Securing Profits

How the arms lobby is hijacking Europe's defence policy

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Executive summary

In 2016 the European Union took the unprecedented step of setting up a military research programme worth 90 million euros, the so-called Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR). This is only a first step. For the coming ten years, the European Commission proposes the establishment of a European Defence Fund which would allocate more than 40 billion euros to the research, development and procurement of weapons.

These steps signify a fundamental change of the European project. Although arms companies have received EU funding before, this has always happened through the 'back door' through a security research programme. The establishment of a EU military research programme points towards an unprecedented acceleration in the militarization of the EU. Based on disclosed EU documents, this report shows how the arms industry had access to every stage of the decision making process, from setting the agenda to drawing up the modalities of the Preparatory Action.

The spider's web

The close relationship between the European Union and the defence industry has been adequately described as "*a spider's web of trust and influence*". The first two chapters of the report introduce the major players and highlight the different nodes in this web: the occasions where policy makers and arms lobbyists meet. Several observations stand out:

- In five years time, the combined lobbying budget of the top ten of the European arms companies has doubled, from 2.8 million euros to 5.6 million euros a year. This is an underestimation. According to data from the Belgian national bank the arms lobbying organisation ASD underreported its lobbying budget by a factor 10.
- Since 2014 the European Commission has had at least 46 meetings with the arms industry to discuss the Preparatory Action on Defence Research. This points towards a structured and constant dialogue between the European Commission and the defence industry.
- The amount of grants for security and defence research has grown exponentially from a mere 65 million euros in 2004-2006 to a minimally projected € 3.5 billion from 2021 onwards.

Militarizing the European budget

Based on internal EU documents chapter three and four reconstruct the decision-making process on the different aspects of the Preparatory Action. This process was heavily dominated by corporate interests. Starting from the Group of Personalities, which set out the agenda for a EU military research programme, the modalities of the Preparatory Action were almost exclusively decided on by the European Commission, the European Defence Agency, Member States and the defence industry. Civil society nor the European Parliament were given any substantial input on these far reaching decisions.

In November 2016 the European Commission published a European Defence Action Plan in which it proposed to establish a European Defence Fund. A thorough comparison shows that many of the policy proposals in the Defence Action Plan are almost literally copied from proposals made by the defence industry.

The European Defence Fund creates a self-fulfilling and continuous loop between supply and demand, funded with public money. This creates the spectre of a European permanent war economy. An economy which is constantly funded by public means to remain competitive and whereby even basic levels of arms export controls are seen as a hindrance to the competitiveness of the European defence industry.

Shaping future wars

The military technologies developed now, shape the wars of the future. The European Union has already started developing autonomous systems through the Pilot Project and the Preparatory Action. Despite warnings from both the scientific community and the European Parliament, these decisions to develop autonomous weapons are taken without any public debate. How these technologies will help us meet security challenges remains unclear.

Similarly, other policy areas such as border management and development cooperation have become increasingly militarized. Drones and surveillance equipment are already being used by the EU to tackle migration. A new proposal of the European Commission would open up development aid to finance military equipment for third countries.

The European Union is at a critical juncture. It has to chose between furthering the interests of the military-industrial complex or building a safer Europe based on democratic participation.

Introduction

"Europe needs to toughen up"[1]. That's what Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, stated in his state of the union address in September 2016, making defence and security a priority of the European Commission. Less than a year later, the European Commission announced the establishment of a European Defence Fund, which would funnel billions of euros to the arms industry with the aim of "*foster[ing] the competitiveness […] of the Union's defence industry*"[2].

Over the last two decades, relations between the European Union and the arms industry have become increasingly close, in what some have called a 'spider's web of trust and influence'[3] and others have called 'the emergence of a EU military industrial complex'[4]. A network of policy makers, defence companies, lobby groups and think tanks has the power not only to set the agenda, but also to design and implement new policies.

Terrorist attacks have increased the feeling of insecurity among European citizens and have created demands on policy makers 'to do something'.[5] In absence of ready-made solutions to complex problems, the EU is relying on the premise of high-tech solutions.

The defence industry thrives in periods of perceived insecurity and instability. Shortly after the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015 the stocks of major arms companies skyrocketed as investors expected military expenditure would increase in Europe.[6] At the same time, the Brexit referendum and the election of US President Donald Trump have provided a long-awaited window of opportunity to push further for a military Europe.

In 2016 the EU took the unprecedented step of setting up a military research programme worth 90 million euros, the so-called Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR). Internal documents show that the arms industry had access to every stage of the decision making process, from setting the agenda, drawing up the modalities - such as funding and the intellectual property rights regime - to even deciding on the governance structure of the PADR. Meanwhile, civil society has been completely absent from the negotiating table.

The Preparatory Action is only a first step. In the long run, the Commission proposes the establishment of a European Defence Fund which would in total allocate more than 40 billion euros to the research, development and procurement of arms.

The excessive influence of the arms industry on EU decision making not only puts into question the legitimacy of the decision making process of the European Union, but also risks militarizing EU foreign policy. As then US President Dwight Eisenhower warned in 1961, "*we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.*"

The observation that the arms industry plays an important role in EU policy making is not new and has been extensively studied. This report will build further on these studies and provide an update which takes into account recently proposed policies by the EU. The objective is to further document the symbiotic relationship between the arms industry and EU institutions and the effect this relationship has had on the decision making process regarding the Preparatory Action on Defence Research and on the European Defence Fund in general.

The report is divided in six chapters. Chapters one and two give a general overview of the European arms lobby and its relationship with the European Union. Chapters three and four zoom in on the influence exerted by the defence industry on the decision-making process relating to the Preparatory Action on Defence Research and the Defence Fund. Lastly, chapters five and six are about the broader implications of these policies on warfare and the European border policy.

1. Too close for comfort: the EU and the arms industry

> "We are not vendors, we are partners."
>
> *Christopher Lombardi, vice-president of the arms company Raytheon, at the Egmont expert seminar 'the European Defence of Europe?'*

The close relationship between the European Union and the defence industry has been much commented on. Several studies have highlighted the very intimate and even symbiotic relationship between EU institutions and industry, which have gone much further than what would be expected of a normal dialogue with stakeholders.

In 2005, researcher Frank Slijper stated that "*the influence from the industry on policy-making processes is astonishing for the uninitiated outsider to see. The field of defence and defence industry would seem to have been abandoned by all but the captains of industry, the officers of the lobbies and the trusty auxiliary corps of 'sherpas'*".[7] A year later researcher Ben Hayes concluded that the EU has allowed arms companies to "*design future EU security policies and allow corporate interests to determine the public interest*".[8] Hayes spoke about the emergence of a security-industrial complex dominated by profit-driven conglomerates. A conclusion which was confirmed in Hayes' much cited study "*NeoConOpticon: The EU Security-Industrial Complex*".

The EU research programme which lasted from 2007 until 2013 - the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) - showed a certain willingness to pose critical questions about the ethical implications of the EU security research programme. In 2011 the study INEX, conducted under the auspices of FP7, pointed out that "*major defence and security companies have played a key role in the definition of the orientation and priorities of the EU's research and development policy for security-related technical systems – and also turn out to be the major beneficiaries of this policy.*"[9] While it is noteworthy that the EU commissioned a study to look critically at its own decision-making process, INEX's damning conclusion did not lead to a serious reflection at the EU level.

Strikingly, a study by the Belgian Royal Higher Institute for Defence in 2016 was also highly critical about the lack of democratic legitimacy of the EU decision making process with regard to EU military development programmes. The study noted that "*the lack of democratic accountability [on military development programmes] is shrouded in a typical technocratic process of so-called 'road maps' designed by EU officials, industry representatives and consultants, and without a substantive input offered by civil society, national parliaments or the European Parliament.*"[10]

Despite these studies' severe criticism of the close relationship between industry and EU officials, the role of the defence industry as 'dialogue partner' has not diminished in importance. For example, on February 2017 the EU

Dutch Minister of Defence Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert at the board meeting of the ASD in 2016 in Scheveningen

Commissioner for Security Union, Julian King, remarked during the board meeting of the arms lobbying organisation ASD that "*industry is part of the response to security threats. […] because it can contribute to designing policies, guiding research efforts and identifying solutions for improving security*".[11] He continued saying that "*we won't be successful in our endeavours to enhance the collective security of Europe if we don't work hand in hand with industry*".[12]

In the European Union the arms industry is seen as an indispensable partner and an essential part of EU foreign policy. The EU 2016 Global Strategy stated that "*a sustainable, innovative and competitive European defence industry is essential for Europe's strategic autonomy and for a credible Commons Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)*".[13]

