

Defence Strategic Vision 2025

This document contains the full text of the
Defence Strategic Vision 2025



DEFENCE

.be

Contents

1. Foreword by the Minister of Defence	3
2. Strategic Guidance for the Future of Defence	6
3. Analysis of the Security Challenges and their Consequences	7
A. DETERIORATION OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT	7
B. THREAT ANALYSIS	7
C. A NEW SECURITY PARADIGM FOR THE WEST	10
D. ADAPTING TO CURRENT AND FUTURE THREATS	13
E. THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR DEFENCE	16
4. Anchoring our Defence in Strategic Cooperation	18
A. EVOLUTION OF THE DETERRENCE AND COLLECTIVE DEFENCE POSTURE	18
B. NATO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: COMPLEMENTARY ALLIES FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY	19
C. STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE PILLAR WITHIN NATO	20
1) <i>Readiness 2030</i>	21
2) <i>The White Paper on the Future of European Defence</i>	21
D. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS FOR CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT IN SUPPORT OF DETERRENCE AND COLLECTIVE DEFENCE	22
1) <i>Honouring Commitments within the Framework of NATO</i>	22
2) <i>European Requirements Aligned with those of NATO</i>	24
3) <i>National Defence Requirements</i>	25
4) <i>Three Frameworks, One Objective</i>	25
E. DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS	26
5. Strategic Missions and Objectives of Defence	27
A. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY	27
B. DEFENCE'S MISSIONS	27
C. CURRENT SITUATION AND AMBITIONS	28
D. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES BY 2035	29
1) <i>Preparing for High-Intensity Military Conflict within a Collective Defence Framework</i>	29
2) <i>Protecting the National Territory</i>	29
3) <i>Anticipate the Battle of the Future</i>	30
6. Priority Areas for Strengthening Defence	30
A. MAXIMISING OPERATIONAL OUTPUT	30
1) <i>Remaining Operational while Transforming</i>	30
2) <i>Contributing to Deterrence and Collective Defence and Protecting the Territory</i>	31
3) <i>Carrying out Defence's Other Missions</i>	32
4) <i>Making a Significant Contribution to the Prevention or Containment of Violent Conflicts</i>	33
B. PERSONNEL AND STRENGTH GROWTH	33
1) <i>Growing Strength</i>	33
2) <i>Selection and Training</i>	34
3) <i>Fully Operational Reserve</i>	35
4) <i>Contemporary Military Service</i>	36
5) <i>Recognised Veterans</i>	36
6) <i>Health, Well-being and Safety of Personnel</i>	36
7) <i>Consideration of the Military Specificity</i>	36
8) <i>Social Partners</i>	37
C. ACCELERATION OF CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT	37
1) <i>Assessment and Prospects for Capability Development and Readiness</i>	37
2) <i>Principles of Capability Updates and Level of Ambition</i>	38
3) <i>Capability Development Priorities</i>	39
4) <i>Development of Innovation</i>	40
D. ANCHORING AN ACCELERATED BUDGETARY TRAJECTORY	41

1) Adequacy between the Budget Path and the Annual Budget	41
2) Defence Budget Path up to 2035.....	41
7. Framework Conditions.....	41
A. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	42
1) <i>Strategic Vision of Defence</i>	42
2) <i>Military Programming Law</i>	42
3) <i>Defence Business Plan</i>	42
B. THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG DEFENCE INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL BASE	43
1) <i>Further Development of the DIRS (DIRS 2.0)</i>	43
2) <i>Development of the Defence Industrial Capability</i>	44
3) <i>Essential Security Interests</i>	45
4) <i>Societal Returns</i>	45
C. DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	46
1) <i>External Communication</i>	46
2) <i>Internal Communication</i>	47
D. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL DEFENCE, ENABLEMENT AND RESILIENCE PLANS	47
1) <i>National Defence Plan</i>	48
2) <i>National Enablement Plan</i>	48
3) <i>National Resilience Plan</i>	49
E. MODERNISATION OF DEFENCE OPERATIONS	49
1) <i>Process Optimisation and Administrative Simplification</i>	49
2) <i>Improvement of Contractual and Budgetary Management Mechanisms</i>	50
3) <i>Digital Transformation</i>	51
F. UPDATING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	51
G. DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENCE’S PROPERTY PORTFOLIO.....	52
H. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	53
I. VALUES AND ETHICS	53
8. Basis of Capability Development	53
A. CAPABILITY, MUCH MORE THAN JUST EQUIPMENT	54
B. BALANCED, AMBITIOUS AND EVOLUTIONARY CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT.....	54
9. Annexes	55
ANNEX A (2025): EVOLUTION OF PERSONNEL AND RECRUITMENT FORECAST	A-1
ANNEX B (2025): BUDGET PATH	B-1
ANNEX C (2025): CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT UP TO 2035.....	C-1
ANNEX D (2025): MILITARY SITES LOCATION PLAN.....	D-1

STRATEGIC VISION OF DEFENCE 2025

1. Foreword by the Minister of Defence

Why We Need to Strengthen our Armed Forces

“Si vis pacem, para bellum.” These are the words written by the Roman author Renatus Publius Vegetius in the 4th century. “If you want peace, prepare for war.” With these words, Vegetius set out a golden rule that has kept all its relevance: a state can only enjoy lasting peace if it is prepared and has the capacity to defend its territory and its sovereignty, by force of arms if necessary. Something that requires capable and powerful armed forces, even in peacetime.

For a long time, our country has also applied this timeless lesson. Two foreign invasions and occupations in two generations, plus the Cold War that followed, have forced us to face the facts: having ready and dissuasive armed forces is not a luxury, but a necessary condition for preserving our democracy. Moreover, a country like Belgium can only remain free and sovereign by engaging with loyal and powerful partners. And we can only count on their loyalty if we are prepared to show solidarity in defending them.

After the Cold War, these important lessons were forgotten. But in this uncertain world, Belgium and Europe have no choice but to relearn the language of hard power. Credible peace diplomacy depends on the availability of “hard power”, which requires a drastic reinforcement of our defence capabilities in the very short term. The aim is to preserve peace by making our own military power credible in the eyes of our adversaries and by reducing our strategic dependence on the United States. Europe can only achieve this goal if it is united, and if every Member State contributes to it. And this government is determined to show the necessary solidarity in this respect.

Protecting the eastern side of Europe is the top strategic priority for our armed forces. Russia is already seriously threatening the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of the three Baltic States members of the European Union: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Under the law of treaties, Belgium is obliged to co-defend the sovereignty and integrity of these states in the event of a threat of military action from Russia. Article 5 of the NATO Treaty and Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union are clear and unconditional in this respect. It implies that Belgium would almost automatically go to war with Russia if it were to take such action. Effectively contributing to NATO's collective military deterrence on the eastern side of Europe is therefore an urgent matter of national security for Belgium.

Even though Africa remains an area of interest for Defence, it is essential, for the reasons given above, that our operational capabilities are concentrated on the eastern side of Europe and that we do not disperse our resources unnecessarily. Alongside the growing threat of war in Eastern Europe, we are seeing a deterioration in the internal security environment due to Russia's hybrid operations on European territory. Through cyberattacks, disinformation and sabotage, Russia is trying to attack Europe's resilience, including that of our country. Defence must therefore be attentive to the threat that this foreign power poses to our internal security. This is where the development of a powerful cyber defence system and a territorial reserve capable of carrying out domestic surveillance missions comes in.

In the face of all these threats, our country must strengthen its security and resilience to protect its citizens, its territory and its economy. Rebuilding our armed forces is also essential if we are to restore our diplomatic credibility within the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). This credibility we have lost because Belgium has dragged its feet in recent years to secure the necessary budget increase, while our allies were already making the necessary efforts. This attitude demonstrates a lack of solidarity, which has led to serious diplomatic damage. A situation that has become even more untenable given that, as host to the headquarters of the European Union, NATO and SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), our country enjoys numerous political, diplomatic and economic advantages.

The threat of war is greater today than it ever was during the Cold War. However, our country's current state of readiness is inadequate in all areas. The public is neither sufficiently informed, nor sufficiently aware

of the reality of military threats. Our defence plans are still too fragmented. And the defence industry remains insufficient capable of supplying our armed forces in the event of a crisis or serious conflict.

Military weakness provokes military aggression, military strength discourages it. It is therefore essential that Belgium strengthens its armed forces without delay. Investing in a solid defence to maintain peace is always cheaper than bearing the cost of a conflict. Despite the progress made under the 2016 Strategic Vision and the 2022 STAR Plan, the current capabilities of Defence and the industry that supports it remain insufficient to meet the demands put on us by the deteriorating security situation.

To do this, Defence must undergo a profound transformation. From the small military force focused on expeditionary interventions (wars of choice) that it is today, our army must turn into a solid armed force focused on deterrence and high-intensity conflicts in the context of collective defence (wars of necessity). This paradigm shift requires us to close capability gaps, build up strategic ammunition and equipment stockpiles and increase the number of military personnel.

It is also essential to raise awareness for the security risks facing our country. Clear communication will make the public aware of these risks, but also of the measures and expertise available from Defence to respond appropriately. This will allow to strengthen the involvement of citizens in the efforts needed to improve our protection.

NATO remains the central pillar of our collective defence. The European Union plays an important complementary role in this respect. The European Union is now actively promoting the rearmament of European Member States due to deteriorating security conditions. It is also committed to integrating the European defence industry and developing joint military capabilities. The European Union and NATO should therefore not be seen as competing entities, but as complementary partners working in synergy to strengthen European security.

The European Strategic Compass underlines the essential nature of this cooperation. The great added value of the European Union lies in the economic incentives and the optimisation of the common defence market. Without this, the rearmament of Europe will never be completed on time, or cost-effectively. Within NATO, our American allies have long been demanding that Europeans guarantee a greater share of NATO's military deterrence in Europe. This should enable the United States to concentrate its own capabilities on the defence of NATO's western side: the Pacific. The current US administration tells us nothing new in this respect. This "pivot to Asia" is an inevitable consequence of China's increasingly assertive geopolitical position and the strengthening of its military capabilities.

Europe is therefore, forced to achieve a certain degree of strategic autonomy. We must be able to guarantee security on the European continent ourselves, thanks to a credible military deterrence capable of discouraging any armed action against the European Union and its allies. This does not mean, however, that the United States is detached in strategic and material terms. On the contrary, such a detachment could lead to sub-optimal and unnecessarily costly weapons systems for the European armed forces, weakening them unnecessarily and undermining our security. Thoughtless and unfounded criticism of NATO only serves the interests of Europe's opponents who seek to sow discord within the alliance, because they know that we are stronger if we are united. On this issue, our country advocates a balanced approach aimed at developing the European defence industry and capabilities within NATO. This European pillar should avoid duplication of effort and ensure interoperability with our allies, by harmonising capabilities and standardising equipment.

To achieve this new Strategic Vision, the Belgian government plans to allocate more resources to the armed forces by 2035. On 11 April 2025, the government adopted a Defence Budget Plan titled "Strategic Contribution to Peace through Strength". This plan raises our country's defence spending to 2% of GDP from 2025, an effort that will be maintained as a minimum in line with the "halt any decline" principle. The trajectory adopted in this Strategic Vision plans for a defence effort of 2% of GDP until 2033 and then 2.5% of GDP in 2034.

It is important to note that this Budget Plan preserves the government's flexibility to adjust this growth trajectory if the situation requires more resources. Following the NATO summit held in The Hague on 24 and

25 June 2025, the government will be looking into the details of a possible upward revision of the Defence Budget Plan, based on the target set by the Alliance.

How We Are Going to Strengthen our Armed Forces

This Strategic Vision sets out how Defence will be strengthened in practical terms to provide an appropriate response to the growing security challenges mentioned above. In terms of capabilities, the strategic priority is to strengthen the robustness of our armed forces by increasing their combat power and improving their readiness and sustainability. To achieve this, we need to address capability shortfalls and build up stocks, particularly of ammunition, so that we are ready to deal with high-intensity conflicts.

At the same time, the number of personnel will be increased, a territorial reserve will be developed, and a voluntary military service will be introduced. To ensure more effective defence, infrastructure will be improved and strengthened. Innovation is another essential pillar of this strategy: Defence is anticipating the war of the future by integrating advanced technologies, in collaboration with academia and industry.

To respond more effectively to new threats, Defence will modernise its operations and, to this end, will review the applicable legal framework. At the same time, a clear, transparent and proactive communication strategy will be deployed to inform and raise public awareness of the security challenges facing Belgium, the European Union and NATO, and of Defence's efforts to prepare for them.

Finally, our security and our defence can only be fully guaranteed if society is resilient and collectively ready. With this in mind, Defence is strengthening its partnerships with all relevant players, both at federal and federated entity level, with a particular focus on the defence industry, to encourage innovation and speed up the production of equipment and ammunition.

The NATO summit in The Hague was an excellent first opportunity for Belgium to reaffirm its commitment as a reliable ally. Through concrete commitments, the government aims to restore the country's diplomatic credibility. It is within this context that this new Strategic Vision was approved by the government. It is also with this in mind that a new military programming law (hereinafter referred to as the "Military Programming Law") will shortly be submitted to Parliament.

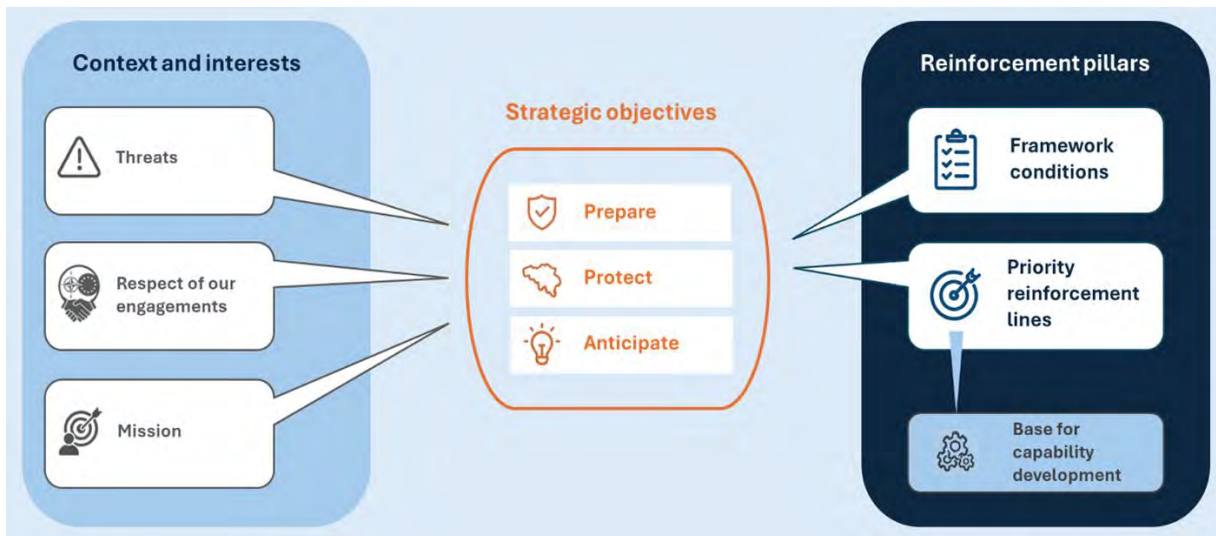


Theo Francken
Minister of Defence

2. Strategic Guidance for the Future of Defence

This chapter provides a structured summary of the Strategic Vision, highlighting a guidance that makes it easier to understand and read.

This Vision is based on an in-depth analysis of the context and the stakes of contemporary challenges to define the strategic objectives assigned to Defence. These objectives guide its path and identify the key levers to be mobilised to ensure its strengthening. It thus provides a coherent framework to guide action and ensure continuity in its implementation.



Like its European partners, Belgium is now faced with a security environment that is undergoing profound change (Chapter 3): increasingly unstable, unpredictable, and characterised by a rise in hybrid and conventional threats. In this context, our country's specific geopolitical situation - at the heart of Europe, home to major international institutions - further amplifies our exposure and vulnerability.

The range of threats we need to be able to face is vast. This reality poses a direct risk not only to the security of our territory and our fellow citizens, but also to the defence of our vital interests.

Faced with these growing challenges, it is imperative to act without delay, as inaction would compromise Belgium's ability to ensure its own defence, weaken its contribution to collective security, and undermine its credibility with its allies within NATO, the European Union and its other strategic partnerships (Chapter 4). Respecting our international commitments is a fundamental pillar of the collective deterrence posture in which Belgium participates.

Based on this analysis of the security environment and the threats identified, and considering the missions assigned to Defence (Chapter 5) and the multilateral framework in which our security policy operates, the Strategic Vision sets out a clear ambition for 2035. Our country's defence ambitions are structured around three strategic objectives (Chapter 5): being capable of dealing with a high-intensity conflict, ensuring the protection of the national territory and the population, and anticipating emerging forms of conflict.

To achieve these objectives, we need to radically transform our defence apparatus. This transformation will focus on several areas of reinforcement (Chapter 6): maximising operational output, increasing the number of personnel, accelerating capability development in line with the priorities defined by NATO and the European Union, and a clear, stable budget trajectory in line with our international commitments.

The success of this transformation will depend on the framework conditions being in place (Chapter 7).

The defined areas of reinforcement will form the basis for future capability development (Chapter 8) to provide Defence with the resources it needs to respond effectively to the security challenges of today and tomorrow.

3. Analysis of the Security Challenges and their Consequences

a. Deterioration of the Security Environment

Since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, Europe has enjoyed an unprecedented period of stability and prosperity. However, recent geopolitical and socio-economic developments clearly show that this era is over.

The Russo-Georgian conflict in 2008 and the conflict in Ukraine are stark reminders that war in Europe is no longer an abstract hypothesis, but a reality. This strategic break has put an end to the illusions of a world permanently at peace, rendering obsolete the idea of a gradual reduction in military needs. The Russian invasion acted as an electroshock for Europe, which now faces direct threats at its borders.

Today's volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous security environment is exacerbated by growing competition between state and non-state actors, whether ideological, technological or economic. This dynamic is giving rise to a series of multidimensional threats that directly affect the stability of the European continent. The threat of armed conflict, whether conventional or hybrid, is now a pressing reality. In recent years, Europe and Belgium have already seen an increase in hybrid attacks: sabotage of critical infrastructure such as submarine cables, cyberattacks targeting both public institutions and private players, and disinformation campaigns, particularly during election periods.

In this context, even if we are not at war, we are no longer living in peace. We are living in a time of diffuse conflict, marked by the intensification of hybrid threats and the gradual blurring of the boundaries between peace and hostility. This grey area, which could be described as a “time of crisis” or, more precisely, a “period of heightened hybrid threats”, requires constant vigilance, a tailored strategic posture and a strengthened response capability.

Because of its strategic geographical location and its role as host to many international institutions, Belgium is particularly exposed. Moreover, its open economy is fundamentally based on stable physical and digital connections with its partners. Our position on the front line of Europe's north-western side, our high density in critical infrastructure and our role as host country and logistical crossroads for European defence make Belgium a prime target on the geopolitical stage.

For our country, as for all its European partners, the new security paradigm underlines the crucial importance of defending our national territory and of greater solidarity in collective defence. This requires credible and deterrent armed forces, a robust defence industrial base capable of sustaining a high-intensity conflict, and a resilient society that is informed and mobilised around the issues of security and sovereignty.

Finally, the very foundations of our democratic institutions are now being put to the test by our geopolitical and ideological adversaries. European cohesion and the transatlantic link, essential to our security, are being undermined. In many Western countries, the rise of populism and extremism - often fuelled by these external influences - is undermining democratic legitimacy, weakening governance and deepening divisions. Disinformation campaigns are also used to manipulate public opinion and disrupt decision-making processes. These are all warning signs that need to be heeded with clarity and determination.

b. Threat Analysis

In a strategic approach, it is important to distinguish between the threat, understood as a potential source of danger, and the action, which is its actual manifestation. It is also important to differentiate between threat and risk, the latter representing a contextualised assessment of the threat in terms of the vulnerabilities specific to the environment under consideration.

Geopolitical Threats

Russia

Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and with its war of aggression launched in 2022, Russia has profoundly disrupted the Euro-Atlantic security environment. Not content with attacking Ukraine militarily, it is also intensifying its efforts to destabilise what it sees as its sphere of influence by, for example, fuelling tensions in areas such as Moldova and the South Caucasus, while at the same time carrying out disruptive actions in our wider neighbourhood, particularly in the Middle East and Africa. Russia retains significant conventional military capabilities, backed up by a powerful nuclear arsenal, making it a real threat. Since February 2022, the Russian President has made numerous explicit references to the potential use of nuclear weapons, including against allied countries. The conflict in Ukraine illustrates a deliberately brutal military strategy, going far beyond legitimate military targets to aim at civilians and critical infrastructure. At the same time, Russia is resorting to hybrid actions on a daily basis: sabotage, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, political interference, and so on. More concretely, it demonstrates its hostility through repeated acts, such as the regular violation of European airspace, underlining the deliberate and threatening nature of its actions. Russia is clearly engaged in a war economy, which enables it to considerably increase its military-industrial production capacity. In 2024, its defence spending accounted for almost 40% of its federal budget, or around 9% of its GDP (compared with 6% in 2023). By 2025, in purchasing power parity terms, they should exceed those of all the Member States of the European Union combined. The increased risk associated with this rise in power, facilitated by the technological, industrial and economic support provided by states such as China, Iran and North Korea, is a source of concern. Moscow fully assumes this confrontational stance towards the West, which it claims to be fighting in what it presents as a fully-fledged war. It combines political will, military capability and strategic risk-taking. This is why Russia is designated as the principal and immediate threat in NATO's Strategic Concept, as well as in the European Union's Strategic Compass.

China

China's increasingly assertive policy is part of a dynamic of global strategic competition - including military competition - in which the country is positioning itself simultaneously as a partner, competitor and rival. As the European Commission's White Paper points out, China, although a major trading partner of the European Union, is actively reinforcing its military capabilities. Its military spending is now the second highest in the world, far outstripping other East Asian powers. This rapid expansion affects key strategic sectors: nuclear forces, space and cyberspace. At the same time, Beijing's unilateral actions in the East and South China Seas are destabilising the regional order, while its growing military projection in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean is prompting increased vigilance among its European partners. The status quo around Taiwan is a major point of tension, the disruption of which - particularly through armed conflict - would have far-reaching global repercussions, including disruption of international trade, disruption of supply chains and geopolitical instability with direct consequences for the European economy. China is closely monitoring the conflict in Ukraine, observing Western cohesion and the strength of our response in the face of Russian aggression. Our ability to manage this conflict is likely to influence how Beijing views its own territorial ambitions, particularly regarding Taiwan. NATO's Strategic Concept recognises that China is pursuing coercive political, economic and military objectives that are contrary to the interests, security and values of the Allies. Beijing also carries out hybrid operations against Western states: cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, espionage, economic and diplomatic interference, as well as hostile rhetoric. China is also seeking to reshape the rule-based international order, particularly in the space, maritime and digital domains. In the long term, it remains the only power capable of challenging the strategic primacy of the United States. This structural reality goes a long way towards explaining America's strategic refocusing on the Indo-Pacific.

Iran

Iran is actively seeking to undermine the West and its values, notably by supplying arms to Russia to support its aggression against Ukraine. To protect its regional interests and extend its zone of influence, the country has the IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) and more specifically the Quds Force, which specialises in unconventional warfare and support for Iranian proxies. Its activities include assassinations and kidnappings, as well as planning terrorist attacks against targets Iran considers its enemies.

The recent conflict confirms that these ambitions, combined with the risk of Iran becoming a nuclear power, make it a major threat to regional security, with the risk of escalation, particularly in relation to Israel.

North Korea

A key player in an implicit Sino-Russo-Iranian coalition, North Korea adopts an openly provocative stance, multiplying its display of power in South-East Asia, which is of particular concern to South Korea and is exerting increasing pressure on Japan. Its military involvement since June 2024 alongside Russia in Ukraine - with the dispatch of thousands of soldiers and the supply of weapons - marks a significant escalation of the conflict, reinforcing the interconnection between the war in Europe and the growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific region, while allowing Pyongyang to gain valuable combat experience.

Alongside these authoritarian revisionist powers, there are other geopolitical players with a more ambiguous or autonomous position, such as India and Pakistan. The heightened tensions between these two states, fuelled by persistent territorial disputes, pose a real risk of regional escalation, even more worrying as both have nuclear capabilities.

At the same time, the Middle East remains a major source of instability. The attack by the terrorist movement Hamas on Israel, followed by the Israeli response, has revived regional tensions and exacerbated the divisions between regional powers. Furthermore, the recent regime change in Syria has plunged the country into deep uncertainty, adding to the already chronic risk of instability in the region and creating fertile ground for foreign interference and non-state armed groups.

Terrorist Threat

Terrorism remains a major, multi-dimensional and constantly evolving threat. It is expressed both by the territorial anchoring of jihadist groups in Africa and by transnational attacks carried out from the Arabian Peninsula, notably by the Houthis, illustrating the geographical and strategic expansion of this threat.

In this context, the situation in Africa remains a major challenge because of its potential direct repercussions on our national security, which is even more vulnerable in the face of the growing influence of Russia and China, who are deploying strategies that are both offensive and competitive. Russia is using the African continent as a lever to restore its status as a great power and challenge the influence of the West. Through an increased military and paramilitary presence, disinformation campaigns and open support for authoritarian regimes, it is seeking to extend its influence while undermining the dynamics of democracy. As for China, the country is banking on a strategy of massive investment in infrastructure and the granting of loans, establishing long-term economic dependence. At the same time, it exerts/ exercises political pressure through coercive diplomacy. These two powers take advantage of local institutional weaknesses to impose their authoritarian models, while relegating the presence of Europe, including Belgium, to the background. Conflicts in Africa can no longer be seen as simple regional crises: they are now part of a global competition for power and influence.

The risk of terrorism is also exacerbated by the structural instability of the African continent, weakened by a succession of coups, armed conflicts and rebellions. This climate of chronic insecurity provides fertile ground for terrorist groups to take long-term root. They find refuge there, organise themselves, and develop capabilities that could eventually pose a direct threat to European security. The Sahel and

the Horn of Africa, in particular, are facing chronic violence, both jihadist and communal. These groups have a worrying degree of freedom of movement, local roots and significant operational resources. Their influence often extends to areas marked by proxy conflicts, such as Libya, Syria and Yemen. Although militarily weakened, the Islamic State continues to operate clandestinely, taking advantage of security loopholes to maintain a long-term underground presence. In addition, the demographic explosion in Africa - with a population expected to double by 2050 to more than two billion - represents a major strategic challenge. This rapid growth, concentrated in areas often marked by instability, poverty and a lack of infrastructure, risks fuelling social tensions, mass migration, competition for resources and the expansion of criminal or terrorist networks. This dynamic will inevitably have a direct impact on European and international security.

The terrorist threat, far from being confined to Africa, now extends to strategic maritime zones such as the Red Sea. By targeting civilian and military vessels, the Houthis are seriously compromising freedom of navigation in a corridor that is vital for world trade. Their attacks have forced the merchant navy to change its routes, leading to a significant increase in logistic costs and delays in international supply chains. Belgium, whose economy is largely based on its port activities, is directly suffering the economic consequences.

Transnational Threats

In addition to deliberate threats, there are transnational and global crises which, without being direct causes of conflict, act as catalysts, amplifying existing risk factors and generating new threats.

By intensifying phenomena such as drought and water shortages, climate change is fuelling social and political tensions, creating fertile ground for instability, radicalisation and massive, unregulated migratory movements.

At the same time, global health crises such as pandemics and forced migration are exacerbating the dynamics of insecurity. These transnational challenges, which are often unpredictable, put economic and strategic interdependencies to the test, making the international order more fragile.

Economic vulnerabilities, particularly those linked to supply chains - be they energy dependencies, raw materials or critical technologies - are increasingly exploited as instruments of influence or pressure.

These cross-cutting factors have demonstrated their ability to destabilise states and heighten tensions on the international stage.

c. A New Security Paradigm for the West

An Expanding Era of Hybrid Rivalries

The new security environment is characterised by a diversification and an intensification of threats, which take forms that go well beyond conventional military confrontations. Hybrid actions, which combine coercion and subversion, skilfully blend conventional and unconventional methods. Orchestrated by state or non-state actors, they pursue essentially political objectives.

These actions can take many and varied forms. They include cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructures, public institutions and private companies. Added to this are the disinformation campaigns disseminated via social networks to sow confusion, influence public opinion or undermine confidence in democratic institutions. Orchestrated migratory pressure, political interference, economic and industrial espionage, and physical or digital sabotage are also potential threats. Finally, even more discreet tactics, such as funding extremist groups, cultural or religious influence operations, or the use of economic levers (for example via strategic investments), can also be considered hybrid actions.

Often difficult to attribute with certainty, these actions aim to exploit a country's societal, economic and political vulnerabilities, while avoiding a direct military response. Their aim is to weaken, influence

or destabilise one or more states, while remaining below the threshold of open armed conflict. So, although there is no official conflict, the situation can no longer be described as genuine peace. In this new environment, traditional physical and legal boundaries appear obsolete. The direct exposure of allied states to hybrid threats makes the coordination of a collective response more complex and raises uncertainties about the applicability of NATO's Article 5. The difficulty of accurately attributing attacks adds to this complexity and hampers the implementation of effective countermeasures.

In Europe, hybrid actions are putting our resilience and response capabilities to the test. Against this backdrop, security strategies need to be adapted: based on a more agile posture, reinforced preventive measures, and an overhaul of legislative frameworks to anticipate and effectively guide responses to these diffuse and multifaceted threats.

Strategic Changeover: Assumptions and Scenarios

Against a backdrop of unfettered rivalry, the emergence of new balances and the multiplication of threats that are both multiform and persistent, the international strategic environment is undergoing a profound transformation, characterised by growing unpredictability. Given this reality, it is essential to develop scenarios for the evolution of the geopolitical landscape to be better prepared for an uncertain future.

Far from being set in stone, the scenarios that follow are likely to interact, reinforce each other or change rapidly because of external shocks. They aim to shed light on the paradigm shift by highlighting possible medium- and long-term dynamics, to inform strategic thinking on prevention, anticipation and resilience.

- A Russian military attack against Europe or NATO: whatever the outcome, the end of the conflict in Ukraine could prompt Russia to test our cohesion and determination. Such a strategy could begin with limited but highly symbolic actions, such as a military incursion into the Baltic States or a targeted missile strike against a Member State of the Alliance, including our country given its geographical and political-economic position. The implicit objective would be to assess the robustness of transatlantic solidarity: would the Allies present a united front or, on the contrary, would the fear of escalation - amplified by the pressure of public opinion - lead to a cautious or even hesitant reaction?
- Large-scale hybrid attacks: Russia in particular could carry out broad-spectrum hybrid operations aimed at neutralising or disrupting critical infrastructures, whether civilian or military. This would include massive cyberattacks likely to paralyse systems essential to the functioning of society, such as communication networks, electronic payment platforms, energy supplies or internet access. Such disruptions would have a profound impact on the economy and people's daily lives, creating a climate of widespread disorder. At the same time, coordinated disinformation campaigns could amplify fear and sow doubt among European public opinion, undermining social cohesion and weakening the political will to respond in a unified way.
- Conflict in the Indo-Pacific region: in its bid to assert its status as the dominant power, China could undertake a military operation to take control of Taiwan, forcing the United States to intervene militarily. Such a conflict would have far-reaching global consequences, with major disruptions to supply chains, particularly in key sectors such as electronics and access to critical raw materials, on which Europe is heavily dependent.
- Increasing destabilisation in Africa: Europe's southern periphery could experience growing instability under the combined effect of strong demographic pressure, climate change, regional tensions fuelled by extremism, and increasing external interference. This situation could give rise to increased transnational threats, particularly in terms of security, and provoke massive migratory flows that are difficult to control. These dynamics would generate social tensions within European societies and exacerbate political divisions between Member States, undermining European cohesion and solidarity.

Several other parameters are likely to reinforce or modify the possible dynamics envisioned in these scenarios.

- The desire of the current US administration - already expressed in the past but firmly reiterated this time - to refocus its strategy on the Indo-Pacific region, meaning China, as well as on domestic security issues, could influence the scenarios envisioned. This strategic realignment will involve a gradual withdrawal of US forces stationed in Europe, weakening NATO's conventional defensive posture on its eastern side and exposing the European allies more to possible aggressive manoeuvres by Russia. In this context, it will now be up to the European allies, as well as Canada, to rapidly assume primary responsibility for the deterrence and defence of the European continent. This strategic rebalancing is commonly referred to as "burden shifting".
- The excesses of the far right in Europe could also be an aggravating factor. Driven by a discourse based on identity, xenophobia and often Euroscepticism, some extremist parties are challenging Europe's fundamental democratic values. There has also been a rise in hatred towards minorities, and racist comments have become commonplace. These excesses, fuelled by misinformation and economic or migratory crises, undermine social cohesion and threaten the principles of tolerance and openness on which the European Union is founded.
- The effects of these scenarios could also be amplified by the rise of a dynamic of influence orchestrated by a less and less heterogeneous front, consisting in particular of China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and other nations pursuing common interests (and even occasionally aligned), with the aim of weakening and isolating the West. The BRICS, which now include emerging powers such as China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa, as well as new members such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, have growing ambitions to reshape the global economic order. One of their major objectives is to reduce dependence on the US dollar, an evolution which, if it comes to fruition, could lead to fragmentation of the international monetary system and exacerbate tensions with Western countries.

Far from being hypothetical, these increasingly likely scenarios highlight the importance of strengthening preparedness and resilience, both within our armed forces and across society as a whole. In this uncertain context, as in the past, a robust Atlantic Alliance and a united European Union remain essential strategic assets.

Although avoiding the materialisation of these scenarios goes beyond the scope of Defence, this Strategic Vision is firmly in line with this dynamic and helps to anticipate emerging threats, build resilience and consolidate response capabilities. Resilience is strengthened by an integrated approach known as "3D", in which Defence acts in close coordination with diplomacy and development cooperation to promote stability beyond national borders.

Adapting the Western Security Posture

Faced with the continuing deterioration of the international security environment, Western countries have embarked on an in-depth review of their strategic posture, resulting in an accelerated process of rearmament and modernisation of military capabilities. It aims to restore deterrence, strengthen operational credibility and respond to an increasingly diverse spectrum of threats, ranging from conventional conflicts to hybrid forms of confrontation, to terrorist takeovers of certain states. These challenges, which go beyond the strictly military sphere, are forcing Western countries to adopt a global security approach that integrates the economic, technological, informational, diplomatic and societal dimensions with the military aspect.

Against a backdrop of sometimes contrasting transatlantic relations, the Western Allies are working to consolidate their historic partnerships. NATO is regaining relevance in the face of the Russian threat, while new strategic partnerships are developing, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.

Europe, which can no longer solely rely on guarantees from other powers, must increase its autonomy in terms of defence. This is in line with Europe's desire to strengthen the European pillar within NATO,

while developing greater strategic autonomy in terms of defence. As underlined in the European Union's Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, a stronger and more assertive Europe in the field of security and defence will make a positive contribution to global and transatlantic security. Faced with an increasingly hostile security environment, Europe needs to make a quantum leap to increase its strategic autonomy and defence capabilities.

By strengthening its capacity to react autonomously to geopolitical shocks, Europe is laying the foundations for a Union capable of defending its interests, ensuring the security of its citizens and asserting itself as an influential player on the international stage. In an increasingly unstable global environment, this strategic autonomy is not a luxury, but an existential necessity.

Challenges of the New Paradigm

In a world faced with a new security paradigm, the challenges are evolving, multiplying and becoming more complex.

In this context, new technologies play an ambivalent role: while they offer unprecedented opportunities, they also introduce new vulnerabilities, particularly in the cyber domain, where attacks are now frequent, targeted and increasingly sophisticated. In a context where the asymmetry between accessible civilian technologies and expensive military weapons systems is becoming more pronounced, it is crucial for Europe to remain at the forefront of innovation. This guarantees not only a credible deterrence capability, but also greater strategic autonomy.

At the same time, major transnational issues are undermining global stability and making societies more vulnerable to external shocks. The growing uncertainty on the international scene, fuelled by the instability of alliances, the emergence of new powers and the questioning of multilateral governance frameworks, requires us to adapt proactively, rapidly and nimbly.

In this dynamic, the internal cohesion of European and transatlantic democracies is a decisive factor. In the face of political divisions, rising populism and a loss of confidence in institutions, maintaining (national, European and transatlantic) unity is essential to ensure a collective and effective response to current and future threats.

The new security paradigm requires EU Member States and Allies to redefine their security posture to meet the challenges of a multipolar, uncertain and complex world. Belgium is no exception. This new paradigm is based on the ability to imagine security in a comprehensive way, to deter effectively, to defend oneself, to prevent crises and to adapt to strengthen resilience.

Europe must act, invest and cooperate to protect itself. And this Strategic Vision is part of this dynamic.

d. Adapting to Current and Future Threats

Learning from the War in Ukraine

Russia's invasion of Ukraine highlighted Europe's vulnerability to conventional threats, reinforcing the urgent need for a credible collective defence. Cohesion between Allies and adaptability to unforeseen scenarios are crucial if we are to respond effectively to rapidly evolving threats.

Defence learns from the conflict in Ukraine and working to implement them. The lessons identified from this war shed valuable light on the evolution of contemporary forms of warfare, from which it is essential to draw lessons to prepare for the wars of tomorrow, while not losing sight of the fact that Russia, too, will inevitably learn its own lessons.

This anticipation affects not only our armed forces, but also our defence industrial and technological base, which, drawing on this experience, must guide research and industrial development in line with the requirements of modern warfare.

A Changing War

War is constantly changing, both in its nature and in the way it is conducted. This transformation is no longer a theoretical prospect, but a tangible reality. The Ukrainian theatre of operations reveals a profound change in military dynamics, where the emergence of new technologies is redefining the strategic balance on the ground. This new face of warfare, dominated by technological innovation, is overturning traditional patterns and forcing an in-depth recast of operational doctrines.

