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Carmelo Abela participates in High Level Interparliamentary Meeting on the Future of European Defence in Brussels

Carmelo Abela represented the Parliament of Malta at the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the ‘Future of European Defence’, held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 3 and 4 December 2025. The event was organised by the European Parliament’s Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE), in cooperation with the Legislative Dialogue Unit of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, and brought together Members of the European Parliament, national parliamentarians and senior officials for a structured exchange on Europe’s evolving security and defence landscape.

The meeting opened with remarks by the President of the European Parliament, Ms Roberta Metsola, followed by introductory comments from Ms Marie Agnes Strack Zimmermann, Chair of the SEDE Committee. These interventions set the tone for two days of high-level discussion on the challenges and strategic direction of European defence at a pivotal moment for the EU. The first panel, entitled Preserving Peace through Strength: The Roadmap to Readiness 2030 and the Future of Europe’s Defence Industry, featured a presentation by European Commissioner for Defence and Space Andrius Kubilius, with Members engaging in an exchange of views on strengthening Europe’s defence industrial base and accelerating readiness. This was followed by a second panel on Preparing for the New Era of Warfare, with Admiral Pierre Vandier, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, outlining the evolving nature of modern conflict and the technological and operational transformations required to respond to it.

Abela addressed the conference by reminding the Constitutional realities of Malta, where active neutrality remains central. On a broader perspective, he said that Europe needs to not only invest more in its security and defence, but to invest better. He noted that the challenge ahead is not solely the scale of investment but the strategic choices on where that investment should be directed, particularly in relation to the industrial capabilities Europe must strengthen. He highlighted the need to ensure a balanced alignment between demand and supply within the defence sector, underlining the central role of industry in achieving the required level of readiness. Abela also observed that defence is only one of the major priorities facing the European Union and that it remains essential to maintain public support for increased investment in this area, which continues to be a significant challenge for policymakers, given that other needs such as tackling poverty and social exclusion require attention. He concluded by stressing the enduring importance of diplomacy as a key instrument alongside defence in safeguarding peace and stability.

The second day opened with a panel on the EU’s role in NATO, addressed by Mr Boris Ruge, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy. The discussion examined Europe’s responsibilities



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within the Alliance and the need for enhanced burden sharing and interoperability. The final panel, Europe's Defence at a Turning Point, included an intervention by Ms Brigitte Nygaard Markussen, Managing Director of the European External Action Service, who reflected on the current geopolitical context and the strategic choices confronting the European Union.

Carmelo Abela reminded the meeting that not all EU members are NATO members. However, Malta supports a stronger EU Defence that complements and collaborates with NATO and contributes to global security, while taking into account constitutional realities and that commitments undertaken by Allies within NATO cannot be imposed on EU Member States which are not part of the Alliance. He also stated that while at the moment the attention is to the East following the Russian invasion, the Mediterranean offers challenges that need attention as well.

The conference concluded on Thursday afternoon following a series of debates that contributed to a deeper parliamentary understanding of the strategic transformation required to strengthen Europe's security and defence posture.