



April 2025

Delivering a UK-EU defence and security pact to better protect Europe

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear President Costa,
Dear Prime Minister Starmer,

And for the attention of
Commissioner Andrius Kubilius,
Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič,

As representatives of the UK defence and security industries, with a major footprint across Europe, we welcome your collective efforts to ensure that Europe can defend itself. This includes the positive UK-EU collaboration in relation to this of late – such as the Paris and London security summits and the E5 and military chiefs' gatherings. We also welcome new EU initiatives such as the EU Defence White Paper, the ReArm Europe Plan and SAFE (Security Action for Europe). Increasing defence spending and cooperation across Europe as a whole, is crucial to meet current demands and future threats.

Recent geopolitical developments have reinforced the need to strengthen European defence industrial cooperation. Effective defence industrial cooperation is the only way that we can efficiently ramp up production capacities and ensure economies of scale in an era of significant threats to European security as well as constrained fiscal options. Enhancing interoperability, joint planning and acquisition strengthens European deterrence. Broadening our defence industrial collaboration is key to deliver this at pace and at cost.

We believe that the full involvement of the United Kingdom is essential for the European Union to effectively address and deter existing and emerging security threats. A broader and more collaborative European defence ecosystem, enriched by the United Kingdom's unique military capabilities and world-leading innovative defence and security industries, will significantly enhance Europe's resilience, strength and global competitiveness.

The UK has one of the most open defence markets in the world. There are no state-owned defence and security enterprises. Major defence companies with headquarters from across Europe have a significant commercial and strategic presence in the UK, such as Airbus, BAE Systems, Leonardo, Saab, MBDA, Rolls Royce, Safran and Thales. The best way to strengthen our inextricably linked defence industries on both sides of the Channel is to include the UK in EU defence industrial mechanisms.

Simply put, the inclusion of the UK in EU defence industrial programmes presents a vital opportunity to strengthen Europe's defence capabilities and maximise the defence industry's potential to drive economic growth in Europe. A collaborative approach would also considerably accelerate efforts to overcome fragmentation in the European defence market and foster a rapid ramping up of production, boost stockpiling efforts, and innovation needed to meet pressing challenges effectively.



Given this context and the need to act quickly, the signing of a UK-EU defence and security partnership agreement that fosters closer industrial cooperation must be a central deliverable of the upcoming UK-EU summit.

Such an agreement would be instrumental in building a strong European industrial and technological base, fostering a pragmatic and inclusive EU defence ecosystem, and enabling the active participation of UK industry in EU-led defence initiatives. This would be a crucial step towards enhancing Europe's collective security, industrial resilience and global competitiveness.

Many thanks for your consideration of this letter, we stand ready to meet to discuss this further to and work with you and your teams to deliver this goal – for the benefit of our continent and its citizens. Together, we are stronger.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Craven
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ADS Group Ltd

Peter Bell
Vice-President
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