QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE

Andrius KUBILIUS

Defence and Space

1. General competence, European commitment and personal independence

What aspects of your personal qualifications and experience are particularly relevant for becoming Commissioner and promoting the European general interest, particularly in the area you would be responsible for? How will you contribute to implementing the political guidelines of the Commission? How will you implement gender mainstreaming and integrate a gender perspective into all policy areas of your portfolio? How will you implement youth mainstreaming?

What guarantees of independence are you able to give Parliament, and how would you make sure that any past, current or future activities you carry out could not cast doubt on the performance of your duties within the Commission?

My life has been dedicated to politics and promoting the common interest for more than the last three decades. I came to politics from the academic field of physics in 1988, with the wave of "Sąjūdis" and a peaceful struggle of the Lithuanian people to regain freedom after the 50 years-long occupation by the Soviet Union. Many of my values are rooted in that time of "Sąjūdis", rebuilding the Lithuanian state and returning to the family of European democracies. Throughout all my work in politics, I have always been a convinced European. Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO is an example of a historic miracle – it helped to consolidate independence and to create possibilities for outstanding economic and social success. Hence, I am convinced of the unprecedented transformative power of the EU and NATO membership, which can be repeated again in other parts of Europe.

Throughout my political career, I have served in different political leadership positions, which allowed me to accumulate a rich array of knowledge, experience and skills. Twice, I have served as a Prime Minister of Lithuania (1999-2000 and 2008-2012). First, at a time when my country was facing a deep economic crisis (due to the Russian economic crisis of 1998), and the second time, during the global financial crisis of 2008-2012. With unpopular but necessary reforms and restructuring, as well as with the effective assistance from the EU, my Governments managed to successfully overcome these crises.

From the very beginning of the Maidan revolution, I have striven to help consolidate international support for Ukraine. In 2022, I initiated the global parliamentary network "United for Ukraine" (U4U), a worldwide supporter for Ukraine's cause. As Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen has noted in her Political Guidelines, "the best investment in European security is investing in the security of Ukraine." On the other hand, the EU also needs to be ready for "the most extreme military contingencies" (as referred to in my Mission Letter). For that, we need a "systemic overhaul of Europe's defence" (Ursula von der Leyen, GLOBSEC, 30.08.24).

Due to Russia's war against Ukraine, we are facing the deepest security crisis on the European continent since World War II. A crisis provides an opportunity. As Jean Monet said back in 1957, Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises. As it is pointed out in the Political Guidelines - we must emerge from the current crisis of security by bringing the European Defence Union to life.

Therefore, my responsibility, in close collaboration with the High Representative/Vice President, and under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, will be to create conditions for the Defence and Space industry to provide enough of the needed resources so that this new era can become a reality. Together with the High Representative/Vice President, we will jointly present a White Paper on the Future of European Defence in the first 100 days of the mandate. This White Paper will frame the new approach

to the EU's role in defence, will identify our investment needs, and the way towards building a true European Defence Union.

In my work, I will do my best to implement gender mainstreaming in defence and space policy. I will do my utmost as a Commissioner, if confirmed, to contribute to the Commission's initiatives on gender equality, most notably to the new Gender Equality Strategy for post-2025.

I will follow the direction on youth of the Political Guidelines in all my activities as Commissioner, including with organisation and my personal participation in the first annual Youth Policy Dialogue on Defence and Space, and making it into an annual endeavour. Young people prioritise peace and international security as key concerns. When shaping policies within my portfolio, I will consider the feedback from young people.

Responsible leadership and high standards of transparency, conduct and ethics of politicians are of utmost importance. I always sought to remain open, my declarations of interests were accessible to the public and the one related to my appointment as a Commissioner shall also be published by the European Parliament.

With regard to independence, transparency, impartiality and availability, I will follow the letter and the spirit of the EU Treaties, will comply without fail with the obligation of professional secrecy as defined in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, will honour the Code of Conduct of Members of the European Commission and will act in the European interest without taking any instructions. I would pledge allegiance to the defence and implementation of EU Treaties and act from a position of neutrality and independence from the interest of individual Member States, including the one that has proposed my nomination. If a situation of potential conflict of interest in the performance of my duties as a Commissioner will arise in the future, I will inform President-elect von der Leyen without delay.

2. Management of the portfolio and cooperation with the European Parliament

Can you commit to duly informing Parliament about your actions and those of your departments? In what respect do you consider yourself accountable to Parliament?

What specific commitments are you prepared to make in terms of your engagement with and presence in Parliament, both in committee and in plenary, transparency, cooperation and effective follow-up to Parliament's positions and requests for legislative initiatives? In relation to planned initiatives or ongoing procedures, are you ready to provide Parliament with timely information and documents on an equal footing with the Council?

As a former and present member of the European Parliament and as a former national Parliamentarian and Prime Minister, I know how important parliamentary oversight and close engagement with the Parliament is and I know what it means to represent the interests of citizens, from remote regions of the European Union and countries located close to areas of conflict.

I will work with the Parliament and relevant committees at all stages of both the policy-making process and the political dialogue, including by appearing in front of the competent parliamentary committees. I will also instruct the senior management of my services to give priority to invitations from the European Parliament in their agenda. Making sure that written questions from Members of the European Parliament are answered swiftly and that European Parliament resolutions are duly and timely followed-up form an integral part of this commitment, as well as my availability for bilateral meetings with the Chairs of these committees and their members. Furthermore, I will instruct my cabinet and services under my responsibility to show openness to discussion with members of the European Parliament, Political Groups and staff and to ensure a regular flow of information at technical level as well. In line with the President-elect's guidelines, I will make myself available to respond to the demands from the European Parliament to debate in plenary in the most appropriate format.

With a view to finding new ways forward and ideas to improve the voice of citizens and civil societies in the European Union, I will ensure an appropriate follow-up on the Conference on the Future of Europe's recommendations. Using my experience in promoting international networking, I will actively seek new forms of networking and collaboration with civil society and independent experts.

