

Debating European Cooperation on Defence Capabilities

Brussels, 27 March 2014. The European Defence Agency (EDA) today hosts its annual conference 'European Defence Matters.' The conference brings together more than 500 high level participants from government, military, and industry, making it the only comprehensive rendez-vous on European defence.

The event is opened by **Claude-France Arnould**, the Chief Executive of the EDA and includes keynote speeches from **Catherine Ashton** the Head of the EDA, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Vice President of the Commission, the Greek Minister of Defence, **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, and the Italian Under Secretary of Defence, **General Domenico Rossi** – representing the current and upcoming EU Presidencies.

Building on the Council Conclusions

The conference is the first since the [European Council](#) in December 2013, which brought an increased level of focus and political support for European defence cooperation. The priorities outlined by the Council include the need to enhance the development of Europe's military capabilities and to strengthen Europe's defence industry.

To address the [decisions that came from December's summit](#) and focus on concrete actions, panel discussions will bring together experts on European defence cooperation with high level figures from military, policy, and industry. Panelists include **Pieter De Crem** Vice-Prime Minister, Belgian Minister of Defence; **Ine Eriksen Søreide**, Norwegian Minister of Defence; **General Patrick de Rousiers**, Chairman of the EU Military Committee; **General Sverker Göranson**, Swedish Chief of Defence; **Alexander Vershbow**, NATO Deputy Secretary General; **Bernhard Gerwert**, CEO Airbus Defence & Space; and **Tim Rowntree**, Director OCCAR.

Note for editors

Live updates from throughout the day will be posted on the [EDA's website](#). Participants and anyone else interested in European defence are invited to get involved in the debate on Twitter, using [#DefenceMatters](#) and the EDA's Twitter handle [@EUDefenceAgency](#).

Regularly updated, copyright free photographs will be available on the day of the event via the [EDA's Flickr page](#). Please just credit ©European Defence Agency when using.

Background

For the first time since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council discussed defence as the main topic on the agenda in December 2013. It identified priority actions for stronger cooperation, increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of the Common Security and Defence Policy, enhancing the development of European capabilities and strengthening Europe's defence industry.

European Defence Agency

The European Defence Agency is designed to support the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve the European Union's defence capabilities for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This means running and supporting cooperative European defence projects; supporting research and technology development; boosting the European defence technological and industrial base; and providing a forum for European Ministries of Defence.

More information:

Pictures are available on request or from the EDA's Flickr page.

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