DIGITALEUROPE unveils Europe's upcoming tech & defence unicorns: meet the 7 Future Unicorn Award 2026 finalists

DIGITALEUROPE, Europe's largest digital industry trade association representing more than 56,000 businesses, has unveiled the seven finalists competing in two categories—Future Unicorn and Dual-Use Technology—for the annual Future Unicorn Awards. The winners will be revealed during Masters of Digital 2026, taking place in Brussels on February 25-26.

The three finalists for the **Future Unicorn Award** are:

- **Canatu, from Finland:** Develops advanced carbon nanotube products and reactors for the semiconductor, automotive, and medical diagnostics industries.

- **Quandela, from France:** Designs, builds and delivers industry-grade quantum computing solutions, including datacentre-ready systems and cloud-accessible processors with industrial value.

- **Sparrow Quantum, from Denmark:** Develops photonic quantum chips that enable quantum computers, quantum communication, and the quantum internet.

The four finalists for the **Dual-Use Technology Award** are:

- **Farsight Vision, from Ukraine:** Delivers real-time 3D contextual awareness and AI-powered action scenarios, enabling humans and robots to work together seamlessly in dynamic environments.

- **Mbryonics Ltd., from Ireland:** Builds ultra-fast and secure optical communications systems that connect satellites into a seamless global network.

- **Ratel, from Ukraine:** Builds battle-proven unmanned ground vehicles for autonomous logistics and evacuation in combat zones with a sovereign Ukrainian-EU supply chain.

- **Sateliot, from Spain:** Deploys the first LEO satellite constellation operating under the 5G standard, enabling standard NB-IoT devices to connect seamlessly from space.

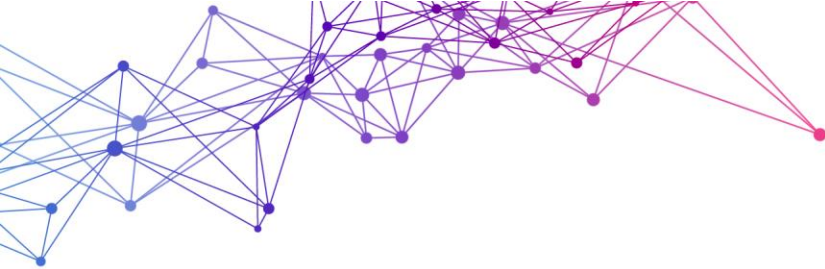Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE, said:

"This year's finalists represent the very best of European innovation, from quantum computing to space infrastructure to life-saving defense technology. Yet we cannot celebrate without acknowledging the reality: Europe accounts for only 20% of global unicorns, while the US holds nearly half. That gap is a direct consequence of how we fund growth. The US invested $339 billion in venture capital in 2025, while Europe invested just a fraction of that. Add to this the regulatory fragmentation that forces our startups to navigate 27 different legal systems, and you see why European innovators struggle to scale at the speed required to compete globally.

These finalists join the DIGITALEUROPE alumni network of nearly 200 fast-growing companies. Europe does not lack talent or innovation. What we need is scale: unified regulations, patient capital, and political will.

Last year's winner Quantum Systems is now a superstar providing critical military capabilities for Europe and Ukraine. We built this award with Ukraine's Ministry of Defence and Minister Fedorov because we know dual-use tech saves lives. We expect nothing less from this year's finalists."

About the Future Unicorn Awards

The [Future Unicorn Awards](#) showcases Europe's most promising tech talent through a unique collaboration: DIGITALEUROPE's affiliated national trade associations each nominate one company from their country with the potential to become the continent's next tech giant.

