

ASD KEY PRIORITY 6

SUPPORT FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES

ISSUE

ASDs Small and Medium Sized Enterprises represent an important and vital part of the supply chain Due to their size and importance for the competitiveness of supply chains specific attention and support is needed. ASD has decided to prioritize the support for SMEs, and demonstrates this through the fact that this becomes a key priority of the association

BACKGROUND

ASD Small and Medium Sized Enterprises are active in all sectors represented by the association. They are facing a challenging environment, especially in times of financial and economical crises, changing primes strategies, e.g. ongoing restructuring of the supply chain, outsourcing and delocalization. On the other hand these SMEs stand for reliability, flexibility, technological expertise and innovation, which are their major assets. Today's issues of (not only) aerospace SME are marked through difficulties in access to financing, challenging risk-revenue partnerships, the question how to engage in investments in long term development projects with a return only after several years, delays in the downflow of payments and shifting schedules in large developments. Participating to European research programmes and initiatives is sometimes not an easy task and needs support and expertise. Increasing competition, the appearance of new supply chains due restructuring and to delocalization strategies of primes and first tiers are on the daily agenda of small and medium sized companies. Initiatives and support exists but often is not sufficiently effective. In order to ensure healthy supply chains and technological leadership in Europe ASD will improve support for these enterprises.

SMEs acting in the defence sector will face in addition to many already mentioned topics shrinking defence budgets and an ongoing restructuring of the sector. The establishment of a European Defence Market will increase competition as well. The need for an adequate support was already identified and discussed during the EU presidencies of Slovenia, the Czech Republic and France, and in many working groups and activities involving ASD, the European Commission and European Defence Agency.

Security is a continuously evolving field and the issues of SMEs acting in this sector are considered similar to other sectors. What is needed is to identify the positioning, role and specifics of security SME.

Based on the results of several ASD driven initiatives a mapping is considered necessary.

¹ According to the definition of the European Commission SMEs are companies with fewer than 250 employees, independent, with an annual turn-over not exceeding 50 M€ or an annual balance sheet total of 43 M€.

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OBJECTIVE

The objective for ASD is to ensure the competitiveness and survival of the SMEs being active in the sectors of aerospace, defence and security through well adapted measures and initiatives.

In the aerospace field a new phase of the EC financed supporting measure Aeroportal needs to be established. Aeroportal is the successor of the well known AeroSME and offers information and hands-on support for enterprises wishing to participate to European research programmes. The support has to be extended to new instruments, like the Clean Sky initiative or SESAR, and has to prioritise SMEs coming from member states which are weaker in their development.

Since years ASD promotes specific support for SMEs in the defence field. Together with European Commission and European Defence Agency a "defence portal" needs to be established for this purpose including the elements which were commonly identified.

The security sector is marked through diversity and multitude of actors. Based on first ASD coordinated initiatives (Sentre, Staccato, SMIG) it is necessary to promote a mapping of SMEs in security as a first step to derive adequate supporting measures.

ASD ACTION (Overview)

- Ensure continuity in supporting Aeronautics SMEs through a new phase of the Aeroportal supporting activity and through addressing the specific issues in the current challenging environment with all industrial and institutional stakeholders
- Establish adapted supporting measures for SMEs in the defence sector, in close collaboration with the European Commission and European Defence Agency
- Mapping the landscape of ASD SMEs in the security field and preparing a strategy for future supporting activities
- ASD being the point of contact for all matters related with SMEs in Aerospace, Defence and Security requires establishing a network of communication involving all of the various multipliers and actors of the sector

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