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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(13.2.2026)

The negotiation and conclusion of Security and Defence Partnerships (SDP) follow the arrangements for non-binding instruments. On 3 December 2025, and in line with the Treaty on European Union¹, the Council authorised the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) to launch negotiations with Australia on a possible SDP, which are led by the European External Action Service. The process is still ongoing. On the EU side the SDP will be signed by HR/VP.

An SDP is required for non-exempt third countries to participate in Security Action for Europe (SAFE) joint procurement². Australian entities can nevertheless participate to a limited extent. SAFE allows up to 35% of a final product's component cost to originate outside the EU, the European Economic Area/European Free Trade Association or Ukraine. Exceeding this would require a bilateral agreement with the EU. The launch of negotiations of such a bilateral agreement would be subject to a mandate by the Council.

EU defence industrial initiatives aim to strengthen the resilience and capacity of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. SAFE therefore fosters investment in the European defence industry to increase production capacity and improve defence equipment availability.

¹ Treaty on European Union (consolidated version); OJ C 326, 26 October 2012; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu_2012/oj/eng.

² According to Council Regulation (EU) 2025/1106 of 27 May 2025 establishing the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the Reinforcement of the European Defence Industry Instrument; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/1106/oj/eng>.