



Von der Leyen: “Europe must be ready for hybrid warfare. We have invested 800 million in Defense. Our freedom is at stake.”

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The European Union must fully assume responsibility for its own security. *«It is no longer a political choice nor a strategic option: it is an imperative»*, declared **the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen**, reiterating how the international context demands rapid and structural decisions on the security and defense front.

According to the President, the starting point is now evident: *«Europe must be responsible for its own security»*. A principle that marks a profound paradigm shift from the past, when the protection of the continent was often delegated to external allies. Today, von der Leyen emphasized, *«we know the threats we face and we will face them»*, as they are concrete risks, constantly evolving, requiring coordinated and lasting responses.

New threats and hybrid warfare: the European response

In her speech, the President of the Commission highlighted how the European Union is called to confront a **new form of conflict**. *«We must develop and deploy new capabilities to counter this new form of hybrid and modern warfare»*, she stated, referring to a scenario characterized by technological, unconventional, and highly complex elements.

Von der Leyen recalled that, after decades of underinvestment, **Europe is finally changing course**. *«We are transforming our defense industrial and technological base into a system capable of developing and delivering cutting-edge technologies»*, a step deemed essential to strengthen the Union's strategic autonomy and its deterrence capability in the face of new threats.

Unprecedented investments in European defense

The year 2025 represents a true turning point for European defense. *«This year we have done more for defense than in the previous ten years»*, von der Leyen declared. Over the last decade, the European Union has invested about 8 billion euros in the European Defense Fund, while just this year up to **800 million euros** have been committed in investments with a perspective reaching 2030.

Particularly significant, according to the President, was the success of the **SAFE Europe** program. *«We have seen how much our SAFE program has been in demand»*, she explained, noting that applications submitted by **18 member states** far exceeded the initial 150 million euros available. *«Everyone is asking for new waves of the SAFE program»*, a signal that, in her view, clearly demonstrates Europe's concrete commitment to strengthening its security.

Defense, freedom, and independence: a strategic choice

Von der Leyen wanted to clarify that strengthening European defense does not concern exclusively the **military dimension**. *«This growth in defense is not just military»*, she stated, addressing the European deputies. *«Our freedom, our prosperity, and above all, our independence are at stake»*.

Security thus becomes a fundamental pillar not only for the protection of European citizens but also for the economic stability, democratic resilience, and international credibility of the Union.

«*We must do more, we must act swiftly*», concluded the President, reiterating that a stronger Europe in terms of defense is a **more autonomous**, aware, and ready Europe to face the global challenges of the present and the future.

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