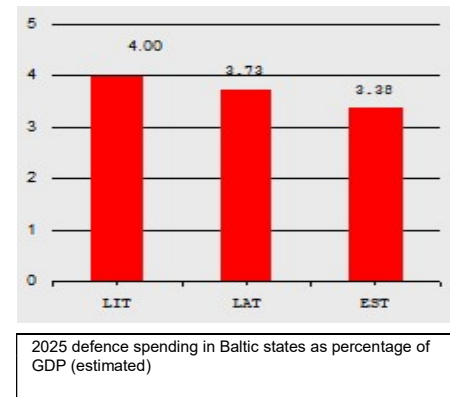


# Baltic Defence Weekly

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The Bundeswehr has more than 260,000 personnel, including women and men in uniform as well as civilian staff. Source: Bundeswehr

## Baltic states on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bundeswehr: together we are stronger!

This week we in the Baltic states and our allies celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Bundeswehr.

Over the course of seven decades, the Bundeswehr has become an integral part of the European security architecture and a reliable NATO ally.

The transfer of the German brigade to Lithuania, the smooth development of the military town of Rūdninkai and the daily cooperation of our soldiers and civilians strengthen the defence and unity of the entire Alliance, the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence said in its statement.

Baltic Defence Weekly takes the liberty to paraphrase the famous words of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz as follows: "Baltic security is also our security. The protection of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn is the protection of Berlin."

Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian people thank the entire German Armed Forces and the 45th Brigade serving in Lithuania.

Together we are stronger! **Pages 2-3**

## EDITORIAL

### Why Baltic defence cooperation matters now more than ever

In a security environment defined by uncertainty, speed, and the persistence of hostile pressure from Russia, the three Baltic states have a great strategic asset – each other.

This collaboration, integration, and learning from one another will determine the resilience and security of our region in the years ahead.

Resilience is more than infrastructure and military capability; it is also the strength of relationships to move quickly when formal channels slow down.

NATO provides the overarching framework for our collective defence, but regional security begins at home.

By deepening cooperation, the region can position itself not merely as a frontline buffer, but as an engine of innovation for the entire Alliance.

Cooperation is our strategic advantage. Baltic unity has always been a strength. Today, it is an imperative. Only by embracing deeper cooperation can we ensure that the Baltic region remains secure, resilient, and ready for whatever challenges the future may bring.



Toomas Hõbemägi,  
Editor-in-Chief

## 70 YEARS OF BUNDESWEHR Transcript of speech by the German De- fence Attaché to Esto- nia, Commander Har- ald Krempchen, at the reception dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Bundeswehr on 12 November 2025

Dear friends,

It is a great honour for me to address you today here in Tallinn, as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Bundeswehr.

This day invites us to pause, to reflect, and to look ahead — with gratitude for the past, with confidence in the present, and with determination for the future.

### Founded in responsibility – “Never Alone Again”

When the Bundeswehr was established on 12 November 1955, by the way, the birthday of the Prussian reformer General Scharnhorst, it was far more than a military or administrative decision. It marked a moral and political turning point.

After the devastation of the Second World War, it was clear: if Germany were ever again to have armed forces, they would have to be completely different.

Not a force of power politics, but a force for peace, firmly anchored in democracy and the rule of law.



German  
Defence  
Attaché to  
Estonia,  
Com-  
mander  
S.G.  
Harald  
Kremp-  
chen.

The guiding principle of the “citizen in uniform” captured this transformation: soldiers as thinking, responsible citizens — serving the people, not ideology or power.

And equally important was the foreign policy commitment: “Never alone again.”

Germany’s security would henceforth be built upon partnership, alliance, and solidarity — within NATO and with our European neighbours. This conviction has guided the Bundeswehr ever since.

### 70 years in the service of peace and freedom

Over the past seven decades, the Bundeswehr has evolved continuously — from its formative years in the 1950s to its present role as a modern, globally engaged force.

During the Cold War, it stood as a pillar of deterrence and stability at the frontier of freedom.

After 1990, with the end of the division of Europe, the Bundeswehr became a force for international peacekeeping — on the Balkans, in Afghanistan, in Africa, and at sea.

German soldiers have helped to rebuild, to protect, and to bring hope to people around the world.

Their service reflects a simple but powerful promise: Germany assumes responsibility — for peace, for freedom, and for the security of our partners.

### A new security reality

Today, seventy years after its founding, the Bundeswehr faces a profoundly changed security environment.

Russia’s full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has shattered Europe’s peace order.

It has reminded us — in the most painful way — that peace and freedom in Europe can never be taken for granted.

