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EUROPEAN DEFENSE INTEGRATION THROUGH THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE INDUSTRY PROGRAMME (EDIP): A GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN THE GERMAN DEFENSE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The shifting European security paradigm following the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine has exposed fundamental weaknesses in the European Union's (EU) defense governance, particularly regarding market fragmentation and research duplication. Consequently, the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) emerged as a supranational governance instrument. However, a significant problem arises as the EU utilizes this international legal instrument to regulate defense procurement, a sector historically entrenched in absolute state sovereignty creating profound tension, especially for Germany amidst its massive Zeitenwende policy and giant defense industry. Previous research has predominantly viewed EU defense integration as a linear process of legal compliance. Filling this research gap, this paper challenges that assumption by uncovering the asymmetries of sovereignty within the EDIP framework, focusing on the politics of norm formation where major donor countries use structural leverage to negotiate legal flexibility. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and desk research, this study analyzes EDIP's application and its direct impact on German defense industry governance. The findings indicate that EDIP creates a new regime complex, forcing Germany to balance domestic industrial sovereignty, EU regulations, and NATO interoperability commitments. Ultimately, Germany faces a continuous dilemma between complying with collective standardization and protecting its domestic industry. The research concludes that EDIP's effectiveness relies heavily on domestic political deliberation, proving it is not merely an economic regulation, but a critical step towards constitutionalizing the international community within the traditional security sector.

Keywords: EDIP, European Union, German Defense Industry, International Law, Regime Complex, Zeitenwende.

INTRODUCTION

In the traditional study of International Relations, the defense sector has long been regarded as the ultimate bastion of absolute Westphalian sovereignty (Sandholtz & Whytock, 2017). Realist orthodoxy dictates that states will never surrender control over their military procurement and defense industries to supranational entities, as doing so directly jeopardizes their national survival. However, the paradigm shifts in European security following the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict has empirically disrupted this theoretical assumption (Andersson & Britz, 2025). The European Union (EU), acting through the European Commission, introduced the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) on March 5, 2024, representing a radical transition from mere voluntary policy coordination to centralized, supranational legal governance over defense production (European Commission, 2024; Schaefer & Schmidt, 2025).

This creates a profound puzzle in contemporary international law and foreign policy analysis. How does a supranational organization enforce legal instruments in a sector historically monopolized by sovereign states? The EDIP explicitly mandates cross-border collaboration and pushes for collective standardization, legally pressuring member states to dismantle national defense monopolies and adopt a "Buy European" approach to overcome market fragmentation (European Commission, 2024; EPRS, 2024).

Nowhere is this clash more evident and paradoxical than in the case of Germany. In response to the geopolitical crisis, Germany announced its monumental Zeitenwende (historic turning point) policy, injecting a massive €100 billion special fund to modernize the Bundeswehr (Weisel & Bitzinger, 2024). Here lies a critical empirical contradiction: on one hand, Germany politically champions European integration and rhetorically supports the EDIP; on the other hand, a significant portion of its Zeitenwende procurement budget has been diverted to purchase off-the-shelf defense equipment from the United States, such as the F-35 fighter jets (EPRS, 2024). Furthermore, Germany strives to protect its domestic defense giants, such as Rheinmetall and Krauss-Maffei Wegmann from the binding legal homogenization imposed by the EU (Calcara & Simon, 2020; Sandholtz & Whytock, 2017). This exposes a massive friction between the factual push for supranational collective standardization under EDIP and the factual persistence of national protectionist politics.

Previous literature has largely viewed European defense integration as a linear, top-down process of legal compliance, focusing heavily on policy implementation rather than the political contestation behind norm formation (Schaefer & Schmidt, 2025). This paper challenges that linear assumption by unpacking the regime complexity and asymmetries of sovereignty within the EDIP framework. By focusing on the politics of international law, we argue that EDIP represents a structural shift where international law acts vertically as an "international community constitution" (Egede & Sutch, 2013), yet simultaneously becomes an institutional bargaining arena where dominant states like Germany exploit their structural leverage to negotiate legal flexibility (Archer, 2001; Johnstone, 2011).

