

European Directive 2003/88 on working time applicated to the armies [FR](#) [EN](#) [DE](#)

In November 2003, the European Parliament and the European Council voted a directive to regulate the working time of employees in the Union. It imposes 48 hours per week maximum, with an 11 hours rest every 24 hours and a 24 hours rest every 7 days. Recently, the possibility that the European Court of Justice could state its application to the military personnel after a request from a Slovenian soldier has forced some countries to clarify their position.

The French High Committee for the Evaluation of the Military Condition, responsible for advising the politics on the condition of military personnel, not allowed to unionise, has recently published notice on that subject. Its statement stresses two principles key for the French armies that makes the directive unapplicable: the availability "in all times and all places", and the "necessary disposal of the armed force" written in the French constitution. Other issues are pointed out, like the complete organisation modification it requires.

Germany, on the other side, separates the application of the directive to the routine service and to the external operations, that has specific constraints and rules. This was adopted via the Soldaten Arbeitszeitverordnung SAZV (Soldiers Working Time Ordinance) when Ursula Von Der Leyen was Minister of Defence.

News on industry: EURODRONE [EN](#) [EN](#) [DE](#)

The Bundestag has voted the budget for the MALE RPAS or EURODRONE project, led by Airbus Defence & Space.

The project aims to develop a European-designed MALE drone (Medium Altitude - Long Endurance) for advanced and durable ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) capacities, and weapon delivery. Indeed, there has been a consensus that Europe took the military drone train late. The United States have a similar equipment, the MQ-9 Reaper drone, which first flew in 2001 ; and several European countries, such as France, Italy, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands, faced no alternative that to buy some for their operational needs. Germany has a rental contract to operate the Israelian Heron.

Intense discussions have been ongoing on some technological choices like the number of engines, Germany calling for a twin-engine design for safety reasons that were not shared with its partners. The initial cost was also 30% higher that the States' expectations, leading some countries to affirm that they would not develop the aircraft at any cost.

After the contract project finalised last November by the OCCAR (Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation, in French Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d'Armement), and the other partners (France, Spain and Italy) having already achieved their approval process, the next and last step was the vote by the Budget commission of the Bundestag. This was reached on April 14th. This opens the path to a 3.1 billion euros funding from Germany for 21 unmanned aircrafts. They will not be armed yet, and this issue will be treated in a separate parliamentary debate.

This vote is also accompanied by some constraints. First, the BAAINBw, a federal office of equipment support to the Bundeswehr, will have to put into place its own cost control structure alongside OCCAR's. Second, the government is to publish a report twice a year. And third, a control on the respect of the workshare dedicated to German companies.

EDA publishes its 2020 annual report [EN](#)

The European Defence Agency (EDA) has published its annual report, tracing back all the achievements and challenges of the agency during the year 2020.

The EDA Chief Executive, Jiří Šedivý, underlines that despite the pandemic and its repercussions on many fields, the EU defence cooperation has continued and achieved some significant steps.

First, 2020 has seen the first Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) being established, covering the current state of EU defence landscape with Member States inputs, and identifying opportunities for enhanced cooperation in its many fragmented fields.

The other main task of EDA is to assist Member States in the implementation of the PESCO projects they are involved in, at their request. In 2020, 5 additional projects to the late 9, giving a total of 14 out of 47, have benefited from the Agency's support and expertise.

R&T projects have also diversified to include innovative fields such as Artificial Intelligence, with a dedicated action plan, or Autonomous Systems.

And last, on operations level, the Agency activated some framework contracts for aeromedical evacuation support in Africa and Europe, also used for COVID-19 actions.

European Union military cooperation and external operations [FR](#) [DN](#)

A European War College ?

The French Ecole de Guerre (literally War School) prepares, after a selection exam, the upper officers of all French armed forces to endorse higher responsibilities and become general officers. This is already the occasion to organise exchanges of officers between European partners' war schools. Its director has however recently called, in a recent interview, for a more innovative and ambitious approach and for the creation of a European War College, complementary with national schools. This would enhance "human and cultural interoperability" between commanding officers. They would afterwards be ready to take command of European staffs, to exploit the EU's "power instruments", with a shared conscience of the Union's common and collective interests".

TF Takuba – Denmark plans to integrate in 2022

The Danish Minister of Defence, Trine Bramsen, joined a virtual meeting organised by France on the TF Takuba and announced that his government will send special forces, officers, and a transport aircraft in Mali. They justified their contribution by the fact that Mali is a source of migration to Europe and the risk that terrorists groups could settle there. A resolution will be filed to the Folketing, the Danish Parliament, for deployment in 2022.

International relations : Russian troops at Ukraine's border [EN](#) [EN](#) [EN](#) [DE](#)

Following a decree stating that Ukraine does not recognise the Russian sovereignty on Crimea, Russian troops have been gathering at the Ukraine's border. Officially for an exercise, up to 80.000 soldiers are stationed on the Russian side. These tensions are also aggravated by the persistent will of Ukraine to join NATO and EU, a red line for Moscow.

Fearing a military intervention, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell officially assured the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba of the "unwavering EU support", in the same words than Joe Biden a few days before. During the Foreign Affairs Council of April 19th, Dmytro Kuleba updated his colleagues of the latest evolution of situation and called for "a new set of sectoral sanctions", because "individual ones are not sufficient anymore".

France and Germany also called for the removal of the troops at the border and the respect of the Minsk agreement in a joint virtual meeting with President Wolodymyr Selensky. Both have been active for a dialogue on the Donbas conflict with "Normandie-format" meeting including also Russia.