

European Defence Fund (EDF)

Summary: An EU budget designed to encourage cooperative work undertaken through EU channels by co-financing it. The *Preparatory Action on Defence Research* finances Research and Technology (R&T). The *European Defence Industrial Development Programme* finances capability development and prototyping.



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At stake: Its ambitions are betrayed by its scale – currently pencilled in at €1.5 billion annually. The EDF is explained as the enabler for all EU capability and strategy. Any UK association carries direct crossover implications in wider policy, including the integration and shrinking of the European defence industry.

What they say: “The European Defence Fund (EDF) will blaze a politically once-unthinkable path” – European Defence Matters, the magazine of the EDA (2019)

Exposure: Some UK businesses were inexplicably encouraged by Whitehall to take part in the early stages of this after the 2016 referendum. Some companies are keen to participate, thinking in terms of short term subsidy and framed advantage for their own sector, but without demonstrating any interest in the wider strategic imperatives - or, it must be said, of the national interest.

Action: The UK should avoid funding the EDF. It might consider assigning money saved to counterpart national schemes for R&D.

Deep dive: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/pl/memo_17_1476