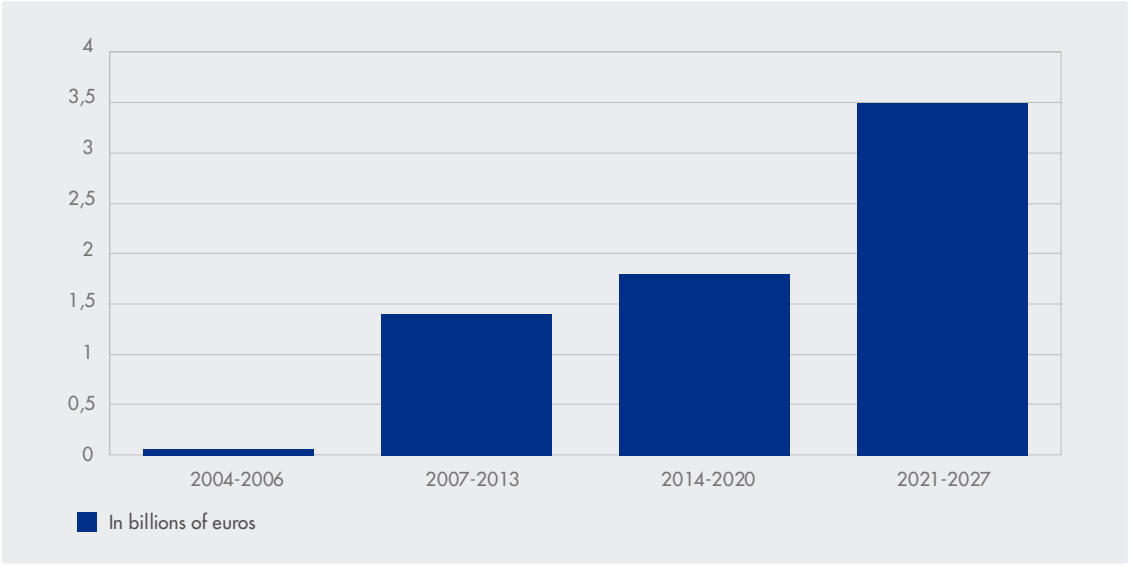
Initially EU policies mainly focused on making the defence industry more competitive by liberalising the European defence market, but refrained from directly funding military research. These policies however did not have the expected results. Member States are hesitant to carry through full liberalisation of the European defence market, as this would affect their sovereignty and their capacity to decide to which end users weapons would be exported to.[14] Since the European Council of 2013 EU proposals have partly abandoned this liberalization angle. Instead they focus on a financial stimulus package for the defence industry - what could be called weaponized Keynesianism-, while at the same time keeping regulation at a bare minimum (for example regarding arms exports control).[15]

In what one Green Member of the European Parliament (MEP) called a 'salami-strategy'[16], this has led to a 'slice-by-slice-approach' whereby political red lines have progressively been transgressed. Defence research has always been officially excluded from all EU research programmes so the defence industry could only get funding through 'the back door': a security research programme[17]. In 2016

the EU took the unprecedented step by deciding to directly fund defence research. At this key moment, the European Parliament approved a Pilot Project of 1.4 million euros, the precursor of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research which amounts to 90 million euros.

These two programmes however are only a testbed for a large scale European Defence Fund which could amount to more than 10 billion euros in EU funding for security and defence programmes for the period 2021-2027. EU Member States are supposed to contribute an additional 30 billion euros.

Table 1: Evolution of the EU budget for security and defence research programmes[18]



Data compiled on 01/08/2017. The budget for the budget cycles 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 is a projection. Several of the proposed programmes have not been approved yet. There is currently no information yet on the security research programme for 2021-2027, so the successor to this programme is excluded from the projection.

What is at stake?

In late 2016 the European Commission launched her plans for a European Defence Fund. This fund developed out of a multitude of proposals, some of which have already been launched but most have not yet been approved. At the time of writing the European Defence Fund looks as follows:

The Pilot Project and the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) are the first programmes which are already being implemented. Both are military research programmes. The Preparatory Action serves as a precursor to a European Defence Research Programme (EDRP) starting from 2021 and lasting till 2027. The EDRP, which would encompass 3.5 billion euros, still has to be approved by the European Parliament.

Moreover, the European Commission in June 2017 proposed a European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), which still has to be approved by the European Parliament. The EDIDP is aimed at the development of new cooperative weapon programmes and the procurement of these weapons by Member States. Contrary to the military research programmes, the EDIDP would mainly be financed by EU Member States. Again the Commission wants to launch a smaller version of the EDIDP for 2019-2020, encompassing half a billion euros in EU funds and two billion in member state contributions. For 2021-2027 the aim is to have a fully fledged EDIDP of five billion euros a year, of which one billion euros would be EU funds.

In total, the European Defence Fund would contain 41 billion euros, most of which is excepted to be contributed by Member States (30 billion euros). To stimulate Member States to contribute, the Commission proposes an exception to the Stability and Growth Pact, which means Member States do not have to take the procurement of weapons through the European Defence Fund into account in their budget deficits.

2. **Who's who:** an introduction to the European arms lobby

> "There is a constant and close dialogue with both the European Commission and the European Defence Agency (EDA)."
>
> *Arms lobby organisation AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association (ASD)'s internal newsletter, May 2016.*

The European defence market is dominated by only a handful of big corporations, the 'big four: BAE Systems, Airbus Group, Leonardo (previously Finmeccanica) and Thales. These companies dominate the defence market and are amongst the biggest and most competitive arms companies in the world.[19] The European defence industry's turnover has increased from 94 billion euros in 2010 to 102 billion in 2015, with the value of exports amounting to 40 billion euros.[20]

Despite the considerable political and financial support the defence industry gets at EU and national level[21], its economic importance in relation to the overall economy is limited. The turnover of the defence industry only constitutes 1.3 percent of the total turnover of the European manufacturing sector (which amounted to a turnover of 7.1 trillion euros in 2014[22]).

Like other big industries the defence industry has a strong presence in the European quarter in Brussels. Out of the ten largest European **defence companies** nine have an established lobby presence in Brussels and most of them employ accredited lobbyists who can access the European Parliament at will (see table 2).

Besides these individual companies, the AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association Europe (ASD), plays a central role at the EU level. **ASD** is the umbrella organisation of the air, space and defence sector and unites 14 arms-multinationals and 26 national defence associations.[23] ASD exists since 1950 and plays a key role in lobbying the European Union on aerospace and defence issues. ASD runs the secretariat of the Sky and Space Intergroup in the European Parliament, which has been described by Jan Pie, the Secretary General of ASD, as "*an extremely effective forum to engage with MEPs*".[24] Similarly, ASD's sister organisation, the European Organisation for Security (**EOS**), has played an important role in the set-up of the EU border and homeland security policies.[25]

In 2016, another lobby-organisation, the European Cybersecurity Organisation (ECSO) was set-up. Major arms companies such as Thales, Airbus and Leonardo-Finmeccanica are well represented in ECSO.[26]

ECSO is operating in a 'contractual Public-Private Partnership on cybersecurity' with the European Commission, the contract is worth 450 million euros.[27] The Commission announced it would give the ECSO considerable influence over the EU research agenda on cybersecurity and that it would commit itself to "*giving due consideration to inputs and advice from [ECSO] in order to identify research and innovation activities to be proposed for financial support under the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme*"[28].

Table 2: Lobbying budget of the 10 biggest EU defence companies present in Brussels

Top 10	Expenditure	Meetings with EC	Accredited lobbyists	Rank in SIPRI top 100 arms companies
BAE Systems	199999	3	0	3
Airbus	1999999	112	13	7
Leanardo/ Finmeccanica	299999	13	3	9
Thales	300000	18	4	11
Safran	495000	4	6	14
Rolls Royce	1499999	13	3	16

Top 10	Expenditure	Meetings with EC	Accredited lobbyists	Rank in SIPRI top 100 arms companies
DCNS	199999	7	2	24
Rheinmetall	299999	1	0	30
Saab	299999	7	1	33
MBDA	49999	6	1	/
Total	**5644992**	**184**	**33**	

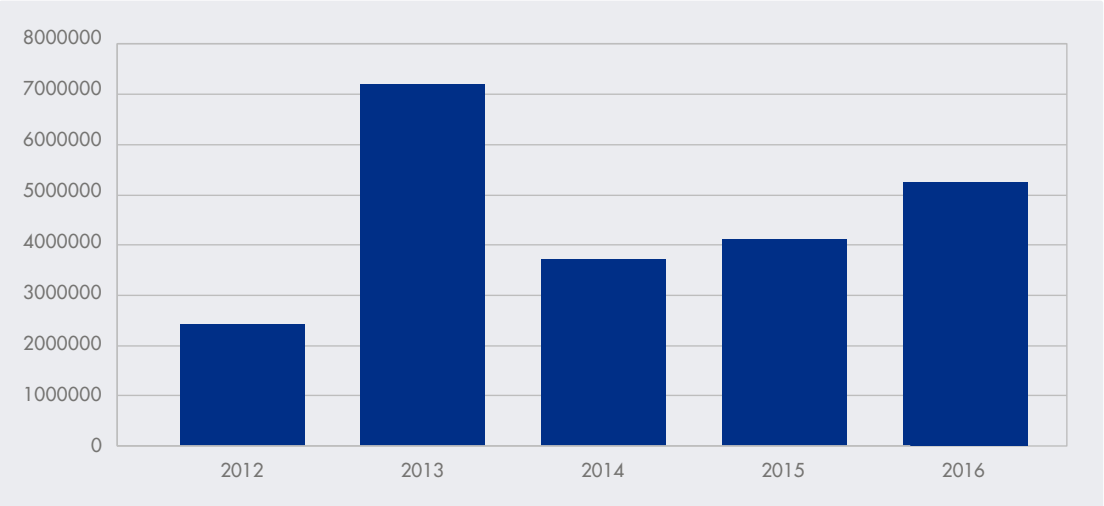
Source: Lobbyfacts, Integrity Watch, SIPRI top 100 arms companies 2015 – data compiled on 25/07/2017

The lobbying budget of the defence industry has increased consistently during the last five years. Since 2012, the lobbying budget of the top 10 arms companies has almost doubled. While in 2012 their combined budget was 2,836,999 euros, this increased to more than five million euros by 2016.[29] The evolution of the arms industries' lobbying budget shows a steady increase over the years (see table 3).

