

Developing technologies for operational use in Ukraine

BraveTechEU DefTech Forges 2026 – Defence Innovation from Bavaria for Europe and Ukraine

With the BraveTechEU DefTech Forges, Bavaria is taking its established defence innovation ecosystem to the European level. From 9 to 13 November 2026, Bayern Innovativ, recently selected as the Local Organiser for Germany, will work alongside European partners to host the European Commission's latest international defence innovation programme.

The programme is designed to develop technological solutions addressing real operational challenges in Ukraine, test them under realistic conditions and prepare them for future deployment. The five-day event will take place simultaneously in Germany and Romania.

The challenges originate from the Ukrainian innovation ecosystem and reflect technology needs identified through operational experience. The programme will bring together technology developers, industry, research organisations and military users. Participating teams will receive direct feedback from users and technical experts, allowing them to refine and further develop their solutions throughout an intensive five-day programme.

Teams in Germany will work on three technology challenges:

1. Multi-Mode RF Seekers for Strike Platforms

We are looking for compact sensor and guidance systems that enable unmanned systems to detect and track targets, even in challenging operating environments.

Technologies of particular interest include:

- Optical and infrared (IR) sensors
- Radar and RF sensing
- Computer vision and AI
- Automated target detection and tracking
- Sensor fusion
- Edge computing
- Compact electronics and embedded systems

The challenge is to reduce the need for manual operation by increasing automation in target detection and tracking. Solutions should remain effective in adverse weather, with limited communications and in electronically contested environments.

2. Autonomous Strike UAS & Swarm Coordination

This challenge is looking for technologies that enable individual UAVs to operate together intelligently and autonomously.

Technologies of particular interest include:

- Edge AI and computer vision
- Autonomous detection and classification
- Decentralised communication between multiple UAVs
- Swarm coordination
- Autonomous mission execution
- GNSS-denied navigation
- Operations with disrupted or limited communications
- Rapid integration with existing UAV and FPV platforms

The aim is to minimise the need for operators to control every stage of a mission. Instead, operators should be able to define overarching mission objectives, while the system carries out as much of the mission as possible autonomously. The challenge is therefore not limited to complete UAV systems. Software, algorithms, AI components, communications technologies, sensors and other enabling technologies are equally relevant.

3. Rapid Battlefield Adaptation & Modular Systems

This challenge focuses on technologies that enable UAVs to be rapidly adapted for different missions without replacing the entire platform.

Technologies of particular interest include:

- Modular UAV platforms
- Standardised interfaces
- Quick-change payloads
- Modular sensors
- Interchangeable communications systems
- EW/SIGINT modules
- Camera and thermal imaging systems
- Software-defined systems
- Flexible mission planning
- Rapidly configurable radio and communications systems
- Open architectures

For example, a UAV should be capable of being quickly reconfigured from a reconnaissance platform into a communications relay or another mission-specific configuration.

The challenge goes beyond hardware. Software and communications systems should also adapt to new configurations without requiring complex reinstallation or a complete system reflash.

Ease of use in the field is essential: reconfiguration should be quick and straightforward for regular crews or operators, without requiring specialist technical personnel.

Connecting Europe for Defence Innovation

The programme is open to start-ups, SMEs and technology companies from across Europe with solutions at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4 or above that are ready to be further developed alongside users and technical experts.

Bayern Innovativ draws on an extensive network spanning industry, research organisations, universities, start-ups, defence hubs and military stakeholders. The programme provides participants with direct access to the European defence innovation ecosystem, while further strengthening Bavaria as a location for the development and testing of defence and dual-use technologies.

At a glance

Format:	BraveTechEU DefTech Forges 2026 (second cycle)
Dates:	9 - 13 November 2026
Technology focus:	Defence & dual-use technologies, TRL 4+
Participants:	European start-ups, SMEs and technology companies
Prize money:	up to 120.000 € per winning team
Next stage:	Selected winners may progress to further testing and evaluation through an EDA-led Phase II
Application deadline:	6 September 2026

The DefTech Forges follow a clear principle: innovation is driven by operational needs, not innovation for innovation's sake. Challenges originating from Ukraine are matched with technological expertise from across Europe. By working directly with users and technical experts, participating teams can refine their solutions and assess their performance and suitability for real-world operations.

Contact and further information



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