



The New European Trench: Drones, Satellites, and Military Cooperation by 2030

Published on 17/10/2025

The European Union defines its military vision for the next decade: more cooperation, more industrial integration, and true strategic autonomy. With the presentation of the **“Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030”**, Brussels launches an ambitious plan to strengthen common defense capabilities and reduce dependence on external suppliers.

The goal is clear: at least **40% of defense procurement must be joint among member states** and **55% of supplies must come from the European industry**. A decisive step towards a “defense made in Europe”, less fragmented and more interoperable.

Four Priorities for the Continent's Security

The EU roadmap identifies four **“flagship projects”** intended to form the operational core of the new defense architecture:

1. **European Drone Defense** – the so-called *European Drone Defence Initiative*, conceived as a “digital wall” of integrated sensors and anti-drone systems, capable of protecting infrastructure and borders from low-altitude aerial attacks.
2. **Eastern Flank Surveillance** – a multi-domain system to monitor in real-time the land, sea, and airspace of Eastern Europe, enhancing rapid response capability against hybrid threats.
3. **European Air Shield** – coordination of missile and air defense capabilities, aiming to ensure common protection of European skies.
4. **European Space Shield** – protection of orbital infrastructures, communication, navigation, and observation satellites, which have become strategic assets for security and defense.

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These four axes represent the synthesis of an integrated approach that combines technological innovation, military cooperation, and industrial development.

The Nine Thematic Coalitions

The political heart of the strategy is the creation of **nine coalitions of member states**, each dedicated to a specific sector of defense capability: cyber-security, electronic warfare, intelligence, logistics, military mobility, drones, space, ammunition, and industrial innovation.

The idea is to overcome the rigidity of cooperation “at twenty-seven”, favoring **groups of countries that share interests and resources** on a voluntary basis. In this way, the EU aims to create a dynamic mosaic of common projects, more flexible and operational.

One of the cornerstones of the Roadmap 2030 is the economic dimension: Brussels wants to rationalize military spending, too often duplicated among various countries.

The goal of **40% joint procurement** aims to achieve economies of scale, reduce costs, and accelerate the introduction of new technologies.

Supporting the process is the **SAFE (Security Action for Europe) program**, a fund of **150 billion euros** intended to co-finance common investments and industrial projects in the defense sector.

In parallel, **55% of supplies must come from European companies**, promoting the emergence of continental champions and consolidating the technological and industrial defense base (EDTIB).

A New Geopolitical Context

The war in Ukraine has shown the vulnerability of the eastern flank and the need to react in a coordinated manner to increasingly hybrid threats — from cyber-attacks to drone incursions. Hence the push to develop **integrated surveillance, intelligence, and defense systems**, also in Space, where satellites are now an integral part of collective security.

The European “drone wall”, expected to be operational by 2027, stems from this awareness: Europe must be able to protect itself and react autonomously, without relying on non-EU suppliers or solely on NATO capabilities.

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However, challenges remain:

- **Industrial Fragmentation:** many states continue to support their national industry, slowing the harmonization of common programs.
- **Technical Standardization:** interoperability remains a complex goal to achieve, especially for weapon systems and software.
- **Bureaucracy and Long Timelines:** European procurement mechanisms need greater flexibility and faster decision-making.
- **Political Will:** defense integration requires mutual trust and a step forward towards shared sovereignty.

Expected Benefits

According to the Commission, a common defense policy will allow:

- to enhance **collective deterrence**;
- to stimulate **research and innovation** in strategic sectors (AI, space, cyber);
- to generate **new qualified jobs** in the European industry;

- to strengthen the **geopolitical position of the EU** as an autonomous and reliable actor in the NATO context.

The Roadmap 2030 marks a turning point in the history of European security.

The Union, after decades of debates, seems to have embarked on the path of **true military integration**, driven by concrete needs and a new strategic realism.

The goal is not to replace NATO, but to build a **“complementary and interconnected European defense”**, capable of ensuring protection, readiness, and decision-making autonomy.

The challenge now is to translate the vision into reality, overcoming political and industrial resistance.

Only in this way — from drones to Space — can Europe truly speak with one voice in defense matters.

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