



EUROPEAN COMBAT VESSEL

Europe's Next-Generation Multi-Modular Naval Platform



Europe's most ambitious naval collaboration in decades, the European Combat Vessel (ECV) is a modular, multipurpose warship designed to safeguard Europe's maritime security and global sea lines of communication. Built on a systems-to-the hull approach, it strengthens EU defence cohesion, standardisation and defragmentation, while remaining fully coherent with NATO targets. Following the 2024 CARD cycle and the November 2024 Ministerial Steering Board, seven EU Member States—Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain—signed a Letter of Intent to develop a new ECV class for the 2040 horizon, with the ambition to become a future EU flagship capability. Work is progressing rapidly under the EDA framework, with the harmonised High-Level Requirements already under national endorsement.

Why it matters

- Catalyst for EU naval defragmentation, standardisation and communality
- Reinforces pan-European collective strength and economies of scale
- Bridges future naval missions while modernising European fleets
- Strong European footprint, leveraging state-of-the-art technologies and PESCO initiatives

A multi-domain capable vessel

The ECV will differ significantly from traditional vessels. Prioritising an open, system(s)-of-systems modular design, it can meet varied operational needs, from protecting critical infrastructure to countering advanced undersea threats, and addressing global challenges at all domains, wherever EU interests call.

Economies of scale, standardisation, industrial cooperation

A joint procurement approach will enable us to reduce the costs of equipment, training and logistics. It will also enable the development of shared naval schools across Europe, fostering a new generation of crews trained to common standards.

The establishment of common logistics chains will generate synergies, optimize resource allocation and reduce redundancies, thereby strengthening both sustainability and resilience across the European defence ecosystem.

Industrial dimension and economic benefits

By leveraging the combined capabilities of Europe's leading shipyard consortia and supporting industries, the project will create thousands of jobs, drive innovation and strengthen Europe's industrial and technological base. This cooperative

approach will pool resources, avoid duplication and reduce fragmented national initiatives, ensuring investments are focused on a single, genuinely European effort.

Through this collaboration, the project will deliver a flagship European capability that demonstrates industrial excellence, technological leadership and effective cooperation, while generating lasting economic and industrial benefits across Europe.

Missions and tasks

- Defence of national sovereignty and national interest
- Support to EU and NATO operations, strategic partners and international peace and security
- Specific contributions to non-military operations
- Capable of Peace, Crisis & high-intensity Armed Conflict intervention

Family of Multi Modular Ships

- Small (<3.000 ton)
- Medium (4.500-6.000 ton)
- Large (7.000-8.000 ton)

Operational Requirements

Open Architecture: Modular, open system(s)-of-systems design "fitted for but not with" future technologies, enabling modernisation/upgrades.

Resilient Command & Control: Flagship-capable C2 with distributed, redundant networks able to operate in contested, degraded and denied (C2D2E/DDIL) environments from the tactical edge to joint force level.

Combat Management Systems: Advanced, AI-enabled CMS providing multi-sensor, multi-domain data fusion and decision support, fully integrated with weapons, EW, ISR and unmanned teaming systems.

Multi-domain operations: Full-spectrum capability across air, surface, subsurface, cyber and EM domains, integrating IAMD/AAW, ASuW, UWU and organic unmanned systems in a coordinated combat framework.

Survivability and Resilience: Reduced signatures, advanced self-defence, cyber/EW protection, damage control and CBRN defence to survive modern high-end and asymmetric threats.

Operational flexibility and interoperability: Modular mission systems, global endurance (30+ days), NATO/EU-compliant CIS and data links enabling seamless integration within joint and combined naval task forces.

Exploiting Emerging & Disruptive Technologies: Integration of AI, edge/fog computing, directed energy, advanced EW, counter-UxV and hypersonic/ballistic missile defence to maintain operational overmatch.

Coherent with NATO targets.

Beyond a platform, the ECV is a flagship collaborative initiative that embodies a vision of Europe that acts, trains and sustains together, delivering long-term synergies for European navies and industry.

