

**“Towards a common strategic
European Technology non-Dependence”**

ETnD Conference, 13-14 April, Budapest

EDA Key Note, by *Adam Sowa*

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

It's indeed a great pleasure for me to be here in Budapest to address this distinguished audience.

First, let me congratulate the Hungarian Presidency for organizing this excellent and important conference on European Technology non-Dependence and thank you for hosting this event.

In particular allow me to thank our Hungarian colleagues: Siklósi Peter and Keszthelyi Gyula and their team for their excellent contribution that has made this conference possible.

It seems to me that it has now become a kind of tradition that this exceptional venue, the Stefania Palace, conference center of the Hungarian MoD, should host a succession of important events, lastly on Pooling and Sharing.

So, it seems we have no choice but to continue that tradition and to have a very successful conference.

Hungary has a long history of achievement in Science and Technology and numerous outstanding scientists, including several Nobel Prize winners.

I am very pleased to learn that the representatives from the Hungarian academy of science are also here with us today.

As I am told, on 19 May this year, this renowned academy of science will award the European Inventor Award, honouring outstanding inventors in five categories, namely:

- "Industry"
- "Small and Medium Enterprises"
- "Research"
- "Non-European countries" and finally
- "Lifetime achievement".

This is a good news for European innovation.

Now to the topic of our conference - "Towards a common strategic European Technology non-Dependence".

It seems obvious that **Technology non-Dependence** is critical for the development and production of world class defence systems, meeting the most demanding capability requirements of our forces. We should remember, however, that it is equally vital to the global competitiveness of the European Defence Industry and to our export autonomy.

While some European nations strive independently to achieve Technology non-Dependence in dedicated technology areas, we still lack a clear vision for Technology non-Dependence on a European level.

In practice, Technology non-Dependence is rarely fully achieved, except perhaps for a limited number of very critical sectors in some countries.

To achieve non-Dependence one needs a vision, an ambitious plan, substantial funding and strong determination.

The US and Japan are excellent examples of countries that meet these preconditions, demonstrating that Technology non-Dependence can be realized in critical areas. It is maybe worth mentioning the cases of China and Russia in this respect. Some examples can also be found in Europe in specific areas like civil aerospace and the automotive industry.

As we all know, the Defence sector has its specificities, in particular relating to national security. Having access to critical technologies and having reliable supply chains is a must.

The dependence on technologies from outside Europe could limit the availability of some capabilities for Europe. In the current financial situation, a common European approach seems to be a reasonable step forward.

When the Agency was created in 2004, with the objective to further develop defence capabilities, in the field of crisis management for CSDP, strengthening of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base was also identified as a strategic goal. This includes promoting research aimed at leadership in critical technologies for future defence capabilities.

The European Defence Agency supports a common approach to innovation development, for the benefit both of our soldiers and our national budgets.

During this conference, a number of my Agency's colleagues will contribute to achieving this goal.

The EDA Research and Technology Director, Christian Bréant will contribute to setting the scene this morning and he will chair the final

panel discussion to develop the way ahead and make recommendations for the future.

To build on concrete cases, we have also asked our EDA Research and Technology assistant directors to moderate this afternoon's sub-sessions on components, materials and devices.

In a more globalized world, the security of Nations is challenged by wider threats than that of traditional military conflicts. While state against state conflicts are no longer an immediate threat, we are challenged, among others, by global terrorism, cyber-attacks, regional conflicts and organized crime. Economic and financial stability may also be included in the equation.

Dependency on various technologies make the EU more vulnerable to political changes or natural disasters in other regions, which also increase risk. The crisis in Japan, apart from the immense human tragedy, has also demonstrated, in a dramatic way, that there are cases where tiny, sophisticated, microelectronic or mechanical components, or devices and high tech materials are so critical to larger systems that they cannot function without them.

In order to remain stable, strong and competitive, Europe must aspire to keep those key enabling elements which are beneficial to society and security in Europe.

Like the US, Europe needs common policies and strategies for reducing technology dependence.

Many critical key enabling technologies for defence, space and security contribute fundamentally to the safety and wellbeing of the European citizen now and in the future.

Working together with the European Space Agency and the European Commission, on critical space technologies, EDA has already

demonstrated its pragmatic approach and added value in this domain.

In less than 6 months, some key technologies of common interest to the issue of non-dependence have been identified, prioritised and jointly addressed through the Commission Research Framework Program.

Smarter co-operation, guided by a strategy which generates and secures critical key enabling technologies could be a viable approach to make Europe reasonably technologically non-dependent, now and in the future. Such a strategy would have to focus strongly on leveraging synergies between the civil and defence communities, to answer challenges posed by the economic crisis.

I look forward to learn your views on these issues.

It is important that constructive conclusions and recommendations are developed to contribute to the way ahead on common European Technology non-Dependence.

As the Chinese proverb says: “Every long journey begins with the first step! Let’s take it together”.

Thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a very successful conference.