



RIIGIKANTSELEI

Estonia's European Union policy priorities 2025–2027



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Security and defence, foreign policy, and commerce

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Strengthening of European defence capabilities

1. EU defence initiatives must **support NATO's capability targets**, alongside a clear timeline of 2030 at the latest. The focus must be on eliminating critical gaps, including those in **air defence, ammunition, and long-range fire and naval capabilities**.
2. The ability of the **European defence industry to efficiently mass-produce goods required for critical capabilities must increase** already in the next few years. This will require an increase in both EU funding and Member States' defence spending. We support agreeing production targets at the EU level to achieve critical capabilities, as well as the pre-stocking of spare parts for crisis resilience.
3. The European Union's defence initiatives must be **as open as possible to the participation of Ukraine, non-EU NATO allies, and other like-minded third countries**.
4. To boost the EU's defence capabilities faster, we are prepared for a **joint loan backed by the EU budget**, which would provide Member States not only with loans but also grants before the next EU long-term budget period (MFF 2028+). Given that EU defence capabilities are a European public good, Estonia's aim is to find an EU-wide solution that brings as much as solidarity as possible, alongside increases in national defence spending.
5. **Defence projects of common interest** must be achieved with the support of the EU budget. Estonia's priorities are to increase ammunition production and create ammunition depots; create a comprehensive European air and missile defence shield fully integrated with NATO; create an eastern border defence line (the Baltic Defence Line and Eastern Shield initiatives); ensure drone surveillance and counter-drone capabilities; further develop military mobility (with a focus on financing dual-use infrastructure projects); and create a capability for the protection of underwater infrastructure.
6. **Access to private capital** for European defence companies must be improved, including to support the growth phase of companies. To this end, **European Investment Bank restrictions should also be lifted** on purely defence-related products (arms and ammunition). Issues related to treating defence as a sustainable investment must also be resolved.
7. There is an urgent need to create a **single market for European defence**. The EU single market must apply NATO standards, harmonise and simplify the certification and export procedures (licences,

permits, certificates) for defence-related products.

8. Requirements for participating in defence and security **procurement** procedures must ensure a level playing field for small and medium-sized enterprises. **Joint procurement** of defence products should be encouraged, and its coordination improved. Member States must retain the competence to decide from whom to procure defence products and equipment, depending on the security situation, to ensure the timely availability of equipment.

9. Participation of SMEs in **EU defence development programmes** (such as the European Defence Fund and the European Defence Investment Programme) must be made more attainable. Programmes ought to support the development of innovative solutions for which both demand and a market are guaranteed. The innovation cycle of solutions needs to be made much shorter (from idea to marketable product or service in 0.5–1.5 years).

10. **In the areas of space, communications, and cyber-defence**, the availability of remote sensing data needs to be increased, and corresponding dual-use services (such as remote sensing applications, secure communications solutions, precise positioning, and autonomous and cyber-resilient systems) need to be developed with EU support.

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The common foreign and security policy of the European Union, enlargement

11. The European Union's foreign and security policy must focus on **working towards Ukraine's victory, supporting Ukraine in every possible way, and securing its position of strength. Holding Russia accountable and giving Ukraine security guarantees to prevent future aggression form an integral part of a just and lasting peace.** Decisions regarding Ukraine and European security cannot be made without Ukraine and Europe. Estonia will never recognise changing borders by force and insists that countries retain the right to choose their own security arrangements and alliances.

12. Ukraine's **defence capability** must be supported for the long haul and to the greatest possible extent, even once the active phase of the war is over. There is a need to ensure long-term sustainable **macro-financial assistance** to Ukraine and to ensure coordinated support from the European Union and partners for Ukraine's **reconstruction**.

13. The European Union's long-term **containment policy of Russia** must ensure that Russia is unable to continue its aggression and is held accountable. This must be based on a **shared threat** assessment in the EU, according to which Russia is a long-term strategic threat to the European Union.

