bonds might be financed from different sources in the long term.

1-0073-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot, Petras, of course, good to speak English among Lithuanians, but maybe I will continue in English!

I would avoid in some way making a conflict in between spending on agriculture and defence. That is one thing. Let's look for other possibilities. Everything is needed. We need to ask ourselves the question, is the European Union's whole budget enough for all those challenges which we are facing? Because when we are trying to distribute that budget to all the issues, perhaps we are failing.

Second, there are all the different options. I was talking about those 500 billion, which are crucial, really, because we cannot wait till 2028 when we shall have another MFF. We need to have to do everything, both in the Parliament and the Member States, to look for possibilities. And as you know, experts are discussing all the different ways. I'm not saying which one I would prefer. They are speaking about defence bonds with the European budget, like the guarantee which was done during the pandemic. That is one thing. Others are saying that we can look also into programmes of today, like RRF, which perhaps are not spent fully. We can look also maybe into other programmes, but let's be very precise. Prime Minister Letta in his report suggested again to come back to experience during pandemic and to use the so-called European Stability Mechanism, some kind of this European IMF to have cheap loans from that for defence. So you know that is where we can look very carefully.

In addition to that, I would say we need to discuss, perhaps we can ask NATO, whether the 2 % target is enough or not. From my point of view it is not enough.

1-0074-0000

Matej Tonin (PPE). – Mr Kubilius, Commissioner-designate, the defence industry is rapidly transforming. Digital is playing an increasingly central role in reshaping modern military strategy.

Countries like the United States, China, Israel are leading the development of advanced digital defence tools, such as artificial-intelligence-driven surveillance systems, cybersecurity enhancements, autonomous drones and precision-strike technologies.

These innovations are not only changing the nature of warfare, but also impacting the outcome on the battlefields. In this context, Europe faces an urgent need to close the innovation gap and enhance its digital defence capabilities.

How do you plan to position the EU at the forefront of this digital transformation? What specific actions will you take to boost collaboration with the private-sector innovators to increase research funding and scale up digital defence tools?

1-0075-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – You touched upon a very important issue, of course. How can we modernise our defence industry? And that is one of the goals, because really one thing is to calculate how many tanks we shall need and how many artillery pieces we shall need. Another thing to ask the very simple question how many tanks will be needed in the future? I am not an expert, really that is for military experts to say, but it's very clear from experience in Ukraine that the war technologies are changing very rapidly.

And again, we can take an example from the Ukrainians of how good they are in developing all the new capabilities, digital defence capabilities.

I can just agree about artificial intelligence, about quantum and things like that. What we have, we have several instruments which we are trying to use for that development, like the European Defence Fund. But this is only EUR 8.5 billion. It would be good to have a much bigger one.

We have also a European defence innovation scheme for innovators and start-ups. We have a Defence Equity Facility, with the European Investment Fund, and we are planning to have funds to accelerate supply chain transformation fast.

Now, again for small businesses. In space, we have CASSINI - a very successful foundation also.

So those are our instruments but definitely only public finances will not solve the problems. We need to convince big business to be much more open for innovations, not to create clusters around, with small business around, with financial services capital around, with universities and academic research around, that is how we can change the situation.

1-0076-0000

Lina Gálvez (S&D). – Mr Kubiľius, I will ask you about space and how crucial the space law to guarantee our strategic autonomy will be, and also how to maintain Europe as a global key player on space, and indeed in many other issues? So my question is: what are your plans to advance towards European technological sovereignty in space, in particular to guarantee non-dependence in space supply chains?

What will the Commission do to ensure that this law is complied with by all entities delivering services in the European Union, and guarantee that there will be no reallocation of activities to countries with less developed regulatory frameworks? What will you do to ensure that third countries' operators meet market access, regulation and entry procedures, including all obligations related to sustainability, safety, security and resilience?

Lastly, are you planning to include any gender dimension in the European Union space law? Are you planning to attract more women? Space is a place to conquer, so women will want to be there, too.

1-0077-0000

Andrius Kubiľius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, thanks a lot. Space law is crucial, really. One of my tasks written into my mission letter. As I know from my conversations with the directorate, there is readiness to bring space law early next year. So preparations are going on. Space law, as I understand, is really very important because now at least 12 of our EU Member States have their own space law. So we are starting to fragment the whole space issue and space market, if we can call it so. So in order to integrate things, we need to have this space law, which first of all... I'm sometimes comparing with what was happening at the beginning of 20th century with road transport. Then we needed to introduce rules of the road. Now we need to introduce rules of space, because when we shall have 30 000 satellites in space, then it will be really an issue. So rules of the road, safety and creation of the market. That is what what we expect this space law will bring.

We hope that, with our initiative, we can start to be again in some way standard setters globally in trying to really push forward for some kind of international agreements on the space rules. Now, technological sovereignty, of course, that is always very crucial. As I said before, there are for different branches of our industry very clear EU regulations on how we need to strengthen security of supplies of raw materials, of special technologies. We need to develop those technologies by ourselves. Until now, we were quite good. As I said, with Galileo, with Copernicus, we are good. Where we lost, we lost launching to Elon Musk, but we shall catch up. Gender is always very important, but I do not see here any kind of very specific in space, and I'm not responsible for astronauts, so that's not my responsibility.

1-0078-0000

François-Xavier Bellamy (PPE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, cher Andrius, au moment où nous avons cette conversation, l'Europe est sans doute menacée de sortir de l'histoire. Et même si certains collègues ici semblent toujours considérer que la défense est une activité taboue, en réalité – et les événements récents aux États-Unis sont là pour nous le rappeler –, si nous ne savons pas assurer notre propre sécurité, nous perdrons la maîtrise de notre destin et nos démocraties.

C'est la raison pour laquelle, comme vous l'avez si bien dit, il faut renforcer nos industries de défense. Mais en matière d'industrie de défense, l'enjeu n'est pas seulement de produire. L'enjeu, c'est aussi d'inventer nous-mêmes ce dont nous aurons besoin. L'enjeu, c'est d'opérer et de soutenir nos forces armées pour qu'elles puissent intervenir sans que nos États aient à demander l'autorisation, y compris à des alliés. Et l'enjeu, c'est bien sûr de pouvoir exporter sans avoir à prendre d'autres considérations en compte que nos propres intérêts géopolitiques et la défense de nos principes. Sur le programme EDIP, qui sera décisif, êtes-vous prêts à appuyer des critères d'éligibilité qui correspondraient à ces objectifs absolument déterminants?