For Germany, for Estonia, for all of Europe, one thing is clear: security begins long before our own borders.

Our strength lies in unity — and our unity is the most powerful response to aggression and intimidation.

### Germany’s commitment in the Baltic region – solidarity in action

Nowhere is this solidarity more visible than here in the Baltic region.

Since 2017, Germany has led the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence battle group in Lithuania — a tangible symbol of collective defence and alliance credibility.

With the decision to establish a permanent German brigade in Lithuania, we are taking this commitment to a new level — we are sending a clear message: Germany stands by its allies, in word and in deed.

German soldiers also contribute here in Estonia — in air policing, air defence, intelligence, training, and cyber cooperation.

And in future, together with our Dutch colleagues, the 1st GNC will take over the corps level responsibility in Estonia and Latvia. I hope that with numerous enablers, we can send a strong signal to our eastern neighbour in a timely manner. The German and Dutch ChoDs sent a joint letter to SACEUR yesterday, outlining their roadmap for further action.

As Defence Attaché, I witness every day the depth of trust and friendship that has grown between our armed forces.

Our Estonian friends know: Germany stands by their side.

And we know: Estonia stands by ours.

That mutual trust is the cornerstone of our shared security.

### The “Zeitenwende” – investing in strength and credibility

The Bundeswehr is currently undergoing a profound transformation. With the “Zeitenwende” – the turning point – announced by Chancellor Scholz in 2022, Germany entered a new era of security policy.

The special fund of 100 billion euros represents a historic investment — but more importantly, it represents a political and strategic commitment: Germany will be able and ready to defend itself and its allies.

The German government is planning defence spending of €108.2b for 2026. Of this, €82.69b is allocated to the individual budget, the regular defence budget. A further €25.51b is to come from the special fund for the German Armed Forces.

We are modernising our armed forces — with new aircraft, ships, and armoured vehicles; with advanced air defence systems such as the European Sky Shield; with upgraded communications, logistics, and infrastructure.

**Planned procurement in detail:**

**The German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr)** are planning to grow from 180,000 to 260,000 active-duty soldiers. An additional 200,000 reservists will also be available.

Over the next 10 years, **the Army** is planning to acquire:

- ▶ 2,500 Boxer armored personnel carriers
- ▶ 1,000 Leopard 2A tanks
- ▶ 400 Puma infantry fighting vehicles
- ▶ 1,000 wheeled armored vehicles
- ▶ 4,000 Patria infantry fighting vehicles.

**The Air Force** is planning to receive, in addition to the aircraft already in service and those already ordered:

- ▶ 35 F-35As
- ▶ 20 Eurofighters
- ▶ 6 IRIS T SLMs
- ▶ 8 Patriot missile launchers
- ▶ 3 Arrow missile launchers.

**The Navy** is planning to receive:

- ▶ 6 F126 frigates
- ▶ 8 F127 frigates
- ▶ 6 additional U212CD submarines.

Yet the true “turning point” is not financial — it is mental. It is the awareness that security and freedom have a cost — and that military capability is an essential part of a mature democracy.

**The human dimension**

But amid all discussions of technology and equipment, we must never forget:

The Bundeswehr’s greatest strength lies in its people. Our soldiers — men and women — serve with professionalism, courage, and compassion.

Our civilian employees provide expertise, continuity, and stability. They embody what it means to serve a democracy — with integrity, responsibility, and humanity. They deserve not only our gratitude but also our commitment: to equip them properly, to care for them, and to ensure that their service is recognised and valued by society.

**The Bundeswehr and society – at the heart of our democracy**

The Bundeswehr is not a state within the state — it is part of the democratic fabric of our society. At home, our soldiers assist in disaster relief, floods, and crises. Abroad, they represent Germany’s values and commitment to peace.

Security policy today is no longer a niche issue — it concerns every citizen. Defence is not only about weapons; it is about willpower, resilience, and solidarity.

Here in Estonia, I see every day how naturally this connection between the armed forces and society is lived. That is an inspiring example for all us: democracy and resilience can go hand in hand — with pride, openness, and trust.

**Looking ahead – security as a shared European task**

The years ahead will be decisive.

We must strengthen our collective defence, as Europeans and as transatlantic partners. Germany will continue to assume responsibility with its permanent presence in the Baltic region, with contributions to NATO’s air and missile defence, with leadership in European security and defence cooperation, and with steadfast support for Ukraine’s struggle for freedom.

The German Government decided to increase the budget for military aid to Ukraine in 2026 to nearly 12 billion Euros (approximately 0.3% of the BIP).

