



**VI EDITION
2025-2026**

#EuropeanDefenceChallenge



@ASSETs+



@ASSETS_Plus



@ASSETs_Plus_EU

| www.europeandefencechallenge.eu

The European Defence Challenge was established under the ASSETs+ project (2020-2023)

What is the European Defence Challenge?

A great opportunity for students to boost their careers and open new horizons.

The European Defence Challenge (EDC) is an open competition to attract young talent to the Defence industry and to encourage them to initiate a career in defence-related technologies.

EDC invites European students to think about a current problem in the domain of AeroSpace & Defence and propose a solution.

The challenge was established under the **ASSETs+ project** (2020-2023) and is continued under the coordination of Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini with the last 5th edition of the challenge being hosted by the Belgian Royal Military Academy in 2024-2025.



www.assets-plus.eu

The Alliance for Strategic Skills addressing Emerging Technologies in Defence (ASSETs+), an Erasmus+ project and a member of the **Pact for Skills**, aimed to build a sustainable human resources supply chain for the European Defence Industry by boosting innovation through both attracting highly skilled young workers and upskilling existing employees.

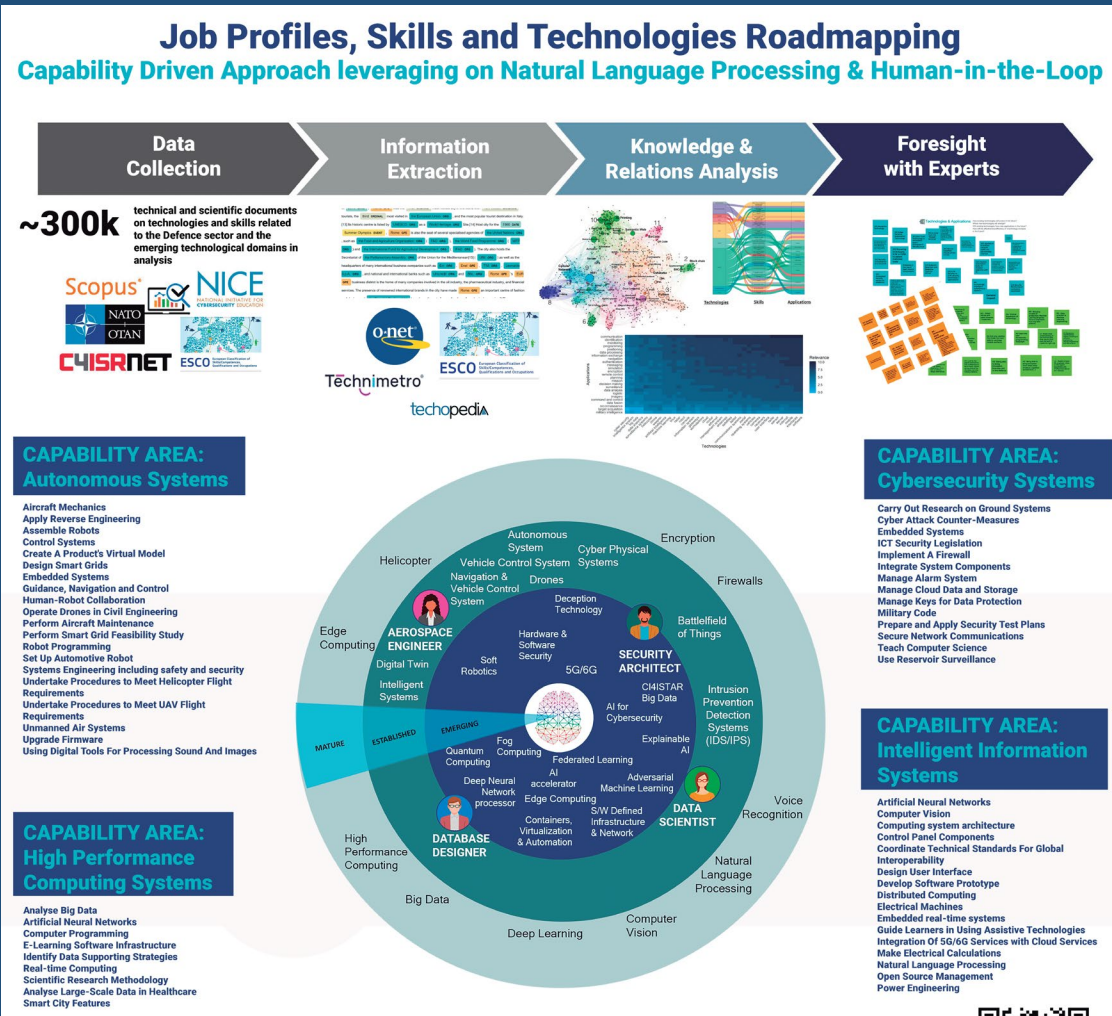
The project was built on close collaboration between the Defence Industry, sectoral organizations, Higher Education Institutions, Vocational Education and Training providers and research centres, with 30 partners from 8 countries and a broad ecosystem of stakeholders.