Remote-controlled systems, particularly drones, now play a central role in modern conflicts, as demonstrated by their massive use by Ukraine and Russia. These devices have established themselves as essential instruments for surveillance, reconnaissance, targeting and strikes, playing a decisive role in conducting land manoeuvres and neutralising enemy capabilities. Their rapid proliferation, even in rudimentary and low-cost forms, requires an urgent and appropriate response, particularly in the fields of electronic warfare and anti-drone defence.

In this context, a growing asymmetry is emerging between, on the one hand, technologies accessible to the general public - such as commercial drones or artificial intelligence (AI) tools - and, on the other hand, conventional weapons systems that are expensive and available in limited quantities. Simple, agile, and inexpensive equipment can now effectively neutralise sophisticated platforms, notably calling into question the operational deployment of certain capabilities. In this changing context, it is becoming imperative to adapt capability choices to emerging threats. This means focusing on flexibility, technological agility, and operational resilience. The point is not to pit traditional capabilities against new technologies, but to link them intelligently. Because in any power struggle, each capability deployed by one side calls for an equivalent response from the other. Reducing our conventional resources is not an option but rather consolidating them by integrating new technologies.

At the same time, cyberwarfare is emerging as a new strategic front. It manifests itself as attacks on sensitive infrastructures and increasingly sophisticated intelligence operations, enhanced by artificial intelligence. In this context, cybersecurity is becoming increasingly important: command, control and communication systems are now as exposed to cyberattacks as they are to conventional strikes.

In tactical terms, the phrase "*there is nowhere to hide*" takes on its full meaning in this new operational environment: the battlefield is becoming increasingly numerically transparent. Each movement on the ground might now be detected in real time thanks to advanced surveillance technologies. Drones, low Earth orbit satellites, infrared sensors and electronic warfare make up an ecosystem that makes concealment far more difficult. In this context, the ability of military forces to maintain their stealth and protect themselves is becoming a major issue. Electronic warfare, which is constantly evolving, is playing a decisive role: systems for jamming and manipulating enemy communications are changing the very conduct of combat. But these countermeasures are themselves subject to technological responses in a spiral of continuous innovation. In this context, electronic warfare - whether offensive or defensive - requires specialised equipment, highly qualified personnel, and access to continually updated databases.

The conflict in Ukraine has highlighted several operational lessons. It stresses the importance of a multi-domain, fully interoperable and resilient defence, capable of dealing simultaneously with hybrid, digital and conventional threats. Air superiority and the ability to counter Anti-Access / Area Denial strategies are essential for freedom of action. The war in Ukraine also shows that real-time collection and exchange of tactical and operational intelligence requires robust technical capabilities, backed up by a high-performance command and control (C²) chain, capable of operating in a degraded environment. Finally, the conflict highlighted the importance of agile logistics and rapid stock replenishment, which are essential to ensure the continuity of the military effort in the long term.

Towards Information Warfare

In psychological and information terms, the rise of hybrid warfare - combining conventional military operations, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and clandestine actions - is profoundly redefining defence and security strategies.

In addition to traditional warfare, there are massive digital offensives as well as large-scale information manipulation involving non-state actors. The cognitive dimension is taking on an increasingly central role in modern confrontations, where digital propaganda is becoming a weapon in its own right to influence opinions, erode resistance and sow confusion in people's minds. The conflict between Israel and the terrorist movement Hamas also illustrates this transformation of conflicts into real battles of perceptions. Social networks and the media now play a crucial strategic role in winning public opinion. They are becoming arenas of confrontation where propaganda, competing narratives and calls for mobilisation are disseminated.

In this context, information warfare is emerging as an autonomous lever of power, based on the manipulation of emotions, disinformation, and the engineering of media influence. From then on, the line between peace and war fades away, blurring traditional reference points and making contemporary conflict dynamics considerably more complex.

The informational, cyber, and cognitive dimensions must therefore be integrated into the defence strategy. This means strengthening cyber defence resources, developing specialised units to combat disinformation, investing in training in psychological operations and working closely with civilian actors - particularly the media - to detect, counter and anticipate hostile influence campaigns. It is also essential to establish a culture of information resilience within the armed forces and society, to reduce vulnerability to manipulation and preserve national cohesion in the face of the invisible assaults of cognitive warfare.

Towards Technological Warfare

In a context of heightened strategic competition, maintaining a technological lead is an imperative for Western nations. This technological superiority is an absolute prerequisite of a credible deterrence and defence posture. Its loss would lead to increased vulnerability.

The technological transformation of warfare goes far beyond traditional weapons. It now encompasses the non-kinetic dimensions of modern conflict, such as electronic warfare, cyberattacks and confrontation in the space sector. These new forms of conflict illustrate how technology acts as a power multiplier, offering a decisive advantage in terms of precision, range, and responsiveness, while limiting the exposure of deployed forces.

To exploit this potential to the full, systems must be interoperable and have shared situational awareness. This is based on a robust C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence) architecture, which provides decision-makers with a unified, real-time understanding of the theatre of operations. This ability to perceive, decide and act faster than the adversary is becoming a major strategic advantage.

With this in mind, the integrated approach to Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) is an essential development. By relying on joint command and control systems, it makes it possible to unify efforts and ensure the coherence of actions in all dimensions of the battlefield: land, sea, air, cyber and space. This synergy is essential if we are to retain the initiative, control information and adapt our responses in the face of hybrid and evolving threats.

Faced with this reality, NATO and the European Union have launched structural initiatives to identify, support and integrate the most critical Emerging Disruptive Technologies (EDTs). These include artificial intelligence, big data analysis, robotics, autonomous systems, quantum technologies, hypersonic capabilities, space innovations and next generation materials.

Towards Mass Warfare

This race for technology must not, however, obscure a fundamental reality: technology alone is not enough. Cutting-edge technology loses its operational effectiveness without a sufficient volume of equipment, troops, weapons and ammunition. It is therefore essential to maintain a balance between technological innovation and traditional military power. The challenge lies in the ability to combine mass and technology in a coherent way to build sustainable and adaptable military superiority.

Collective defence depends on the ability of the Allies to support a sustained military effort over the long term. This implies not only well-equipped and interoperable forces, but also a sufficient volume of resources to deal with a war of attrition. In an environment where losses can be significant in the early stages of a conflict, having many systems and ammunition is essential to maintain operational effectiveness and ensure resilience. Mass, in this sense, is not a luxury but a basic requirement.

In the field of drones, this volume-based logic takes an even more pronounced form: it is saturation that creates the tactical effect. The massive use of this type of system, including low-cost, limited-use devices, enables adversary defences to be overwhelmed and saturated, anti-aircraft resources to be exhausted and, in so doing, exploitable gaps to be created. Here, numbers become a strategic lever, capable of compensating for limited individual capabilities by relying on the cumulative effect and constant pressure exerted on the opponent.

Ultimately, quantity is a key factor in strategic resilience. Having a sufficient volume of resources, even less sophisticated ones, broadens the spectrum of operational options and increases tactical flexibility. The maxim "Quantity has a quality of its own" is fully relevant here: in future conflicts, superiority will lie not just in technology, but in the right balance between innovation and mass availability.

e. The Urgency of the Situation and the Consequences for our Defence

A Sense of Urgency

While the annexation of Crimea in 2014 clearly confirmed Russia's shift in strategic posture, this warning was underestimated. Since then, awareness of the deteriorating security environment has grown steadily, although the threat is not yet fully understood in all its seriousness.

But history is replete with examples showing that potential triggers, often perceived as isolated or peripheral events, deserve to be taken seriously. Many crises - be they political, economic or military - have been preceded by warning signs that were all too often ignored or played down. By failing to react in time to these danger signs, situations that could have been contained beforehand have deteriorated.

This requires a rapid, coordinated and determined response, to preserve stability and defend our national and international interests. With this in mind, it is crucial to systematically inject a real sense of urgency into communication strategies to ensure coherent, transparent and credible action, in proportion with the growing expectations and concerns of the population.

In addition to communication, it is just as essential to translate the guidelines and strategic priorities into concrete actions, to implement without delay, but with rigour and determination.

Consequences for our Defence

The consequences of the deteriorating security environment for our defence system call for a comprehensive transformation, affecting our strategic posture, our operational capabilities, the strength of our alliances and our communication strategy.

It is no longer a question of reacting to crises, but of being able to anticipate them. Our country must be fully capable of participating in deterrence and ensuring its defence. This requires a global approach - involving the federal government, the federated entities, the industry, and the population - to strengthen its ability to anticipate, resist and recover rapidly from crises, whether military or of another nature. In this context, Defence plays a central role: there can be no resilience without the ability to defend oneself.

To do this, Belgium needs to plan the reinforcement of its defence capabilities within this global approach, while remaining agile in the face of geopolitical, strategic and technological dynamics. First and foremost, we need to invest in modern, high-performance military equipment, in sufficient quantity and capable of responding to emerging challenges with agility. This means not only increasing the volume of equipment already being delivered, but also enhancing capabilities in areas such as

intelligence, cybersecurity, electronic warfare, unmanned systems, air defence and space. At the same time, the number of military personnel will have to go up to support the increase in capabilities. Force readiness, in terms of both capabilities and troop training, will also need to be enhanced to ensure optimal and adequate response capability.

The consolidation of strategic alliances is also a key part of this transformation. In a context of globalised and interconnected threats, no nation can claim to guarantee its security on its own. Increased cooperation within NATO and the European Union is therefore essential to pool efforts, coordinate responses and guarantee the effectiveness of collective defence mechanisms. It also enables forces to be more interoperable, intelligence to be shared and a common approach to security challenges to be adopted. This strategic solidarity is an essential defence against the fragmentation strategies pursued by hostile players.

Finally, the information and communication dimension of Defence must be fully taken into account. It is crucial to fight informational interference, to counter disinformation campaigns and to prepare public opinion for security challenges through coherent and transparent strategic education. Reinforcing the credibility of our discourse, creating a genuine collective vigilance reflex, and maintaining national cohesion are now integral parts of our defence strategy.

Defence must therefore evolve towards a more integrated, agile, and resilient model, capable of responding to current and future challenges and thus forming a lasting part of a renewed collective defence framework.

The Need to Update the Strategic Defence Vision

Geopolitical changes, threats and the new security paradigm require a re-evaluation of our country's strategic positioning in terms of defence to adapt to the new realities. These changes require us to refocus our strategy in favour of deterrence and collective defence.

In this context, the STAR Plan, which was drawn up before the major escalation of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022, needs to be updated to respond to the new geopolitical and security dynamics that require our defence capabilities to be adjusted. Although the strategic visions of 2016 and 2022 (STAR Plan) marked important steps in the reconstruction of our defence, they are proving insufficient to meet these challenges and honour the commitments made by our country.

The priorities set out in the government agreement, combined with an accelerated budgetary growth path, form the foundations of this much-needed update.

Speeding Up the Reinforcement of Defence

The reality of defence investment cycles - with around ten years between the decision and full operational capability - means that we cannot lose more time, especially as the increasing pressure on military equipment supply chains is inexorably lengthening delivery times. Rebuilding military capability is a long-term challenge, far more demanding than reducing it.

The aim of this Strategic Vision, which has been drawn up in line with the principles of the STAR Plan, which it incorporates and extends, is to prepare and structure the reinforcement of Defence, while ensuring clear and transparent communication on the issues, priorities and resources needed to guarantee our safety. It also includes a national defence approach, while being aligned with NATO and European Union strategies. With a new military programming law, this vision establishes a guiding framework for the development of our defence over the next two terms. Coherent development of our military defence capabilities can only be achieved through long-term planning, as building military capabilities requires time, a clear vision and a well-defined strategy.

For Belgium, which was lagging in its defence effort and struggling to participate fully in the collective defence of NATO and Europe, the pressure to step up was growing. This new Strategic Vision, together with the increase in our contribution to the collective effort to reach 2% of our GDP from 2025, is an important message to our Allies aimed at gradually restoring our international credibility. Our country

is hereby demonstrating its determination to meet its obligations from now on and to make an active contribution to tackling common security challenges.

4. Anchoring our Defence in Strategic Cooperation

a. Evolution of the Deterrence and Collective Defence Posture

Belgium and Collective Defence: A Necessary Strategic Choice

Given the specific characteristics of our country, Belgium has made the strategic choice not to isolate itself but, on the contrary, to anchor its defence within a collective framework. Our security is therefore based on solid partnerships and lasting alliances, mainly within NATO and the European Union. However, this choice should in no way be seen as a delegation of responsibility for defence. On the contrary, it implies a loyal and united commitment to a joint effort in which each nation fully assumes its share of responsibility.

This choice is based on close cooperation between Allies, with each country first committing to being able to resist an armed attack individually, before pooling its efforts to ensure collective defence if necessary. The aim is to adopt a credible posture, based on appropriate forces and shared capabilities, to deter any aggression through the threat of retaliation. Collective defence is based on the principle of fairness and solidarity, ensuring mutual support between Allies. This means that no country is forced to rely solely on its own resources.

Beyond operational advantages, this collective approach offers real resource optimisation: by pooling assets, it enables a smarter burden-sharing, fosters capacity synergies and enhances overall performance, both economically and strategically.

However, the reliability of each stakeholder is crucial: any lack of commitment or predictability undermines system cohesion and compromises the effectiveness of deterrence. In a collective system, there can be no weak links because the most vulnerable element determines the strength of the whole.

Revising Strategies and Adapting Priorities

The war in Ukraine has been one of the major markers illustrating the resurgence of East-West tensions, forcing Europe to fundamentally and permanently rethink the foundations of its security, while maintaining its focus on the Global South and terrorism.

With the shift in the security paradigm, NATO and the European Union have revised their respective defence strategies to respond to current geopolitical, security and technological threats. This has been done through key documents such as NATO's Strategic Concept, the Global Strategy and the European Union's Strategic Compass. These adjustments have made it possible to redefine priorities and strengthen cooperation among Allies, ensuring a more effective response to modern challenges while preserving regional stability and the collective security of Member States.

The Essential Role of Deterrence and Collective Defence

Since the invasion of Ukraine, state and non-state threats have seriously compromised the stability and security of our country and that of our Allies. This situation has brought deterrence and collective defence back to the forefront of strategic priorities, highlighting the imminent risk of a major high-intensity conflict, even if its exact form cannot be precisely anticipated.

In response to this growing threat, NATO has strengthened its collective defence posture, and the European Union has become more aware of the need for a more autonomous and robust defence, nevertheless firmly anchored in the Alliance. The strategic repositioning reaffirmed by the United States has further increased the importance for Europeans to act in favour of their own defence, even if the idea of European strategic autonomy is not new. In this context, the consolidation of the Alliance,

regional partnerships and European solidarity remains essential to ensure deterrence in the face of new threats.

The Return of territorial Defence and Enablement

Effective collective defence depends above all on each nation's ability to resist an attack on its own territory. Since the end of the Cold War, this aspect of defence has gradually weakened, with a shift towards collective security missions beyond the territory of NATO and the European Union. At the same time, essential missions such as territorial defence and the Enablement mission, which consists of receiving, supporting and facilitating the transit of allied troops while ensuring the deployment of our own forces, have been neglected. The responsible structures and units have been dissolved, and plans have not been updated to address new challenges. Today, NATO's DNA is back.

For Belgium, these missions are of particular strategic importance due to the country's geographic position. Our ports, airports and transport infrastructure play a crucial role in supporting allied forces coming from the West. With the eastward enlargement of NATO and the European Union, distances have increased, making military mobility a major strategic issue. Enablement therefore plays a key role in ensuring the rapid deployment of NATO forces and supporting their operations, thereby strengthening deterrence and defence in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Strengthening Capabilities and Readiness

While the strengthening of collective defence is inspired by certain practices inherited from the Cold War, it cannot be limited to a simple return to past models. Given the profound changes in strategic, geopolitical and technological realities, it is essential that we adapt our approach to contemporary challenges. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to relearn certain disciplines and revitalise structures from that era, which will require increased investment in funding, human resources, technological capabilities and industrial planning.

In the face of new geopolitical and security threats, it is imperative to build more resilient and robust armed forces without delay. More demanding than mere collective security, collective defence requires enhanced capabilities, both in terms of quality and quantity, as well as optimal operational readiness. In this context, it will be essential to maintain our technological superiority, have sufficient equipment and ensure fast and efficient supply chains.

b. NATO and the European Union: Complementary Allies for European Security

NATO and the European Union: A New Era of Strategic Cooperation

For more than 75 years, NATO has been playing a central role in maintaining peace in Europe through effective deterrence – made even more obvious by the war in Ukraine – which has highlighted the crucial importance of the transatlantic bond for the security of the continent. The recent entry of Finland and Sweden in the Alliance shows that its collective defence mission is still relevant.

NATO, a political alliance with a military purpose is distinguished by its integrated structures and its ability to conduct large-scale military operations, thanks to a coherent set of conventional, nuclear and anti-missile resources and a joint command structure under the authority of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

In comparison, the European Union, primarily an economic organisation, is developing a security and defence policy based on voluntary cooperation between Member States, which retain their military sovereignty. At this stage, there is no European military command structure that could replace NATO, which covers the entire European territory.

While Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides for collective defence within NATO in the event of an armed attack against an ally, Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union commits Member States

to provide aid and assistance in case of aggression. However, the latter article is not based on an integrated military mechanism.

In response to the conflict in Ukraine, European countries have increased their military budgets and strategic capabilities, emphasising the importance of greater European autonomy in defence (capacity to act), without calling into question complementarity with NATO and while recognising its essential role in collective defence. The European Union aims to strengthen its capacity to act on the international stage. This dynamic, which is set to result in the emergence of a true European pillar within NATO, will require time, structural reforms and closer cooperation between Member States. In this context, coordination between the European Union and NATO is more essential than ever to avoid duplication of effort, optimise the use of resources and respond effectively to security challenges through a strengthened strategic partnership and concrete cooperation initiatives.

A Balanced Belgian Approach

NATO, which has guaranteed our security for more than 75 years, remains the cornerstone of our collective defence. Belgium's ambition through this Strategic Vision is to once again become a model ally to safeguard its international position. By extension, the European Union must contribute to collective security, particularly through the Common Security and Defence Policy. This Strategic Vision also supports the desire to strengthen European security through enhanced defence cooperation within the European Union and in complementarity with NATO. Within the framework of a reaffirmed transatlantic relationship, Belgium will make an ambitious contribution to the development of the strategic autonomy of the European Union.

This autonomy must ensure that Europe—in defending its own interests—is more sovereign, more responsible for its own defence, and better able to act autonomously and collectively against current and future challenges. To achieve the objective of resolutely strengthening joint European defence while remaining consistent with NATO, Belgium will voluntarily cooperate in its implementation, particularly regarding the acquisition of crucial strategic enablers.

In that context, our country is taking a balanced approach, aiming to strengthen military capabilities and honour its commitments, which benefits NATO, the European Union and the European defence industry. As highlighted in the European Union's Strategic Compass, collective defence will be made most effective by consolidating the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU. Strengthening European autonomy must therefore not be interpreted as a quest for absolute independence. Strategic autonomy does not imply acting alone but acting more effectively with partners. The partnership between Europe and its transatlantic allies within NATO, particularly the United States, remains the cornerstone of our security and defence policy. We must continue and strengthen this cooperation while also consolidating our own capabilities. Conversely, adopting a hostile stance towards NATO or some of its members amounts, even unintentionally, to serving the interests of our adversaries. It is essential not to mistake our enemy.

c. Strengthening the European Defence Pillar within NATO

The return of war on the European continent, combined with the new security policy of the United States, has prompted a significant response from the European Union to strengthen its defence. This momentum has recently led to several major initiatives:

- The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (March 2022), which outlines a shared objective of increasing defence budgets, while also identifying a wide range of priority capability areas and military technologies.
- The European Strategy for the Defence Industry (March 2023), which sets out a European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS). It was accompanied by the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), which seeks to invest in arms manufacturing industries and centralise the procurement of

defence equipment. Although this project is largely supported, the issue of European preference has sparked debate.

- The EU Capability Development Priorities (CDP) published by the European Defence Agency (2023) identify 22 capability priorities across five operational areas: land, air, sea, space and cyber. In 2024, this initiative was further developed through the CARD (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence), which highlights 12 specific areas where cooperation between Member States is strongly encouraged.

Strategic Context and Adjustments to US Priorities

The conflict in Ukraine and growing concerns related to security on the European continent have intensified the need for a stronger European defence. Furthermore, the United States has recently reaffirmed its changing stance on security, putting increased pressure on Europe to assume more responsibility for its own defence. This shift, however, does not undermine NATO's central role, which remains the cornerstone of collective defence, as highlighted by the European Strategic Compass.

Two new European initiatives have emerged in that context.

1) Readiness 2030

On 4 March 2025, the President of the European Commission presented Readiness 2030 (ReArm Europe), an ambitious plan designed to strengthen the continent's security through a swift and coordinated response. This plan proposes the creation of a new defence instrument, supported by a significant increase in European military spending. It also emphasises enhanced cooperation between NATO and the European Union, while affirming Europe's willingness to take charge of its own security and assume increased responsibility for defence.

This plan is based on a set of proposals aimed at mobilising all available financial levers to help Member States rapidly and significantly boost their defence spending. It is structured around five pillars, including a new European financial mechanism designed to support the rapid and substantial strengthening of Member States' defence capabilities. The Commission also proposes to activate an escape clause from the Stability and Growth Pact, allowing an increase in military spending without triggering an excessive deficit procedure.

Europe also stresses the need to spend more efficiently and in a coordinated manner by pooling requirements and carrying out joint procurement. This approach will reduce fragmentation, improve interoperability and strengthen the European defence industrial base.

2) The White Paper on the Future of European Defence

The European Commission has appointed a Commissioner for Defence and Space, who presented a White Paper on the future of European Defence on 19 March 2025. This strategic document complements the Readiness 2030 plan and sets out a roadmap for strengthening military capabilities and revitalising the European defence industry to ensure lasting security on the continent.

The White Paper identifies priority areas for investment, in line with NATO's capability priorities: air and missile defence, artillery systems, missiles and ammunition, drone and anti-drone systems, military mobility, strategic support capabilities, infrastructure protection, and the areas of cyberspace, artificial intelligence and electronic warfare. It also emphasises the need to protect critical infrastructures and bring the Ukrainian defence industry closer to the European market. Readiness 2030, which could free up to €800 billion by 2030, will serve as the basis for the implementation of these projects.

The White Paper also highlights the fragmentation of the European defence market, a major obstacle to its effectiveness. To address this challenge, there are plans to launch large-scale

programmes involving multiple European Union countries. The aim is to encourage European states to invest collectively, develop interoperable systems and strengthen military cooperation.

A Major European Challenge in Cooperation with NATO

During the presentation of the White Paper, the head of European diplomacy warned that, even in the event of a ceasefire with Ukraine, Russia - with its war economy - will remain a persistent threat and could test the resilience of the European Union over the next three to five years. The lack of time forces us to act quickly and pragmatically.

The two European initiatives mentioned above are structural effects in terms of European strategic autonomy, and their implementation will require time before producing tangible results. The projects stemming from this Strategic Vision must also generate short-term effects, without waiting for long-term efforts - such as strengthening industrial autonomy or launching major joint military programmes - to materialise. It should also be emphasised that this increased autonomy will not result in lower costs; on the contrary, ensuring our own security will require substantial and structural investments.

In this context, the White Paper also reaffirmed that NATO remains the cornerstone of European collective defence, and that the European Union's initiatives are not intended to replace the Alliance's capability process (NATO Defence Planning Process – NDPP). On the contrary, they are part of a coherent approach, highlighting the convergence of the capability priorities identified by NATO and the European Union. The White Paper emphasises that European efforts will enable NATO Member States to contribute more effectively and in a more interoperable manner to the Alliance's capability requirements.

d. Strategic Frameworks for Capability Development in Support of Deterrence and Collective Defence

1) Honouring Commitments within the Framework of NATO

Within NATO, Member States' participation in collective defence is categorised into direct and indirect contributions. The former covers the operational costs of the Alliance, while the latter refer to national expenditure aimed at making national forces and capabilities available in support of the collective effort. Since the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, Member States' military spending pledge has been set at 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2024 at the latest, with a commitment not to reduce this effort, in accordance with the principle of "halt any decline". In this context, at least 20% of annual defence spending must be allocated to the acquisition of new equipment (a key indicator of the scale and pace of modernisation).

At the Vilnius Summit in 2023, the new Regional Deterrence and Defence Plans and the strengthening of the pledge to a minimum threshold of 2% were unanimously approved by the Allies. The implementation of the Regional Plans entails a substantial increase in the military capabilities required, implying a raising of this threshold, which was also emphasised at the Hague summit.

However, this equitable sharing is not merely a financial (cash) issue. It is also based on the military capabilities developed by each Member State and their contributions to operations. These three dimensions are interdependent: budgetary resources finance the acquisition of capabilities, which are then deployed in operations. Insufficient defence efforts therefore lead to underinvestment in equipment and operations, thereby compromising the overall effectiveness of deterrence and collective defence.

The Delay in Belgium's Contribution and its Repercussions

Although many European countries have significantly increased their defence spending to meet or exceed the 2% of GDP target (with two-thirds of Allies reaching this target in 2024, compared to

only three in 2014), Belgium remained below this threshold, lagging behind its counterparts. As one of the ten largest economies in the eurozone, both financially and demographically, Belgium found itself weakened by this position, which had become difficult to justify. In a less visible way, this situation could also indirectly reduce the country's attractiveness to foreign companies.

In the military sphere, maintaining defence effort below the minimum threshold of 2% of GDP has automatically led to our country falling behind in terms of capability development, resulting in significant gaps in available capabilities.

Without the government's strong response on 11 April 2025, marked by the achievement of the 2% target by 2025, international pressure would only have increased.

Identifying Capability Gaps

Given the clear threat from Russia, NATO has drawn up concrete defence plans for the European continent, known as Regional Plans, accompanied by detailed tactical plans designed to ensure the effective implementation of operational readiness. Based on intelligence provided by allied services, these plans rely on a series of scenarios involving Russian aggression against one or more Member States, accompanied by an assessment of their likelihood. By approving these Regional Plans at the 2023 NATO summit in Vilnius - alongside all other Allies - the previous government acknowledged the validity of these assumptions and, consequently the necessity of the resulting defence measures.

The approval of these plans marks a major strategic shift, refocusing the Alliance on its founding mission of collective defence after several decades devoted primarily to external interventions. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, these plans define a military organisation structured by region, ensuring the coordination of all allied forces in the face of a clearly identified Russian threat.

What the Allies, European and non-European alike, can deploy is now clear, as is what is required to guarantee the defence of the European continent. The gap between the requirements defined in the plans and the capabilities available will have to be filled according to a principle of fair burden sharing among all NATO members. It is within this framework that each Member State will be officially assigned its 'Capability Targets 2025', the result of NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP). These capability targets represent each country's expected contribution to the collective effort required to implement the approved Regional Plans. They are part of a mechanism aimed at coordinating and optimising the Allies' capability contributions to build credible, coherent forces that are fully aligned with the Alliance's collective level of ambition.

Unlike the previous NDPP cycle, which was mainly focused on expeditionary operations conducted according to a "coalition of the willing" approach, preparation for a high-intensity conflict now implies significantly higher demands in terms of strength, technologies, interoperability and training. The deterrence and defence posture against Russia requires maximum mobilisation of forces, increased availability of equipment, reinforced strategic stocks (ammunition, fuel, spare parts), as well as intensive and sustained training. In a context marked by a deteriorating geopolitical landscape and increased threats, the capability requirements arising from the NDPP process have increased significantly. The objectives assigned to member countries reflect this development.

Defence has incorporated the capability targets to which Belgium has committed under the Capability Target Package 2025 when drawing up the capability portfolio for the new Military Programming Law, which defines investments up to 2035 in line with this Strategic Vision, with the goal of meeting the agreed Capability Targets.

Finally, it should be emphasised that the NDPP 2025 cycle has fully integrated the capabilities currently deployed by the United States in Europe. However, Washington now wants Europe to assume a greater share of the continent's defence, particularly following the redeployment of

some of its capabilities to other theatres of operations. At the same time, the European Union is seeking to strengthen its strategic autonomy by reducing its dependence on US military capabilities. These two dynamics prove to be convergent and complementary. Ultimately, the pledges made by European countries will therefore likely need to increase further.

2) European Requirements Aligned with those of NATO

Within the European Union, there is also a plan to guide capability development, known as the Capability Development Plan (CDP). It sets out joint capability priorities in six key areas: land, sea, air, space, cyber, as well as strategic and force multiplying capabilities. Unlike the NDPP process, the CDP places greater emphasis on the effects to be generated rather than on capabilities and strengths. These are primarily qualitative objectives, which provide neither quantitative guidelines nor a precise distribution of effort among Member States. These objectives serve as the basis for the European Union's defence initiatives and instruments, such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). The European Union's level of military ambition is defined by the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which mainly covers collective security, unlike NATO, which focuses on collective defence. Finally, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) is a recent tool introduced by the European Union to promote greater cooperation between Member States. It helps identify opportunities for cooperation between Member States and potential synergies, thereby facilitating the emergence of joint projects. By promoting a more integrated approach to defence, the CARD enhances the coherence of European efforts, guides joint initiatives and optimises investments, contributing to more effective, structured and sustainable collaboration.

The priorities established under the NDPP are fully consistent and aligned with those defined at European level, in particular through instruments such as the White Paper on Defence and the CARD, which is a voluntary coordination instrument between Member States of the European Union aimed at promoting cooperation and capability coherence, but without national constraints or the assignment of specific tasks, whereas the NDPP is a structured, directive and confidential process in which each country is assigned quantified capability targets to be met within the collective framework of NATO.

The NDPP process is therefore unique, and to date, no European process has replaced that of NATO. If such a process were ever to be conducted in an exclusively European context, it would probably reach conclusions like those of the NDPP with regard to the identification of needs but would require more resources due to the absence of contributions from non-EU countries. Duplicating the NDPP process would be inefficient and further complicate planning.

Defence will ensure that capability development, guided by the NDPP, remains aligned with the European Union's objectives, plans and needs. Strengthening NATO's military capabilities means strengthening those of the European Union, and vice versa.

The strategic autonomy of the European Union must also ensure that Europe can act independently when its vital security interests are at stake, given the strategic reorientation of the United States towards East Asia. We must therefore step up our efforts, in full coherence with NATO, in the priority areas and capabilities that have been specifically identified at European Union level, and for which we remain overly dependent on the United States. This must be done by rapidly developing collaborative projects and initiatives, such as SAFE (Security Action For Europe) and EDIP (European Defence Industry Programme), within which EDPCI (European Defence Projects of Common Interest) is particularly promising for addressing gaps in strategic enablers at European level. In this regard, it is important to emphasise the need for Member States to make rapid progress, particularly through implementing the most advanced short-term projects, while launching long-term initiatives with the support of the European Defence Agency, the High Representative and the Commissioner specifically appointed for defence.

3) National Defence Requirements

National defence requirements are intended to ensure the stability and sovereignty of the country in the face of a constantly evolving range of threats. The protection of our territory and its population is a major priority, encompassing not only defence against external aggression, but also effective crisis management, whether military, terrorist or criminal. This comprehensive approach strengthens the country's resilience in the face of a variety of challenges. In this context, Belgium must have modern and adequate defence capabilities, in particular to counter hybrid and cyber threats, in collaboration with its Allies.

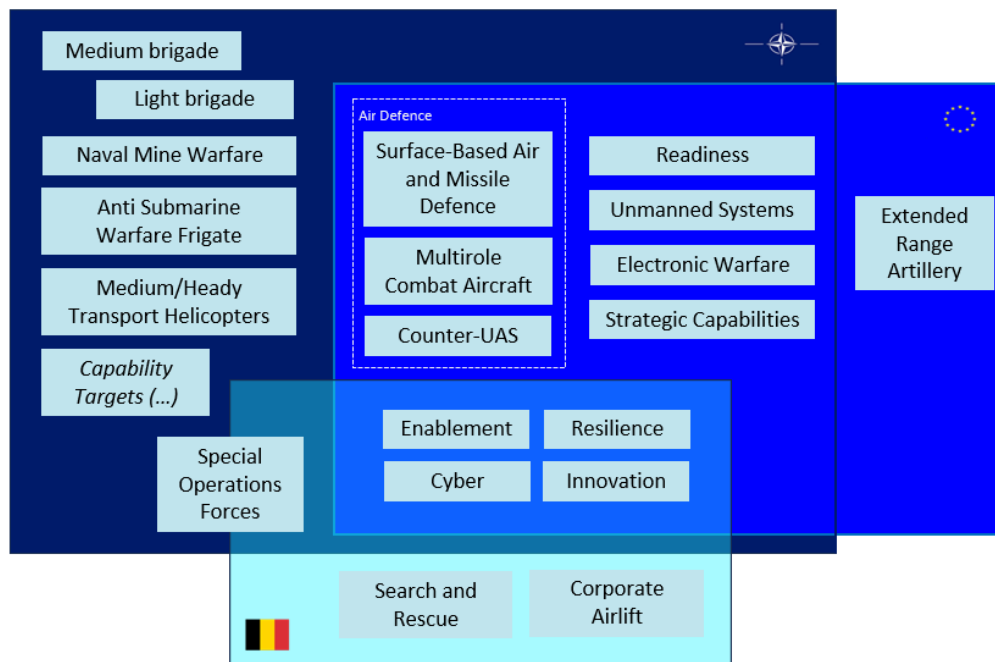
Needs also arise from the implementation of the three Plans designed to ensure the defence of the national territory (National Defence Plan), reinforce our role in collective defence (National Enablement Plan) and increase our country's resilience (National Resilience Plan). The implementation of these plans will lead to the gradual development of specialised or dual-use capabilities (for civilian and military purposes) combining civilian and military challenges. This approach ensures optimal flexibility and adaptability in the face of various security challenges, while reinforcing the interconnection between civilian and military needs.

Finally, requirements directly linked to certain national missions - such as search and rescue, the evacuation of our nationals (Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations - NEO) or the transport of authorities - complete the framework of national requirements.

4) Three Frameworks, One Objective

The determination of capability development needs is based on three frameworks: the gaps identified by NATO - which Belgium has committed to addressing as part of the NDPP process -, the priorities expressed by the European Union - particularly in the White Paper - and national needs.

The following diagram illustrates the convergence between these different frameworks for the most important requirements, showing that meeting the capability commitments assigned to Belgium by NATO also satisfies European requirements.



As already mentioned, the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) plays a central role in defining collective defence capability requirements, as it is the only harmonised mechanism ensuring consistency in the planning of NATO's Regional Plans. This mechanism optimises the mobilisation

of forces and resources needed to meet the strategic requirements collectively defined by the Allies, while ensuring a fair distribution of the collective effort. Each country contributes to it through explicit political endorsement, thereby strengthening both the legitimacy and cohesion of the process.

The government has therefore established this mechanism as the guiding principle for capability investment, with the aim of achieving the objective, shared by both the Alliance and the European Union, of ensuring the security of their members and the stability of the continent through deterrence and collective defence.

e. Developing Partnerships

Operational Partnerships

Compliance with international commitments is also demonstrated through our commitment to collaboration and partnership within NATO, the European Union, Benelux and at a bilateral level.

Within the framework of NATO and the European Union, concrete operational partnerships illustrate the growing integration between allies and partners. In the face of renewed threats, cooperation between states is becoming a strategic imperative.

Over time, Belgium has succeeded in anchoring capabilities with partners, both at European and transatlantic level, positioning itself as a model and a pioneer. These collaborations play a vital role in improving interoperability and the joint development of defence capabilities. Bilateral and multilateral partnerships are major assets for Defence, strengthening the transatlantic and European alliance, which are essential to the collective defence of the continent. This type of collaboration goes beyond simple coordination and reflects a logic of operational interdependence through shared capabilities, joint planning and mutual training. The effectiveness of these long-term partnerships is based on loyalty and consistency.

Defence will focus on developing new forms of European and transatlantic cooperation, particularly with countries where partnerships remain limited today. This will concern both existing capabilities and those to be acquired, such as air defence systems. Participation in numerous international forums contributes to forging the links necessary for this joint development, which is encouraged particularly at European level.

Additional Partnerships

In line with operational partnerships, the deployment of additional collaborations - particularly in the areas of economics and industry, research and development, logistical support, maintenance and training - must also be fully integrated into the defence cooperation strategy. These complementary partnerships strengthen the scope, effectiveness and reciprocity of actions carried out between partners and allies.

With this in mind, Belgium intends to play an active role in building a European Defence Industrial and Technological Base (EDITB). This ambition means that, when negotiating international cooperation agreements, we must take a pragmatic approach to ensuring that Belgian interests are considered and that our country obtains concrete participations. These may take the form of subcontracts, technology transfers, joint research projects or even localised production in Belgium.

In line with the vision set out in the White Paper on European Defence (Readiness 2030), opportunities for industrial cooperation as well as cooperation on security and defence will be pursued with partners in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, the Republic of South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India.

5. Strategic Missions and Objectives of Defence

a. National Security Strategy

The strategic missions and objectives of Defence are fully in line with the National Security Strategy as an essential component of a comprehensive approach based on the preservation of the country's vital interests. This approach aims to protect democracy and the rule of law, ensure economic security, strengthen resilience and honour international responsibility.

Based on close cooperation between the various levels of government and relevant departments, including the Ministry of Defence, the National Security Strategy takes a multidisciplinary approach. Within this framework, the Strategic Vision complements and reinforces other aspects of national security by providing a specific, coherent and appropriate response to military, hybrid and geopolitical threats.

b. Defence's Missions

The missions of Defence, which express what our country expects from its armed forces, embody its *raison d'être*. They are based on the Constitution, which defines the main responsibilities of the armed forces.

Defence plays a key role in protecting our vital interests and maintaining peace and stability in Europe and beyond, wherever these are threatened. Through the development of national military capabilities and its commitment to international alliances and partnerships, it stands ready, upon decision of the government, to mobilise its forces and, if necessary, make legitimate use of force to ensure the security of the country and its population.

