European Defence Fund delivers new pan-European research projects

Elżbieta **Bieńkowska,** Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs said: *"The European Defence Fund is essential to bring more cooperation between defence companies and the military in the European Union and to ensure Europe's strategic autonomy. The pan-European collaborative defence research projects supported by the Fund are designed to ensure Europe's technological leadership, lay the foundations for future defence capabilities and support a more innovative and competitive European defence industry."*

The **Ocean2020** project supports maritime surveillance and interdiction missions at sea and to that end will integrate drones and unmanned submarines into fleet operations. The information acquired will be combined with conventional systems to build up a comprehensive picture of developing situations for military commanders.

The project will be run by a consortium led by Leonardo S.p.A, bringing together 42 partners from 15 EU countries. It will receive a grant of around €35 million. In 2019, the project will stage two real-life demonstrations – one in the Baltics led by the Swedish navy and one in the Mediterranean led by the Italian navy.

Three other projects that aim to improve soldiers' equipment were each awarded grants in the range of €1 to 3 million:

- **ACAMSII** will develop adaptive camouflage that will protect soldiers against sensors operating in several wavelength ranges.
- **Gossra** will improve the compatibility of complex system elements (e.g. sensors or digital goggles) carried by soldiers.
- **Vestlife** seeks to develop ultralight body armour for dismounted soldiers.

The grant agreements for these projects will be signed in the coming weeks.

Today's announcement on support for these defence research projects comes on the opening day of the annual Munich Security Conference, where President **Juncker** will present further steps to promote a stronger Europe on security and defence. The President will be accompanied by Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, Commissioners Johannes **Hahn**, Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, and Julian **King**.

Background

Under the research strand of the European Defence Fund, €90 million will be allocated to defence research grants fully and directly funded from the EU budget (2017-2019). Projects to be funded have been selected following the first call for defence research proposals in 2017. In December 2017, the

first grant agreement was signed with the PYTHIA consortium. This project aims to identify key trends in the fast evolving world of innovative defence technologies.

The Commission will also soon adopt the defence research work-programme for 2018 and ask the European Defence Agency to open the new calls for defence research proposals for this year. These calls will focus on electronic design technologies for defence applications and a European high-power laser effector. This next batch of research grants for defence will be signed by the end of 2018.

As announced in June 2017, the Commission will come forward with a proposal to establish, post 2020, a €1.5 billion per year European Defence Fund to support defence capabilities, out of which an estimated annual budget of €500 million will be dedicated to defence research, making the EU one of the biggest defence research investors in Europe.

More information on the projects

Ocean 2020: the project aims to enhance situational awareness in a maritime environment by using manned and unmanned systems and building a complete picture on the basis of many different inputs. Defence Ministries in **Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden** and **the United Kingdom** are involved. The industrial partners are: Indra, Safran, Saab, MBDA, PGZ/CTM Hensoldt, Intracom-IDE, Fincantieri and Qinetiq. Research centres include Fraunhofer, the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (TNO), the Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE NATO) and the Italian Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).

ACAMSII: this project will develop adaptive camouflage for soldiers that will protect them against sensors operating in several wavelength ranges. Partners **from France, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal** and **Sweden** are involved. Participating companies are from the textile, aerospace and defence system integrators sectors: CITEVE, Damel and Safran. Research centres are the Swedish Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut (FOI), Fraunhofer, and the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (TNO).

GOSSRA: this project focuses onensuring thatcomplex system elements worn by soldiers work together. Soldiers are equipped with a range of devices which are required to work together. The project aims to create a methodology for specifying how components connect, making it much easier to develop new devices that can work with existing equipment. Partners from **Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain** and **Sweden** will run the project. The companies involved are Rheinmetall, Indra, GMV aerospace and defence, Leonardo, Larimart and Saab; SMEs Tekever and iTTi and the research institute Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (TNO).

Vestlife: the goal of this project is to create protective clothing for soldiers. It will work on developing clothes that are effective for defence

purposes, but lighter, more flexible and comfortable at the same time. Partners from **Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal** and **Spain**, together with companies CITEVE and FY-composites, research institutes AITEX and TECNALIA are involved. Two small and medium enterprises (SMEs) BRAPA and Petroceramics are also taking part in the project.