ASSETs+ main results

Technology & skills analysis

Education & training

ASSETs+ designed education & training programmes to provide professionals (Defence & AeroSpace) as well as undergraduate and graduate students, with new skills related to key technologies that will be expected in the Defence sector in the coming years, most notably: Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, C4ISTAR and Cybersecurity.

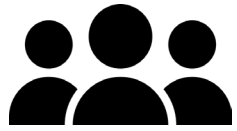




European Defence Challenge

Previous editions

(2020-2024)



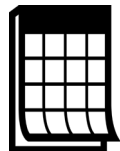
794 students
registered



24 countries



126 institutions



29 webinars with defence experts and public events



44%



56%



55% undergraduated
45% graduated

AGE | **~ 23**
7% below 20



TOPICS of previous editions

I EDITION 2020-2021: “Which technologies and technology bricks are particularly relevant for Europe’s sovereignty in defence and security?” Host: University of Bordeaux

II EDITION 2021-2022: “Remote everything? To what extent can unmanned assets interact with humans in the field for defence operations?” Host: Polytechnical University of Madrid

III EDITION 2022-2023: “Security – threats identification and defence strategies”
Host: Rzeszow University of Technology

IV EDITION 2023: “Leading through Complexity: Effective Management in Defence Environment”. Host: University of Pisa

V EDITION 2024-2025: “Towards a Safer Tomorrow: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Landmine Clearance and Security Enhancement” Host: Royal Military Academy, Brussels



Awards ceremony, connections, and inspiration in Brussels!





Winners

(2020-2023)

I EDITION

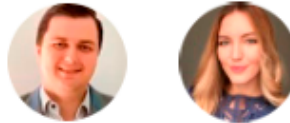
FIRST POSITION

Emre Kursat & Miguel Garrido, College of Europe



SECOND POSITION

Matěj Pastír & Radka Fléglová, Charles University



THIRD POSITION

Marinette Gaillon & Auriane Georges, Science Po Lille



II EDITION

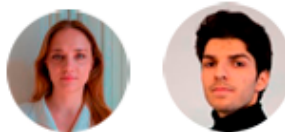
FIRST POSITION

Andreas Wouters & Nathan Prakopetz, Royal Military Academy Brussels



FINALISTS

Susanna Hein & Emilien Maquaire, Sciences Po Lille



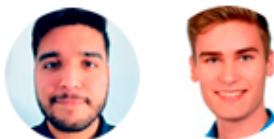
FINALISTS

Anaëlle Salamo, Sciences Po Lille & Sinan Bekka, University of Edinburgh



YOUNG STUDENT AWARD

Carlos Daniel Farias, University of Cadiz & Carlos Thurn, from Nordakademie



FIRST POSITION

Antoine Lebret & Sarah Joron, Sciences Po Lille



THIRD POSITION

Antonio Ferrándiz & Jesús Eguino, Centro Universitario de la Guardia Civil – UC3M



