



# War starts here

A guided tour about the arms industry lobby in Brussels



Weapons manufacturers have gathered an army of lobbyists on the Brussels frontline. Their influence is embedded in an EU Defence and Security apparatus which is geared up to defend and nurture the arms industry. The main manufacturers are represented in influential advisory bodies of the European Commission, they are active in informal networks and finance “neutral” think tanks. Their aim is to foster a strong European Security and Defence Policy, to make Europe spend more on war-planes, combat drones and the like and to get funding for their latest research projects. This is a brief guide to the hot spots of arms industry lobbying in Brussels.



### DG Enterprise & Industry (DG ENTR)

45 Avenue d'Auderghem

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### DG Internal Market & Services (DG MARKT)

2 Rue de Spa

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Two Commission departments are especially relevant for arms lobbyists in Brussels: DG MARKT, which is involved in the liberalisation of military procurement and internal arms trade, as embodied in two recent directives; and DG ENTR, which is coordinating the European security research programme (2007-2013) worth €1,4 billion and the European space strategy, putting a strong emphasis on the dual military and civilian use of space technology. The heads of both departments, Commissioners Michel Barnier and Antonio Tajani have repeatedly underlined their view that a European foreign and defence policy cannot exist without a strong arms industry. Following this rationale, the DGs' doors are wide open to lobbyists pushing for further support to the sector.

### European External Action Service (EEAS)

1 Avenue de Cortenbergh

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Under the Lisbon Treaty, EU activities in the field of foreign and defence policy have been merged under the European External Action Service, which is being established within eyeshot of the Commission and the Council. As Baroness Catherine Ashton, the head of the EEAS and Europe's "foreign minister" has to stand her ground against 27 national governments, she is likely to welcome support from industry, its associations and think-tanks in Brussels. Her counsellor Robert Cooper and several other members of the EEAS are already on the advisory board of the Security and Defence Agenda and Ashton's predecessor, Javier Solana is the think tank's co-president.

### European Defence Agency (EDA)

17-23 Rue des Drapiers

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The EDA, established in 2004 after intense lobbying by the arms industry is an intergovernmental agency with the goal to make Europe "spend more, spend better and spend more together" (Javier Solana) on armaments. With a budget of €31 million in 2010 and over 100 employees, the EDA works to promote joint armaments projects and collaborative research and development between member states. It has been actively engaged in the Commission's initiative to develop and nurture a "European Defence Technological and Industrial Base". In this spirit the arms industry is a crucial "stakeholder", and ties with ASD and other lobby-organisations are consequently tight.

### KangarooGroup (KG)

135 Rue Belliard, c/o European Parliament

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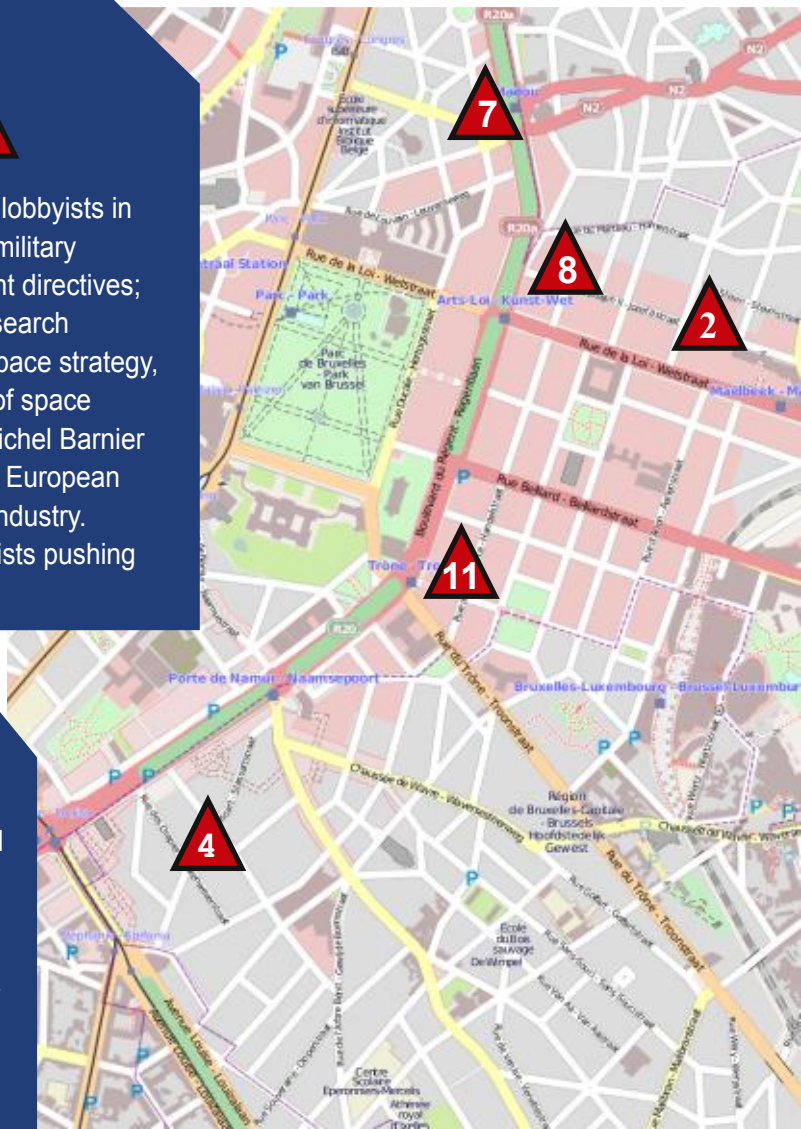
Several inter-groups, which bring together Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) across party boundaries and industry representatives on topics of common interest, focus on defence and security policy. The KG is the most prominent of them, with members from major arms producing companies such as EADS and MBDA and many influential MEPs. It organises joint working groups and conferences, ensuring the smooth coordination of interests between them. KG has its office right in the European Parliament. "Sky and Space" – a similar group – is run directly by the arms lobby, with its secretariat hosted by ASD.