The total known lobbying budget is likely to be an underestimation. Studies have pointed out that data registered by lobbying organisations about their budget is often untrustworthy.[30] The ASD for example claims to spend 298,000 euros on lobbying. According to numbers from the national bank of Belgium however, the turnover of the ASD in 2015 amounted to 3,345,616, more than ten times the budget registered in the EU transparency register.[31] The same is the case of the EOS which reports a maximum lobbying budget of 299.999 euros, while the national bank report shows a turnover of 996.426 euros. As the sole purpose of both organisations is to lobby the European institutions, it is very likely that the numbers from the Belgian national bank are much closer to their actual lobbying budgets.

Similarly, the amount of reported lobbyists is often an underestimation. The top defence companies allegedly employ only 33 accredited lobbyists, but the actual number is probably much higher. BAE systems for example does not have any accreditation to access the European Parliament, but does employ at least one lobbyist and has had at least three meetings with the European Commission.[32]

Table 3: Evolution of lobbying budgets of the ten biggest EU arms companies



Source: data compiled on basis of lobbyfacts.eu. The year is the year of registration, so not the budgetary years. The budget in 2013 shows a sudden increase which is due to the unexplained increase of the Airbus Group lobby budget which decreased again in 2014.

2.1 The nodes in the spider's web

> "The privileged access of industry to European policy-making through the security and defence community and the almost complete absence of civil society representation raise serious issues about democracy in the EU."
>
> *Corporate Europe Observatory, Lobbying Warfare, 2011.*

The lobbying watchdog Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) described the defence lobby community as a *"spider's web of trust"*.[33] In this web, arms fairs, defence conferences, workshops and think tanks form the nodes: a myriad of groups, events and institutions where European policy makers, CEO's from the defence industry, government officials and military personnel formally or informally meet. We will expand on several of the most poignant 'spaces' where this network is being formed and reinforced. For a more comprehensive overview, see CEO's study Lobbying Warfare.

According to data provided by the European Commission, between 2013 and 2016 at least 36 meetings took place between the defence industry and DG Grow on the Preparatory Action on Defence Research alone (see annex 1). This number is an underestimation as several meetings about which information is publicly available are not listed.[34] The industry also met at least once with both DG Budget and DG Research.[35] The correspondence between industry and the European Defence Agency was so voluminous that an individual screening of the correspondence was seen as an *"excessive administrative burden"* and would have to be handled by staff members outside of their normal activities.[36]

Arms and security fairs form key moments for EU policy makers and the industry to meet. Arms fairs such as DSEI in the UK or Eurosatory in France are enormous meeting places which thousands of visitors attend, including tens of official delegations. These fairs not only function as markets for buying and selling military equipment, but also as ideal places for industry and policy makers to meet and discuss policies. The European Defence Agency as well as the European Commission are regularly present at arms fairs. In June 2017, ASD tweeted *"Another great visit today with Philippe Brunet & Thierry Buttin from DG Grow at the #PAS17 [Paris Air Show]"*. Not only the Commission was present, but also representatives from the European Defence Agency and the European Parliament attended the fair.[37]

Also 'neutral' platforms play a key role in bringing the EU and the industry together. The prime example of this is the Kangaroo Group, which provides an 'informal gathering' for Members of Parliament and the (defence) industry. Key MEPs such as Michael Gahler (EPP) and Ana Gomes (S&D), who are board members of the Kangaroo Group, have played an important role in furthering the military agenda in the European Parliament.[38]

Last but not least, conferences play a key role in forming networks. The annual conference of the European Defence Agency is without doubt the most high profile arms lobby event in the Brussels bubble. In 2016 almost 300 arms companies, defence lobby associations and think tanks were invited. The EDA invited 22 Airbus employees, 16 employees of Thales and 10 employees from ASD.[39] The event was broadcast by the EDA as *"a unique platform for senior decision-makers to consider how to ensure that the sector remains fit for purpose"*. Several companies were invited to speak alongside high profile policy-makers such as the EU High Representative Mogherini and European Commissioner Bieńkowska.

3. **Setting the scene:** the Group of Personalities on Defence Research

The Group of Personalities on Defence Research

> "The creation of [the] Group of Personalities [...] needs to make a strong case for an EU CSDP research activity to European and national decision-makers and to the public."
>
> *Commissioner Bieńkowska of DG Grow at the first meeting of the Group of Personalities*

An EU military research programme has been a long term lobbying objective of the defence industry. In 2010 the former president of the lobbying organisation ASD, Domingo Ureña-Raso, stated that;

"Our industry needs to receive an adequate level of support for its long-term development and success. This means, in particular, that we should continue to attract significant EU funding for our research and technology activities."[40]

In 2011 then European Commissioners Michel Barnier and Antonio Tajani set up a Defence Industry and Market Task Force which identified military research as a priority area.[41] Not long afterwards the Commission launched a communication, Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector, in which the Commission for the first time announced that it was considering the possibility of a European military research programme.[42]

Instrumental in setting the agenda was an advisory body called the Group of Personalities on Defence Research (GoP), brought together by European Commissioner Bieńkowska in 2015, responsible for DG Grow (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME's). She stated that *"securing the long-term future for our defence industry is in all our interests. Both nationally and collectively. The Commission can play an important supporting role to reinforce national defence industries and research capacities."*[43]

The parallels with the GoP on Security Research, which was set up in 2003, are striking.[44] As with the GoP on Security Research, the GoP on Defence Research was essential in

"cement[ing] the structure, objective and ideology"[45] of the future European Defence Research Programme. The GoP on Defence Research however has been even more heavily dominated by the defence industry (see box 2).

Out of sixteen members, seven represented defence companies (Airbus Group, BAE Systems, Finmeccanica/ Leonardo, MBDA, Saab, Indra and the defence lobbying group ASD). Two members were private research institutions which could benefit from an EU military research programme (TNO and Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft).[46]

There were barely any independent voices represented in the GoP, let alone any critical voices such as peace groups or human rights organisations. The only MEP represented in the GoP, Michael Gahler, is known for his pro-military views and is a board member of the Kangaroo Group, a lobby organisation which brings together MEP's and the defence industry.[47]

The setting up of a Group of Personalities is rare and seems to have been deliberately used to evade even basic levels of transparency as the GoP was not registered as an expert group. Expert groups are to a certain extent subjected to rules regarding transparency (e.g. dates of meetings, agendas and minutes are publicly available).[48] In the case of the GoP not even these basic rules were enforced. This has led to the opening of an investigation by the European ombudsman which was, at the moment of writing, not concluded yet.[49]

The reasons stated by the Commission for setting up the GoP have been inconsistent. While the Commission at first declared that the GoP is an expert group and therefore did not include any representatives from civil society[50], the Commission later denied the GoP was an expert group, but stated that it provided political and strategic advice.[51] In reality the GoP was a mixture of both. Not only did the GoP propose very specific policies aimed at making the arms industry more competitive, it also laid down the ideological foundation for the further militarization of Europe.

Composition of the Group of Personalities on Defence Research

Chair

- Elźbieta Bieńkowska - European Commissioner for DG Grow

Members of the European Parliament

- Michael Gahler – European People's Party (EPP)

Companies

- Fernando Abril-Martorell - CEO Indra
- Antoine Bouvier - CEO MBDA
- Håkan Buskhe - CEO of Saab
- Tom Enders - CEO Airbus Group
- Ian King - Chief Executive BAE Systems
- Mauro Moretti - CEO Finmeccanica
- Arndt Schoenemann - Managing Director of Liebherr-Aerospace Lindenberg GmbH, Chairman of ASD Supply Chain and SME Group

Research / Institutions

- Paul de Krom - former secretary of State for Social Affairs and Employment, President and CEO of TNO
- Reimund Neugebauer - President of Frauenhofer-Gesellschaft
- Teija Tiilikainen - Director of Finnish Institute of International Affairs
- Nick Witney - former EDA Chief Executive, senior policy fellow with the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)

Member States Representatives

- Carl Bildt - former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Elisabeth Guigou - President of the Foreign Affairs Commission in l'Assamblée Nationale, former Minister of European Affairs, of Justice and of Employment
- Bogdan Klich - former Minister of Defence, member of the Polish Senate

3.1 The GoP report: sustaining the competitiveness of the European arms industry

> "It is quite challenging for defence companies to take on large scale R&T risks. This would put the relevant companies at a clear competitive disadvantage relative to their international competitors which are receiving government-funded R&T."
>
> *Group of Personalities report February 2016*

In February 2016 the GoP published the report *"European Defence Research: The case for an EU funded defence R&T programme"*. The GoP proposed a substantial Preparatory Action on Defence Research of 90 million euros, but stipulated this would only be a first step towards establishing a full scale European Defence Research Programme (EDRP) of at least 3,5 billion euros for the period 2021-2027.