1-0079-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Of course things are changing globally. We have a new US Administration. Let's see how we shall be able to continue our cooperation, including on defence issues. I agree absolutely that we need to strengthen our own capabilities, not just to look at how things will develop in the United States. We can be more optimistic or not so optimistic about the United States. But in any case we need to do our utmost to develop ourselves, both scaling up conventional industries and also in modernising our production, supporting everybody who is ready to invent, startups and so on. And this is not so easy.

I came from science, from physics. I know that you cannot create innovation or invention just by signing a law. You need to create the whole atmosphere. For me it would be a dream to see some kind of... We are forgetting ideas about clusterisation, which were very popular something like 10 or 20 years ago now, something like Silicon Valley on European defence, created in Europe, in the countries which have no tradition of defence industry, would be a step forward.

Now, on EDIP and the possibility to use EDIP for third countries, again, the language which is proposed, I see is quite a good language. It allows entities from third countries also to participate in EDIP according to eligibility standards if they are established in EU, if they are getting guarantees from the countries in which they are established. But also we need to look, of course, into those, design criteria. That's very important: not to be conditionalised too much.

1-0080-0000

Grzegorz Braun (NI). – Two issues. You speak about conquering space. You must be aware that the regime that you are about to join, its probably best-known technical achievement of last year was messing up with our bottle caps.

You say that it would be nice to produce more tanks cheaper, like in Ukraine. You must be aware that that might be a war zone, but it is a non-Green-Deal zone.

Then my question is: can I count on you as a champion of some anti-Green, anti-Blue-Deal crusade within the European Commission? Otherwise how are you going to make the ends meet?

The other issue would be China and Iran and your other nominees for enemies. I would feel much safer with you as the presumed peace commissary if you were not so eager in nominating enemies instead of fighting different dangers that we have within this European *eurokołchoz*.

1-0081-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, for me, the European Union is not a *kolkhoz*. I grew up in the Soviet Union and I know what *kolkhoz* means. I saw them. Luckily, they collapsed. The European Union will not collapse.

So second, I like the colour green. So, I will not be against green in general. But more seriously, I would say very simply, if you will read again, President Niinistö's report, you will see what threats we are facing, all of us. We are facing military ones and we are facing threats coming from climate change.

And we started our discussion from things which had happened in Spain, very tragic things. And we do understand what century we are living through. And we need to be ready for everything. So that is why I see the fight against climate change as very important. Of course, we need to see how we can do it in a most acceptable way, taking care also of industry worries.

But, from my point of view, the Green Deal is a done deal and we need to implement it and industries – defence industries and space industries – will go through green transformations in the same way as all other industries are going.

Second, I would say that I am in favour of the Green Deal also because of geopolitical consequences. In my view, going out from consumption of oil and gas will have major geopolitical consequences, especially for those autocracies which are living on the export on oil and gas.

1-0082-0000

Pascale Piera (PFE). – Monsieur le Commissaire désigné, vous déplorez un sous-investissement chronique en matière de défense. Vous reprenez à votre compte une recommandation de l'OTAN qui estime que chaque État devrait consacrer 2 % de son PIB au budget de la défense. Pourtant, je crois savoir que, lorsque vous étiez Premier ministre en Lituanie, les dépenses de défense ont précisément baissé de 30 %. Dans ces conditions, quelle sera votre ligne directrice en qualité de commissaire?

J'en viens à la deuxième question. Le rapport Draghi constate que la grande majorité des investissements européens dans la défense a été détournée vers les États-Unis et vers d'autres acteurs, notamment Israël ou la Corée du Sud. Dès lors, quelles mesures comptez-vous prendre pour protéger les industriels européens de la défense?

Enfin, vous avez exprimé l'ambition de protéger les moyens spatiaux de l'Union européenne. Comment envisagez-vous d'assurer cette protection alors que notre industrie spatiale est en deçà des capacités de nos concurrents chinois et américains, que notre accès à l'espace ne tient qu'aux lanceurs Ariane 6 et que notre activité spatiale se limite à quelques programmes symboliques de lancement de satellites de géolocalisation?

1-0083-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – So thanks a lot for your personal question. I would remind you that when we were really having our defence spending below 2 %, that was the years of financial crisis, 2008-2012, and we were really looking for how to survive because our economy went down by -15 %. At the same time, we implemented very radical reforms in our energy sector and luckily we got rid of our dependencies on energy supplies from Russia, especially Gazprom. That is why when the war started we were able to get rid of any kind of dependency.

Now, of course, I would look further, really how to make defence spending from all the Member States equivalent to the threats which we are facing. Again, the threats now are different from the threats back in 2008 or 2012, at least in our understanding. And that is where we need to be very clear.

On space and industries on the European continent, I am in favour of really developing European industries, not just because we want to compete with Chinese or American industries, but because in the event of most extreme military contingencies, we shall need to have our developed industry as a defence resource. We are not as bad in space as you just mentioned. Yes, we are bad at launching satellites, but we are good in Galileo and Copernicus, and we shall be very good also in IRIS².

1-0084-0000

Tobias Cremer (S&D). – Thank you, Mr Kubilius, you made a very clear case for why creating a real defence union is good public policy, especially given yesterday's election result in the US.

But the successful implementation, even of good public policy, hinges on public support, and public support necessitates both transparency and the trust that funds produce tangible results.

But currently, EU governance in the defence sector is neither transparent nor is there clarity regarding its output in terms of tangible capabilities. Instead with multiple initiatives such as PESCO, EDIP, CARD, EDF or ASAP or CDP – Europe has often seemed better at producing acronyms than actually working tanks.

So, in your written responses, you said that you want to streamline the governance of the EU defence sector. So my question is: how are you planning to do so concretely? Are you, for instance, considering reforming the European Defence Agency and extending its mandate? And how will you ensure that taxpayers can feel confident that their money finally produces actual and tangible capabilities, rather than more initiatives?

1-0085-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, there is very strong public support, as you know from recent opinion polls, for the EU taking more responsibility on defence. More than 70 % of Europeans are saying, yes, we want to see the European Union taking care about defence. So that's what is also creating for us additional possibilities.