At the same time, we must prepare our armed forces for the future — to be networked, digital, resilient, and firmly grounded in our constitutional values.

Dear friends,

When the Bundeswehr was founded in 1955, its mission was clear: to safeguard the freedom of Germany — in peace and in partnership.

Seventy years later, that mission remains unchanged — only its scope has grown.

Today, German soldiers stand shoulder to shoulder with their allies, here in the Baltic region, across Europe, and around the world.

We may look back on seven decades with pride — and forward with humility and determination.

May the Bundeswehr continue to stand as a pillar of peace, security, and freedom — in Germany, in Europe, and beyond. Thank you very much. Aitäh.”

**DRONE TECH****German drone maker Quantum Systems expands to Lithuania**

German drone manufacturer **Quantum Systems** has established operations in Lithuania. **Donatas Sirgedas**, head of Quantum Systems in Lithuania, said: “Being on the eastern flank is a commitment, where we see an opportunity to integrate advanced solutions”, adding that a key factor is the Bundeswehr brigade in Lithuania.



**Donatas Sirgedas,**  
head of  
**Quantum Systems in Lithuania**

“The German army already uses our systems and will deploy the same ones here. They will also need servicing and maintenance locally, a full SSTLC (service, support, training and logistics centre) package,” said Sirgedas.

Sirgedas said the company does not plan to start drone production in Lithuania in the coming years but may consider it depending on demand and order volumes.

“New solutions and capacities are of great interest to us, especially since Quantum Systems produces between 40 and 80 drones per month in Ukraine alone,” he said.

“Adding our European facilities, it’s natural we need partners for production based on scale.”

In May, Quantum Systems signed a memorandum of understanding with Lithuanian laser technology developer b, where Sirgedas previously worked.

The company also plans to sign another memorandum on November 25 during the German-Baltic Defence Industry Conference with **ADV Defense**, a Lithuanian manufacturer of drone components.

The Quantum Systems group employs about 900 people worldwide and expects to exceed 1,000 employees next year.

Its revenue reached €120 million in 2024, with projections to grow to more than €200 million in 2025.

## DEFENCE COOPERATION

## Israel opened embassy in Tallinn, held forum of defence businesses

On November 11 the Israeli foreign minister **Gideon Sa'ar** opened the Embassy of Israel in Tallinn.

Estonian Defence Minister **Hanno Pevkur** who discussed possibilities to expand defence cooperation between the two countries with Sa'ar, said: "Like Estonia, Israel is a country with a small population and territory. Over decades, Israel has managed to build a very strong reserve-based defence force, along with a highly capable defence industry. Estonia has much to learn from Israel and can also share its own experience to enhance the defence capabilities of both countries."

Pevkur added that Israel is already an important partner for Estonia in the field of defence.

"We have acquired significant weapon systems from Israel, including machine guns, naval and anti-tank missiles, and air munitions. In addition, we see numerous new cooperation opportunities between Estonian and Israeli defence industry companies, which will also strengthen Estonia's national defence capability," he added.

Sa'ar said: "I believe in Estonia, I believe in the future of Estonia, and the relationship between Israel and Estonia."

Sa'ar added that both countries have much in common: they are small nations that face many threats, they are democracies, and they both have important startup sectors.



**Estonian Defence Minister Hanno Pevkur met with Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar.** Photo: MoD.

### Estonian-Israeli business forum with a focus on defence

In connection with the opening of the embassy, an Israeli business delegation visited Estonia, and an Estonia-Israel business forum took place, where cooperation opportunities were discussed and meetings were held between entrepreneurs.

Nearly 50 companies, mainly from the defence industry, cybersecurity, and ICT sectors, participated in the event at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The forum was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Embassy of Israel.

## AMMUNITION PRODUCTION

## Sweden's Astor Group completes acquisition of Latvian-based Ammunity

**Scandinavian Astor Group**, a leading Nordic defense group, announced this week that it has completed the acquisition of **Ammunity**, Latvia's only manu-

facturer of military small-caliber ammunition and the largest private ammunition producer in the Baltics.

The acquisition marks a strategic milestone in our continued expansion within Astor Protect and strengthens both Europe's defence industrial base and regional security of supply, said **Mattias Hjorth**, CEO of Astor Group.

**Gabor Nagy**, Business Area Manager for Astor Protect, added: "With Ammunity as part of Astor Protect, we gain a strong production partner that complements our existing portfolio and strengthens the entire group's capabilities in critical defense components. As part of Astor Protect, we continue to operate under the Ammunity name, with our dedicated team in Riga and our CEO **Beate Krauze-Čebotare** continuing to lead the company."

