

**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative
resolution on flagship European defence projects of
common interest**

- 1. Rapporteur:** Lucia ANNUNZIATA (S&D / IT)
- 2. References:** 2025/2144(INI) / A10-0014/2026 / P10_TA(2026)0080
- 3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 11 March 2026
- 4. Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE)
- 5. Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

In light of the current geopolitical environment, the resolution emphasises the importance of addressing the gaps in the EU's and its Member States' collective strategic capabilities, as these gaps significantly undermine their deterrence capabilities and their ability to sustain large-scale military operations over an extended period. The resolution acknowledged the efforts made and called for strengthening cooperation and interoperability in close coordination with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The resolution recommends that the development of European Readiness Flagship projects should build on specific objectives, a timetable, implementation steps, funding proposals, an operational concept, clear governance mechanisms, and technological scope. The resolution acknowledges the contribution of the projects to the efficiency, innovative capacity and thus competitiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), while noting that immediate defence needs require supplies or support from non-EU countries. The resolution called for aligning the objectives of the flagship projects with the EU's agreed-upon defence goals, as well as with existing instruments, such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), and the European Defence Projects of Common Interest (EDPCIs). These projects must also be based on a shared vision and effective coordination among all stakeholders. The resolution recommends opening projects to Ukraine, associated countries and countries that have concluded a security and defence partnership with the EU. Furthermore, these projects should address innovative technological areas that are critical to contemporary defence. Additionally, they should include measures to strengthen resilience and reinforce the protection of critical infrastructures and systems. Further, stronger synergies should be fostered between research, innovation, and industrial development within the EU's defence ecosystem. Finally, the resolution considers that dedicated funding under the next

multiannual financial framework (MFF) is essential to guarantee the adequate long-term financing of flagship projects.

6. Response to requests and overview of actions taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:

Developing defence capabilities through flagship projects in priority areas

In reference to paragraph 8, the Commission expects European Defence Projects of Common Interest (EDPCIs), as a new instrument within the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) Regulation, to be enablers and contributors of EU-wide flagship projects. As part of the implementation of EDIP, the Commission launched a call for expression of interest to identify EDPCIs with a view to having a Council implementing act formally identifying a list of EDPCIs adopted by the end of summer 2026. The Commission welcomes the commitment of Member States and Norway to preparing and consolidating project proposals for possible EDPCIs in response to this call. In parallel, the Commission adopted the EDIP Work Programme¹ on 30 March 2026 that specifically earmarks EUR 325 million out of its EUR 1.5 billion in support of EDPCIs. Discussions are ongoing within the EDIP programme committee to clarify the mechanisms that will allow to finance EDPCIs once formally identified by the Council act. A proper governance of EDPCIs (and of the flagships to which they contribute) will be instrumental to the delivery of tangible results and the defence readiness of the EU.

On paragraph 9 regarding the implementation of pilot projects involving a smaller number of Member States, the Commission recalls, that Member States are responsible for setting military capability development priorities. This is also valid for Member States active in the capability area of drones and counter-drones, whereby ambitions are shaped in the framework of a dedicated capability coalition with the support of the European Defence Agency (EDA). The Commission acts as a facilitator and does so by providing support through its funding tools, for example EDIP, EDF, the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument².

The Commission also agrees with the Parliament's observation that drones exemplify the increasing incorporation of cyber capabilities, networked operations and technologies such as Artificial Intelligence into systems used in warfare. This underscores the importance of synergies between the development of capabilities and developing Europe's excellence in digital technologies underpinning modern systems, as is recognised in the Action Plan on Drone and Counter-Drone

¹ [2026 EDIP Work Programme](#)

² [EUR-Lex - 02025R1106-20250528 - EN](#)

Security³.

Regarding paragraph 10, the Commission fully agrees with the Parliament on the importance of the inclusion of measures to strengthen forward resilience, reinforce infrastructure protection measures and cyber defence capabilities, and ensure regional interoperability and full operational readiness in case of crisis. The Joint Communication Preserving Peace - Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030⁴, puts forward concrete steps to close Europe's capability gaps. The proposed flagships are conceived as catalysts to drive political attention to big challenges that a single Member State could not address alone. The EDIP Work Programme is, as mentioned above, not only crucial for the support of EDPCIs but also instrumental to enhance and modernise Europe's defence industry, boost production capacity and secure technological advancement and resilience as whole.

In line with the EU Preparedness Union Strategy⁵, the Commission is also working to strengthen crisis preparedness in the eastern border regions to protect populations, economies, industries, and ensure the resilience and functionality of critical, defence and dual-use infrastructure, including in healthcare systems.

Further, as stated in the Communication Strong Regions for a safe Europe⁶, resilience considerations will be integrated into and mainstreamed across the EU eastern border regions initiatives, applying the principle of 'preparedness by design'.