Now on governance. We touched upon a very important issue, But I will not give you very precise answers. Why? Because really, my portfolio and Institution of Defence Commission is a totally new one. And as you know, until now, defence and security was more on the High Representative's portfolio. Now we are in some way a little bit separating but not conflicting. So we shall keep very good cooperation, I am absolutely sure. And we shall try to find the best way how to use those institutional resources which we have now in the best way.

Because you mentioned the European Defence Agency, that agency for the time being, and I don't know for how long, is an agency under the responsibility of Kaja Kallas and even if I would like to say, 'give it to me!', I'm not so sure if that will happen because this is the only agency which is written into an EU Treaty - Article 45, perhaps, if I am correct, and Treaty changes are not foreseen in the near future.

My point is very simple. I agree with you that, first of all, we need to take care about production of tanks. Now about production of all other equipment, modernising that equipment, governance

issues will come a little bit later. I am sure that we shall need to look more deeply into that, but not from the very beginning.

1-0086-0000

Jan Farský (PPE). – Commissioner-designate, the Niinistö report confirms that decades of underinvestment have severely weakened the European defence industrial base. Over 80 % of national defence investments feed purely domestic industries, and private capital is underutilised.

As such, the EU urgently needs to stimulate investment in the defence sector. This is why the EPP strongly believes that weapons should be taken out swiftly from the taxonomy exclusion list, thereby allowing the European Investment Bank to invest, without further delay, in defence-focused companies.

My question thus is as follows: how will you go about removing defence manufacturing from EIB's exclusion list to enable a direct investment in defence-focused companies? What timeline have you set yourself?

Would you support establishing a dedicated entity for defence investment within the EIB, enabling private and public capital to be combined, thus securing sustained, stable strategic defence investments? For example, an entity modelled after the European Investment Fund?

1-0087-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Thanks a lot. You again touched upon a very important issue. I was talking a little bit before about that – that defence in some way is suffering in Europe, because of some kind of attitude that investment into defence is not good investment. I don't know what are the reasons.

That is why I'm saying that I would like to call myself not Defence Commissioner, but Peace Commissioner or Commissioner for Peace. Maybe that would change narratives. If we are investing into defence, that is investment into peace, and who can be against investment into peace? That's a little bit more of a philosophical question.

Now, as I understand it, taxonomy is not a problem, not an issue. Taxonomy does not create any problem, any criteria which do not allow to invest into defence. There are some regulations in the mandate of EIB which really till now was very strict. Earlier in spring, as I understand, EIB started to change its policy.

I would like to remind that I would like to have some kind of authority on the EIB, but the EIB is an independent banking institution which is governed by all the Member States, by their ministers of finance.

If you remember, earlier in spring, there was a very powerful letter from perhaps 14 government leaders, including the German and the French Government, asking the EIB to change their mandate. So EIB moved in that direction. They changed the mandate, the language on dual use. Now they removed a little bit of those restrictions, but still restrictions are somewhere around.

As I said, I am going to have good discussions with them, including discussing the possibility to create a special instrument, special facility, maybe similar to what even President Niinistö is talking about when he speaks about Defending Europe Facility.

1-0088-0000

Virginijus Sinkevičius (Verts/ALE). – Dėkoju už Jūsų atsakymus. Ir, aišku, aš puikiai suprantu, kaip jaučiatės. Gera naujiena, kad liko visai nedaug, bet užduotis, kuri Jūsų laukia, greičiausiai, kai būsite patvirtintas, bus labai sunki. Iš to, ką mes girdime, iš klausimų, Europa pasiruošusi ginkluotis, bet pinigų tam nėra. Pinigų turi šalys narės, tačiau yra didžiulė fragmentacija, skirtingas grėsmių, galų gale, suvokimas. Gynybos pramonei ji irgi pasiuntė labai aiškią žinią, kad jiems reikia aiškumo. Mano klausimas yra labai paprastas. Ar planuojate nustatyti privalomus gynybos produktų pirkimus tarp šalių narių? Bent jau aiškius tikslus, siekiant užtikrinti vieningą, kartu ir ekonomiškai efektyvų požiūrį į gynybą? O kartu aš manau, kad tas sustiprintų ir bendrą požiūrį į grėsmes, kurios yra labai arti Europos Sąjungos sienų.

1-0089-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Paskirtasis Komisijos narys. – Gerbiamas Virginijau, gerbiamas ekskomisare, ačiū labai už tikrai gerą klausimą. Jūs pats buvote komisaru ir Jūs žinote ir matėte, ką Komisija iš tikrųjų naudingo padarė, ypač prasidėjus pandemijai, kai buvo sugebėta įtikinti visas šalis nares, kad reikia jungtis ir reikia spręsti problemas kartu. Na, aš nelyginsiu pandemijos iššūkių su gynybos iššūkiais, bet situacija, mano manymu, filosofine prasme turi daug panašumų. Ir šioje vietoje aš manau, kad fragmentacijos įveikimui mes tikrai galėtume pasinaudoti ta patirtimi, kuri buvo sukaupta per pandemiją, ieškodami būdų, kaip sutarti ir dėl bendrų pirkimų, ir dėl bendrų tikslų. Aš jau kalbėjau apie NATO labai aiškiai formuluojamus tikslus – aišku, jie, tie skaičiai, nėra lengvai prieinami, čia aš iš spaudos citavau. Kažkodėl tai yra laikoma didele paslaptimi, kokių resursų mums reikia ir ką šalys turi ir ko neturi. Man atrodo, kad Putinas tuos skaičius geriau žino negu mes juos žinome. Ir čia nereikėtų labai nuo jų bėgti. Tai būtų viena iš tikrųjų galimybių turėti aiškius skaičius, kokių ginklų mums reikia, ir tada tartis visiems kartu, kad tų ginklų ir įsigyjame kartu. Ir tai būtų kaip tik žingsnis įveikiant tą fragmentaciją. Antras dalykas, be abejo, yra tie rodikliai, kaip 35 procentai bendrų pirkimų ir 50 procentų europietiškių pirkimų, kurių mes visi kartu turime siekti. Ir galbūt galima būtų juos vėlgi turėti kaip tam tikrus bendrus siektinus rodiklius, turint omeny, kad galime pasinaudoti tokia patirtimi kaip Europos semestrai ir turėti gynybos semestrą.

