

Security & defence in the election campaign

Key takeaways for the defence industry

11 February 2025

New federal parliament elections are due to be held in Germany on 23 February 2025. In light of the multiple international challenges, national security and defence is one of the key issues. This briefing provides an overview of the content of the election manifestos of the main political parties on the topics of the Bundeswehr, its financing and the defence industry.

The selection is limited to the parties that are currently certain to be represented in the Bundestag. These are, in alphabetical order: [Alternative für Deutschland \(AfD\)](#), [Bündnis 90/Die Grünen \(the Greens\)](#), [CDU/CSU](#), and [SPD](#).

The Bundeswehr

The view of the [Buendnis Sarah Wagenknecht \(BSW\)](#), whose representation in the 21st German Bundestag is still uncertain, that the narrative of the Bundeswehr having being cut to the bone is a myth is not shared by any of the other parties. On the contrary, they are in favour of modernising and better funding the Bundeswehr, which they believe is essential for Germany's ability to defend itself.

A closer look at the election manifestos reveals that the CDU/CSU and the AfD deal with the future of the Bundeswehr in the greatest detail. Both are in favour of developing cyber capabilities, with the CDU/CSU particularly advocating the establishment of a drone army, including the necessary production capacities. Although the former Ampel coalition announced investments in more cyber security in its [National Security and Defence Industry Strategy](#), there is nothing to be found on this subject in the election manifestos of the respective parties. The Greens' statement that they expressly reject the development and use of lethal, fully autonomous weapons systems that decide over life and death without any human control offers plenty of room for interpretation. The SPD is very vague on this aspect of equipping the Bundeswehr.

The Greens and the SPD are furthermore in favour of the introduction of voluntary military service, while the CDU/CSU is in favour of a compulsory year in society, which should be thought of in conjunction with compulsory military service (the term used here is growing up compulsory military service). The AfD goes further, calling for the reintroduction of compulsory military service and alternative service. The Greens and the

CDU/CSU are also calling for civil defence and homeland security to be strengthened and the reserve to be expanded.

Financing

NATO's two per cent target has long been on everyone's lips and, in view of the new security situation and pressure from Washington and NATO Secretary General [Rutte](#), may even be outdated. Nevertheless, the parties hardly address this issue in their election programmes. The AfD's election manifesto makes no specific reference to the two per cent target. The Greens, CDU/CSU and SPD are (at least) in agreement that the two per cent target should be maintained and even increased in the long term. Only the Greens comment on the question of financing: It will not be possible to finance this from current revenues alone but will also have to be financed in the medium term through higher borrowing.

Defence industry

With regard to the defence industry, the SPD, the Greens and the CDU/CSU agree that an independent and powerful defence industry is of strategic importance for European sovereignty. The parties emphasise cooperation within the EU. However, there are clear differences in detail. For example, the CDU/CSU want to abolish the Supply Chain Due Diligence Act and reorganise the procurement system by streamlining processes and establishing a new lean, powerful agency, while the Greens want to introduce ethical humanitarian and preventive arms control. The AfD agrees with the call for an expansion of the defence industry, especially independent of China and the US, although it rejects communitisation in the EU and calls for an expansion of the defence industry only in Germany.

Outlook

Of concern are the parties' statements on the growth in funding for the armed forces. Moreover, the statements sound more like carry on than new beginnings. It remains to be hoped that this is an election campaign tactic and that the necessary steps will (nevertheless) be taken with determination in the new legislative period.

BLOMSTEIN will keep a close eye on developments after the election and will be happy to help you and your business navigate through the regulatory jungle at any time with the [Defence and Security Focus Group](#). If you have any questions, [Dr Roland Stein](#), [Dr Christopher Wolters](#), and [Hanna Sophie Kurtz](#) will be glad to advise you at any time.