The GoP report focused on improving the competitiveness of the defence industry through a dedicated European Defence Research Programme. According to the report the existence of the European defence industry is threatened by years of budget cuts on defence.[52] The report made three main arguments for an EU funded R&T programme.

Firstly, the report emphasized a worsening security situation. The EU is confronted with instability and conflict in neighbouring states (Ukraine, Libya, Syria, Iraq, etc.), the rise of competing powers and internal threats, such as terrorist networks and an inflow of refugees. The report argued that to tackle these threats ever more sophisticated military technologies are needed.[53] In order to face these security threats, the report urged the EU to *"bolster its military posture"*.[54]

Strategic autonomy was therefore seen as crucial: the ability to arm itself and to act militarily without the help from other governments. A competitive European arms industry is therefore essential. During the first meeting of the Group of Personalities Antoine Bouvier, CEO of missile producer MBDA, stated that *"strategic autonomy is of key importance, as [is] the notion of a competitive EU industry that can deliver this autonomy"*.[55] The GoP report itself essentially copied this line of reasoning and said that *"strategic autonomy is inherently linked to the security of supply"*.

Second, economic arguments were repeatedly used to advocate for a military R&T programme. The report stated that an EDA analysis had shown that cuts in defence spending *"have disproportionately large impacts on Gross Domestic Product (GDP)"*. The cited study, which was only made available after a Freedom of Information request[56], shows that compared to three other sectors (transport, education and health), budget cuts to investments in the defence industry do not disproportionately affect GDP growth. According to the study, the defence industry

The Group of Personalities report published in February 2016

performs more or less the same compared to the three other sectors mentioned.

The study also shows that the only reason investments in the arms sector are assumed to have the same GDP multiplier effect was because of *"rest of the world leakages"* (e.g. arms exports), which is not very surprising as education or health care are hardly sectors known for their exports. A comparison with other manufacturing sectors, such as clean energy[57], was not included in the study, nor were possible negative externalities of the arms trade included. If exports are left out of the picture, the GDP multiplier of defence was much lower than the performance of transport, education or health. Even in a country such as the UK, with a substantial arms industry, the GDP multiplier of investments in the defence industry was only 1.17, while those of transport (1.8), education (2.04) and health (1.87) were substantially higher.

Thirdly, the spectre of the US arms industry was presented as a threat to European industry. The report stated that as arms exports are crucial for the survival of the defence industry, the European arms industry needs to remain competitive enough to compete with the US arms industry on third markets. As the United States launched a new military research policy, called the Third Offset Strategy (3EOS), the EU could not stay behind. The report concluded that *"all this [e.g. the Third Offset Strategy] should stimulate Europeans to change their approach to investing in defence technologies"*.

3.2 Pushing the agenda forward

From the beginning the GoP was very conscious of the contentiousness of its proposals. During the second meeting of the GoP, representatives from the Commission made clear that the GoP report was supposed to *"overcome resistance towards a defence research programme."*[58]

Even more important was the influence the GoP exerted on the political agenda. Conscious of the window of opportunity, Elisabeth Guigou, member of the GoP and president of the Foreign Affairs Commission in l'Assemblée Nationale, proposed during the first GoP meeting in March 2015 that *"we need to keep a political momentum, therefore it would be good to organise the second meeting of GoP before the June E[uropean] C[ouncil]. This meeting could pass some important messages, for example relating to strategic autonomy concept."* Not without success. The June European Council of heads of state and governments endorsed the Preparatory Action on Defence Research and called for a strengthening of Europe's defence industry.[60]

The only European actor of which the support was still in doubt was the European Parliament. In the run up to the vote, the chief executive of the European Defence Agency Jorge Domecq even went as far as calling on the arms company Saab to lobby MEPs directly. He said during the meeting that *"while Member States and the European Commission are fully supportive of an ambitious PA and follow-up European Defence Research Programme there are divergent views in European Parliament at times. It is in our all interest to convince Members of Parliament about the importance of this project."*In November 2016 the European Parliament voted with a majority on the PADR.

3.3 The privatization of publicly funded research

> "Whenever we change the modalities of the Preparatory Action, whenever we propose measures which are unprecedented, we need to look at the buy-in of the different players [...]. This programme is really designed for Member States and the [arms] industry."
>
> *Philippe Brunet, European Commission, DG Grow, intervention in the European Parliament in January 2017*

The arms industry has had a heavy footprint on the negotiations, including on the specific modalities of the PADR. Besides the meetings by the Group of Personalities, at least another eight working group meetings took place on the PADR. The arms industry was well represented during at least three of these follow-up meetings taking place between April and June 2016.[62] During a meeting on the 7th of April, nine out of twenty-two people present were representatives from the defence industry (eight came from Member States, three from the European Defence Agency and two were representatives from the European Commission). There were no members present from the European Parliament, nor from the academic world or civil society.[63] Industry representatives came from the major European defence companies (DCNS, Airbus, BAE Systems, Thales) and the arms lobbying organisation ASD.

These meetings further defined the modalities of the Preparatory Action, especially regarding the rate of funding and the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regime. ASD had already made clear in a meeting in 2015 that *"100 percent funding to industry should be considered the norm and industry should not be expected to co-finance"*.[64]

In an internal newsletter to its member organisations the ASD emphasized that it has *"consistently stipulated that 100% funding to industry is essential if the programme is to work, along with full ownership of IPR for the organisation generating the IPR"*.[65]

The IPR regime was seen as absolutely crucial to the defence industry, even to the extent that in the past the relationship between ASD and the Commission had turned sour over the negotiations of the IPR regime of the security research programme. In 2015 two ASD employees from the Security Business Unit, Alberto De Benedictis and Burkard Schmitt met with a representative from DG Grow. Schmitt, who only recently started working with the ASD, had worked for ten years for the European Commission where he was *"the pen on all matters related to defence and security"*[66]. According to Commission documents, the meeting had the objective to *"launch a fresh start in the relations with ASD"*.[67]

This objective was initially not fully successful. Talks did not go as planned between industry and the European Commission on the IPR regime for the PADR. In May 2016 ASD expressed its concerns regarding the IPR provisions in the Preparatory Action and stated that it would take *"several actions to provide further inputs to Member States and the EDA"*. One of these actions was a meeting with the Dutch minister of defence Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert at the ASD board meeting in 2016 in Scheveningen. The ASD noted that *"the board had a wide-ranging exchange of views on strategic Defence issues"* with the minister and concluded with the minister promising to offer *"her support to address industry concerns about IPR provisions in the Preparatory Action to her Council colleagues from other Member States"*.[68] With success. Only a couple of months later, ASD stated that *"such thorny issues as IPR [...] are moving ahead in a positive way."*[69]

These extremely influential relations with the Member States and the Commission led to an unprecedented and

extremely beneficial regime for the arms industry. Even on controversial issues such as the IPR regime industry seemed to be able to greatly steer policies in a favourable direction.

All research results under the Preparatory Action will be owned by the arms companies involved, although with access rights for Member States in case they want to further develop a developed technology. At the same time the research is subject to 100 percent funding (most projects under the research programme Horizon 2020 are eighty percent funded by the EU and twenty percent funded by the participants). In addition, the EU will fund 25 percent of the indirect costs made.[70]

3.4 For and by the arms industry

> "ASD advocates a strong role for industry in the governance of the P[reparatory] A[ction]"
>
> *ASD internal newsletter May 2016*

Continued access of the industry to the implementation of the PADR is seen by the defence industry as crucial. The ASD has regularly pleaded for a fixed role for the industry in the governance of the Preparatory Action. The GoP also pleaded for a continued influence of its members through the setting up of a European Defence Advisory Board which would have "*direct access to the highest EU institutional levels*".[71]

The idea of a Defence Advisory Board was eventually not picked up. However, the influence of the defence industry was guaranteed in a governance structure consisting of a Programme Committee (PC) and an Advisory Group (AG).

The Programme Committee (PC) consists out of delegates from the Member States and experts from national governments. The PC draws out the work programme of the PADR to ensure the strategic direction of the research undertaken. It also aims to ensure compatibility of research undertaken at the national level and research conducted on a European level.

The Advisory Group includes industry representatives, the European Commission and the European Defence Agency. It advises the Commission on global technology trends, potential synergies with civil research and provides feedback on technological and financial aspects of capability programmes.

