

# Harmonising ammunition qualification

## Introduction

The European ammunition sector is considered key in the consolidation of a globally competitive and capable EDTIB. This sector has a high operational impact and is critical to the capabilities of the European armed forces. During recent multinational operations partner nations needed to exchange ammunition. However, the current ammunition testing procedures vary between Member States preventing such sharing arrangements. Harmonisation of safety standards would enable pooling and sharing, procuring, stockpiling, exchanging or transporting of ammunition between Member States.

## Shortfalls

In theory, ammunition qualification within Europe is undertaken by applying comparable standards; in reality, different interpretation of the standards can often cause unnecessary duplication.

This has negative consequences on interoperability and limits the possibilities of pooling and sharing ammunition among Member States (for example when on multinational operations). Furthermore, the lack of harmonisation not only results in a waste of money and resources, but also imposes an unnecessary regulatory burden on ammunition manufacturers. Each European ammunition manufacturer must apply subtly different qualification procedures for each EU Member State. This can cause considerable additional processes with the associated costs.

## The benefits of harmonisation

European harmonisation of ammunition qualification would contribute to the successful implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and further enhance the development and maintenance of Member States armed forces, by:

- increasing interoperability and interchangeability of ammunition between Member States;
- improving harmonisation of requirements among Member States;
- strengthening the ammunition European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), while,
- creating the baseline for a common European ammunition market.



Rough estimates demonstrate that the envisaged savings of full ammunition qualification harmonisation in Europe, will be up to €1.5bn per year.

## An action plan / roadmap to improve harmonisation

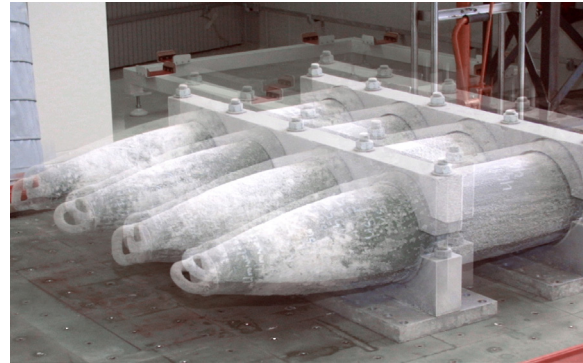
Following a decision by Defence Ministers in March 2012, the European Defence Agency developed an action plan to improve harmonisation of ammunition qualification in Europe. This roadmap was designed to avoid duplication in other relevant fora, such as NATO, and ensure no additional burdens for Member States.

This action plan includes short to mid-term objectives expected to drastically reduce duplication and total acquisition costs, while improving harmonisation and the potential for further cooperation, including Pooling & Sharing.

Actions such as Standardised Qualification Reporting, development of a Minimum Safety Data Package and the Endorsement of Test and Evaluation Houses, are designed to enable comparison between individual Member States qualification results, reducing unnecessary duplication and enhancing trust among national authorities and test centres to promote commonly accepted qualification processes.

## EDA's long term vision

These short- and mid-term actions are expected to considerably improve harmonisation among EU nations, with immediate (financial and other) benefits for the Member States. Meanwhile, EDA will continue to address the long-term perspective with the ultimate objective of developing a common European understanding on the implementation of the national and international standards on ammunition.



## Background information about ENNSA



The European Network of National Safety Authorities on Ammunition (ENNSA) was established on 14 October 2010 by the EDA Steering Board with a view to improving the ammunition sector in Europe and closing the identified gaps. Ammunition safety has a substantial impact from an operational, financial and industrial perspective.

ENNSA is used by the Member States as a stand-alone platform for better communication among national safety authorities on ammunition and to improve harmonisation of national practices on ammunition safety standardisation and test procedures where feasible.

The ENNSA initiative influenced the European ammunition industry to create a mirror group. The two groups are now interacting in areas of common interest, building a common European understanding of ammunition safety.

ENNSA has already delivered the first tangible results - the Harmonization of Qualification Roadmap - and is assigned to coordinate the implementation of the actions included in this action plan.