



Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Andrius Kubilius European Commissioner for Defence and Space

Title of Youth Policy Dialogue: SPACE AND DEFENCE: EUROPE'S FUTURE IN THE
HANDS OF A NEW GENERATION

Date: 20 October 2025

Location: Aalborg, Denmark



Introduction

The Youth Policy Dialogue gathered around 100 university students for an inspiring exchange with European Commissioner Andrius Kubilius, focused on how space and defence together strengthen Europe's security, resilience, and strategic autonomy.

Taking place on 20 October 2024 at Musikkens Hus, Ritmisk Sal Room, in Aalborg, in the margins of the Danish National Space Conference, the dialogue provided students with a unique opportunity to share their views directly with the Commissioner.

The discussion was moderated by Anders Bundgaard and brought together students from a wide range of fields from engineering and political science to law and international relations. It reflected the diversity, creativity and ambition of Europe's next generation.

Commissioner Kubilius engaged closely with around 20 students during the exchange, listening to their questions, ideas and reflections on Europe's role in space and defence. The atmosphere was open, curious and forward-looking. It embodied the very spirit of the EU's engagement with youth on strategic issues.

Summary of the Youth Policy Dialogue (In person-meeting)

The Youth Policy Dialogue opened with a warm welcome and an engaging introduction by Commissioner Andrius Kubilius, who set the tone for an open and forward-looking conversation on how space and defence are shaping Europe's future. In his remarks, the Commissioner underlined that Europe's security, technological autonomy and innovation capacity depend not only on strong policies and investments, but also on the active involvement of its young generation.

The discussion followed a conversational and interactive format, with students invited to ask questions directly and exchange views with the Commissioner. Rather than a formal speech, the session unfolded as a genuine dialogue with spontaneous questions, reflections and follow-ups that kept the energy in the room high. The Commissioner moved beyond the podium to engage directly with students, fostering a sense of accessibility and openness.

The group dynamics were lively, with students showing curiosity and enthusiasm about the EU's space and defence ambitions. Many were particularly interested in how EU programmes such as IRIS², CASSINI and EUDIS create new opportunities for research, innovation and entrepreneurship. The setting, an intimate and informal conference room, helped create

a comfortable environment that encouraged participation and exchange among students from different academic backgrounds. Throughout the conversation, several themes resonated strongly: the importance of European strategic autonomy, the role of dual-use technologies and the need to inspire young people to build careers in the space and defence ecosystem. The Commissioner highlighted that Europe's future in these fields lies in the hands of its youth, whose creativity and values will define how Europe positions itself in an increasingly complex global landscape.

In his closing remarks, Commissioner Kubitius thanked the students for their engagement and insights, emphasising that youth voices are vital in shaping Europe's strategic vision. He reiterated the Commission's commitment to fostering opportunities for young Europeans. The session ended on an optimistic note, with students encouraged to remain curious, ambitious and involved in Europe's journey toward a more secure, innovative, and sovereign future.

Main takeaways

1. Space and Defence: Building Europe's Security and Strategic Autonomy

- Discussion centred on how space capabilities support Europe's collective defence and resilience.
- Commissioner Kubitius underlined that space and defence are complementary pillars of Europe's strategic autonomy and global competitiveness.

2. Innovation and Dual-Use Potential

- Discussion around the dual-use innovation potential of European space and defence programmes and their role in reducing dependence on external actors.
- EUDIS and CASSINI were highlighted as concrete tools to support start-ups, entrepreneurship, and research in the defence and space ecosystem.
- Commissioner encouraged students to engage with these initiatives and help drive Europe's innovation frontier.

3. Youth Engagement and the Future of European Security

- Discussion addressed **how to involve more young people** in shaping Europe's space and defence future.
- Commissioner stressed the need for **greater youth inclusion** in EU programmes and policymaking.

Annex

In this section you may include links to web streams, photos, videoclips and news articles (if any related to the coverage of the event), etc.