The requirements of collective defence - whether exercised within the Atlantic Alliance or on national territory - are the main factors in structuring the armed forces. They primarily determine their size, structure and capabilities. Where necessary, these resources are adapted for collective security missions beyond NATO territory, provided the force model remains similar. What sets these engagements apart is, above all, the requirement for greater robustness. The other, non-dimensioning missions are conducted within the limits of the resources available to Defence.

Deterrence and Collective Defence

This mission is part of our commitments to NATO, and Defence's primary mission is to fully contribute to it.

Belgium's vital security interests are anchored in the collective defence system and are therefore fundamentally dependent on it. Collective defence is a force-sizing factor, particularly in terms of equipment, personnel, preparation and supplies. In other words, Defence must be able to deploy the capabilities it has committed to its Allies - quantitatively, qualitatively, and in a timely manner.

Defence of the National Territory

Recent geopolitical upheavals and threats, both conventional and hybrid, have brought the need to defend national territory back to the forefront of collective defence. This mission involves securing and preserving the physical integrity of the country against all forms of threats by deploying appropriate and coordinated military responses.

While Defence contributes to the protection of national territory, its role differs from that of the internal security forces. Whereas the police are responsible for ensuring daily public safety, maintaining order, and combating crime, Defence is tasked with responding to major threats, often of an external or strategic nature, that jeopardise sovereignty or national security on a large scale. In this

context, it mobilises military resources and acts within a specific legal and operational framework, complementing internal security forces when the situation requires it.

Subject to government decision and specific conditions, Defence may also be tasked, on a non-structural basis, with internal security missions, particularly the protection of vital infrastructure. To maintain the preparedness and readiness of the armed forces in the context of collective defence, static surveillance missions on national territory will mainly be carried out by the territorial reserve, once it has been established and is fully operational. These missions will be conducted within a clearly defined legal and operational framework, ensuring their effectiveness and legitimacy.

Collective Security

The stability of the international environment is a key strategic issue, particularly for the Belgian economy. Maintaining this stability may require Defence to take part in international crisis management or peace support operations or, where necessary, in military interventions against actors threatening to undermine the international order. With that in mind, Belgium has adopted a '3D' approach (Defence, Diplomacy and Development), whereby Defence acts in coordination with diplomatic instruments and development cooperation. This synergy seeks to promote stability along Europe's external borders, while pursuing balanced partnerships, particularly in Africa, based on pragmatic, reciprocal and mutually respectful relations.

The Safety of the Belgian Nationals Abroad

The safety of Belgian citizens abroad relies primarily on a preventive approach, including diplomatic action and the involvement of Defence. However, in the event of a direct threat or the inability of local authorities to ensure the protection of our nationals, intervention by Defence may - upon decision by the government - prove necessary (NEO).

Support for International Humanitarian Missions

Defence also plays a role in supporting international humanitarian missions and defence diplomacy. It is actively committed to promoting international peace and security by contributing, when circumstances allow, to United Nations peacekeeping missions and European Union crisis management operations, particularly in the prevention and management of conflicts within its immediate neighbourhood and in crises with security implications. The strengthening of bilateral partnerships is part of this dynamic.

Aid to the Nation

Finally, when necessary and if resources permit, Defence provides support to the services responsible for the security of the population. This support can be mobilised in response to various types of crises or emergencies, such as natural disasters, particularly when civilian resources are insufficient or when certain specific Defence capabilities are essential.

c. Current Situation and Ambitions

Although progress has been made thanks to the Strategic Visions of 2016 and 2022 (STAR Plan), current capabilities and Defence's state of readiness remain insufficient, particularly in response to the growing need to effectively address emerging threats. To date, Defence is unable to fully fulfil its collective defence missions due to persistent shortcomings.

For many years, a chronic recruitment deficit, combined with underfunding that hindered the renewal and modernisation of equipment, has directly affected the operational readiness and effectiveness of the armed forces, while also limiting their ability to innovate and adapt to technological developments.

It has now become crucial to significantly strengthen Defence to prepare our armed forces to face high-intensity conflicts. This requires extensive modernisation, particularly through the integration of cutting-edge technologies, to have a more robust, better prepared (readiness) and more agile force

capable of responding quickly and effectively to evolving threats. This primarily involves addressing capability gaps, increasing strategic ammunition stocks and strengthening personnel numbers.

At the same time, Defence will have to legitimise its *raison d'être* in the eyes of the public by demonstrating its usefulness in concrete terms. Whether it is our Allies or our fellow citizens, expectations are clear: Defence must be able to do what is expected of it - and prove it.

While this ambition is essential, it is important to remain pragmatic: despite the substantial increase in budgetary resources allocated by the government in 2025, the scale of the needs is such that the delays accumulated over the years cannot be resolved within just two terms of government. The reconstruction of Defence is part of a long-term process that requires constant, structural commitment and sustained political will.

The Strategic Vision forms the basis for decisions to be taken to achieve capability-building targets as quickly as possible. However, these targets, and the priorities that derive from them, are not set in stone: they must remain flexible and adaptable to respond to changes in the environment and to the emergence of new threats.

d. Strategic Objectives by 2035

Considering Defence's missions, the current geopolitical context and its implications, as well as the anchoring of our defence in strategic partnerships and alliances, the strategic objectives outlined below define what Defence must become by 2035 and guide the efforts to strengthen it.

1) Preparing for High-Intensity Military Conflict within a Collective Defence Framework

Defence is committed to preventing conflicts by strengthening deterrence alongside its allies, both within NATO and the European Union. The main objective is to make the military option less attractive to any hostile nation by developing a robust and deterrent defence capability. This strengthening involves the continuous improvement of our armed forces to prepare them for a possible high-intensity conflict.

If deterrence fails, our armed forces are ready to engage quickly and effectively in collective defence operations to protect the territory of the Alliance, and in particular that of Europe. Achieving this level of preparedness requires armed forces that are capable of swiftly engaging in high-intensity, long-term combat operations while maintaining optimal readiness and support levels to ensure operational effectiveness.

Pursuing this strategic objective does not in any way exclude the execution of collective security missions.

Within this framework of collective defence, Defence is a reliable partner, supporting strong partnerships, both national and international, and working closely with the defence industry and innovation stakeholders. It has sufficient personnel, an extensive operational reserve and has filled its most significant capability gaps. The armed forces are ready to intervene in a variety of contexts, demonstrating robustness, resilience, readiness and interoperability. They are capable of providing a swift and decisive response to increasingly complex threats, both conventional and hybrid, combining efficiency, flexibility and firepower.

2) Protecting the National Territory

In the face of varied and persisting threats, Defence is ready to protect the national territory against all forms of aggression, as part of a pan-societal approach to security. The intensification of threats, particularly hybrid threats, requires us to go beyond the strictly military framework. Territorial protection is becoming global and mobilises all public and private stakeholders, as well as society as a whole (whole-of-society approach). With this in mind, Defence engages in

structured cooperation with key partners and stakeholders, both nationally and internationally, to ensure a coordinated, effective, and resilient response to the complex, multidimensional crises of the future.

Defence has developed a National Defence Plan and contributes to the National Resilience Plan, both of which clarify responsibilities, necessary resources and appropriate actors. In parallel, Defence has drawn up an Enablement Plan to facilitate the large-scale transit and protection of allied troops and equipment, notably by ensuring smooth coordination and optimal responsiveness from the other actors involved.

Defence uses a proactive and transparent communication strategy, both within and outside the organisation, to maintain strong national cohesion and ensure effective crisis management. Defence has a clear legal framework that governs its activities on national territory.

3) Anticipate the Battle of the Future

Defence has its own anticipation capability, relying on analyses of recent conflicts and new modes of warfare to draw all the necessary lessons. It is capable of maintaining a structural military advantage by balancing traditional military capabilities with the integration of cutting-edge technologies, while also rapidly and effectively adopting new technologies through a proactive approach of continuous innovation. Remaining relevant and effective in the long term, the armed forces are actively preparing for future combat by adapting their strategies, modernising their capabilities and integrating new forms of warfare and disruptive technologies.

Defence's industrial strategy drives the rationalisation and strengthening of Belgium's and Europe's technological and industrial base by profoundly transforming both the industrial and defence ecosystems. It supports the deployment of industrial capabilities to accelerate the production of ammunition and weapon systems. For this purpose, Defence has established strategic partnerships with manufacturers to ensure that equipment is always ready for use.

Defence's research and development policy is part of the process of developing new weapon systems. To this end, DIRS 2.0 (Defence Industry and Research Strategy) is more focused on the needs of our armed forces, strengthening cooperation and innovation in the defence industry. It particularly involves small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), thus illustrating a model of European integration. Opportunities for technological and industrial spin-offs are systematically highlighted. With this in mind, Defence will coordinate its actions with other relevant federal departments, in particular the Ministry of Economy, as well as with federated entities.

6. Priority Areas for Strengthening Defence

Considering the strategic objectives to be achieved, the priority areas provide direction for the strengthening of Defence: maximising operational output, increasing personnel numbers, accelerating capability development and establishing an accelerated budgetary trajectory.

a. Maximising Operational Output

Generating operational output is an integral part of Defence's missions, and it will ensure its implementation is strengthened and optimised. Taking into consideration the transformation of capabilities, this effort will remain ambitious yet realistic, so as not to compromise the strengthening of capabilities or disperse resources.

1) Remaining Operational while Transforming

Maintaining a high level of operational activity is essential to ensuring credible deterrence capabilities. Even during periods of reconstruction, an army cannot afford to appear weakened in

the eyes of potential adversaries. It is therefore crucial to permanently preserve the ability to carry out the assigned missions. Maintaining a sustained operational pace, even if adjusted, also helps to avoid any capability gaps, which would be difficult to fill later.

Furthermore, operational engagement is an essential lever for preparation and skills development: real-life operations provide an opportunity to train military personnel in concrete contexts, test next-generation equipment in real-life conditions and validate the effectiveness of new doctrines. This direct feedback is invaluable in guiding transformation efforts and refining the relevance of capability and organisational choices.

The operational effort also supports the development of the defence sector as a whole. By calling on industrial and technological capabilities in real-world conditions, it encourages adaptability, innovation and responsiveness among the players involved.

Finally, an active Defence maintains its legitimacy with the population. Through operations, both domestic and international, it demonstrates its tangible usefulness and its ability to act and protect. This facilitates support for modernisation efforts, justifies public investment and mobilises political and societal commitment.

2) Contributing to Deterrence and Collective Defence and Protecting the Territory

Our armed forces must have combat power that meets NATO standards, is robust and effective in all areas, equipped with cutting-edge technology and staffed by highly trained personnel. They must also ensure permanent operational readiness, including in terms of reserves, and be capable of rapidly scaling up their capabilities according to needs.

Without preventing our country from deploying forces in contexts other than NATO, the operational priorities of Defence will primarily focus on fulfilling the commitments made within the Alliance. These commitments are mainly part of the concept of Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA).

The DDA relies on alert, response and deployment mechanisms structured around the NATO Force Model (NFM), which aims to provide NATO with an increased volume of high-readiness forces, capable of rapid intervention across all operational domains. It is based in particular on a rapid and substantial reaction force, kept on alert to ensure collective defence.

The Forward Land Forces (FLF), pre-positioned on the Alliance's eastern flank, play a central role in this arrangement. They participate in NATO missions and are regularly deployed in large-scale exercises.

In this context, Defence will play an active role in implementing and supporting NATO's new Strategic Concept, which has led to an Enhanced Deterrence Posture.

Finally, the new Regional Plans, developed within the framework of the DDA, form the backbone of the Alliance's response in the event of a crisis or conflict. Their practical implementation is ensured by the NATO Force Model, guaranteeing increased responsiveness and coordination between allied forces. The implementation of these plans will result in a significant strengthening of the presence of land, naval and air forces on the Alliance's eastern border. Defence will gradually allocate more resources and personnel to this area.

Furthermore, due to its position on the Alliance's north-western flank, Belgium also assumes the role of a frontline nation, requiring active contributions, particularly in airspace protection through air and missile defence capabilities, coastal surveillance, and cyber resilience.

As part of NATO's Standing Defence Plan, which aims to safeguard the integrity and protection of Alliance Member States, Defence provides Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) services, an air policing mechanism designed to jointly protect the airspace of the Benelux countries and, periodically, that of other allied nations.

Given the country's role as a host, transit, receiving and troop-contributing nation, the armed forces are prepared to facilitate the large-scale transit of allied troops and military equipment across national territory, while ensuring the protection of critical infrastructure.

Belgium's role in NATO's nuclear deterrence posture will remain essential. By providing Dual Capable Aircraft, our country is actively contributing to a mission aimed at achieving the political objective of preserving peace within the Alliance.

3) Carrying out Defence's Other Missions

Contributing to Collective Security

Although collective defence has become the priority and the main effort, collective security operations remain a crucial option for maintaining or restoring stability in strategic areas.

In the coming years, potential areas of intervention within the framework of the collective security mission will mainly be located in the circle of instability surrounding Europe - including the Mediterranean, the Sahel, West Africa and the Middle East - as well as in regions and strategic trade corridors that are essential to the Belgian economy, particularly for safeguarding freedom of commercial navigation and securing the supply of raw materials.

In Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo will remain an important axis of cooperation for Defence, notably through direct binational support in the form of training and, at European level, through the European Peace Facility (EPF) programme. The situation in the east of the country will remain a point of attention.

To promote knowledge sharing and better defend Belgian interests, an exchange programme between the Foreign Affairs and Defence administrations will be developed.

Protecting Belgian Nationals and Interests Abroad

With regard to assisting Belgian nationals and beneficiaries abroad, global tensions show that Defence must remain constantly ready to provide protection. In this context, preparation for NEO evacuation operations remains a priority for Defence.

If necessary, Defence ensures the security of embassies through optimised deployments and the assignment of specially trained security personnel (Security Agents Detachment - DAS).

Contributing to Urgent Humanitarian Aid

Defence contributes to the efforts required to provide emergency humanitarian aid when necessary. In this context, B-FAST (Belgian First Aid and Support Team) responds to requests for assistance from foreign countries. Its actions include sending medical and humanitarian equipment, organising medical evacuations and deploying specialised teams. Belgian Defence plays an important part in this context, providing its expertise, logistical capabilities and operational resources to ensure a swift and effective response.

Participating in Aid to the Nation

Beyond its ad hoc support within the context of internal security missions, in accordance with a specific legal and operational framework, Defence is also called upon to assist the Nation when required. In addition to mobilising its resources in the event of a crisis or emergency, Defence may be called upon to carry out missions providing direct support to the population when civilian resources are insufficient or specific capabilities are required. In that regard, the PROTER (Territorial Protection) Company serves as a readily available response capability.

Defence also conducts helicopter rescue operations (Search and Rescue - SAR), and contributes to the protection of critical infrastructure, cybersecurity and the fight against disinformation. In addition, it carries out other essential missions, including the surveillance and escort of suspicious vessels in territorial waters and in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), as well as mine clearance

operations via the Explosive Ordnance Disposal service (*Service d'Enlèvement et de Destruction d'Engins Explosifs* - SEDEE).

4) Making a Significant Contribution to the Prevention or Containment of Violent Conflicts

Defence will make a significant contribution to the prevention and containment of violent conflicts, including outside the framework of collective defence, as demonstrated by the support provided in response to the aggression against Ukraine.

In this context, Belgium and its armed forces will continue their military support to Ukraine, both within the framework of the European Union and NATO.

Belgian support takes the form of training Ukrainian military personnel and supplying equipment and ammunition. Depending on how the situation develops, our country's commitment will be adjusted to optimally respond to emerging needs and requirements in the field. Our country will contribute, in collaboration with international partners, to strengthening the Ukrainian army, in particular by supplying F-16s and providing the accompanying support.

Defence will closely monitor developments in this conflict. Our armed forces are preparing to support a European effort aimed at ensuring compliance with a possible ceasefire, within an international framework that remains to be defined.

b. Personnel and Strength Growth

1) Growing Strength

Defence is not built solely on budgets and equipment. The women and men of Defence, through their talent, commitment and excellence, are the driving force behind its actions. They drive its transformation and actively contribute to its strengthening. Their role is central and must remain a priority.

To ensure the development of its operational capabilities and meet its commitments, Defence will need to significantly increase its personnel strength. Defence will actively pursue the recruitment of both military and civilian personnel. The realisation of this ambition within the framework of this Strategic Vision is provided in Annex A.

This increase in personnel is also essential to carry out the transformation, which requires acquiring numerous weapons systems, ensuring their commissioning and subsequent management, and, in particular, guaranteeing the training and preservation of the skills necessary for their use. An expanded workforce will also allow Defence to better contribute to international organisations, thus promoting greater international integration.

Defence will therefore explore all possible avenues to increase its personnel capacity. Recruitment will be diverse, swift and adaptable, while keeping attrition among young recruits and in shortage occupations as low as possible.

As one of the country's largest employers, Defence offers a wide range of careers, internal promotion opportunities and training. In this context, the predictive analysis of the labour market will be continued, and collaboration with, among others, regional employment services will be intensified to support recruitment. Channels for expanding recruitment pools will be further developed. Units will also have more resources and greater autonomy to play a more active role in recruitment, particularly to address their specific personnel needs. The organisation of a secondary education programme focused on Defence and Security professions will be continued and further developed, particularly to ensure coverage across all regions.

The attractiveness of the military profession will be maintained, particularly in terms of salary, allowances and compensation linked to specific situations, performances and/or qualifications. Personnel initiatives will be developed and implemented through constructive dialogue with Defence's labour unions.

Efforts to inspire vocations and strengthen a sense of commitment among young people will be intensified. Particular attention will be given to technical professions in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), which are essential for Defence and, as in many other sectors, in short supply. Accordingly, measures will be implemented to enhance the attractiveness of certain essential professions. Given the growing complexity of Defence's capabilities and systems, it is becoming essential, in some cases, to limit the frequency of job rotations to preserve and leverage the knowledge and experience acquired. To this end, specialisation pathways will be established, while maintaining versatile career trajectories, thus ensuring a fair balance between expertise and adaptability.

The recruitment of civilian personnel remains essential for non-operational functions. To enhance the attractiveness of civilian roles within Defence, their status will be clarified. A regulatory framework will be developed with additional obligations and rules to better align the functioning of civilian personnel with the organisation and needs of Defence, for example in the event of troop training or deployment. This differentiation from other public servants is explained by the need for Defence civilians to also be available in the event of a crisis or conflict. In this context, opportunities to join the reserve will be actively encouraged.

Lateral recruitment, which is autonomous and swift, whether for fixed-term or permanent positions, full-time or part-time, will also be developed. Administrative barriers hindering the lateral inflow of personnel will be removed. Previous experience and specific qualifications will be recognised and valued.

In addition, better use will be made of external personnel through contracted services (outsourcing). Outsourcing will continue to be used as long as necessary, provided that it does not undermine the operational capabilities of the armed forces and that it proves to be effective and efficient. In this context, the possibilities for selection and recruitment will be examined.

To thank military personnel for their service, employee benefits will be developed, in particular through agreements with the private sector.

2) Selection and Training

Recruitment, aimed at boosting personnel numbers, goes hand in hand with the strengthening of selection and training capabilities. The processes and resources required for these activities will be adapted to increase recruitment capacity, reduce enlistment waiting times, and improve candidate onboarding. Selection and training are crucial moments, as they represent the first contact with Defence for applicants and young recruits.

Given the increased complexity of equipment and the operational environment, training is essential and constitutes an important pillar for Defence to guarantee the operational implementation of capabilities. Every year, Defence offers a wide range of training courses, benefiting several thousand individuals. Whether initial, continuing or specialised, these courses cover a broad spectrum of subjects and combine theory and practice. The majority takes place in a military environment, on national territory. They are provided by joint forces organisations, such as the Royal Military Academy and the Royal School for NCOs, as well as by institutions specific to each force. Some are also part of international partnerships, promoting the sharing of experience and strengthening interoperability.

These training courses are essential to ensure the smooth running and operational readiness of Defence. They must be supervised by qualified instructors who are exemplary and committed to providing close support. Their expertise and teaching methods will evolve, incorporating modern

pedagogical approaches based on technological advancements and educational science. For learners, training must be both high-quality and motivating, based on personalised programmes and appropriate physical monitoring (human performance programme). These initiatives are essential not only to enhance the attractiveness of Defence, but also to retain young recruits.

The training programmes will be regularly updated to reflect changes in operational realities and new technologies, such as the use of drones and electronic warfare. Innovation, technologies and partnerships will be fully exploited to optimise learning effectiveness, in particular through increased use of simulation tools.

Training is also an essential part of organisational culture. Defence will therefore ensure that the personnel responsible for training effectively convey values and leadership. A transformative culture, essential to meeting the challenge of strengthening Defence, will also need to be integrated.

3) Fully Operational Reserve

Professional armed forces are essential for deterrence and collective defence. However, their limited size restricts their ability to respond sustainably to major crises or conflicts, both nationally and internationally. To overcome this limitation, it is necessary to strengthen response capabilities with reserve forces, which will complement the active forces. The development of a multi-purpose, larger and more operational reserve is an absolute priority. Defence will integrate more reservists in an appropriate, efficient and effective manner.

The reserve forces are an essential link between Defence and citizens, offering the opportunity to serve one's country without necessarily pursuing a military career. This closer connection not only enhances the image and visibility of Defence but also helps foster a genuine culture of security across the nation. The reserve also offers many other opportunities, such as the strengthening of partnerships with industry.

It is based on 3 pillars:

- The specialised reserve, which can reinforce Defence operations either occasionally or structurally, will consist of individuals integrated alongside civilian and military personnel in active service;
- The combat (deployable) reserve, structured in the same way and integrated into active units, but with a lower readiness level. After a period of (re-)conditioning (training), these reserve units can be deployed in operations, in Belgium or abroad, just like active units. They will be fully equipped and well trained;
- The territorial reserve focuses on homeland defence, enablement missions, the protection of certain vital infrastructures, and aid to the nation. The creation of a territorial reserve is a short-term priority.

To reinforce the concept of the reserve, it is essential to enhance its attractiveness, both to reservists and their employers. The status will be clarified and modernised, in particular to better include full-time and part-time work opportunities. The management of reservists will be simplified and gradually integrated into that of active military personnel. They will be provided with high-quality equipment. Incentive measures will be considered to compensate for their absences from work when serving within Defence, and to encourage engagement in the reserve. To ensure that reservist activities can be combined with professional duties, a forward-looking management of training activities will be established.

To support employers, agreements with sectoral organisations and targeted compensation measures will be implemented, ensuring greater flexibility in the deployment of reservists and better alignment between the needs of Defence and those of other employers. Coordination will be ensured with other federal and regional departments within their areas of competence.

Existing limits and requirements for reservists will be assessed and reviewed if necessary. Unnecessary barriers will be removed so that anyone with specific skills or relevant expertise has the opportunity to enlist.

4) Contemporary Military Service

In response to a growing number of security-related challenges, a one-year voluntary military service ("*Année de Service Militaire - Militair Dienstjaar*") will be introduced in 2026. This service, which will be developed as part of the reserve force, is crucial to its development and strengthening, as it will provide trained and motivated individuals.

Young men and women turning 18 will receive a letter encouraging them to reflect on current security issues and inviting them to join Defence for a year. Participants will be properly compensated, based on their rank, and will have access to interesting military positions.

By the end of the year, these young people will have the opportunity to either pursue a career at Defence or to sign up as reservists, thereby contributing to the strengthening of Defence.

5) Recognised Veterans

In Belgium, a national State recognition status exists to formally acknowledge individuals who have endured exceptional living conditions and demonstrated a commitment beyond what is normally expected of a citizen.

Defence veterans are individuals who have served or are serving within Defence and who meet specific criteria for participation in operations. To date, this recognition is limited to an honorary title, with no specific rights or benefits. To acknowledge the commitment of veterans in service to the nation and recognise their contribution to society, a set of benefits equivalent to those granted under other national recognition statuses will be introduced.

6) Health, Well-being and Safety of Personnel

Military personnel are regularly confronted with complex missions, often carried out under intense pressure and in extreme conditions. These situations expose them to significant risks that must be identified, managed, and, as far as possible, prevented.

Strengthening both individual and collective resilience will be crucial to help personnel effectively manage stress and face the many challenges that lie ahead. This will be particularly important in the coming years, as Defence personnel face growing pressure from ongoing organisational transformation, while continuing to uphold high standards in training and operational performance. The ability to manage stress and overcome challenges will be a key factor in both effectiveness and well-being.

The Total Force Fitness (TFF) concept will be further developed through a holistic model covering eight areas related to well-being: social, physical, financial, medical, spiritual, mental, nutritional and work environment. At the same time, the Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) department will be optimised by consolidating its three strategic pillars – occupational medicine, workplace safety, and psychosocial support - to ensure compliance with legal obligations while maintaining the operational agility required in a potential conflict context.

Defence is also committed to ensuring a safe working and living environment for all its personnel. This means that every employee should be able to thrive in an environment where they feel safe, valued, and respected.

7) Consideration of the Military Specificity

Military personnel are tasked with protecting our country, its vital interests, and its citizens against external threats. This is a unique mission that defines the very essence of military commitment

and the resulting requirements. It involves rigorous training and education, specialised skills, and the management of expensive technological equipment. Moreover, frequent assignments throughout a career significantly increase the burden of commuting between home and the workplace. This unique role within society entails specific obligations and sacrifices: restrictions on certain fundamental freedoms, a duty of obedience, increased exposure to the risk of accidents, a distinct disciplinary and penal system, the possibility of resorting to extreme force, and threats to life, both during training and operations.

This unique specificity, which derives from the Constitution, applies to all military personnel. It means that Defence is not a public service like any other, and that military personnel cannot be treated in the same way as other civil servants. They represent the last resort, stepping in where others cannot. Their mission requires unwavering availability and permanent adaptability to varied, often unpredictable and dangerous contexts.

Recognising, protecting and fully integrating this specificity is essential to guarantee the operational effectiveness of the armed forces. It must be given priority, particularly in the context of any changes affecting the status of military personnel.

Disregarding this specificity - which is not an abstract concept, but a concrete and operational reality - would significantly undermine the resilience and operational capabilities of our armed forces.

Taking this specificity into account is crucial while implementing the reform of the military pension system. It is essential that the proposed measures do not place an excessive burden on the Defence budget, lead to an unsustainable ageing of the armed forces, restrict career prospects of specific categories of key personnel, disrupt the proper running of Defence, or compromise both capability-building efforts and operational readiness. In the current threat environment, failing to adequately consider this would be a reckless risk. In the context of an overall reform of pension systems, specific, balanced and appropriate measures will be implemented to address the realities of the military profession.

Furthermore, recognising and valuing the essential role of military personnel - who serve selflessly and make significant sacrifices for the nation's security - is a cornerstone in fostering a genuine security culture in Belgium.

8) Social Partners

As personnel representatives with extensive expertise, social partners make a significant contribution to the achievement of Defence's objectives. Their involvement is essential to support both organisational and operational developments. Bearing this in mind, a social dialogue based on trust, listening and consultation is an essential lever for achieving the objectives set.

c. Acceleration of Capability Development

1) Assessment and Prospects for Capability Development and Readiness

In terms of capabilities, a first round of major investments, aligned with the Strategic Vision 2016, led to a Military Programming Law adopted in May 2017. It included several major procurement programmes, such as the acquisition of key capabilities: a land motorised capability, a multirole air combat capability, reconnaissance drones, frigates, and mine countermeasure vessels. Deliveries of these capabilities have begun and will gradually increase to reach full operational capacity.

Through an appropriate military programming law, the Strategic Vision 2022 (STAR Plan) has maintained its momentum by launching a second phase of investment, supported by a growing workforce. The focus was placed on purchasing additional land motorised capabilities, strengthening the defence industrial and technological base, and developing new cyber

capabilities. Although this second phase has only recently been implemented (with initial contracts planned for 2023), several major programmes have already been launched, including the acquisition of flight hours equivalent to an additional transport and air-to-air refuelling aircraft, artillery systems, a third patrol boat, logistics and command vehicles, and light multi-role helicopters.

The deteriorating geopolitical context and escalating threats are now forcing the Ministry of Defence to accelerate and intensify the strengthening of its capabilities. This requires an increased combat power and enhanced readiness, particularly through more sustained training and an increase in stocks - especially ammunition - to ensure greater operational sustainability.

In this context, the two investment phases linked to the Strategic Visions 2016 and 2022 have paved the way but remain insufficient to fully meet our country's commitments in terms of collective defence. In terms of readiness in particular, the budgetary resources actually allocated to Defence in recent years have not been sufficient for the replenishment of stocks, especially ammunition, which remain well below the required level.

Finally, based on the lessons learned from the conflict in Ukraine, Defence will now systematically assess the opportunity to retain equipment scheduled for decommissioning, unless there is an urgent request, particularly from Ukraine. The aim of this approach is to enable this equipment to be re-used in potential large-scale, long-term conflicts, or for the benefit of reserve forces, rather than simply selling it based on its residual value.

2) Principles of Capability Updates and Level of Ambition

The capability updates and the level of ambition outlined in this Vision fully comply with Belgium's commitments in terms of collective defence, while meeting the priorities set by the government and the missions of Defence.

In this context, Defence is pursuing a balanced and coherent capability-building policy, focused on improving operational strength, responsiveness, resilience and connectivity. It also aims to ensure that capabilities are interoperable with those of other NATO and European Union Member States.

As previously mentioned, NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP) remains the reference framework guiding Defence investments. Faced with a context marked by actual threats, NATO has significantly raised the minimum level of expected capabilities compared to the requirements defined during the previous NDPP cycle (2021). This reassessment entails a significant increase in the contributions expected from each Member State.

The 2025 NDPP cycle aims to optimise the allocation of available resources by prioritising the most critical areas. As a result, the investments outlined in the current Military Programming Law have been reassessed, prioritised and adjusted, considering identified shortcomings as well as existing capabilities, to enhance strategic coherence and maximise effectiveness.

The aim is now to promptly initiate acquisitions that address these strategic capability requirements. To respond swiftly to the need for increased robustness as part of a reinforced collective defence, the initial equipment acquisitions, beyond the STAR plan, should mainly focus on expanding and strengthening the capabilities already used or currently being delivered under previous strategic plans. This scenario will allow for the simultaneous acceleration of Defence transformation. These additional procurements will be based as much as possible on existing contracts and partnerships, thereby reducing the length of the contracting process. In terms of human resources, both current and planned personnel provide a solid foundation, which can be more easily reinforced when acquisitions involve standardised equipment.

While reaffirming the need to develop and support a European defence industry, Defence will adopt a pragmatic approach, considering the acquisition of European systems when they are available and aligned with operational requirements, as is already largely the case. However, this

approach will not exclude a priori the acquisition of non-European equipment when deemed essential, considering that not all types of equipment and ammunition are currently available on the European market.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that the capability targets resulting from the NDPP go beyond required equipment investments alone. They also encompass the types of capabilities to be developed, the methods of implementation, and the associated response times, thereby determining a level of ambition to be achieved. In the past, NATO's external collective security operations were based on the voluntary participation of Member States, according to their level of ambition and priorities. This model allowed each country to define its degree of involvement, depending on its available capabilities and budgetary constraints. Today, confronted with the return of a high-intensity threat in Europe, Belgium's level of ambition must be fully aligned with that of the Alliance in terms of the capability objectives assigned to us. In any case, given the context and the sensitivity of the data, the expected level of ambition of our forces has not been made public.

3) Capability Development Priorities

Given the many years of under-investment, the total cost of filling the gaps identified through the NDPP process and increasing readiness exceeds the resources allocated to Defence. Priorities are needed and will be progressively implemented under the new Military Programming Law. Within this framework, priorities focus on a gradual and coherent development of operational capabilities identified and prioritised by NATO for Belgium, which also address the capability shortfalls outlined in the White Paper. This development takes personnel changes, infrastructure expansion, equipment delivery times and implementation into account, to ensure that capabilities are available within the required deadlines.

The main objectives of these priorities are to:

- Increase the operational readiness of current forces to ensure their availability, responsiveness and resilience, as well as their ability to engage in high-intensity combat if necessary and maintain this effort over the long term. We need to strengthen logistical support, maintenance and training capabilities, while building up sufficient stocks, especially of ammunition, to meet supply deadlines, and reinforcing industrial production capacity.
- Operationalise the medium motorised brigade to provide a rapidly deployable, integrated and mobile land capability with enhanced levels of protection, firepower and mobility.
- Complete the multirole air combat capability with additional combat aircraft of the same type to strengthen air superiority, ground support and strategic deterrence.
- Build up an enablement capability to deliver effective support, focusing on improving transit and parking infrastructure, the ability to host and support allied forces, and the development of deployable logistical support capabilities.
- Develop a multi-layered ground-air defence capability, including Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS), to protect deployed forces, the population and critical national infrastructure from complex airborne threats.
- Strengthen the naval surface combat capability to enhance its contribution to collective maritime security and the defence of naval lines of communication.

For capabilities already acquired, planned reinforcement will be achieved through the acquisition of equipment identical to those currently being delivered or already ordered, while taking societal feedback into account. The introduction of new equipment would lead to additional financial and human costs, a reduction in operational effectiveness and a significant increase in resource management complexity that Defence cannot absorb before 2040. Given the progress of ongoing

programmes, a coherent extension of existing capabilities - while maintaining equipment homogeneity - is the only operationally effective, viable, and economically rational option.

Ammunition stocks will be built up for all capabilities, with priority given to systems already in service or about to be commissioned, to ensure their operational readiness as quickly as possible. This initial stock will then have to be consolidated to ensure long-term operational robustness in compliance with NATO standards.

4) Development of Innovation

Technological competition is intensifying, with many competitors investing heavily in emerging technologies, reshaping the correlation of forces on the international stage. The war in Ukraine is a striking illustration of this trend. It highlights what proves effective on the field and acts as a driving force for rapid and sustained technological innovation, with very short innovation cycles and the emergence of new capabilities directly on the battlefield.

In this case, it is vital to maintain a significant technological lead. Acquiring capabilities incorporating cutting-edge technologies - such as artificial intelligence, remotely operated systems, electronic warfare, and cyber capabilities - must therefore be a priority for all Defence components. This will enable the armed forces to meet the challenges posed by the evolving battlefield, ensuring a lasting operational advantage and optimal preparedness against future threats.

This ambition is part of an organisational transformation of Defence, where innovation is not only valued, but becomes a real policy applied from the Staff (strategic level) down to operational units (tactical level). To set this goal, the Defence Strategy Department will adopt a proactive and visionary strategy, capable of meeting not only national security requirements, but also the expectations of our international partners.

Bearing this in mind, instruments such as NATO's DIANA (Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic) and the European Union's EUDIS (European Defence Innovation Scheme) are key levers. These initiatives promote the emergence and support of dual-use technologies (civilian and military), by stimulating collaboration between armed forces, academia, start-ups and industry.

Belgium must fully engage in these dynamics to consolidate its role within the Euro-Atlantic cooperation and benefit from the innovation ecosystems that are shaped by this framework. It must position itself as a reliable technological partner, capable of going beyond the role of mere contributor to become a real driving force in the field of innovation and a strategic player within European and transatlantic cooperation.

The Royal Higher Institute for Defence (RHID) plays an essential role as a competence centre, guided by an innovation policy focused on leveraging technological advances resulting from research (technology push), notably through the creation of the Defence Innovation Hub. This initiative seeks to foster collaboration and integrate innovative solutions within Defence structures.

To promote a culture of innovation, a bottom-up innovation process called "Innovation for Defence" has been implemented within Defence. This programme facilitates short-cycle innovation and enables Defence personnel to come up with ideas that may lead to innovation projects.

The demand for innovation is growing, both from the defence industry and from SMEs, start-ups and research centres. In this context, the RHID will aim, through its policy, to integrate start-ups into value chains and facilitate access to growth capital.

As technological progress is inevitable, it is essential that innovation be strategically mobilised to strengthen the operational effectiveness of our armed forces. However, this dynamic must also be accompanied by thorough reflection on ethical issues and broader societal repercussions.

In this context, technological expertise appears to be the decisive factor in the outcome of future conflicts. By adopting a coherent and ambitious approach, Defence is anticipating the future by laying the foundations for an army resolutely focused on innovation and regarded as a strategic driver of operational performance. This orientation will enable us to maintain our technological superiority and secure a decisive advantage in an increasingly complex, interconnected and evolving environment. Following this dynamic, Belgium relies on the Defence, Industry and Research Strategy (DIRS), which specifically aims to stimulate innovation and strengthen synergies between the military, industrial and academic sectors.

d. Anchoring an Accelerated Budgetary Trajectory

1) Adequacy between the Budget Path and the Annual Budget

As it pursues its operations, Defence must strengthen its capabilities in a coherent manner, namely by synchronising the development of its personnel, investments in major equipment, and the strengthening of operational readiness and force support. Since this synchronisation involves processes that span over several years between decision-making and tangible outcomes, it is vital for Defence to rely on predictable budgetary planning, to ensure financial feasibility to support these processes. Without reliable programming of resources, capacity building will be compromised, and Defence will not be able to ensure the fulfilment of its missions. Respecting the budgetary planning is therefore essential, as it determines the achievement of strategic objectives.

2) Defence Budget Path up to 2035

The government agreement of 31 January 2025 set out a path for accelerated growth in defence spending towards 2% of GDP by 2029 at the latest and towards 2.5% by 2034 at the latest. The implementation of this ambition within the framework of this Strategic Vision is dealt with in Annex B.

It is essential to emphasise that, to maintain the defence effort at the set level and thus comply with the “halt any decline” principle, the amounts currently planned (in euros) may need to be adjusted during the legislative period, depending on the (positive) evolution of GDP compared to current projections. Since the defence effort is calculated based on GDP, an increase in GDP, without adjusting the nominal amounts, would result in a decrease in the defence effort. Even in the event of a decline in GDP, it is essential to maintain these nominal amounts if we are to meet our commitments.

7. Framework Conditions

The framework conditions bring together the levers that are essential for achieving the priority axes (preconditions for success), thereby ensuring the achievement of the strategic objectives.