I intend to build on the principles reflected in both the Commission President-elect's Political Guidelines and my Mission Letter by deploying my work culture of dialogue with a regular involvement in parliamentary

committees and trilogues. I will fully respect the principle of equal treatment in relations with the European Parliament and the Council in line with the provisions of the 2010 Framework Agreement and of the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

The key legislative proposals that my Mission Letter refers to, in particular the European Defence Industry Programme and the future EU Space Law, will be important initial milestones of my work, with the European Parliament as a co-legislator. In addition, as referred to in my Mission Letter I will give a particular importance to the preparation of an Annual Progress Report on Enforcement and Implementation and contribute to reducing administrative burden and reporting obligations for companies, to be addressed to both the Parliamentary committees and Council formations.

I am fully aware that my portfolio, if I am confirmed as Commissioner, will pertain to sensitive areas, which would require discussion in restrictive format. Sensitivity will not prevent me from finding constructive ways of exchanging with the European Parliament in a spirit of mutual trust.

I fully subscribe to the President-elect's pledge to give the Parliament a stronger role in initiating and shaping legislation and I stand ready, in line with her guidelines, to respond to Parliament´s Article 225 resolutions with legislative proposals in full respect of proportionality, subsidiarity and better law-making principles. To this end, I will organise, where relevant, a structured dialogue with you, to discuss how to take forward any Article 225 resolution falling under my remit that your institution may adopt, and will make sure that the Commission responds to such resolutions in a timely manner.

Questions from the Committee on Foreign Affairs

3. You have been entrusted with a new role of helping to coordinate at European level the building of a true European Defence Union. How do you intend to achieve that ambitious goal during the timeframe of your mandate? How do you envisage the division of tasks and complementarity of roles with the Vice-President/High Representative, given the latter's leading role in CSDP, and with the Executive Vice-President-designate Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy? Without prejudice to the Commission's decision-making processes, what would be your concrete priorities in terms of legislative, budgetary and political initiatives, including joint ones and objectives/goals for the Defence and Space portfolio in the short, medium and long term for the duration of your mandate? What are the main challenges and how would you overcome them on the way of pursuing those priorities and objectives, and how do you intend to finance them?

In a geopolitical context characterised by multiple, complex and evolving threats, we must urgently accelerate progress towards a genuine European Defence Union. This calls for a paradigm change and systematic overhaul of European defence, without prejudice to the unquestioned sovereignty of Member States in the field of defence.

In my view, establishing a European Defence Union means achieving a steady state of EU defence readiness and preparedness at large. The EU and its Member States should be able to protect Europe's citizens, territorial integrity, critical assets and infrastructures, and its core values and democratic processes. A genuine Defence Union will also have to rely on a competitive, innovative and resilient European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). This will require joint, incremental and steady efforts based on a shared understanding of our needs and objectives.

As set out by President von der Leyen in the Political Guidelines for the next Commission, we need to frame a new approach and to identify investment needs to build a true European Defence Union. To this end, and if I am confirmed, I will present together with the Vice President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy a White Paper on the Future of European Defence to help cement a truly European ambition and define commensurate actions.I can anticipate three main axes for discussion. First, a European Defence Union implies a streamlined governance and seamless interconnection between the responsibilities and activities regulated under the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Core defence policy and defence industrial policy must work hand in hand. Second, a European Defence Union must be founded on a common threat analysis and shared threat perception. Third, we must recall the commitment to spend more, better, together and European, make full use of existing instruments and resources and consider giving ourselves the additional resources that we are still lacking to attain our vital objectives.

Against this backdrop, Common Security and Defence Policy aspects are no longer dissociable from the EU defence industrial policy. Those in charge of monitoring the threats and identifying corresponding needs must coordinate more effectively with those in a position to activate our industrial programmes and associated resources.

This is not just a condition for our success. This is the very core of our mission. Similarly, work on the European Defence Union must also benefit the competitiveness and production capacity of the defence industry, as well as the consistency of the internal and external dimension of our security action. This means that the Commissioner for Defence and Space will have to work hand in hand both with the Executive Vice-President-designate for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy and the High Representative/Vice President of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to achieve our common goals.

This collaboration will be also beneficial for fully harnessing the potential of the EU space programmes and initiatives to serve key priorities: security and defence, resilience, economic growth, digital and green transitions. We need a strong and innovative space industry, up to our pressing need for state-of-the-art EU space systems, which is competitive, diversified and able to ensure the Union's non-dependence: to provide new technologies, solutions and industrial processes and to support the evolution of our EU space flagships. I intend to take forward the work on a space data economy Strategy and to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU space industry and foster the growth of innovative start-ups and SMEs.

Seeking for synergies will be naturally at the core of my action, starting with defence and space. Building upon the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence, we should maximise the use of space for defence and protect EU and Member States' space assets. If I am confirmed, I will give priority to the development and deployment of space services in support of defence, including the Galileo Public Regulated Service and IRIS^2 secure connectivity services, as well as an Earth Observation service for governmental and defence users. In order to guarantee the secure and reliable deployment of these programmes, the Union will need autonomous, reliable and cost-efficient capacities to access space. I will aim to ensure that Europe strengthens its sovereignty in accessing and using space by intensifying efforts to secure autonomous access to space and also, through greater diversification and more competition among European launch service providers.

Securing investment in both the defence industry and space sector will be an overarching priority of this mandate, in particular to address the challenges faced by the competitiveness of the EDTIB. A major issue has been chronic underinvestment, as highlighted by the analysis of the Commission and High Representative showing that an additional EUR1.1 trillion would have been allocated to defence if Member States had consistently spent 2% of their GDP on it from 2006 to 2020. The EDTIB's effectiveness is further compromised by market fragmentation, with individual EU countries preferring to support their domestic defence industries, resulting in inefficient, small-scale production across the Union. This fragmentation and under-developed production capacity is evident in the fact that around 75% of EU defence acquisitions were sourced from outside the EU between the onset of Russia's aggression in Ukraine and June 2023. Moreover, the EU's defence spending growth has lagged significantly behind other global powers, increasing by a mere 19.7% from 1999 to 2021, while countries like the US, Russia, and China have seen much more substantial increases in their defence budgets during the same periods.