1-0090-0000

Mariateresa Vivaldini (ECR). – Signor Commissario designato, nei prossimi anni l'attenzione dell'Europa dovrà focalizzarsi sulla necessità di mettere a frutto gli investimenti spaziali ed aumentare la competitività. Lavoreremo alla *Space Law* e al nuovo programma spaziale.

Le chiedo dunque: quali criteri intende adottare la Commissione per garantire che i processi di certificazione non diventino un ostacolo per le aziende europee e non escludano quei paesi membri che hanno già rapporti consolidati di collaborazione con paesi extra UE?

Considerata la crescente partecipazione delle PMI e *start-up* nel settore spaziale, quale garanzia può offrire la Commissione affinché i processi di certificazione previsti dalla nuova legge non diventino barriere di ingresso al mercato per le piccole e medie imprese? È previsto un percorso agevolato per facilitarne l'accesso?

Nell'agricoltura di precisione non sono stati fatti eccessivi passi in avanti. Troppe aziende agricole in Europa hanno difficoltà ad accedervi, sia per scarsa conoscenza delle tecnologie sia per il costo dei servizi, che però sono fondamentali per la gestione del consumo di acqua e dei fertilizzanti e per la riduzione dell'utilizzo dei pesticidi. Sapendo che esistono ostacoli normativi, economici e una scarsa consapevolezza del loro utilizzo, come pensa di eliminarli?

1-0091-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – First of all, space law. As I said, we are ready to come with space law if everybody will agree in Commission and according to the procedures somewhere in the first half of next year. And definitely all the details will be in that law, including certification. I cannot now discuss with you all the details, but my point of view is that we are very good always in creating as many obstacles as possible, and then we are looking how to fight those obstacles. So maybe we can in some way be more effective not bringing those obstacles at the very beginning.

I don't know what certification will mean for space industry. That's very specific. But I trust the experts and I trust those Members of our own Parliament who know that area perhaps better than I.

Of course, for industry, access to market, to space market, to space in general, is a crucial issue. And that is why I was speaking about how important it is for us to come back with our launching possibilities, where we unfortunately know, perhaps, of the decisions which were made 10 years ago. We are now facing all the problems.

Yes, Ariane 6 will restart. I think that at the beginning of December there will be the Ariane 6 launch, very important. But Ariane 6 can serve, and it will be enough just for those projects which we are going with EU money. I will remind you that for IRIS² there will be a need of launching 300 satellites. That's quite a challenge. But launching is one of the things where we need to pay a lot of attention and here exactly the new space industry will play, from my point of view, a most important role with micro-launching and all other things which we need to support.

1-0092-0000

Michał Kobosko (Renew). – Panie Premierze! Bardzo dziękuję, po pierwsze, za Pana przemyślane, dogłębne i konkretne odpowiedzi. To nie zawsze było normą, to jest normą w czasie przesłuchań w tym tygodniu. Jestem za to bardzo wdzięczny.

Po drugie, konkretne pytanie, i wróć tu do relacji z NATO. Pana urząd, Pana stanowisko jest nowe. NATO jest organizacją, która się rozwija w przyspieszony sposób. W jaki sposób będzie Pan na co dzień operacyjnie współpracował z NATO, tak żeby nie dublować zadań państwowym? Pan mówi o konieczności zwiększenia produkcji, o standaryzacji produkcji w Europie. O tym samym mówi NATO i o tym mówiono także na szczycie NATO w Waszyngtonie. Więc jak będziecie kooperować, żeby uniknąć dublowania i być może sprzecznych decyzji?

Ponadto powiedział Pan 25 września w wywiadzie dla Politico, że wyobraża Pan sobie, że Komisja Europejska kupuje sprzęt zbrojeniowy i przechowuje go we własnych magazynach. Czy to jest wizja realna?

1-0093-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – The relations with NATO, thanks a lot, a very important question, but from the very beginning I was speaking always very simply. I don't expect any competition between EU and myself as Commissioner with NATO. NATO really is doing a great job, especially with the defence plans, regional defence plans, deterrence plans and also with high military command. Where EU can be of assistance that is with our possibilities with added value on development of the resources or capabilities which are needed for the implementation of the defence plans. We can raise money if, of course, we know Member States will agree. Now that is what NATO cannot do. NATO can ask for 2 % or 3 %. But in their own way they cannot raise money. We can, and we can have additional, special legal regulations, EU laws or some other regulations which, again, can be beneficial for Member States.

Now that is why I consider that our relations really are very important. And I see all the possibilities for good cooperation. As I said, we met, we had a very good conversation with some NATO officials on the renewed NATO plans. We need to find a way how to put very clearly numbers for ourselves, in terms of resources, what we have and what we need to have. We need to have numbers. I can repeat myself quoting a very famous British physicist, Lord Kelvin, who said back at the end of the 19th century, 'if you cannot measure anything, you cannot improve that'. So, you know, we need to have numbers.

1-0094-0000

Hans Neuhoff (ESN). – Herr Kubilius, Sie wollen die EU zu einer starken Weltraummacht machen. Angesichts der gegenwärtigen Lage stellt sich jedoch die Frage, wie realistisch diese Ambitionen sind. Kollege Glucksmann hat es schon angesprochen: Der Weltraumsektor ist stark abhängig von Rohstoffen, deren Vorkommen oft außerhalb der EU liegen. Und unsere Produktionskapazitäten sind weit entfernt von der Flexibilität und Geschwindigkeit der USA oder der staatsgelenkten Industrie Chinas.

Sie betonten, dass die EU ihre Binnennachfrage bündeln und die eigene Industrie stärken wird. Aber wie wollen Sie die strategische Autonomie aufbauen, von der der Hohe Vertreter Borrell spricht, wenn die EU in Bereichen wie seltene Erdmetalle, Titan, Palladium oder Lithium vollständig von Staaten wie Russland und China abhängig ist und dabei EU-Trägersysteme wie die Ariane 6 von Verzögerungen und technischen Problemen betroffen sind? Wäre es nicht realistischer und ehrlicher, die Kooperationsnotwendigkeit der EU mit allen Rohstofflieferanten anzuerkennen?

1-0095-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, first of all, are we strong in space or not? I see some kind of confusion.

