



The Irish Defence and  
Security Association

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22 Northumberland Road

Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Simon Harris T.D.

An Tánaiste & Minister for Defence

Cc Eamonn Murtagh

Assistant Secretary for Strategic Change & Capability Development

3 April 2025

An Tánaiste,

We write on behalf of the Irish Defence and Security Association (IDSA). IDSA, which is formally recognised as the National Defence Industry Association for Ireland, represents the Irish security and defence-related sector with a mission to develop appropriate, leading edge and trusted defence and security capabilities in the land, sea, air, space and cyber domains, to protect our society, create jobs, drive research and enhance Ireland's economic growth. This sector comprises large enterprises, SMEs/start-ups, knowledge providers, institutes and the research sector within the fields of defence, dual-use and high-tech. IDSA is a national association member of the Aerospace, Security and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD), as well as a member of the inaugural ASD SME Council.

IDSA identifies a number of obstacles and opportunities which the Government should begin to address to support Ireland's national security and prosperity ambitions. Given recent announcements of urgency for higher levels of Irish and European defence spend as well as Irish announcements surrounding expedited procurement, IDSA recommends that the below priorities receive urgent attention (please find additional detail on priorities attached).

- With a step up in both national and European defence expenditures, based on international experience, this will prompt the call for local industrial involvement. It is critical to shape these foundations at this stage. IDSA has strongly recommended the need to develop the nation's defence industry strategy and thereby determine a defined industrial participation policy in defence procurement (in compliance with national/EU regulation). The attached brief on 'levelling up industrial strategy through industrial participation' provides basic background context. IDSA can provide essential input, bringing national and European industry experience to relevant consultations.
- There is an urgent need for active coordination with relevant ministries/agencies responsible for trade and the economy (e.g. DFAT; DETE; EI; IDA). International good practices indicate that while a ministry of defence would define military requirements



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(i.e. capability driven), those ministries/agencies with responsibility for economic affairs and trade must also represent the interests of the security and defence-related research and enterprise sector as an important part of the national economy. These steps would provide good practice enablers for critical collaboration with industry, bringing about an optimal outcome for the nation vis-à-vis higher national and European defence spend.

- At national level, and in line with international practice, the Government's expected economic benefit to Ireland of these increased national defence spend ambitions does not seem to have been yet provided for. In addition, given the urgency to enhance defence spend in Europe, it has become even more urgent for the Irish Government to ensure that Ireland becomes a beneficiary rather than mere client - as is currently the case with a status of net contributor to the EU budget.
- There is a need to better foster Irish enterprises, SMEs, innovation and R&D opportunities. Procurements should provide an opportunity for Ireland's indigenous "dual use" SMEs and security-focused research institutes to partner with large global providers to deliver capability for Ireland, while opening export, R&D and research opportunities for local SMEs through international partner supply chains. There is an increasingly important need to create these opportunities for the research sector, local enterprises and other innovators to solve strategic dual-use security and defence challenges, not just in Ireland, but also for EU and international partners.
- Stronger, proactive and regular engagement between the Department of Defence and industry is essential for Ireland's new Capability Development processes. Industry should be part of this reformed capability development process as international good practice. Ongoing consultative engagement with industry and transparency are essential, especially at this stage of the national capability development process.
- Policy clarity will be needed on how Ireland will position itself in relation to EU Defence Industrial Strategy where the implications of an evolving but fast moving EU industrial focus for Ireland does not yet seem to be determined.
- Lastly, Government must begin to better enhance awareness and understanding about the nature of the important role of the defence-related industry and defence innovation when it comes to national defence capability and economic benefit. It is critical to raise high level public and cross-party political understanding on the supporting role of industry to deliver on national defence capability ambitions.

With these suggestions in mind, we would be sincerely grateful if we could please arrange a meeting within the near future and at a time most suitable to your diary commitments.

Yours Sincerely for and on behalf of IDSA,

Pat O'Connor

Caitríona Heint