### European Commission's expert and advisory groups

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36 Rue Froissart, Broschette Conference Centre

Advisory groups with external "experts" are often set up by the European Commission as the first step towards developing an official EU policy. They have therefore become a powerful tool for lobbyists in defining policy outcomes. Expert groups dealing with security research, space, and defence industrial policy are seriously biased in favour of corporate interests. Among the non-Commission, non-government members of bodies like the "European Security Research Advisory Board" industry representatives are the vast majority, while wider civil society is almost completely absent.





## Security & Defence Agenda (SDA)

137 Rue Belliard, Bibliothèque Solvay

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Presenting itself not as a lobbygroup but as a neutral discussion forum, the SDA's main function is to provide an intimate environment for industry, policy makers and selected academics and journalists to discuss security and defence issues. The think-tank's activities range from informal lunch debates to large conferences and occasional publications, generously sponsored by partner companies. This partnership is clearly reflected in the SDA's support for the expansion of a militarized Europe.

## BAE Systems

4 Rue de la Presse

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declared lobbying budget: <€100,000 (2010)

## Finmeccanica

21 Avenue des Arts

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declared lobbying budget: <€300,000 (2009)

## EADS

28 Avenue Marnix

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declared lobbying budget: <€500,000 (2010)

## Thales

60 Avenue de Cortenbergh

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declared lobbying budget: <€450,000 (2010)

As a result of concentration, the European arms industry is dominated today by these "big four" (BAE Systems, EADS, Finmeccanica, Thales) and a small number of other corporations, which control most of the sector's turnover. Individually, they have close ties with their home-country's governments. Nevertheless all of them have offices in Brussels to lobby the European institutions directly. Their engagement includes participation in the relevant advisory groups, membership of the SDA, ASD, KangarooGroup and other useful organisations. From time to time they also address policy-makers publicly. In 2003, for example, the chief executives of BAE, EADS and THALES wrote an open letter calling for the creation of a European defence agency. It was established a year later.

## AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD) European Organization for Security (EOS)

270 Avenue de Tervueren

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ASD is the umbrella organisation for the arms industry in Europe. The product of a 2004-merger between the European Association of Aerospace Industries, the European Defence Industries Group and EUROSPACE, it represents 28 national trade associations in 20 European countries, while its steering council consists of 18 major aerospace and defence companies. Even though they are officially competitors, the climate among ASD-members in Brussels is characterised by common goals and cooperation.

In an attempt to better lobby for the arms companies in the emerging "homeland security" market, the European Organization for Security was founded as an ASD spin-off in 2007. For the arms industry this is a lucrative opportunity to boost sales and to get rid of their image as merchants of war, because homeland security blurs the line between traditional military defence and civil security. The EU – which likes to see itself as a civil power – is supporting this approach with its security research programme.

## Brothers in Arms

More than 20,000 lobbyists currently influence the EU institutions, most of them operating from offices in the four square kilometres around the European Commission headquarters and the European Parliament. Brussels competes with Washington for the title of lobbying capital of the world. The European institution's power, complex procedures and lack of transparency, combined with their reliance on external sources of advice and information, make Brussels a lobbyist's paradise.

For the European arms industry, lobbying in Brussels has become increasingly important with the advancing militarization of the European Union and the transfer of decision making powers on defence industry issues to the EU level. Following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, the EU became a military alliance with an infrastructure for civil-military interventions including Europe's own armaments agency. European directives concerning arms procurement and the arms trade, cooperative armaments projects, and numerous initiatives benefiting defence companies in the fields of security research and space mean that EU policy-making is worth billions of Euros to the arms industry.

For the arms sector, lobbying is about far more than industry influencing European institutions; rather it is about their close cooperation in reaching common goals. The European Union and the European arms industry have overlapping interests based on their vision of 'a strong industry underpinning a strong EU defence policy'. Arms industry lobbyists enjoy privileged access to EU decision making. They use diverse channels to sustain this partnership, including sitting in advisory groups to influence budget decisions and political strategies, membership of think tanks and other organizations to ensure intimate contact with policy makers, and many more.

*"None of us can any longer afford to sustain a healthy and comprehensive Defence Technological and Industrial Base on a national basis. The future health, maybe even survival, of Europe's defence industry requires a European approach, and a European strategy."*

**Javier Solana**, Former High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Former Secretary General of the Council of the European Union, Former Secretary General of NATO



Further information:

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