

# Strategic objectives



**For the European defence sector, ASD advocates for the following strategic objectives:**

## **Enhance European strategic autonomy**

Europe needs an appropriate level of strategic autonomy to be a credible international partner and assume its responsibilities on the global scene. The European defence industry is a crucial element of this strategic autonomy, since it develops the technologies that are needed for Europe's freedom to decide and to act. It is therefore an essential European security interest to retain in Europe the industrial and technological base that underpins key strategic military capabilities. This implies a robust European defence planning process, sufficient and targeted investment in defence R&D both at the national and EU-level, and European cooperation on all major defence programmes. Strategic autonomy implies also technological sovereignty in critical areas and security of supply of critical components and raw materials.

## **Establish a genuine European defence market**

To maintain a competitive defence industry in Europe, it is essential to strengthen the internal market for defence. In this context, EU-wide competition is important, but not sufficient. Equally important is to pool demand and establish a regulatory framework which facilitates cross-border cooperation and consolidation. This implies in particular the free circulation



of defence goods and services within the European Union. What is needed is a balanced approach between market- and industrial policies that ensures fair competition also vis-à-vis suppliers from third countries and aims at a comprehensive EU-wide system of security of supply.

### **Encourage competitive cross-border supply chains**

In Europe, the bulk of defence industries is concentrated in a few Member States which invest most in defence. At the same time, innovative and competitive SMEs and mid-caps exist throughout the European Union. Facilitating and fostering EU-wide cooperation and integration between defence companies is both an industrial and a political interest, since competitive supply chains should be based on excellence rather than the nationality of its elements. This implies both a regulatory framework that allows companies to operate freely across national borders and cooperative development programmes open to suppliers from other Member States.

### **Foster synergies with other hi-tech and emerging technology trends**

Defence industries constantly push the bounds of technology and generate spin-off-technologies which reinforce the competitiveness of other important sectors such as civil aviation, space and electronics. At the same time, many current breakthrough technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, 5G or Cyber are driven by the civil sector, but can considerably enhance defence capabilities. It is therefore crucial to support all technologies that matter for Europe's sovereignty and to allow the exploitation of potential synergies across the traditional divide between defence and civil domains.