To dissect this tension, this research aims to answer three core questions: (1) How is EDIP applied within the framework of international law and governance within the European Union? (2) How does EDIP impact the political sovereignty and defense industry governance in Germany, particularly within the framework of a regime complex? And (3) How does a binding supranational regulation transform into a bargaining chip for a dominant domestic industrial power?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the politics of international law is often caught in the dichotomy between rigid legal compliance and state political realism. Theoretically, Wayne Sandholtz and Christopher A. Whytock emphasize that the making and application of international law is an arena of intense political contestation, where domestic interventions shape global governance (Sandholtz & Whytock, 2017). This is reinforced by the perspective of Christian Reus Smit who argues that international law constructs states identities and rational goals through political processes, rather than simply constraining their behavior (Reus-Smit, 2004). In the context of the European Union, legal institutions not only facilitate cooperation, but also force states to justify any unilateral actions through the power of deliberation mechanism, as conceptualized by Ian Johnstone (Johnstone, 2011).

In the empirical realm, recent literature has begun to highlight this institutional shift specifically in the European defense industry sector following the escalation of the Ukraine conflict. Andersson and Britz (2025) find that EU defense industrial policy is now forced to transform from voluntary coordination to address capability gaps to centralized supranational regulation (Andersson & Britz, 2025). This transition gives rise to what recent defense political economy literature refers to as the European Iron Network (2025), an increasingly binding web of interactions between supranational institutions or the EU, national governments, and the arms industry, slowly eroding states absolute autonomy over their defense equipment production (Schaefer & Schmidt, 2025).

Furthermore, a meta synthesis study from Defence and Peace Economics (2024) underlines that the biggest obstacle in European defence market integration is domestic protectionism, where member states tend to defend their national champions, as seen in the German defence industry (Weisel & Beitzinger, 2024). Although Germany has announced a Zeitenwende or known as historic turning point to modernize its military, domestic political realities often clash with the legal integration agenda of the European defence market.

While recent scholarship accurately maps the emergence of the 'European Iron Network' and the shift toward centralized regulation, it predominantly treats this integration as a top-down structural imposition. These previous studies often overlook the micro-political bargaining where hegemon states, like Germany, manipulate supranational regulations to protect their national interests. To bridge this gap, this study employs Clive Archer's conceptualization. In analyzing the role of the European Union through the EDIP program, this study applies the theory of the roles of international

organizations proposed by Clive Archer. Archer identifies three primary roles of international organizations: as an instrument, an actor, and an arena. According to Archer, as an arena, an international organization functions as a venue or forum for member states to meet, discuss specific issues, conduct negotiations, and as a means of diplomacy to advance their respective national interests. In the context of EDIP, the European Commission acts as an arena where intensive deliberations take place among member states to align European defense standardization ambitions with pre-existing domestic regulations (Archer, 2001).

Also, we examining the existing scholarship on European defense industrial governance can be categorized into three major analytical trends:

First, the Legal-Compliance Approach conceptualizes defense integration as a top-down, linear trajectory of legal adaptation, focusing primarily on formal directives, EU treaty enforcement, and compliance mechanisms (Egede & Sutch, 2013). This perspective emphasizes how supranational rules constrain state discretion over time. However, it often understates the micro-political bargaining, legal flexibilities, and exceptions negotiated by powerful member states to safeguard their core security interests.

Second, the Political Economy and Market-Size Approach emphasizes the structural dichotomy between defense-specific competitiveness and broader commercial technology capabilities (Calcara & Simón, 2025). Studies within this tradition highlight how states with superior commercial R&D bases leverage market integration to solidify long-term industrial advantages, whereas states with specialized defense-specific edges lean toward intergovernmental, project-based collaboration. While effective in explaining structural market incentives, this approach frequently treats state strategies as purely economic calculations, underestimating the role of institutional frameworks and alliance commitments.

Third, the Regime Network Approach maps the complex web of interactions among supranational agencies, national defense ministries, and private defense firms often referred to as the "European Iron Network" (Faure, 2025; Schaefer & Schmidt, 2025). This body of literature effectively captures domestic protectionist dynamics and informal lobbying networks. However, it tends to focus heavily on internal decision-making structures while overlooking how states strategically navigate overlapping international regimes outside the EU structure.

While these three analytical traditions offer critical insights into European defense policy, a distinct literature gap remains: existing research has insufficiently examined how dominant donor states exploit regime complexity specifically the overlapping and sometimes conflicting mandates of EU supranational rules, NATO standardization agreements (STANAG), and domestic constitutional mandates within deliberative supranational arenas. Rather than treating supranational legal instruments as strict constraints, states frequently utilize them as flexible mechanisms for strategic arbitration to maintain domestic industrial sovereignty.