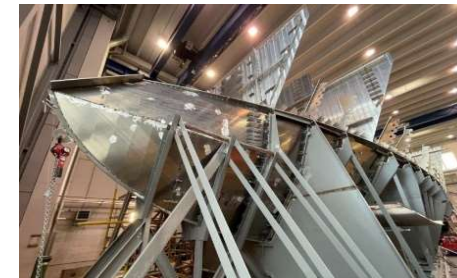


**Production in Ammunity.** Photo: MoD

## NAVAL SYSTEMS

## Semi-autonomous naval system to have a hull made in Estonia

Development of a semi-autonomous system by the EUROGUARD consortium led by Estonia's **Baltic Workboats** is advancing, The Defence Post wrote.



**The hull of the semi-autonomous vessel taking shape on Saaremaa.** Photo: Defence Post

The vessel is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2026. Sea trials are planned for the fourth quarter of the year.

Hull construction will take place at the Baltic Workboats shipyard on Saaremaa Island in Estonia.

The EUROGUARD program aims to enhance the EU's naval response capacity by improving fleet coordination and adopting advanced maritime and weapons technologies.

"The knowledge and experience gained will provide a strong foundation for assessing the suitability of new technologies and for developing new capabilities," said **Ats Janno**, Project Manager of EUROGUARD.

EUROGUARD involves building a 45-meter (148-foot) demonstrator vessel equipped to host multiple modular mission systems, allowing tests of autonomous functions in realistic coastal settings.

Launched last year, the project has a total budget of €95m, including €65m in funding from the European Defence Fund.

Partner nations include Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, and Italy. Poland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden are also part of the EUROGUARD consortium.



The DiBaX team. Source: DiBaX

## MILITARY COMMUNICATION

### Latvia holds the largest NATO's Digital Backbone Experimentation DiBaX 2025

NATO's largest annual **Digital Backbone Experimentation (DiBaX 2025)** has concluded in Latvia after field experiments that focused on how communication networks, AI and unmanned systems can work together in complex environments, reported Truesix.io

The experiments were held at Latvia's Ādaži Military base between October 27 and November 7.

The aim of the experiments was to integrate multiple vendor technologies – including networks, unmanned systems, sensors, AI, and more – into a common architecture and test its resilience in various operational scenarios.

"DiBaX is the only military technology experiment of this scale that NATO has been implementing in Latvia for four years," said Latvian Defence Minister **Andris Sprūds** in his speech.

The experiment was concluded by an operational demo, which simulated a UAS operation with a following explosive ordnance disposal mission.

Using technologies from companies such as **Ark Robotics, Ascent Lumina, Ericsson, JET Connectivity, KELLUU, Marduk Technologies, Nokia, Origin Robotics, Rescue Dynamics, Origin, Thales**, and others, the experiment demonstrated that data from multiple international systems can be connected through 5G and satellite communication systems to ensure a common operational picture for complex and dynamic operations.

"Over the past 4 years, LMT Defence has served as the technical integrator in NATO ACT's Digital Backbone experiment – an initiative that brings together 5G expertise for the improvement of military innovation. Being an integrator is about more than connecting technologies. It's about creating synergy between innovation, security, and strategic thinking. We've demonstrated that we have competence, courage, and capability to be a vital part of NATO's digital transformation," said **LMT president Juris Binde**.

**Warren Low**, Director of DiBaX at NATO ACT, stressed that the most important outcome of these experiments is to eventually "put this technology in the hands of soldiers, let them operate it, have experience, [and] provide feedback to industry" to help the industry innovate and develop more rapidly.



Levira's Director of Technology and IT, **Kristo Kaasan**.

Photo: Levira

## Estonia is testing Europe's first 5G emergency alert system

Estonia is developing Europe's first nationwide emergency notification system based on 5G mobile broadcasting technology.

The service called **Taskusireen** (in English, Pocket Siren) will ensure that emergency notifications reach people even if regular mobile and internet networks are down, such as during natural disasters or nationwide crises.

Taskusireen, currently in testing, was recently presented in Brussels at the Broadcast Networks Europe forum by **Levira**, the Estonian company developing it.

Levira's Director of Technology and IT, **Kristo Kaasan**, said that the 5G emergency alert will offer a reliable and sustainable solution for emergency notifications going forward.

Levira is developing the system in cooperation with **Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech)**. Other technology partners involved include **ORS** (Austria) and **TRedess** (Spain).