In a workshop in March 2015 a representative from the German defence company Rheinmetall stressed a closer involvement of industry in the Programme Committee, the governance structure which does not include industry representatives. Industry pleaded for a "*potential role of the industry in the work programme definition*".[72] The European Commission responded by stating that "*there is quite a shared view on the appropriate governance structure*".[73]

For industry these advisory bodies are crucial as they provide the opportunity to shape research projects at a very early stage to their own needs. The Dutch news website De Correspondent interviewed a representative from a French company who quite openly stated that for industry "*the goal is to win contracts and sell the technology. We learn how the EU works and we can co-decide on the requirements being asked.*"[74]

3.5 From the border to the battlefield: autonomous war technology

> "Everybody knows that the answer is the [fighter drone], but nobody knows what the question is."[75]
>
> *Yves Robins, vice president of Dassault Aviation at the start of the nEUROn drone programme*

The development of European armed drones has figured high on the EU research agenda for a considerable time. It has frustrated both EU policy makers and the defence industry that it is not able to compete with Israel and the United States in the field of armed drones. The failure of the German Euro Hawk is only an example of this.[76] The Commission has for several years spent considerable funds on drone technology still limited to non-military purposes. In 2014 it was estimated that the Commission had freed up more than 315 million euros for the development of drones. [77]

It is not surprising that drone-related research is prioritized in the Preparatory Action. The PADR however goes much further than already established EU research programmes. The technologies funded by the PADR aim to substantially increase the autonomy of weapon systems, decreasing human involvement.

The Pilot Project, which was launched in 2016 by the European Defence Agency as a precursor for the PADR, focused heavily on drone-related research and robotics (see box Technological priorities and the Pilot Project). Noteworthy is the project called EuroSWARM, which is aimed at 'outsourcing' typical military tasks to autonomous swarm systems.[78] It is striking that the project description explicitly states that EuroSWARM is mainly considered as a pilot for large-scale usage in border control and for

Technological priorities and the Pilot Project

The Pilot Project, which started in 2016, was the first EU defence research programme. The funds for the Pilot Project were limited, amounting to 1.4 million euros. Initially the Pilot Project was supposed to be a test for the Preparatory Action on Defence Research. As the Pilot Project only started in 2017, after the PADR was already approved, it can however hardly be considered as a valid pilot for the Preparatory Action.

The Pilot Project served a much more important function. It was paramount in breaking down the political taboo on an EU military research programme. For example, Pierre Delsaux, Deputy Director General of DG Grow, stated that "EU funding for defence research was almost inconceivable a few years ago for EU institutions, Member States and the defence community. This Pilot Project is therefore the precursor of a new era".[80]

The Pilot Project encompasses three projects:

- SPIDER (€ 433,225): a proof of concept for a system of inside building awareness with miniaturized sensors, partly by a static outdoor system and partly by mobile robots equipped with cameras and sensors.
- TRAWA (€ 433,292): the development of standards for a detect and avoid system for military drones in civilian airspace.
- EuroSWARM (€ 434,000): the development of a control & command architecture for autonomous swarms of sensors.

surveillance-security purposes. Denis Roger, EDA Director of European synergies and innovation, has hinted at the possible use of military equipment at the EU borders. He stated that "*prototypes could be 'dual use'. For example, a drone used to watch out for migrants at sea or fires on land could be used for military purposes*".[79] This hints to a further acceleration of the militarisation of the EU border policy with technology developed by the European defence industry (see also chapter 6).

The first three calls for the Preparatory Action confirm that autonomous systems and drones will remain a priority for future EU defence research. The PADR will pour an estimated 35 million out of a total of 90 million euros into the research of unmanned naval vessels.[81] The aim is to develop sensors for unmanned naval vessels to "*enhance naval situational awareness*". The call stipulates that the research project has to increase the autonomy of weapon systems and decrease the level of human involvement in operations.[82]

The Hellenic Navy has already expressed interest in testing the technology.[82] Although it is unclear for which purposes this technology will be used, it does complement earlier EU research efforts in surveillance technology and border protection.[84] Greece has regularly expressed interest in EU funds for border security and surveillance technology. In 2011 for example, Frontex paid drone companies to conduct field demonstrations for maritime surveillance in Greece in an effort to bring buyers (governments) and companies in contact with each other.[85]

Again, most of these decisions were made behind closed doors by the European Commission, the European Defence Agency, EU governments and the defence industry.[86] Neither national parliaments nor the European Parliament were ever involved in deciding which technologies should be researched, nor did any discussion take place on the ethical implications of these technologies. The EU risks pouring billion of euros into military research without any checks and balances on the further use of these technologies.

Autonomous weapons are not without risks. In 2015 thousands of robotics researchers warned for a third revolution in warfare, stating that "*deployment of such systems is feasible within years, not decades. […] The key question for humanity today is whether to start a global AI arms race or to prevent it from starting*".[87] Also the European Parliament has expressed its worries about the advent of autonomous weapons. In a resolution, the Parliament called for a ban on the development of fully autonomous weapons. The European Parliament called on the Commission "*to keep Parliament properly informed about the use of EU funds for all research and development projects associated with the construction of drones [and] calls for human rights impact assessments in respect of further drone development projects*".[88] A parliamentary inquiry questioned if the Commission ever conducted such a human rights assessment in relation to the pilot project and the PADR. At the time of writing the parliamentary question remains unanswered.[89]

At the same time it is unclear what these technologies, once developed, will be used for. A European common foreign and defence policy worthy of the name is absent. The national interests of EU Member States are often fundamentally different. A recent report commissioned by DG International Co-operation and Development from the European Commission confirms that Member States often prioritize their own national interests to the detriment of the EU's capacity to carry out a consistent foreign policy.[90] Even the harmonization of arms export controls have been stalled as Member States cannot find common ground.[91] Foreign military interventions happen in constantly changing coalitions.

Hendrik Vos, a Belgian academic and director of the Centre for EU Studies of the university of Ghent, said the following in an op-ed:

"As long as the Union does not have a clearly directed foreign policy, a common defence is premature. The most important distinction between an army and a gang of robbers is that, in principle, an army is politically controlled. Because in Europe such a clearly directed foreign policy is absent, the thought of a European army is even a bit scary: who will direct this army?" [92]

Biased by default

Independent policy-oriented studies are crucial tools in advising government institutions. They can provide insights in the usefulness of certain policy initiatives or point to problematic issues related to an initiative. However, several studies about the Preparatory Action commissioned by EU institutions are far from independent. Rather than providing an independent view on the advantages and disadvantages of an EU military research programme, these studies aim to manufacture consent about the necessity of pouring money into the arms industry.

In 2015 the European Parliament Security and Defence Committee (SEDE) commissioned a study called 'the future of EU defence research'. The study was conducted by Frédéric Mauro and Klaus Thoma. Both have strong ties with the arms industry. As such, the study can barely be called 'independent', rather it reinforced the Committee's support for the Preparatory Action.

Frédéric Mauro is a lawyer and registered lobbyist[93] who claims to have several arms companies as clients. His website states that his close network with policy makers renders him capable in delivering "*commercially practical advice of the highest quality*". Among other topics, he provides advice to his clients on the Preparatory Action on Defence Research.[94] He is also affiliated with several lobby organisations such as the Kangaroo Group, Europe et Défense and Eurodéfense.[95]

Klaus Thoma, who was also a sherpa[96] in the Group of Personalities, has a background in the arms industry where he used to work for Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm (MBB), a company which in 1989 merged into what would become Airbus.[97] He later became one of the leading researchers of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, a private application-based research institution which is involved in defence and security-related research.[98]

Similarly, in 2015 the EDA commissioned a study called the 'Study on Industrial and Technological Competences in the Naval Sector'. The study was conducted by a consortium of naval defence companies (Sea Europe, Damen, DCNS, Fincantieri, Navanta and TKMS). The conclusion of the study was unsurprising. Although the study portrayed the naval industry as existing out of "*healthy, capable, diversified and successful export-orientated companies*", the study declared that the industry urgently needs a naval-oriented research programme starting from 2021. The study continued by stating that the Preparatory Action could play a key role in this regard. In addition, the study pleaded for a "*regular exchange of ideas between the EDA and the major players in the shipbuilding sector*".[99]

4. The European Defence Action Plan: **copying the advice of the arms industry**

> "For the first time, the Commission is now tabling a European Defence Action Plan which focuses on capability needs and supports the European defence industry."
>
> *European Defence Action Plan, presented by the European Commission on 30 November 2016.*

On 30 November 2016 the European Commission published its Defence Action Plan aimed at strengthening the Defence Single Market, reducing duplications and improving the competitiveness of the EU defence industry.[100] The Action Plan was highly anticipated by the arms industry. Half a year before, the ASD published a position paper, 'Considerations on the European Commission's Defence Action Plan', with several concrete proposals. Many of which were almost literally copied into the Defence Action Plan (see table 4).