For both defence and space, we should ensure that we address pressing geopolitical and security challenges. A first avenue is arguably the pooling of resources in flagship European Defence Projects of Common Interest. I am fully aware that identifying key investment priorities will not be an easy task when it comes to enhancing our readiness or reinforcing the European contribution to NATO. In this vein, I see merit in exploring options for monitoring defence investments at EU level and in more structured format, starting with the indicators put forward by the European Defence Industrial Strategy and developed further also by embedding them into EU's governance and national programmes. In the medium term, we will need to incentivise Member States to spend better, together, more and European. As mentioned in the Political Guidelines of the President-elect, the first task is the urgent need to rebuild, replenish and transform the national armed forces – as defined by Member States.

P. The next MFF represents an important opportunity to maximise the impact of Union action for space, leverage the EU budget to deliver on EU priorities and give predictability to private investment and national public investment. To back a strong and innovative space industry, I also intend to draw lessons from CASSINI - the Commission's initiative in support of space entrepreneurship.

As outlined in the guidelines of President von der Leyen for the new Commission, a new European Competitiveness Fund will be established as an investment capacity that will support strategic sectors critical to the EU competitiveness, including space. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy and the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration towards this aim.

We need to have a more ambitious approach to defence funding in the next MFF to support the competitiveness and production capacity of the European defence industry.

If I am confirmed, I will contribute to strengthening the single market by creating a true single market for defence. A key focus will be on standardisation, including the implementation by Member States of NATO military standards, and convergence on certification. This effort will involve promoting the use of agreed both civil and defence standards, such as NATO STANAGs - within EU defence industrial programmes, and supporting swift cross-certification activities to ensure interoperability and reduce barriers to market entry for defence products across the EU. Moreover, beyond the review of the directives on the transfer of defence related products and defence procurement, we need to think in terms of better market access for all companies, more and smoother cross-border cooperation and increased security of supply. In addition, if confirmed, in the first half of 2025 I will work with the other members of the College to put forward an EU Space Law paving the way to a single market for space. This will foster the competitiveness of our space industry, create more business opportunities and simplify the life for our space companies.

I strongly believe that a continuous engagement with key stakeholders, such as the European Parliament, the Council, Member States, industry, research community and the broader public opinion can ensure the necessary buy-in and consensus building in support of an ambitious agenda for European defence industry and space.

4. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has brought full-scale war back to the European continent. As the EU's first Commissioner for Defence and Space with a lead-role in establishing a European Defence Union and a White Paper on the Future of European Defence, what will be your priorities to support Member States in regenerating European defence capabilities in the immediate, medium and long-term to ensure the security of EU citizens? In this respect, can you give some examples of initiatives the Commission could develop that will be coherent with the needs defined by the Vice-President/High Representative and Member States, and in line with the commitments of the Versailles declaration?

I strongly believe we must be able to replenish national defence stocks and equip Member States' armed forces with what is required to be able to face the most extreme military contingencies. This implies investing massively to regenerate our defence capabilities and do it in the most efficient way.

To address these critical needs, there are two distinct challenges across different timeframes. In the short term, we must urgently enhance the EU's readiness for a scenario of possible military aggression. Simultaneously, we must plan for the medium to long term, acknowledging that in the coming decades, the US is likely to diminish its presence in European defence as it pivots to focus on the strategic challenge posed by China. These dual challenges underscore the imperative to rapidly bolster EU's defence autonomy and capabilities, ensuring the Union can effectively safeguard its interests and security in an increasingly complex global landscape.

Furthermore, I believe we need, in the short term, to continue supporting research and development in defence through the European Defence Fund (EDF). We also need to continue implementing our two emergency instruments, the Regulation on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA) and the Regulation on Supporting Ammunition Production (ASAP).

However, to significantly scale up the aggregated demand in the EU and ramp up industrial production of conventional defence equipment, much more needs be done, in the closest possible coordination with Member States, including: (i) fostering appropriate exchange of information between EU Member States, the EU and NATO on the current quantitative status of defence resources and needs, which could eventually result in an EU defence industry output plan to align and optimise the production capabilities of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) with the collective security needs of EU Member States and NATO Allies in a coordinated and efficient manner; (ii) exploring with Member States options for joint stockpiling based on EU military security criteria and monitoring of EU indicators for defence industry capacity building and investments which could be embedded into national programmes; (iii) promoting joint procurement through the upcoming European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) to aggregate demand and lower price levels; .

Therefore, I will engage with the Parliament and the Council towards the swift adoption of EDIP and I hope to count on your vital support to this end.

I furthermore also count on your support when it comes to transforming Military Mobility into a comprehensive military logistics resource, which will require, inter alia, significant investments in military mobility infrastructure, as well as removing of regulatory bottlenecks for this mobility. We must enhance cargo airlift capabilities and increase investment in logistic infrastructure such as ports, airports, railroads, waterways, and roads. On these

aspects of military mobility, if confirmed, I will collaborate closely with the Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism. Additionally, we need to develop the necessary infrastructure, including digitalisation, flow monitoring, and cargo optimisation systems. facilitate rapid troop and equipment movement across borders, significantly reducing deployment times and thereby significantly enhancing our collective defence and operational readiness.

These measures call for strengthening military mobility by removing all barriers..

We need to be able to deliver on new defence capabilities for the armed forces of our Member States. We need to have sufficient means to focus on the biggest common and cross-border threats. This requires European investment in the next multiannual financial framework. But we will also make proposals for urgent defence investment needs.

In addition, we must also explore options, which could involve a combination of EU-level funding, national contributions, and innovative financing solutions to incentivise private sector investment in defence capabilities in certain priority areas, such as European air defence shield, cyber defence, military mobility, or drone technologies.

Our future action in such priority areas will have to be defined jointly by the Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with the full involvement of Member States, who will ultimately decide on which priorities to tackle first. It will be key to ensure a seamless transition towards a robust framework for enhancing European defence capabilities.