III EDITION

SECOND POSITION

Stefan Ursu & Jan Beuchel, RWTH Aachen University



YOUNG STUDENT AWARD

Abigail Machaj & Alicja Siekanowicz, Rzeszów University of Technology



IV EDITION

FIRST POSITION

Camille Haaby, Bordeaux Institute of Technology, & Camille Stephan, Sciences Po Strasbourg



SECOND POSITION EX AEQUO

Filip Kubik & Marcin Krysiak, Rzeszów University of Technology



SECOND POSITION EX AEQUO

Borre Van de walle & Lucie Vandemaele, KU Leuven



THIRD POSITION

Gian Marco Comparini & Pietro del Debbio, University of Pisa



All the proposals can be downloaded on the website of the Challenge



Winners V edition

(2024-2025)

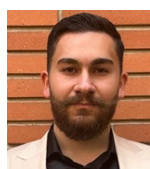
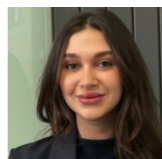


First position (ex aequo):

Andrea Arieti and **Daniele Nannelli**, from DTU – Technical University of Denmark and Università di Pisa, Italy



Jens Magnus Oldenburg and **Christoffer Hartmann Skovsgård**, from Syddansk Universitet – University of Southern Denmark, Denmark



Second position:

Karen Safa and **Mohammad Hajj**, from Université Toulouse Capitole, France



Third position:

Matylda Iwanicka and **Radosław Ciećko**, from Politechnika Rzeszowska im. Ignacego Łukasiewicza, Poland

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**VI EDITION
2025-2026**



VI EDITION
2025-2026

Topic of the 6th edition

“From STEM to strategy: Empowering young minds to shape Europe’s aerospace & defence future”

Hosted by:



About the topic

The Challenge invites students to reflect on and design ways to engage their peers with STEM education and to highlight the opportunities within the aerospace and defence ecosystem.

And encourages them to explore what makes STEM attractive, how aerospace and defence can connect to these motivations, and how Europe can build a diverse, inspired, and future-ready workforce.

About the topic

To enrich this exploration, students may also consider the pedagogical approaches that best foster curiosity and engagement in STEM. These methods can be powerful in both sparking initial interest in STEM and in demonstrating how defence and aerospace education connects technical knowledge with ethical reflection, creativity, and strategic thinking.



Timeline

• **November
5, 2025**



Launch Event

• **2025**



**Promotional
Events**

• **16 December
2025**



**Deadline
1 page proposals
submission**

• **24 March
2026**



**Deadline
10 page proposals
submission**

• **May 2026**



**Awards
ceremony**

Awards

The 3 Finalists Teams

- will be invited to attend the **Awards Ceremony in Brussels**, with **transport and accommodation fully covered**. During their stay, finalists will enjoy a **1-day visit to EU institutions** and have exclusive **meetings with key Aerospace & Defence stakeholders** in Brussels.
- **Three nights' accommodation** at *The University Gliding Centre in Bezmiechowa (Poland)*, with **Vouchers for glider flights**
- **Public recognition** on the EDC website and social media
- **Certificate of participation**

Special Mention:

- **Best Essay by a Young Participant (up to 20 years old)**

Who can participate?

All undergraduate or graduate **students** from all faculties in European universities, vocational education and training centres, and other institutions dedicated to education.

Students are strongly encouraged to **team up in pairs**, finding a partner in a different university or country.

Guidelines

- ✓ Register on the website www.europeandefencechallenge.eu
- ✓ Write a 1 page proposal (500-600 words) and submit it to: challenge@assets-plus.eu
- ✓ If your proposal is selected for the second stage of the Challenge, you will be asked to expand the description to 10 pages (5000-6000 words) which should be a development of the previously submitted proposal
- ✓ **IMPORTANT:** Students are strongly encouraged to team up in pairs, finding a partner in a different university or country. Teams will get an additional point in the final score.
- ✓ A fresh view is valued. It is required to include not only technological but also economic, environmental, social, ethical and/or political analysis within the proposal.

Are you interested in becoming a partner of the European Defence Challenge?

There are different ways of collaboration:

- Provision of thematic experts
- Proposal assessment panel
- Promotion and outreach
- Sponsorship





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