To address this gap, this study examines three interconnected research questions: How is the EDIP framework structured and contextualized within European Union defense governance? How does the implementation of EDIP affect German defense governance within an overlapping regime complex? In what ways do dominant member states turn regional legal instruments into bargaining mechanisms to preserve domestic industrial autonomy?

This will be the research that answer the gap and the question that hasn't been answered before and this paper complements the limitations of previous literature by combining the theoretical framework of regime complexes with recent empirical findings on the 2024-2025 European Defense Industry Program (EDIP). Whereas Andersson & Britz (2025) focused more on a general industrial policy review, this study specifically dissects the EDIP as an instrument of the constitution of the international community referring to Egede & Sutch's concept that clashes directly with Germany's domestic industrial sovereignty discretion. This analysis provides novelty by looking at how Germany balances EU international law with NATO alliance interests under the umbrella of International Relations scholarship.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design utilizing Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) within an instrumental case study framework. Germany is selected as the primary instrumental case study due to its status as Europe's largest economy, its robust domestic defense industrial base, and the critical policy intersection between its €100 billion Zeitenwende modernization fund and overarching European Union integration agendas (Calcara & Simón, 2025; Weisel & Bitzinger, 2024).

To ensure analytical rigor and comprehensive empirical grounding, data collection relies on a systematic compilation of primary and secondary documentation: Primary Data: Official legislative texts, policy proposals, and strategic communications from the European Commission—specifically the EDIP Proposal (COM(2024)0150) and the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS 2024)—alongside European Parliament briefings (EPRS 2024, 2026), European Council conclusions, and relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU, specifically Articles 114, 173, and 346). Secondary Data: Peer-reviewed scholarly articles, academic monographs, and policy reports focusing on European defense political economy, international legal politics, and regime complexity published between 2024 and 2026 (e.g., Andersson & Britz, 2025; Faure, 2025; Schaefer & Schmidt, 2025)

Data analysis is conducted using directed qualitative content analysis. Textual evidence from primary legislative acts and policy reports is systematically coded and evaluated against four key analytical indicators: (1) institutional synchronization, (2) regulatory arbitrage across overlapping regimes, (3) domestic political discretion and legal exemptions, and (4) defense market integration dynamics. This methodological triangulation ensures that the findings accurately capture the interplay between supranational regulation and national strategic autonomy.

RESULTS

The research findings point to several important dimensions of EDIP implementation and Germany's positioning. The EDIP regulation is designed to bridge the short-term emergency step towards structural defense industrial readiness. The main mechanism of EDIP is to provide financial and regulatory incentives for member states that conduct joint procurement. The main condition of these incentives is that the consortium must involve at least three EU member states. This is legally designed to force cross border collaboration and break up national monopolies.

Mechanism of EDIP

The European Union developed the European Defense Industry Programme (EDIP) as a policy instrument to strengthen defense industrial capacity and improve military procurement coordination among member states. This program was proposed by the European Commission as part of the implementation of the European Defense Industrial Strategy (EDIS), which aims to improve European defense industrial readiness (European Commission, 2024).

This program is also a continuation of the European Defense Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), which previously aimed to encourage joint procurement of military equipment among European Union member states (European Commission, 2023). EDIP was designed as a more comprehensive policy framework to strengthen the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and increase the integration of the defense industry in the European region (EPRS, 2024).

In general, the program aims to address the fragmentation of the European defense market, where many member states develop weapons systems separately, creating duplication of technology, increasing production costs, and hampering military interoperability at the regional level.

One of the main mechanisms of the EDIP is the provision of financial incentives for member states that collectively procure defense equipment. Under this scheme, the European Union encourages member states to engage in joint procurement to improve military interoperability and reduce duplication of weapons systems (EPRS, 2024). Joint procurement also allows member states to obtain financial support from the EU budget to reduce the cost of military equipment procurement. This approach is expected to create greater economies of scale in defense equipment production and improve defense policy coordination among member states.

In addition to joint procurement, EDIP also aims to increase the production capacity of the European defense industry. This policy emerged in response to the increasing need for military equipment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which exposed the limited production capacity of the defense industry in the European region.

The European Union provides support to the defense industry to upgrade production facilities, accelerate manufacturing processes, and strengthen the military industry supply chain. These efforts aim to ensure that the European defense industry is able to meet regional security needs more quickly and efficiently (EPRS, 2024).