5. You have been tasked with presenting (in cooperation with the Vice-President/High Representative) the White Paper on the Future of European Defence already within the first 100 days of your mandate, and through this process, you have been instructed to contribute to a shared vision and ambition across Council, Parliament, the public and other stakeholders and to strengthen the EU-NATO partnership. How will you proactively and effectively engage with the European Parliament from the earliest stages in the processes of elaborating and developing both the White Paper on the Future of European Defence and other initiatives in your area of responsibility all the way to their operationalisation and implementation (including, in the run-up to the next Multiannual Financial Framework)? In relation to this, could you please provide details on how you intend to: maintain regular exchanges of views in Plenary and with relevant committees; ensure 'structured dialogue' and your ad hoc presence at short notice in case of significant events or major developments; ensure that the positions of Parliament are duly taken into account in proposals for legal acts and EU communications and strategies; ensure that Parliament receives relevant information and documents with relevance to your portfolio, including those shared with the Council, and that the relevant committees are immediately and fully informed, in writing and orally; and ensure that pertinent and relevant non-public information is provided to Parliament during in-camera meetings?

The President-elect has tasked me, together with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President designate of the Commission, to work on a White Paper on the Future of European Defence, especially to launch a debate with the public, stakeholders, the European Parliament and the Council in order to build consensus on a new, shared approach to defence in the EU. The White Paper, which is to be delivered in the first 100 days of the Commission's mandate, will be the starting point and will be designed to engage with you at an early stage of the process by setting possible paths and the way ahead.

As recalled by the President-elect, defending Europe requires Member States and EU institutions to work closely together. And defending Europe means protecting European citizens. The EU post-electoral survey shows that EU defence and security was one of the seven priorities which encouraged citizens to vote. Through the input of your institution, European citizens will have a genuine say in defence matters, which are not and should not be the monopoly of Member States and military experts. The White Paper on the Future of European Defence will be the perfect opportunity to engage in a broad public debate on what it takes to achieve defence readiness.

I intend to work hand in hand with the European Parliament, with full respect of the important role of Member States as sovereign decision-makers on defence matters. You will be invited to feed this process by submitting your views on the direction the European defence should take. The European Parliament's annual reports on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and of the Common Security and Defence Policy offer an opportunity to effectively feed the process of preparation of the White Paper.

Should I be confirmed, I will be honoured to present the White Paper in Plenary so that we set together the course of an intensified dialogue at European Parliament committees level on defence matters.

The publication of the White Paper will be only the beginning of a common journey to define our shared vision. You can count on me, if confirmed as Commissioner for Defence and Space, to ensure an effective and even stronger cooperation with the Parliament.

I will also work with you when it comes to the EU-NATO partnership, which I will seek to further develop in close cooperation with the High Representative/Vice President designate and in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU, while respecting the specific character of the security and defence policy of any of the Member States.

I am convinced that the European Union has a unique added value in complementing the efforts of Member States and NATO in the realm of defence. I will build on EU distinctive instruments, namely its budget and regulatory capacity, and also space assets, which can be leveraged to support Member States and NATO in developing critical defence resources. It is all about reinforcement of NATO's key role for collective defence. I trust that we will have ample opportunities to discuss the EU contribution to the overall defence preparedness of the continent and its complementarity with NATO.

In this vein, I would like to pay tribute to the work of the European Parliament's delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. As previous co-President of the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly, I particularly value parliamentary diplomacy and I will be pleased to engage with the delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and with the relevant EP committees.

The key legislative proposals that my Mission Letter refers to, in particular the European Defence Industry Programme and the future EU Space Law, will be important initial milestones of my work, with the European Parliament as a co-legislator. I look forward to engaging with the Parliament on the proposal establishing the European Defence Industry Programme. I will instruct my services to provide technical briefings in support of your upcoming analysis of the text.

As regards the future EU Space Law, the European Parliament has consistently provided support. I have in mind the proposed pilot projects related to safety and sustainability, which are of direct relevance for such legislation. There is a shared view that we need common rules for space operators to smoothly provide services across the Union. The EU Space Law is the most suitable tool to create this single market for the space sector. This approach is supported by Member States, the European Parliament and stakeholders (industry and academia), who have been deeply consulted along the preparatory process. The close interaction that we have with Member States, Parliament and space industry will be instrumental for the success of this initiative.

In addition, if confirmed, I intend to work to reinforce the competitiveness of the space industry and to maximise space data uptake. More needs to be done to remove certain technological barriers across all economic sectors and to defragment the European market. I count on your support.

As regards the preparation of the next MFF, the review of the current programmes is an excellent opportunity to exchange views with the relevant Parliament’s committees on the challenges ahead. I have in mind the recent mid-term review of the EU Space Programme and the upcoming review of the European Defence Fund. The next MFF represents an important opportunity to maximise the impact of Union action, leverage the EU budget to deliver on key urgent EU priorities, give predictability to private and public investment, strengthen the synergies amongst objectives; and simplify the EU financial landscape to reduce the administrative burden. I will cooperate closely with the European Parliament so that it can fully exercise its legislative, scrutiny and agenda-setting roles. I will fully respect the principle of equal treatment in relations with the European Parliament and the Council in line with the provisions of the 2010 Framework Agreement and of the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

I am fully aware that my portfolio would pertain to sensitive areas, which would require discussion in restricted format. Sensitivity would not prevent me from finding constructive ways of exchanging with the European Parliament in a spirit of mutual trust.

Should this prove necessary, I would also stand ready to explore ways of developing appropriate and practical communication channels to share sensitive information with the committees in charge of the policies falling into the portfolio outlined in my Mission Letter.

Questions from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

6. What is your vision for your portfolio over and above your mission letter and what would you like your legacy to be? What legislative proposals and other initiatives will you suggest to the College of Commissioners for adoption in the next five years and in particular in the first 100 days? How will you ensure that these proposals, as well as the implementation of existing legislation, would strengthen European competitiveness? Do you intend to base those legislative proposals on dedicated impact assessments? What are your plans in particular for the single market for defence products and services, the European Defence Fund, the EU Space Law, the Space Data Economy Strategy, as well as the implementation of EDIRPA, ASAP, the European Defence Industrial Strategy and the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence?

