

**Question for written answer E-003075/2024**

**to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Providing the necessary flexibility within the economic governance framework

The Maastricht criteria set strict limits on budget deficits, requiring Member States to keep their annual government deficits below 3 % of gross domestic product (GDP). However, there is a need for Member States to be able to temporarily deviate from these criteria to boost defence spending and the build-up of defence capabilities. The need for enhanced military readiness has become more pressing due to increasing geopolitical tensions and continuing and evolving security threats, such as continued aggression in Ukraine. NATO members have committed to spending at least 2 % of their GDP on defence, a target which in reality is far below what is needed but which some EU countries still struggle to meet within the constraints of the Maastricht fiscal framework. The option of temporarily deviating from the 3 % deficit limit could provide the flexibility needed to significantly increase defence budgets, thereby ensuring better military preparedness and enhancing security and defence policies.

Is the Commission planning to consider allowing such deviations in order to provide the necessary flexibility within the economic governance framework to help the Member States and the EU boost financing for security and defence policies and develop indispensable critical military capacities?

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