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Секретар: ЛЄЗІНА Анастасія – кандидат економічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри бізнес-економіки та підприємництва КНЕУ ім. Вадима Гетьмана.

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Конференція спрямована на обговорення вченими і практиками результатів наукових досліджень і розвитку функціонування підприємств у контексті формування знань з новітньої економіки і розвитку інтеграційних процесів.

The conference is aimed at the discussion by scientists and practitioners of the results of scientific research and the development of the functioning of enterprises in the context of the formation of knowledge on the modern economy and the development of integration processes.

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Accordingly, the following interpretation of possible results is traced, which manifests itself in the following pattern: C(t)↑⇒R(t)↓ - strengthening the cascade potential reduces stability. But at the same time, there is another pattern: A(t)↑⟹R(t)↑ - increasing adaptive capacity increases the ability of the enterprise to absorb polycrisis impact. As a result, the proposed formalization indicates that the stability of economic security. Enterprises is a dynamic indicator that considers the ability of the subject to absorb polycrisis. In this case, it is important to consider not only the initial negative impacts, but also subsequent manifestations (i.e. secondary links) within the operational activities of the enterprise. To resist polycrisis, it is necessary to increase resistance to the cascading spread of threats and increase adaptive capacity. Accordingly, the logic of the enterprise's activities within the framework of identifying and countering threats should be proactive in nature. It is worth identifying potential threats in a timely manner, determining their possible cascading impact and forming measures to absorb them. Efficiency for the enterprise in this case will be determined not by the absence of any impacts, but by the enterprise's ability to maintain functional capacity in crisis conditions.

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Sevastyanov R.V.
Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor
Associate Professor of the Department of business and management
Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic National University
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9088-4433

CURRENT TRENDS IN DEFENCE STARTUP ECOSYSTEMS: UKRAINE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CONTEXT OF MILITARY AND DUAL-USE TECHNOLOGIES

The development of startup ecosystems is increasingly determined by the ability of entrepreneurial and innovation systems to respond not only to economic and technological challenges, but also to emerging security threats. In this context, defense technologies have become one of the fastest-growing segments of the European innovation economy. The full-scale war in Ukraine has accelerated the transition from traditional models of defense innovation to technology-driven, decentralized, and highly adaptive ecosystems in which startups, research institutes, defense companies, investors, and government agencies jointly develop and implement new capabilities. As a result, artificial intelligence (AI), unmanned systems, electronic warfare (EW), cybersecurity, autonomous platforms, robotics, satellite technologies, and advanced communications have evolved from predominantly experimental fields into strategically important components of national and European security.

Recent studies describe the European defense innovation ecosystem as one that is rapidly transforming under the influence of the war in Ukraine, the proliferation of dual-use technologies, and the involvement of startups and venture capital in the development of defense solutions. In a study by Y. Leshchenko and J. Pelc [1] emphasize that DefenseTech startups are becoming key drivers of development in artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cybersecurity, quantum, and space technologies; however, they face regulatory barriers, lengthy procurement procedures, and limited access to military customers. Csernatoni, in analyzing the “New Defense” concept, highlights the EU’s transition to a more flexible, software-first model of defense innovation, in which civilian deep-tech companies and startups integrate with the traditional defense industry [2]. Research on the Ukrainian military-tech ecosystem shows that the war has spurred the formation of an environment in which startups and small innovative enterprises ensure the rapid development and adaptation of military and dual-use technologies. This study is timely and highlights the potential for deepening cooperation between Ukraine and the EU. This creates the conditions for integrating Ukrainian combat experience and technological solutions into the European defense and innovation ecosystem.

For Ukraine, this transformation is particularly pronounced. The war has created exceptional conditions for rapidly conducting technological experiments, field testing, and adaptation. Ukrainian defense startups are

increasingly operating within a cycle in which an idea can be developed, tested in combat conditions, modified based on feedback from the battlefield, and subsequently scaled up for military use. This model differs significantly from the traditional innovation cycle, which typically involves lengthy periods of laboratory development, certification, procurement, and market entry. Thus, the Ukrainian experience represents not only a national response to a military necessity but also an emerging model of accelerated innovation in the defense sector, which may have potential implications for the European Union.

Thus, the most significant current trend in Ukraine is the militarization and transformation of technology-based entrepreneurship toward dual-use applications. Ukrainian startups are increasingly developing technologies that combine military and civilian applications. AI-based computer vision, autonomous navigation, geospatial reconnaissance, telecommunications, cybersecurity, robotics, energy systems, and unmanned platforms can be used in both the defense and civilian sectors. This dual-use focus expands the potential market for startups while also facilitating the adoption of military innovations in logistics, infrastructure protection, emergency response, agriculture, and other sectors. Table 1 outlines the main trends in the defense startup ecosystems in Ukraine and the EU.