It will be an honour and a privilege to serve as the first Commissioner for Defence and Space, if I am confirmed by the European Parliament. I am well aware that this new position is part of the EU response to the war in Ukraine and to the increasing geopolitical tensions. I am encouraged by the fact that the European Union has overcome numerous crises throughout its history and has always evolved to enhance its ability to deal with new challenges. Securing our interests in strategic domains, such as space and defence, is part of this line of thinking. I would ensure that the EU's defence industry and space policy have a lasting impact on the EU economy, security and defence, contributing to the wellbeing of EU citizens.

We need to take EU defence to the next level, progressing towards a genuine European Defence Union through a set of ambitious measures. Member States should start working together as a norm rather than the exception, and investing not only more but also better, namely collaboratively and primarily in the European defence industry. Our defence industry can draw inspiration from the industrial cooperation on European space flagship programmes like Galileo or Copernicus that foster joint developments and provision of services that are beneficial to all the whole Union.

As reflected in the President-elect's Political Guidelines and in my Mission Letter, I see three key axes of work as regards progressing towards a genuine defence union.

First, establishing a true single market for defence, with Member States shifting from their current predominant national approaches to the defence market and industry. A particular emphasis should be put on standardisation, including the implementation by Member States of NATO military standards and convergence on certification. This effort will involve promoting the use of agreed civil and defence standards, such as NATO STANAGs, within EU defence industrial programmes, and supporting swift cross-certification activities to ensure interoperability and reduce barriers to market entry for defence products across the EU.

Second, we need a closer alignment between the identification of the EU's capability needs and the investment in the satisfaction of those needs though the activation of our EU programmes and budget.

Third, the development of flagship European Defence Projects of Common Interest would be critical for the security and defence interests and the technological sovereignty of the Union and would outweigh the financial and industrial capacity of individual Member States. I would intend to work closely with them to help them bring about common projects on air defence, cyber defence, drone and anti-UAV technologies, and other critical priorities. Furthermore, building on the progress made so far, I would continue to prioritise Military Mobility. And I would also encourage cooperation between the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and Ukraine, notably on drones and on innovation, building on the EU Innovation Office recently established in Kyiv.

On our journey towards a European Defence Union, we shall build on the experience from the short-term emergency instruments such as the Regulation on Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) and the Regulation for European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement (EDIRPA).

I would also commit to scale up the efforts of the European Defence Fund to reduce fragmentation of the EU defence capability landscape and enhance the competitiveness of the European defence industry. It will be also crucial to swiftly implement the measures proposed in the European Defence Industrial Strategy and to swiftly adopt and start implementing the European Defence Industry Programme currently under discussion in Council. On the latter, the European Parliament will have a critical role to play in the coming months.

Looking forward, I would give a particular attention to supporting the creation of a European defence single market and incentivising the competitiveness and capacity of the European defence industry.

I believe we also need a change of paradigm for space. My vision will be centred on consolidating the EU's position as a global space leader, while prioritising the space sector's competitiveness, maximising the use of space for security and defence and enhancing the protection of space assets.

The EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence will be the cornerstone of my approach. I will work closely with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President designate of the Commission, the rest of the College and Member States, to ensure its continued implementation.

In the immediate term, I would focus on continuing the development of space services in support of defence. Key initiatives include the Galileo Public Regulated Services and IRIS^2, the EU Secure Connectivity Programme, which will offer secure connectivity services for governmental and defence users by 2030. In the medium term, I would work on the development of new services for governmental purposes in the field of Earth Observation, with both a pilot service and feasibility studies currently underway. In parallel, we would enhance our space situational awareness through the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking Services and develop a pilot mission for in-space operations and services. I would also aim to ensure autonomous, responsive and versatile access to space. In the long term, I will aim to develop autonomous capabilities in the area of in-space operations and services.

If I am confirmed, I would prioritise a strong and innovative space industry as a key pillar for EU's competitiveness and security. I would take forward the work of supporting an EU space industry, in particular in fostering a strategic approach on launch capacity, research and innovation, and supporting innovative start-ups and scale-ups.

As reflected in my Mission Letter, the EU Space Law will be a key element of the EU space policy, as it will create a single market for space, simplify the life of our space companies, and create new business opportunities. I would ensure that standardisation is central to the implementation of the EU Space Law. By establishing a common approach, common norms and relevant coordination mechanisms, we will set the path to a competitive EU space industry. On the process, a thorough Impact Assessment was conducted in early 2024. Its findings were clear: we need common rules for space operators to smoothly provide services across the Union. The EU Space Law is the most suitable tool to create this single market for space, enhance the global competitiveness of the EU space industry and provide a level playing field for all operators. Industry and other key stakeholders have expressed general support for this approach during the consultation process.

I will work on the creation of a European defence single market. The Commission will propose a European competitiveness fund to incentivise the investments into strategic technologies, in such areas as AI, space, clean tech, biotech, as well as projects of common European interest. We will seek to ensure that we use the power of our budget to leverage and de-risk private investment in our common goals, as Europe can use its collective strength to invest together in ambitious common projects.

7. What concrete measures do you envisage to enhance the capability of defence industry to efficiently and competitively produce sufficient quantities of relevant products and services? How do you plan to expand defence industrial capabilities across the EU in order to reduce undue external dependencies in particular for SMEs and small midcaps, without prejudice to the budget allocated to other EU policies? What measures do you envisage to provide better access for European industry to raw materials, key components and reduce restrictions on the use of certain technologies? What are your plans for making European defence-related products and services more attractive to purchase? How do you intend to ensure that EU support for the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDITB) goes in hand with integration of SMEs and midcaps into supply chains and stimulation of genuinely new partnerships between actors from different Member States? More generally, how will you enhance cooperation between Member States and what role do you foresee for the European Defence Agency? What is your vision for the shaping of cross-border cooperation and the potential "specialisation" in the defence industry? What role do you see for digital technologies in European defence? How would you put the EDIP budget and structures to maximum use? What would you consider to be appropriate financial resources for EDIP and related current instruments, and how do you intend to secure them? How will you ensure that EDIP can be of maximum benefit to the EU industry and what are your views on its eligibility criteria? What is your view on the EU's approach to directly fund the Ukrainian defence industry and do you envisage strengthening this approach? How do you envisage the future of EDIP after 2027?