These framework conditions are the implementation of a clear and coherent strategic framework, the importance of a strong defence industrial and technological base, the development of a communication strategy, the implementation of plans - for defence, enablement and resilience -, a modernised functioning of Defence, an update of the legal framework, the evolution of Defence property portfolio, sustainable development, and values and ethics.

a. Development and Implementation of a Strategic Framework

1) Strategic Vision of Defence

This Strategic Defence Vision 2025 sets out the strategic objectives aimed at strengthening Defence by 2035, thus covering the next two terms of office. It also defines the evolution of capabilities, and the budgetary trajectory required to achieve these objectives.

The adoption of a Strategic Vision is the foundation of a deep and lasting political commitment, specially through a growing and sustained budget path, which is essential for the effective implementation of the strategic objectives.

2) Military Programming Law

The Military Programming Law sets out, in continuity and coherence with the Strategic Vision, the Defence capability investments for the duration of this vision. This act makes it possible to generate the stability and predictability that are essential to the implementation of capability programmes.

It also sets recruitment objectives for personnel, as well as Defence's commitment in terms of industrial and technological base. It therefore provides essential predictability not only for Defence, but also for our Allies and for society, ensuring long-term planning and better coordination of efforts to strengthen our national and international security.

In terms of capability, capability investment programmes have been reassessed up to 2035. The investments that are still required and already planned under the Military Programming Law of 2022 have been incorporated into the new programmes, so that they can be included in the new law (referred to as the Military Programming Law on Investment, Personnel, and Technological Reinforcement for the period 2026–2034). The entire framework has been restructured to establish a coherent link between the capability dimensions (Intelligence - Cyber - Influence / Land / Air / Maritime / Command and Operational Support) and the capability objectives identified within NATO (NDPP) and the European Union, as well as national priorities, all of which have been jointly taken into consideration to guide capability development choices.

3) Defence Business Plan

The Strategic Vision is a key tool for defining the long-term strategic direction of Defence (10 to 15 years). It is indeed crucial for the Defence Staff to translate this vision into intermediate objectives over the medium term (4 to 5 years). This process, carried out at the strategic level of the Staff and referred to as “navigation”, ensures that activities and objectives are in line with the defined policy.

A “Business Plan” is drawn up to this end. This plan is not only used as a reference for the Staff at a strategic level (“Tier 1”) but also sets the operational management framework for subordinate levels (“Tier 2”). It specifies the monitoring and updating of actions undertaken, enabling risks to be anticipated, opportunities to be seized and ensuring consistency with the defined policy. This plan is assessed on a regular base and adapted, normally every two years.

Changes in the geopolitical context and threats require greater agility and responsiveness, allowing for adjustments, when necessary, to the effective implementation of the Strategic Vision and the Programming Law.

In this context, regular reporting on the progress of Defence reinforcement, as well as on the adjustments made, will be implemented to ensure the essential transparency regarding the government and parliament.

b. The Importance of a Strong Defence Industrial and Technological Base

1) Further Development of the DIRS (DIRS 2.0)

The DIRS (Defence, Industry and Research Strategy) aims to support national security and defence policies, strengthen the European Union's strategic autonomy and consolidate the Belgian Defence Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB). It aims to place Belgium in a better position as a competitive technological partner while generating economic and societal returns, particularly through knowledge, dual technologies and jobs. The DIRS ensures national autonomy in key areas, while stimulating research and development to fill capability gaps. It is essential here to ensure consistency between DIRS projects, future Defence needs and technological priorities, by focusing on industrialisation and contractual implementation of initiatives arising from this strategy. To ensure the long-term sustainability of this dynamic, a win-win approach must be adopted, in which investments in our defence and security industry ultimately benefit Defence through new systems and ammunition, while encouraging the development of dual-use technologies that can also benefit the civilian economy.

Given the deteriorating security environment and the need for greater autonomy in defence matters, the European Union must accelerate the development of its own security and strengthen collective defence. In this context, the capacity for innovation in defence is of strategic importance. DIRS policies aim to maintain European and transatlantic technological leadership, particularly in emerging technologies that will transform future warfare. Defence will pursue this dynamic by developing the DIRS, with a dedicated research budget that will evolve to meet the PESCO standard.

It is important for Belgium to keep supporting EU initiatives aimed at strengthening the European defence industry and, by extension, developing greater strategic autonomy for Europe, particularly through frameworks such as the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) or the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP).

An effective research policy is essential for the development of new weapons systems. The DIRS must give priority to the needs of the armed forces. It will enhance participation in EU and NATO defence programmes. As part of a cooperation agreement with the federated entities, the DIRS 2.0 will promote increased collaboration, boost the national defence industry and stimulate domestic production.

Opportunities to participate in flagship programmes will be explored, both in the development and production phases. The technological and industrial return, as well as the relevance of the projects for our Defence, both in operational and budgetary terms, will be key criteria in deciding whether to engage in these initiatives. The acquisition of the resulting equipment will only be confirmed after a thorough assessment of these aspects.

The Royal Higher Institute for Defence (RHID) will play a leading role in the further development and implementation of the DIRS. The RHID will be strengthened so that it can define policies for project management and optimisation. Specific attention will be paid to the Institute's responsibilities in project assessment, support allocation, as well as monitoring and auditing of their implementation.

The RHID will also develop and refine the tools implemented as part of the DIRS. The planned activities include developing and managing technology roadmaps, coordinating mission-oriented defence innovation ecosystems, operating a Defence Innovation Hub (with activities such as concept development, testing and experimentation), proposing research, development and innovation (R&D&I) themes, and supporting investment in innovative companies - from the initial phase to industrialisation - while also strengthening the capacity to rapidly integrate technological advances resulting from innovation.

Drawing inspiration from approaches adopted in neighbouring countries, the RHID will explore to what extent and how an organisation dedicated to defence innovation (Organisation for Defence Innovation and Defence Industry - ODIN) could make a targeted contribution to the implementation of the DIRS.

The von Karman Institute for Fluid Dynamics (VKI) is an internationally renowned Belgian research and teaching centre specialising in fluid mechanics. It plays a key role in the development of cutting-edge technologies, particularly in the aerospace and defence sectors. Through its work, it directly contributes to the technological and strategic superiority of the allied armed forces. Given its strategic importance, closer links with Defence will be actively considered.

2) Development of the Defence Industrial Capability

To address emerging threats, it is essential to rely on a solid technological, industrial, and scientific base capable of supporting the development, production, sustainability and evolution of military capabilities. The industry's strategic positioning also supports the strengthening of long-term cooperation both at the European and transatlantic levels. Considering the technological evolution, this foundation goes far beyond the traditional defence industrial stakeholders. This is why the establishment of dynamic ecosystems (mission-driven defence innovation ecosystems), in areas such as cybersecurity and remotely operated systems (drones) for example, is essential to encourage close collaboration between Defence, industry, academia and research centres. This approach aims to better stimulate innovation, develop cutting-edge military solutions, and strengthen the national position in major international capability projects.

The war in Ukraine has also highlighted the need for a robust defence industry capable of rapidly supporting extended operations in the event of conflict, by quickly producing vital goods such as ammunition - thereby contributing to deterrence. In this regard, production shortfalls compel armed forces to build up stocks which, in any case, will be insufficient in the long term. This is why the industry must quickly be able to produce more and faster. Current delivery times are still too long, and some productions are still missing, particularly in Europe. In addition to the long-term efforts through the DIRS in the field of research and development, it is therefore crucial to implement policies aimed at strengthening the capacity to produce or assemble weapons systems and armaments, to reinforce strategic autonomy in coordination with the federated entities (DIRS 2.0), and to shift from a just-in-time principle to a just-in-case principle.

To this end, the DIRS will integrate a Defence Industrial Development Plan aimed at establishing concrete policies and actions to realise opportunities for strengthening national production capacities among industrial stakeholders. This plan will also explore possibilities for industrial conversion following the closure of civilian companies. This aspect is particularly relevant as it facilitates the redeployment of laid-off personnel and helps overcome the difficulties involved in finding suitable land for new production facilities.

While the main levers for change remain national, NATO and the European Union, both increasingly focused on industrial strategies, can nevertheless play a decisive role by clarifying long-term demand visibility and identifying cooperation opportunities.

At Belgian level, to support the necessary industrial development in the field of defence, the roles and responsibilities of the respective stakeholders, particularly the regions, will be clarified to better identify and promote investment opportunities for industry. In this context, the development of the defence industrial capability will also be supported by the Defence attachés, as well as by the National Armaments Director (NAD), whose resources will be reinforced.

This defence industrial capability deployment plan will also explore the possibility of investing in industrial development in Ukraine.

3) Essential Security Interests

Article 346 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) allows Member States to derogate from internal market rules when it comes to protecting their essential security interests (ESI). This notion covers fundamental interests related to the preservation of national sovereignty, defence and security.

In this situation, the government defined in 2016 the guidelines applicable to Belgium's interests in the field of defence and security policy, as well as the Key Enabling Technological Defence and Security Applications (KETAs) that must be made available to Defence. This document will need to be adapted to reflect the evolution of threats, strategic priorities, and technological advances.

Protecting Belgium's security interests strengthens Belgian and European resilience and strategic autonomy. It also maintains national relevance in key sectors, while generating industrial and societal benefits. In an uncertain security environment, this tool helps ensure the acquisition and availability of war equipment. It enhances readiness and provides in-service support.

In recent years, the implementation of the Strategic Vision 2016 and the STAR Plan 2022 has reinforced collaboration between Defence and industry, particularly through measures aimed at protecting ESIs. The integration of these measures into major investment programmes has opened new opportunities for our defence industry. This enabled it to develop production and support capabilities, while consolidating its position as a competitive partner in international markets. In addition to consolidating the Belgian Defence Technological and Industrial Base, these investment programmes have also laid the foundations for structured communication between Defence and industry. This collaboration has gradually evolved, notably through the DIRS. The dynamic has also opened new prospects and consolidated the position of our industry in the defence sector, generating significant economic and societal returns for our country. These measures will be pursued, and the exploitation of any resulting opportunities will be supported by the financial resources allocated to the DIRS if necessary.

However, integrating these protection measures into procurement processes should not cause any delays and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. It is essential to make sure that they do not divert from the main objective, which remains to provide Defence with the best possible product.

More generally, safeguarding our vital security interests also requires improving protection against the theft of sensitive technologies, preserve national expertise and avoid any malicious foreign takeover of key sectors.

4) Societal Returns

Developing and supporting a defence industrial base is a strategic imperative to ensure greater national and European autonomy. This requires a major investment in the development of innovation and in the implementation of a genuine industrial strategy, focused on the production of armaments and defence systems. This movement must begin with a strong initial commitment, particularly in terms of public funding. This effort is aimed at creating a dynamic in which public orders, combined with technological advances, lead to a gradual build-up of industrial capability. Once this mechanism is in place, it should become self-sustaining, ensuring both the expected production and innovation and generating sufficient income to cover its own financing needs. At the same time, it would contribute to the national economic vitality by creating jobs, exporting technologies and strengthening high-tech sectors.

Defence already serves as a major lever for societal benefits, particularly in economic and industrial terms. Around two-thirds of defence spendings are estimated to directly benefit the Belgian economy, generating a significant societal return.

The direct social benefits of major investment programmes, whether European or transatlantic, are also significant. In 2023, for example, the major programmes concluded in 2018 under the

Strategic Vision 2016 - covering land motorised capability, air combat capability and naval capabilities - had already generated nearly two billion euros in economic returns to our country.

In addition to these direct returns in the form of investment and jobs, there are also indirect returns. These include commercial opportunities for other companies (such as SMEs) or sectors not directly involved in these programmes, transfer of knowledge and support activities.

Another aspect lies in the dual nature of many investments, which can meet both civilian and military needs. This is particularly true in the field of Enablement, which will require investments in logistics or transport infrastructure to enable the rapid deployment of troops and equipment. These investments generate significant civilian benefits, for example by helping to improve trade. The same applies to the Defence cyber sector, which actively contributes to strengthening national cyber security by protecting both military systems and critical civilian infrastructures.

Investing in Defence is therefore an important driver of economic and technological development. In addition to strengthening our security and sovereignty, major weapons programmes generate significant societal returns - both direct and indirect - for the benefit of the entire national socio-economic fabric. Defence spending must therefore not be seen as a pure cost, but as a genuine investment in the future.

c. Development of a Communication Strategy

1) External Communication

The widely publicised conflict in Ukraine has highlighted the brutality of modern warfare, through images of massive destruction, repeated violence against civilians and flagrant violations of human rights. It has confronted European societies with a nearby geopolitical reality that could one day directly affect them. A growing proportion of the population is wondering: could such a war break out here? Are we prepared to deal with it? And what can we do, collectively and individually, to respond? Is Defence ready?

In a world where the information environment is increasingly contested, it is essential for Defence to adopt a clear and coherent communication strategy to ensure the credibility, transparency, and effectiveness of its actions. Strategic communication also plays a key role in deterrence efforts by projecting the image of a credible Defence.

Military and hybrid threats are totally real, but the population is not always fully aware of them and/or does not perceive the urgency of preparing to deal with them. It is essential for every citizen to be aware of the military challenges and dangers facing Europe, and Belgium in particular, as well as the efforts required to address them. This understanding will enhance the clarity and legitimacy of political choices regarding defence. The aim is to raise awareness about the fundamental importance of Defence, its missions and the way it operates in an increasingly uncertain strategic environment.

In this context, Defence will occupy more space in the media by promoting the word of its military experts and making them more accessible to the media. More than ever, the Chief of Defence and military specialists must be able to speak freely about the geopolitical situation and military-technical issues, while respecting security constraints.

Defence will also need to communicate on its policies, relevance, needs and shortcomings in a clear and educational way. It needs to strengthen its links with society, specially through modernised communications, increased presence on social networks, and targeted efforts to reach the younger generations.

This communication is extremely important as it helps inform the public on major issues: commitments made in international institutions, cooperation and partnerships, defence effort,

use of resources, activities of the armed forces, scope of strategic issues, deterrence and defence posture, and decisions on operational commitments.

It is also essential to raise public awareness on the information warfare raging in the digital space. A proactive strategic communication from Defence, in coherence with the other state actors concerned, will help counter disinformation campaigns more effectively, by reinforcing the public's critical approach towards disseminated content. This communication will provide citizens with the tools and confidence needed to independently assess the authenticity of the information they receive. Bearing this in mind, Defence communications will rely on a factual discourse to counter hostile campaigns, disinformation and manipulation attempts, thus contributing to the fight against foreign interference (Foreign Information Manipulation & Interference - FIMI).

By adopting a proactive communication approach, Defence will help develop a culture of security among the population, strengthening its legitimacy, credibility and societal anchorage, while promoting a better understanding of its missions and its positive impact on society. The direct societal value of Defence must be the guiding thread running through this strategic communication.

2) Internal Communication

Internal communication is key, not only for missions, but also for the management, planning and coordination of activities. It enables faster and more effective preparation and commitment, while allowing a proper daily functioning of Defence. Quick and effective work requires high-quality information that is complete, accurate, up-to-date and readily available.

It also enables the personnel to better convey Defence's messages and objectives. Transparency is fundamental: a clear, open and accessible communication on decisions, objectives, projects and internal policy developments plays a key role in strengthening the commitment of the personnel.

Information management is currently not at its best. Bearing this in mind, an update of the internal Defence network (Intranet) will be undertaken, and the introduction of a digital internal communication application will be considered. The aim is to spread smooth and intuitive information among the personnel. These tools will also help simplify administrative procedures. This initiative is particularly important for maintaining contact with reservists, but also knowing that within Defence, not everybody has a personal computer.

Improving internal communications is part of a wider digital transformation process of Defence, both operationally and administratively. This evolution aims to adapt to the digital world, accelerate the adoption of technologies to enhance military capabilities and ensure real-time access to strategic data. It involves a secured networked organisation, a culture of information sharing, increased digital skills, an appropriate support structure and optimised management of information flows, as well as the implementation of decision-support tools.

d. Implementation of National Defence, Enablement and Resilience Plans

Developing the defence of our territory along with a resilient society requires the development of three interdependent and complementary plans: the National Defence Plan, the National Enablement Plan (both currently developed by Defence), and the National Resilience Plan, which is currently developed by the National Crisis Centre (NCCN). The National Defence Plan serves as a "Master Plan" for the first two.

These three plans are part of the National Security Strategy and aim to bring together, coordinate and synchronise all available resources, both civilian and military. To make sure that these plans are properly implemented, it is essential to mobilise the whole of society and coordinate civilian and military action, in close collaboration with all levels of government (whole-of-government). The areas covered by these plans fall under federal responsibility, while respecting and integrating the competences of other levels

of government. They will therefore be drawn up in consultation with the other federal departments and the federated entities.

To make these plans fully operational, inter-federal steering will have to be set up, backed up by a coherent strategic communication approach. Within Defence, a National Plans Coordination Cell (NPCC) has been set up to monitor the development and implementation of the National Defence Plan, the National Enablement Plan, and coordination related to the National Resilience Plan.

As these plans are still under development, the resulting requirements will continue to evolve. At this stage, as far as Defence is concerned, some requirements have already been identified and integrated into the capability development process.

1) National Defence Plan

The National Defence Plan outlines a comprehensive national defence concept, aimed at providing an effective response to physical threats (armed attack, sabotage), virtual threats (cyber threats) and cognitive threats (disinformation). It sets out the strategic orientations, objectives and necessary resources to ensure territorial security and safeguard Belgium's vital interests.

This plan also defines the principles and modalities for the coordinated involvement of all national stakeholders in the development, implementation and evaluation of responses to threats. It is integrated into NATO's regional collective defence plans and coordinated with neighbouring countries. It also harmonises efforts between various federal departments and sets out guidelines for the coordinated use of military, civilian and societal resources, ensuring a coherent and effective response to counter threats.

Active cooperation from other federal departments and federated entities is crucial for developing measures that ensure a prompt and effective response in the event of an international crisis with potential repercussions on national territory. In this context, anticipation plays a key role. This is why, as soon as the National Defence Plan is published, initiatives will be proposed to ensure optimal readiness at all levels.

2) National Enablement Plan

The National Enablement Plan outlines Belgium's responsibilities as a host nation, receiving nation and transit nation, when it comes to hosting allied troops, supporting them and allowing them to travel on and through its territory in the event of the activation of collective defence mechanisms. Being able to carry out these enablement missions also puts our country in a position, as a sending nation, to deploy, reinforce and support its own troops effectively.

Given its strategic geographical position and infrastructure, Belgium plays a central role in strengthening and supporting combat forces in Central and Eastern Europe, notably through its ports on the North Sea. As NATO expands eastward, growing distances and increasingly blurred traditional boundaries further highlight the importance of military and logistical mobility.

This ability to facilitate the rapid deployment of allied forces is a key element of deterrence and defence of the Euro-Atlantic area. However, after the Cold War, this capability was neglected, leading to the dismantling of dedicated structures and the disappearance of appropriate procedures.

Enablement missions rely on both physical elements - such as reception and transit zones, mobility corridors and support infrastructures - and functional components, including key stakeholders (such as the competent authorities), operational and administrative plans, processes and procedures, as well as compliance with legal obligations, particularly regarding border crossings, customs formalities and specific authorisations. In this context, the development of a "military Schengen" and a European strategy for military mobility is a necessity.

Enablement is based on a dual approach involving close consultation and collaboration between Defence and the civilian (public and private) and military sectors. Its implementation requires appropriate capabilities and infrastructure (particularly in terms of specialised rail transport and strategic debarkation facilities).

3) National Resilience Plan

The European Union and NATO underscore the importance of resilience, which remains a national responsibility. Its strengthening is a key pillar of deterrence and defence. By improving our ability to resist, react and recover from a crisis, we strengthen our security and reduce the vulnerabilities that could be exploited by our adversaries. Enhanced resilience contributes to deter aggression by demonstrating that any attempted aggression would inevitably fail.

From a Defence perspective, the National Resilience Plan should cover a number of key requirements, such as the continuity of public authorities and essential services, the security of energy supplies, the ability to manage uncontrolled population flows, the availability of food and water, the management of large numbers of victims or major health crises - notably through strengthening crisis capacities in civilian hospital networks - as well as the robustness of communication and transport systems, the financial sector and, more broadly, the economic fabric.

To ensure that Defence continues to provide optimal support in the development of this plan, a close coordination will be established with the Department of Security and Federal Public Service Home Affairs, in charge of the NCCN and civilian resilience.

e. Modernisation of Defence Operations

In the coming years, Defence will need to undergo a rapid transformation to strengthen its readiness, consolidate existing capabilities and develop new ones. Considering the constantly evolving geopolitical situation, unforeseen events could force Defence to adapt even more quickly than anticipated. This is why it is vital to rapidly modernise the way Defence operates and optimise its processes.

A fluid and fully coordinated cooperation will also be essential, both within the Defence services and with the other federal departments and federated entities. Collegiality at all levels will be vital to accelerate progress in defence matters and ensure effective protection of the country and its population.

1) Process Optimisation and Administrative Simplification

To address its security, budgetary, capability and human resources challenges, Defence must be able to operate in an optimal and dynamic manner. This can only be achieved by relying on strong governance and rigorous business process management, notably through a results-oriented command structure that promotes increased cross-disciplinarity and better coordination.

In this context, the Defence Staff has recently been reorganised, with the aim - through adjusted governance - of establishing a system that ensures greater transparency in its structure, activities, roles and responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms. A good governance system not only facilitates the implementation of policy but also regulates management and accountability processes. This results, among other things, in greater flexibility to act with agility within the given mandate (empowerment), and in ultimate responsibility for achieving assigned objectives (accountability).

A second modernisation axis, focused on optimising processes and simplifying administration, will be implemented soon. Considering the planned transformation of Defence, it is essential to strengthen agility and simplify decision-making chains, administrative procedures and

mechanisms to accelerate the implementation and redeploy the personnel to higher value-added tasks.

Too often, the digitalisation of processes does not lead to simplification, time savings or a reduction in the number of personnel required to manage them. This situation must absolutely change. Confronted with an emergency, Defence must be able to act quickly and effectively. While rigorous work and appropriate controls remain essential, excessive administrative burdens and bottlenecks must be eliminated.

These initiatives are in line with the Federal Action Plan for Administrative Simplification (FAPAS).

2) Improvement of Contractual and Budgetary Management Mechanisms

Contractual level

The rapid scaling-up of defence efforts calls for the implementation of agile and effective contractual and budgetary mechanisms, specifically designed to minimise delays. These mechanisms must ensure a rapid and appropriate response to changing needs in an uncertain security environment. This is a crucial issue. Based on the experience gained from the accelerated procurement of equipment for Ukraine, Defence will facilitate and simplify its acquisition procedures to better meet its own evolving needs, while remaining compliant with public procurement regulations.

From a contractual perspective, Defence will consolidate its needs as much as possible to reach comprehensive agreements with the government, enabling faster completion of the necessary contracts. To strengthen readiness, Defence will establish broad and long-term framework agreements allowing an efficient and flexible execution, to meet operational needs. These agreements will offer suppliers of goods and services long-term prospects, enhancing operational readiness and integration of technological developments. To maximise synergies, Defence will give preference to joint procurements with other governments or through agencies.

Innovation results will be integrated into procurement, and contractual mechanisms will become more agile and flexible to make sure that capabilities can develop along with technology.

Defence will intensify its dynamic teaming approach, promoting cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration, to accelerate and simplify the preparation of the documents required for initiating and finalising contracts.

As part of the Defence Business Plan, enhanced monitoring of the programmes progress will be implemented to ensure optimal execution and compliance with the objectives set, both in terms of budget and deadlines.

Budgetary level

Modernising budgetary processes requires enhanced flexibility and more adaptive credit management during budget execution, to ensure the continuity of operations and the strengthening of Defence. Defence must be able to operate within a more flexible budgetary framework, simplifying the modalities for internal transfers and the allocation of interdepartmental provisions, notably for support to Ukraine. A reform in this direction would accelerate and facilitate the budget implementation while ensuring better anticipation of needs and more efficient allocation of resources.

Administrative and Budgetary Control

The accelerated strengthening of Defence must rely on effective administrative and budgetary management. Administrative and budgetary control, especially by the Finance Inspectors, will therefore be modernised and simplified. It is not a matter of questioning its existence, but rather of optimising its functioning so that it remains a guarantor of independent internal control without

hindering the achievement of the government's objectives. Consultations with federal partners to implement these improvements are ongoing.

3) Digital Transformation

To successfully strengthen its position, Defence must keep investing in digital transformation - essential for adapting to the realities of today's digital world -, while accelerating the integration of technological developments and ensuring real-time access to relevant data and decision-making tools. This implies reorganising information management, favouring a network-based organisation promoting secure, fluid and efficient data exchange. It also involves promoting an organisational structure that facilitates information sharing, while integrating a culture of (cyber)security at every level.

Strengthening digital skills is essential to raise awareness among all personnel and improve their ability to use digital tools. This will foster innovation and the adoption of new technologies. Expertise and solutions in data exploitation must be readily available, intuitive, and tailored to the users' needs, to encourage their adoption at all levels. Data-driven decision-making will need to be fully integrated into functional and operational processes, within a framework that ensures optimal digital interoperability.

Eventually, the integration of emerging technologies - such as artificial intelligence, sovereign cloud computing, and quantum technologies - will be accelerated. A digital innovation policy will ensure that Defence-relevant technologies are adopted in a timely manner to maintain a strategic advantage in the information environment.

In terms of capabilities, forces equipped with modern communication and information systems - the true digital pillars of contemporary defence - are essential, particularly for ensuring large-scale interoperability.

f. Updating the Legal Framework

Given the deteriorating geopolitical situation, it is imperative to adopt a modern, coherent and comprehensive legal framework that addresses new threats and Defence missions. The introduction of a Defence Code (Codex) aims at structuring and completing the Defence-related legislation.

This initiative is part of a global reflection aimed at consolidating scattered texts, filling legal gaps and clarifying ambiguities, while preserving the flexibility necessary for Defence to carry out its missions. Its aim is to enhance the effectiveness of the armed forces by providing increased guarantees for the safety of military personnel and citizens, while defining the role of Defence. This is both a strategic and a democratic issue. A clear definition of missions and competences will improve the organisation and implementation of capabilities, while ensuring that Defence's missions are not expanded indiscriminately. The Code will also clarify the terms of Defence engagement, particularly regarding the conditions for the use of force outside armed conflicts, i.e. in the continuum between peace and war, which requires defining and regulating the concept of crisis times (a period of increased hybrid threats).

This legal framework will also take technological developments into account - particularly in the fields of robotics, digitalisation, and artificial intelligence - to address current challenges, such as data management on the battlefield. At international level, Belgium will contribute to clarifying the rules of international law regarding the use of advanced automation technologies (artificial intelligence and others), to ensure compliance with the principles of international humanitarian law. The national framework will be based on the above principles.

Ethical Vigilance

Regarding Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems - LAWS), Defence will help clarifying the rules of international law, to ensure their respect in the context of their potential deployment in the future.

Defence does not possess such autonomous systems yet, which should not be confused with unmanned/uncrewed systems such as drones, that remain under permanent human control, even when armed.

Defence will implement emerging technologies in its weapons systems in a responsible manner, meaning that it will systematically ensure permanent human control over the decision to use them.

g. Development of Defence's Property Portfolio

Infrastructure is essential to the proper functioning of the armed forces and the effectiveness of their operations. It also plays a key role in the appeal of Defence and in the loyalty of its personnel.

The development of Defence's property portfolio is based on the following objectives:

- Bringing the facilities up to standard: despite the investments already made, the general condition of the infrastructure remains insufficient to meet the standards of a modern organisation, particularly in terms of energy and the environment. The upgrading of property must therefore continue to meet the current and future needs, with particular attention to military security. Concrete actions will be taken to quickly remedy everyday infrastructure problems, which have a significant impact on personnel morale and well-being and may not be neglected.
- A resilient defence infrastructure: the evolution of collective defence and the need for greater military resilience are also urging Defence to re-examine its infrastructure concepts, with an emphasis on robustness and greater dispersion of facilities, particularly for ammunition storage. The development of enablement and protection missions of the national territory will also encourage a more comprehensive and dual approach to military infrastructure, incorporating solutions such as railway loading docks that are capable of loading and unloading heavy military equipment.
- An infrastructure built for the future: strengthening Defence implies renovation and the construction of new infrastructure to ensure that new capabilities can be operationalised and storage capacity increased. At the same time, the increase in personnel requires an expansion of accommodation infrastructure, particularly for the training of young recruits and the accommodation of reservists. This reinforcement is even more necessary when personnel are required to remain on site due to operational requirements or geographical distance from their homes. Training will also generate an increased need for specific space and infrastructure. Where possible, Defence will seek to expand existing training areas or acquire new ones.
- A balanced geographical distribution: the distribution of military barracks throughout the country is essential to facilitate recruitment and improve personnel retention. Taking demographic realities into account, the establishment of new infrastructure in regions where military presence is currently limited is a response to this challenge. In this respect, Defence will prioritise the development of the Barracks of the Future North, while continuing with the Barracks of the Future South project.
- Strengthening societal anchorage: without obscuring the fundamentally military nature of Defence infrastructure - which must be protected and whose access to the public remains restricted by nature - certain facilities, such as sports or health facilities, may nevertheless be made accessible to the local population. This openness will help to strengthen the legitimacy and visibility of Defence within society. In the context of services provided for third parties, the loan of equipment or the provision of certain services may be considered. In addition, military infrastructure can also play a role as a vehicle of national resilience, particularly in responding to civil crises such as pandemics, natural disasters or major emergencies.

To meet growing needs in terms of infrastructure, enablement, geographical distribution, and resilience – and given the difficulty of establishing new barracks or training areas in regions where they are lacking

– the sale of military sites that may still have potential for Defence purposes will not be pursued. However, as part of the development of an integrated industrial defence strategy, the conditions under which certain military spaces, facilities or grounds could be made available to the defence industry will be examined.

A barracks plan will be drawn up based on these principles.

Given the presence of many major actors in the construction sector in our territory, investments in infrastructure can be a significant lever for economic growth. These budgets offer potential societal benefits, both in terms of project development and construction or maintenance.

h. Sustainable Development

Defence actively contributes to the sustainable development objectives of the federal government and aims to become a more sustainable organisation itself, in accordance with its missions and transformation. This approach is based on three pillars: Governance, People, Planet. The first two pillars are broken down into aspects related to the modernisation of Defence functioning as well as to management and well-being of personnel. With regard to the third pillar, Defence is fully aware of its impact on the environment and the multiple crises – climate, energy, and security – it faces. These interconnected challenges have a direct impact on the strategic environment, the nature of its missions, and the conditions in theatres of operation. That is why Defence is committed to being a participatory environmental actor, seeking to reduce its ecological footprint and adopt sustainable management practices to prevent and respond to environmental threats, provided that these measures do not compromise the security of its personnel or operational effectiveness.

i. Values and Ethics

Values and ethics are essential to Defence, ensuring that its actions respect the fundamental freedoms and rights as well as international standards. Decisions must always be justifiable and aimed at preventing abuse of power, thereby preserving the reputation and legitimacy of the armed forces. Moral and transparent conduct strengthens public confidence and ensures that Defence meets societal expectations.

Values and ethics also contribute to the internal cohesion of the armed forces. Clear standards of conduct guarantee discipline and unity among troops. A coherent framework enables all military personnel to act in good conscience and in accordance with the rules, which is essential for maintaining order and solidarity, even in the tensest situations. As role models for society, military personnel must embody exemplary values, especially as the specific nature of their mission requires impeccable conduct.

A policy based on mutual respect guides the culture of Defence, with a firm determination to combat transgressive behaviour. The fight against extremism, discrimination, and any form of obstacle to inclusion and diversity within Defence will be conducted proactively and resolutely.

8. Basis of Capability Development

The capability development of Defence is based on both national needs and on the requirements arising from international commitments. With a view to adapting to current and future threats, this approach is part of an ambitious, yet realistic framework designed to guarantee an effective response to security challenges.

These considerations have been compiled in a coherent manner to determine the priorities and objectives for this development up to 2035.

a. Capability, Much More Than Just Equipment

Capability is not limited to its material dimension alone. It also includes essential elements such as doctrine, organisation, education and training, human resources, infrastructure, interoperability, command and management structures, as well as the financial resources necessary for capability development.

To make sure that each of these aspects is covered, this development is based on the DOTMLPFI approach, which is incorporated in NATO's conceptual framework and provides a comprehensive, structured and coherent vision of the acquisition and development of operational capabilities:

- Doctrine defines the principles and concepts guiding the use of capabilities;
- Organisation establishes the structure of capabilities and armed forces to optimise their effectiveness;
- Training and education ensure the preparation and development of personnel;
- Material encompasses the equipment and supplies necessary for operations;
- Leadership ensures effective command and optimal personnel management;
- Human resources (Personnel) play a key role in the implementation and operationalisation of capabilities;
- Infrastructures and facilities (Facilities), including training areas, are essential to maintaining operational readiness;
- Interoperability ensures compatibility and coordination between different forces or nations. This integrated approach allows the development of fully operational capabilities tailored to current and future requirements.

It is essential that the growth of capabilities between these pillars is as synchronised as possible to ensure an effective and coherent operational implementation. However, this development is based to a certain extent on estimates, as it is impossible to anticipate everything with certainty, particularly with regard to the results of policies on personnel management, acquisitions, technological advances, and partnerships.

Synchronicity of Capability Development

Capability development, based on an integrated DOTMLPFI approach, requires maximum synchronisation between all components of a capability – whether it concerns human resources (personnel and specialisations), infrastructure or operating resources – and the timetable for implementing investment programmes.

However, providing accurate figures for each of these components and for each capability over a period of ten years remains a particularly complex task. Many parameters remain unknown or will inevitably change, whether they concern equipment choices, technological developments, doctrines of use or concepts for the support and implementation of future capabilities.

Nevertheless, the development of Defence capabilities is part of a planned, progressive and coherent trajectory in all capability dimensions.

b. Balanced, Ambitious and Evolutionary Capability Development

The capability development of Defence, presented in Annex C, is structured around five major capability dimensions, distinct from the Forces (formerly known as “Components”): Information (Intelligence, Cyber and Influence – ICI), Land, Air, Maritime, as well as Command and Operational Support. Each of these dimensions encompasses several capability domains.

This development is planned in a progressive, consistent and balanced manner across the different dimensions, to ensure a credible and sustainable contribution to deterrence, collective defence, and the protection of the national territory. This ambition is supported by numerous partnerships in which Defence is involved, thereby strengthening interoperability and strategic solidarity. With sufficient, well-dimensioned resources, our country will be able to assert itself as a reliable, credible and recognised partner on the international stage.

The current situation, the developments planned up to 2035, and the associated partnerships for each of these capability dimensions are described in detail in Annex C. An overview of the investments laid down in the Military Programming Law for the period 2026-2034 is also included.

Determining Resources for Capability Development

The margin for capability development is determined in accordance with the standard established by NATO. This standard recommends a balanced budget structure in which at least 20% of expenditure is allocated to the acquisition of new major equipment. This percentage is considered a key indicator of the level and pace of modernisation of the armed forces. Failure to meet this minimum increases the risk of equipment becoming obsolete, of widening gaps between Allies in terms of capabilities and interoperability, and of weakening the Defence Technological and Industrial Base in Europe.

Given the backlog that our country has accumulated, and the resources made available under the accelerated budget path defined by the government, capability development is part of a ramp-up process, with the ambition of reaching a target of 25% by 2034.

Evolutionary Character of Capability Development

Capability development cannot be completely fixed for a period of two terms of office. On the contrary, it must remain flexible and evolutionary so that it can be adapted to an increasingly unstable security environment and rapid and often unpredictable technological developments. Aware of these challenges, Defence is adapting its capability portfolio based on regular reviews to ensure that its capabilities, missions, and strategic objectives always remain consistent.

In this respect, Defence will seek to identify and implement the most relevant and innovative solutions to meet emerging needs, ensuring that these capabilities are rapidly available and operational. This effort is part of a cost-control approach, while strengthening the defence industrial base, maximising societal benefits, and consolidating the European anchoring of these capabilities.

With a view to strengthening the overall robustness of capabilities, future developments will aim to meet the need for reinforced attrition reserves to compensate for losses or temporary unavailability of equipment, particularly due to maintenance.

9. Annexes

The annexes provide detailed figures and data that are essential to the implementation of this Strategic Vision, such as evolution of personnel (Annex A), the budget path and resources (Annex B), and capability development (Annex C). As emphasised several times in the document, the nature of the threats and their rapid evolution will probably require adjustments that can be made during execution, without necessarily involving changes to the main body of the text, which is intended to remain stable over time (Strategic Vision). To adopt a flexible and responsive approach in the event of adaptation, the annexes, which include their reference year (in the title), are therefore drawn up as separate documents that may change over time.

In addition, new annexes, such as the Military Sites Location Plan, can be added gradually, which together will form a coherent set.

Annex A (2025): Evolution of Personnel and Recruitment Forecast

At the beginning of 2025, Defence had approximately 28.500 full-time employees (26.200 military and 2.300 civilian personnel) and approximately 2.500 active reservists.

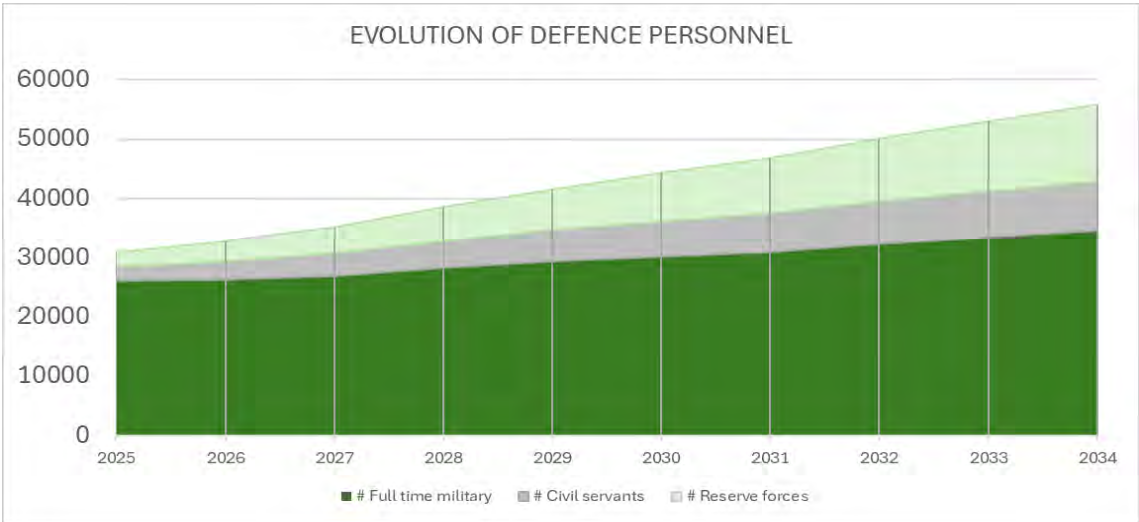
The ambitions for capability transformation require sustained growth in personnel in all categories.

