European materials handling federation

FEM technologies and their strategic relevance for the European Defence Fund

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Executive summary

The European Materials Handling Federation (FEM) represents European manufacturers of materials-handling, lifting and storage equipment. In light of the objectives and eligibility criteria of the European Defence Fund (EDF), FEM technologies are strong candidates for EDF-supported projects because they are dual-use by nature and directly enable military mobility, logistics interoperability and operational resilience.

FEM represents European manufacturers active in the following areas:

- Cranes & Lifting Equipment
- Industrial Trucks
- Intralogistics Systems
- Mobile Elevating Work Platforms
- Racking & Shelving

These products enable the movement, storage, control and protection of goods across industrial, logistics and transport chains, often as part of integrated and automated systems.

Against that background, the EDF priorities most directly connected to FEM's scope include:

- Military mobility and logistics
- Dual-use technologies and enabling infrastructure
- Resilience, automation, digitalisation and interoperability
- Support to SMEs and European industrial ecosystems

The EDF funds cooperative projects that strengthen Europe's ability to move, deploy and sustain forces rapidly—often by leveraging and upgrading civilian logistics infrastructure. As a result, FEM technologies are directly relevant to EU defence priorities.

Across all product groups, FEM members share characteristics that are highly attractive for EDF support:

- Dual-use by design, with direct transferability between civilian logistics and defence use cases
- Direct contribution to military mobility and sustainment (loading/unloading, warehousing, storage, maintenance access and material flow)
- Standardisation and interoperability of equipment interfaces, storage formats and operating procedures—supporting multinational and coalition operations

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- Growing integration of digitalisation, automation, autonomy and AI-enabled functions aligned with EDF innovation priorities
- Strong European industrial footprint, with significant SME participation—supporting ecosystem development and strategic autonomy objectives

In addition, certain product groups offer specific contributions that can be highlighted depending on the EDF call and capability context:

➢ **Cranes & Lifting Equipment:** relevant where lifting of all kinds of loads is required.
- Enable lifting and handling operations at ports, rail terminals, depots (e.g. vehicles, engineering assets, palletized goods and containers, including oversized loads) and manufacturing
- Support secure remote operation and automation for hazardous or contested environments (where applicable)

➢ **Industrial Trucks:** relevant for militarised warehouse/depot operations, including signature reduction and secure system integration.
- Adapt solutions to military depot constraints (e.g., ammunition-handling procedures, robustness and safety requirements)
- Support electrification to reduce thermal/acoustic signature and dependence on fuel logistics (where relevant)
- Enable secure integration with military logistics command-and-control systems (interfaces and cybersecurity requirements)

➢ **Intralogistics Systems (Automated Warehousing and Material Flow):** relevant for end-to-end optimisation, data visibility and resilient, cyber-secure automation.
- Optimise military supply chains through automated storage/retrieval and orchestrated material flows
- Increase interoperability and data visibility across sites via software interfaces (e.g., WMS/WCS) to reduce deployment and replenishment times
- Improve resilience through redundancy, degraded-mode operation and cyber-secure automation

➢ **Mobile Elevating Work Platforms:** relevant for maintenance access and rapid infrastructure repair in deployed or home-base settings.
- Provide safe access for maintenance of aircraft, vehicles, radar and base infrastructure
- Support rapid infrastructure repair and expeditionary base construction
- Meet ruggedisation and transportability requirements for deployment (where applicable)

➢ **Racking & Shelving Systems:** relevant for military-grade storage, hardened infrastructure interfaces and rapid stand-up of depots.
- Provide military-grade storage for ammunition, spare parts and strategic reserves (segregation, traceability and safety constraints)

- Meet engineering requirements such as seismic resistance and hardened-infrastructure interfaces; where relevant, consider blast-aware design constraints
- Enable standardised layouts to accelerate the stand-up of depots along mobility corridors

FEM technologies are well positioned to benefit from the European Defence Fund, particularly in the areas of military mobility, logistics automation, infrastructure resilience and dual use capability development. By engaging in collaborative, multinational EDF projects, FEM members can contribute significantly to EU defence readiness while reinforcing Europe's industrial and technological base. Overall, the fit between FEM's materials-handling ecosystem and EDF priorities makes the sector a practical partner for future EU defence capability and innovation initiatives.