



1ST HIGH-LEVEL JOINT DEFENCE AND ENERGY MEETING
in the context of the Consultation Forum for Sustainable Energy in
the Defence and Security Sector (CF SEDSS)

14 APRIL 2021, VTC

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

WELCOME ADDRESS
EDA CE JIŘI ŠEDIVÝ

- Thank you, Daniel for the kind introduction.
- It is a great pleasure welcoming all of you to this first-ever joint defence and energy meeting. While I wish we could have met in person, I am pleased to address you from EDA's headquarters in Brussels.
- The participation in this meeting of some 200 defence and energy experts from 30 different European countries and many EU institutions reflects the high interest of these two communities in establishing contact, sharing insights, and exploring how to tackling energy and climate challenges together. It also demonstrates the EU's determination to reduce carbon and ecological footprint through sustainable energy in an all-inclusive manner.
- While [EDA's primary mission](#) is to support the development of European defence capabilities and facilitate defence cooperation



among its Member States, the Agency makes significant efforts to also address wider EU policies such as promoting sustainable energy solutions, reducing environmental risks and fighting climate change.

- In this context, EDA and the Commission launched the [Consultation Forum](#) in 2015 to provide the EU Ministries of Defence and relevant stakeholders with a platform to share knowledge and promote collaborative defence research and innovation in the field of sustainable energy. Since then, the Forum has achieved an impressive track-record.
 - Notably, within a few short years, the Forum has become the largest European defence energy community with experts from 30 European countries and more than 40 different EU institutions, industry including SMEs, and from research organisations.
 - The Forum strives to enable MoDs to reduce their energy costs and carbon footprint by:
 - improving energy efficiency and performance of defence building stock;
 - strengthening the use of renewable energy sources; and,
 - enhancing the resilience of defence-related critical energy infrastructure.

More than 60 project ideas, fact sheets, and research studies and reports have been produced so far, and all this



is done while keeping operational efficiency front and centre.

- As you may recall, the project idea [RESHUB](#), which stands for *RESilience Hub Network in Europe*, led by the Slovenian Ministry of Defence, was the first project of the Forum to receive EU funding following EDA support. Recently, the Agency has provided similar support to the French Ministry of Defence in submitting a funding proposal to explore the viability of carbon-neutral military camps. These are examples of how project ideas developed in the Forum with the right support can be turned into tangible projects.
- The central role of the Consultation Forum was acknowledged already in [June 2019 by the Council of the EU](#), which called for developing concrete solutions within the defence sector for safe and sustainable energy models and strengthening relevant collaboration.
- Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Consultation Forum has managed to proceed with its [Phase III](#) ensuring business continuity. Impressively, the [four working groups](#) of the Forum have continued to develop their work plans and identify first key objectives to address, such as:
 - asses the application of nearly zero-energy buildings (NZEB) standards for defence buildings and implement an effective bespoke behavioural change programme to increase their energy performance;



- develop a suitable energy storage selection toolkit to help MoDs increase their energy resilience and autonomy and examine options for accelerated decarbonisation of heating systems in military buildings;
 - identify the impact of pandemics on defence-related critical energy infrastructure and the vulnerabilities created in case of asymmetrical threats;
 - focus on skills and energy management policies and identify disruptive clean energy technologies applied in the defence sector, such as artificial intelligence and big data.
- In addition, the Consultation Forum is a key instrument for the implementation of the EU [Climate Change and Defence Roadmap](#) launched in November 2020. This is the first-ever EU action plan to address the links between defence and climate change and contributes to the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#). Hence, the Forum is currently:
 - exploring the potential impact of the application of energy-related policies and directives in the defence sector;
 - assessing the feasibility of establishing a suitable mechanism to act as the EU's repository, observatory, and research platform. This mechanism could be a game-changer in assisting national authorities (e.g. EU Ministries of Defence, Interior, Energy, Environment, etc.) to reduce



energy consumption and increase energy efficiency, thereby contributing to the implementation of the EU's climate and energy targets;

- elaborating several in-depth studies, including on the European defence adaptation to climate change, the application of green public procurement options in defence, the resilience of defence-related critical energy infrastructure against hybrid threats, and innovative clean energy technologies to increase defence energy resilience and autonomy.
- While the focus of our meeting today is on the Consultation Forum, let me stress that the Agency is engaged in the EU Climate Change Roadmap with several other actions, especially at the operational level, through its Energy and Environment working group, and by promoting a more circular and sustainable defence sector through EDA's coming Incubation Forum on Circular Economy in European Defence.
- The pivotal role of EDA in boosting the energy transition has also been acknowledged in a recent [Strategy of the European Commission](#) "...to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate-neutral future". In this respect, the Forum assesses the impact of defence activities on offshore renewable energy developments to provide recommendations to remove the barriers for improving the defence-civilian co-existence.



- The diverse contribution of the Consultation Forum has also been recently acknowledged in the Commission's "[Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries](#)", where it has been identified as one of several EU-funded initiatives that "*lay the ground for cross-sectoral synergies*" unlocking opportunities for launching new projects.
- As defence is an energy-intensive sector in general and a large consumer of fossil energy in particular, and the largest public owner of free land and infrastructures in Europe with many energy inefficient buildings, there is an urgent need to adapt and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, I encourage the colleagues and experts coming from the energy community to support the defence sector's efforts in this regard by sharing your knowledge, providing technical assistance, but also helping us in voicing defence requirements at the national and EU level and facilitating access to national funds. We need your support.
- In conclusion, I want to thank the working group team leaders and moderators for their commitment and perseverance as well as to the colleagues from the Commission, and especially **Director-General Ditte Juul Jørgensen and DG ENERGY**, for exemplary inter-institutional collaboration, especially during the difficult times we have been facing during the past year.
- I wish you a fruitful meeting, hoping that next time I will be able to address you in person. Thank you for your attention!