EDIP also introduced the concept of European Defense Projects of Common Interest, which are defense industry projects deemed to have strategic value for the EU's collective security. These projects typically involve cooperation between several member states in the development of specific military technologies or weapons systems (EPRS, 2024). Through this mechanism, the European Union promotes cross border defense industrial integration while enhancing military interoperability among member states.

Another mechanism introduced in the EDIP is the security of supply framework, a system designed to guarantee the availability of military components and equipment for member states during times of crisis. This framework aims to reduce the European defense industry's dependence on suppliers from outside the region and strengthen the resilience of the military supply chain at the regional level. In doing so, the European Union strives to build a more independent and resilient defense industry ecosystem (EPRS, 2024).

EDIP also introduced a new cooperation framework called the Structure for European Armament Programme (SEAP). This structure allows member states to voluntarily cooperate throughout the entire military equipment development cycle, from research and development to joint production and procurement (EPRS, 2024). Through this mechanism, the European Union seeks to create a more integrated defense industrial cooperation system, thereby reducing the fragmentation of the European defense market and strengthening the region's collective capability to address global security threats.

Operational Activity

In operation, institutions such as the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the European Commission are given a greater mandate to standardize and map supply chains. These international organizations are not simply facilitators, but regulatory watchdogs that ensure that European integration funds are only disbursed if the technical specifications of the equipment are uniform, thus reducing product duplication, for example, there are too many types of main battle tanks in Europe.

Germany's Position

As Europe's largest economy, Germany has defense industry giants such as Rheinmetall, Krauss-Maffei Wegmann, and ThyssenKrupp. Through the Zeitenwende policy, Germany is pouring around €100 billion in special funds into the modernization of the Bundeswehr. The findings show an ambivalence. On the one hand, Germany adopts a pro-European rhetoric and supports integration.

On the other hand, much of the initial procurement from the Zeitenwende fund was directed towards the purchase of off the shelf defense equipment from the United States such as the F-35, which contradicts the spirit of EDIP that calls for "Buy European" production. Currently, while Germany rhetorically supports the EDIP framework and contributes substantial political and financial capital to the European integration project, it has strategically avoided full legally binding commitments under this program. This calculated ambivalence allows Germany to utilize EU mechanisms when beneficial, whilst shielding its domestic defense industrial base from rigid supranational dictates.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are significant because they illustrate how theoretical concepts in international relations, particularly the political study of international law, are manifested in the empirical reality of modern defense governance.

The EDIP should be seen not merely as an economic policy, but rather as an instrument of international law produced by a supranational organization. As analyzed by Egede and Sutch, the interaction between international justice and power politics often results in institutions that have asymmetrical coercive power (Egede & Sutch, 2013). EDIP regulations are binding once passed. Member states are legally encouraged to comply with technical standards and common procurement procedures. This reflects what Johnstone calls the power of deliberation, whereby legal mechanisms within the EU force countries like Germany to provide legal justifications and rationales that are collectively acceptable if they prefer to develop defense equipment independently (Johnstone, 2011).

International Governance

Through the framework of the European Defense Industry Programme (EDIP), the European Union is practicing a radical shift in global governance. Historically, the defense industry and defense equipment procurement were considered the last bastion of absolute Westphalian sovereignty. However, EDIP illustrates the operation of what Egede and Sutch conceptualize as the Constitution of the International Community. This concept refers to a supranational legal order that has a hierarchy of fundamental norms and values capable of overcoming the absolute sovereign discretion of states in favor of a larger collective interest (Egede & Sutch, 2013). In this case, the EU transforms from a mere economic facilitator to a supranational governing entity that actively engineers and controls the traditional security sector. International law is here used to engineer market structures and direct the behavior of member states towards one collective goal: European Strategic Autonomy.

The EU's actions as a supranational entity are implemented through legal mechanisms that are asymmetric and financially coercive. The EDIP Regulation mandates the European Commission to go beyond voluntary policy coordination to

structural intervention into national defense industry supply chains (Lorant, 2025). The supranational institution now has legal instruments to audit domestic production capacity, impose technical standardization, and require joint procurement consortia involving a minimum of three member states. International law is here used as a disciplinary tool: member states such as Germany will only gain access to European strategic funding if they are willing to give up their national champions monopoly and submit to the regulation of the defense single market (Andersson & Britz, 2025).