In my view, if you take Galileo, Copernicus, and now IRIS², look into those systems from that point of view, we are very strong. We are the best in the world. So what else we can say?

Galileo is the best in the world. The Earth observation system Copernicus is the best in the world. So should we be proud or should we condemn ourselves that we are very unsuccessful?

I would like to say that we need to be proud, and especially that that was achieved by EU Member States in agreement and with best technological equipment. I would say that space for me is an inspiration what we should do in defence, because that's really a very, very important achievement.

We are bad in launching and we should strengthen ourselves with the development of so-called new space industry, which is bringing revolution. So usually we are quite slow when revolutions are coming, we are quite slow. But let's do what we can.

On raw materials, this is an issue for all European Union industries. That is why EU is really doing a lot with all the different strategic decisions, strategic acts, which were adopted also by the Parliament. How to resolve those problems, dependencies on strategic raw materials?

If I am correct, you did some kind of monitoring and there are 40 raw materials which we should say we need to take care. And there are instruments which are starting to be developed, including strategic partnership agreements with different countries which have those resources, and which can provide, also in a stable way, the European Union.

1-0096-0000

Özlem Demirel (The Left). – Herr designierter Kommissar Kubilius, erlauben Sie mir bitte eine Anmerkung vorweg, bevor ich zu meiner Frage komme. Sie haben eben gesagt: „Wenn du Frieden willst, rüste zum Krieg“, und haben sich in die Tradition des alten römischen Spruches gestellt. Wenn ich gerade sehe, dass unterschiedliche Großmächte und darunter jetzt auch ein designierter Kommissar der EU tatsächlich sich auf diesen alten Spruch berufen, habe ich manchmal Angst, dass sie gemeinsam und gegenseitig uns tatsächlich auch zivilisatorisch wieder in die Antike zurückbomben wollen, und davor kann ich tatsächlich nur warnen.

Jetzt zu meiner Frage: Welchen Stellenwert hat tatsächlich für Sie die europäische Gesetzgebung? Artikel 41 Absatz 2 gibt es nach wie vor, und dieser Artikel verbietet ja nach wie vor Ausgaben aus dem gemeinsamen europäischen Haushalt für Beschaffungen und auch weitere Mittel mit militärischen Bezügen. Jetzt sagen Sie, Sie wollen halt diese ganzen Instrumente, die geschaffen wurden, noch weiter ausbauen. Bisher wurde das als aktive Industriepolitik deklariert. Wie steht eigentlich die Kommission jetzt zu diesen ganzen Artikeln, die wir als Europäische Union haben?

Ihr Vorgänger sprach davon, dass er ein Sondervermögen von 100 Milliarden möchte. Ist es das, woran Sie anknüpfen möchten? Und er sprach von dem Ausbau der Kriegswirtschaft. Wollen Sie auch daran anknüpfen?

1-0097-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – First of all, I don't understand how you want to guarantee peace on the European continent if you are not ready to defend peace. That's, for me, kind of difficult to understand. I think that maybe if you look back when we were enjoying the so-called peace dividend after 1990s, when everybody saw that there will be no aggressors any more, and so on, that we made some kind of strategic mistake, that we did not understand that some countries are coming back to authoritarian regimes. They're starting to violate human rights and then they're starting to become aggressors. That is what we faced with Putin, that's what we're facing with Lukashenka.

So what to do with aggressive Russia? How to convince Putin not to start another military adventure against EU Member States is really to show that we are able to defend ourselves. And that demands from us very much of our joint efforts to increase our defence industry capabilities and our military capabilities. That's very clear. You know, you can have peace according to Putin, when everybody around is surrendering and surrendering, and then yes, it will be peace, but according to Putin. We had such an experience back in Soviet times, so we don't want to repeat that.

Second, on how to spend the money, yes there are limitations of the Treaty, which we are looking at very carefully, and the legal advice is always very crucial. But recently there were several good initiatives by EU, like ASAP for support to industries to develop their new facilities. It was not buying any weapons. The second was the so-called EDIRPA programme, which is still going on, which is supporting the joint procurement. And now we are moving into EDIP, which, again, is a very good legal instrument, how we can create and how we can have new possibilities really to support, by EU means, by EU funds, by EU legal regulation, new possibilities to strengthen our defence.

1-0098-0000

Davor Ivo Stier (PPE). – Mr Commissioner-designate, you have already addressed the question of cooperation with the Ukrainian defence industry. I believe that we should also acknowledge the expertise of the Western Balkan candidate countries in the defence industry, and that that cooperation could be mutually beneficial. The EU would gain access to some quality defence

equipment, while the Western Balkans countries will strengthen their alignment with our common security and defence policy.

On the other hand, failure to engage with the Western Balkans' defence industry could lead to other competing global powers seizing that opportunity. So my question would be: what actions would you undertake to reinforce the cooperation with Western Balkan countries in the field of defence industries?

1-0099-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Well, thanks a lot. Really, a very good question. Of course, now what we are discussing, the so-called European Defence Industry Programme and Regulation, which is in the Parliament, speaks – besides the development of the European defence industry – only about the Ukrainian defence industry, and about possibilities of integration, support and so on, which is really very crucially important, because the war is here.

The Western Balkans, luckily for you, you had experience – very bad – but now there is peace in the region. I would see a possibility really to look into the next stage of development, since the Western Balkans – like other countries like Moldova and Ukraine – are going now through the path of integration towards the EU, which I hope will be really successful.

Again, you know, my dream is to see, first of all, the Western Balkans in the EU before 2030, a possibility to integrate into different policy areas, including a European Defence Union, should be considered as a very important step forward. I don't know in which way and how it should be, and how it will be done, but that is a possibility.

1-0100-0000

Elissavet Vozenberg-Vrionidi, *Chair of the TRAN Committee*. – Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Honourable Mr Kubilius, the Russian aggression against Ukraine demonstrates the need to be able to smoothly move military equipment across the continent. Military mobility is severely underfinanced. Your written answer to our Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) points in this direction, but how concretely will you make sure, together with the other commissioners responsible, that the Commission and Parliament's budgetary proposals are not again cut more than four times by the Council? How will you make sure that the next MFF will foresee a budget for military mobility that is commensurate to the threat we are facing? How will you cover short term needs under the current MFF?

