

Ana Gomes (S&D). - Mr President, the financial crisis is having a dangerous impact on our national security and defence capacities and therefore restricting CSDP operationality. We are living in a time when the Chinese, among others, come on buying sprees to reap, at cheap prices, the benefit of sensitive defence and security technology developed by Europeans.

As my colleague Krzysztof Lisek's very good report highlights, pooling and sharing resources and capacities in security and defence is central for the EU and European states to escape irrelevance in global governance, even within NATO, as Secretary Gates complained.

Let us be clear: without assuming a European preference against similar measures by others, we will never build the European industrial base that is needed to ensure our strategic autonomy, as well as preparedness to enter into synergies with others, be it in NATO, the UN or other frameworks

Spending shrinking defence and security budgets in a smarter way – as Baroness Ashton said – requires getting rid of the corruption which is pervasive in the offset system, and the opacity dominating security and defence procurement. It also requires two Member States, Britain and France, to be persuaded to cease wasting money on their nuclear arsenals, which do not serve to counter any of the threats Europe and the world are now facing: just the opposite.

Finally, I would like to say to Baroness Ashton that Libya was a glaring missed opportunity for a CSDP mission and therefore for EU, and not Franco-British, leadership. Your job is indeed to persuade Member States not to miss these opportunities and to assume these responsibilities. We in this Parliament will definitely support you in these endeavours.