The Taskusireen test network (mux8) operates on digital TV frequencies E40 (626 MHz) and E41 (634 MHz), known in the mobile world as the n71 band. There are already some phones on the market suitable for 5G emergency alerts.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Bittium signs C2 systems framework agreement with Finnish, Swedish Defence Forces**  
**Bittium Wireless**, subsidiary of **Bittium Corporation**, has signed a Framework Agreement in the Field of Command-and-Control Systems with the Finnish and Swedish Defence Forces.

Norway and Denmark, who are also participating in Nordic defence cooperation may also join the agreement.

The agreement enables the procurement of tactical communication systems and products, software-defined radios, secure software, and telephones, as well as joint product development.

**Bittium Wireless** produces command and control system solutions, such as tactical communication systems, as well as related products and services.



"We are proud that Bittium's solutions meet the future needs of defence. Modern defense forces require not only reliable and resilient communications but also high-level security, interoperability, and flexibility" says **Tommi Kangas**, Senior Vice President, Bittium's Defense & Security Business Segment.

Bittium specializes in the development of reliable, secure communications and connectivity solutions, provides innovative products and services, customized solutions based on its product platforms and R&D services. Complementing its communications and connectivity solutions, Bittium offers proven information security solutions for mobile devices and portable computers.

Net sales in 2024 were EUR 85.2 million and operating profit was EUR 8.6 million. Bittium is listed on Nasdaq Helsinki.

## DRONE WALL

### When will Estonia have a functioning drone wall and at what cost?

What would Estonia's planned drone wall look like and consist of? And how far are we from the real thing?

Eesti Ekspress weekly looked into it and found that 98 percent of Estonian drone wall is still only on paper. In addition, the country needs to spend another €150 million before it has a fully functioning drone wall on its eastern border.

One thing that everybody agrees on is that Estonia's eastern border clearly needs counter-drone defence. According to military intelligence, Russia's 6th Air Defense Army opposite the Estonian border is establishing a brand-new drone unit. In the future, this unit will be able to launch an estimated 300 attack drones per day.

#### Layered defence

At the same time Estonia is one of the few European countries that already has a vision for a future drone wall. The documents about it are not public.

According to the vision, Estonia's drone defense would be layered and consist of a range of different systems.

Unlike Latvia, there are no plans to build an extensive acoustic surveillance network—although effective in Ukraine, acoustic sensors have short ranges and high maintenance costs.

The plan is to detect unmanned aerial vehicles heading toward Estonia already while they are still on Russian territory.

There would be stationary jammers and radars on the eastern border. Complex systems capable of automatically taking down drones would be built in critical locations. The five counties bordering the eastern border would also get their own detection and countermeasures, as would the larger cities.

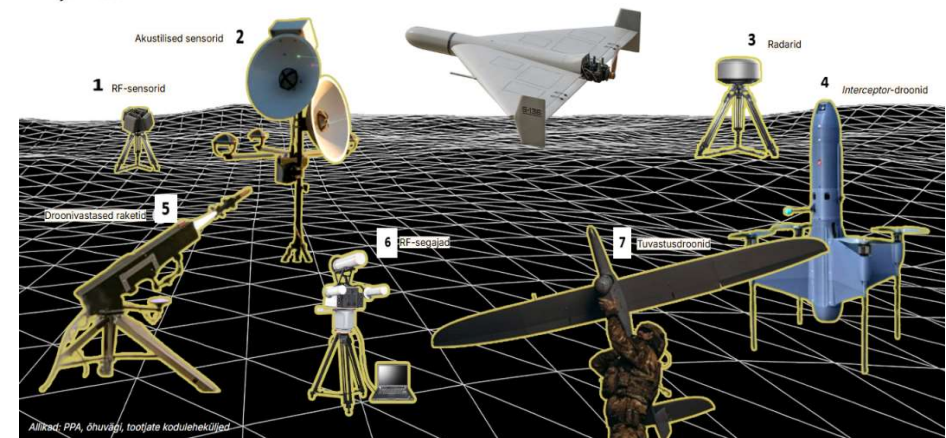
“So that we could, more or less, tell whether a drone that crossed the border in the southeast corner is heading towards Tartu, Põlva, or turning back. This would give us the capability to react ahead of time in some locations before major damage occurs,” says **Veiko Kommusaar**, Deputy Director General of the Police and Border Guard Board (PPA).

After detection, action would be taken against the drone, says Air Surveillance Division Chief **Tõnis Pärna**. With military drones, it's simple: it should be brought down with a shell, missile, or directed energy (ie, laser), he says, adding: “And we need to have these in massive quantities. We must be ready for a moment like in Ukraine, when 500 drones cross the border per day”.

According to Kommusaar, such a solution would cost an additional €140m to 150m on top of the 20m already spent. The government has not yet made funding decisions for this.

