

# European Defence Union for strength, peace and freedom: A Call for a Stronger, Autonomous and Competitive Europe

Friday 14 February, 2025

Munich Declaration 2025

Munich, 14 February 2025

On the occasion of the 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC), leading European policymakers, business leaders and security experts have presented the Munich Declaration 2025 — a bold vision for strengthening Europe's defence and economic competitiveness.

The declaration is issued by the Europe Panel and its committee. It was initiated by

- **José Manuel Durão Barroso** (Former President of the European Commission),
- **Klaus Regling** (Former Managing Director of the ESM),
- **André Loeseckrug-Pietri** (Chairman and Scientific Director of JEDI),
- **Othmar Karas** (President European Forum Alpbach),
- **Antonella Mei-Pochtler** (Vice President European Forum Alpbach),
- **Andreas Treichl** (Chairman Erste Foundation Austria) and
- **Martin Schoeller** (Entrepreneur).

The declaration outlines concrete steps to **enhance Europe's security architecture**, technological leadership, and strategic autonomy in an increasingly volatile and protectionist global environment.

Key Commitments of the Munich Declaration 2025:

- **European Defence Union** – A call for stronger coordination of military forces, fast, agile and when appropriate centralized procurement, and an increase in defense spending to **3-4% of GDP is necessary and affordable**. The declaration also advocates **scaling a European DARPA-like agency to lead in AI, cyber, space, drones** and defense technologies, ensuring Europe remains at the forefront of innovation.
- **Competitiveness & Growth** – Recognizing that economic power is the foundation of sovereignty, the declaration emphasizes the urgent need for completing the EU Single Market, fostering by dual use technology such as AI-driven productivity, and enabling strategic investments in manufacturing, energy, and cloud infrastructure. Regulatory adjustments, more trade agreements and a capital markets union are crucial for stronger growth and Europe's global competitiveness and more public procurement and military readiness.
- **Sustainable Financing** – for increased private and public investment in defense, technology and infrastructure are available. The declaration calls for using existing European financing instruments, such as a European infrastructure bond market, or the ESM which currently has 400 bn undrawn lines. A temporary increase in fiscal deficits and debt, compatible with European and national fiscal rules, will be necessary to strengthen defence capabilities, innovation and growth immediately. European infrastructure investment spending will through dual use technology be covered by value, growth and tax income enhancing European public and private assets overtime

The Munich Declaration 2025 proposes decisive steps toward a more resilient Europe, ensuring security, prosperity, and strategic independence. The signatories urge European governments, European institutions, and industry to act swiftly to implement the outlined measures.

The European Forum Alpbach will support this initiative by providing a platform for security policy dialogue at the EFA25, with the European Defence Union as a key track topic in the "Security" track.

The Europe Panel is hosted by the European Forum Alpbach (President: Othmar Karas; Vice-President: Antonella Mei-Pochtler), The Bavarian Family Entrepreneur Association, The Joint European Disruptive Initiative (JEDI) acting as an advanced research projects agency (ARPA) for Europe (Chairman: André Loeseckrug-Pietri), and is an official side event at the premises (Hotel Bayerischer Hof) of the Munich Security Conference 2025.

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