Afterwards, each nominated company is reviewed by a professional jury of expectational European institutional leaders and investors:

Future Unicorn Award:

- **Doris Pold**, Vice-President Executive Board, **DIGITALEUROPE**
- **Stéphane Ouaki**, Acting Director, **European Innovation Council (EIC) Fund**
- **Merete Clausen,** Deputy Chief Executive, **European Investment Fund (EIF)**
- **Eric de Montgolfier**, CEO, **Invest Europe**
- **Tom Wehmeir,** Partner & Head of Intelligence, **Atomico**
- **Nicolas Meier**, Managing Director I EMEA Tech Investments, **Temasek**
- **Johan Dahlfors**, Partner, **Bridgepoint**

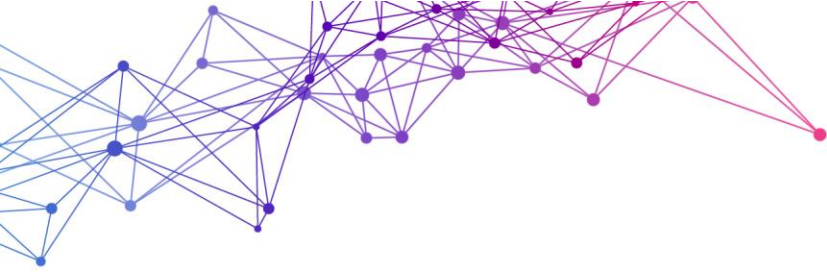**Dual-Use Technology Award – delivered in collaboration with the Ukraine Ministry of Defence:**

- **Peter Weckesser**, President Executive Board, **DIGITALEUROPE**
- **Oksana Ferchuk**, Deputy Minister of Defence of Ukraine for Digital Development, Digital Transformation and Digitalisation, **Ukrainian Ministry of Defence**
- **Benedikt Franke**, CEO, **Munich Security Conference**
- **Robert Vass**, President and Founder, **GLOBSEC**
- **Max Büchner**, CEO, **Speer Group**
- **Jillian Manus,** Venture Partner, **Shield Capital**

Winners are celebrated at [Masters of Digital](#), DIGITALEUROPE's premier annual conference, taking place February 25-26 in Brussels. The Award will be handed out by Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Technological Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy, Henna Virkkunen.

This marks the ninth consecutive year for the award and the second year for the Dual-Use Technology category, delivered in collaboration with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence. The partnership underscores the vital importance of dual-use SMEs within Europe's broader digital and defence ecosystem.

The event also features top EU leaders as confirmed speakers, including EVPs Henna Virkkunen and Roxana Mînzatu, Commissioners Maria Luís Albuquerque and Dan Jørgensen, EIB President Nadia Calviño, as well as government representatives, and industry leaders (see full list [here](#)).

Why European unicorns matter

Supporting scale-ups is Europe's best path to cultivating homegrown tech giants and strengthening digital resilience. The urgency has never been greater, as Europe navigates the changing global landscape.
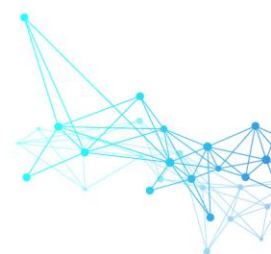
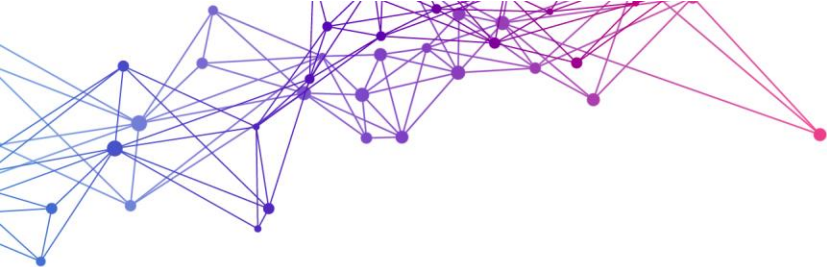*Find out more information and secure the final in-person seats to Masters of Digital: https://mastersofdigital.org/*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Diem Tran

Associate Director for Communications

diem.tran@digitaleurope.org / +32 490 22 00 93

About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE is the leading trade association representing digitally transforming industries in Europe. We stand for a regulatory environment that enables European businesses and citizens to prosper from digital technologies. We wish Europe to grow, attract, and sustain the world's best digital talents and technology companies. Together with our members, we shape the industry policy positions on all relevant legislative matters and contribute to the development and implementation of relevant EU policies, as well as international policies that have an impact on Europe's digital economy. Our membership represents over 45,000 businesses who operate and invest in Europe. It includes 122 corporations which are global leaders in their field of activity, as well as 41 national trade associations from across Europe.