Nevertheless, the seed for the drone wall was planted last week when PPA and the Air Force announced a €460m joint framework procurement for the purchase of detection devices, radars, and jammers.

This enables contracts with manufacturers to be prepared in advance, so they're ready when money becomes available.



1 – Radio RF sensors, 2 – Acoustic sensors, 5 – Counter-drone rockets, 6 – RF jammers, Source: Police and Border Guard Authority PPA, Navy

3 – Radars, 4 – Interceptor drones, 7 – Detection drones

#### Another €150m needed

All the above doesn't mean that Estonia currently has nothing to counter foreign drones. We do, confirm both Kommusaar and Major Pärna.

Among others, Air surveillance radars can see deep enough into Russia to provide timely warnings.

Operators have learned to read the radar images for fragmented traces, which are often characteristic of smaller objects than aircraft, like drones. The military also has anti-drone radars.

Information sharing is working well. In Estonia, the security of airspace is divided between the Air Force and the PPA. The rule is that all drones with kinetic force and wings are the military's domain, and the rest are handled by the police. Kommusaar says that Estonia has secured around €18m from several rounds of European funding, adding:

The first radio-detection procurements for Estonia's southeast corner are actually already underway. The very first brand-new devices will arrive in the first quarter of 2026. With them, we'll be able to detect more drones at lower altitudes and those using radio links,” said Kommusaar, adding: “To implement the first phase, we have 20 million euros at our disposal. As a result, we'll know whether anything is flying over the larger cities and whether, in certain critical locations on the eastern border, something is coming across or not. But this is far from sufficient to cover the entire border area and critical infrastructure.”

#### Fact

# €150m

is needed to develop a functioning Estonian drone wall

## FUNDING

## Lithuania borrows €300m from EIB to boost defence on EU's eastern border

The European Investment Bank (EIB) announced this week that it is lending €300 million to the Lithuanian government for investments in military infrastructure.

The financing will help Lithuania strengthen its defence capabilities through investments in key areas: harbour boats for piloting and towing, medical transport and equipment, and new infrastructure for residential, administrative, training, transport and logistics needs. The upgrades will support the Lithuanian Armed Forces and help meet North Atlantic Treaty Organization commitments.

The signed loan is part of a broader €500 million investment package approved by the EIB for this operation. It complements a €540 million loan approved earlier this year for the NATO military base in Rūdninkai, along with advisory support. Together, this brings EIB Group support for Lithuania's defence to over €1 billion in 2025.

"These investments are substantial for strengthening our national defence and contributing to Europe's collective security. We welcome this partnership with our European bank, which is capable of rapidly mobilizing financial resources and responding effectively to the needs of member states," said Lithuanian Minister of Finance **Kristupas Vaitiekūnas**.



**Karl Nehammer,**  
Vice President  
of EIB. Source: EIB

"This agreement reflects the EIB's evolving role in supporting EU member states on the Eastern border," said EIB Vice-President **Karl Nehammer**, responsible for operations in Lithuania. "Lithuania has shown leadership in strengthening Europe's collective security and resilience. We are proud to support its efforts to invest in defence infrastructure that benefits both national and European stability."

Earlier this year, EIB the scope of its activities to include investments purely dedicated to military uses, marking a significant strategic shift.

It now has a robust pipeline of around 30 flagship operations across the EU, focusing on key priorities: border and critical infrastructure protection, including defences against enemy drones and for Europe's Eastern flank, as well as military mobility; strengthening industrial capabilities; advancing European innovation through strategic technology development; facilitating access to finance for small and medium-sized companies across the security and defence supply chain; and boosting the emerging venture capital ecosystem in security and defence, with investments already committed to several dedicated funds.

## COUNTER-UAV

## Estonia's Frankenburg Technologies to collaborate with Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa PGZ

Estonia's Frankenburg Technologies that is developing low-cost counter-UAV missile this week announced collaboration with **Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa (PGZ)**.

The collaboration is aimed at strengthening NATO's Eastern Flank and advancing the regional "drone wall" initiative. Our new collaboration focuses on accelerating counter unmanned aerial vehicles and air-defence integration across the region, said Frankenburg Technologies.

**Kusti Salm**, CEO of Frankenburg Technologies, said in a LinkedIn post: "Together, we're scaling up capabilities through a joint plan to establish local missile production capacity of up to 10,000 units per year — delivering speed, resilience, and rapid replenishment when Europe needs it most.

We fully share Poland's approach — prioritizing local projects that strengthen our industry while remaining open to European cooperation and joint defence initiatives. The "drone wall" is more than a concept, it's a shared responsibility and the time to build it is now.