To achieve defence readiness, the Union and its Member States must not only possess but also benefit from the permanent availability of the full spectrum of the capabilities needed to face the most extreme military

contingencies. This implies mastering all critical technologies and enjoying security of supply of any equipment needed without any restrictions on its use.

To attain this objective, I strongly believe that the EU should be able to rely on a Defence Technological and Industrial Base that is competitive at global level but also responsive and resilient to respond in volume and in time to any need expressed by its Member States to deter or withstand any threat. Such an EU Defence and Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB) must also be resilient to any shock for its supply chains to continue to fulfil their role under the most severe constraints.

My first objective would therefore be to take new measures to tap into the full the potential of a single market for defence products. This would allow the EU defence industry to benefit from a bigger market, gaining in efficiency but also improving access to innovation.

Moreover, SMEs' cross-border participation to defence supply chains is a key parameter of achieving a true European Single Market for defence products and services. In this regard, I believe we can build on the successful experience with the European Defence Fund, with 1/3 of its beneficiaries being SMEs. Similarly, other instruments are meant to facilitate SMEs' access to finance, e.g. Defence Equity facility, already in place, and the Fund to Accelerate Supply Chain Transformation, proposed under the EDIP regulation proposal. If I am confirmed Commission for Defence and Space, SMEs will remain a key point of attention across all our EU defence industrial programmes supporting the EDTIB and that we will continue to explore new ways and means to support them, particularly focusing on simplification.

I would stand ready to work intensively with co-legislators to ensure that they swiftly adopt our latest regulation proposal to establish the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP). The programme entails several measures aimed at translating into effect the ambitious goals set out in European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) and provides financial support to enhance the competitiveness of the EDTIB, with a proposed budget of EUR 1.5 billion.

EDIP will provide new incentives and frameworks to encourage and facilitate the aggregation of demand for products from the EDTIB and further investment in the ramping up of our defence industry. More specifically, on the support to the EDTIB's competitiveness, EDIP will financially support the expansion of European production capacities for relevant defence products, ensuring they are available in time and scale for Member States, by expanding the intervention logic tested under of the Regulation on Supporting Ammunition Production (ASAP). In addition, EDIP will also introduce measures to make the European defence products more attractive to purchase. The Commission has proposed the creation of the European Military Sales Mechanism aimed at encouraging the availability and facilitating the acquisition of EU equipment. This Mechanism entails the development of a catalogue of equipment produced by the EDTIB and the setting up of European Defence Readiness Pools to increase the products' availability and speed up the delivery time.

The competitiveness and attractiveness of the EDTIB relies also on its innovation potential, which needs to be nurtured through adequate investments. In this regard, digital technologies have the potential to enhance European defence across a range of areas, from cyber security to advanced military operations. Key applications of digital technologies are already addressed within the European Defence Fund. However, more needs to be done to ensure the EDTIB will provide our armed forces with state-of-the-art solutions, which is why I would intend to foster EU investments in defence innovation.

However, there can be no defence readiness and no thriving single market and EDTIB without sufficient investment. My second objective would therefore be to support by all possible ways and means a considerable increase in the level of investment in the European defence industry. We need more investment by the Member States to catch up as a matter of urgency on the current defence investment gap of over EUR 400 billion for the next decade. We do not only need more investment, but also better investment, done collaboratively and benefiting the EDTIB to create the required scale effect.

Therefore, we should spend more, spend better, spend together. Given the security challenges faced by Europe, I am confident that Member States and the European Parliament will be supportive of this approach.

EU support should work on the EDIP blueprint and encompass all our intervention logics in support of the EDTIB's competitiveness, i.e. support to collaborative research and development, productive investment and common procurement.

We need more collaborative and consistent spending. In this regard, I would always be committed to encourage Member States to make full use of existing initiatives and frameworks at EU level, including those developed and managed within the European Defence Agency (EDA). For instance, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as well as the Capability Development Plan (CDP) are meant to guide and facilitate Member States' cooperation in Defence. I am convinced that a close interaction between the Commission services, the EDA, and the European External Action Service will be key, to keep ensuring consistent approach between all EU defence initiatives.

A more thriving EDTIB can however meaningfully contribute to defence readiness only if it is resilient to the most extreme contingencies. A defence industry can serve no purpose if it ceases to supply Member States when they most need it. My third objective would therefore be to considerably reinforce the overall resilience of the EDTIB. This implies improving the lasting access of European defence companies to critical raw materials, components and technologies; establishing a robust governance of the single market; and preventing any restrictions on the use of defence products. In relation to the latter, it is important to underline that EDIP is designed to support long-term, structuring projects beyond the emergency actions. Thereby, I believe that the set of eligibility conditions, built on the European Defence Fund blueprint, is the right one to enhance our defence readiness and its effectiveness.

As Commissioner for Defence and Space, I would work with co-legislators to implement EDIP measures, including the Security of Supply (SoS) regime. This regime will protect Member States and help industry access the necessary resources for defence production. The support of the European Parliament will be key to implement this system, which will help manage supply chain disruptions through a flexible crisis management framework.

But none of the above objectives can be attained without what I would make my fourth, permanent and cross-cutting objective: instil a genuine spirit of solidarity and European cooperation in anything that we do in relation to defence at EU level. This must translate not only in cooperation becoming the norm among Member States with respect to defence investment, but also in a genuine objective of inclusiveness through the Europeanisation of supply chains whenever possible.

Finally, such a solidarity principle must find its most obvious and rock-solid illustration in the unwavering support we owe and must continue to offer to Ukraine. And this would form my fifth and may be most compelling objective: mobilise all our efforts and energy to help Ukraine win the war. A short-term priority in this regard is to speed up the assistance for ramping up Ukraine's defence industry capabilities. This will be achieved through the integration of Ukraine and EU defence and space industries and by providing Ukraine with access to other EU support instruments thanks to EDIP, and by fostering industrial collaboration on space matters. EDIP also aims to support reconstruction, recovery and modernisation of the Ukrainian defence industry, although without a budget allocation for the time being.

