

Strengthening Europe's Security: A Dual Approach for Civil & Defence Resilience

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*To ensure Europe's security in an increasingly complex threat landscape, a strong, independent, and well-funded civil security research programme must exist alongside a robust defence research initiative. The two must be aligned strategically, reinforcing each other to enhance societal resilience. No military can sustain operations without a resilient society, and no society can be fully secure without robust defence capabilities. Recent events from the pandemic over the increasing number of heavy weather events to the war of aggression by Russia have shown that there is no pure civilian or pure military crisis. Moreover, those events have demonstrated the essential need for a resilient society beyond professional security forces. The **"whole-of-society" approach** outlined in the Niinistö report underscores this necessity, emphasizing preparedness, cooperation, and dual-use potential within a comprehensive security framework that actively involves civil actors, businesses, local communities, and citizens.*

EARTO Working Group Security & Defence Research welcomes the [report "Safer Together - Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness"](#) by Sauli Niinistö. It presents a clear and comprehensive view on how European preparedness and resilience can and should be strengthened. Putting citizens at the core of preparedness, adopting a whole of society approach and reinforcing civilian-military cooperation are the most important recommendations. Furthermore, **the new comprehensive preparedness framework needs to be reflected in a 'preparedness-by-design' principle to be applied across the board when designing new legislation, reviewing regulatory frameworks or setting up new funding instruments.**

Europe is facing a wide array of security challenges, both inside and outside its borders. Especially the Russian war in Ukraine, the recent US elections and the continuous natural disasters caused by climate change have shown that a secure Europe cannot be taken for granted anymore. The Niinistö report is in our view, complementary to the [Draghi report on EU Competitiveness](#). The Draghi report recognises that "Security is a precondition for sustainable growth, as rising geopolitical risks can increase uncertainty and dampen investments, while major geopolitical shocks or sudden stops in trade can be extremely disruptive". The Niinistö report fills in the actions to strengthen societal security and related research and innovation. Security is a cornerstone for industries and communities to operate safely and prosper within the European Union. Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I) policy should not only be subordinated to our competitiveness but also cover crucial research areas for our sovereignty, like security research. For more EARTO views on how Technologies and RD&I impact our competitiveness, please [EARTO Policy Recommendations "No EU Tech, No EU Competitiveness"](#).

Following the Niinistö report, EARTO Working Group Security & Defence Research hereby presents its recommendations to strengthen Europe's Security:

- 1. In parallel to increasing its investments in its Defence capabilities, Europe needs to invest in further developing its civil security capabilities.** For a strong European society and economy, the narratives of preparedness and resilience on the one hand and competitiveness on the other, should go hand in hand when shaping the architecture of the next MFF. **To do so, investments in Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I) in civil security will need to complement those of defence to ensure that European companies will also be able to provide the security technologies, products and services Europe needs to maintain its sovereignty.** To keep up with the increasing security challenges and to protect our European way of life, a forward-looking approach, based on foresight and strategic planning, should be pursued across the civil security domain in the EU.
- 2. The EU and Member States should set up a Defending Europe Facility (DEF) and a Securing Europe Facility (SEF). The Securing Europe Facility should combine all instruments and programmes linked to civil security, civil protection, and other emergency response services, and related critical infrastructures. We support the**

recommendation in the Niinistö report to ring-fence funding for preparedness actions.

In addition, as innovation through security research is a cornerstone of competitiveness and economic security¹, we explicitly recommend that this should also include **ring-fencing the necessary EU RD&I budget for security**. This aligns with the recommendation from the [CERIS expert group](#) to establish closer links between an EU-funded civil security research programme and other EU funding programmes to enhance capabilities based on innovative solutions. This will lead to a faster process to come from research to production, thereby making the Member States more resilient in future crisis situations.

3. **For the sake of effective and high-quality defence RD&I, a strong innovation pipeline from civil security RD&I to defence should be strengthened even further.** Up to now, the European Defence sector seems to profit most from innovations developed within the civil domain, rather than the other way round. Although our European civil security market is strong, it is rather fragmented². Decreasing market fragmentation by promoting harmonized standards, facilitating cross-border procurement, and stimulating the development of dual use technologies provides strong industry support for security research. To further expand this, continuous attention is needed for civil security as a key European challenge. Future EU RD&I funding should maintain and strengthen the focus on collaborative research in security and create clear pathways from fundamental and applied research to innovation and implementation.
4. **In parallel, Europe needs to further strengthen its dual-use capabilities and civil-military cooperation.** This is also in line with the [Heitor report](#), which states that **future EU RD&I funding should focus on optimizing the benefits in both (civil and military) directions**. Civil security and defence markets have become significantly differentiated since the creation of the EU Security Research Programme in 2007, leading to a duplication of efforts and underexploited synergy effects. Increasing the complementarity and efficiency of the approaches strongly implies stimulating dual-use research at lower TRLs, creating synergies that also benefit the civilian context from the results of defence research. Accordingly, if dual-use research is established as part of future EU RD&I funding, it should be implemented outside of the existing defence research framework to ensure a strong participation of civilian actors. Either way, spin-in and spin-out can be done from both sides, and therefore, coordination between future Defence & Security RD&I programmes would be highly needed.

EARTO Working Group Security & Defence Research remains ready to provide any additional input: our Security & Defence experts are available for further discussion with the EU Institutions on how to best treat technologies with dual-use potential in the future EU RD&I programming.

EARTO - European Association of Research and Technology Organisations

Founded in 1999, EARTO promotes RTOs and represents their interest in Europe. EARTO network counts over 350 RTOs in more than 31 countries. EARTO members represent 150,000 highly-skilled researchers and engineers managing a wide range of innovation infrastructures.

RTOs - Research and Technology Organisations

From the lab to your everyday life. RTOs innovate to improve your health and well-being, your safety and security, your mobility and connectivity. RTOs' technologies cover all scientific fields. Their work ranges from basic research to new products and services' development. RTOs are non-profit organisations whose core mission is to produce, combine and bridge various types of knowledge, skills and infrastructures to deliver a range of research and development activities in collaboration with public and industrial partners of all sizes. These activities aim to result in technological and social innovations and system solutions that contribute to and mutually reinforce their economic, societal and policy impacts.

EARTO Working Group Security and Defence Research is composed of 65 EU Affairs Specialists working within our membership to elaborate and to voice consolidated positions of RTOs and address them to the EC and other bodies.

EARTO WG Security & Defence Research Chair:
Marcel van Berlo, TNO
marcel.vanberlo@tno.nl

EARTO Contact:
secretariat@earto.eu
+32 2 502 86 98
www.earto.eu

¹ [New tools to reinforce the EU's economic security - European Commission](#)

² [EU security market study - European Commission](#)