1-0101-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot again for a very, very important question. I would start from saying the question is how to convince the Council members and the Member States? I would ask you otherwise, I don't know. For the time being, that perhaps will be our common task, really, to convince Member States that the defence needs are crucial.

When we are talking about defence, military mobility or military logistics, resources are again at the same crucial level, importance level as defence equipment or defence industry. And that is in my portfolio and I am really looking forward how we can speed up and how to avoid that situation, which you were referring to, when the military mobility budget line was cut, by several times.

Military mobility as a defence project of common European interest is discussed among those eight most important projects, next to the air shield. Investment which is needed at least by the DG's

estimation is around of EUR 200 billion during the next ten years in order to upgrade all the infrastructure like bridges and roads and railways.

But when we are talking about military mobility, we need to talk not only about rails and roads, we need to talk also about cargo airlift possibilities. We need to talk very much about what I know sometimes we are calling 'military Schengen', how to move defence goods from one country to another country without too long legal permission requirements. That is a problem. Again we are looking into possibility how to digitalise that service. But those are really crucial issues.

1-0102-0000

Borys Budka, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Thank you for this round. Now we start the third round. So, questions from the groups, but in reverse order. I just remind that it is a three-minute slot.

1-0103-0000

Marcin Sypniewski (ESN). – Szanowny Panie! Chciałbym się spytać o rzeczy, których mi zabrakło i na czym w zasadzie powinna skończyć się europejska polityka obronna. Chodzi mi o wsparcie państw, które już dzisiaj są w zasadzie na pierwszej linii frontu, które ponoszą też skutki polityki unijnej i które też w przyszłości będą narażone na niebezpieczeństwa. W razie konfliktu bomby nie będą spadać na Brukselę, na Paryż, na Berlin, ale na terytorium Polski, Litwy czy innych państw sąsiadujących. Już dzisiaj nasi żołnierze bronią przecież granicy, która jest granicą Polski i granicą Unii Europejskiej, także przed najazdem imigrantów.

Jaki ma Pan pomysł na wsparcie tych państw frontowych? Czy rozważa Pan przeznaczenie środków na budowę trwałej zapory chroniącej granice Polski i granice Unii Europejskiej? Czy rozważa Pan na przykład zmianę polityki unijnej dotyczącej Konwencji Ottawskiej o zakazie używania min przeciwpiechotnych i dopuszczenie do zaminowania granic będących zewnętrznymi granicami Unii Europejskiej? Czy przewiduje Pan też wzmocnienie systemu obrony cywilnej państw członkowskich, zwłaszcza państw frontowych, takich jak Polska, Litwa itp.?

1-0104-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – So, first of all, definitely not when we are talking about most extreme military contingencies. According to all the intelligence reports Russia can be ready during the next five years to test EU Member States. The question is, which EU Member states could be tested? It's quite obvious. We don't need to know a very precise answer.

So that is why among all those who know defence projects of common European interest – I repeat myself again – in Directorate-General DEFIS there are discussions also about the so-called north-eastern border shield project, which is designed by request of the Member States, namely the Baltic Member States, Finland, Poland, and I don't know about other Member States, but that is according to their request. The whole project is devoted, if I'm correct, to the physical shield, building all the needed physical obstacles for tanks or whatever, as military equipment and also electronic or digital shield.

So those are the projects which are considered, and the whole project is quite costly. I hope that if we find money, as I was speaking before, this project will be among one of the priority projects.

I was talking before about the Lithuanian experts' analysis, that in order for us to defend our country against Russian invasion in 2028, we need to have additional 10 billion. The question is, from where? And here comes the question on EU solidarity. I see that as a question of solidarity. When

we have issues with refugees coming through Mediterranean, we know that we need to show solidarity. The same with the possibility of military aggression. We shall need to show solidarity.

1-0105-0000

Merja Kyllönen (The Left). – Honourable Mr Kubilius, the security of the Baltic Sea and the operational conditions of the region are critical for the entire EU internal market and the security of supply.

What actions does the Commission intend to take to ensure the security of the Baltic Sea region, especially considering the security risk caused by the Russian shadow fleet in the Baltic Sea and the huge increase in GPS interference?

What concrete measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure the continuity of the Baltic Sea routes, even in crisis situations?

1-0106-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, thanks a lot – very important question. But I'm a little bit, again, confused that perhaps this is more a question to NATO and to Kaja Kallas.

I can talk about what we are looking from defence projects, defence equipment, defence industry point of view. Of course, maritime security is crucial from all the different points of view, including all the different connection facilities which we have in the sea, like pipelines, like cables, and so on. Here we need to develop all the new modern technologies, how to surveil what is happening on the seabed.

So that's one of those projects which, as I understand, both EDF and also European Defence Agency, which belongs to EEAS, are looking for. There are also PESCO projects on that topic.

But, sorry, as I said before, it's not directly my portfolio to discuss how we can increase security in the Baltic Sea.

1-0107-0000

Hannah Neumann (Verts/ALE). – On Monday, Commissioner Šefčovič underlined how important it is that we stand together in the area of trade and exports. You, Commissioner-designate, underlined today how important it is that we work together closely when it comes to the defence industry in research and development, in production and procurement. Yet both of you treat the issue of arms exports like a Lord Voldemort: the one that shall not be named.

And I don't get it, because we both know that diverging policies on arms exports are a key problem in all joint defence projects, sometimes even preventing them from happening at all. And they weaken Europeans' foreign policy and security, because while Ukraine urgently needs weapons, some Member States, including really big ones, prefer to export ammunition and military equipment to countries with dubious records.

So, Commissioner-designate, will you advocate for an EU-level arms exports policy and put forward regulation towards this end to stop this mess?

1-0108-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Thanks a lot for one important question. Nobody asked so before you I was not elaborating. Arms exports, for time being are exclusively in the hands

of Member States. And I'm not sure that Member States would very easily agree to abandon that. But I would be in favour of looking for more harmonised export policies. So let's look now at how we can go into that direction, because I'm looking, first of all, from single market perspective. If really we want to create a single market with market standardisation, market certification, let's look also at how we can enhance the power of this market with more harmonised arms export regulations. So let's look.

But again, you know, I am in favour of continuing that discussion and having a broader discussion with the Parliament, but also then with Member States.

