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Examining the Factors Behind the EU's Defence Innovation System

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The European Union's defence innovation ambitions have evolved significantly since the early 2000s, driven by an increasing need for technological sovereignty amid the resurgence of great power competition. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 further accelerated interest in defence R&D, drawing greater attention from both the public and private sectors within the EU. Taking the supranational perspective, rather than that of individual member states, this paper offers an inquiry into the current state of the European Union's defence innovation system by examining the different factors shaping its development. External pressures, including the war in Ukraine and the assertive US foreign policy, act as catalytic factors, creating potential for superior defence innovation outcomes. A strong human capital base underpinned by academia and a network of technology hubs also contributes to the development of the defence innovation system. At the other end of the spectrum are the institutional factors. However, institutional constraints, including a complex regulatory environment and rigid public procurement processes, pose challenges to both public and private investment in defence R&D, limiting the EU's ability to fully leverage its defence innovation potential.

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Politics and International Relations

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Yes

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