I therefore would work together with the Parliament and the Member States to ensure that we find a credible solution to adequately fund the Ukraine Support Instrument proposed under EDIP. Given previous positions taken by your institution, I understand that you would look positively to this goal if and when agreed by the Council.

This comprehensive approach will not only bolster Ukraine's immediate defence capabilities but also lay the groundwork for long-term integration and modernisation of its defence and space industry within the European framework.

8. How do you concretely plan to ensure EU's strategic autonomy in the space sector and promote EU's role as a global player? What measures will you take for the further development of a competitive European space industry? How will you ensure that EU domestic demand for space technologies is addressed by the EU space sector? How will you ensure the integration of SMEs and small midcaps into supply chains? How would you explain the divergent industrial developments between the EU, the US and other countries in the sector? What is your vision for the future EU Space Law? What measures should include and when will it be presented? How will you address the ongoing issue of access to space and what will be the content of the EU space launcher policy, including alternative launch capabilities? How will you address the challenges related to sustainable use of space?

The EU is a global space power, and a world leader in Earth Observation thanks to our flagship programme Copernicus, as well as in satellite navigation through Galileo. We are committed to remaining a strong global space player.

At the same time, over the last years, the EU lost its leading market position, increased its dependencies in several space domains, and the EU space industry struggles to remain competitive. The US is the dominant global space player, benefiting from a highly integrated national strategy and a robust investment ecosystem. In numbers, the US invests five times more than the EU, and China's investment will soon be double that of the EU's space budget. This leads to a substantial investment gap for the EU.

Against this backdrop, I believe that, to foster a strong and innovative EU space industry, we need three main elements. First, the EU should harness the European institutional demand to stimulate the growth of the sector and allow industries and SMEs to scale up and foster trusted and resilient EU supply chains. Second, the EU needs to align EU investments in space research and development with the required level of ambition and increase the efficiency of these investments. Third, the EU should exploit synergies between space and defence by fostering compatible civil and defence space programmes.

The EU needs to reinforce its autonomous access to space through diversification of launch service solutions, increased competition, and development of a strong launch service offer, including for defence needs.

First, we need to aggregate European institutional launcher demand by the EU, the European Space Agency and Member States. We need to create a bigger domestic demand in support of EU launch service solutions, starting with a digital platform to share information, to support aggregation of demand and joint procurements. Second, we need to support the development of new launch solutions through new procurement schemes and foster game-changing innovation. Third, we need to support EU critical infrastructure, in particular test and launch facilities.

Alongside large corporates, small and medium-sized enterprises have an important role to play in the space economy. Today, about 400-500 SMEs contribute to the European space supply chain. We also see more and more New Space start-ups develop breakthrough technologies, new business models and more cost-efficient solutions. I strongly believe we need to fully leverage the innovative potential of these startups and SMEs. They need to be able to scale-up, grow and establish themselves as credible suppliers. We should further adjust our procurement rules and processes to make them faster, more agile, and more friendly for innovative start-ups and SMEs. Key is also a greater risk-appetite.

If confirmed as Commissioner, I intend to build on the CASSINI initiative that supports innovative potential of European New Space companies. We need to improve access to procurement for start-ups and SMEs across the EU Space Programme, take measures to have a more agile procurement facility, and improve access to growth capital that supports innovative start-ups and scale-ups in the EU.

The future EU Space Law will be of key importance to consolidate this approach, by creating the single market for space and fostering the competitiveness of the EU space industry. It should entail binding requirements on safety, resilience, and sustainability for space operations, covering both satellites and launchers, as well as introduce meaningful measures to foster the development of new markets, for example for in-space operations and services or cyber-security for space.

These efforts should be reinforced by active EU outreach, be it bilaterally with strategic partners, or in multilateral contexts, including the United Nations, with the objective of promoting EU standards, values and priorities globally.

To sum up, it is my view that, in order to consolidate our position as a global space power, preserve our freedom of action in space, and ensure our strategic autonomy, the EU needs the following strategic capacities: (1) use of space on Earth - which we master with our space flagships Galileo, Copernicus and, in the near future, IRIS²; (2) access to space - which we will strengthen; (3) monitor space - which we will extend; and (4) act in space - which we will accelerate.

Question from the Committee on Transport and Tourism

9. According to the corresponding mission letter, President von der Leyen tasked the future Transport Commissioner to further strengthen the dual-use transport infrastructure corridors across the Trans-European Network, as well as to work with Member States on strengthening military mobility. These priorities are also mentioned in the mission letter for the future Commissioner for Defence and Space. What actions do you intend to take, working in cooperation with the future Transport Commissioner, to meet these objectives, given the current geopolitical challenges that the EU faces? How would you support the dual use of transport infrastructure through research and development, including via joint undertakings and public-private partnerships?

Let me begin by underlining the importance of Military Mobility in the current geopolitical context with the war on our borders. Your institution, which proposed that Member States consider military mobility needs when constructing or upgrading infrastructure on the Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) network, concurs with this view.

To be able to respond to crisis and contribute to the Union preparedness, including to support Ukraine with military aid but also to maintain a deterrence posture, Member States must be able to move their armed forces and equipment with speed and at scale. In my view, we need to focus on three main elements: dual use infrastructure, regulatory aspects and resilience.

While substantial progress has already been made within the EU, I believe we need to speed up our actions. The EU has already invested EUR 1.79 billion in transport dual use infrastructure. These projects bring us closer to develop military mobility corridors along the TEN-T network in Europe. If confirmed as Commissioner for Defence and Space, I would therefore work together with the Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism to ensure that efforts to mobilise a sufficient budget for defence-related investments in the next MFF also benefit military mobility infrastructure.

We should draw lessons from Ukraine and extend military mobility infrastructure to cover all logistical aspects, including logistics hubs, fuel, spare parts, repair capacity, and ammunition. The EU defence readiness depends on the availability of these resources along corridors, enabling swift and effective operations. The recent update to include fuel infrastructure is a positive step in this direction.