1-0109-0000

Lucia Yar (Renew). – Mr Commissioner-designate, another topic we haven't touched much. At the end of your hearing, there's a bit of opportunity. I will follow up with the question regarding gender because you – yes, you – will not be responsible for sending female astronauts to space, but you will certainly need to implement gender mainstreaming into the European defence and space policies. We find it to be a challenging but important task. In your written answers, you have mentioned that you will do your best to implement gender mainstreaming in those policies. But even though the question clearly tried to find out how you would execute it, you have only answered that you will do it.

So since tonight we haven't mentioned this topic in the length that it deserves, I'm going to ask you how, in practice – for instance, in two or three very concrete examples – do you plan to implement the gender mainstreaming into the new European defence policy? Please try to be concrete.

1-0110-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – Well, thanks a lot for a really good question, but in general I don't know what are specific problems in defence industry if you compare with other industries on gender mainstreaming. So maybe I will look, first of all, into that specifically. For the time being I don't know any kind of very clear answers to why it should be different from other industries.

I would say that what I am worried about is really the shortage of skills in the industry. And the shortage of students of both genders in specific studies. And that is where I hope that we can look all together at how we can enhance.

On gender mainstreaming, again, if there are any specific challenges in the defence industry on that, I am ready look into how we can improve the situation.

1-0111-0000

Reinis Požņaks (ECR). – Labvakar! Liels paldies par izturību un pacietību šovakar, atbildot uz mūsu jautājumiem! Un, kā jūs pareizi minējāt, visu mūsu uzdevums ir gatavoties karam ar Krieviju. Šovakar mēs daudz esam runājuši par militāro industriju, par kosmosu trīsreiz uz riņķi. Tādēļ es mēģināšu būt tuvāk zemei, jo, kā zināms, sākoties karam, robeža starp militāro un civilo pasauli pazūd, sevišķi, ja runa ir par karu ar Krieviju, kurai civiliedzīvotāju terors, apšaudot pilsētas ar visiem iespējamajiem ieročiem, ir kara stratēģija.

Tāpēc man jautājums ir šāds: vai, ielūkojoties savā portfeli, jūs redzat arī kādu failu, kas palīdzēs sagatavot militāriem draudiem arī civilās aizsardzības infrastruktūru?

1-0112-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot for a Latvian question. I would be happy to answer in Latvian, but despite the fact that I was spending all my summers next to the Latvian border with my grandmother, my knowledge is limited to *paldies*.

More seriously, yes, military and civilian border is disappearing when we are talking in general about security and defence. That was again, I can repeat, for me, very, very important and very, very crucial to look into the report of President Niinistö, who speaks exactly about both sides of our preparedness and absolutely clear that if the war starts, you need to have not only military equipment, but all the civilian sector ready for the war, with prepared shells, with medical service, with everything else, transport, whatever.

So that is where we need to have, again, clear strategy. It's good that in the Political Guidelines, the Commission President speaks about so-called preparedness strategy. Perhaps we can expect that it will cover both defence preparedness and civilian preparedness. I can repeat my sentence again. Of course, implementation of preparedness costs a lot of money. But no preparedness costs much more money. So we need to be prudent in that choice.

1-0113-0000

Susanna Ceccardi (PFE). – Thank you, Mr Commissioner-designate, the European Union must strengthen its strategic capability, not as an alternative, but in complementarity with the United States and NATO.

I will ask you what concrete measures you intend to implement to ensure defence investments are distributed equitably among Member States and to support European companies, creating a robust production and innovation capacity that is less dependent on external actors?

Finally, how do you plan to enhance the resilience of our critical infrastructures, especially in the cyber sector, against the increasingly sophisticated threats to ensure the security and integrity of our system?

1-0114-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – How to ensure more equal distribution of investment into the defence industry. Very good question. For the time being in my portfolio of Defence Commissioner, there is only EUR 10 billion, which, first of all, is even not such an amount as it was in 2021. Now it's much less, but it's spent by the European Defence Fund, which is doing a good job and covering all the countries, all the entities from different countries.

The forthcoming European Defence Industry Strategy programme will also be that instrument. I would say that we need to look more creatively into next developments. And I would look into possibility to look more deeply into how a lot of money is spent. Perhaps we can ask to orientate some of this money nationally or at national level to spend that on the development of a defence industry. The same looking into the future maybe can be done with cohesion funds, the huge European cohesion funds, which are used in order to help Member States to develop their industries. Why not look at how this money can be spent on a national level exactly for the development or modernising of defence industry in the country? We are now spending on other industries. Let's spend on defence industry. So that's one thing.

Now on cyber security, I said it's very crucial. We need to look both at how to strengthen those defence capabilities which we are establishing now on an institutional level, on a national level, on

a European level. Coordination is crucial, but also development of new technologies, how to be more able to defend ourselves against cyber attacks. That also is very important.

1-0115-0000

Thomas Pellerin-Carlin (S&D). – Mr Kubilius, good evening. As you know, the war in Ukraine started 10 years ago. It has been a war with a heavy artillery component, with Russia leveraging its superior artillery firepower to conquer territory. Recently, South Korean intelligence estimated that North Korea sent 9 million artillery shells to Russia – 9 million. In the meantime, we the European Union, were not even able to deliver a single million shells that we promised to Ukraine.

Our European GDP is more than 600 times bigger than North Korea's, yet we send 14 times less shells to Ukraine than North Korea did to Russia. And the re-election of Donald Trump will only worsen an already difficult situation.

Mr Kubilius, I know that you and I share the same goal here. So my question is, what is your plan to ensure that we Europeans can produce more artillery shells and send them to Ukraine? More specifically, will you propose measures that would force our defence industry to prioritise and prepare for Member States' orders, whether for themselves or Ukraine, during times of crisis?

1-0116-0000

Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate. – All the answer is almost in your question. I agree absolutely with the point you raised. You know, we see in this war that at least from 2022 artillery is playing a very important role. And of course Ukraine is suffering because of the shortage of artillery shells supply.

You remember when the European Union promised 1 million, and it appears that we are able to produce only 300 000. Now, with the European Union special programmes which were adopted in the previous Parliament, ASAP and EDIRPA, and especially ASAP, we are finishing this year, if I'm correct, with 1.4 billion producing 1 million shells, and then next year we shall finish with 2 million. But Russians are producing 3 million, and they are getting from North Korea 9 million and still they are producing.