Moreover, this supranational intervention is most visible in the crisis management clause of the EDIP. In the event of a security emergency, this regulation allows the European Commission to priority rated orders for certain defence products over civilian commercial orders, a governance instrument previously only available to national governments in wartime (European Commission, 2024). This proves that international law has vertically penetrated domestic jurisdictional boundaries.

The EU's ability to regulate the defence industry relies heavily on the power of deliberation mechanism that operates within international organizations, as Ian Johnstone asserts (Johnstone, 2011). As a deliberative arena, the EU uses the EDIP legal regime to force its member states to publicly justify each of their defence policies. When member states intend to take unilateral actions-such as purchasing defense equipment from outside Europe they face institutional pressure and must deal with legal arguments that such actions undermine the collective goal of European Strategic Autonomy. Thus, supranational regulation does not act through military coercion, but rather through discursive legitimacy and institutional law that slowly ensnares and changes states' political behavior in the defense sector (Sandholtz & Whytock, 2017).

The Implementation of EDIP

European Defense Industry Program (EDIP) makes a significant movement for the EU operational management of the defense sector, from secretive to regional integration. EDIP is a regulation that has been in effect since December 2025, as an international legal instrument at the regional level, which then makes EDIP binding on all member states, including Germany. This has forced Germany to align its defense procurement procedures with the technical standards set by the European Union in order to achieve industrial efficiency (European Parliament, 2026).

Legally, the EDIP is based on Article 173(3) of the TFEU regarding industrial competitiveness and Article 114 of the TFEU regarding the internal market. This legal basis enables the EDIP to function as a supranational law and to exercise authority over the German national government in regulating the defense industry as part of the European economic market. Meanwhile, on the German side, that means that they have to accept and be involved in determining how large companies such as Rheinmetall or ThyssenKrupp collaborate with other member states. They can incur significant losses from the cooperation (European Parliament, 2026).

The procedure was strengthened by the role of the European Commission and the European Defence Agency (EDA). If the European Commission uses the budgetary authority through the European Defence Fund to give incentives to states that obey the regulations (Vroege, 2023). While the EDA acts as a facilitator that harmonizes the military needs of member states to achieve standardization of defense equipment (Gariglio & Serra, 2025).

However, even though the regulation has a strong and binding legal basis, the member state of the EU often use Article 346 TFEU (European Union, 2016) to exempt themselves from EU procurement rules on the grounds of national security (European Parliament, 2025). Similarly, Germany, as a member state with a very strong defense industry, faces a dilemma between complying with the new rules and EDIP standardization or choosing instead to protect its own domestic industry, thereby preserving its political sovereignty. And they choose to participated but not legally binding for now.

EU Commission as an Arena

The process of establishing the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) by the European Commission is a clear manifestation of the function of international organizations as arenas of deliberation. Starting with the launch of the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) in March 2024, the European Commission initiated the EDIP not just as a technical document, but as a high-level political bargaining space.

During the deliberation period between 2024 and the tentative agreement in October 2025, the European Commission facilitated a process that political law calls consensus building. In this arena, there was a tug of war between the EU's supranational ambitions for defense standardization and the industrial protectionist policies of major countries. The European Commission had to navigate Germany's demand for domestic flexibility (Zeitenwende) and France's vision of European strategic autonomy oriented towards internal products.

The transformation of the EDIP proposal into law in December 2025 proves that the effectiveness of international law in the defense sector is highly dependent on the quality of deliberation within the institution. This process shows that the European Commission succeeded in constructing a legal regime capable of accommodating the concerns of major fund providers through the granting of certain exemptions, while still maintaining the direction of regional defense integration. EDIP is thus not just a legislative product, but the result of a balance of power and interests within the supranational Arena.

Adopting Clive Archer's typology, we position the European Commission not simply as an administrative instrument, but as a competitive political Arena. In this arena, international law is not static. We argue that EDIP is a product of Institutional Bargaining.

Here, the European Commission provides the rules of the game, but actors such as Germany and France are the players who are able to bend the rules through their deliberative power. This confirms that sovereignty in the defense industry does not disappear, but rather transforms into a form of institutional diplomacy at the supranational level. Regarding of the difference between Germany and France responses, we can see that how the domestic policy and resources can also be the factor that can decide the state behavior.

The Complexity of the Regime in German Defense

The complexity of the regulatory regime in the German defense industry demonstrates how the country navigates the various overlapping layers of authority between national law and European Union regulations (EDIP).