During this legislative period, Defence will aim to recruit at least 14.800 military personnel in active service, 6.600 reservists, and 4.800 civilians. By the end of 2029, Defence should have 29.400 full-time military personnel, 6.900 reservists, and 5.200 civilians. By the end of 2034, Defence should have 34.500 military personnel, 12.800 reservists, and 8.500 civilians.

A first levy of voluntary military service will be organised in 2026, with the aim of selecting 500 candidates. This system will be fully operational in 2028, with 1.000 volunteers selected each year.

This increase in recruitment is essential to quickly restore Defence’s strength of military personnel with a view to providing a credible collective defence and enabling the deployment of new weapon systems under the best possible conditions.

The graph below shows the planned increase in Defence personnel. The persons who participate in the voluntary military service are counted as reservists.



The annual recruitment objectives are specified in the Military Programming Law.

Annex B (2025): Budget Path

Budget Path up to 2035

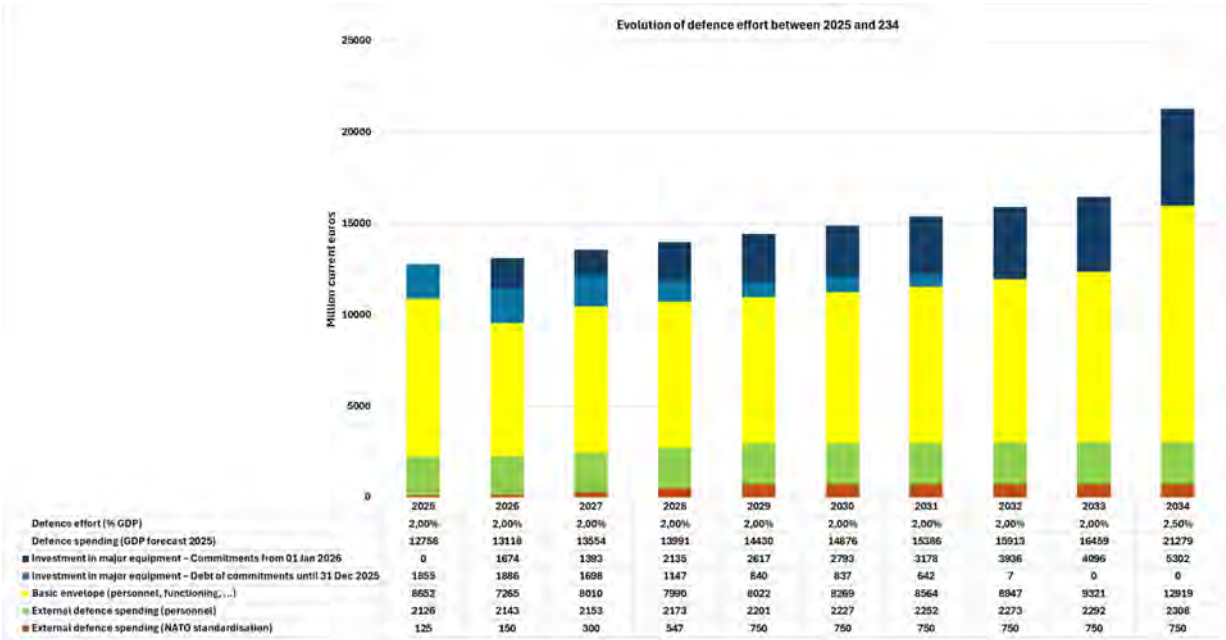
The government agreement of 31 January 2025 sets out a path for accelerated growth in defence spending to 2% of GDP by 2029 at the latest and to 2.5% by 2034 at the latest.

On 11 April 2025, the government adopted a Defence Budget Plan (“Strategic Contribution to Peace by Force”) which stipulates that 2% of the GDP must be achieved from 2025 onwards, a level that will be maintained as a minimum, in accordance with the “halt any decline” principle. In accordance with the government agreement, the budget path defined in this Strategic Vision will bring defence spending to 2.5% of the GDP from 2034 onwards. This path, which upholds the commitment to make a Strategic Contribution to Peace by Force as determined by the government on 11 April 2025, allows Defence to anticipate future needs as much as possible while supporting a coherent (in terms of quantity and timing) and sustainable build-up of capability development. Furthermore, it does not in any way limit the room for manoeuvre of the government, which keeps the option to adjust priorities to strategic and budgetary developments, in particular on the basis of the milestones set out in the plan adopted on the same date.

A Coherent Defence Effort Towards 2035

Based on the established budget path, the annual amount of the defence effort can be determined, calculated as a proportion (percentage) of GDP expressed in current euros. Current euros are amounts expressed in nominal values, i.e. at prices applicable in a given year. Using current euros makes it possible to show the evolution of budget volumes by taking into account the effect of estimated inflation, and thus to represent the amounts included in the annual Defence budgets.

The evolution of the defence effort between 2025 and 2034, as well as its composition, is shown in the graph below:



Defence spending, which reflects the nominal amounts resulting from the defence effort, is structured around three main categories: investment in major equipment, the basic budget, and external defence spending. Although included in defence spending according to the NATO definition, external spending is not financed from the Defence budget. In this context, a distinction should be made between spending related to the payment of military pensions (personnel) and spending incurred by other departments

that fall under the NATO criteria (the latter are referred to as “standardisation” in reference to the “NATO standard” that determines whether an expenditure is included in defence spending) and which are included in the Defence Budget Plan. Subsequently, the “basic” budget covers all expenditure essential to the proper functioning of defence, including expenditure aimed at ensuring its operational readiness. It also includes personnel spending that falls under the Defence budget.

Finally, the resources allocated to capability development programmes, which correspond to investments in major equipment, are divided into two groups:

- The first concerns programmes for which commitments (formalisation by contract) have been made or are planned by the end of 2025, in accordance with the Military Programming Law of 20 July 2022, i.e. before the entry into force of the new Military Programming Law (scheduled for 1 January 2026). Part of the payments corresponding to these commitments will be made at a later date; this balance is categorised as debt in budgetary terms.
- The second group concerns programmes that will be committed from 2026 onwards under the new Military Programming Law linked to this Strategic Vision.

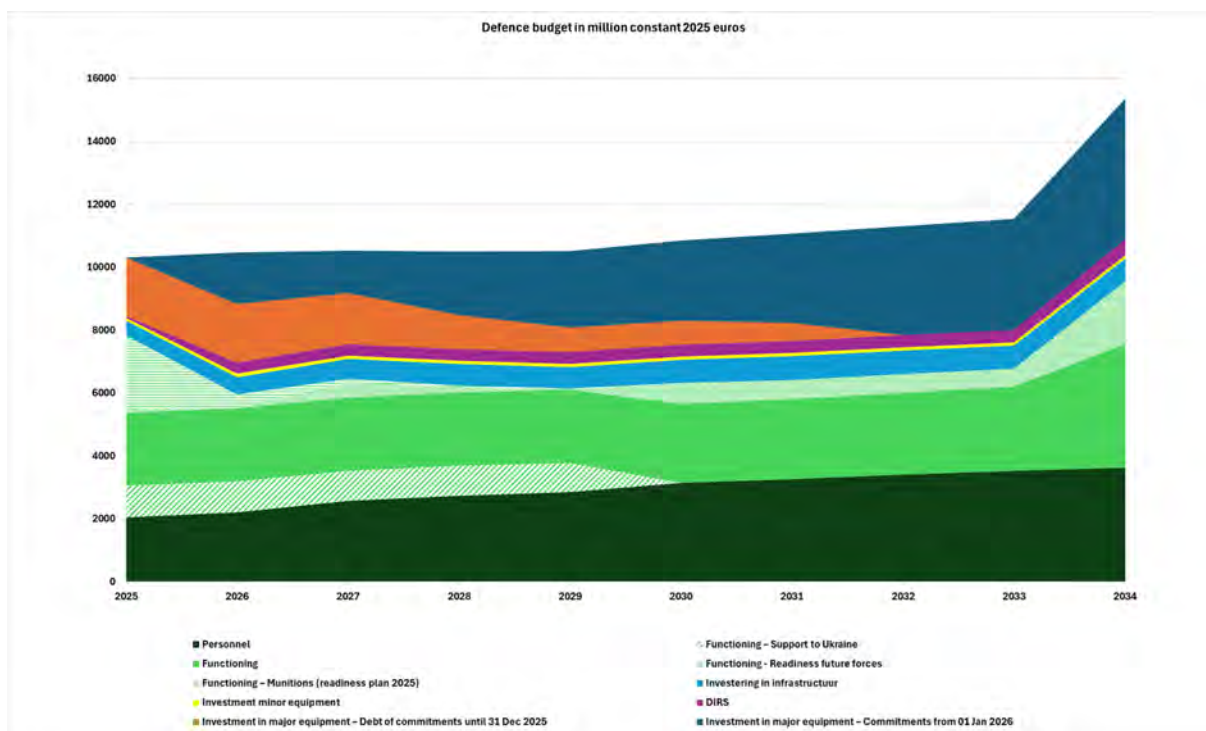
A Coherent Budget Structure

The budget is expressed in settlement credit, i.e. payment credit, which must be distinguished from commitment credit, which represent the budgetary resources released when contracts are concluded.

To determine the annual budget actually allocated to Defence, spending classified as “external spending” must be deducted from the amount of defence spending. Therefore, the actual annual Defence budget is structured around two main components: on the one hand, the basic budget and, on the other hand, investments in major equipment – as provided for in this Strategic Vision – (in addition to these investment amounts, the debt resulting from programmes already committed before 2026 under the STAR Plan will be added).

The basic budget is in turn divided into several sub-categories, including personnel expenditure, operating expenditure – in particular, expenditure related to the readiness of the armed forces – infrastructure investments, current investments for the replacement of minor equipment, and resources allocated to support the DIRS (Defence Industry and Research Strategy).

On this basis, taking into account the budget path considered towards 2035, the graph below shows the projected structure of the Defence budget in millions of constant 2025 euros. This projection in constant euros makes it possible to highlight the development trends, as the amounts are expressed in real value, i.e. they are adjusted for price changes (without adjustments for inflation and growth) relative to a reference year.



The investment effort in major equipment is expected to reach 25% by 2034. At the same time, to support the strengthening of readiness and the replenishment of ammunition stocks, the basic budget envelope will also be gradually increased by 2035. The budgetary resources for the replacement of minor equipment will be maintained. The long-term effort to renovate and adapt infrastructure to the new capabilities has already begun. The budgetary resources earmarked will make it possible to accelerate and expand this process, which will contribute not only to improved operational readiness but also to better working conditions for personnel. The share of the budget allocated to the functioning of Defence will increase over the next two terms of office. Moreover, substantial efforts are planned in the very short and medium term to increase the state of operational readiness and stocks in all logistics categories, including ammunition. Personnel spending will follow the same trend, mainly due to the increase in Defence personnel, as detailed in Annex A. The personnel budget covers the growth in the three categories of personnel – military, civilian and reservists – as well as measures to increase retention and mitigate the impact of the pension reform. DIRS funding will be fixed at 3% of the Defence budget each year, plus additional annual amounts to be specified in the Programming Law.

This indicative projection is not intended to be set in stone, as many parameters are subject to change and require regular adjustments. Whether it be delivery times, industrial capacity, international commitments, programme maturity, actual recruitment levels, support provided to Ukraine or the degree of standardisation, all these factors are likely to cause needs to vary from one year to the next. This is why the defence budget, which is based on a multi-year plan, is updated and approved annually. This dual approach ensures an appropriate budgetary balance, allowing the allocated resources to remain relevant and effective in the face of changing operational and economic realities.

The average levels of personnel, investment, and operating spending in NATO countries are also a relevant indicator of a balanced defence budget, as intended. They reflect the search for a coherent compromise between financial sustainability, operational effectiveness, and preparedness for the future. For instance, a budget that is overly focused on personnel spending could be an indication of a rigid and inflexible army, while a significant proportion of the budget for investment reflects a commitment to modernisation and adaptation to technological developments. Conversely, insufficient spending on personnel could indicate that the growth and retention of the personnel needed to

implement and manage the capability portfolio is at risk. Operating spending ensures the availability and practical effectiveness of existing capabilities. The budget model presented here, which is balanced and adapted to the current and future challenges of Defence, aims for a distribution of resources by 2035 of approximately 35% for personnel, 40% for functioning, and 25% for investment. This structure constitutes a practical starting point for credibly aligning national defence policy with the Alliance's common efforts and standards.

Annex C (2025): Capability Development up to 2035

Contents

A.	INTRODUCTION.....	C-2
B.	CAPABILITY DIMENSION INTELLIGENCE-CYBER-INFLUENCE	C-2
1)	<i>Intelligence</i>	C-3
2)	<i>Cyber</i>	C-5
3)	<i>Influence</i>	C-7
4)	<i>Space</i>	C-8
5)	<i>Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems</i>	C-10
6)	<i>Digitalisation and supporting communications</i>	C-12
C.	CAPABILITY DIMENSION LAND	C-13
1)	<i>Motorised Capability</i>	C-15
1)	<i>Special Operations</i>	C-19
2)	<i>Joint and General Support Land</i>	C-22
D.	CAPABILITY DIMENSION AIR.....	C-23
1)	<i>Air Combat multirole</i>	C-25
2)	<i>Surface-Based Air & Missile Defence</i>	C-27
3)	<i>Fixed Wing Transport</i>	C-28
4)	<i>Air-to-Air Refueling</i>	C-29
5)	<i>Airborne Early Warning and Control</i>	C-30
6)	<i>Air Command and Control</i>	C-30
7)	<i>Force Protection Air</i>	C-31
8)	<i>Search and Rescue</i>	C-31
9)	<i>Airbase General Support</i>	C-32
E.	CAPABILITY DIMENSION MARITIME	C-32
1)	<i>Surface Combatant</i>	C-33
2)	<i>Naval Mine Warfare</i>	C-34
3)	<i>Coastal Security</i>	C-35
4)	<i>Harbour Protection</i>	C-36
5)	<i>Maritime Command & Control and Maritime Support</i>	C-37
F.	CAPABILITY DIMENSION COMMAND AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT	C-38
1)	<i>Medical Support</i>	C-39
2)	<i>Joint Force Protection</i>	C-42
3)	<i>General Support</i>	C-43
4)	<i>Unmanned Systems</i>	C-44
5)	<i>Enablement</i>	C-45

a. Introduction

This annex presents an overview of current capabilities, describes their projected development by 2035, and analyses the dynamics of partnerships. On this basis, the capability portfolio has been drawn up for each capability dimension, in accordance with the investment programme provided for in the Military Programming Law for the period from 2026 up to and including 2034.

With regard to the capability commitments made by our country under the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) as well as European and national requirements, a coherent distribution between the five capability dimensions (Intelligence-Cyber-Influence - ICI, Land, Air, Maritime, Command and Operational Support - Comd & Ops Sp) has been taken into account to ensure a credible, lasting and sustainable contribution to the collective defence effort. The search for added value, cooperation and enhanced synergies, both at the national level and within the framework of NATO and the European Union, supports this objective.

The table below provides an overview of the amounts (expressed in constant 2026 euros) in both commitments (formalisation by contract) and settlements (payments) for each capability dimension for the period covered by this Strategic Vision.

	Commitment 2026-2034 (€Cst26)	Settlement 2026-2034 (€Cst26)
ICI	3.527.691.311 €	2.958.702.145 €
Land	13.862.344.826 €	8.112.648.849 €
Air	10.280.805.049 €	9.326.879.414 €
Maritime	3.429.737.355 €	2.261.835.215 €
Comd & Ops Sp	2.683.574.990 €	2.000.939.137 €
Total	33.784.153.531 €	24.661.004.760 €

The total amount of commitments consists of the amount of investments under the STAR plan still planned as of 1 January 2026, which amounts to 7.77 billion (expressed in constant 2026 euros). To the total amount of settlements is added the amount of the debt resulting from investments made or planned up to 31 December 2025 under the STAR plan, which amounts to 6.81 billion (expressed in constant 2026 euros).

In capability segments characterised by rapidly and continuously evolving threats and technologies, it would be neither relevant nor realistic to set long-term needs with any degree of certainty. In this regard, a dynamic consolidated development approach has been adopted, complementing individually planned acquisitions, to ensure sufficient flexibility as well as increased responsiveness. This approach is structured around currently identified needs and integrates them into a specific annual budget, thus offering the possibility of seizing technological opportunities and responding effectively to emerging threats. This results in increased agility in the face of inevitable developments.

b. Capability Dimension Intelligence-Cyber-Influence

Information superiority has become a key issue, requiring capability building in cyberspace and information technologies to influence and disrupt the adversary's decision-making process. Faced with accelerating technological advances, an increasingly complex and unpredictable security environment, and threats that have become both more dynamic and more hybrid, information management is emerging as a key factor. It is essential to exploit its full potential to anticipate developments and keep the initiative at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels in the information environment.

This constantly changing environment is profoundly transforming the way in which armed forces communicate, make decisions, and conduct operations. It requires advanced digital integration of all capabilities involved, based on increased automation and significant decentralisation of decision-making processes. This is precisely the ambition of the capability dimension Intelligence-Cyber-

Influence (ICI), which unites and integrates different aspects of information to provide relevant capabilities in this area.

This dimension includes the Intelligence, Cyber & Influence capabilities, but also transversal capabilities such as space capability, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), as well as digital integration and communications support.

The table below shows, per capability, the main areas of development and their first year of budgetary commitment, together with the corresponding amounts, both in commitments and in settlements (expressed in constant 2026 euros), for the period covered by this vision.

	First year of commitment	Commitment 2026-2034 (€Cst26)	Settlement 2026-2034 (€Cst26)
ICI		3.527.691.311 €	2.958.702.145 €
Intelligence		290.633.200 €	290.633.200 €
(Counter-)intelligence and security consolidated development	2026	290.633.200 €	290.633.200€
Cyber		489.977.767 €	489.977.767 €
Crypto / Cyber capability consolidated development	2026	489.977.767 €	489.977.767€
Influence		10.873.340 €	10.873.340 €
Influence analysis & information management tools	2027	8.637.700 €	8.637.700€
Public Affairs, PsyOps and CIMIC support equipment	2027	2.235.640 €	2.235.640€
Space		616.664.033 €	616.664.033 €
Joint Space capability consolidated development	2026	616.664.033 €	616.664.033€
Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)		504.123.705 €	504.123.705 €
MQ-9B 3rd system	2027	254.050.000 €	254.050.000€
MQ-9B updates and upgrades	2026	250.073.705 €	250.073.705€
Digitalisation & Supporting Communications		1.615.419.267 €	1.046.430.100 €
CIS services DCN, IT & Digital Transformation (incl. MDO) consolidated development	2026	294.359.267 €	294.359.267€
CIS support to new weapon systems consolidated development	2026	355.670.000 €	355.670.000€
Data centres	2029	965.390.000 €	396.400.833€

Throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision, intelligence capabilities will be gradually strengthened, in particular through investments in digital tools for the *Service Général du Renseignement et de Sécurité* (SGRS; General Intelligence and Security Service) At the same time, Defence's cyber defence, influence and information capabilities will be expanded and strengthened. The development of the space capability and the acquisition of an additional MALE system are planned as well. Finally, the continued digitalisation of Defence will be accompanied by projects aimed at strengthening security, preserving sovereignty, and increasing the resilience of systems.

A stronger digital innovation policy, in collaboration with industry and research institutions, will allow technologies relevant to Defence to be identified, validated, and adopted in a timely manner. It will also ensure that every effort is made to accelerate the integration of innovative technologies. Initially, the focus will be on artificial intelligence and quantum technologies to support the development of advanced solutions for data exploitation, high-performance computing, mass storage, and cybersecurity.

1) Intelligence

Intelligence refers to all information gathered, analysed, and treated to support military and political decision-making. It encompasses strategic intelligence (for long-term planning),

operational intelligence (for specific military actions), and tactical intelligence (for decisions on the ground). To have a better understanding of the adversaries' intentions, capabilities, and vulnerabilities, various sources are used to collect this information - open sources (Open Source Intelligence – OSINT), human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), and imagery intelligence (IMINT).

Operational and tactical military intelligence is provided by ACOS Readiness & Operations and the various Forces respectively, whereas strategic military intelligence is the responsibility of the *Service Général du Renseignement et de Sécurité* (SGRS; General Intelligence and Security Service).

Current Capability

The SGRS deals with threats to the integrity of the Belgian territory and the population, the military defence plans, the scientific and economic potential related to the Defence sector, the execution of the missions of the armed forces, and the security of Belgian citizens abroad. SGRS is the reference body for foreign intelligence. The service collects, processes, and analyses any information or activity originating abroad that may pose a threat to national security. SGRS plays a key advisory role to the government on security and defence matters, both external and internal, distinguishing itself by its military specificity.

SGRS combines the sub-capabilities of “intelligence” and “counterintelligence” around two axes: one is focused on exploitation, bringing together analytical capabilities, and the other is focused on collection. These capabilities are complemented and implemented in synergy with the analysis and collection resources specific to cyberspace.

To be able to provide relevant intelligence in a timely manner, SGRS has a range of collection resources, secure information and communication systems, and multidisciplinary analysis capabilities.

Capability Development

The intensification of threats makes intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities increasingly essential, while the development of resources and technologies is leading to greater demands regarding military security.

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, SGRS capabilities will be strengthened through increased digitalisation. To this end, the establishment of a secure digital environment will continue. This environment will enable users to exploit data more quickly, efficiently and intuitively, allowing relevant data to be generated within the required time limits. Investments will provide a stable and secure IT environment in line with the latest technological developments. By automating access to relevant external databases as much as possible, verification processes and security investigations will be significantly strengthened. The digital transformation also aims to interconnect the IT environments of SGRS and *Staatsveiligheid – Surêté d’Etat* (VSSE; Belgian State Security), further enhancing collaboration between both intelligence services.

High-performance tools will be acquired to optimise the use of open sources and social media (OSINT/SOCMINT), to monitor and detect Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), to adapt to technological developments in communications interception (SIGINT), and to adapt to new techniques in human intelligence gathering (HUMINT). These acquisitions will provide effective capabilities for information gathering.

Cooperation

SGRS develops many and varied partnerships, with Belgian partners such as State Security, Foreign Affairs, the Federal Police, the National Crisis Centre (NCCN), the Centre for Cyber Security Belgium (CCB), the *l’Organe de coordination pour l’analyse de la menace* (OCAM; coordination unit for threat analysis), universities, the industry, as well as foreign intelligence services.

Cooperation with the VSSE is already close and will be strengthened further, particularly in four priority areas: counterterrorism and counter-extremism, counter-espionage and the fight against interference, an integrated approach to information and communication technologies (ICT), and the development of cyber intelligence. This cooperation, which is essential for the effectiveness of the Belgian intelligence services, will also be reinforced through legislative initiatives, the inter-service mobility of agents within the existing regulatory framework, and the development of specific exchange platforms.

2) Cyber

Cyberspace refers to the entirety of digital environments, networks, and interconnected infrastructures that enable the exchange of information via the Internet and other computer systems. It is a virtual space where digital interactions, communications, and activities take place.

As digitisation and interconnectivity continue to grow, the functioning of our society and economy is becoming increasingly dependent on the digital domain. In a constantly evolving cyberspace, the risks of cyberattacks, as well as of disinformation and espionage are multiplying in both the civilian and military environments. Cyberspace is characterised by asymmetry, which refers to an imbalance in resources between the capabilities of actors, where smaller or less powerful entities can cause significant damage to larger targets using digital means that are often available at low cost.

Military cyber capability must guarantee the security of communications and weapon systems, while also being able to disrupt enemy networks to limit their options for action. Freedom of action in the operational cyber domain is an essential element in the preparation and execution of any operation. It provides an opportunity to use asymmetry to one's own advantage, whether for intelligence purposes or to generate effects in cyberspace. Defence must make full use of the cyber potential, which constitutes an essential additional capacity for action, both for its integration into multinational operations and for the exercise of credible deterrence.

Current Capability

The implementation of the operational cyberspace domain within Defence started with the establishment of Cyber Command in 2022. From a capability point of view, existing capabilities in the fields of electromagnetic warfare, cyber defence, and cyber intelligence were regrouped in a coherent way.

The resources specified in previous strategic visions and military programming laws have made it possible to launch several modernisation programmes in various sub-capabilities of cyberspace. As a result, several major initiatives have been initiated, particularly in the areas of innovation, research and technological development, and the reinforcement of cyber defence for other Forces, whether in the land, air, maritime, or medical domains, in the defence logistics chain or in support of operations via space capabilities.

Its current capabilities in the cyberspace domain allow Defence to conduct four types of operations across the three layers of cyberspace - physical, logical and virtual -: preventive force protection operations in cyberspace (Protect), active defence actions (Defend), information gathering operations, whether or not intrusive (Collect), and the development of offensive capabilities in cyberspace (Fight).

Capability Development

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, the objective will be to expand and consolidate the cyber defence capabilities. In addition to strengthening the missions of SGRS, the continuing development of Defence's cyber capabilities will aim to increase our resilience to foreign interference and ensure our ability to conduct offensive operations in cyberspace, if necessary.

To this end, investments will be made in the field of strategic intelligence gathering through the acquisition or modernisation of cyber collection capabilities. These will be supplemented by programmes related to tactical capabilities in cyberspace, both for the acquisition of tactical cyber data collection sensors and for the cyber defence of major weapon systems that are integrated with their communication systems.

The modernisation of the Secure Intelligence Centre (responsible for cyber intelligence and crisis management) and equipment will continue, as well as the interconnection of Secure Operations Centres in the land, air, maritime and medical domains – where cyber incidents are dealt with –. This approach will also include the secure connection of systems (Internet of Things) specific to each of these domains.

In the field of cryptography, numerous encryption devices for various operational networks and/or (new) weapon systems will be acquired and/or upgraded to make them resistant to decryption by quantum computers. Electronic warfare simulation equipment will also be acquired to improve the preparedness of all forces.

Resources will be allocated to the elimination of single points of failure, i.e. entities in cyberspace consisting of a single element, the failure of which would compromise the entire system. At the same time, resources will be committed to the acquisition of toolkits for Cyber Rapid Response Teams (CRRT) as well as tools to counter digital influence operations (Counter-FIMI).

Finally, greater efforts will be devoted to emerging technologies to maintain an advantage with regard to cyber threats. In this respect, initiatives related to artificial intelligence will receive particular support.

Cooperation

Defence's cyberspace capabilities contribute to national and international resilience within a vast network of operational, institutional, industrial, academic and societal partners, thus contributing to the development of advanced threat detection systems and the implementation of appropriate response procedures.

At the international operational level, there are numerous collaborations with partner services in the field of data collection. As for electronic warfare, we cooperate with our neighbouring countries. A collaboration has been developed with France in the field of defensive cyber warfare and cyber influence operations. In the field of cyber defence of space resources, a cooperation agreement has been concluded with the European Space Agency (ESA), in particular the European Space Security and Education Centre (ESEC) at the Redu site, where the Agency's cyber security supervision systems for space operations will soon be concentrated. Cooperation with NATO and the Netherlands (*Defensie Cyber Commando*) contributes to the development of offensive capabilities, in particular their implementation procedures. Several projects are currently being developed within the framework of the EU Policy on Cyber Defence. This applies in particular to the operational capability of the EU CRRT (Cyber Rapid Response Team), which was developed, with twelve European Union partners, from a PESCO project and became operational last year, notably in Moldova to support the presidential elections.

At the national operational level, there is cooperation in the interdepartmental structures of the National Security Council, particularly in the areas of cyber (logical layer) and FIMI (virtual layer). Examples include active participation in the protection of the electoral process in June and October 2024 with cyber and counter-FIMI teams, as well as in the cyber contingency plan process and the award process. Since 2022, a technical cooperation has also been established between Cyber Command and the Federal Judicial Police, covering about fifteen common or similar sub-areas of expertise. Strengthening cooperation between the various actors in the cyber field will be actively pursued to improve Belgian capabilities in this domain.

These national and international collaborations will continue to be developed within the framework of the future development of cyber capabilities. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the intergovernmental collaboration with the United Kingdom on the development of the “Joint EWC 2.0” project, as well as the collaboration with ESA on the realisation of the project for a centre of excellence and cryptographic testing.

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Development

By its very nature, cyberspace is a field of continuous innovation and technological development. In this context, sustained efforts will be made to develop emerging, potentially disruptive technologies, while strengthening collaboration with specialised centres of expertise, both national and international. This is particularly the case in the fields of artificial intelligence and post-quantum cryptography. In 2023, a structural partnership was established between Cyber Command and the Royal Military Academy (RMA), with specific funding from the Royal Higher Institute for Defence (RHID), which will become effective in 2025.

The establishment of dynamic ecosystems, e.g. in the fields of cyber defence and drones, is essential to promote close collaboration between Defence, the economic sector, industry, and research centres. This approach aims to better stimulate innovation, develop cutting-edge military solutions, and strengthen the national position in major international capability projects. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the cooperation between Cyber Command and AGORIA (Cyber Made In Belgium) since 2022 as well as their active participation in the next stage, started by RHID at the end of 2024, which consists of operationalising the DIRS in the cyberspace domain with the definition of a technological roadmap and the implementation of a cyber defence ecosystem.

3) Influence

Democracies around the world are being undermined by increasing attempts to manipulate our digital lives. A growing number of professionals and amateurs, supported by states or guided by ideologies, are exploiting our online spaces. Equipped with ever more powerful tools and taking advantage of often poorly secured platforms, they are increasing their disinformation and manipulation actions, the harmful effects of which are constantly intensifying.

Two tactics that are commonly used to manipulate target populations are disinformation and influence operations. Disinformation refers to the creation and dissemination of false or misleading information, whether on purpose or not. Influence operations, on the other hand, are deliberate actions aimed at altering public perception and changing people's understanding of the world. These two tactics are often closely linked and can overlap: an influence operation may rely on disinformation, but it may also, for instance, exaggerate true but secondary information with the aim of diverting attention or manipulating public debate.

By mobilising media and psychological strategies, the purpose of influence operations is to shape opinions to serve strategic objectives. This modern evolution of traditional propaganda takes full advantage of digital technologies to influence social behaviour and political dynamics, while raising important ethical questions.

A state's ability to influence, or protect itself from the influence of, other actors relies on a range of resources, from public diplomacy to strategic communications and information operations. The objective is to influence attitudes, behaviours, and decisions without necessarily using force. In the case of counter- Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (counter-FIMI), the objective is to monitor, detect, and explain attempts at foreign manipulation and interference.

Information operations are one of the tools of influence and consist of collecting information on target groups, analysing it, and exploiting it through the targeted dissemination of messages, with the aim of creating an informational, tactical or strategic advantage. Defence has an information operations capability, which is the subject of the Influence capability.

Counter-FIMI, meanwhile, is part of the intelligence and cyber capabilities.

Current Capability

Defence's information operations capability consists of three sub-capabilities:

- Military Public Affairs (Mil PA) encompasses all communication activities aimed at informing different target groups to strengthen legitimacy and support, thereby contributing to the achievement of military objectives. Mil PA contributes to combat disinformation.
- Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) aims to ensure cooperation between military and civilian actors to guarantee harmonious coexistence in the field and thus contribute to the success of military operations.
- Psychological Operations (PsyOps) focus on actions taken to influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of a target group to support military objectives.

The Mil PA pillar is composed of personnel responsible for public relations (Public Affairs Officers – PAO). These officers are deployed in the various Forces, as well as in public affairs support teams operating at the tactical level. The CIMIC and PsyOps pillars are composed of respective support teams under the responsibility of the Civil–Military Engagement Group (Ci–MEG) of the Land Force.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, media analysis and production software will be acquired, as well as tools capable of processing large volumes of content to identify attempts at influence. These investments will also include equipment for content production and distribution.

4) Space

Improvements in space capabilities not only support many aspects of our daily lives but also play a vital strategic role in the military domain. Modern vehicle navigation systems, as well as maritime and air operations, rely on highly accurate global positioning satellite (GPS) systems. Similarly, mobile communications, videoconferencing, as well as intelligence gathering and sharing depend heavily on space assets to ensure their effectiveness, speed, and reliability. The space sector is constantly evolving, driven by innovation, technological competition, and the emergence of new opportunities.

NATO has recognised space as a fully-fledged operational domain, alongside land, air, maritime, and cyberspace. For its part, the European Union has identified space as a strategic domain in its Strategic Compass, calling for the development of a European space strategy for security and defence. In line with this political momentum, the European Commission has introduced the Space Strategy for Security and Defence.

In 2023, Defence drafted its Defence Space Strategy to actively contribute to the construction of a safe and secure space. This strategy will guarantee sustainable access to resilient, high-quality services that are essential for Defence and for all national security actors.

This strategy is based on seven operational functions (Space Domain Operational Functions):

- Space Situational Awareness (SSA), enabling the tracking of artificial space objects;
- Shared Early Warning (SEW), providing early alerts for threats such as ballistic missile attacks;
- Space-Based Information, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (SBISR), encompassing the observation and analysis of the Earth's surface from space (Space Based Earth Observation – SBEO);
- Satellite Communications (SATCOM), providing a (secure and stable) satellite communications network;

- Positioning, Navigation & Timing (PNT), ensuring the availability and accuracy of our navigation and positioning systems through access to Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS, such as the American GPS and European Galileo constellations);
- Meteorology & Oceanography (METOC) enabling the collection and analysis of meteorological data for operational purposes;
- Space Security, including cross-cutting measures (across other space sub-capabilities) taken to protect freedom of action and freedom of manoeuvre in space, as well as the use of space systems and capabilities.

Current Capability

To operationalise its Defence Space Strategy, Defence has created the Space Security Centre (SSC). Its role is to coordinate and develop the seven operational functions and provide space support for operations, with a focus on space surveillance and access to global satellite navigation systems.

Within the framework of Positioning, Navigation & Timing (PNT) and Satellite Communications (SATCOM), Defence has access to global systems, particularly in the field of satellite navigation (GPS and Galileo). For the development of Space-Based Information, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (SBISR), Belgium participates in the French *Composante Spatiale Optique* (CSO) programme, a constellation of very high-resolution satellites designed to provide strategic and tactical optical images for defence and intelligence purposes. Finally, Meteorology & Oceanography is making progress thanks to an existing partnership with the STCE (Solar and Terrestrial Centre of Excellence).

Capability Development

During the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the development of Defence's space capability will be pursued to guarantee sustainable access to resilient, high-quality services.

Investments will be made in ground-based sensors for space surveillance and in the construction of an optical telescope as part of the development of a sovereign Space Situational Awareness capability, in collaboration with Belgian scientific organisations.

Space-Based Information, Surveillance & Reconnaissance will continue to be developed through participation in the future GALO (Global coverage All weather Low earth orbit Observation) constellation and the acquisition of microsatellites.

About satellite communications, investments will be made in docking stations, bandwidth, and satellite terminals to increase SATCOM capacity and enable the implementation of current and future weapon systems, as well as to meet growing connectivity needs in theatres of operations.

Investments will also be made in the development of a Navigation Warfare (NAVWAR) capability to protect our Positioning, Navigation & Timing (PNT) data from the European Galileo constellation against enemy interference. This development will be carried out as part of the NAVGUARD project of the EDF (European Defence Fund).

Finally, Defence will also participate in the EDF project – Odin's Eye II – which will develop a Shared Early Warning capability against ballistic missiles from space. The development of both EDF projects mentioned above will be carried out in collaboration with European industry consortia in which Belgian industry is actively involved.

Cooperation

Since 2022, Defence has joined forces with BELSPO to co-finance Belgium's contribution to the European Space Agency (ESA). This initiative supports fundamental and applied research in the space domain, while promoting the development of the Defence Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB) as defined in the DIRS. The collaboration with BELSPO is proving to be a crucial asset in orienting projects in an intelligent way towards shared technological developments, by pooling the

respective knowledge of the industrial and academic sectors, strengthening the access of the RMA to ESA projects, and avoiding duplication of projects between the various actors (ESA, European Defence Agency, Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space). This collaboration allows Belgium to maintain its position as the fifth largest contributor to ESA.

Finally, with ESA now opening up more to defence-oriented projects, it is essential that Belgium positions itself at the forefront of this development, in particular through the new European Resilience from Space (ERS) programme, which aims to strengthen Europe's capacity to respond to crises and threats, including natural disasters and geopolitical instability, by using space technologies and through the European Space Security and Education Centre (ESEC) in Redu, which houses the centre of excellence for space cybersecurity services, ESA's Proba mission control centre, the space meteorology data centre, and ESA's training centre.

Defence and BELSPO will jointly compile an inventory of all current and potential technological research and development programmes that meet Defence-related needs. These programmes may, for instance, be carried out at the Belgian level, jointly with other European countries such as Luxembourg, or at the level of ESA or other European institutions. These programmes, whether they are specific to Defence or dual-use, will contribute, among other things, to achieving a certain degree of autonomy from the strategic enablers currently provided by the United States.

5) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems

Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), commonly known as drones, are unmanned vehicles that are either automatically piloted or remotely controlled, whether they are aerial (Unmanned Aerial Systems – UAS), land-based or amphibious. Depending on the required capabilities, their weight can vary from a few grams to several tonnes, and their autonomy can reach several dozen hours.