So this is a warning signal. As I said before, when I read this Kiel Institute report on Russian military economic capabilities, how much they are producing now, everything, shells, artillery pieces, refurbishing old tanks and so on, and that during six months they are able to produce everything that the German army have in their stocks, for me it was very clear signal that with such a situation we are creating a real temptation for Putin to test us. So this is – I don't know in what language to say that – this is such a warning signal that we need to immediately look into all the new possibilities, which we need to do.

And in order to produce more, we need to have more financial resources, both on a national level and on an EU level. Second, we need to look at how we can encourage our industries to expand. That can come only if we convince our industry that they are getting long-term contracts, because now we were coming in small demands, and industries were not able to understand what we want. And the last point, really, we need to have ability for prioritisation. That is what is coming with EDIP.

1-0117-0000

Angelika Niebler (PPE). – Werter Herr designierter Kommissar, lieber Andrius Kubilius, zum Ende Ihres *confirmation hearings* würde ich gerne noch mal auf den Bereich „Weltraum“ zu sprechen

kommen. Sie hatten ja selbst schon von der *Revolution in Space* und von der *New Space Industry* gesprochen. Wir haben heute auch schon mehrfach in die USA geblickt. Ich möchte das auch noch mal hier tun. In den USA werden Satelliten ja zu einem Bruchteil der Kosten produziert, die bei uns bei EU-Weltraummissionen anfallen. Ich denke, wir müssen uns wirklich fragen, wie wir die Voraussetzungen schaffen können, damit wir in der Europäischen Union eine ähnliche Marktentwicklung vollziehen können wie in den USA.

Und um es auf den Punkt zu bringen, noch einmal: Im ersten Quartal 2024 hat SpaceX alleine 31 Orbital-Starts ins All realisiert, China hat im gleichen Zeitraum 14 Starts für sich verbuchen können, und wir in Europa haben nicht eine einzige Rakete ins All geschossen. Ich glaube, die Zahlen zeigen deutlich, welchen Aufholbedarf wir hier im Vergleich zu den USA haben. Uns fehlt es nicht an innovativen Ingenieurinnen und Ingenieuren. Wir haben viele Start-ups, Scale-ups, die sich hier auch gerade im Bereich Microlauncher entwickeln wollen. Frage an Sie: Wie schaffen wir es, in Europa eine ähnliche Marktentwicklung wie in den USA hinzubekommen?

1-0118-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Thanks a lot. A very good question. Of course, a little bit different aspects, but I will try to run through all.

Now, on launching. I said we are facing a difficult problem. Our Ariane 6 was delayed and of course that is of that model which is coming from decisions from 2014. It's not reusable and so on, so we have problems. But there are steps which were done both by the Commission and by the European Space Agency, with new tenders like Flight Ticket, like Launcher Challenge, which are really looking into the private sector, asking them to develop some projects on launching, including the so-called cargo launching into space project, which is very similar, at least by what I see from experts – they are saying that this is very similar to what NASA did back in 2006, how they created Elon Musk and SpaceX possibilities, asking private sector also to develop the same cargo launching system.

We are moving. I don't know how quickly we can do it. But also we need to look into so-called micro-launching systems' possibilities, which we can do more easily because that, again, will be very much needed, especially when we are talking about defence of our space installations.

So, now on how to convince factories to produce satellites in a more advanced way. I don't know. We are not CEOs, but at least I see that if we are going now, and I think that contracts will be signed – already they were signed on IRIS², which demands 300 satellites to be produced, and quite soon – maybe that will be some kind of push for the industry to look into the experience of the United States and to take those technologies back into Europe.

1-0119-0000

Borys Budka, *Chair of the ITRE Committee*. – Thank you very much. We have finished the final round. So let me thank all Members for your questions and the Commissioner-designate for your answers.

Before we close this hearing, I'd like to invite Mr Kubilius to make a brief closing statement of no more than five minutes. But it can be less, of course.

1-0120-0000

Andrius Kubilius, *Commissioner-designate*. – Dear colleagues, thanks a lot for your patience. And thanks a lot, really, to everybody. I would really like to thank you for your questions, your words of

support and your words of disagreement. It was a good opportunity to discuss about the most important issue, about our security and our defence.

I hope to continue those discussions later on. Really, I am ready to be as often here in Parliament as time will allow. But we need to remember that without security and defence there will be nothing. No prosperity, no competitiveness, no peace, and no future for us, for our kids and for our grandkids.

And again, I can repeat that history is teaching us, if you want peace, prepare for the war. Despite all the challenges, problems, and sometimes darkness of this period, I continue to be a permanent optimist, maybe less naive than a few years ago, but my optimism is based on the most prudent statement, which I'm quoting quite often of Jean Monnet back in 1957 when he said that 'the European Community will be created during the crisis and what will be created during the crisis, that will be the European Community'.

Now we are living through the first and very deep crisis of geopolitical security on the European continent since the start of the creation of the European Community in 1957. The outcome of the security crisis of today needs to be a European Defence Union, which, in synergy with NATO and each Member State, will be able to deter Putin or any other aggressor.

In order to achieve that, we need to be ambitious, decisive, unorthodox and inventive, and we need not be afraid to take the responsibility to defend Europe into our own hands. In order to do that, we need to be real Europeans and united at a maximum level.

I consider from my experience in the European Parliament that the European Parliament, I would say maybe together with the European Commission, politically are the most European institutions among all other political institutions of the EU.

That is why I promise again to be together with you on this ambitious way to create a real and genuine European Defence Union with strong European defence and space industry, with a lot of innovation and new technologies, with a free Ukraine, and Moldova and Western Balkans also becoming an integral part of such a defence union. This is the only way to real and stable peace on the European continent. Thanks a lot.

1-0121-0000

David McAllister, *Chair of the AFET Committee*. – So, dear colleagues, I'll be brief. Let me first of all thank you for all your good questions. Let me secondly thank Andrius Kubilius for three hours sitting on this hot chair. Let me thank the interpreters who stayed longer than possible.

With regard to the following steps, let me recall that the AFET and ITRE coordinators will meet in camera at 22:30 today to evaluate this hearing. And I think we all understood that some of our German colleagues were slightly distracted and had to leave the meeting early. Thank you, and with this, the meeting is closed.

1-0122-0000

(The hearing closed at 21:52)