



Shaping the Future of Digital Defence

Harnessing Innovation to Strengthen NATO's Strategic Edge

**DIGITALEUROPE-NATO Joint Innovation Event | 19 February 2025, 09:15-12:30,
Brussels**

Europe's security landscape is becoming increasingly complex, driven by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the rapid digital transformation of the battlefield. Building on DIGITALEUROPE's industry blueprint for NATO's Rapid Adoption Action Plan, this event will convene NATO planners, procurement experts, and industry innovators to accelerate the adoption of dual-use technologies and enhance market access. The event aims to bridge innovation cycles and operational needs, reinforcing NATO's strategic technological edge and resilience. Participants will explore actionable pathways to strengthen Europe's defence ecosystem by engaging in discussions on SME innovation, scaling startups, and national best practices.

08:45 - 09:15 | Registration

09:15 - 09:20 | Introduction by event moderator

- **Dr Constantinos Hadjisavvas**, Director of Digital Resilience and Defence, DIGITALEUROPE

09:20- 09:50 | Opening Fireside Chat | 'From the Battlefield to the Boardroom: How Geopolitical Shifts Shape Defence Innovation'

- **Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl**, Director General, DIGITALEUROPE
- **Jean Charles Ellerman-Kingombe**, Assistant Secretary-General for Innovation, Hybrid and Cyber, NATO
- **Kateryna Chernohorenko**, Deputy Minister of Defence, Ukraine (online)

09:50 - 10:30 | Panel I - Defence Innovation through the lens of SMEs: Challenges and Breakthroughs

This session highlights the experiences of SMEs navigating the defence ecosystem, focusing on defence technology and digital solutions. Panelists will address barriers to innovation, procurement challenges, opportunities for government collaboration, and success stories showcasing breakthroughs in defence and dual-use technologies. What barriers do SMEs and innovative dual-use companies face when accessing public funds?

Moderator: Agnès Flémal, Director General, WSL

- **Kadi Silde**, Director of European Engagement, Helsing AI
- **Ivan Jelušić**, CSO C Co-founder, ORQA d.o.o.
- **Andrei Dragomir**, Co-Founder C Chief Executive Officer, Aquark Technologies
- **Iraia Ibarzabal**, Chief Growth Officer, Multiverse Computing

10:30 - 11:00 | Coffee break

11:00 - 11:40 | Panel II - Scaling Defence Startups: The Role of Strategic Investment and Funding Models

This session delves into the pivotal role of strategic investments and funding models in scaling defence startups and driving digital innovation. How can defence-focused startups harness funding mechanisms to advance cutting-edge technologies such as AI, cybersecurity, and autonomous systems? Panelists will provide insights into funding gaps, the influence of private and public investments, and proven models that empower tech-driven defence innovations.

Moderator: **Nikolaos Loutas**, Director Innovation, Innovation, Hybrid and Cyber Division, NATO

- **Christopher Schroeder**, Chair of the German Marshall Fund (GMF)
- **Patrick Schneider-Sikorsky**, Partner, NATO Innovation Fund
- **Joaquín Ortiz**, Managing Partner, Hyperion Fund

11:40 - 12:20 | Panel III- Accelerating Adoption of Defence Innovation - Best Practices

This session examines how nations drive technology-led defence innovation to stay ahead in an evolving security landscape. Panelists will discuss strategies, investments in cutting-edge technologies, and the critical roles of industry, SMEs and startups in accelerating innovation for defence and dual-use applications.

Moderator: **Major General Jorge Andrade**, Military Deputy Director - Europe, DIANA, NATO

- **Colonel Ralf Goossens**, Chief Innovation Adviser, Netherlands Ministry of Defence
- **Dr. Gergely Németh**, CEO, VIKI (HU)
- **Oliver Tüür**, Director of Defence Planning Department, Estonian Ministry of Defence

12:20 - 12:30 | Concluding Reflections

- **Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl**, Director General, DIGITALEUROPE
- **Jean-Charles Ellerman-Kingombe**, NATO, Assistant Secretary-General for Innovation, Hybrid, and Cyber

12:30 - 13:30 | Lunch

13:30 - 15:00 | Defence Digital Innovation Matchmaking