

COMMUNICATION

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To: Member States' National Defence Industrial Associations (NDIA)

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EDA'S AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS COMMUNITY OF INTEREST (ASCI)

The European Defence Agency's (EDA) Action Plan on Autonomous Systems (APAS), approved on 11 January 2024, aims to support the Member States (MS) to speed up the development of highly effective, efficient, and reliable autonomous systems (AS) for land, air, maritime, and cross-domain operations. Embracing a holistic approach to the development of AS, the plan addresses various challenges encompassing technology discovery, development, and integration, to enhance AS abilities and non-technological aspects such as concept development, taxonomy, test, validation & verification, certification, standardization, and regulation.

The APAS proposes a synergistic and complementary trajectory, fostering collaboration among EU programmes and entities, notably the EDA and the European Commission. This collaborative strategy acknowledges the unique features and priorities of each entity, and contributes to enhance efficiency in investments, optimization of results, and to accelerate technology identification, development and transition to military capabilities, beyond research and innovation activities and in line with EU Capability Development Priorities. Moreover, it is also intended to stimulate the spin in of EU civil-driven research and innovation.

One key feature of the APAS is the establishment of an **Autonomous Systems Community of Interest (ASCI)**. This community will ensure the contribution from diverse governmental and non-governmental experts, employing a cross-functional and cross-Directorate approach. The objective is to facilitate cooperation, promote the exchange of perspectives, experiences, and knowledge, thereby maximizing EU efforts on AS and expediting their development in a unified and coordinated manner. The establishment of this community is without prejudice to, and will not duplicate, the ongoing and future activities on autonomous air, land and maritime systems carried out by the existing EDA communities, project teams or working groups.

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The ASCI will be granted visibility into key AS activities through a dedicated EDA webpage – currently under development. Additionally, it will actively participate in and co-organise thematic events such as conferences, seminars, workshops, where sectoral topics, emerging challenges, opportunities, critical factors, and potential solutions will be discussed. Moreover, the ASCI will be offered the opportunity to provide insights for future reviews of the APAS.

The events with ASCI involvement will be tailored on an ad hoc basis to best support the implementation of the APAS and discuss specific aspects of future AS. These events will reach diverse audiences, with varying levels of expertise and responsibility. Anticipated topics for these events encompass all elements of the APAS, namely:

- Technology for AS (Land, Air, Maritime, cross-domain, enablers);
- Concept of use (CONUSE), concept of operations (CONOPS), operational requirements and training;
- Test, Validation and Verification;
- Certification;
- Standardisation and taxonomy;
- Regulatory and ethical considerations.

In this context, EDA kindly invites you to extend the invitation to your associates whose activities are related to Autonomous Systems to join the **Autonomous Systems Community of Interest**.

As the **1st ASCI Conference** will be held on 13-14 November 2024, interested entities are encouraged to register at their earliest convenience using this [link](#).

If you have any questions or difficulties, please contact the APAS coordinator at mario.martinho@eda.europa.eu with a copy to luigi.fasano@eda.europa.eu.