EU-funded research and development already supports the development of military mobility infrastructure. The European Defence Fund currently has three projects underway, including for the development of a digital system for secure military mobility information exchange (EUR 9 million) and studies on a robust aircraft platform and future European strategic airlift capability (EUR 20 million).

Research and development may also play a major role in ensuring resilience and security of military infrastructure. I also see the potential for the European Defence Fund to play a stronger role in developing solutions in the development and protection of military mobility infrastructure.

However, infrastructure alone will not ensure swift and unimpeded movement of military forces across and beyond Europe. Regulatory, legal, security and political considerations and sensitivities are slowing down the speed at which Europe develops its military mobility.

A sustained investment in multimodal, cross-border dual-use infrastructure and logistics is crucial. I consider changing gear on removing barriers, to take military mobility to the next level – it is time for bold solutions as threats on our borders increase. A critical short- and medium-term action should be the transformation of Military Mobility into a comprehensive military logistics resource. Should I be confirmed by the European Parliament, I will take work towards these goals, in particular in developing the mobility corridors and removing of the regulatory bottlenecks in this area.

Finally, I would also support the Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism in delivering on the Military Mobility Action Plan, reinforcing support for military mobility projects and possible future priority military mobility corridors.

Question from the Subcommittee on Security and Defence

10. The Draghi Report, amongst others, has underlined the need for investment in European defence. As the first Commissioner for Defence and Space, you will have the task of ensuring that defence is reflected in the priorities of the current annual budgets and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) that will be negotiated and adopted during the current legislature. How will you ensure that defence becomes a real priority in this process and in particular ensure that EDF, EDIP, and all successor proposals in EDIS, will be sufficiently funded in the short and long-term including what are your views on exploring other avenues for financing defence such as own resources, proposals dedicated to support leverage of private investments, for example reform of the statutes of the European Investment Bank, use of frozen Russian assets and Eurobonds?

The Draghi report highlights a combination of structural weaknesses affecting the competitiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). Among other challenges, the report identifies insufficient public defence spending (i.e. the combined defence expenditure of the EU 27 Member States is currently approximately one-third of that of the US, with spending rapidly increasing in China), and limited access to financing. On the latter, while the European Investment Bank (EIB) has recently stepped up significantly its support for dual-use technologies and SMEs in the security and defence industry, its lending policy still excludes financing ammunition and weapons, as well as equipment or infrastructure exclusively dedicated to military/police use.

When it comes to public financing and investment, if confirmed as Commissioner for Defence and Space, I would work to ensure the most efficient use of the resources available in the EU budget. This implies to – first – decide on the priority areas for defence spending and – second – discuss which of these priorities need common funding at EU level to be achieved in a shorter framework and a lower overall cost.

The White Paper on the Future of European Defence, which I am tasked to present together with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in the first 100 days of the mandate, will identify investment needs, readying the EU and Member States for the most extreme military contingencies.

On the question on how to finance these needs under the current EU budget, it is important to recall that the swift adoption of the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) would unlock EUR 1.5 billion, notably to contribute to the EU defence industrial readiness. A solution still needs to be found for adequate funding of the Ukraine Support Instrument within EDIP.

Moreover, as Commissioner for Defence and Space, I would also ensure a rapid implementation of the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) and of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP).

Furthermore, to strengthen our defence readiness, we must mainstream this culture across EU policies and address the issue of access to finance. Financing options are challenging: they require either additional national contributions to the EU budget, or agreement on new EU own resources. A new dedicated borrowing programme for defence investments would also mean additional national contributions or new own resources to cover the repayment costs in the future.

Given these constraints, incentivising private investments in defence becomes crucial to financing and de-risking common defence projects and defence innovation. As outlined in my mission letter, intense, work with the EIB, other financial institutions and private banks will be instrumental in achieving this goal.

A change in the EIB's lending policy, as well as a greater risk-taking approach in support of deep tech such as space, would significantly benefit the European defence industry. It would unleash funds and send a much-needed signal to the rest of the market.

The European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) proposes concrete actions to overcome existing barriers, including providing guidance on applying the EU sustainable finance framework to defence and establishing a high-level dialogue with the financial sector. I intend to work towards better recognition of the EU's sovereignty, resilience, and security within the sustainable finance framework.

The proposed EDIP includes a Fund to Accelerate Defence Supply Chain Transformation (FAST), aimed at facilitating access to financing for SMEs and small midcaps in the defence sector. These efforts, combined with continued advocacy for the EIB to further limit or remove defence-related exclusions from their lending policies, will create a more supportive environment for defence investments and innovation across the EU.

Looking towards the longer-term perspective, we must significantly boost both public and private investment in defence R&D. The US Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) provides an inspiring model for the EU to consider. We could explore establishing a similar approach at the EU level, focusing on high-risk, high-reward research projects with the potential to revolutionise defence capabilities. Such an initiative would drive cutting-edge research in critical areas, foster breakthrough innovations, and ensure Europe's technological sovereignty in the defence sector. By adopting this approach, the EU could accelerate the development of disruptive technologies, bridge the gap between basic research and military applications, and maintain a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving global security landscape. This effort would complement our existing initiatives and further strengthen the EDTIB.

Furthermore, the EU defence industry should draw lessons from the achievements of the EU space industry, particularly in areas such as joint development, leading technologies, innovation and the provision of services for the entire EU and beyond. By leveraging these experiences, we can foster similar successes in our defence sector, promoting innovation, collaboration, and strategic autonomy.

Finally, the design of the next MFF and its instruments is ahead of us, and defence will be a key priority.

Our reflection needs to start with "what we want to finance" to then see "how" best we can deliver on our objectives and maximise results on the ground. This will allow to make our funding more impactful.

If confirmed Commissioner for Defence and Space, I will be working closely with the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration to make sure these elements are considered in the preparation of the next MFF proposal, which is due next year.

A strong EDTIB is the cornerstone of a European Defence Union. We need to work together to strengthen the Union's industrial policy, boost the support for the defence sector by putting emphasis on more, better and joint investments.