

Current Geopolitical Situation: Sovereign Europe Forum Calls for Accelerated Establishment of a European Defence Union and Proposes European-Led NATO Command

Munich, March 2026. In light of the current escalation in the geopolitical situation, the Sovereign Europe Forum (SEF) is calling for the accelerated establishment of a European Defence Union. To address this, the EU must strengthen its military credibility in order to be able to contribute European values and interests.

In a communiqué titled “Responsibility means response ability,” the forum advocates that the European NATO member states should assume command of the European NATO units. To facilitate this, a “Handover Council” should be established at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) to coordinate the transition—if possible under the leadership of the Deputy Supreme Commander, who is always a European.

“It is only fair that Europe takes on a larger share after so many decades of protection by the United States,” said SEF co-founder and entrepreneur Martin A. Schoeller.

The proposal by EU Defence Commissioner Kubilius—who also participated in the forum as a keynote speaker and in the discussion—to establish a European task force of around 100,000 soldiers is strongly supported by the SEF, as it is necessary for the proposed handover of command.

At the most recent Munich Security Conference, the SEF organized an official side event where concrete recommendations were developed together with former President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso, former Managing Director of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) Klaus Regling, entrepreneurs like Philippe Oddo, Antonella Mei-Pochtler, Beat Wittmann and experts like Klaus Welle, Philipp Hildebrand, Nico Lange and André Loesekrug-Pietri, as well as Günther Oettinger, Heinrich von Pierer and many other leading figures from politics and business.

Beyond the military sphere in the narrower sense, it is also important to increase European technological sovereignty. Technological sovereignty must be the goal and guideline for European investments and partnerships. Technology investments would not only help to become sovereign and resilient, but could also boost growth.

Therefore the SEF recommends to significantly redirect national and European defence budgets toward digital infrastructure and future technologies such as drones, lasers, and robotics. Through public-private partnerships (PPPs)—for example by leasing technology infrastructure over the long term—multiples of private capital could be mobilized. The forum also advocates the establishment of a European DARPA and a higher share of start-ups and SMEs in defence innovation.

Integrated capital markets as a booster not only for defence financing

In addition, Europe needs a larger EU budget for projects that can be managed more efficiently and cost-effectively at the European level than nationally, and authority based like the US DARPA that supports research projects and works closely with startups.

Another important lever for an independent, secure Europe is a capital markets union. Without integrated capital markets, Europe would not be able to finance the necessary expansion of defence. "The defence and capital markets unions are mutually reinforcing," says SEF co-founder Klaus Regling, former managing director of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). Deeper financial market integration would also make more capital available for ventures and IPOs in Europe

"A Capital Markets Union is indispensable to increase Europe's growth potential, finance a European Defence Union and strengthen the international role of the euro, all of which would improve Europe's sovereignty," Regling said.

From the SEF's point of view, the so-called "28th regime" – i.e. a uniform EU-wide legal framework to which companies operating across borders can opt – is particularly important. In addition, it is important to promote funded pension schemes as well as the digital euro as a alternative to foreign payment systems, centralise financial supervision and build a common European stock market.

About us

The Sovereign Europe Forum (SEF) promotes dialogue between policymakers, business leaders, and experts in order to develop concrete and implementable policy recommendations and to make an effective contribution to the strategic and operational implementation of European sovereignty.

The forum was founded in December 2025 by personalities from politics and business. It works works closely with United Europe e.V. and the European Forum Alpbach (EFA). The board consists of EFA Vice-President Antonella Mei-Pochtler, Andreas Treichl (Chairman of the ERSTE Foundation), as well as the family entrepreneurs Patrick Adenauer and Martin Schoeller.

The other founders are José Manuel Durão Barroso (former President of the European Commission), Jürgen Großmann (entrepreneur and founder of United Europe), Klaus Regling (former Managing Director of the European Stability Mechanism), and Beat Wittmann (co-founder and chairman of Porta Advisors).