

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000669/26  
to the Commission  
Michał Dworczyk (ECR)  
(17 February 2026)**

*Subject:* Geographical balance and fair access to future instruments supporting the EU's defence technological and industrial base

The mid-term evaluation of the European Defence Fund (EDF) shows that the instrument, in its current form, leads to projects, funding and decision-making roles being concentrated in the hands of large companies from a limited number of Member States. Instead of contributing to the sustainable development of the entire EU defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB), in practice the EDF perpetuates the advantage of countries with the strongest defence sectors, while entities in many other countries play a secondary role. The dominance of the strongest and richest companies is therefore bolstered at the expense of other companies that the EDF should also serve. This exacerbates inequalities in the technological and industrial capacities of EU Member States.

The EDF is becoming another example of how EU instruments can, in practice, strengthen already dominant players and regions if these instruments are not implemented with consideration for geographical and industrial balance.

The way in which lessons from the EDF will feed into the design of new EU programmes supporting the EDTIP is of particular importance for work on the 2028-2034 MMF. I would therefore like to ask:

1. What specific safeguards is the Commission planning to include in future EU instruments supporting the EDTIB to avoid repeating the mistakes in the EDF model, which unjustly impacted my region?
2. Is the Commission planning to introduce mechanisms in future programmes that ensure geographical balance in distributing resources and coordination roles, including solutions for countries in the EU and NATO's eastern flank, which bear the real costs of defending the EU's eastern — and most threatened — border?

Submitted: 17.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Kubilius on behalf of the European Commission  
(16 April 2026)**

The European Defence Fund <sup>(1)</sup> (EDF)'s aims to enhance the competitiveness of the European defence technological and industrial base, and to promote cooperation in defence research and development between entities of all sizes across the EU and EDF associated countries.

All applicants can compete for EDF funding under fair, transparent and non-discriminatory call conditions, in line with the EDF and the Financial Regulations. Applications are assessed using uniform eligibility and selection criteria.

National defence ecosystems are very diverse: some Member States have well-established, internationally active defence industries, while others have ecosystems dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The EDF implements several measures to foster broader inclusion and cross-border collaboration, particularly with and among SMEs.

The European Defence Innovation Scheme, funded at around 20% of the annual EDF budget, aims to drive technological progress and boost SME involvement <sup>(2)</sup>.

As a result, the EDF Interim Evaluation Report <sup>(3)</sup> highlighted that SMEs accounted for 43% of distinct beneficiaries, particularly from Eastern Europe.

The Commission's proposal for the European Competitiveness Fund includes several additional cross-sectoral measures designed to encourage participation across the EU, such as project advisory services, the 'EU for Business' Network, value chain builder actions and EU Tech frontrunners actions.

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<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, pp. 149-177.

<sup>(2)</sup> [https://eudis.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://eudis.europa.eu/index_en).

<sup>(3)</sup> COM(2025) 299 final of 17 June 2025 — [https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf-official-webpage-european-commission/edf-interim-evaluation-report\\_en](https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf-official-webpage-european-commission/edf-interim-evaluation-report_en).