Under the NATO standard, drones are classified according to total take-off weight, altitude and range. There are different classes:

- Classe III drones, strategic drones (used in theatres of operations), which are divided into:
 - HALE (High Altitude Long Endurance) drones are designed to operate at high altitude with a very large autonomy, allowing extensive and sustained coverage of areas of interest.
 - MALE (Medium Altitude Long Endurance) drones are capable of flying at medium altitude for long periods of time and are used for surveillance, intelligence gathering, and certain armed missions.

This dimension (ICI) focuses exclusively on Class III drones, such as the MQ-9B, a MALE (Medium Altitude Long Endurance) drone.

- Classe II drones, tactical drones (used at the brigade level or equivalent):
 - Tactical Unmanned Air Vehicles (TUAV), whether fixed-wing or rotary-wing, slow or fast, have average endurance and are used for reconnaissance or support missions and certain armed missions at the tactical level.

Class II drones are integrated into broader capabilities and are therefore discussed in the capability dimension to which they contribute. This is particularly the case for the Integrator tactical drone, which is part of the Land capability dimension.

- Classe I drones, which are tactical as well, but used at a lower level, i.e. at battalion, company or platoon level:
 - These drones, of different sizes (small, mini and micro drones), generally have a more limited range. They often carry out close observation tasks, acting as “remote binoculars”.

They are used in particular to fly over obstacles or inspect high-risk areas, as well as during certain armed missions.

Class I drones are used in a wide range of capabilities, mainly for land capabilities. Therefore, they are grouped within the Operational Command and Support dimension (Unmanned Systems).

The armed forces mainly use class I and II drones organically at the tactical level. Class III drones, on the other hand, are deployed by the Air Force, as their use requires close coordination with other airspace users.

Other types of drones carry out specific tasks according to the operational needs. Target drones are used as flying targets for training forces, particularly for combat aircraft or ground-air defence systems. Light transport drones can carry small payloads to resupply combatants directly in the field. Decoy drones are designed to deceive enemy radars or divert missiles. Single-use attack drones, also known as loitering munitions, explode on impact or on command after identifying the target. Finally, logistics drones transport equipment, whether on the battlefield or in support of operations.

Remotely operated systems pose a growing challenge for all armed forces, in all areas of operations. Drones are easy to hijack for hostile purposes, they can be turned into weapons, and their low cost and widespread use make them a potential threat to any type of target. Countering this asymmetric threat is the purpose of the anti-drone capability (C-UAS), which is discussed in the fifth capability dimension, Command and Operational Support, under Joint Force Protection.

Current Capability

Belgium participates in NATO's High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) capability (NATO ISR Force – NISRF) through contribution of personnel and NATO common funding. The NATO ISR Force is a key element of NATO's Joint intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance structure (Joint ISR).

Within Defence, a distinction should be made between, on the one hand, drones that are organically integrated into units, such as RAVEN and PUMA (Class I drones, used by the Land Force, particularly in the ISTAR battalion and in manoeuvre battalions), which do not constitute an autonomous capability but support a broader operational capability, and, on the other hand, larger drones, such as the Integrator (Class II drone, used only in the ISTAR battalion) or the MQ-9B (Class III drone, used by the Air Force), which are fully-fledged capabilities requiring specific infrastructure, specialised crews, and an adapted chain of command.

Regarding strategic drones, Belgium does not have any HALE (High Altitude Long Endurance) systems in its inventory, but it does have MALE (Medium Altitude Long Endurance) drones, ordered as part of the 2016 Strategic Vision. Two MQ-9B SkyGuardian systems have been acquired and are scheduled for delivery in 2025.

Capability Development

To meet growing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance requirements, a third MQ-9B system (each system consists of two drones) will be acquired, along with maritime sensors that can be fitted into them, to strengthen the maritime surveillance capability (detection, localisation, identification, and monitoring of ships or submarines) in our own waters or in support of international maritime operations.

Technical updates and an interoperability programme (relating to connectivity and the radar system) will be initiated on these MQ-9B systems. They will also be equipped with an integrated weapon capability to enable remotely operating crews to carry out precision strikes while maintaining prolonged surveillance.

Cooperation

As part of the MQ-9B partnership between Belgium and the United Kingdom – initiated in 2020 and signed in 2023 –, both countries have established bilateral arrangements that are essential for the initial certification of Belgian aircraft and for the training of operational and technical personnel. To extend areas of cooperation and expand the MQ-9B community, Belgium and the United Kingdom have also decided to jointly turn to the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) to create the MQ-9 International Cooperation Support Partnership (MIC SP). This partnership provides a common instrument for the procurement of systems and equipment. It allows for the sharing of costs related to future developments, the establishment of a single maintenance contract and any other services deemed necessary. Furthermore, it makes it possible to share expertise and to benefit from air and ground personnel training provided by the United Kingdom through the RPAS facility of NATO Flight Training Europe (NFTE). All of this will help member states to develop common tactics, techniques and procedures. The growing number of European countries that use the MQ-9B also offers greater opportunities for cooperation and synergies at the European level.

6) Digitalisation and supporting communications

The rapidly evolving information environment is altering the way in which armed forces communicate, make decisions, and fight. Recent conflicts such as the war in Ukraine clearly demonstrate this. The future of military operations in the digital age will be determined primarily by the ability of military organisations to adapt to the transformative power of emerging technologies and make the best possible use of them to carry out the planning and decision-making process more quickly and effectively than their adversaries.

New military concepts, such as multi-domain operations, require Defence to adapt by facilitating data-driven operations and accelerating access to cutting-edge technologies to enhance military capabilities. It is essential that authorised users have real-time access to relevant operational data from all functional domains, as well as the decision-support tools necessary for rapid and coordinated action. This digitalisation enables decision-makers in various operational domains (political, strategic, operational, tactical, etc.) to gain a thorough understanding of the situation, giving them the ability to act more effectively than their adversaries.

This requires a completely interconnected organisation capable of exchanging data sets in a secure and timely manner, both internally and with partners. An organisational culture and structure that promote data sharing and technological innovation are essential, as is the development of a digital culture at all levels of the institution. This also involves the implementation of appropriate digital support and rigorous identification of information flows. This transformation is closely linked to the security of the virtual information environment: Defence must be able to guarantee the availability, confidentiality, and integrity of digitised data, as well as the resilience of the infrastructures and systems that support them. A multidimensional approach, integrating military security, cyber defence, and information security, is therefore essential.

Current Capability

The investments made have already enabled the establishment of a shared data server (Coalition Shared Data – CSD) on the Defence Classified Network (DCN), which connects the digital collection entities of the various dimensions (satellites, remotely piloted aircraft, radars, cameras, etc.) and the capacities for action of the various dimensions with command and control interfaces.

Capability Development

During the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the objective will be to continue the digital transformation of Defence, to fully integrate the operational capabilities, and to safeguard the security, sovereignty, and resilience of Defence. To ensure interoperability and compliance, Defence will continue to adapt to NATO standards for information storage and exchange.

During the current legislative period, efforts will be focused on establishing classified and sovereign data centres across the country and a Defence Operation Centre (DOC) integrated into the future Defence Headquarters. Investments will also make it possible to keep the Defence Classified Network (DCN) servers and major collection systems, such as Remotely Piloted Aircraft, up to date.

During the next legislative period, data centres will be reinforced with more robust infrastructure, and Defence will develop alternative command centres to increase the redundancy and resilience of the chain of command. Investments will be aligned with the continuous development of technologies.

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, the systems introduced will enable operational capabilities in all dimensions to communicate, integrate into the global network, and remain constantly up to date.

c. Capability Dimension Land

The Land dimension refers to all capabilities directly associated with the structures of the Land Forces. It also includes the resources necessary for land operations originating from other domains, such as helicopters which, although part of the Air capability domain, are primarily used in support of Land Force operations.

The Land capability dimension focuses on motorised capability, special operations capability, and general support capability related to the Land dimension (Joint and General Support Land).

The table below presents, by capability, the main development axes as well as their first year of budgetary commitment, along with the corresponding amounts, both in commitments and in settlements (expressed in constant 2026 euros), over the period covered by this Vision.

	First year of commitment	Commitment 2026-2034 (€Cst26)	Settlement 2026-2034 (€Cst26)
Land		13.862.344.826 €	8.112.648.849 €
Motorised Capability		9.815.001.762 €	5.859.824.315 €
Command & Control (vehicles, shelters, generators, CIS support)	2026	892.159.730 €	892.159.730€
C - Combat Manoeuvre (platforms, mission kits, configuration management, simulators)	2026	6.003.819.889 €	3.187.629.389€
CS - Combat Support Fires (indirect fire system, MLRS, radar, PLIFS, JTAC equipment)	2026	417.897.327 €	134.657.327€
CS - Combat Support Force Protection (VSHORAD, EW, CBRN)	2026	226.743.771 €	178.044.704€
CS - Combat Support ISR (tactical UAS, sensors)	2028	79.701.293 €	79.701.293€
CS - Combat Support Military Engineering (counter- and mobility assets, construction)	2026	842.037.342 €	327.531.542€
CSS - Combat Service Support Sustainment (transport, supply & services, recovery)	2026	1.352.642.411 €	1.060.100.331€
Special Operations (SO)		2.511.851.877 €	1.373.702.347 €
SO Command & Control (digitalisation, radio's, mobile C ² platform, C ² batch)	2026	140.250.000 €	140.250.000€
SO Engagement (engagement and force protection equipment, PLIFS, parachute)	2026	153.878.595 €	149.532.292€
SO Intelligence (digital surveillance tools, emerging technologies, intell batch)	2026	33.000.000 €	33.000.000€
SO Mobility (Land & Maritime mobility platforms)	2027	546.337.393 €	350.486.765€
SO Sustainment (transport, recovery)	2026	131.502.200 €	131.502.200€

SO Air Task Unit - Short Take Off and Landing aircraft (STOL) updates and upgrades	2027	154.504.405 €	154.504.406€
SO Air Task Unit - Light Utility Helicopters (LUH) equipment, updates and upgrades	2026	62.912.942 €	59.864.342€
SO Air Task Unit - Medium/Heavy Transport Helicopters	2033	1.289.466.342 €	354.562.342€
Joint & General Support Land		1.535.491.187 €	879.122.187 €
Command & Control (territorial and protected vehicles)	2026	280.969.800 €	186.924.000€
Deployable Field Infrastructure (DFI) (modules 150 pers, deployable ammunition infra, tents)	2027	178.413.237 €	106.506.037€
Military Engineering capability (equipment engineering battalion)	2034	152.430.000 €	- €
Supply (tanks, containers, bladders, handling equipment)	2027	122.706.150 €	122.706.150€
Transport (trucks, trailers, heavy equipment transport)	2026	800.972.000 €	462.986.000€

Throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the gradual strengthening of the Land capability dimension will be pursued, in particular to meet NATO capability requirements.

During the current legislative period, several key investments will enable the acquisition of the missing vehicles and equipment needed to complete the formation and operationalisation of the medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade) and its support assets. Regarding air assets primarily dedicated to Land dimension missions, investments will enable the procurement of additional equipment for LUH (Light Utility Helicopter) and STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing aircraft). Special operations will benefit from an upgrade through targeted investments in secure communication equipment, tactical and logistical mobility assets, kinetic and non-kinetic action capabilities, tactical intelligence assets, as well as airborne insertion equipment via parachuting.

During the next legislative period, investments will focus on vehicles and equipment to continue the formation of a second operational brigade, the light combined arms motorised brigade (Light Brigade), with its support assets, and to reinforce the medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade). Regarding the build-up of air assets primarily dedicated to missions within the Land dimension, investments will enable the acquisition of a rotary-wing air transport capability (Medium/Heavy Transport Helicopter – M/HTH), intended for the transport of personnel, equipment, and for helicopter-based medical evacuation. Resources will also be allocated to the operationalisation of new aerial capabilities such as LUH and STOL aircraft, to the acquisition of vehicles (as part of land mobility), as well as to the modernisation of engagement and protection resources in support of the special operations capability.

Throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the investments made will progressively strengthen the Joint and General Support Land capability through the acquisition of transport, supply, service, reception, projection, protection, Command and Control (C²), and engineering assets, with the aim of being able to deploy Belgian forces — and support them once deployed — as well as to receive and transit allied forces on our territory.

1) Motorised Capability

Motorised capability enables military land units to move quickly and operate effectively using motorised vehicles, such as armoured vehicles, specialized artillery and engineering vehicles, or other means of transport.

The motorised capability consists of two combined arms brigades and a reconnaissance battalion that Belgium has committed to making available to NATO: a medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade), a light combined arms brigade (Light Brigade), and a medium Belgian-Luxembourg reconnaissance and combat battalion (Medium Combat Reconnaissance Battalion – Md Cbt Recce Bn), called the “*Ermesinde*” battalion. These units are integrated into a NATO division, which provides command and control of its brigades while also possessing its own resources, particularly in the areas of Combat Support and Combat Service Support. The Belgian-Luxembourg reconnaissance and combat battalion—composed of two Belgian squadrons and two Luxembourg squadrons—is scheduled to be established by 2028 and will serve as one of the means of combat support at the divisional level.

The brigade represents the central level of land operations. As an intermediate tactical echelon, it has its own autonomy and controls an area of terrain spanning several hundred square kilometres. It is part of a larger structure: that of the division. The finalised medium motorised brigade should consist of approximately 7.800 personnel and 2.700 (wheeled) vehicles of various types.

A brigade is structured around three main pillars: one combat and two support, each comprising smaller units called battalions:

- The “Combat” pillar brings together the units, known as manoeuvre units, that are directly engaged in contact with the enemy, such as the infantry (foot soldiers transported in armoured vehicles) and the cavalry (armoured vehicles providing firepower, high speed, and the ability to penetrate enemy lines).
- The “Combat Support” pillar includes immediate support units, such as artillery (long-range and counter-battery fire (Fires), air defence, and anti-drone defence (Force Protection)), Military Engineering (responsible for creating and removing obstacles, building and destroying bridges and roads, protection and safeguarding (Force Protection), and development work), and reconnaissance (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Reconnaissance – ISTAR). These units help strengthen the effectiveness of combat forces.
- The “Combat Service Support” pillar brings together direct and technical support units responsible for supply, maintenance, medical support, and transmissions. These units ensure the duration and continuity of the action (Sustainment).

The brigade represents the command-and-control echelon that combines various land capabilities (infantry, cavalry, artillery, etc.) to conduct coordinated operations and thereby optimise the impact of actions on the enemy. The close cooperation between these different arms within a military force is referred to as “combined arms combat”.

Current Capability

In 2018, a strategic partnership called CaMo, short for *Capacité Motorisée*, was established between France and Belgium. This bilateral agreement was aimed in particular at replacing the vehicles of the Belgian motorised capability with French vehicles. This project is part of the French SCORPION programme, which aims to renew and modernise the combat capabilities of the French Army, notably through new armoured vehicles and a battlefield ‘information enhancement’ system designed to interconnect all weapon systems and sensors, enabling real-time communication between all deployed units.

Future land combat will therefore rely on a collaborative approach, supported by a major digital transformation, designed to optimise understanding of the theatre of operations, make it transparent, ensure the efficient use of kinetic and non-kinetic resources, and achieve operational superiority.

The gradual replacement of motorised capability vehicles with French equipment under the CaMo partnership has begun with orders placed as part of the 2016 and 2022 strategic visions. The first vehicles, of the Griffon type, will be delivered to Belgium at the end of 2025.

During this transformation, the motorised capability will maintain operational output by being able to provide, notably to NATO, increasingly substantial units, gradually evolving from a Combined Arms Tactical Subgroup (CATSG, approx. 300 personnel) – a temporary and modular tactical structure equivalent to a reinforced company –, to a Combined Arms Tactical Group – CATG (+/- 1.000 personnel) – a combined arms operational structure at battalion level – and, finally, to a medium motorised Combined Arms Brigade – CAB.

Within a brigade, the different types of vehicles work together in a complementary way to ensure mobility, protection, and firepower. Within the CaMo framework, the Griffon multi-role armoured vehicle forms the backbone of mobility for infantry and combat support units, transporting up to ten fully equipped combatants while providing them with direct fire support. Lighter and more agile, the Serval, a light multi-role armoured vehicle (VBMR-L), comes in several versions (troop transport, command post, communications hub, electronic warfare, anti-drone operations, etc.) and carries out tactical mobility, command, or specialised missions in demanding environments. The Armoured Engagement Support Vehicle (VBAE), currently under development, will come in several versions and will be used notably for reconnaissance, engagement support, or target designation. It will be fully integrated into the SCORPION collaborative combat system, enabling it to share the information it collects with the brigade's other platforms in real time. The Jaguar, an armoured reconnaissance and combat vehicle (EBRC), plays a vital role in reconnaissance and armoured engagement operations, thanks to its 40 mm cannon and anti-tank capabilities, directly supporting manoeuvre units (units directly engaged in close-quarters combat with the enemy) by neutralizing armoured threats. As indirect fire support, the Caesar, with its 155 mm cannon, strikes deep targets to support the brigade's manoeuvre, while the MEPAC, a version of the Griffon equipped with an onboard mortar, provides close and responsive fire support in contact with engaged forces. Mobility and counter-mobility are provided by specific systems such as Combat Engineer Vehicles (CEVs), mine-burier systems, mobile bridges (Mobile Assault Bridge), construction means, etc.

The brigade must be capable of conducting a mobile battle lasting at least seven days, while remaining in an area for sometimes less than 24 hours. To ensure its autonomy, it needs direct logistical support with armoured trucks for transport and supply, as well as maintenance and recovery vehicles (Protected Recovery Vehicle – PRV) and logistic evacuation vehicles (Protected Evacuation Vehicle – PEV). Logistical vehicles must be of the same type as those of the supported units to provide the same tactical mobility and the same level of protection.

Integrated within the brigade, these resources ensure a coherent, effective, and adaptable manoeuvre in response to the diversity of threats on the battlefield. All the entities mentioned above are reinforced by the integration of remotely operated systems (Unmanned Systems) capable of operating in various environments (aerial, ground, and river drones), as well as by electronic warfare systems (Electronic Warfare – EW). They are also capable of surviving a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) attack or incident.

This agreement with France does not preclude the acquisition of additional motorised capabilities outside the framework of the partnership. Defence has notably acquired American command and liaison vehicles (CLVs) called Falcons, designed to ensure mobility, protection, and connectivity for command posts on the ground. The Belgian motorised capability thus goes beyond the scope of

the Franco-Belgian CaMo programme alone. To fully equip the Motorised Capability, other types of equipment are also required, including unmanned or remotely operated systems such as drones.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, the objective will be to finalise the formation of the medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade) and its operational support resources, so that it can be deployed, particularly within the framework of NATO, from 2030 onwards. To this end, vehicles and equipment will be acquired to complete the capabilities of this brigade, while its build-up will be carried out progressively, ensuring a balanced and simultaneous development of all pillars (Combat, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support).

Ultimately, this brigade will be organised based on four manoeuvre battalions:

- Two infantry battalions each with three infantry companies and one support company (the main vehicle being the Griffon);
- Two 'light' cavalry battalions, initially with two and gradually with three squadrons — company-level for cavalry and reconnaissance — (the main vehicle being the Jaguar), and one reconnaissance and intervention squadron (the main vehicle being, eventually, the VBAE).

In addition to these manoeuvre battalions, combat support will be provided by:

- An engineer battalion with four combat engineer companies (the main vehicles being the Griffon in its engineer version) and a general support company (the main vehicles being the Griffon and mobility support vehicles—and counter-mobility vehicles—such as the Combat Engineer Vehicle, mine-laying or mine-clearing systems, or the Mobile Assault Bridge);
- An artillery battalion with two field artillery batteries (the main system being the Caesar), a mortar battery (the main system being the Griffon MEPAC), a battery of attack loitering munitions, a low-level ground-air defence battery (Counter-Unmanned Aerial System and Very Short Range Air Defence, VSHORAD), a battery of liaison teams to coordinate fire (Joint Terminal Attack Control (JTAC) teams), C² elements moving in Griffon, and radars and sensors to locate enemy fire);
- A reconnaissance squadron in contact (reconnaissance troops advancing ahead of the brigade's lines) – whose main vehicles are the Serval and, eventually, the VBAE –, a multi-sensor squadron for intelligence support (a unit gathering intelligence through sensors such as radars, tactical drones (Integrator), with the Serval as the main vehicle), and a squadron of armed tactical drones (with the Serval as the main vehicle).

For Combat Service Support units:

- A logistics battalion (with the main vehicles being various types of trucks) with its supply and transport companies and maintenance companies, a signals battalion (with the main vehicles being Serval vehicles and trucks used to establish Tactical Communication Nodes), a military police company (with the main vehicles being CLVs and Serval vehicles), and a civil-military engagement detachment, CIMIC and PsyOps (with the main vehicles being CLVs and Serval vehicles), will complete the brigade's support;
- Medical support is provided by first-aid posts (Role 1) within battalions, which ensure that the wounded and sick are stabilised so that they can be evacuated to a field hospital (Role 2 Enhanced) at brigade level. Each echelon has its own land evacuation resources capable of going wherever the units they support go, i.e., with the same off-road mobility (armoured ambulances such as Griffon and Serval, etc.), as well as its own transport means for equipment, mobile infrastructure, and medical logistics (various types of trucks). Investments related to medical support are included in the "Command and Operational Support" capability dimension.

The doctrine of employment, shared at the Franco-Belgian level, remains evolving and can be adjusted depending on the nature of the combat and the lessons learned from operational feedback. As things stand, the number of main systems needed to complete and finalise the medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade) is as follows: 315 Falcon-type liaison and command vehicles (CLVs), 12 Jaguars, 85 Servals, and 454 trucks of various types (light, medium, and heavy).

The aim will also be to equip the Belgian-Luxembourg *Ermesinde* battalion with vehicles that will be acquired as part of the CaMo partnership. The Belgian contribution will consist of 35 liaison and command vehicles, 11 Griffons, 24 Jaguars, 2 Servals, and 37 trucks.

However, procurements to equip a brigade are not limited to main vehicles. It is also necessary to have access to a whole range of related resources without which the brigade cannot operate, such as command and control systems for command posts, mobile shelters, handling equipment, and generators. In the field of artillery, plans include the acquisition of radar systems and acoustic sensors, a mobile weather station, JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller) equipment—used to guide aircraft from the ground—and light mortars. For Force Protection, VSHORAD sensors and effectors (including embedded ones), EW systems (jamming, interception, and broadcasting), CBRN detection and decontamination equipment, as well as construction machinery (shelters and trenches) are planned. For Information, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR), in addition to tactical sensors, the replacement of the current tactical drone Integrator is also planned. Minefield laying and clearing systems, heavy cranes, ground reinforcement equipment and mobile bridges will be acquired to enable engineering units to carry out their mobility and counter-mobility support tasks. Trailers, water and fuel tanks, containers (cargo, refrigerated, and air-conditioned), mobile field service equipment (kitchens, showers, laundries, etc.), as well as maintenance and combat recovery means will equip the logistics.

To ensure realistic training and instruction, resources are also allocated to contribute to the development of training and simulation facilities (including for the *Ermesinde* Battalion) and operational training environments. Several types of real and simulated training environments can be integrated to varying degrees into a single integrated simulation, providing troops with more realistic combat scenarios.

During the next legislative period, the objective will be to establish a second operational brigade, the light combined arms motorised brigade (Light Brigade), with its support units, the final form of which will be determined by the end of 2028 at the latest during the current legislative period. Ultimately, the light combined arms brigade (Light Brigade) should be organised based on three manoeuvre battalions: two infantry battalions and a third battalion, to be created, which will specialise in the field of combat drones (in addition to the systems already distributed among other units).

The Falcon-type command and liaison vehicles (CLVs), which will initially equip the medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade) while awaiting delivery of the VBAEs, will then be gradually transferred to the light combined arms brigade (Light Brigade).

To meet the requirement for robustness in a collective defence context, particularly in high-intensity operations, the medium combined arms motorised brigade (Medium Brigade) will be reinforced. This reinforcement will notably include the acquisition of a multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) battery.

Cooperation

The binational partnership with France will be continued and deepened in the expeditionary domain, aiming as much as possible for alignment in terms of doctrine, capability development, innovation, education and training, while integrating our country's linguistic dimension into implementation — in practice, this linguistic dimension is achieved, for example, through the publication of bilingual joint doctrine documents, the availability of the command and control

interface in English, or training provided in France and delivered in French, Dutch, or English. In this context, the interoperability inherent to the partnership enables Belgian units to easily integrate into higher-level French formations – up to the divisional echelon – while still retaining the ability to operate autonomously within other European or NATO forces.

Since 2020, our country has been part of a Benelux programme for the procurement, training and operationalisation of Integrator-type Tactical UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems). This system (with two drones) has a 24-hour autonomy and a range of 100 km and is used for intelligence gathering missions.

At the end of 2021, Belgium committed, together with France, to a joint development project under OCCAR for an Armoured Engagement Support Vehicle (VBAE), a future vehicle that will complement the range of reconnaissance and support resources within land units, offering significantly enhanced capabilities in terms of mobility, protection, firepower, and connectivity.

Cooperation with Luxembourg will continue to enable the operational deployment of the *Ermesinde* battalion by 2028.

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

Future increments of the SCORPION programme will broaden and strengthen the capabilities of land forces in direct contact by leveraging available technologies that have the potential to be ‘game-changers’. The improvement and expansion of collaborative combat, the integration of the third dimension, firing beyond the line of sight, diversification of effects, increased survivability (including active protection), and the use of robotics such as contact drones are all steps toward a multi-domain integrated approach aimed at preserving tactical advantage and initiative through information dominance.

1) Special Operations

The special operations (SO) capability enables the deployment of modular entities that can act quickly and anywhere in the world. This capability is based on an organisation capable of deploying detachments ranging from a few operators to a Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) of several hundred individuals, thus offering a flexible, rapid and proportionate response to a wide range of situations and levels of intensity, either openly or discreetly, in response to conventional or hybrid threats. It is *joint* in nature and acts as a cross-cutting force multiplier in all fields.

The mobility of special operations forces is a characteristic that operates across three dimensions – land, air, and sea – allowing them to choose the most suitable means of transport for the mission.

It takes various forms, ranging from travel on foot to the use of motorised vehicles, including specific means such as diving, fast boats, or even the use of aircraft, whether helicopters or transport planes.

By their very nature, special operations forces train and operate in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments. They are constantly seeking an “adaptive advantage”, transforming the unexpected not into an obstacle, but into a lever for action. To maintain this advantage, special operations forces must constantly evolve to develop modes of action that are increasingly adapted to changing threats and environments.

Special Operations Forces within NATO are generically structured around two levels of action units and two levels of Command and Control (C²):

- The Special Operations Task Unit (SOTU), which is the lowest tactical combat level. It deploys by air, land, or sea and is capable of conducting tailor-made missions.

- The Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) is an autonomous grouping of special operations forces. It is composed of a command element, a SOTU, combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS) elements.
- These units of action are characterised by the environment in which they mainly operate. For example, we refer to Special Operations Land Task Group (SOLTG) when the unit operates on land, or Special Operations Maritime Task Group (SOMTG) when the unit operates at sea.
- The Special Operations Component Command (SOCC) provides command of special operations across an entire theatre of operations on behalf of a Joint Force Command.
- When an intermediate level of Command and Control is required, the Special Operations Task Force is used.

The nature of special operations – flexible, adaptive, multi-purpose, discreet and sometimes far removed from friendly lines – requires equipment that is diverse, redundant, light, mobile, autonomous and reliable. It also requires secure and redundant communications.

Current Capability

The Special Operations (SO) capability is permanently on standby to conduct unpredictable rapid response operations at the national level, such as repatriating nationals from abroad during Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). In this context, it can set up a Special Operations Task Force at very short notice. It is also capable of deploying special operations capabilities corresponding to Belgium's commitments in the context of collective defence.

From a material point of view, in the land domain, the SO capability possesses combat equipment (light and heavy weaponry, light mortars), Force Protection assets (anti-drone protection systems), and intelligence resources (various types of drones). Armoured SUVs have recently been added to the existing range of land mobility vehicles. In 2025, procurement procedures are underway for the procurement of portable air defence systems and precision-guided weapons.

To operate in maritime environments, the SO capability has a fleet of fast boats – Fast Raiding Interception Special Forces Craft (FRISC) – which will soon be replaced by more modern and air-droppable platforms (the acquisition process is underway). Maritime mobility resources, including long-range underwater propulsion systems, have been acquired.

In the air domain, regarding tactical rotary-wing air capability, a recently acquired fleet of light utility helicopters (LUH) of the H145M type – manufactured by Airbus Helicopters – will be progressively delivered starting in 2026. In 2025, a fixed-wing air capability will reinforce the air domain with the acquisition of five Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) aircraft, specifically designed for special operations (the acquisition process is currently underway). These aircraft are distinguished by their high versatility in terms of equipment, sensors, and armament. They will thus be capable of carrying out a variety of missions: specialised air transport, intelligence gathering, command and control, and fire support, even in complex or hostile environments.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, the build-up of the air section will result in the gradual operationalisation of air equipment (LUH and STOL aircraft). Specific equipment for carrying out and sustaining special operations will complete the configuration of the LUH aircraft. With the entry into service of the LUH, the NH90 helicopter fleet, of the TTH (Troop Transport Helicopter) type, and the A109 will be respectively withdrawn from service and disposed of in 2025 and 2027.

In the field of land operations, the planned acquisition of armoured vehicles and a fleet of Medium Multirole Tactical Vehicles to complement the existing range, as well as equipment and vehicles dedicated to logistical and medical support (sustainment), will strengthen the robustness of the land mobility section of the capability. The integration of weapons systems and command and

communication systems into mobility platforms will be a major asset for conducting interconnected operations in complex environments.

For operations in inland waters and coastal environments, the acquisition of light naval capabilities will broaden the scope of action (maritime mobility). Secure command and control resources, insertion equipment via parachuting, resources that complement kinetic and non-kinetic engagement capabilities, and intelligence collection and analysis resources will ensure the upgrade of current capabilities. Integrating artificial intelligence into weapons systems will support faster and better-informed decision-making processes, thanks to real-time access to information via state-of-the-art hardware and software solutions.

During the next legislative period, investments will be made in the first upgrades and improvements to STOL capacity. The acquisition of a Medium/Heavy Transport Helicopter (M/HTH) capability, which our country has committed to providing to NATO, will be initiated. This capability is primarily intended for the transport of special forces and their equipment, as well as for helicopter medical evacuation. Resources will also be allocated to participating in the development of Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) capabilities, which will ultimately strengthen and expand LUH capabilities through the integration of unmanned aircraft, thereby optimising reconnaissance, support, and tactical engagement missions.

In the section on land mobility, the acquisition or upgrading of mobility resources, kinetic and non-kinetic engagement resources, and Force Protection resources is also planned.

The future helicopters of Defence will also help contribute to firefighting efforts on national territory.

Cooperation

Special operations forces maintain numerous links with various partners in the European Union and NATO, particularly France, the Netherlands, and the United States. This cooperation is set to expand further, particularly with other partners such as Germany and the United Kingdom.

In terms of air capabilities, synergies are being considered, particularly with Germany, which also operates the H145M in support of special operations.

At the national level, the special operations capability works closely with the National Crisis Centre and the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs during complex crises or for specialized security missions. In collaboration with the Federal Public Service Home Affairs, special operations forces carry out actions under the authority of the police as part of counterterrorism operations. As part of national plans, the special operations capability will continue its cooperation with special police units and the VSSE, notably by testing the security of sensitive infrastructure or by supporting domestic security agencies during special interventions.

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (*Institut Royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique - IRSB*) currently uses a Britten-Norman Islander to, among other things, detect pollution in territorial waters. This aircraft is operated thanks to the provision of pilots by Defence. As part of the replacement of this aircraft, collaboration between Defence and the Institute will continue, notably through the joint acquisition of an aircraft similar to that planned for the SOFAIR programme (air assets for Special Operations capabilities – SO).

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

The special operations capability will continue to explore new technological concepts, such as adaptive camouflage, advanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) systems, cyber resilience, distributed computing that allows multiple computers to work together to solve a problem, next-generation GPS and mapping tools, multifunctional information dissemination systems, augmented and virtual reality, as well as command and control software incorporating artificial intelligence.

Taking into account the lessons learned from the conflict in Ukraine, and as soon as technology allows, it will be essential to study the possibility of a combined use of different means of mobility with various types of drones. This Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) concept will enhance operational capabilities while reducing the risks associated with direct engagement of forces.

2) Joint and General Support Land

The Joint and General Support Land capability consists of elements that enable the implementation of Land dimension capabilities.

This capability is responsible for the projection of units, including transport of equipment by land, the supervision, and the protection of movements. Once in the area, it also ensures the installation and support of deployed Belgian units through general support, storage, supply, maintenance, etc. To accomplish these missions, it must rely on logistical support units—including RSOM (Reception, Staging and Onward Movement), storage, transport, and maintenance—reinforced by movement control units (planning, regulation, assistance), military police, and engineering units (setting up temporary infrastructure, maintaining roads, neutralising ammunition-related threats).

Inside the national borders, this capability ensures the management of strategic fuel stocks intended for vehicles, as well as all ammunition. It also supports exercises and provides a significant portion of the daily territorial support provided to all units present in Belgium. It is also responsible for the reception and transit of allied troops on national territory within the framework of Host Nation Support (as part of the Enablement mission).

Current Capacity

The Joint and General Support Land capability currently consists of a general support logistics battalion, a Movement Control Group, a Military Police Group, a temporary infrastructure installation unit (Field Accommodation Unit – FAU), an Explosive Ordnance Disposal service – EOD battalion (*Service d'Enlèvement et de Destruction d'Engins Explosifs* - SEDEE), and a Civil-Military Engagement Group).

Capability Development

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, the objective will be to strengthen the Joint and General Support Land capability to meet Belgium's commitments to NATO.

During the current legislative period, the build-up will be reflected in the procurement of equipment and vehicles to make the units more operational. Thus, as part of the Land capability dimension's contribution to Enablement, specific equipment for welcoming troops, organising transit and waiting areas – as well as for the deployment of our own forces (Deployable Field Infrastructure) – will be acquired for the RSOM battalion and for the FAU.

The general support logistics battalion (National Support Element – NSE) will be reinforced with additional supply resources, particularly fuel, through the acquisition of mobile refuelling installations (Battlefield Bulk Fuel Installation). This reinforcement will also include increased equipment transport capabilities, notably through the acquisition of trucks and trailers. The logistical capabilities associated with ammunition storage — whether temporary infrastructure or handling equipment — will be acquired to evolve coherently with the increase in stored volumes and the operational need for ammunition.

The Movement Control Group and the Military Police Group will be reinforced and equipped with vehicles suited to their missions, including commercial vehicles, Serval-type vehicles, and CLVs. The resources needed to ensure command and control of the capability will also be acquired.

During the next legislative period, the Joint and General Support Land capability will continue its development. The procurement of CLV and Serval-type vehicles and protection systems will enable the equipping of protection companies specific to the RSOM and NSE battalions. These companies

will ensure the protection of supply chains. The Military Police Group will be provided with additional vehicles to equip a second deployable company. Heavy road construction equipment and floating crossing equipment will be provided to a divisional engineer battalion (Military Engineering). To meet the commitments made to NATO regarding logistical transport, heavy equipment transport vehicles will be added to strengthen projection capabilities and equip a dedicated transport battalion.

Cooperation

To best ensure its tasks of reception, transit, projection, and support, it is essential that the Joint and General Support Land capability collaborates with national civilian authorities as well as with other European Union and NATO nations. This is how Belgium participates in NATO's planning cycles and deployment exercises such as "Dacian Spring" or "Fort to Port" in the RSOM domain.

Collaboration with France will also intensify as the Belgian brigades gain strength, to optimise their support in the rear area.

European drivers, such as PESCO, finally provide opportunities to develop and standardise military mobility and the network of logistical hubs.

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

The development of systems aimed at optimising personnel work—such as cargo drones, automated convoys with follower trucks ('Leader-Follower' systems), or remote maintenance devices to assist units in operation— will be closely monitored, to invest as soon as these technologies reach a sufficient level of maturity.

d. Capability Dimension Air

The air capability dimension encompasses all capabilities directly linked to Belgian Air Force structures. It does not, however, include all the aerial assets required for land (SOFAIR, LUH/HTH helicopters), maritime (NFH), and informational (MQ-9B) operations, which, although operated by the Belgian Air Force, fall under the Land, Maritime, and ICI capability dimensions.

The air capability dimension is structured around the Air combat Multirole, Surface-Based Air & Missile Defence (SBAMD), Fixed Wing Transport, Air-to-Air Refuelling, Airborne Early Warning & Control, Air Command & Control (C²), Force Protection, Search and Rescue and Airbase General Support capabilities.

Throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the gradual strengthening of the air capability dimension will be pursued, in particular to meet NATO capability requirements. This capability development will be based, among other things, on several key investments, including the acquisition of 11 additional F-35 combat aircraft, the implementation of a short-, medium-, and long-range Surface-Based Air Missile Defence (SBAMD) system, the acquisition of four helicopters dedicated to Search and Rescue (SAR) missions, and the procurement of corporate transport aircraft.

Furthermore, projection capabilities will be strengthened through deployable Command and Control (C²) elements and a Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) radar, as well as general support elements inherent to force projection. Investments will also be made to increase the resilience and survivability of air bases. Finally, international cooperation will be strengthened, notably through participation in the AFSC programme designed to replace AWACS (Airborne Early Warning), as well as updates to MRTT (air-to-air refuelling) aircraft, and participation in an international strategic transport solution. The fleet of combat aircraft will finally be reinforced by unmanned systems (Manned-Unmanned Teaming, MUM-T).

The table below presents, by capability, the main development axes as well as their first year of budgetary commitment, accompanied by the corresponding amounts, both in commitments and in settlements (expressed in constant 2026 euros), over the period covered by this Vision.

