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EDN News Feed – N°14 26/01/20

Germany's presidency of the Council of the European Union ended [EN EN](#)

After 6 months of presidency, Germany gives, as expected, its place to Portugal. She had taken over the reins of the Council of Europe this summer, in the midst of the Corona Virus crisis, and included a major economic recovery plan to face it. On the topic of European defence, the initiation of the concept of a "strategic compass" at the end of August was led by AKK (Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer), the German Defence Minister, with the aim of setting a course for the defence of Europe. That is to say, analyse common threats as well as define the axes of defence. Germany has negotiated the possibility for non-EU countries to participate in certain "permanent structured cooperation" projects. Finally, with a view to establishing lasting peace, Germany has also created a European centre of excellence in Berlin, for civil crisis management, since conflicts cannot be resolved solely with military means.

Italian Defence Minister on Europe's strategic autonomy [EN](#)

Europe's "strategic autonomy" is a concept spread in Defence speeches all over Europe, but still with various definitions.

Used frequently by French President Macron, notably in his interview to the Economist in 2019 about NATO, and by German Minister of Defence Kramp-Karrenbauer in an article in Politico, but with very different interpretations, it was recently defined by J. Borrel as "protecting our capacity to act according to our interests and reducing our over-dependencies and vulnerabilities".

In a recent article published January 11th, the Italian Defence Minister Lorenzo Guerini stated that "Italy does not see European strategic autonomy as a go-it-alone policy". Stressing his argumentation on the importance of high technology Defence industry for Italian economy, he wants to continue the "privileged relationship" his country has with the United States while participating in European Defence projects. It places Italy on a balanced position between Europe and the role of transatlantic relations.

J. Borrel on space for European Defence and Security [EN](#)

On the occasion of the annual European Space Conference, J. Borrel introduction stressed the importance of space for Defence and Security issues, as an enabler of Europe's strategic autonomy.

He identified two main pillars for future European Union space policy :

- "security from space", ie the implication of space capacities for protecting the security of the Union and for military operations it conducts, such as IRINI
- "security of space", ie the protection of European Union's space assets, and Space Traffic Monitoring.

Those two objectives are supported by the 3SOS initiative, a EU campaign promoting good behaviour towards orbital debris and arms race.

Some significant European space programs can be referred to : GALILEO, EGNOS and COPERNICUS.



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EDN News Feed – N°14 26/12/20

Future French light armoured vehicle could be a European collaboration [EN FR](#)

The successor of the French light armoured vehicles in the frame of the SCORPION program could be developed with the support of the European Defence Fund (EDF), according to French Minister of Defence F. Parly. Faced to improvised explosive devices in Sahel region, the current vehicles are not armoured enough to protect military forces. F. Parly opens the door for a European collaboration on their replacement, either in a next call for proposal, or joining the already ongoing AIFV/AAV/LAV PESCO project.

Great-Britain becomes observer for the MGCS program [EN](#)

Great-Britain has been granted an observer status for the Franco-German MGCS program, according to official sources, with the objective to find replacement by 2035 for its Challenger 2. Currently a 50/50 project closed to other nations due to a difficult workload distribution between France and Germany, German Defence Ministry's official reportedly said the project was however open for other nations to participate.

This observer's status allows Great Britain to follow the development of the program and later join officially. Despite Great-Britain leaving the European Union, some countries, among which France and Germany, have vowed to continue defence cooperation and multilateral agreements unaltered.