This partnership reflects PGZ's trust in the future of our solutions and marks a major step forward for us.

We're proud to play a role in strengthening Europe's security."



UAV made by Monopulse. Source: Monopulse

## LITHUANIA

## Monopulse secures €1.12m in financing from ILTE Lietuva to expand UAV production capacity

Lithuanian drone maker **Monopulse** announced this week that it has secured €1.12 million in financing from **ILTE Lietuva** to expand production capacity.

According to company founder and CEO **Justas Poderys**, the financing enables to fulfill current orders for customers in Lithuania and internationally and to accelerate growth and innovation.

According to Poderys, the biggest challenge now lies in the pace of technological development and production capacity.

"Our number one priority right now is to strengthen the team, especially on the engineering and sales side. We're growing fast, and the next phase requires more hands and minds to keep up with the momentum. In parallel, we're setting up a dedicated UAV manufacturing line to bring more production in-house and boost capacity. So definitely keep an eye on this space as some exciting announcements are coming soon," Poderys said in an interview to Tech Philomat.



## EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY Experiment, scale up and deploy – is Europe lagging in defence ro- botics?

In the **European Defence Agency** conference on **Autonomous Systems Community of Interest (ASCI)** held in Tallinn, Baltic Defence Weekly sat down with **Nathalie Guichard**, EDA's Director of Research, Technology and Innovation, and **Mario Martinho**, EDA's Project Officer, Land Systems Technologies, to talk about how to speed up cooperation among EU member states and industry in autonomous systems.

### Q: What are the keywords at the ASCI conference for you?

**Nathalie Guichard:** I think there are several keywords, especially awareness. Awareness about the importance of autonomous systems, and also awareness of the key technologies that have to be developed for autonomous systems if we want the system to be able to operate in, for instance, a GNSS-denied environment, and take into account all the threats related to electronic warfare.

So the keywords are awareness, cross-border cooperation, networking, technology and challenges.

A very important point that should be stressed is open architecture and modularity because the idea is also to reduce

the fragmentation of the industry to enable several suppliers to plug in. If it's modular and with the same standards, one can have different suppliers.

**Mario Martinho:** ASCI has grown to more than 1,000 community members from all over Europe.

We look at this conference and this community as an opportunity to give to the participants a framework for discussion and for cooperation. Most of these entities have similar challenges and difficulties.

So this is a platform where they can discuss those common challenges in a networked meeting to identify synergies and how to overcome challenges together. So this is what we try to do.

And this is also an opportunity that helps this community to engage with Ukrainian experts. We engage in our activities colleagues from Ukraine's government, Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces, but also from Ukrainian companies so they can share their experience on difficulties and solutions on the battlefield.

### Q: ASCI is about sharing innovation and experiences. How does EDA help to share best practices and innovation?

**Nathalie Guichard:** We in the Research, Technology and Innovation Directorate help to share best practices in innovation by moderating a network with the member states and helping to build an ecosystem within each country to share best practice. At present some countries have a defence innovation agency, but some have not.

In July RTI organized an experimentation campaign on the topic of cross-domain logistics, ie UAV, UGV. And it was



**Nathalie Guichard delivering welcome remarks at ASCI Conference.** Source: Milrem

really the first time on EU level that we could bring together end users from the member states by presenting business cases to three UAV and three UGV companies.

Together they played the use cases given by the member states. It was really quite appreciated because bringing together innovation, innovators and end users is also a key factor for success. And innovation is also using an existing product or technology in a different way. For instance, using in the defence UGVs designed for agriculture.

In agriculture vehicles need to handle complicated terrain. And the technology used in some agricultural UGVs may be suitable also for use in defence, making it dual-use technology. By innovation you can use something designed for agriculture or logistics also in military.

As for investments, EDA is in partnership with the European Investment Bank and we help EIB to assess projects which are dual-use and may have also a defence component apart from the fact that there shouldn't be any lethal weapon in the system. EIB is also putting more money and more investment in dual-use projects.

**Mario Martinho:** I should add that ASCI is also a platform that raises awareness

about EDA projects and activities related to autonomous systems. With the help of Capacity-Technology Groups or CapTechs we are able to foster the scaling up of the industry of autonomous systems by bringing together governments, industry, academia and so on.

In the industry of autonomous systems there are startups, mid-size companies, but also primes. The ASCI platform helps to connect big companies with small companies. They can collaborate bilaterally but also build trust in EDA projects that can then be translated into consortiums for EDF, national or bilateral projects.