Table 1 - Key trends in defence startup ecosystems in Ukraine and the EU

Trend	Ukraine	European Union
DefenceTech expansion	Rapid growth driven by wartime demand and operational necessity	Rapidly expanding as European governments increase defence investment
AI and autonomy	AI-enabled drones, computer vision, targeting support, autonomous systems	AI, autonomous platforms, decision-support systems and robotics
Unmanned systems	UAVs, UGVs and naval drones represent major startup segments	Strong growth in drones, counter-drone systems and autonomous platforms
Electronic warfare	One of the most dynamic technological areas due to battlefield requirements	Increasingly prioritised as a component of European defence readiness
Cyber defence	Strong connection with Ukraine's established IT ecosystem	Growing investment in cyber resilience and dual-use cybersecurity
Testing and validation	Direct battlefield testing provides exceptionally rapid feedback	Increasing development of testbeds, accelerators and defence innovation programmes
Procurement	Increasingly oriented toward rapid acquisition and battlefield requirements	Traditionally slower and fragmented, but reforms increasingly emphasise speed and innovation
Funding	Strong dependence on state programmes, international grants and specialised investors	Larger institutional funding base through EDF, EIC, EUDIS and national programmes
International integration	Increasing integration with NATO and EU defence-industrial networks	Increasing cooperation with Ukraine and other European defence ecosystems
Main ecosystem advantage	Operational experience and rapid technology validation	Capital, industrial capacity, research infrastructure and access to the EU market

The development of Ukraine's defence ecosystem has also changed the role of investment capital. Before the full-scale invasion, Ukrainian technology startups were largely associated with software, outsourcing and fintech. The EU represents a different, yet increasingly complementary, model. The European Defense Fund (EDF) has become one of the key instruments supporting this transition. The EDF's budget for 2021–2027 totals nearly 7.3 billion euros, including joint defense research and joint capability development. [3]. The EU has also established the European Defense Innovation Program (EUDIS) to promote the participation of small companies and new entrants in the defense sector.

The scale of this transformation is illustrated by the results of the EDF calls for proposals for 2025. In 2026, the European Commission announced the allocation of 1.07 billion euros for 57 new defense projects covering areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, unmanned aerial vehicles, and counter-drone systems [4]. SMEs accounted for more than 38% of participating organizations, reflecting the growing role of small technology companies in Europe's defense industrial base. It is important to note that the program also provides for Ukraine's participation, including in cooperation on cyber defense based on artificial intelligence and technologies related to unmanned aerial vehicles.

Consequently, one of the key differences between Ukraine and the EU is the speed and nature of technological validation. Ukraine offers an exceptionally demanding operational environment, while the EU

possesses greater research infrastructure, capital and industrial capacity. Combining these advantages could create a highly competitive European defence innovation ecosystem.

A further current trend is the progressive internationalisation of Ukrainian defence startups. Ukrainian companies are increasingly seeking foreign capital, partnerships, production capacity and access to international markets. In parallel, European institutions are attempting to integrate Ukrainian technological capabilities into broader European defence-industrial structures.

The 2026 EDF results provide evidence of this process: selected projects include Ukrainian participation, while the EU Defence Innovation Office in Kyiv is intended to strengthen cooperation between the Ukrainian defence industry and the European industrial base.

The emerging model can therefore be represented as: Ukrainian operational experience → European R&D and capital → joint development → industrial scaling → European and global markets. The financing structure of defence startups is also changing. The current security environment is encouraging the emergence of specialised defence funds, government-backed accelerators and blended public-private financing mechanisms. Thus, the actual trend is a shift from a model of survival through grants to a mixed model of defense technology financing that combines grants, venture capital, strategic investments, procurement contracts, and industrial partnerships. The convergence of Ukrainian battlefield experience and European financial, industrial and research capabilities creates the conditions for a new form of cross-border ecosystem: a Ukraine–EU defence innovation corridor. Current trends demonstrate that defence startups are becoming a structural component of both the Ukrainian and European startup ecosystems. The transformation is driven by the convergence of geopolitical risks, technological progress, growing defence expenditure and the increasing strategic importance of dual-use technologies. Ukraine occupies a distinctive position in this transformation because its startups combine strong engineering capabilities with direct operational experience and exceptionally rapid battlefield validation.

The most important emerging trend is therefore not competition between the Ukrainian and EU startup ecosystems, but their increasing functional complementarity. Ukraine provides an environment for rapid experimentation, operational feedback and development of technologies adapted to contemporary warfare, while the EU can provide capital, research infrastructure, industrial capacity, regulatory mechanisms and access to a large integrated market.

The strategic objective should consequently be the creation of a common Ukraine–EU defence innovation ecosystem based on co-development, interoperable standards, shared testing, blended financing, accelerated procurement and industrial cooperation. In this context, defense startups should no longer be viewed exclusively as suppliers to the defence sector. They increasingly represent strategic innovation actors at the intersection of entrepreneurship, national security, industrial policy and technological sovereignty. The evolution of the Ukrainian and European ecosystems suggests that the competitiveness of future startup economies will depend increasingly on their ability to connect civilian innovation with defence needs, mobilise private and public capital, shorten innovation cycles and transform operational knowledge into scalable technologies.

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