	First year of commitment	Commitment 2026-2034 (€Cst26)	Settlement 2026-2034 (€Cst26)
Air		10.280.805.049 €	9.326.879.414 €
Air Combat multirole		3.387.409.005 €	3.237.409.005 €
Air combat multirole aircraft (11EA) including mission equipment	2026	1.672.258.720 €	1.672.258.720 €
Aircraft support equipment, spare parts and configuration updates	2026	445.104.480 €	295.104.480 €
Continuous capability development (incl. Manned Unmanned Teaming MuM-T)	2027	419.589.040 €	419.589.040 €
Deployable SAP mission planning facility (DSAP-F)	2026	20.324.000 €	20.324.000 €
Electronic Warfare (EW) European mission data generation capability	2028	156.465.598 €	156.465.598 €
Training - European Operational Training Infrastructure (OTI) program	2026	202.632.173 €	202.632.173 €
Training - NATO Advanced Flight Training Europe	2027	101.620.000 €	101.620.000 €
Training - Update mission training center and readiness enhancement (incl. weapons loading trainer)	2026	369.414.994 €	369.414.994 €
Surface-Based Air & Missile Defence		4.013.990.000 €	3.410.062.395 €
Short/medium range firing units (10EA)	2026	2.032.400.000 €	1.827.114.395 €
Long range firing units (03EA)	2029	1.981.590.000 €	1.582.948.000 €
Fixed Wing Transport		1.047.965.105 €	997.155.105 €
A400M Directional Infra-Red Counter Measures (DIRCM) and block update	2026	264.879.353 €	264.879.353 €
Future strategic air transport partnership (outsized cargo)	2033	152.430.000 €	101.620.000 €
Light tactical / Medium range air transport capability	2026	426.804.000 €	426.804.000 €
Replacement long range air transport capability	2029	203.851.752 €	203.851.752 €
Air-to-Air Refueling		161.759.935 €	161.759.935 €
MRTT updates and upgrades	2030	161.759.935 €	161.759.935 €
Airborne Early Warning & Control		580.443.033 €	505.457.928 €
Alliance Future Surveillance and Control programme (including last update AWACS)	2026	580.443.033 €	505.457.928 €
Air Command and Control		527.343.392 €	486.695.391 €
Airbases CIS (Voice Communication Systems replacement, classified network upgrade)	2026	46.701.201 €	46.701.201 €
Air Defence (deployable long-range radar/CRC, C ² systems replacement and simulation)	2026	239.104.193 €	239.104.193 €
Air surveillance radars capability improvement	2026	35.322.634 €	35.322.634 €
Air Traffic Management (ATM) systems improvement	2027	190.972.363 €	150.324.363 €
Multi-domain targeting support capability	2028	15.243.000 €	15.243.000 €
Force Protection Air		244.483.503 €	220.074.379 €
Airbase resiliency improvement and intrusion detection systems	2026	166.032.863 €	141.623.739 €
Command, transport, CBRN reconnaissance and liaison vehicles	2026	78.450.640 €	78.450.640 €
Search and Rescue		193.071.489 €	193.071.489 €
SAR helicopters (04EA)	2026	193.071.489 €	193.071.489 €
Airbase General Support		124.339.587 €	115.193.786 €

Airbases Navigational Aids replacement and support material	2026	20.179.087 €	14.081.886 €
Deployable airbase equipment and Instrument Landing System (ILS)	2028	91.966.100 €	91.966.100 €
Weather observation, forecasting and data distribution systems	2026	12.194.400 €	9.145.800 €

1) Air Combat multirole

The air combat multirole capability is an essential element for acquiring or maintaining control of the airspace, both in times of peace and during periods of crisis. It is of vital importance for all military operations, both land and naval, whether in Belgium or within the framework of NATO and international coalitions. The F-35, successor to the F-16, is designed to carry out several of these missions simultaneously, such as air defence, protection of allied troops, neutralisation of enemy air defences, and destruction of strategic targets deep within enemy territory. This is referred to as multirole capability. These missions are essential for disrupting enemy operations and ensuring air superiority, thereby providing a strategic advantage and avoiding prolonged conflicts of attrition, such as in Ukraine. The F-35 is a stealth combat aircraft that is difficult to detect and equipped with state-of-the-art sensors. It can deploy air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons with great precision, enabling it to operate effectively across a wide range of missions.

Combat aircraft play an essential role in the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS), particularly in ensuring the defence of Belgian airspace and the protection of critical civilian and military infrastructure on our territory. In this context, surveillance of Benelux airspace is carried out jointly and alternately with the Netherlands. The Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) system, operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, keeps two combat aircraft and their crews on permanent alert. They are ready to take off within minutes to intercept any suspicious or unidentified aircraft moving through the NATO-controlled airspace over the Benelux.

Current Capability

Air combat capability is a fundamental pillar of Belgian airspace defence and NATO's security architecture. In a high-intensity combat environment and faced with the emergence of new threats, such as drones and hypersonic missiles, it is becoming imperative to strengthen this strategic component. The conflict in Ukraine has cruelly highlighted the decisive role of air superiority in preventing military stalemates and forms of static warfare, such as trench fighting.

In 2018, the Belgian government approved the acquisition of 34 F-35 fighter aircraft to replace a fleet of 54 F-16s, resulting in a significant reduction in air combat capability. The current F-16 air combat capability is gradually being reduced, from around 50 aircraft today to a complete withdrawal from operational service by the end of 2028. The process of replacing these aircraft began last year with the first deliveries of F-35s, eight of which have been delivered and are currently being used in the United States to train Belgian pilots. After the summer of 2025, the first F-35 will be delivered to Belgium at the Florennes Air Base. The 34 new combat aircraft are expected to be fully operational by early 2031.

Since 2021, NATO has been expecting Belgium to exceed its initial commitment of 34 aircraft and further strengthen its air combat capability, which is essential to ensuring air superiority and contributing fully to the collective defence of the European continent. In an international context marked by intensifying geopolitical tensions and the accelerated development of technological threats, this requirement for densification further increased in 2025.

Capability Development

To partially meet its commitments to NATO, Belgium will proceed with the procurement of 11 additional F-35 aircraft (including support elements and mission equipment) in addition to the 34 aircraft previously ordered.

To ensure optimal training for pilots and personnel in the use of this aircraft, while guaranteeing the safety, efficiency, and performance of missions, resources will be allocated to the development of a shared operational training environment (Operational Training Infrastructure – OTI), preferably in Europe. Investments will also be allocated to enhance pilots' readiness for the changing operational environment. The field of simulation will also be further developed within the Mission Training Center with the implementation of the LVCT (Live Virtual Constructive Training) concept, which aims to combine several types of training environments (integration of real and simulated flights) into a single integrated simulation offering pilots realistic combat scenarios. Furthermore, resources will be allocated to training equipment for weapon loading (weapons loading trainer).

Finally, a partnership will also be established with other European users of the F-35 in the field of Electronic Warfare. The deployment of multirole air combat capability will also be strengthened, in particular through the acquisition of additional mission planning facility (DSAP-F) resources enabling missions to be planned in a secure environment.

The next legislative period will focus on strengthening air combat capability and continuing the evolution of the aircraft, jointly with other F-35 users (Continuous Capability Development). Resources will also be allocated to participating in the development of Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) capabilities, which will ultimately strengthen and expand combat aircraft capabilities through the integration of unmanned aircraft, thereby optimising reconnaissance, support, and tactical engagement missions.

Pilot training is one of the main missions of the Air Competence Centre (CCAir). It takes place in several phases, including an initial phase that is common to all future pilots (on all types of aircraft). This phase will be carried out using capabilities provided under a service contract (Basic Flight Training Capability – BFTC, file currently being finalised). The resources required to develop this basic training capability are therefore not covered by the capability development described in this annex. Conversely, the specific training phase intended for pilots joining the multirole air combat capability, which is part of capability development, will be carried out in a collaborative framework with other European users (NATO Flight Training Europe).

Cooperation

The F-35 programme is an international project developed jointly by the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and several European countries (Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark). Since then, many other European countries, including Belgium, have acquired the F-35 (Germany, Poland, Finland, etc.).

Today, the F-35 is the most widely used combat aircraft within NATO in terms of quantity, operational presence, and strategic convergence. This makes it a pillar of interoperability and transatlantic and European cooperation within the alliance. This interoperability translates into logistics, operational tactics, and operational planning. With twelve European countries having already ordered several hundred aircraft, enhanced cooperation at the European level is a reality, encompassing synergies in maintenance, spare parts management, data generation, and future developments. An aircraft production facility is also located in Europe, while several maintenance and parts production centres are spread across the European continent. The F-35 programme therefore represents a major strategic lever for innovation and industrial and military cooperation. It makes a decisive contribution to strengthening common defence and deterrence at the European level.

A mixed fleet consisting of two different types of combat aircraft could provide added value in terms of strategic flexibility. A second fleet, however, requires an investment, both budgetary and in terms of personnel, that far exceeds the capabilities of Defence within the time horizon of this Strategic Vision. However, in the longer term, beyond 2040, and provided that the situation in

terms of personnel and defence budgets continues to evolve favourably, a mixed fleet of F-35s and a sixth-generation European fighter aircraft is an interesting path that should be explored.

In this context, Belgium currently has an observer role in the Franco-German-Spanish FCAS (Future Air Combat System) programme, in which a new-generation fighter is just one element of a system-of-systems approach.

As part of the STAR plan, a budget of 300 million euros has been allocated to enable our country to participate as a full-fledged partner in the next phase of development currently planned for the period 2026-2030, which should then lead to the creation of a technology demonstrator. As things stand, the total cost of this development phase is estimated at around 5 billion euros for all partners. Beyond 2030, and likely until around 2040, the operational development of the FCAS programme is expected to require an additional 40 to 50 billion euros from all partners.

The government will ask the FCAS consortium to integrate Belgium as a full-fledged partner as soon as possible. Added value in terms of societal returns, consolidation and strengthening of the Defence Technological and Industrial Base must be ensured. For the second phase of development until 2030, budgetary resources had already been planned. For the third phase of development starting in 2030, budgets will be provided for in the adjusted military programme Law (major DIRS participation programmes).

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

The F-35 contract has already generated numerous technological returns for Belgium. The technology surrounding the F-35 weapons system, and its evolution, opens numerous possibilities for innovation and development in the years to come, both in the field of simulation via the LVCT (Live Virtual Constructive Training) concept and in the development of a Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) capability.

2) Surface-Based Air & Missile Defence

Ground-based air defence systems (Surface-Based Air & Missile Defence – SBAMD) are an essential pillar of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS). Their mission is to protect the national territory and that of the Alliance, the airspace, the sensitive infrastructure, populations and forces deployed in operation against aerial threats.

SBAMD systems are classified according to their range – short, medium or long – and are designed to be integrated into a multi-layered defence architecture (in this case, that of NATO). Their effectiveness relies on close coordination and interoperability with other defence systems, particularly those of other allies, ensuring a consistent and reactive response to air and ballistic threats.

Unlike VSHORAD (Very Short Range Air Defence) systems – which are often portable or vehicle-mounted, highly responsive but have limited range – used by the Land Force for close protection of units against very short-range air threats such as drones, helicopters or low-altitude aircraft, SBAMD systems are designed to protect sensitive or strategic sites against a wide range of longer-range threats, including aircraft, cruise missiles and, in some cases, ballistic missiles. Their use is more complex and requires careful coordination of airspace to avoid any interference with friendly aircraft, which is why they fall under the responsibility of the Air Force.

This defensive shield of ground-based air defence systems (Surface-Based Air & Missile Defence – SBAMD) that has been put in place will significantly contribute to the protection of our territory and to the capability needs of NATO and the European Union.

Current Capability

Currently, Belgium no longer has SBAMD systems to protect itself against aerial threats. However, both the sensitive institutions and infrastructures present in Belgium (national and international

decision-making centres, facilities hosting and transiting troops, etc.) and the current security situation highlight the scale and urgency of this need. Not only does the protection of the national territory require this capability, but it is also one of the capabilities requested by NATO. That is why Defence will quickly focus on developing a robust SBAMD capability that meets the expectations of our partners.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, Belgium will invest in an air defence system (Surface– Based Air and Missile Defence – SBAMD) to protect the entire national territory, with a focus on sensitive infrastructure. The government has declared itself in favour of enhanced cooperation in this area within the Benelux.

The progressive development of this capability will begin with the acquisition of 10 short- and medium-range NASAMS (Norwegian Advanced Surface to Air Missile System) firing units, a system already acquired by the Netherlands. It has the advantage of being a versatile system, capable of providing both short- and medium-range defence. Its compatibility with certain munitions already used by the F-35s, as well as its short-term availability, make it a pragmatic, consistent and strategic solution.

Next, our country will acquire three *long-range* firing units to complete the SBAMD multi-layered defence system. Cooperation within the Benelux framework and full interoperability with air combat capabilities, into which SBAMD systems are integrated to provide air defence, must be guaranteed.

To fully meet the Alliance's needs, the development of SBAMD capability will need to continue beyond the end of the Strategic Vision.

During the next legislative period, the delivery and operationalisation of the systems will continue.

Cooperation

To the extent that anti-missile systems constitute an essential complement to air defence, which is largely ensured in cooperation with the Netherlands within the framework of the Quick Reaction Alert Benelux, it appears fully coherent to extend and intensify this dynamic in the field of SBAMD. It is with this in mind that the government included the Belgian SBAMD project within the framework of Benelux cooperation. This approach is particularly relevant given that the Netherlands already has proven expertise in this area, which will facilitate the transfer of know-how and contribute to the rapid emergence of an autonomous and high-performing Belgian capability.

3) Fixed Wing Transport

Air transport capability allows for the rapid deployment of troops and equipment, while ensuring their subsequent support. It also plays a key role as an effective and rapid means of repatriating nationals from abroad during Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). This capability is also frequently used in humanitarian missions.

Current Capability

The current air transport fleet includes seven Airbus A400M aircraft, operated jointly within a binational unit together with one Luxembourg aircraft, from the Melsbroek air base in Belgium. These aircraft will be fully operational (Full Operational Capability – FOC) during 2025.

Two (long-range) aircraft Corporate, owned by a private company but operated by Defence, are added to this fleet. If necessary, Defence can also resort to charter contracts for transport aircraft, as well as to the transport capacity provided by the multinational MRTT fleet (Airbus A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport) in which Belgium participates.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, the necessary measures will be taken to equip A400M aircraft with enhanced self-protection against threats from infrared-guided missiles (Directional Infra-Red Counter Measures – DIRCM). The fleet will also begin an initial general upgrade of its systems (block update).

The air transport fleet will be reinforced by the acquisition of medium-sized, medium-range passenger transport aircraft (such as regional jets) or light tactical transport aircraft. This investment is aimed in particular at avoiding the deployment of an A400M when the cargo or the number of passengers does not justify it. A preliminary study will be carried out to determine the most appropriate solution to optimally complement the current A400M capability (a combination of both systems light tactical / medium range air transport is possible).

The two (long-range) aircraft Corporate currently operated by Defence will be replaced through the acquisition of two new aircraft to maintain operational capability at the end of the current contract.

The next legislative period will be dedicated to the delivery and commissioning of these aircraft, including the new “white” fleet. A replacement solution for the current strategic outsized cargo capability SALIS (Strategic Airlift Interim Solution), which enables NATO countries to pool the chartering of very large aircraft for the global transport of heavy equipment, will also be considered within an international framework.

Cooperation

For many years, Belgian military air transport has been an area of strong international cooperation. Examples include the EATC (European Air Transport Command), which coordinates and optimises the use of military air transport capabilities in several European countries, and the Belgian-Luxembourg A400M fleet, which operates jointly within a binational unit in Melsbroek.

The future will also focus on international cooperation, whether in relation to the upcoming A400M modifications, the FMTC project or the study of the future SALIS solution.

4) Air-to-Air Refueling

Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR) is a crucial capability for ensuring the autonomy of air systems, extending their range and reducing the number of stopovers during expeditionary deployments. It helps optimize the speed of interventions while reducing dependence on ground-based airport infrastructure.

Current Capability

Belgium participates in the Multinational Multirole Tanker Transport Unit (MMU). This unit, whose main base is located in the Netherlands, brings together several NATO countries sharing a common fleet of MRTT aircraft (Airbus A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport). These aircraft, which carry out air-to-air refuelling missions, are also capable of performing strategic transport missions for passengers, cargo, and patients during medical evacuations.

Belgium currently contributes to this capability with the equivalent of one MRTT aircraft, acquired as part of the 2016 Strategic Vision, supplemented by the equivalent of a second aircraft provided for in the STAR Plan, which is expected to be delivered in 2026.

Capability development

As mentioned above, the current legislative period will be marked by the delivery of the second MRTT aircraft. During the next legislative period, a programme to upgrade and improve the system (updates and upgrades) will be launched.

Cooperation

Belgium participates in the MMU, which operates the fleet of MRTT aircraft. This fleet is pooled and operated by six European NATO partner countries.

5) Airborne Early Warning and Control

The Airborne Early Warning & Control (AEW&C) capability provides NATO with immediately available aerial and maritime surveillance, as well as airborne command, control, and air battle management capability. This is based on a joint fleet, better known as AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System), operated by multinational crews and based in Germany. Thanks, in particular to a powerful on-board radar, this strategic asset makes it possible to monitor vast areas, coordinate air operations, warn of potential threats and ensure air superiority by guiding aircraft to their targets in real time. Designed to integrate with the defence systems, these aircraft enhance interoperability between NATO nations.

Current Capability

Belgium has been participating in the AWACS programme for many years. Defence is also contributing to the international programme to modernise this system, ensuring that the technologies and capabilities used remain state-of-the-art and operational until 2035.

Over the coming years, Defence will take part in NATO's AFSC (Alliance Future Surveillance and Control) development and production programme. Launched at the Warsaw Summit in 2016, this programme aims to develop solutions to replace the current surveillance and control capabilities currently provided by AWACS. After the design and study phase, the development and production phases will follow. The initial phase of this new capability is currently scheduled to enter service in 2031, requiring a final upgrade of the AWACS.

6) Air Command and Control

Defence's Air Command and Control (Air C²) capability ensures the security and integrity of airspace. In addition to the international AEW&C component mentioned above, the national Air C² capability includes the Control & Reporting Centre (CRC) and the Air Traffic Control Centre (ATCC).

Current Capability

The main unit of the Air C² capability is the CRC, based at Beauvechain, which is part of the NATO Integrated Air & Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS). The CRC provides continuous surveillance of Belgian and Luxembourg airspace and coordinates all air defence activities. To establish the air situation, identify and track air movements, the CRC relies on a network of radars combining civilian and military resources. It plays a crucial role in triggering the Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) mission: when a situation requiring rapid interception arises (such as an intrusion into national airspace), the CRC identifies the incident and, depending on its analysis of the situation, orders the stand-by combat aircraft to take off to carry out the interception.

In terms of air traffic management related to military operations and training flights, the Air Traffic Control Centre (ATCC) supports the Air Force's activities by controlling military traffic, administering Belgian airspace and disseminating the necessary aeronautical information.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, Defence will continue to invest in its radar network, both at home and in operations, with the acquisition of a 3D expeditionary long-range radar and deployable CRC, as well as through the improvement of its surveillance radar network. Capability investments will also involve updating and replacing Command and Control (C²) systems, classified networks, Voice Communication Systems (VCS), and Air Traffic Management (ATM) tools. The C²

simulation will also be developed and equipment acquired for a Multi-Domain Targeting Support Cell, responsible for collecting and analysing the information needed to carry out precise strikes.

Cooperation

By its very nature, the Air Command and Control domain is part of an international cooperation framework, particularly within the NATO Integrated Air & Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS).

At national level, Defence and Skeyes jointly manage Belgian airspace from a shared location. This collaboration has enabled better integration of civilian and military operations, thereby strengthening the security, fluidity, and efficiency of Belgian airspace management.

At CRC level, coordination and information exchange with the NCCN are ensured as part of the protection of nuclear sites, particularly in the event of a suspected airborne threat.

In collaboration with the Directorate-General for Air Transport, Defence and the Federal Police and Customs, the CRC also houses the National Airspace Security Centre (NASC), which is responsible for collecting, analysing and redistributing information on air incidents in a centralised manner for use by the competent authorities. Within the context of enhanced territorial defence, the NASC will need to be strengthened to be able to deploy its full operational capabilities.

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

Integrating all systems to enable rapid, data-driven decision-making in complex air environments is a major challenge. Networking of weapons is one of the Air dimension's innovation priorities. The Air Force works closely with industry and research institutes to accelerate its innovation policy.

7) Force Protection Air

The aim of the air dimension's force protection capability is to ensure the continuation of air activities despite enemy actions, and to protect the air personnel and assets as well as the mission. The FP Air capability is a Combat Support function that enables missions to be carried out successfully, making it an important part of any air operation.

Current Capability

Force protection air capabilities are currently distributed across the bases of Beauvechain, Florennes, and Kleine-Brogel, each of which has expeditionary assets ready to be deployed to ensure the active and passive defence of a deployed air detachment. They can also be used to enhance security at air bases within the national territory (Main Operating Bases).

Capability Development

The FP squadrons at the three air bases will be equipped with new command, liaison and transport vehicles, as well as CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) reconnaissance vehicles for rapid detection of contamination. Synergies with the Land Force will be sought to this end. Air base security will also be enhanced with equipment to improve intrusion detection.

Finally, investment will be made in the acquisition of equipment to significantly increase the resilience of air bases - with priority given to bases hosting air combat capability - considered to be critical infrastructures in the architecture of deterrence, collective defence and force projection. This will involve providing these sites with enhanced physical protection measures, as well as capabilities to quickly restore operations in the event of an attack or sabotage (emergency runway repair kits, etc.).

8) Search and Rescue

Belgium has a Search and Rescue (SAR) capability permanently available from the Koksijde air base to carry out rescue operations at sea and on Belgian-Luxembourg territory.

Current Capability

The SAR role is currently performed by the NH-90 NATO Frigate Helicopter (NFH).

Capability Development

Designed to carry out anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare missions from frigates, the NH90 NFH will eventually be fully dedicated to supporting operations in the maritime domain, consolidating its role as a key air-sea carrier. During the current legislative period - and as soon as possible to free up the NFHs for their specific missions - a fleet of 4 new helicopters will be acquired, specifically dedicated to Search and Rescue (SAR) operations.

9) Airbase General Support

Airbase general support brings together all the elements required for the proper functioning of an airbase, whether located on national soil or deployed abroad as a detachment. This includes a wide range of essential needs to support air operations and the personnel who maintain the systems.

Capability Development

During the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the focus will be on acquiring the necessary resources to ensure deployments (deployable airbase equipment). These needs are part of the requirement to project Forces, while also providing greater resilience to our infrastructure. This will include deployable weather capabilities as required by NATO, deployable infrastructure (such as ammunition storage or maintenance facilities), equipment related to aircraft emergency arresting systems, and emergency vehicles. Support equipment for aircraft (tools, scaffolding, ammunition loading devices) required for their technical and logistic support activities will also be provided, as well as resources to maintain up-to-date capabilities for weather observation, forecasting, and data distribution.

During the next legislative period, a deployable Instrument Landing System (ILS) will be acquired, and the Navigational Aids will be replaced.

e. Capability Dimension Maritime

Belgium, despite its relatively small coastline, has major maritime interests, including one of the largest ports in Europe, a significant merchant fleet, and a critical dependence on sea lanes for its open economy. Our critical infrastructures, both submarine and maritime, are vital to our communications and energy supply networks. Moreover, maritime routes play a key strategic role in the military domain, as Belgium serves as a transit nation for troops heading to the Eastern flank.

The capability dimension Maritime encompasses all capabilities directly linked to Naval structures. It also includes the necessary resources for maritime operations from other dimensions, such as helicopters, which, although part of the Air dimension, are mainly used in support of Navy operations. The capability dimension Maritime includes the Surface Combatant, Naval Mine Warfare, Coastal Security, Harbour Protection, and Maritime C² & Support capabilities.

Throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the gradual strengthening of the capability dimension Maritime will be pursued, in particular to meet NATO capability requirements. This capability development will be based on several key investments, including the acquisition of a third ASWF (Anti-Submarine Warfare Frigate) via the Netherlands, along with upgrades and improvements to the NFH (*NATO Frigate Helicopter*) fleet. To bring the Naval Mine Warfare capability into line with NATO requirements, a Logistic Support Ship and modular mine-laying systems will be acquired. To reinforce maritime security, sensors will be acquired, equipment in the various command and control centres will be modernised, and patrol boats will be updated. In addition, harbour infrastructure protection capabilities will be strengthened, and the expansion of the Marine Fusiliers (MarFus) capability will continue.

The development of the capability dimension Maritime also benefits from a particularly advanced bi-national structural cooperation between the Belgian Navy and the Royal Netherlands Navy, especially in the area of Surface Combatant and Naval Mine Warfare capabilities. This collaboration is embodied in the BENESAM partnership (*Belgisch-Nederlandse Samenwerking*, or Belgian-Dutch cooperation), which aims to pool resources, training, infrastructure, and operations between the two navies to improve efficiency, interoperability, and cost-effectiveness.

The table below shows, by capability, the main areas of development, and their first year of budgetary commitment, together with the corresponding amounts, both in commitments and in settlements (expressed in constant 2026 euros), for the period covered by this Vision.

	First year of commitment	Commitment 2026-2034 (€Cst26)	Settlement 2026-2034 (€Cst26)
Maritime		3.429.737.355 €	2.261.835.215 €
Surface Combatant		1.918.242.943 €	1.518.621.543 €
Anti-Submarine Warfare Frigate (3rd ASWF)	2026	1.270.250.000 €	1.223.250.000 €
ASWF updates, upgrades and support	2029	545.213.400 €	197.673.000 €
NATO Frigate Helicopters (NFH) updates, upgrades and support	2029	51.969.543 €	51.969.543 €
Surface Warfare capability development	2029	50.810.000 €	45.729.000 €
Naval Mine Warfare		1.170.883.050 €	445.316.250 €
Logistic Support Ship (O1EA)	2033	274.374.000 €	101.620.000 €
Mine Counter Measures (MCM) Lab projects implementation	2027	10.162.000 €	10.162.000 €
Mine Counter Measures (MCM) Toolboxes	2026	656.987.876 €	165.147.076 €
Mine Counter Measures Vessels (MCMV) updates, upgrades and additional material	2026	211.877.700 €	150.905.700 €
Mine-laying capacity	2027	6.280.914 €	6.280.914 €
Mine Warfare Data Centre	2027	11.200.560 €	11.200.560 €
Coastal Security		135.403.105 €	117.111.505 €
Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPV) updates and upgrades	2026	94.755.105 €	76.463.505 €
Offshore Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) sensors	2027	40.648.000 €	40.648.000 €
Harbour Protection		64.087.679 €	48.844.679 €
Seaward and landward sensors, effectors and protection	2026	64.087.679 €	48.844.679 €
Maritime C ² & support		141.120.578 €	131.941.238 €
C ² for maritime operation centres and sensors integration	2027	67.685.861 €	67.685.861 €
MCMV Satellite terminals upgrade	2027	73.434.717 €	64.255.377 €

1) Surface Combatant

The Navy's Surface Combatant (SC) capability comprises frigate-type warships equipped with additional tools such as helicopters, drones and small boats. The frigate is the smallest type of warship capable of operating across the full spectrum of conflict - from low to high intensity - and in all dimensions of maritime operations, whether above, on the surface, or underwater.

The frigates can be deployed in a wide range of missions, including anti-submarine and air defence, strikes against enemy vessels, or escorting vulnerable ships. They play a key role in NATO's collective maritime defence and the protection of European maritime supply routes, in particular by taking part in anti-piracy operations.

Current Capability

Belgium currently has 2 multi-purpose frigates (M-Frigates) capable of carrying NH90 NFH helicopters.

As part of the 2016 Strategic Vision, it was decided to replace the current frigates with new Anti-Submarine Warfare Frigates (ASWF), in partnership with the Netherlands. These new frigates - which will be delivered between 2029 and 2031 - will still be multi-purpose but will have an enhanced anti-submarine warfare capability.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, and to guarantee the permanent operational availability of the capability, a third ASWF frigate will be acquired as part of the BENESAM partnership.

To enhance the frigates' Surface Warfare Capability, organic Class II tactical drones will also be acquired for maritime imagery and tactical intelligence gathering. To address future threats, it will be reinforced with anti-torpedo systems, new fast boats, and maritime sensors (radar, Automatic Identification System, sonar buoys, etc.) intended to equip the Belgian MQ-9B RPAS.

To ensure the evolution and operational readiness of the NH90 NFH, new radar warning systems will be acquired and NFH update, upgrade and support activities are planned. This also includes Belgium's contribution to the upgrade of simulators at the International Training Centre in Den Helder, the Netherlands, used for the education and training of Belgian and Dutch crews.

The next legislative period will focus on building up the Surface Combatant capability, including the continued capability development of the frigates as well as their periodic updates, upgrades, and support.

Cooperation

As part of the BENESAM collaboration, the Belgian and Dutch frigates have been operating jointly for several years. This cooperation covers all aspects of capability development for the surface combatant capability.

Regarding the new frigates (ASWF), the Royal Netherlands Navy is the lead nation. As such, it is the Netherlands that are developing these new vessels, which will be jointly supported once they enter service.

For the NH90 NFH, the configuration of the Belgian and Dutch helicopters is very closely aligned, and cooperation between the two countries also exists, especially through the pooling of certain spare parts. The operational preparation of these helicopters is also carried out in close collaboration. Defence personnel are present in the Netherlands to provide logistic support and training. The Dutch Full Mission Flight Trainer (FMFT) operational simulator is based in Den Helder.

2) Naval Mine Warfare

Naval mines create physical and psychological barriers aimed at restricting the adversary's freedom of movement, in particular by controlling access to specific areas or maritime infrastructure. Having a Naval Mine Warfare (NMW) capability enables a country to ensure access to sea lanes and harbour facilities. On the other hand, such a capability also allows for defence through the strategic placement of minefields.

A comprehensive NMW capability therefore encompasses several aspects, including mine hunting, mine sweeping, and mine laying. Within this context, the use of remotely-operated systems is becoming increasingly widespread and tends to partially replace traditional resources, whether vessels or divers.

Current Capability

Over the past decades, the Belgian Navy has earned a reputation as a specialist in maritime Mine Counter Measures (MCM). The Belgian NMW capability currently consists of 3 Tripartite Mine Hunters (CMT) with mine countermeasures capabilities for Very Shallow Waters (VSW).

As part of the 2016 Strategic Vision, a decision was made to replace these mine hunters with 6 new Mine Counter Measures Vessels (MCMV). These innovative vessels offer a diversified mine countermeasures capability, notably through their toolbox composed of remotely operated and autonomous systems (small craft, mini-submarines, aerial drones, etc.).

Moreover, thanks to their modular design, larger size, and increased embarkation capacity, these new vessels can be deployed in a multifunctional manner, particularly for maritime security operations or to integrate additional capabilities such as special operations forces.

Developed in partnership with the Netherlands, these vessels will be delivered progressively between 2025 and 2030.

Capability Development

To meet its commitments to NATO, Belgium must also possess a logistic support ship for its MCM capability, as well as mine-laying assets.

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, a logistic support ship, capable of serving as a command ship and as a mother ship (fuel, drinking water, ammunition, spare parts, food, etc.), will therefore be acquired.

Modular mine-laying systems, as well as mine data storage and analysis systems, will also be purchased. Finally, the MCMV fleet will also undergo an initial general upgrade of its systems (updates, upgrades and additional material), and drones operating above, on the surface, and underwater will also be acquired to enhance the operational readiness of the MCM capability (MCM Toolbox). Particular attention will be given to the component related to the Mine Warfare Data Centre.

Cooperation

As part of the BENESAM collaboration, the mine hunters have been operating jointly for several years. Cooperation encompasses all areas of capability development.

As far as the MCM capability is concerned, the Belgian Navy is the Lead Nation and is responsible for developing the various projects.

As regards the development of the mine-laying capability, the Naval Mines Cooperation Plan, which aims for the joint acquisition of a single mine-laying system by different countries within NATO, is an interesting option.

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

One of the most important areas of innovation is the use of drones. These unmanned systems will soon be used for MCM capability in the various phases of mine countermeasures, from detection to destruction. The Navy is also in charge of the PESCO MAS MCM project, which aims to ensure continuous innovation in the mine countermeasure toolkit.

At the same time, efforts are being made to innovate in the field of C-UAS systems to integrate them into the air defence of our ships.

3) Coastal Security

The *Maritiem Informatie Kruispunt* (MIK) is responsible for issues relating to maritime security. Within it, operators from the Navy (Defence), the shipping police, customs (Federal Public Service Finance), and the Directorate-General for Shipping (Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport),

work closely together. This cooperation aims to combat illegal activities in waters under Belgian jurisdiction, such as terrorist acts, human or drug trafficking, illicit trade, prohibited fishing practices, and illegal discharges of hydrocarbons.

The presence of strategic infrastructures and offshore activities in Belgian territorial waters and in our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has significantly increased in recent years. Wind farms, as well as submarine cables and pipelines, represent a strategic issue for our country, but also, at the same time, a risk of hybrid threats (sabotage, etc.).

To detect illicit activities, operators rely in particular on radar images, transponder data, as well as information provided by national and international partners. These various sources make it possible to reconstruct a clear picture of the situation at sea (Maritime Situational Awareness), thereby helping to ensure maritime security.

While the Navy plays a central role in coastal security, other Forces also contribute to this mission, each bringing its specific capabilities in support or complementarity, depending on operational needs. The Defence resources that the MIK can call upon, in addition to the Coastal Security capability, include SAR helicopters, MQ-9B RPAS, F-35 QRA, and Special Operations Forces.

Alongside its contribution to surveillance, Defence is responsible for monitoring foreign military vessels and conducting military interventions to secure sensitive infrastructure.

Current Capability

Today, Defence's Coastal Security (CS) capability, in close collaboration with the MIK, aims to monitor territorial waters and our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), as well as our sensitive maritime infrastructure, using two Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPV). Despite their limited warfare capability, CPVs add value to coastguard tasks and have a deterrent effect against threats. Within this context, to ensure the continuous availability of a vessel ready to carry out maritime security missions, it was decided to acquire a third CPV in 2024.

Capability Development

During the current legislative period, investments will be made in sensors (acoustic, optical, etc.) aimed at monitoring and protecting our maritime infrastructure (offshore ISR sensors). The two existing CPVs will undergo technical updates and upgrades, enabling them to evolve in their mission and better respond to hybrid threats.

Cooperation

The MIK Zeebrugge is integrated into the MARSUR (Maritime Surveillance) network, a project of the European Defence Agency (EDA), launched in 2006 and operational since 2014. MARSUR is a network for the automatic exchange of information between European navies, enabling the sharing of data on vessel positions and trajectories, their identification, as well as associated images. MARSUR is also the precursor to a broader civil-military project: the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), initiated by the European Commission. This project aims to establish a common structure for sharing maritime information among the Member States of the European Union. The aim is to connect the MIK to the CISE in the coming years.

4) Harbour Protection

The Harbour Protection (HP) capability aims to protect harbour facilities and docked vessels against surface and underwater threats, relying on a set of sensors - such as sonars, electro-optical sensors, and hydrophones - a command-and-control system, as well as lethal and non-lethal intervention means enabling a graduated response.

The Marine Fusiliers (MarFus), recently established within the Navy, provide the maritime dimension with an expeditionary protection capability for a Sea Port of Debarkation.

During the current legislative period, investments will be made in the development of harbour protection capability to effectively contribute to the security of ports and their approaches. The focus will be on systems for protecting harbour infrastructure against maritime threats, whether conventional or hybrid, with the acquisition of new underwater sensors. Belgium has committed to providing NATO with an expeditionary harbour protection module capable of cooperating with units responsible for the land and air defence of harbour infrastructure. Accordingly, sensors, intervention means, and Command, Control, Communication & Intelligence (C³I) systems will also be acquired, alongside the growth in Marine Fusilier personnel (seaward and landward sensors, effectors, and protection).

5) Maritime Command & Control and Maritime Support

To operate and manage maritime capabilities effectively, it is essential to have a command and control (C²) system as well as an appropriate support capability. Within this framework, the Belgian-Dutch structure of the Benelux Admiralty (ABNL) includes joint command and support centres, such as the Maritime Operations Centres (MOC) located in Den Helder and Zeebrugge.

The MOC in Zeebrugge provides technical, logistic, and personnel support to the Belgian fleet, as well as technical and logistic support to the Dutch mine countermeasures fleet. The operational control of the Surface Combatant and Naval Mine Warfare capabilities is currently ensured by the ABNL MOC in Den Helder.

Capability Development

The ambition is to develop the Zeebrugge MOC so that it can take over all Naval Mine Warfare responsibilities for the Belgian-Dutch MCM fleet. The ABNL MOC in Den Helder will retain primary management responsibility for the Surface Combatant capabilities. As an integral part of the ABNL binational command structure, the Zeebrugge MOC will also serve as a backup to the Dutch MOC, thereby increasing the resilience of the binational command. Within this context, the MIK will also be co-located with the MOC.

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, satellite terminals will be acquired for the mine countermeasures vessels (MCMV satellite terminals upgrade), and a modernisation of the Communication and Information Systems (CIS) of the MIK and the MOC will be carried out. The sensors of maritime platforms and offshore sensors will be integrated into the command network (C² for maritime operation centres and sensors integration).

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

Innovation in the field of data integration and exploitation, along with the increasing use of AI, will also play a crucial role in optimising naval deployment. By analysing large amounts of data, the Navy can receive marine anomaly alerts more quickly, make better-informed decisions, and improve the efficiency of its deployment and interventions. This involves close cooperation with the Belgian maritime sector and the existing Belgian offshore ecosystem.

Innovation opportunities in the maintenance of our vessels will be explored. Remote monitoring of the ships' technical systems will enable early detection of issues and more efficient maintenance, thereby increasing the operational availability of the fleet and potentially reducing future personnel needs.

f. Capability Dimension Command and Operational Support

The capability dimension Command and Operational Support encompasses capabilities that are common to or support the other dimensions.

The capability dimension Command and Operational Support is structured around five capabilities: Medical Support, Joint Force Protection, General Support, unmanned systems, and enablement, which ensures deployment support and the sustainment of combat power.

Throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the gradual strengthening of the capability dimension Command and Operational Support will be pursued, in particular to meet NATO capability requirements. This capability development will be based on several key investments, including the acquisition of medical equipment to support operational units - such as field hospitals, medical evacuation assets, and ambulances - as well as medical equipment to ensure the functioning of the military hospital pending the creation and operationalisation of the Medical Hub.

