Buy, Build & Scale with Ukraine

Private Equity, Established Industry, and Ukrainian Scale-Ups: Add-On Acquisitions, Joint Ventures, and the Path into NATO Procurement

Berlin (Urban Tech Republic, Flughafen Tegel 1, 13405 Berlin) | 09.07.2026

10:00 - 17:00 | Invitation-only executive format with curated 1:1 matchmaking

Co-organized by the European Defense Tech Hub (EDTH) and Defense Netzwerk Thüringen e.V.

Overview

Our first event, “From Prototype to Arsenal” (19.05.2026, Marienpark Berlin), answered the question of how Europe can industrialize drone production using automotive principles. The conclusion was clear: the technology exists, the demand exists, and Europe’s established industry holds exactly the production capacity, quality systems, and supply chain expertise that defense manufacturing now requires.

This follow-up event takes the next step: from principles to partnerships. Ukraine’s defense manufacturers are no longer start-ups. They are scale-ups with battlefield-proven products, serial production experience, and order books, and they are actively seeking European partners, capital, and market access. At the same time, German industrial companies are looking for credible entry points into defense, and investors are looking for mature assets rather than early-stage bets. Defense has moved to the center of the private equity agenda: platform investors and family offices are building defense and dual-use champions through buy-and-build, and Ukrainian scale-ups and German Mittelstand suppliers are exactly the add-on targets they need. The core question of this event:

How do private equity, established German industry, and Ukrainian scale-ups build platforms and joint ventures that produce what NATO buys?

Four Thematic Pillars

- **Scale-ups, not start-ups:** Battlefield-proven products with serial production experience, deployed at scale in Ukraine, now seeking European industrial partners and capital. The focus is on companies ready for joint production and for integration into a platform, not on early-stage ventures.
- **Cooperation models and a German-Ukrainian footprint:** The full range of partnership structures, from joint ventures and licensing to minority stakes and add-on acquisitions, combining Ukrainian engineering speed and combat-proven designs with German production capacity, quality systems, and certification expertise. Production both in Germany and in Ukraine, de-risked through federal investment guarantees and export credit cover.
- **Private equity and the buy-and-build play:** Defense has become a core private equity thesis. Platform investors and family offices are building defense and dual-use champions through add-on acquisitions, bringing Ukrainian scale-ups and German Mittelstand suppliers together under a single platform. Growth and add-on capital meet a maturing public funding landscape: BMVg direct financing of Ukrainian production, strategic JV support, Brave1 / Brave Germany, the EDIP Ukraine Support Instrument (USI-IRA), and the proposed AGILE programme.
- **Products NATO buys:** Adapting battlefield-proven Ukrainian systems to NATO standards, certification, and procurement logic, so that joint ventures can sell not only to Ukraine but into NATO and EU member state programmes.

Agenda (10:00 - 17:00)

Draft agenda, subject to refinement with speakers and partners.

10:00 - 10:30 | Arrival & Coffee

Informal networking and participant onboarding

10:30 - 11:00 | Opening Keynote: From Arsenal to Alliance

- What “From Prototype to Arsenal” set in motion, and what has happened since
- Why joint ventures and add-on acquisitions are now the strategic instruments of German-Ukrainian defense cooperation

11:00 - 12:00 | Session 1: The Ukrainian Scale-Up Landscape

- Showcase of selected Ukrainian manufacturers: products, volumes, production setups
- What scale-ups need from European partners: capacity, certification, market access
- Lessons from running serial production under wartime conditions

12:00 - 13:00 | Session 2: Structuring the Cooperation

- Cooperation structures, from JV and licensing to minority stakes and add-on acquisitions, and the German-Ukrainian footprint: what to produce where
- De-risking the Ukrainian leg: federal investment guarantees, Hermes cover, Defense City status
- Tax, currency, and compliance essentials for German-Ukrainian structures

13:00 - 14:00 | Lunch & Curated 1:1 Matchmaking

Pre-scheduled meetings between Ukrainian scale-ups, German industrial companies, private equity platforms, and investors