**Mario Martinho,**  
EDA's Project Officer,  
Land Systems Technologies,  
was the  
moderator on Day 1.  
Photo: Milrem Robotics

### Q: Speaking of the Action Plan on Autonomous Systems (APAS), what are its most critical priorities?

**Mario Martinho:** APAS is a very comprehensive document, covering not only the development of technology, but also other elements, including standardization, test, validation, verification, certification, regulation, and taxonomy.

As for technology, we are addressing critical priorities and different domains. For example, the air domain is already very advanced in concerns individual UAVs, individual systems. This is not the case for other domains. For example, in the land domain, in the unmanned ground vehicles UGVs, there are obstacles and difficulties that need to be overcome.



We have structured APAS into different action lines. Some are more focused on individual systems, others more on cooperation between systems as well as heterogeneous swarms.

In the air domain, the critical priorities are how to go from individual systems to swarms, and also how to deal with the use of strong electronic warfare. And we need to keep improving individual systems from technological perspective. But it's not only a question of technology as you also need to test it.

Things that are of utmost importance for us are how to expand experimentation of systems, and then how to translate our prototypes into capabilities at speed. And last but not least, how to scale in mass.

So there are many complementary activities that APAS deals with or addresses in parallel. At the EDA we implement a cross-directorate approach so we can cover the industry, research, technology, innovation, operational requirements and standardization.

**Nathalie Guichard:** I would add that also the taxonomy topic is very important, for example making sure that everyone has the same understanding of when we speak about swarms. The key is to have the same meaning behind each term. That's really important. Because if you want to cooperate there can be no misunderstanding.

**Q: How does EDA take into account the lessons of modern warfare?**

**Mario Martinho:** We will do a fundamental and complete review of APAS in 2027. The action plan is a reference document and we have 94 action lines in all these different areas.



**ASCI Conference in Tallinn attracted over 420 participants.** Source: Milrem RObotics

Also member states are proposing other projects and activities on top of what is written in APAS.

We have different working bodies, including CapTechs, that bring together the member states, industry, academia, research and technology organizations.

Most of the companies from the defence industry are also on the battlefield with their systems. Member states can also individually collect information about what is happening on the battlefield. So, we are also discussing the way the battlefield is changing and what are the difficulties and challenges ahead, and also considering it in shaping our projects.

Another important element here is that at the end of this year we will launch a new tool that aims to continuously identify new challenges, new threats, new solutions, new processes from different sources, including from the battlefield, especially Ukraine, but also from what other entities and countries such as the US, China and Israel are doing. Also, what is happening in dual use in Europe. So it's not only about defence partners, but also about others.

**Q: Specifically for autonomous systems how do you assess the current landscape and collaboration within the community?**

**Mario Martinho:** First, I think that from the technology perspective, EU industry is doing well. It is growing rapidly, and some of industry companies are referenced worldwide such as Milrem in Estonia which has excellent systems. So from a technology perspective, I think we are doing very well.

Speaking of collaboration - before EDA started to launch collaborative projects on UGS with EDF funding opportunities for projects of this kind, the industry was working mainly in silos.

Now the landscape has changed completely.

As an example, recently the iMUGS2 project that Milrem is leading held a kickoff meeting. This is only one example of a project where all main players from EU on unmanned ground systems are participating.

We have also good examples at EDA. We have awarded 36 million euros to a project involving 9 countries and 29 companies (to develop a cybersecurity platform for defence - ed.). So there are several examples of deeper cooperation between EU companies, and it's a key factor for change.

**Q: How is the collaboration between EDA and the industry evolving?**

**Nathalie Guichard:** We have a very good framework for cooperation in EDA in the form of CapTechs. We have 15 CapTechs in air, land, maritime, space, cyber and other domains so they cover everything.

It is very important that this collaboration inside CapTechs continues, because that's where we all meet, discuss and align. Member states must be aware of what industry is able to provide from a technological point of view and the industry has to understand what the member states' requirements are.

From RTI's point of view cooperation is really good - we have 55 projects ongoing in general and more than 80 in preparation.

It means that there is good appetite for cooperation in RTI projects.



**Milrem Robotics' HAVOC and TheMIS in front of the conference venue.** Source: Milrem

#### EDA in brief

- ▶ Role: to support cooperative European defence projects and help Member States to develop their military resources.
- ▶ EDA is engaged in supporting Member States to speed up the development of highly autonomous, effective, efficient, and reliable autonomous systems for Land, Air, Maritime, and cross-domain operations, where unmanned platforms and robots will perform dynamic actions in support to the execution of tasks usually assigned to manned platforms and soldiers.