The Agency’s role and impact have constantly grown, especially with the implementation of the EU’s Global Strategy (2016) which also led Member States to reinforce the Agency’s mission in 2017.

EDA’s expertise and activities cover the whole spectrum of cooperation: from harmonising requirements to delivering operational capabilities; from research & technology (R&T) and innovation to developing technology demonstrators; from training and exercises to support to CSDP operations.

Created in 2004 to support and facilitate defence cooperation in Europe, the European Defence Agency (EDA) has become the place where countries willing to develop their defence capabilities collaboratively can do so.

EDA also closely engages with the European defence industry to enhance Europe’s defence technological and industrial base and help make the industry stronger and more competitive.

Set up in 2004 as an Agency of the Council of the EU, based in Brussels; + 180 staff plus network of some 2,500 national experts;

Managed by Chief Executive Jiří Šedivý under the authority of Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
EDA currently implements and manages the European Commission’s Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) which is preparing the ground for a European Defence Research Programme under the future European Defence Fund (EDF) as of 2021; the Agency’s 12 Capability Technology groups (CapTechs) gather experts from Member States, industry & research organisations. Through them, close to 200 research and technology projects have been managed by EDA since 2004.

Since 2016, the EU has put in place several new EU defence cooperation tools: the revised Capability Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF);

all these instruments are interlinked: the CDP identifies capability priorities; CARD provides an overview of existing capabilities in Europe and identifies opportunities for cooperation; PESCO offers options how to develop prioritised capabilities in a collaborative manner; and the EDF provides EU funding for cooperative defence projects;

to make the whole edifice work, all tools must join and interact. EDA plays a central role in this: it is involved in each of the new defence initiatives, and ensures coherence among them, including with NATO.