
EU Commission: first European Defence Fund (EDF) programme approved, €1.2 billion available for “cooperation to become the norm”

The European Commission adopted the first European Defence Fund (EDF) annual work programme and 23 related calls for proposals for a total of €1.2 billion in funding available for collaborative defence research and development projects. The EDF has a budget of €7.953 billion, of which one-third will finance competitive and collaborative research projects and two-thirds will complement Member States' investment by co-financing the costs for defence capabilities development following the research stage. It is the “first-ever dedicated defence programme”, a statement from the Commission reads, aimed at making cooperation in this area “the norm”. Other objectives of the EDF include reducing fragmentation of the EU defence capabilities, and enhancing competitiveness of the EU defence industry and the interoperability of products and technologies. In particular, around €700 million will be allocated to the preparation of large-scale and complex defence platforms and systems, and around €100 million to critical technologies which will enhance the performance and resilience of defence equipment such as artificial intelligence and cloud for military operations, semiconductors in the field of infrared and radiofrequency components. Other funding will increase synergies with other civilian EU policies and programmes, notably in the field of space (around €50 million), medical response (around €70 million), and digital and cyber (around €100 million). 30% of funding will be allocated to SMEs.

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