14:00 - 15:00 | Session 3: Private Equity and the Buy-and-Build Play

- The PE thesis on defense: why platform investors and family offices are entering the sector, and what makes a defense asset investable
- Buy-and-build in practice: assembling a defense or dual-use platform through add-on acquisitions, with Ukrainian scale-ups and German suppliers as the add-ons
- Cooperation structures and how to co-finance them: joint ventures, minority stakes, licensing, and add-on deals, and how public guarantees de-risk each
- Public and EU instruments alongside private capital: BMVg direct financing, JV support, Brave1 / Brave Germany, PURL, the EDIP Ukraine Support Instrument (USI-IRA calls for unmanned systems), AGILE, and EDF

15:00 - 16:00 | Panel: Selling to the Alliance

- From battlefield-proven to NATO-procurable: standards, certification, qualification
- Procurement pathways: national programmes, framework contracts, the “Danish Model” and its German equivalent
- Export control and regulatory realities for joint German-Ukrainian products

16:00 - 16:30 | Closing & Call to Action

- Concrete next steps: pilot joint ventures and add-on deals, matchmaking follow-ups, financing and buy-and-build roundtables

17:00 | End (Optional Informal Networking)

Participants, Format, and Next Steps

Who Should Attend

- **German industry:** CEOs, COOs, and business development leads of established manufacturers (automotive, mechanical engineering, electronics) evaluating defense as a growth field
- **Ukrainian scale-ups:** Founders and executives of battlefield-proven manufacturers (UAV, counter-UAS, electronics, munitions-adjacent systems) seeking European production partners and capital
- **Investors and financiers:** Private equity platforms pursuing buy-and-build in defense, growth funds, family offices, and banks active in or entering the defense and dual-use space
- **Policymakers:** Representatives of BMVg, BMWK, state ministries, and EU institutions shaping the German-Ukrainian defense industrial partnership

What Makes This Event Different

- **Curated, deal-oriented:** Every Ukrainian company presenting has products in serial use; every German company attending has real production capacity to offer.
- **Structured 1:1 matchmaking:** Pre-scheduled, interest-matched meetings instead of open networking only, prepared by the organizers in advance.
- **End-to-end perspective:** The full chain in one room: technology, production capacity, private capital, public funding, and procurement.
- **Continuity:** Builds directly on relationships and findings from “From Prototype to Arsenal” and the ongoing German-Ukrainian industrial dialogue.

The Funding and Support Landscape (Selection)

Participants receive a practical map of the most relevant instruments for joint production and add-on financing:

- Private equity co-investment and buy-and-build structures alongside public guarantees, showing how federal cover de-risks add-on acquisitions in Ukraine and Germany
- BMVg direct financing of Ukrainian defense production and announced strategic support for defense industrial joint ventures
- Brave1 / Brave Germany: joint German-Ukrainian defense tech programme with grant support
- German Ukraine military assistance 2026 (approx. EUR 11.5 bn), the NATO-coordinated PURL mechanism, federal investment guarantees, and Hermes export credit cover
- EDIP Ukraine Support Instrument: IRA call for unmanned systems and counter-unmanned systems (up to EUR 10 m per consortium, deadline 16.02.2027)
- AGILE (proposed): single-entity fast-track funding for disruptive defense technologies, target time-to-award of four months or less

Open Points and Next Steps

- Final date within 07.07. - 09.07.2026 and venue confirmation
- Partner confirmation and speaker outreach (industry, scale-ups, private equity, investors, BMVg)
- Identification of platform investors and add-on targets for curated matchmaking
- Selection and invitation of Ukrainian scale-ups and German counterparts
- Set-up of the matchmaking process and registration (Luma)

Contact

Dr. Thomas Rücker, Vorstandsvorsitzender Defence Netzwerk Thüringen e.V. | thomas.ruecker@ipol.eu

Benjamin Wolba, European Defense Tech Hub | benjamin@eurodefense.tech

Organization: Margarita Hettich, Executive Assistant to Dr. Thomas Rücker (margarita.hettich@ipol.eu, +49 173 405 69 42)