Most importantly, the industry not only calls for research, but also for 'market uptake', guaranteed with European funds. As governments are the only customers of military equipment, this was actually a call for guaranteed procurement of developed weapon systems by the EU and Member States. In 2015 Eric Trappier, CEO of Dassault and president of ASD, called market uptake the most important issue for industry, as this would create "*new business opportunities for the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB)*".[101]

Industry was wary of a 'valley of death', the gap between the research of new technologies and the development, production and procurement of these weapons. During a workshop in March 2015 with the EDA and the European Commission, industry representatives stressed that future collaborative programmes are absolutely crucial for the PADR to succeed.[102]

The GoP mirrored the position of the defence industry, which stated that "*only continuous investment in next-generation defence technologies will sustain the industry in the long term*". "[103] Michael Barnier mirrored this statement in an opinion article in Le Monde by saying that "*the absence of big European programmes hinders the consolidation and competitiveness of our defence industry*".[104] In other words, big scale arms development programmes are necessary to keep the defence industry in shape. The question, which

Table 4: comparison between recommendations made by the defence industry (left) and the Defence Action Plan (right)

ASD position paper July 2016	European Defence Action Plan November 2016
The EDRP [European Defence Research Programme] will need to be comparable in scale to the national defence R&T budgets of the big member states – i.e. circa €500m/year.	[The EDRP] may need an estimated annual budget of EUR 500 million[…]. This amount would place the EU among the top 4 of defence research & technology investors in Europe.
We encourage the European Commission to announce in its Defence Action Plan its intention to take an initiative at the Board of Directors of the EIB to remove defence and policing from the list of excluded activities.	The Commission will support, within the decision-making bodies of the EIB, the adaptation of the EIB lending criteria to the defence sector within the limits of the Treaties.
We urge the European Commission to explore with Member States the possibility to classify defence expenditure as "productive investment", therefore making it eligible for the Two Pack's exclusion from the Fiscal Compact.	National capital contributions to the "capability window" will be treated as "one-offs" under the Stability and Growth Pact, which means that they will be discounted from the structural fiscal effort expected to be accomplished by Member States.

Source: Considerations on the European Commission's Defence Action Plan, 4 July 2016, Aerospace and Defence Industries Europe (ASD).

weapons should be developed and if they are actually needed, is not even asked.

As the report Market Forces poignantly states, the aim is to create a self-fulfilling loop of supply and demand in which EU funds both pay for the development of new technologies and for their subsequent purchase (see figure 2).[105]

The European Defence Action Plan was closely modelled on proposals made by the industry. Most important was the creation of a European Defence Fund. The primary focus of the Defence Action Plan was clear: supporting the arms industry. In September 2016, when Juncker announced the creation of a European Defence Fund, the European Commissioner Bieńkowska reacted almost jubilant in a tweet.

Elżbieta Bieńkowska @EBienkowskaEU · 14 sep. 2016

#SOTEU - good news for defence industry: new European Defence Fund before the end of the year! europa.eu/!rh98Kf

2 21 20

The Defence Fund consists of:

1. A 'research window' of 0.5 billion euros a year modelled on the recommendations made by the Group of Personalities.
2. A 'capability window' of 5 billion euros a year (2021-2027) which would guarantee joint development and procurement of weapons by Member States. The costs of the arms developed and procured through the capability window would mainly be carried by Member States (80 percent), but the Commission proposed to co-fund (20 percent) the development of prototypes if Member States commit to procure the final product. To stimulate states to jointly procure weapons. Contributions by Member States to the capability window would be deducted from fiscal deficits.

Other proposals included in the Defence Action Plan are:[106]

- The extension of the mandate of the European Investment Bank in order to finance the defence sector (see box Ethical Banks (…)).
- Opening up regional development funds to the defence industry. In 2017 a budget of € 800.000 from the EU programme for small and medium-sized enterprises COSME was earmarked for the defence industry.[107]
- Supporting skills in the defence sector through the Erasmus+ programme for education, youth and sports.

The Defence Fund was heavily condemned by the scientist group Scientists for Global Responsibility which stated that "*we need a much stronger focus on R&D which contributes to tackling the root causes of conflict*".[108] A petition on the website wemove.eu opposing the proposals of the European Commission harnessed more than 140,000 signatures.[109]

Figure 1: European Defence Fund – before and after 2020 (source: European Commission)

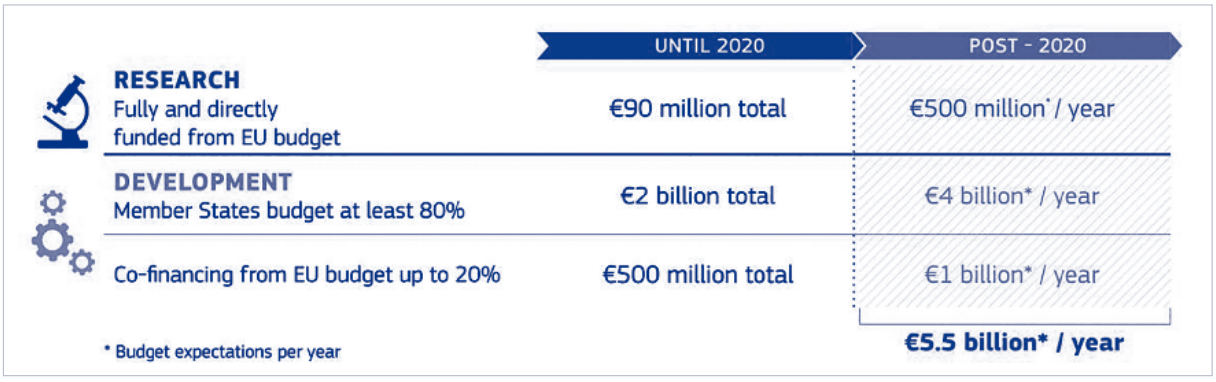
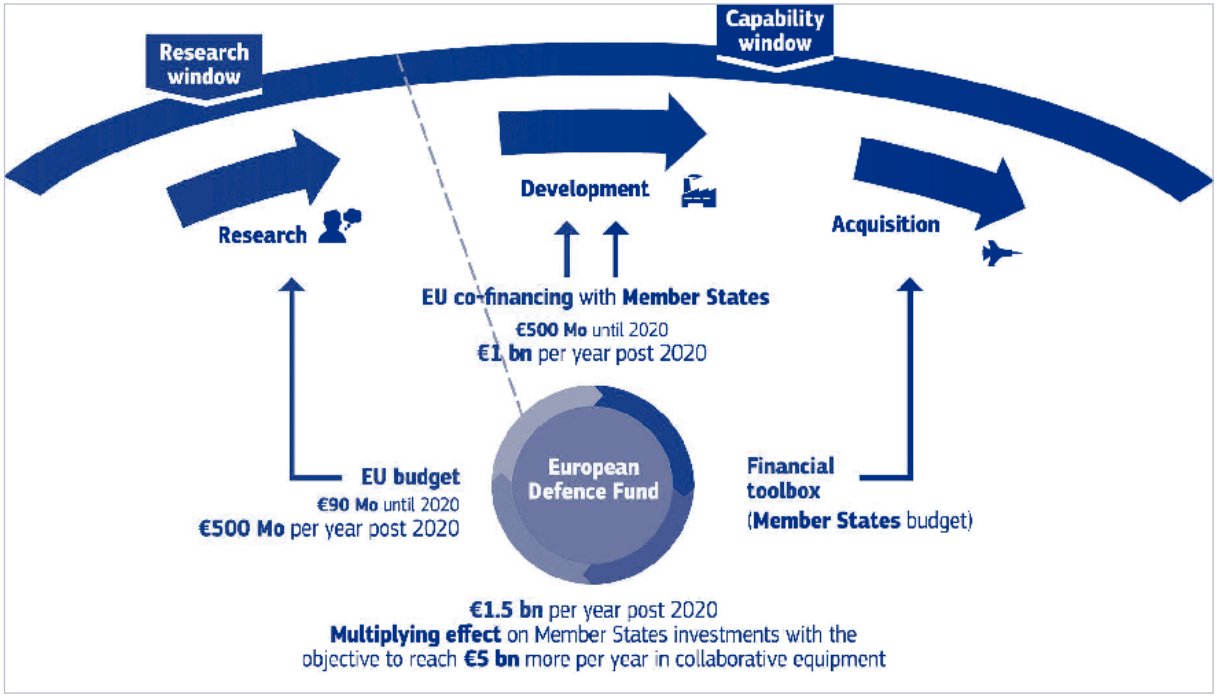


Figure 2: the European Defence Fund – a publicly funded, self-fulfilling loop between supply and demand



(source: European Commission)

Ethical banks call on the EIB not to invest in the production of weapons

The European Investment Bank is one of the biggest international public financial institutions operating globally. It had more than EUR 83 billion of signed operations in 2016. In recent years, following a decision by the European Council to increase its capital and the setting-up of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI – better known as the Juncker fund), the EIB has played an important macroeconomic role in the EU. Although not uncontested, the EIB claims to invest primarily in socially and ecologically responsible projects.[110] Activities relating to *"munitions and weapons, military/police equipment or infrastructure"* are consequently excluded. In the European Defence Action Plan, the European Commission proposed to extend the Juncker Fund, and by extension the EIB, to fund the defence industry.

