

Programme for agile and rapid defence innovation (AGILE)

2026/0078(COD) - 29/06/2026 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Security and Defence and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted a joint report by Tonino PICULA (S&D, HR) and Ivars IJABS (Renew, LV) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Programme for agile and rapid defence innovation (AGILE).

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Subject matter

The proposed Regulation establishes the Programme for agile and rapid defence innovation for the period from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027, and lays down its objectives and budget, forms of funding under the Programme and rules for the provision of that funding.

Objectives

The general objective of the Programme is to support the rapid innovation capacity of SMEs, including innovative start-ups and scaleups, with a view to increasing the rapid and cost-efficient delivery of emerging and disruptive products and technologies for defence that address the most recent and fast evolving challenges faced by Member States' armed forces, in particular those stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Programme should thereby foster the competitiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and contribute to strengthening the Union's defence readiness, while reducing strategic dependencies on non-associated third countries across the full defence technology stack. The Programme should also contribute to closing the capability gaps in operational capabilities of armed forces of Member States and associated countries.

The Programme has the following **specific objectives**:

- to significantly **accelerate innovation cycles of emerging and disruptive products and technologies** for defence developed across the Union by SMEs, including innovative start-ups and scale-ups, taking into account the urgent needs of Member States and associated countries identified with the assistance of the Programme Committee and tapping into the innovation potential of the Union's industry as a whole;
- to support the **scaling up of start-ups and scale-ups developing emerging and disruptive products and technologies** for defence across the Union and their integration with the supply chains of the EDTIB, thereby enhancing the resilience and security of supply for such defence products and technologies across the Union;
- to facilitate the **matchmaking between non-defence and New Defence SMEs** and established undertakings of defence supply chains, such as European defence industrial prime contractors, including in regions with less developed defence innovation ecosystems, thereby creating new cross-border supply chains and supporting a more balanced development of defence innovation capacities across the Union;
- to significantly **increase the uptake by Member States' and associated countries' armed forces of emerging and disruptive products and technologies** for defence developed by SMEs, including

innovative start-ups and scaleups, thereby reinforcing the technological edge of Member States' armed forces.

Work programme

The Programme should be implemented by a work programme. The work programme and the challenges therein should take into account, where relevant, the capability priorities identified in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy, including the Capability Development Plan and the findings and collaborative opportunities identified through the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, as well as the views and expertise provided by the European Defence Agency. The Commission should also take into account, where relevant, lessons learned, project pipelines and results from relevant Union defence innovation initiatives, including EUDIS, in order to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication and facilitate follow-on support for promising technologies.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Commission should monitor the implementation of the Programme and assess its effectiveness in achieving its objectives, with success assessed at portfolio level to reflect the high-risk, high-potential nature of defence innovation. It should also regularly report to the European Parliament on implementation, including work programmes, the definition of challenges, the outcome of award procedures and the allocation of EU funding, while respecting confidentiality and security requirements.

Moreover, the proposal requires the Commission to monitor the Programme's implementation and evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its objectives, with performance assessed at portfolio level due to the high-risk, high-potential nature of defence innovation. The Commission must keep the European Parliament regularly informed about implementation, including work programmes, funding decisions and allocation of Union support, while respecting confidentiality and security requirements.

An interim report is to be published by 1 July 2028, assessing the distribution of funding among SMEs, geographic and thematic coverage, concentration of funding, the effectiveness of simplified award procedures compared with the European Defence Fund, and the Programme's contribution to reducing strategic dependencies. A final evaluation will be published after completion of all Programme actions and will examine whether the Programme should be continued, adapted or expanded under the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework.