



France: Private Military Companies - Agile Power Tool

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November 26, 2025 marks a turning point for French projection strategy. The new decree legalizing and framing Private Military Companies (PMC) is not just a regulatory act, but the affirmation of a **new defense and security doctrine** designed for the 21st century. Paris, with pragmatism and strategic intelligence, aligns itself with successful global models, embracing the operational agility necessary to maintain its status as a world power in an increasingly fluid and competitive landscape.

By calling these entities **“reference operators”** of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, the government is not privatizing force, but **optimizing** it. This formal recognition allows France to integrate a highly specialized and flexible resource for cooperation tasks, *mentorship*, training, and logistical support, freeing regular armed forces for high-intensity and deterrence missions.

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A Geopolitical Advantage and the European Guarantee

The strategic move is clear: France chooses not to relinquish its influence in crucial theaters. Limiting them to entities created within the European Union or the European Economic Area is not a limitation, but a **guarantee of sovereignty and political control**. This ensures that the tool remains firmly within the European sphere of interest, unlike other global actors who rely on opaque mercenarism.

By authorizing PMCs to transmit skills and train partner armies, the decree creates a **military soft power device** that is quick, effective, and low-profile. This allows Paris to:

- **Bypass political and bureaucratic constraints** that would slow down direct military intervention.
- **Maintain a vital presence** in strategic areas (Sahel, Middle East, West Africa) without the excessive political exposure and human costs resulting from the deployment of regular units.

France is not admitting its limits, it is **turning challenges into opportunities**. After the complex withdrawals from the Sahel, PMCs represent the ideal vector for a **discreet but persistent presence**, actively countering the expansion of state and private actors, such as the Russians, who operate without respect for international law. PMCs are the **modern and surgical** response to "hybrid warfare".

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Synergy with the Legion and the Defense Industry

This new tool does not conflict with the Légion étrangère, but is a **strategic complement** to it. While the Legion remains the backbone of elite force projection, PMCs offer the flexibility and specialization needed to lighten the operational load on the armed forces at a time of increasing global demand and recruitment tension.

Moreover, PMCs are a fundamental lever for the **French defense industry**. Delegating training, maintenance, and technical assistance activities to private operators with state licenses allows Paris to:

1. **Support and make military exports more competitive** (for example, offering complete "turnkey" packages that include weapon systems, training, and security).
2. **Strengthen industrial agreements** with partners, ensuring continuous and effective technical *follow-up*.

With this decree, France demonstrates it has a keen vision: modern military action requires **agility and diversification**. Private Military Companies, as a "hinge" between the State and its external scenarios, represent an intermediate solution of great pragmatism. In an era where medium powers struggle to maintain their weight, Paris has chosen to **intelligently expand its range of tools** to remain an unavoidable player on the world stage. A strategic move that is destined to set a precedent.

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