



15th EDA Anniversary

Brussels, 25 June 2019

Speech by EDA Chief Executive Jorge Domecq

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- Dear Head of Agency,
Dear Ministers, Commissioners, State Secretaries,
Ambassadors, Generals, and Admirals,
Dear colleagues from the Member States,
Dear Friends of the Agency,
- It is my true pleasure and honour to welcome you today to celebrate our 15 Years Anniversary. Today is very special for me and all staff of the Agency. As you know, many of our colleagues come from the Member States or from the European institutions and opening our home to all of you is important to us.
- I thus stand here today on behalf of all EDA staff: all of whom are watching this ceremony in another room in the building but will join us afterwards in the garden
- This is indeed the first time – and if you speak to the team organising today’s event – also the last time, the Agency hosts such a large group, at least in these premises.

[Introduction]

- I am sure that you will agree with me that the sometimes slow but progressive defence integration can be regarded as the “quiet success story of the EU”, even though concrete achievements came at a modest pace.
- As you know, EDA’s role is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty: it is a cornerstone of the EU’s flourishing security and defence landscape.
- Recently, I welcomed Nick Witney and Claude-France Arnould, my predecessors, for a common interview for the anniversary edition of our inhouse magazine, European Defence Matters. You all have received a copy of the magazine I believe.
- What surprised me when talking to them was that many of the challenges they faced were very similar to what I have experienced over these last five years. From the very mundane issues with the building or the budget to the more serious questions of demonstrating what the added value of this Agency is and can be.
- Our mission is very clear: to support Member States in the development of their defence capabilities. All our work is geared towards making this mission a reality.
- Since the birth of the Agency 15 years ago, EDA has had some 700 staff. 700 committed individuals who contributed in their different roles to championing cooperation in defence rather than pursuing capability development, defence research &



technology, armaments cooperation or industrial topics merely on a purely national level.

- But even if the core of our work has never been disputed, priorities changed over the years. The most notorious change came of course with the presentation of the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy. The Strategy clearly raised the Union's ambition to become a security provider; at the same time, it called on the Member States to make full use of the Agency.
- I am thankful to you, Head of Agency, for launching EDA's long-term review shortly after the publication of your Strategy. Very importantly, the long-term review allowed the Agency to quickly tackle some of the new tasks coming with this raised ambition.

[EDA achievements]

- I dare to say that over the years, the Agency accomplished a lot. And although it is me, today, presenting some selected key achievements, I want to underline that these are achievements of all EDA colleagues, past and present.
- [European hub for multinational capability development]
- Since 2004, the Agency has worked on multinational capability and R&T projects of a combined value of over 1 billion Euros. Among them are the famous four key programmes on air-to-air refuelling, cyber defence, remotely piloted aircraft systems and governmental satellite communications, that were endorsed by Heads of State and Government in 2013.



- In the framework of the long-term review, Ministers of Defence have enhanced the EDA's role as the preferred cooperation forum and management support structure at EU level. This role is fundamental and includes engagement in technology and capability development activities, ranging from R&T to critical enablers, exercise and training as well as support to operations, not to forget the industrial dimension.
- Some of our projects include almost all our Member States – a recent example is a project in the domain of military mobility which has so far been signed by 24 countries. And then others are smaller on scale. Our principle has always been the same: EDA employs an “a la carte” approach meaning we support projects even if only two Member States participate.
- The range of activities is impressive - and it is growing. We currently work on over 110 projects and programmes while another 20 are in preparation. It is difficult to pick out some few, but let me nevertheless give you an idea of the diversity of expertise we have in this house:
- One of the early priorities of the Agency has been its work on Countering Improvised Explosive Devices. In fact, in 2010, the Agency together with the Member States agreed on buying and equipping a multinational exploitation laboratory demonstrator to support the worldwide fight against improvised bombs. The laboratory was deployed to Afghanistan from 2011 to 2014 where – under French lead – it was used in support of ISAF. During its deployment more than 6,000 exhibits were forensically examined.



- Once back to Europe, the laboratory was moved to the Netherlands as part of a permanent joint training facility which opened in September 2014. Since then, around 500 students have been trained, a second, also deployable laboratory has been equipped and both were included in several multinational military exercises.
- Improvised Explosive Devices have been used for many decades in civil wars and conflicts worldwide. Their production costs are in general low, but their effect on military and civilians is devastating.
- Almost on the other end of the technological spectrum is the growing importance of Artificial Intelligence in defence, from the development of prototypes at research institutions to real world applications across all dimensions of military activity – air, sea, land, space and cyber at political, strategic, tactical and operational levels.
- Within EDA, research into Artificial Intelligence is conducted through various expert working groups covering for example AI in cyber defence or navigation; Artificial Intelligence is also widely taken into account in the Capability Development Plan and in the Overarching Strategic Research Agenda. This year, the EDA's Defence Innovation Prize is dedicated to AI applications for defence – submissions for the prize are still possible until the end of August.

