
Rutte to MEPs: “We are safe now, we might not be safe in five years”

On Monday afternoon, MEPs discussed the security situation in Europe and beyond as well as defence and EU-NATO cooperation with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte.

In his first public discussion with MEPs from the [Foreign Affairs Committee](#), [Subcommittee on Security and Defence](#) and [Parliament’s delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly](#) since taking office as NATO Secretary General, Mr Rutte said he is deeply concerned about the security situation in Europe. “We are not at war, but we are not at peace either,” he said, mentioning challenges from states such as Russia, China, Iran and North Korea, but also lingering threats in the form of terrorism, nuclear proliferation, disinformation and climate change.

He said, however, that: “We know how to protect our peoples and the European way of life (...), now we just have to do it”, talking about the need to invest more in defence capabilities and assets, to boost resilience and to continue supporting Ukraine. A stronger European defence means spending more, spending better and producing more, Mr Rutte argued, not to provoke war, but to prevent it. “NATO’s current two percent defence spending target is not nearly enough (...) to stay safe, NATO allies will have to spend considerably more. This also includes ramping up the production of crucial assets and capabilities,” he said. “The European defense industry is doing truly impressive work, but the truth is that we are not where we need to be.”

On Ukraine, the NATO Secretary General said that the future of Europe hinges on the outcome of the war. “We want lasting peace there. If Putin gets it his way, peace will not last,” he stressed, adding that EU support to Ukraine is crucial: “We are safe now, we might not be safe in five years.”

MEPs: What can Europe do for NATO

Regarding EU-NATO cooperation, MEPs quizzed Mr Rutte on the EU contribution. Defence is not limited to military issues: it includes international relations, as well as social, economic and diplomatic relations, a number of MEPs stressed. MEPs also asked about future cooperation with the incoming Trump Administration and expressed concern about the role of Türkiye in NATO.

Other MEPs pointed out that there are differences between NATO allies on defence issues, but staying united is necessary to secure a sustainable peace in Ukraine. They also highlighted the

difficult security situation in Mediterranean and Western Balkans.

On boosting military industry, MEPs enquired about the avoidance of duplication in military production as well accelerating the development of weapons. Several MEPs raised the issue of the need to tackle hybrid threats, particularly on the eastern flank of Europe and in the Western Balkans.

You can rewatch the full debate [here](#).

Further information

[The Foreign Affairs Committee](#)

[The Subcommittee on Security and Defence](#)

[The European Parliament's delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly](#)


[Roberta Metsola, EP President, meets with Mark Rutte, Secretary General of NATO \(video\)](#)


[Video extracts from the exchange of views with Mark Rutte, Secretary General of NATO](#)

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