14. The European Union must support the establishment of a **special tribunal for crimes of aggression** against Ukraine within the framework of the Council of Europe and become its member.
15. Russia should be subject to **additional sanctions with the maximum possible impact**, as long as Russia continues its war of aggression against Ukraine. The sanctions must remain in place until Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are restored within its internationally recognised borders and until Russia compensates for the war damages caused. Special focus is on energy carriers, the shadow fleet, and the technology enabling Russia's military recovery. We support the highest possible EU **tariffs** for goods from Russia and Belarus.
16. The principal of Russia's **frozen assets must be taken into use** for Ukraine's benefit. The frozen assets must remain frozen until Russia compensates Ukraine for damages or until the principal of the assets is taken into use.
17. **Any potential steps by the European Union that could be interpreted as a normalisation of relations with Russia must depend on Russia's prior steps to compensate for the material and moral damage caused.** The EU must avoid any economic dependence on Russia.
18. The European Union must develop and implement a **comprehensive strategy to prevent and counter Russian sabotage and hostile influence activity** both within the European Union and in its neighbourhood, especially in EU candidate countries. In this context, Estonia considers it important to implement a uniformly strict visa and residence permit policy for Russian citizens in the EU.
19. **Since the strength and credibility of the European Union's foreign policy lies in unity, its persistent malicious violation and undermining must not become tolerated.** Estonia always strongly prefers EU-wide solutions. However, on certain issues that require urgent action, it may be necessary to move forward first with a 'coalition of the willing' if one or more member states block progress in principle. If a Member State consistently and persistently threatens the values of the European Union, the EU should act and **consider withdrawing its right to vote** according to the Treaties.
20. Maintaining as **stable and functional a transatlantic relationship** as possible is crucial for the EU. It is important that the EU and the US are partners who work together towards common goals and recognise each other's strategic interests. This requires regular communication and an action plan for economic and political cooperation. An effort must be made to remove trade barriers. If necessary, the EU must stand united for its interests.
21. China supports Russia's war of aggression and is behaving increasingly forcefully and systematically on the global stage. Therefore, the EU's policy towards China **needs to be brought up to date and strengthened**, building on the EU's current three-dimensional approach to China (partner, competitor, rival), while doing more to identify and factor in the challenges China poses.
22. The European Union must take an **active and leading role in international organisations**, in cooperation with like-minded countries, to resist attempts to replace the international rules-based world order with a multi-polar order that relies on force and spheres of influence.

23. Continued efforts are required to involve **global partners**. The EU's relations and agenda for engaging global partners must centre around action against Russian aggression and support for Ukraine. The partners' action on these issues will have an impact on potential cooperation projects with the EU.

24. Estonia wants to speed up the conclusion of **new EU free trade agreements and partnerships** with countries and regions (including Mercosur, Mexico, and India) to open up new markets and investment opportunities for EU citizens and businesses; to increase the EU's economic security; and to reduce critical dependencies. To integrate Ukraine into the EU single market, it is necessary to fully implement the free trade area and replace temporary solutions with permanent ones.

25. **European Union development cooperation** must be better coordinated and promote the EU's interests. This involves using the **Global Gateway Strategy** to help global partners develop key projects through cooperation on digital, cyber, climate, infrastructure, energy, and other areas.

26. **EU enlargement** is of strategic importance. Enlargement is the EU's strongest lever to boost shared values, security, and prosperity in Europe. **We support the integration of Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans into the EU**, taking into account the measurable advances of the candidate countries. Full alignment with the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, including sanctions, is more important than ever in the new geopolitical context. Ukraine's integration with the EU needs to be accelerated in light of Ukraine's progress in the accession process and to ensure its security and economic and political stability.

27. The EU needs to **prepare and ensure its capacity to include new Member States**. The EU's preparations for the inclusion of new Member States must run in parallel with the enlargement process.

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Crisis preparedness and civil protection

28. The European Union needs to develop common **readiness to respond to different crises and threat scenarios with severe consequences, including a military threat scenario or a large-scale hybrid attack**. **Joint response capabilities** (such as the EU Civil Protection Mechanism's rescEU capacities) must continue to be developed, **and crisis stockpiles should be pre-positioned** based on risk assessments that take regional specificities into account.

29. Joint efforts are needed to improve **preparedness for organising the evacuation of the population**, as well as for monitoring and responding to **chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats**.

