



Brussels, 20.10.2017

C(2017) 6927 final

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Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its Opinion on the Communication 'European Defence Action Plan' {COM(2016) 950 final}.

The Commission is pleased that the Camera dei Deputati shares its views about the paramount importance of strengthening the European defence capacity in the context of emerging challenges, as well as about the existing shortcomings in the structure and operation of the European defence sector which lead to inefficiencies, fragmentation and lack of interoperability.

As correctly pointed out by the Camera dei Deputati, without long-term perspective in the investments in the defence technologies, Europe will not be able to maintain its technological prowess. As a consequence it might affect Union's ability to ensure required level of protection.

Against this backdrop, actions proposed by the Commission in the 'European Defence Action Plan' aim at leveraging the competitiveness of the sector by facilitating collaboration between enterprises and Member States, using financing from the newly established European Defence Fund. It should mitigate the existing inefficiency resulting from a significant fragmentation of the market, which, together with falling spending on defence hamper the competitiveness of the European defence industry as well as render the Union more vulnerable to both internal and external threats.

The Commission believes that the initiatives outlined in the Communication at the European Union level will contribute to addressing most palpable obstacles preventing the European defence industry from being more competitive and enabling the European Union to face in a more efficient manner emerging challenges and threats.

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The Commission would like to draw the Camera dei Deputati's attention to the fact that, following the publication of the Action Plan, on 7 June 2017 the Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Industry Development Fund. In addition, on 7 July 2017, a call for proposal under the Preparatory Action for Defence Research Programme was published. Those two initiatives show the Commission's determination to provide its strong support for strengthening the European Union defence industrial base and the improving competitiveness of the sector.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue on the defence related activities which will contribute to meeting the priorities of the European Union's Global Strategy.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Member of the Commission*