Concerning the recommendation in paragraph 12 on opening the projects to the participation of Ukraine, associated countries and partner countries, the Commission refers to Article 35 of the EDIP Regulation⁷, setting out that Member States and associated countries, as well as Ukraine, shall be given a genuine opportunity to participate in EDPCIs. In line with this article, the Commission shall also verify that all Member States and associated countries, and, where relevant, Ukraine, were informed of the emergence of a project and were given the opportunity to participate.

In view of this, as part of the on-going process, the Commission welcomes the foreseen participation of Ukraine and Norway in several of project proposals for possible EDPCIs, as well as their participation in the EDIP Programme Committee meetings where the project proposals are being presented.

³ [EUR-Lex - 52026DC0081 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁴ [EUR-Lex - 52025JC0027 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁵ [EUR-Lex - 52025JC0130 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁶ [EUR-Lex - 52026DC0082 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁷ [Regulation - 2025/2643 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

Identifying and ensuring the proper set-up and implementation of flagship projects

The Commission shares the Parliament's view on the integration of cyber domain and digital technologies into EU core defence priorities as outlined in paragraph 14. As stated in the Joint Communication Preserving Peace - Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030, defence readiness entails developing and acquiring the capabilities that are needed for modern warfare. To ensure peace through deterrence, Europe's defence posture and capabilities must also be ready for the battlefields of tomorrow, in line with the changing nature of warfare. Furthermore, cyber, along with Artificial Intelligence and electronic warfare, is one of the priority capability areas identified by Member States.

Digitalisation and therefore the necessary cybersecurity are already an important part of most, if not all, the proposed flagships, as the Commission agrees that cyber resilience is essential for the security of both civilian and dual-use critical infrastructure, and of the defence sector. While EU cybersecurity policies such as the Network Information System (NIS) 2 Directive⁸, and the Cyber Resilience Act⁹ support preparedness against cyber threats in their respective fields of application, the defence community is invited to apply non-legally binding recommendations inspired by NIS2, to contribute to the resilience of the defence sector.

In response to the Parliament's call for the establishment of clear short-, medium- and long-term strategies for developing projects in paragraph 16, the Commission states, that it only proposed flagships with a view to catalysing political drive, incentivising mobilisation of efforts and resources and accelerating delivery. It is up to Member States to define and advance the work. As already noted above, the Commission's defence industrial programmes can be informed to best support Member States' efforts.

The Commission concurs with the Parliament's view taken in paragraph 19. Full conceptual and procedural alignment between implementation frameworks of projects and existing instruments is essential. Therefore, EDF, EDIP, including the EDPCIs, which build on PESCO experience, follow this approach. These instruments have been designed to consider existing initiatives, including those in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) area, to ensure coherence and mutual reinforcement.

Referencing to what was outlined in connection with paragraph 16, in addition pursuant to Article 35(2)(b) and (c) of the EDIP

⁸ [EUR-Lex - 02022L2555-20221227 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁹ [EUR-Lex - 02024R2847-20241120 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

Regulation, EDPCIs will by design be consistent with the objectives of the 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence¹⁰, with the defence capability priorities commonly agreed by Member States within the framework of the CFSP, in particular in the context of the Capability Development Plan (CDP), and with the collaborative opportunities identified in the context of Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), and take into account PESCO and EDA initiatives and projects.

Regarding the relationship between EDPCIs and defence readiness flagship projects, the Commission notes that EDPCIs, which are collaborative industrial projects, can be viewed as a tool for realising the flagship projects, which represent the overarching political vision, and also integrate an operational dimension.

Governance of flagship projects and the role of Parliament

In connection with the Parliament's suggestion to further present proposals for flagship projects made in paragraph 25, the Commission recalls that Member States are at the forefront of defence capability development. It has already proposed four ambitious flagship projects for their consideration: Air Shield, Space Shield as well as the European Drone Defence Initiative, and Eastern Flank Watch, already named above. Member States are engaging in various forums to bring these political concepts to fruition and play a crucial role in ensuring coherence with NATO targets, EU objectives, and national efforts.

The recommendation to be involved in the implementation of EDPCIs made in paragraph 27, is in line with the procedure of the EDIP Regulation, which provides that the High Representative(i) should be consulted before the Commission tables its proposal for the Council implementing act(s) identifying EDPCIs and (ii) could be involved (as observer) in EDPCIs' implementation if decided by the participating Member States.

By involving the High Representative, EDPCIs will also benefit from the European Union Military Committee's (EUMC) expertise, particularly concerning operational and capability aspects.

Ensuring the financing of flagship projects in the long term

Lastly, in connection with paragraph 32, it is worth noting that Member States participating in an EDPCI will submit to the Commission, on an annual basis, a joint report on the implementation of the EDPCI activities as outlined in Article 35(17) of the EDIP Regulation. In addition, the Commission will manage the EU grants financially supporting EDPCIs and proceed

¹⁰ [2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence](#)

with payments once the agreed milestones are completed. This should ensure due monitoring of the projects.