In the defense context, the complexity of the regulatory regime refers to a network of parallel and nested governance frameworks. The implementation of EDIP in Germany does not stand alone but interacts with national industrial policies and NATO security standards. In line with indicators of regulatory complexity, the absence of a clear hierarchy between supranational or EU and national German authorities creates space for actors to engage in regulatory arbitrage (Pertiwi, 2016).

Germany faces a unique challenge due to the role of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) as the gatekeeper of sovereignty (Korioth & Marx, 2021). The FCC ensures that any EU regulation, including the EDIP, does not violate Germany's constitutional identity or the principle of conferral. If an EU policy is deemed to overstep its bounds, the FCC has the authority to declare that policy inapplicable within Germany, adding another layer of complexity to the integration of international law.

German defense companies such as Rheinmetall capitalize on this complexity through a strategy known as Strategic Arbitration. They support EU market integration to expand their business reach, yet at the same time, they use national legal mechanisms such as Article 346 TTFE to protect less competitive strategic sectors from open competition (Calcara & Simon, 2020). This allows Germany to reap financial benefits from the EU without completely losing control over its domestic industry.

To resolve these overlaps, Germany tends to adopt a conflict-avoidance strategy, opting for compromise rather than direct confrontation with EU institutions (Thielemann, 1999). The result is contextual and selective compliance, whereby Germany supports European defense initiatives in principle but retains significant control over defense procurement and military industrial strategy.

The dynamics in Germany demonstrate the classic clash between Law and Politics. According to Reus Smit's constructivist perspective, international politics is a realm of action where legal norms, identities and strategies intersect (Reus-Smit, 2004). Germany faces a political dilemma: comply with EU uniformity law to build a strong

European identity, or protect its domestic industry such as Rheinmetall to safeguard domestic economic and employment interests.

An analysis of Germany's Zeitenwende policy reveals a paradox in international governance, the stronger the pressure for regional integration, the stronger the hegemon state's efforts to protect its domestic industrial base. As major fund providers, Germany and France have the political privilege to request legal exceptions. We find that the deliberation process in the European Commission often results in asymmetric standards where small countries are expected to comply fully for the sake of incentives, while large countries get room to keep prioritizing their national regulations. We refer to this phenomenon as Managed Supranationalism, where integration continues but remains under the control of the industrial interests of the strongest countries.

In addition, Germany's position illustrates the operation of the Regime Complex as a System of Governance. Regime complex refers to the existence of overlapping international institutions and regulations in the same field (Sandholtz & Whytock, 2017). Germany is bound by the EDIP regulations of the European Union, but at the same time, they are the backbone of NATO in continental Europe. Although Germany is not yet legally involved in EDIP, it is following the regulations that have been set. Germany has to balance its EU integration legal obligations or EDIP with NATO interoperability standards (STANAG). At times, NATO's priority to buy proven and readily available defense equipment usually from the US clashes with EDIP's legal priority to develop the European industrial base even if it takes longer. This battle between institutional regulatory compliance and security rationality is at the heart of contemporary international legal politics.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the European Defense Industry Programme (EDIP) is a clear manifestation of strengthening the application of international law in regulating a very sensitive sector, namely traditional defense and security. Through EDIP, the European Union affirms its role in international governance by intervening in the exclusive sovereign domain of member states in order to achieve collective standardization.

Germany, as a central actor and major economic power in the region, is a crucial case study to test the effectiveness of this regime. The implementation of EDIP in Germany exposes the complex interplay between international law and domestic politics, where Germany had to navigate the regime's complex overlap between the EU's supranational obligations and NATO's strategic alliance commitments, amidst national industrial protectionist pressures. For further scholarship, future research could focus on a comparative analysis of how Eastern European member states adopted EDIP compared to Western European countries, as well as an evaluation of the long-term impact of this legal governance on Europe's strategic autonomy.

Ultimately, the EDIP is proof that the future of European defense will not be determined by legal coercion, but rather by the final outcome of negotiations in the supranational Arena. This paper confirms that in the politics of international law, rules are only as strong as the political consensus behind them. This research paves the way for further discussion on how European strategic autonomy can be achieved without compromising the balance of sovereignty between members. Ultimately, the interplay between the EDIP and Germany's Zeitenwende illustrates a crucial theoretical reality in the contemporary international system, state sovereignty is not eroding, rather, it is being actively renegotiated within the institutional arenas of international organizations.

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