30. **To ensure the continuity of food supplies and supply chains** during crises, a coherent EU crisis plan needs to be developed. This plan should include crisis protocols for stockpile management, logistics, supply chain priorities, and cooperation between Member States, including the need to actively support front-line states in the event of a military crisis.

31. Based on threat assessments, **stockpiles of pre-positioned medicines, medical equipment, and blood products** must be ensured in Estonia or nearby countries.

32. Joint emergency plans must be developed, and cross-border data exchange and cooperation improved in order to manage **pollution incidents in marine and transboundary water bodies** in a coordinated manner.

33. In the EU, **the resilience of water services to environmental, economic, and geopolitical threats needs to be strengthened** by implementing early warning systems, crisis management mechanisms, circular economy principles, and strategic measures to protect water resources. A standard for the quality, continuity, and sustainability of water services must be developed to **ensure clean and affordable water**.

34. **Strengthening cooperation between military and civilian cyber communities** is essential to more effectively protect critical infrastructure, prevent and counter cyberattacks, and manage crises in a coordinated manner. Particularly important are cooperation and joint exercises between the European Union and NATO, through which approaches should be harmonised, real-time information sharing improved, and resilience to hybrid and cyber threats enhanced.

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A secure area without internal borders

35. A **strong and well-protected external border** is vital for Estonia to ensure free movement as a fundamental EU freedom and the functioning of the free movement area. **Development of external border infrastructure, as well as surveillance and information systems, must be jointly financed to a greater extent**, since a strong external border is a common interest of the European Union. This must include the joint development and funding of drone surveillance and counter-drone systems.

36. We are ready to organise **training in Estonia** on a larger scale **for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency's (Frontex) standing corps** with the support of EU funding. We are seeking greater participation of Frontex officers in guarding our eastern border.

37. Situations where a third country uses **illegal migration as a means of pressure** to destabilise the

Union, or a Member State, must also be regarded as hybrid attacks. The European Union and its legal framework must support Member States in such situations, so that they can react decisively and take the necessary measures to safeguard national security and public order.

38. The European External Action Service needs to carry out **strategic communication** towards countries of origin to **explain the consequences of illegal entry into the EU**. To improve readmission cooperation, the European Union needs to make more active use of foreign policy instruments (visa, trade, and development cooperation policies). **A simpler and more effective legal framework for returns** is needed, including stricter rules to limit abuses and prevent returnees from absconding, as well as a legal basis for establishing return centres in third countries.

39. In the case of ending the **application of temporary protection for Ukrainian war refugees**, a coordinated approach by the European Union is needed, – for example, temporary residence permits for work and study – to prevent refugees from moving into the asylum system. EU coordination and cooperation with Ukraine is also essential to support the return of war refugees to their home country.

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Effective cross-border legal cooperation

40. The retention of communications metadata must be permitted in a way that allows law enforcement authorities to effectively prevent and investigate criminal offences, regardless of the location of data within the European Union. Therefore, it is necessary to **establish common rules at the EU level on data retention** that strike a balance between ensuring security and protecting privacy.

41. **The development of European Union criminal law should be limited to setting only minimum requirements.** EU legislation should avoid imposing mandatory additional penalties on legal persons, demanding extensive limitation periods, and including detailed references to types of proceedings and measures. We support the **development of a model set of provisions for EU criminal law** to avoid specific regulations within EU criminal law and to ensure better alignment with our own criminal law system.

42. Cross-border digitisation in the field of justice must be ensured within the EU. To achieve this, the **European Union's IT agency (eu-LISA)**, which has so far mainly dealt with internal affairs information systems, **should be transformed into an IT agency with broader responsibilities** to support the development of digital solutions needed for cross-border cooperation in other sectors as well. The Agency's unit in Tallinn must also be allowed to develop new IT solutions and host information systems, alongside fulfilling its headquarters functions. We see that in the coming years, the agency could play a greater role in supporting cross-border digitisation in the justice sector, as well as hosting IT systems of

other EU agencies and developing a secure data communication system for crisis management authorities in Member States and the European Union.

43. An EU-wide **IT platform should be created that enables the electronic submission of requests for mutual recognition of financial penalties** and the exchange of information about them with other Member States.

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