In response to this proposal 28 organisations, including ethical banks, campaigning groups for more ethical financing and peace groups, called on the Member States and the European Parliament to halt this move. The groups stated that "*an industry with a track record in human rights violations and war crimes should not receive money with the aim of increasing its global competitiveness*". The letter continued by saying that investing in arms would divert funding from much needed investments in environmentally and socially responsible projects.

While the European Parliament does not have any competency to change the mandate of the EIB, the Parliament did discuss the extension of the Juncker fund to investments in the arms industry, which is managed by the EIB. The Parliament was heavily divided on the question. The European Peoples Party (EPP) filed amendments to open up the Juncker Fund to the defence industry, while Greens and the Left (GUE) filed amendments to explicitly exclude the arms industry. A compromise was reached whereby none of the amendments were accepted, leaving the mandate as it is.

4.1 Not fast enough: time for a "*big bang*" in defence spending

Two weeks after the launch of the Defence Action Plan, Javier Solana, former EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security, complained in an opinion article that the Defence Action Plan was not enough. "*This is hardly the big bang the EU needs to create a military-industrial complex*", he wrote.[111] He further noted that 3.5 billion euros for defence research were hardly enough to "*turbo-boost defence spending*".

In June 2017 the Commission announced a proposal which would hurry up the implementation of the Defence Fund. The proposal contained the creation of a European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) encompassing 500 million euros, with an added contribution by Member States on a project-basis of two billion euros.[112]

As European budgets are already attributed to other programmes, the Commission announced it would divert money away from already running programmes to the Defence Industrial Development Programme. The EU Observer newspaper reported that several of these programmes are contributing to sustainable development and the protection of the environment.[113]

Budgetary implications of the Defence Industrial Development Programme 2019-2020 to other EU programmes

- ⬇ – € 145 million Connecting Europe Facility, infrastructure and energy programme
- ⬇ – € 135 million EGNOS and Galileo, EU satellite programmes
- ⬇ – € 80 million ITER, a nuclear fusion power programme
- ⬇ – € 15 million European Earth Observation Programme

€ 125 million unallocated margins under the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020

Source: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme aiming at supporting the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the EU defence industry, p. 25-26

4.2 Arms export controls: "*excessive regulation*"

> "Domestic demand coupled with export success is essential in order for Europe to retain viable and globally competitive defence industrial players."
>
> *Group of Personalities report, February 2016*

The arms trade is a booming business. Instability in the Middle East and rising military spending have pushed the arms trade to its highest volume since the end of the Cold War.[114] The United States, Europe and Russia continue to dominate the market.[115] During the period 2012-2016, EU Member States were the second largest arms supplier in the world (26 percent). Only the United States sells more weapons (33 percent of the global arms trade is American).[116]

EU Member States have a long history of arms sales to authoritarian regimes. Out of the 51 authoritarian regimes on the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index, 43 were able to buy weapons in the EU.[117] The Middle East figures highly in the top 10 of destinations. In 2015 Saudi Arabia was the most important export destination, along with Egypt (2), the United Arab Emirates (8), Turkey (9) and Iraq (10).[118] Although carefully worded, the verdict of the research institute SIPRI is clear;

"*The USA and several West European states continued to be the major arms suppliers to most countries in the [Middle East] throughout 2012–16. It is likely that arms imports have contributed to the instability, violent conflict and human rights violations in the region.*"[119]

EU policies are directly aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the European defence industry, and arms exports to third countries are considered as a token of the industries' success. European weapon programmes are

seen as essential in improving the competitiveness of the European defence industry.

While the GoP report admitted that arms exports are one of the reasons that Europe is losing its military technological edge, the GoP at the same time identified arms exports as a proof of the competitive advantage of European industry in the face of emerging competitors. To maintain this technological advantage, the report stated, "*more European efforts in defence R&T are necessary.*"[120]

The European defence industry sees the lack of European consolidation of the defence market as a barrier to their success on third markets. For example Mauro Moretti, former president of ASD and CEO of Finmeccanica, said in the EDA magazine European Defence Matters that at the moment "*not Europe […] but single companies propose their products on the [international] market*". According to Moretti this model inhibits arms export success. In the long term "*unique and distinctive European industrial champions […] may be capable of entering the global market. To obtain this result it is necessary to follow cooperative models […] with a strong core of technological competencies and adequate size to successfully compete at an international level.*"[121]

Export controls are seen by the European Commission as inhibiting the growth of the European defence industry. Guillaume De La Brosse, adviser to the European Commission and policy assistant at the European Political Strategy Centre, wrote that European defence programmes should "*not be disrupted by excessive conditions imposed by the Commission (especially concerning the industrial setting up and on export policy).*"[122]

The proposal for a European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) reflected this. The proposal stated that the EDIDP would eventually lead to lower costs of military equipment, which would have "*a positive effect on exports*".[123] The Commission made it clear from the outset that it did not want to inhibit arms exports, despite the financial contributions made by the European Union. The EDIDP proposal stated that "*the Union financial support should not affect the export of products, equipment or technologies, and it should not affect the discretion of Member States regarding policy on the export of defence related products. The Union financial support should not affect Member States' export policies on defence related products.*"[124]

A Saudi Eurofighter Typhoon manufactured by a consortium of European companies (Airbus, BAE Sysems and Finmeccanica). Saudi Arabia has committed systematic violations of international humanitarian law in the war in Yemen. "

5. Drone-fare: the shape of war to come

The autonomous border guard TALOS

> "The very phrase war on terror is irrational. It is like saying a war on war. It's nonsense. You're slipping into this possibility of a perpetual war."
>
> *Clare Short, British Minister for International Development 1997-2003*[125]

While the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan at the beginning of the 21th century had a relatively heavy footprint in terms of boots on the grounds, foreign military engagements have increasingly become 'light-footed'. Foreign interventions are increasingly invisible wars. An all-encompassing presence in distant battlefields through the use of targeted killings by ever increasing autonomous weapons and covert operations by special forces.[126] Researcher Ben Hayes described this as a world "*policed by computer systems, combat robots and drone planes, [whereby] populations are subject to full spectrum dominance*".[127]

The increasing sophistication of weaponry has led to a total disjunction between the technologically superior side and the 'receiving side'. As Richard Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, put it;

"*The ultra-sophistication of the new weaponry and the accompanying military tactics create a new divide in the military sphere, giving rise to an era of virtually "casualty-free" and one-sided wars where the devastation and victimisation are shifted almost totally to the technologically inferior side.*"[128]

The influence of the defence industry on the set-up of the EU military research programmes risks to only further this trend without any serious reflection on the consequences. Swarm systems, autonomous weapons and drones are the technological priorities of the Pilot Project and the Preparatory Action. The constant mantra of EU policy makers that "*there is no security without defence, no defence without capabilities and no capabilities without industry*" seems to be reversed.[129] The initiative for the European strategy has been outsourced to the industry. Rather than a reflection of

what security means and how to ensure it, the European strategy is dominated by developing and selling new capabilities. Supporting the defence industry has become a goal in itself.

Meanwhile actual security challenges remain unanswered and mistakes from past policy choices perpetuated. At a high cost.

The official British inquiry about the intervention in Iraq was scathing. The intervention was seen as one of the triggering factors in the proliferation of extremist jihadi groups in Iraq and across the region, of which Islamic State is only the latest manifestation.[130]

Similarly, six years after the NATO intervention in Libya, the country is still wrecked by competing armed groups. A report by the British Committee on Foreign Affairs stated that the UK government focused exclusively on the military option. The inability to contain the spread of weapons after the fall of the Gaddafi regime, many of which had been delivered by Western governments, led to further instability in Libya and increased terrorism in Africa and the Middle East. The parliamentary report further stated that "*given its role in the conflict and subsequent destabilization in Libya, the UK has a particular responsibility in relation to migrants and refugees, an issue which has been exacerbated by the collapse of the Libyan state*".[131]

Instead of taking responsibility for its foreign policy, the EU has on the contrary militarised its border policies at an astonishing speed. The EU border policies are mirroring trends taking place on the battlefield. High-tech and autonomous military equipment, such as drones and surveillance equipment, is increasingly used by the EU and its Member States to tackle migration. Between 2007 and 2010 EU funds were provided to 545 border surveillance systems which covered a total of 8279 kilometres of EU borders and 22,347 items of border surveillance equipment.[132] The most striking research project by far was TALOS which aimed to develop an automated border control robot. The project is infamous for giving research grants to the Israeli defence company Israel Aerospace Industries.[133] Although the project was deemed as to complicated for actual use, it shows the direction of EU funded border security projects.