[The military voice and interface for EU policies]

- Artificial Intelligence is a good example of how previously rigid boundaries between civil and military worlds have become more and more blurred over recent years.



- One indication is the growing number of civil technologies we see entering the defence world. At the same time, threats are becoming more and more hybrid.
- Another indication of this blurring of boundaries is the fact that rules and regulations of the civilian world can have an important impact on the military too. As a result of the Long-Term Review, EDA is now recognised as the interface between Member States, EU institutions and agencies. In my view, this is a task which will further grow.
- Energy, for instance, is such an area where civil-military interaction is developing fast. Only last week, the Council adopted conclusions which underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation in tackling energy security challenges. The Conclusions also made specific reference to the Agency's work on the Consultation Forum for Sustainable Energy in the Defence and Security Sector.
- Another prominent example is the impact the Single European Sky regulations have on the military. I am delighted to see the progress we have made in making the military voices heard in this important modernisation process through our successful cooperation with the European Commission, Eurocontrol, the SESAR Joint Undertaking and other EU bodies.
- In 2017, we embarked together with the European Commission on a very new adventure. Many didn't believe in the Preparatory Action on Defence Research, the possibility for defence-related research to be funded by the EU budget. The doubts on the feasibility were so serious that the European Parliament pushed for a pilot project – a precursor to the



precursor. And I am thankful it did. Today, the European Defence Fund is taking shape, with an important defence research window.

- But it is not only through the Preparatory Action that defence research activities can benefit from European funding. For several years now, the Agency supports industry, research-and-technology organisations, academia, and Ministries of Defence in accessing European Structural and Investment Funds. Just recently, a €9 million space research project with both civilian and defence implications has been awarded co-funding.
- And while this amount might not be groundbreaking for the world of defence research and development, EDA's support to and engagement with industry in the interest of EU strategic autonomy is unwavering – be it SMEs, mid-caps, large companies or EU primes. We will only be able to develop the right capabilities, the capabilities we need if we retain a competitive, strong and innovative European defence industry.

[Main prioritisation instrument & work on EU defence initiatives]

- Let me finish with what currently is probably the Agency's most prominent task, namely to support the new EU defence initiatives and, importantly, to ensure coherence among them
- Through a more output-oriented Capability Development Plan and a key role as the secretariat of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, together with a new Overarching Strategic Research Agenda and the identification of Europe's Key Strategic Activities, EDA has become the main architect of EU defence capability priorities.

- Together with our support to Member States in the identification and where requested the initiation and implementation of cooperative PESCO projects, this expertise allows us to ensure coherence among the different new EU defence tools together with the European External Action Service, the EU Military Staff and the EU Military Committee.
- Like in an orchestra, we all know that CARD, PESCO and ultimately the European Defence Fund can only develop their potential if and when they are well coordinated. I wouldn't go as far as saying EDA is the conductor of the new EU defence initiatives. However, I am proud of the impact this house makes, in the interest of a more coherent European capability landscape owned and used by our Member States in whatever context they decide.

[End]

- Your Excellencies,
- I could stand in front of you for another couple of hours listing the many milestones we have reached in order to make this Europe of Defence a reality. However, I am even more interested in what we can accomplish in the future.
- We are only at the beginning of European defence integration even if what has been achieved over these last three years is unprecedented.
- I am a firm believer that the European Defence Agency has a unique role to play today and even more so in the future. But whether the “full potential” of the Agency is used, is entirely in



your hands: the hands of Member States and the many institutions and organisations you are representing today.

- What I have seen over these last five years is that with the Agency, you have an asset in your hands that is able to cover all areas of capability planning, research and development including training in a professional and flexible way.
- However, please do not forget that the full potential of the Agency can only be used if at the same time we are equipped with the necessary human and financial resources.
- Now that defence spending is growing in Europe and that we want the Europeans to take more responsibility for their security, we should not forget this. I am grateful for all the support this house has received from political and technical levels, from our friends in the European institutions, the national administrations, armed forces, academia, industry as well as the media.
- There is much more we can do together.
- Thank you.