

Beretta White Paper puts the soldier front and centre of European defence policy discussions

Brussels, Belgium – 3 March 2026

Fabbrica d'Armi Pietro Beretta S.p.A., founding member of the Beretta Defense Technologies (BDT) strategic alliance of Beretta Holding group companies, is launching a White Paper calling for greater consideration of the dismounted soldier in Europe's defence policy and programming.

The paper, titled “the Enduring Importance of the Dismounted Soldier in Modern Conflict” was presented to Members of the European Parliament, national and EU defence representatives on 5 March. Taking stock of lessons from the war in Ukraine, the paper underlines that the human element remains central to operational effectiveness. To defend Europe, training and equipping soldiers effectively must be a priority.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Beretta Holding Vice-President and CEO of Fabbrica d'Armi Pietro Beretta S.p.A., Dr Franco Gussalli Beretta, said “As warfare continues to evolve through advancing technologies, the soldier remains a vital and irreplaceable element of modern defence. In this context, innovation and the continuous enhancement of individual equipment are essential to strengthening the capabilities and effectiveness of today's soldiers”.

Although investment in defence at European and national level is ramping up, several challenges remain. Programmes like the European Defence Fund (EDF), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), and the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) have strengthened Europe's ability to invest together in defence. However, too little of this funding is allocated to soldier-focused capabilities.

A new industrial mindset

The White Paper highlights that Europe's small arms, ammunition and equipment markets remain fragmented, characterised by different national approaches to equipping soldiers. Many countries are still equipping their soldiers with outdated service weapons or relying on non-European products.

The rapidly changing defence and geopolitical landscape calls for a new industrial mindset to address the challenges to equipping soldiers effectively. This mindset should focus on common requirements, pragmatic solutions and European collaboration.

The paper calls on European policymakers to make the dismounted soldier a strategic priority by:

- Investing in modern infantry equipment;
- Harmonising European standards for that equipment;
- Streamlining design and performance criteria;
- Reforming procurement;
- Encouraging industrial cooperation between member states.

Beretta urges faster innovation, better planning, and learning from current conflicts to ensure soldiers are ready to face current and future threats.

Next steps

The White Paper draws on expertise from across Beretta Defense Technologies, a predominantly European alliance of Beretta Holding companies. Each BDT company has a rich history and reputation for excellence in their field: from firearms and ammunition production to precision optics, clothing and accessories.

Through this alliance, Beretta is uniquely placed to offer scalable solutions, designed and manufactured in Europe. The latest innovations from BDT include specialised anti-drone firearms and ammunition.

This launch is intended as a first step towards the wider goal of a credible and autonomous European defence posture. Beretta stands ready to support decision makers to learn the lessons of today's conflicts, address market fragmentation, establish key standards and criteria, and facilitate industrial alliances.

About Beretta

Beretta (Fabbrica d'Armi Pietro Beretta SpA) is the oldest firearms manufacturer in the world. With roots in Northern Italy going back to 1526, the company remains under the leadership of the Beretta family, making it one of the world's oldest family-owned and family-run businesses. Beretta is also a founding member of BDT (Beretta Defense Technologies), an alliance of Beretta Holding Group companies that supply leading armed forces and law enforcement agencies worldwide with firearms, ammunition, optics, electro-optics, clothing and accessories.

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