Not surprisingly, research has pointed out that it is the arms industry which has benefited most from this trend towards the militarization of the borders.[134] Since 2002 arms and security companies have received 316 million euros for research projects in the field of border control.[135]

Not only has the EU tried to strengthen its borders, the EU has also made moves to (militarily) externalize its refugee policy to third countries. In 2016 the European Commission launched a proposal to use EU development aid under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) to equip border security forces in order to curb migration at the 'source'. This equipment would include military aid.[136]The joint communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament noted that '*the direct financing of the military [in third countries] is not possible. Due to exceptional circumstances in some partner countries, it was important to close this gap*".[137] In a position paper the ASD had previously called on the EU to make it possible for development aid to be used for the financing of military equipment to equip militaries in third countries. The paper noted that "*up until now, IcSP has funded mainly activities of international organisations, NGOs, Think Tanks, etc. We believe the natural partner for the supply of EU-funded equipment and services should be European industries*".[138]

According to the news website EU Observer, militias such as the Rapid Support Force in Sudan might benefit from EU military aid. The Rapid Support Force is infamous as most of its members are drawn from the Janjaweed, a militia well-known for its human rights violations.[139] As Saferworld noted this "*reliance on 'train and equip' programmes risks further militarising contexts that are characterised by weak and abusive governance.*"[140]

6. Concluding remarks: Towards a **permanent war economy**?

> "A society that decides that the bulk of its budget is going to arms manufacturing, has made a moral decision. A decision that militarism is more important than the creation of well-being for the population."
>
> *Vijay Prashad, historian and journalist*[141]

As this report has shown, a disturbing dynamic is going on at the EU level. What started out as a peace project, is now subsidising an industry which exports war. The competitiveness of the arms industry has become a policy goal in and of itself.

The European Defence Fund creates a self-fulfilling and continuous loop between supply and demand, funded with public money. This creates the spectre of a European permanent war economy. An economy which has to be constantly funded by public means to remain competitive, without answering the security challenges the world faces.

The military technologies developed now, shape the wars of the future. The European Union has already started developing autonomous systems through the Pilot Project and the Preparatory Action. Despite warnings from both the scientific community as well as the European Parliament, these decisions to develop autonomous weapons are taken without any public debate.

This narrow focus on technology to tackle insecurity, excludes alternative ways of handling conflicts. Programmes for the prevention and resolution of conflicts under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) in 2017 only received 29 million euros.[142] The disastrous impact of European arms exports is not even considered. On the contrary, arms exports are seen as a sign of a thriving defence industrial base. Modest calls for an upgrade of the arms export control policy remain unheard.[143]

The European Defence Fund will not lead to more security, because it is not meant to lead to more security. The fund is an industrial stimulus fund for the major European arms-multinationals, located in only a few European countries.[144] The undue influence of these companies at every level of the decision-making process has led to an outcome which solely takes economic considerations into account. This raises questions on the democratic legitimacy of these policies.

In 2017 an alliance of civil society organisations called on the EU to "*invest in jobs and research projects which contribute to the peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts rather than to subsidise research for arms production*".[145] CIMULACT, a European project funded under the EU research programme Horizon 2020, shows that the research areas European citizens believe to be most relevant for society are related to ecological challenges, health, education and a good work-life balance.[146] Similarly, most Europeans are opposed to increased military expenditures and do not think 'hard power' is effective in combating terrorism.[147]

The European Union is at a critical juncture between furthering the interests of the military-industrial complex or building a safer Europe based on democratic participation. Only a sustained struggle for a democratic and peaceful Europe has a chance of success. As former US President Eisenhower said during his farewell address:

"*Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.*"

Annexes

Annex 1: list of meetings between industry and DG Grow on the Preparatory Action on Defence Research – as provided by the European Commission under a Freedom of Information request[148]

Date	Representative of stakeholders	DG GROW Representative	Comments
22.03.2013	REDACTED (Company)	Martijn Hendriksen	Meeting with REDACTED (Name)
25.03.2013	ASD / REDACTED (Company)	Martijn Hendriksen	Meeting with REDACTED (Name) from REDACTED (Company) / ASD
22.10.2013	REDACTED (Company)	Paul Weissenberg	Meeting with REDACTED (Name), Director General of REDACTED (Company) – 22 October at 16:00
06.11.2013	REDACTED (Company)	President Barroso	G.5 - contribution to the briefing No 2013/412 for President Barroso - deadline 25 October 2013cob - meeting with REDACTED (Company) on 06/11/2013
09.11.2013	Unknown - Multiple companies	Tajani	Italian National Debate on Defence
21.11.2013	AmCham	Philippe Brunet	"Security and Defence - Together for the European growth"
26.11.2013	Unknown - Multiple companies	Paul Weissenberg	Berlin Security Conference 2013
23.01.2014	Unknown - Multiple companies	President Barroso	G.5 contribution - Briefing No 34 for President Barroso - deadline 13 January 2014 (COB - World Economic Forum (Davos) on 23-24 January
17.01.2014	ASD	Philippe Brunet	G5 - Briefing for PhB for the meeting with ASD on Friday 17/01.
05.02.2014	REDACTED (Company)	Calleja	G.5 - Briefing for Mr Calleja - VISITE DE REDACTED (Name) - 05/02/2014 A 9H
13.02.2014	REDACTED (Company)	Calleja	G5 - Briefing for Meeting REDACTED (Company) 13/02/2014
03.03.2014	REDACTED (Company)	Calleja	G5 - BRIEFING for Mr Calleja, Dinner with Ambassador COPS Nicolas PASCUAL DE LA PARTE + REDACTED (Company) - 03/03/2014
04.03.2014	Unknown - Multiple companies	President Barroso	High Level Conference
13.03.2014	ASD	Philippe Brunet	G.5 contribution - PhB Briefing request for the meeting with ASD on 13 March
02.04.2014	Unknown - Multiple companies	Calleja	G5- Briefing Invitación a participar en la Jornada sobre la Industria Europea de la Defensa y su repercusión para España
15.04.2014	REDACTED (Company)	Calleja	G.5 - Briefing for Mr Calleja - MEETING WITH REDACTED (Name) NEW REDACTED (Company) REPRESENTATIVE IN BRUSSELS 15/04/2014
25.04.2014	ASD	Philippe Brunet	ASD Annual Conference

Date	Representative of stakeholders	DG GROW Representative	Comments
02.06.2014	REDACTED (Company)	REDACTED (Name)	G5 Briefing for REDACTED (Name) - AP dinner with REDACTED (Company) on 02/06/2014
08.07.2014	REDACTED (Company)	Philippe Brunet	G.5 contribution - REDACTED (Company) discussion on Preparatory Action , H2020, EDRS
30.03.2015	Unknown - Multiple companies	Philippe Brunet	Grow K4 - Invitations to Member States and Industry for the Workshop on CSDP-related research on 30 March 2015
27.01.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	1st Sherpa meeting
30.03.2015	See GoP Report	Bienkowska	GoP meeting
21.04.2015	ASD	Philippe Brunet	GROW K4 - Briefing for PB: rendez-vous avec REDACTED (Name)
29.04.2015	REDACTED (Company)	Philippe Brunet	K4 - Briefing for PB: REDACTED (Company) - meeting REDACTED (Name) / Brunet - June Council on Defence
06.05.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	2nd Sherpa meeting
08.06.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	3rd Sherpa meeting
06.07.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	4th Sherpa meeting
14.09.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	5th Sherpa meeting
19.10.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	6th Sherpa meeting
11.11.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	7th Sherpa meeting
17.11.2015	ASD	Pierre Delsaux	Briefing for Mr Pierre Delsaux - meeting with ASD Chairman of Defence unit REDACTED (Name), 17 November pm
17.11.2015	See GoP Report	Bienkowska	GoP meeting
08.12.2015	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	8th Sherpa meeting
14.01.2016	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	9th Sherpa meeting
24.01.2016	Multiple companies, mainly SMEs	REDACTED (Name)	Info day "Access to EU Funding for Defence research and innovation projects"
27.01.2016	See GoP Report	REDACTED (Name)	10th Sherpa meeting
07.04.2016	See enclosed list (editor's note: list was not enclosed)	REDACTED (Name)	Working Group on IPRs meeting VI - Draft agenda, draft minutes and list of participants - Brussels, 07/04/2016

Annex 2: the EU defence lobby[149]

Company	Expenditure	Number of lobbyists
ASD	298000	11
SAAB	199999	2
Rheinmetall	299999	1,75
EOS	299999	8
Airbus	1999999	12
BAE	199999	0,5
Leanardo	299999	4
MBDA	99999	0,75
Safran	495000	5,5
Rolls Royce	1249999	3,25
Thales	300000	2,5
Indra	999999	4
Kangaroo Group	299999	2,75
DCNS	199999	7
Diehl	220000	2
GKN	199999	1,75
Aernnova	399999	4
Fraunhofer Gesellschaft	9999	4,5
TNO	9999	23
European Cyber Security Organisation	0	2,25
Fokker Technologies	99999	2
Total	8082985	104,5

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149 Based on information from lobbyfacts.eu

In 2016 the European Union took the unprecedented step of setting up a military research programme worth 90 million euros, the so-called Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR). This is only a first step. In the long run, the European Commission proposes the establishment of a European Defence Fund which would allocate more than 40 billion euros to the research, development and procurement of arms. *One group stands to benefit and that is the defence industry.* This has led a narrow definition of security challenges and the responses to these challenges. The effect is a de facto militarization of EU border management practices and the European foreign policy.

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