As part of Joint Force Protection, essential investments will be made in Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS). CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) protection equipment, camouflage systems, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) equipment will also be acquired. For the General Support capability, investments will be made in both collective and individual soldier equipment. Territorial vehicles will be acquired to meet the growing training needs, as well as specific vehicles for the Reserve.

The need for Unmanned Systems will evolve significantly in the coming years. In response to this trend, Defence will invest in a wide range of drones - aerial, ground, maritime, and underwater - intended for both combat and support missions.

Finally, to carry out enablement missions, Defence will invest in equipment for the operationalisation of reception and transit infrastructure, in the resources necessary for the implementation of the Joint Support Hub, as well as in the acquisition of wagons. The redevelopment of the Leopoldsburg rail terminal is also planned, with the aim of enhancing military mobility.

The table below shows, by capability, the main areas of development and their first year of budgetary commitment, together with the corresponding amounts, both in commitments and in settlements (expressed in constant 2026 euros), for the period covered by this Vision.

	First year of commitment	Commitment 2026-2034 (€Cst26)	Settlement 2026-2034 (€Cst26)
Command & Operational Support		2.683.574.990 €	2.000.939.137 €
Medical Support		753.192.384 €	527.613.962 €
CBRN medical deployable lab	2034	4.064.800 €	1.016.200 €
Deployable medical treatment facilities	2026	97.995.731 €	97.309.796 €
MEDEVAC Air kits	2029	10.162.000 €	8.129.600 €
MEDEVAC Ground (soft skin and armoured vehicles)	2026	399.331.260 €	239.462.676 €
Medical logistic equipment and vehicles	2026	151.150.800 €	108.774.660 €
Medical support equipment	2026	90.487.793 €	72.921.030 €
Joint Force Protection		544.735.671 €	499.853.505 €
CBRN equipment and decontamination means	2026	52.389.697 €	52.389.697 €
C-UAS capability consolidated development	2026	368.880.600 €	368.880.600 €
EOD - Remotely controlled vehicles	2034	30.486.000 €	- €
EOD - Static detonation chamber	2030	35.567.000 €	35.567.000 €
Joint Force Protection - Camouflage equipment	2026	51.292.814 €	36.896.648 €
Joint Force Protection - Entry Control Point	2026	6.119.560 €	6.119.560 €
General Support		936.058.933 €	523.883.670 €

Homeland and territorial reserve - vehicles (incl. AAA VSHORAD) and handling systems	2026	466.180.037 €	205.370.037 €
Soldier armament and optronics	2026	305.449.330 €	204.084.066 €
Soldier digitalisation (radios, connectivity, softwares)	2028	95.000.000 €	45.000.000 €
Soldier equipment for personnel build-up (incl. reserve)	2029	46.799.679 €	46.799.679 €
Wall tents replacement	2026	22.629.888 €	22.629.888 €
Unmanned systems		367.017.567 €	367.017.567 €
Unmanned systems consolidated development	2026	367.017.567 €	367.017.567 €
Enablement		82.570.435 €	82.570.435 €
Air terminal operations center equipment	2028	40.946.883 €	40.946.883 €
Airbase operating location regeneration	2026	21.299.552 €	21.299.552 €
Rail transport wagons	2027	20.324.000 €	20.324.000 €

1) Medical Support

Medical support capability is an essential form of operational support (Combat Service Support - CSS) that must be scaled according to the level of ambition, the engagement scenarios of other capability dimensions, and NATO's capability requirements. This support capability is a force multiplier and a key enabler of combat capabilities within Defence, both physically and morally. An efficient medical support capability is essential to ensure the deployment of Belgian troops. It encompasses all the sub-capabilities directly linked to the structures of the Medical Service. These are organised into three pillars:

- An operational pillar (Medical Support to Operations - MSO), whose role is to ensure the deployment and operational support of Defence units.

The organisation, which is structured in accordance with NATO provisions in this regard, has the objective of providing wounded personnel with rapid and continuous treatment throughout the evacuation and treatment chain, based on the severity of their injuries or condition. To this end, medical support is structured in tiers based on several Medical Treatment Facilities (MTF), referred to as roles. Role 1 is the first medical structure in the field, capable of stabilising the wounded and sick before their transfer to a field hospital, a Role 2 Forward, or a Role 2 Basic, which has limited surgical capability. This Role 2 Basic can be reinforced and supplemented with specific modules such as extended surgical capability, a laboratory module, a dental module, or additional beds with nursing care (in which case it is referred to as Role 2 Enhanced). Roles 1 and 2, being integrated into the units they support, must have resources aligned with those units: for the Land dimension, for example, Role 1, Role 2, and medical evacuation capabilities must be fully mobile, and medical vehicles must be of the same type as those of the supported units to ensure the same tactical mobility and level of protection. The integration of communication and battlefield management systems must be complete.

Patient evacuation is carried out by ambulances, both armoured and unarmoured, but also, whenever possible, by tactical air assets with rotary or fixed wings. These air assets enable faster intervention or longer-range transport and are absolutely essential to ensure response times and continuity of care. For mass evacuations, the transport of a large number of patients over long distances can be conducted by bus or train, while maintaining strategic air evacuation capacity for critical patients.

Finally, patients who cannot return to combat quickly must be transferred to a field hospital providing specialist care in the operational theatre (Role 3), or to a Role 4, which is provided by either a military or civilian hospital on national territory. To medically prepare patients for this (potentially long) evacuation, Casualty Staging Units (CSU) must be implemented. These units are responsible for preparing patients selected for strategic evacuation to Role 4.

- A readiness pillar (Medical Readiness of the Forces - MROF and Readiness of the Medical Forces - ROMF), which ensures the preparation of both other Forces and the Medical Service for their wartime missions. For the benefit of other Forces, this includes in particular the learning of essential basic medical procedures to save lives and prevent irreversible damage, as well as the assessment of medical fitness for deployment, force health protection aspects such as vaccination, field hygiene, disease prevention, and the coordination of medico-psycho-social care with other actors within Defence. Readiness also includes medical selection activities during recruitment to ensure that recruits have an appropriate medical profile to be able to work within Defence. It ensures the readiness of Medical Service personnel to adequately meet the functional requirements of practising wartime medicine in all its aspects.
- A support pillar that includes the command and control of the Medical Service and medical logistics. It ensures the acquisition, storage, maintenance, repairs, and distribution of medical equipment and pharmaceutical and medical consumables in support of operations and readiness throughout Defence. Part of the medical logistics capabilities is deployable and therefore belongs to the operational pillar of the Medical Service.

Current Capability

The operational pillar has the material resources to support the other Forces with first-aid posts (Role 1), deployable surgical capabilities (Role 2), armoured and unarmoured ground medical evacuation means, equipment for tactical (A109 helicopters) and strategic (A400M) aeromedical evacuation, as well as a CBRN medical laboratory (deployable for a limited time). NATO does not expect our country to have a Role 3 capability.

The missions of the readiness pillar and the support pillar are currently carried out by the Queen Astrid Military Hospital, the Medical Competence Centre, and the Medical Logistics Unit. First-line curative care has been outsourced through a system of accredited medical healthcare providers (general practitioners, dentists, physiotherapists, etc.) for over fifteen years. Occasional territorial missions are carried out using the available operational resources.

Capability Development

Within a collective defence context, the intensity of medical support increases significantly due to the rise in the number of wounded and casualties, which places greater pressure on operational medical support. Moreover, the overall build-up of Defence capabilities has a direct impact on the readiness pillar.

During the period covered by this Strategic Vision, the objective will be to establish a medical support capability able to carry out all its tasks to meet Belgium's commitments to NATO, within the context of high-intensity operations or war.

During the current legislative period, the build-up of the operational pillar will involve the purchase of additional first-aid posts (Role 1), increased surgical capabilities (Role 2 Forward/Basic/Enhanced), as well as the vehicles required to ensure the mobility of Role 1 and 2 units and ground evacuation (armoured medical vehicles such as Griffon and Serval, as well as unarmoured ambulances).

Medical evacuation kits adapted to the new types of aircraft will be acquired. Medical logistics elements (health product distribution elements and a medical logistics company) will also be equipped with trucks, trailers and temperature-controlled containers to manage medical and pharmaceutical products and equipment during operational deployments. Medical kits intended for use by the Forces will also be purchased, including specialised sets to address CBRN-type threats. The renewal and evolution of medical equipment specific to special operations support is also part of the investment programmes.

While focusing on the priority of making medical support operational for the benefit of other Forces, the Medical Service also pays close attention to the readiness and support pillars, which

are essential to the overall effectiveness of the health chain. Within this context, the modernisation of infrastructure and the concentration of priority military medical missions make it necessary to optimise existing capabilities and reorganise processes. As a result, the various units in the readiness and support pillars will be centralised within a Medical Hub and will focus on their priority tasks, namely recruitment and selection of military personnel, preparation of personnel, and medical support for operations, all within a modern and optimised infrastructure. The Medical Hub, whose concept will be rapidly developed during the current legislative period, will consist of a medical expertise centre, a limited number of specialities for specific care pathways based on Defence needs, a training and simulation centre to ensure the maintenance of medical skills, a medical logistics centre, and a research and development centre. The selected specialities will be part of the study and will focus on operational needs, such as the Travel Clinic, dentistry, the mental health centre, the blood laboratory, radiology, and the centre for physical medicine and rehabilitation. Pending the Medical Hub, medical support equipment will be acquired to provide a transitional capacity (bridging mode), thereby ensuring continuity of capability.

During the next legislative period, the build-up will continue through additional acquisitions beyond those made during the current legislative period, with a particular focus on consolidating the operationalisation of capabilities. To address existing gaps, equipment will be purchased to outfit Casualty Staging Units (CSU), and components of the CBRN medical laboratory will also be replaced. At the territorial level, the essential material resources for establishing the Medical Hub will be acquired.

Cooperation

Within the context of high-intensity operations, a large influx of patients from all NATO partners is to be expected. Medical follow-up, strategic evacuation, hospitalisation, and repatriation to the country of origin will, for the most part, need to be provided by civilian sector actors. Within this context, cooperation between the various national and international actors - in particular the Defence Medical Service - is essential to anticipate and effectively organise the coordination of these activities, to ensure a coherent and integrated response.

Whether in times of peace, crisis, or war, collaboration between Defence and the civilian medical sector remains essential. This cooperation must be strengthened and become more structured, particularly within the context of national defence plans and the maintenance of skills among both military and civilian medical personnel. This will be carried out in consultation with civilian health authorities and institutions, in particular by sharing expertise in the field of military medicine, by proposing the inclusion of military medicine aspects in the education programmes of medical professions in Belgium, or by integrating military and civilian personnel into training and education courses or coordination structures.

Strengthening Innovation and Integrating Technological Evolution

Research, technology, and innovation must help reduce the increased pressure on operational medical support caused by the context of collective defence. The future Medical Hub, with its research and development centre, will guide projects in this direction.

To this end, scientific studies in areas such as antibiotic resistance, blood products, medicine in extreme environments, patient flows, physical performance, and mental resilience, are being conducted in collaboration with the RHID. They take place within the context of the Triple Helix or are integrated into NATO's Science and Technology Organisation. Other research topics conducted by civilian universities are also being monitored by Defence with the same objective.

An unmanned systems project for the transport of medical supplies will be developed within the framework of the DIRS and in collaboration with other Forces, industry, and relevant stakeholders. As part of the readiness pillar, the potential optimisation of the military medical selection process with artificial intelligence will be examined.

2) Joint Force Protection

Joint Force Protection encompasses all measures and means implemented to minimise the vulnerability of personnel, facilities, equipment, operations, and activities in the face of threats and hazards. The objective is to guarantee freedom of action and maintain operational effectiveness, both essential conditions for mission success.

Within Defence, the Joint Force Protection capability area is essentially structured around three sub-capabilities:

- The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) sub-capability, which covers specialised support in the neutralisation of explosives and munitions.
- The Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) defence sub-capability, which aims to protect troops and military installations against these threats. If a CBRN agent is used, it is also capable of ensuring decontamination and survival in a contaminated environment.
- The Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS) sub-capability, which encompasses all means used to detect, identify, intercept, neutralise, or destroy hostile drones, to protect personnel and military infrastructure.

Joint Force Protection also extends to other areas such as military security, strengthening resilience, and the implementation of passive protection measures (permanent protection systems, camouflage, deception, dispersion, etc.).

Current Capability

The EOD sub-capability is provided by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal service (*Service d'Enlèvement et de Destruction d'Engins Explosifs* - SEDEE). It has the means to fulfil its territorial role and uses those same resources to support deployed capabilities.

The CBRN defence sub-capability currently has the means to support the existing capabilities of the various dimensions, both on national territory and during deployments. These means are distributed across the different Forces, such as specialised teams for CBRN reconnaissance and incident response, decontamination units, collective protection systems for deployable command centres, and medical capabilities able to operate in contaminated environments. Stocks of personal protective equipment are regularly updated.

Threats related to explosive devices, munitions, and CBRN agents are already widely known. Although evolving, these changes are in no way comparable to those posed by the Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) threat. The rapid evolution of unmanned aerial systems technology presents a challenge for all armed forces in all areas of military operations, both at home and abroad. As the war in Ukraine has demonstrated, aerial drones make the battlefield much more transparent and are inexpensive weapons capable of threatening any target. Drones are now widely used for reconnaissance and various types of strikes. Counter-drone measures (C-UAS) are becoming essential to counter these asymmetric, low-cost, and highly effective threats.

To ensure effective protection against drones, it is necessary to combine active and passive countermeasures. Active measures include detectors, kinetic and non-kinetic neutralisation means, coordination and command means. Passive measures such as camouflage, protection, dispersion, *stealth*, analysis, and technical exploitation of technologies and tactics employed should be considered in parallel. Currently, only portable C-UAS systems have been acquired.

Capability Development

During the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the objective will be to build a Joint Force Protection capability in line with evolving threats and Defence capabilities. This is to meet commitments to NATO, but also to ensure the necessary resources are available on national territory.

During the current legislative period, Belgium will first invest in the urgent development of the C-UAS sub-capability through significant investments in the air, sea and land domains. Apart from C-UAS systems that are closely integrated into certain platforms, such as anti-drone systems, these investments will take a comprehensive approach to the issue and will extend throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision. This comprehensive approach, which will be developed from 2025 onwards, will aim to implement ad hoc tools for all capability dimensions. The establishment of a long-term strategic partnership will be sought, involving both military and civilian actors, to anticipate the evolution of this threat as effectively as possible.

Portable anti-drone systems will be deployed for use by all Forces, in addition to existing resources. At the same time, fixed systems will be installed as a priority at air bases to strengthen their protection against the threat of drones in the long term.

The EOD sub-capability will be strengthened by the purchase of new robots for neutralising improvised explosive devices (remotely controlled vehicles). Electronic jammers designed to prevent the detonation of explosive devices will also be acquired in this area.

The CBRN defence sub-capability will benefit from the acquisition of CBRN equipment for all Forces, new decontamination modules, remote sensors, and collective protective equipment.

Finally, cross-cutting investments will be made to increase security, resilience and passive protection, such as modern camouflage and deception measures, passive protective equipment for temporary infrastructure, and mobile scanners for access control to military installations (*entry control point*).

During the next legislative period, the Static Detonation Chamber (SDC) of the EOD sub-capability, which ensures the destruction of old conventional or chemical munitions collected on national territory, will be replaced. Various types of EOD robots will also be replaced.

3) General Support

General support covers individual equipment for personnel – such as weapons, optronic systems, protective equipment, specialist equipment, uniforms, etc. – as well as collective equipment, including weapons, field equipment, and communication equipment. It also includes the resources necessary for day-to-day operations, such as vehicles for territorial transport or security systems for military quarters, as well as equipment for training camps.

This support applies to both active and reserve personnel.

The Territorial Reserve, the cornerstone of missions arising from national plans, must be fully equipped in accordance with the requirements of its mission to be able to train, operate and act at short notice in a virtually autonomous manner.

The Combat Reserve (deployable), meanwhile, complements the active units and has identical missions to those of the active units. It is therefore equipped in the same way as active units.

Current Capability

In terms of individual equipment, soldiers' equipment is now designed as an integrated system, based on close complementarity between clothing, weapons, optronics, command, communication and information equipment (soldier digitalisation), and ballistic protection. Within this context, greater attention has been paid to soldiers' equipment in recent years. The Belgian Defence Clothing System (BDCS) contract was carried out to modernise clothing and individual equipment. It is complemented by a global partnership covering small arms, related equipment and associated small calibre ammunition. These developments enable military personnel to operate more effectively and accomplish their missions by adapting to the specific characteristics of the environment in which they are deployed. In addition, a contract in the logistics field provides

comprehensive support throughout the country, not only for equipment but also for numerous Defence spare parts.

Capability Development

During the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the objective in terms of general support will be to provide the Forces with the necessary equipment to accompany the increase in personnel, whether active or reserve. The necessary individual and collective equipment will be acquired gradually to support this growth. A replacement programme is also planned for collective tents (wall tents).

At the territorial level, liaison and transport vehicles will be acquired in particular to enable the execution of missions across the entire national territory. Furthermore, the territorial reserve will be equipped with VSHORAD systems, intended to ensure the protection of the territory against aerial threats such as UAS, as well as low-flying aircraft and helicopters.

Cooperation

The contracts and partnerships established by Defence in the field of general support contribute to strengthening logistic efficiency, while allowing Defence to focus its resources on fulfilling its missions. In the future, these collaborations will be continued, provided they do not compromise Defence's operational capability, and will be adapted as necessary to respond to evolving needs and context.

4) Unmanned Systems

In the light of the rise of technologies such as artificial intelligence, drones and cyberattacks, which are becoming increasingly asymmetrical, certain traditional weapon systems may prove vulnerable. To ensure the effectiveness of military systems, strategies and tactics must rely on technological superiority that enables resource optimisation, strengthens force coordination, and surpasses adversary capabilities. This technological superiority must also be demonstrated in the field of Unmanned Systems. A targeted effort must be made in this key area.

Unmanned systems integrated into certain platforms or constituting a capability in themselves (such as the MCM toolbox, loitering munitions, Manned-Unmanned Teaming systems, MQ-9B RPAS, Integrator) are not addressed within the Unmanned Systems domain.

The potential gains are numerous. For example, the integration of detection and identification technologies helps reduce risks for troops. These include remotely operated systems used by EOD specialists to identify and neutralise explosive devices, flying drones equipped with CBRN detectors to identify toxic agents and delineate contaminated areas, or autonomous mine countermeasure systems. At the logistical level, the delivery of equipment, spare parts, or medicines by cargo drones could significantly accelerate response times and alter the footprint of logistics personnel. The ability to link pilots, control stations, and drivers to various types of drones through Manned–Unmanned Teaming will multiply their actions.

Investments will take a comprehensive approach to the domain and will extend throughout the period covered by the Strategic Vision.

The diversity of available solutions and constant technological developments require a comprehensive and agile approach. Innovative solutions will therefore be sought to create a decisive advantage. Industry-defence partnerships, broad and long-term framework agreements enabling efficient and flexible execution to meet needs, and contracts concluded in coordination with other governments or through agencies. Solutions that will provide suppliers and Defence with long-term visibility, thereby promoting sustainable cooperation and improved operational responsiveness. This comprehensive approach will aim to develop ad hoc tools across all capability dimensions by seeking long-term strategic partnerships to keep pace with the evolution of this technology.

5) Enablement

Support for deployment and the maintenance of combat power (covered by Enablement) is the integrated activity aimed at creating the necessary conditions to receive, support, and facilitate the transit of allied troops (Reception and Transit Nation), while ensuring the deployment and support of our own Forces (Sending Nation).

These roles are fulfilled based on existing and future support elements within the various Forces (Force Enablers), such as strategic air transport (Fixed Wing Transport) or the Joint and General Support Land capability, as well as Joint capabilities for the deployment and resupply of these troops. The elements of the Joint capability are the subject of the Enablement domain.

The reception, staging and onward movement of allied troops, summarised by the acronym RSOM, require both permanent and temporary infrastructure near seaports (primarily for equipment) and airports (primarily for personnel) of debarkation. For example, when troops arrive at an airport, a Combined Air Terminal Operations is set up to ensure optimal reception of personnel and their equipment. RSOM requires a road and rail network, as well as rail transport means adapted to the transit of large quantities of military vehicles and equipment, which are sometimes very heavy and exceed standard dimensions.

A Joint Support Hub facility will integrate various transport and logistics activities to efficiently manage the transit and deployment of equipment, supplies, and troops. This Hub will also serve as a coordination centre for requests involving different modes of transport, ensuring the smooth and efficient movement of personnel and equipment.

As part of maintaining combat power, having strategic stockpiles makes it possible to sustain combat operations initially while awaiting industrial resupply. These strategic stockpiles notably concern battle decisive munitions. A certain level of stock (Days of Supply – DoS) is required by NATO.

The role of host and transit nation is based on a dual approach, combining both civilian and military aspects. Its implementation requires appropriate capabilities and infrastructure, as well as close collaboration between the civilian and military sectors.

Current Capability

Currently, our contribution to the Enablement of NATO plans is carried out on an ad hoc basis rather than in a structured manner. As part of collective defence, the Enablement capability must become structural to meet the requirements of speed and scale in the event of a crisis or conflict.

Capability Development

In parallel with the drafting of the national Enablement plan, Defence has initiated a process to map out the needs in consultation with the relevant partners. These will serve as the basis for developing a progressive roadmap.

During the period covered by the Strategic Vision, the objective will be to build a support capability for force deployment and the maintenance of combat power that can meet Belgium's commitments to NATO. Within this context, the necessary actions will be taken to equip the Joint Support Hub and the Combined Air Terminal Operations with the necessary vehicles and equipment for storage, processing, and handling of parcels. Focus will also be placed on rail transport through the acquisition of wagons capable of transporting military equipment in accordance with NATO standards, and the redevelopment of the railway loading platform in Leopoldsburg.

Regarding the Koksijde air base, equipment will be acquired to enable its regeneration and to allow it to accommodate troops and equipment as part of the Enablement framework.

As for the subsequent deployment, a Northern corridor and a Southern corridor will be prepared through tailored contracts to ensure access to the necessary civilian infrastructure and services.

Collaboration

Only collaboration between military personnel, reservists, and civilian resources within a total force approach will make it possible to meet the operational requirements of Enablement.

The EU's Military Mobility Initiative aims to ensure the rapid and seamless movement of military personnel, equipment, and assets, both in the short term and on a large scale, within and beyond the EU. It aims to create a well-connected network with shorter response times and secure, resilient infrastructure. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) project dedicated to military mobility represents a major opportunity to develop and harmonise the transport network.

Annex D (2025): Military Sites Location Plan

In accordance with point 9 of this Strategic Vision 2025, this annex has been added following approval by the Council of Ministers on 20 March 2026 (Point of notification 6).

a. Introduction

This annex provides an overview of the current military sites and outlines their expected development by 2035, based on the principles governing the development of the Ministry of Defence's property portfolio.

The Military Sites Location Plan is a tool designed to ensure coherence between the objectives of the Strategic Vision, on the one hand, and the layout and evolution of the use of military sites and barracks in Belgium, on the other.

The Military Sites Location Plan is not intended to describe the construction works to be carried out, nor their detailed planning. This task is fulfilled by the Infra Business Plan (IBP), which will be developed to implement the Military Sites Location Plan.

The infrastructure sector is characterised by relatively long lead times, whether in identifying a suitable location, assessing requirements, concluding contracts or implementation. It is therefore crucial to be able to rely on a long-term vision based on stable principles.

b. Current situation

The 2021 Military Sites Location Plan emphasised the optimisation of the geographical distribution of barracks and their composition (i.e. the units stationed within them). In particular, it provided for the construction of new barracks ('*Quartier du Future*') in areas with a limited military presence, such as the provinces of East Flanders and Hainaut. Given the geopolitical developments and the emergence of new threats described in this Strategic Vision, the current Military Sites Location Plan must be adapted to align with the orientations and principles of this new vision.

c. Evolution of the Military Sites Location Plan

1) Principles for the drafting of the Military Sites Location Plan

Given the long lead times and the risks associated with acquiring and reallocating new sites, which are often difficult to manage, priority has been given to maximising the use of sites owned by the Ministry of Defence. This does not rule out potential acquisitions, such as the '*Quartier du Future*' in Charleroi, for which initial steps were already taken in 2021 and for which an agreement exists regarding the purchase and preparation of the sites.

Sites for which no requirement has yet been identified for the 2026–2034 period covered by the Strategic Vision will be retained as a strategic reserve for the further evolution of requirements beyond this period. They may also be made available to the defence industry or other third parties as part of societal anchorage initiatives.

Within the current portfolio, sites with sufficient growth potential to accommodate personnel and equipment, in line with the capacity build-up envisaged in the Strategic

Vision, have been identified. Existing units have been retained at their current locations as far as possible, while new sites are primarily intended for units yet to be established. As the military presence in the western part of the country is currently limited, the Military Sites Location Plan prioritises the development of available sites located in that region.

2) Evolution of military sites by 2030–2034

Overall, under the new Military Sites Location Plan, Defence will evolve from 41 active sites, including 36 key sites, in 2025 to 54 active sites, including 49 key sites, in 2034. Existing sites and barracks will be further expanded. A key site is defined as a site with its own territorial support resources; sub-sites may depend on, and be supported by, a key site.

The new key sites are primarily sites already owned by the Ministry of Defence, some of which were closed under previous military sites location plans but have not yet been sold. The main function is assigned to each site, which may be complemented by one or more secondary functions. For example, units of the territorial reserve will be stationed at various sites spread across the country.

During this legislative term, development will begin on the following key and training sites, with a view to their completion by 2034:

- 1) Charleroi: *Quartier du Future* South with mixed occupancy for a combat unit, a logistics unit and a cyber force detachment.
- 2) Berlaar: logistics site, recommissioned last year for a logistics unit and for the reception of transiting troops (Enablement). The Enablement function will eventually be taken over by the Kievermont site in Geel.
- 3) Ypres: is being brought back into use for a logistics unit.
- 4) Helchteren: is being brought back into use for a logistics function.
- 5) Glons: is being brought back into use in the context of resilience and for further growth post-2034.
- 6) Ursel (Aalter) Airfield: will become the home base of an air defence unit.

In accordance with the Federal Coalition Agreement and the Defence Policy Paper of 24 April 2025, the dossier on the '*Kwartier van de Toekomst*' North in East Flanders was reviewed and relocated to Aalter (Ursel Airfield) instead of Geraardsbergen.

A study identified both Geraardsbergen and Aalter as suitable locations for the '*Kwartier van de Toekomst*' North. At the time, a political decision was made in favour of Geraardsbergen. However, this choice encountered significant local opposition and would have required land expropriation and amendments to the regional plan. Unlike Aalter, Geraardsbergen does not have an existing military site, making its development more complex and subject to an uncertain timeframe. On the contrary, Aalter is a more logical option, given the presence of an existing military site and its central location. Mobility considerations and the presence of a runway constitute additional strategic advantages. For these reasons, Aalter has been selected. Further development will take place in close consultation with all stakeholders in Geraardsbergen, including local authorities, the *Agentschap Natuur en Bos*, nature

conservation organisations, and residents. In addition to operational requirements, sustainability, mobility, quality of life and nature conservation are important criteria. The Drongengoedbos, which is open to the public, will not be affected. The feasibility of the future concept will be examined, considering operational and safety requirements.

The training school for air defence unit personnel will be established in Beauvechain.

- 7) Burcht (Fort Sint-Marie): an abandoned site with access to the Scheldt, intended for a Marine Fusiliers unit. This site, with a limited occupancy, will rely on the Luitenant Victor Thoumsin quarter in Burcht for its territorial support.
- 8) Ammunition depots: various options are being explored for additional storage within the framework of resilience, to achieve a larger and more dispersed ammunition storage capacity. The study considers, among other things, storage capacity, geographical distribution and the condition of the available infrastructure. In addition to extra storage at existing locations, the use of additional sites is being considered:
 - a) Arendonk: former ammunition depot, still owned by the Ministry of Defence except for the administrative sites, which have been sold.
 - b) Sugny: former NATO ammunition depot, for which discussions are ongoing with the current owner, the municipality of Vresse-sur-Semois
 - c) Zutendaal: The Ministry of Defence is investigating, in consultation with the US forces stationed there, whether the ammunition depot on the grounds of Zutendaal airfield can be partially brought back into use
- 9) Goetsenhoven: former military airfield, for which purchase discussions are ongoing with the current owner, the city of Tienen. The airfield function will be retained, and the site is envisaged as an expansion option for the heavily occupied sites at Beauvechain and Heverlee and, later, also as a base for a Medical Support Unit.
- 10) St Hubert Airfield: is intended for a logistics unit.
- 11) Geel: is intended for Enablement and for a logistics unit.
- 12) Moorsele Airfield: is intended for a logistics unit and for further growth post-2034
- 13) Lessive: former RTT site for which acquisition discussions are ongoing with the current owner, with the aim of developing the site into a tactical training centre that will include virtual reality capabilities.

The following bases, which were planned for closure in the previous military sites location plan, will also be retained as key sites:

- 1) The Koksijde base will be retained and will become a mixed base for use by Air and Land units.
- 2) The naval base at St Kruis will be retained for enablement and logistical functions.

3) Gradual closure of asylum centres on military sites

The Federal Government Agreement specifies that our support network has been under pressure for years and that it is unacceptable for people seeking international protection to sleep on the streets. We must fulfil our obligation to provide reception facilities, but

we must also take measures to significantly reduce the pressure on the support system. We are therefore doing everything in our power to significantly and structurally reduce the asylum influx and, at a later stage, once these measures have taken effect, we will gradually and sensitively scale back the network of asylum centres.

We will always ensure there are sufficient buffer places to manage fluctuations. As part of this reduction, hotel accommodation will be phased out as a priority, followed gradually by the accommodation of asylum seekers in individual houses and flats via the Public Centre for Social Action. Vulnerable individuals will be accommodated in small-scale, collective centres with tailored support.

Taking this agreement into account, it will be assessed, in full coordination with Asylum and Migration, to what extent the closure of these existing asylum centres on military sites can be utilised to absorb part of the increase in Defence personnel.

4) Strategic reserve and shared military sites

The barracks or buildings on military sites retained as a strategic reserve may be made available, either in full or for shared use, to the defence industry or other third parties, where this provides demonstrable added value for Defence.

Opportunities have been identified in the following military sites in each province: Koksijde and Moorsele (Province of West Flanders); Fort Brosius and Fort van Kruibeke (Province of East Flanders); Fort Kapellen, Weelde Airfield and Brasschaat (Province of Antwerp); Hoksent Depot and Brustem Airfield (Province of Limburg); Melsbroek and Tienen-Vissenaken (Province of Flemish Brabant); the Ath region (Province of Hainaut); Nivelles and Beauvechain (Province of Walloon Brabant); Namur – Polygone de Sart-Hulet (Province of Namur); Elsenborn (Province of Liège); St-Hubert Airfield (Province of Luxembourg).

In Peutie (Province of Flemish Brabant) and Rocourt (Province of Liège), the defence industry is already operating under a shared-use arrangement. In addition, certain key defence activities will also continue to take place at other sites not owned by the Ministry of Defence, such as at Redu in the *cyber* and *space* sectors.

5) Other elements

1) Expansion of the Evere headquarters

The growth of the Defence has also led to an expansion of the staff. Part of the site of the former NATO headquarters, adjacent to the new headquarters currently under construction, is being reserved for an extension of this headquarters.

2) Training areas

Given the increase in personnel, pressure is mounting on the available training grounds, which are currently located mainly in the east of the country. During the current legislative period, additional training grounds will be sought, either through acquisition or via cooperation agreements with the owners. Priority will be given to sites in the west of the country to limit the travel time for units to the training site and improve training output. A site in the vicinity of Ghlin, or another location in Hainaut, would provide a solution for both the military sites in the north-west and those in the south-west of the country. In addition, potential opportunities for acquiring sites in

Lessive (former RTT site) and Namur (already sold plot of the military site at Sart-Hulet) are being investigated.

3) Additional quarters on sites to be acquired

This Military Sites Location Plan will ensure a more even structural distribution of the military presence across the territory. Through the establishment of the military sites in Aalter, Charleroi, Moorsele, the reopening of the site in Ypres and the expansion of the existing quarters in East Flanders, West Flanders and Hainaut, the military presence West of the Antwerp/Brussels axis will increase from 14% of personnel to around 22.5% of military personnel, whereas this region accounts for 40% of the population.

The geographical dispersion can therefore be further optimised in the future through the acquisition of new sites and the construction of new quarters in regions with a proportionally lower military presence and where there is significant recruitment potential, particularly in Hainaut and East Flanders. These additional sites will enable the growth of the Defence after 2034.

In this context, the Ministry of Defence has specifically identified the site of Cerfontaine airfield, near Lake l'Eau d'Heure, as a potential location; the purchase of this site will be analysed in detail before 2035, with a view to establishing a heavy bridge-laying unit there. In Hainaut, a site is being sought to establish new quarter to station a long-range air defence unit there. In addition, an investigation will be carried out to determine whether the para-commando capacity in Diest could be expanded. Research efforts will begin without delay during this legislative period.

4) As stated in the Strategic Vision, given the strategic importance of the von Karman Institute for Fluid Dynamics (VKI), closer cooperation with Defence will be actively pursued. In this context, Defence is investigating whether it would be appropriate to convert the VKI site in Sint-Genesius-Rode back into a military quarter.

5) From 2028, Defence, in close consultation with the Federal Police, will also make use of the training facilities offered by Westakkers in Sint-Niklaas, and will, in that context, co-finance the development of the new tactical training centre at that site.

Appendix I: list of key military sites

No.	Location	Name of military site	Main functions	Comment
1	AALTER	URSEL Airfield	Air defence	Reactivated quarter
2	AMAY	Camp Adjt BRASSEUR	Direct Support Land	
3	ARENDONK	DBW HAUPTMUNITIONDEPOT	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter Subject to analysis of options: Arendonk-Sugny-Zutendaal
4	ARLON	Camp Gen BASTIN	Combat Function Land	
5	BEAUVECHAIN	Air Base LtCol Avi Ch. ROMAN	Air Force Base	
6	BERLAAR	OLt Baron ZUYLEN VAN NYEVELT	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
7	BERTRIX	BERTRIX Airfield and 260 th Coy Mun + Depot	Logistical Support	
8	BRASSCHAAT	BRASSCHAAT WEST	Direct Support Land	
9	BRUSSELS	KMS	Education	
10	BURCHT	FORT ST MARIE	Force protection	Reactivated quarter Depends on 1Lt THOUMSIN
11	BURCHT	1Lt V. THOUMSIN	Direct Support Land	
12	CHARLEROI	Charleroi Quartier du Future	Combat Function and Land Logistics Support	New quarter
13	TOURNAI	Gen Baron RUQUOY and ST JEAN	Education	
14	ELSENBORN	Place et Camp d'ELSENBORN	Education – training ground	
15	EUPEN	SLt ANTOINE	Education & Training	
16	EVERE	Queen ELISABETH Reine ELISABETH	Command Staff	
17	FLAWINNE	SLt THIBAUT	Combat Function: Land	

No.	Location	Name of military site	Main functions	Comment
18	FLORENNES	Jean OFFENBERG Air Base	Air Force Base	
19	GAVERE	Kapt vlieger DE HEMPTINNE	Combat Function Land	
20	GEEL	KIEVERMONT	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
21	GLONS	Radar CRC GLONS site	Direct Support	Reactivated quarter
22	GROBBENDONK	DEN TROON	Logistical Support	
23	HELCHTEREN	HELCHTEREN	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
24	HEVERLEE	Cdt DE HEMPTINNE	Combat Role and Direct Land Support	
25	HOUTHULST	BOS VAN HOUTHULST + STEENSTRAAT	Direct Support	
26	YPRES	1st Wachtmeester LEMAHIEU Albert	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
27	KLEINE BROGEL	Air Base GenMaj VI DU MONCEAU DE BERGENDAL (KLEINE BROGEL)	Air Force Base	
28	KOKSIJDE	Air Base Adjt VI F. ALLAEYS	Mixed quarter Air - Land	
29	LEOPOLDSBURG	LEOPOLDSBURG Garrison	Combat Function Logistical Support Services Land, Education and training ground	
30	LESSIVE	Former RTT site LESSIVE	Education and training ground	New acquisition
31	LOMBARDSIJDE	Kamp van LOMBARDSIJDE	Combat Function and Direct Land Support	
32	MEERDAAL	MEERDAALBOS	Direct Support	

No.	Location	Name of military site	Main functions	Comment
33	MARCHE-EN-FAMENNE	Camp ROI ALBERT	Combat Function Logistical Support Services Land, Education and training ground	
34	MELSBROEK	GROENVELD	Air Force base	
35	MARCHE-LES-DAMES	LtGen ROMAN and Camp WARTET	Education and training	
36	MOORSELE (KORTRIJK)	MOORSELE Airfield	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
37	NIVELLES	Cdt Avi DONY	Medical support	
38	NOH	Queen ASTRID	Medical support	
39	OSTEND	Boatsman JONSEN Naval Quarter	Training	
40	PEUTIE	Maj HOUSIAU	Logistical Support and Services; Education	
41	ROCOURT	Maj IFM DUFOUR	Logistical Support	
42	SCHAFFEN	OLt DEVIGNEZ	Training	
43	SINT KRUIS	Luitenant-ter-zee Victor BILLET	Logistical Support	
44	SINT TRUIDEN	Kol VI RENSON	Training	
45	SPA	LtGen Jacques DE DIXMUDE + Training grounds	Combat Function: Land	
46	St HUBERT	St HUBERT Airfield	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
47	TIELEN	Kapt Pierre GAILLY	Combat Function: Land	
48	TIENEN	(Former) Airfield GOETSENHOVEN	Logistical Support	Reactivated quarter
49	ZEEBRUGGE	Naval Base ZEEBRUGGE	Naval Base	



DEFENCE

.be