

# Editorial

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## Editor / Group Leader [in](#)

**Felix Heuner** has completed a B.A. in European Studies at Maastricht University. As a scholarship holder of the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, his research focuses on international security and industrial policy. After completing internships at the German Foreign Ministry in New York, the German Ministry for Economic Affairs in Berlin, and the department for geopolitical risk analysis at the BMW Group, he is currently pursuing a M.Sc. in Crisis and Security Management at Leiden University.

# **Europe needs to focus on defence enabled research and development to strengthen the military industrial complex.**

Dear Reader,

Europe is in the process of the most consequential security transformation since the end of the Cold War. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has evolved into a war of attrition that merges new technological developments with war-fighting tactics from the First World War. The conflict in Ukraine pits two markedly different industrial systems against each other. The West has decreased its manufacturing capacity after the Cold War to focus on the manufacturing of a small number of high-tech systems. Russia, on the other hand, continues to follow the Soviet model of valuing large quantities of material over quality. Which of these systems will ultimately endure cannot be determined at this time.

What is clear, however, is that Europe needs to expand its defence industrial base and adapt to the dynamics of high-intensity conflict to build credible deterrence in the face of waning U.S. support. This report analyses the opportunities and challenges that arise from such a profound reform of the defence-industrial base, ranging from critical inputs, such as rare earth elements, to financial constraints.

In the first section of the report, Xerxes Hafezi Rachti, Alba Gremli Torres and Patryk Borowski analyse current capability gaps in the European defence-industrial base. In the second part, Jolina-Zoe Zarda and Julia Konarzewska discuss current initiatives that define the development of European defence. Finally, in the third section, Karolina Kisiel, Denisa Cepoiu, and Radosław Binkiewicz discuss topics such as private military contractors, rare-earth supply, and decoupled industrial structures that could influence the future of the defence-industrial complex.

The report is completed with guest contributions from Mauro Gilli, professor of Military Strategy and Technology at the Hertie School and Dr. Özlem Has, independent researcher and former post-doc researcher at King's College London.

I want to thank the authors and the EPIS board for their dedicated work and excellent collaboration during the drafting of this report. I also want to thank our guest writers for contributing to this student-led report on security policy and defence and for supporting our goal of increasing the impact of young voices in European security debates.

We hope that you will enjoy the read!

**Felix Heuner**  
**EPIS Report Groups**  
**Group Leader**