

DAY ONE Wednesday 4 November 2026

10:00	Welcome to Readiness Europe
10:10 – 11:00	OPENING KEYNOTE PANEL Strengthening readiness for Europe through a stronger, sovereign defence-industrial base - From Article 5 and the ReArm Europe plan to Readiness 2030, reading Europe's demand signals and the production volumes industry is now being asked to meet. - Financing deterrence: positions on joint procurement for defence, security and resilience capabilities, and what this means for manufacturing. - A reality check on readiness ambitions; the constraints still to be resolved, from military mobility to building a start-up innovation ecosystem. - A front door for industry: the support mechanisms and tools open to primes, SMEs and start-ups seeking to engage. SPEAKERS: Tomasz Husak, Director, DEFIS Directorate for Defence Policy, European Commission • MEP Tomáš Zdechovský, Group of the European People's Party, European Parliament
11:10 – 11:45	Understanding the military capability development and procurement logic: from capability gaps to market positioning - How a capability gap identified inside a defence ministry becomes a formal operational requirement that industry can respond to. - Why the concept of operations, not the technical specification, is the document that ultimately determines what gets procured. - Where in the procurement pathway a manufacturer can still shape requirements, and how an SME without a bid team gets into that conversation early. SPEAKER: Col. Norbert Vetter, Head of Digitalization Support for Cyber Reserve, Center for Digitalization of the Bundeswehr; Advisory Board, EUDIS Business Accelerator
11:45 – 12:10	Defence OEM prioritisation: what is rewarded when qualifying suppliers on the procurement pathway - What makes a company contractable in European defence, and the compliance minimum a team needs in place before tendering. - What OEMs and primes prioritise when qualifying new suppliers, and how smaller firms position for it rather than waiting to be found. - Dual-use and attritable systems: the opportunity for civilian contractors, and what the latest BwBBG means for manufacturers entering the market.
12:10 – 12:30	Scaling up production of autonomous systems: the manufacturing perspective - What the war in Ukraine has proven about the combat value of deployed autonomous systems, read through a production lens. - Scaling CUAV, UGV and UAV output – from heavy load-bearing platforms to expendable, mass-produceable attritable systems. - The approaches manufacturers are taking to meet contractual volume demands.
12:30 – 13:45	Networking lunch, exhibition exploration & networking
13:45 – 14:15	Start-ups, scale-ups and civilian OEMs: how to avoid failure after contract signing - The toolkits and financial stack available once contracts are drawn, and what a credible scale-up looks like to primes. - How export classification under Article 346 TFEU and the EU dual-use regulation decides who you are legally allowed to sell to. - What a contracting prime needs to see in your production and workforce plan before trusting you with volume rather than batch orders. SPEAKER: Nicolaas Pereboom, Director Contracts & Head of Contract Management, NHIndustries
14:20 – 15:10	Unlocking the capital behind the ramp-up to enter the defence supply chain - The EU and NATO funding instruments most relevant to manufacturing capacity scale-up, and where to begin. - Prerequisites and qualifying criteria for the DSRB, SAFE and the European Investment Bank's defence lending instrument. - What private investors and venture funds active in defence are looking for, and how to position a manufacturing business for investment. - The financial stack that makes it work: working capital, blended finance and debt financing for deterrence. SPEAKERS: Brigadier General (Retd) Robbie Boyd OBE, Senior Leader, Defence, Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB) • Alex Lezama, VC Investor in Dual-Use and Deep Tech, and Partner, OMVP • Col. Norbert Vetter, Center for Digitalization of the Bundeswehr; Advisory Board, EUDIS Business Accelerator
15:15 – 15:45	KEYNOTE Crossing the valley of death: how you can successfully enter the defence sector - Defence has become a rapidly growing market, offering a lot of opportunities to manufacturers. What does this opportunity map look like? - Understanding market barriers that can be prohibitive - From prototype to procured capability: the realistic self-assessment and a sound strategy needed for market entry to succeed SPEAKER: Col. Matthias Puschnig, formerly General Staff Service of the Bundeswehr and Ukraine Special Staff, Federal Ministry of Defence
15:45 – 16:15	The moonshot to defence: the manufacturing pivot, opportunities, obstacles and the way through - Organisational journeys and lessons learned from civilian manufacturers now established in European defence supply chains. - What governments, primes and OEMs need from new entrants, and what disqualifies a supplier before the conversation begins. - Where engineering and automotive-grade manufacturing hold the clearest advantage – munitions components, UAV structures, ground vehicles. SPEAKER: Arda Mevlütoğlu, CEO and Turkish defence consultant, Mergen Analytical Strategies
16:30 – 18:30	Drinks reception

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Speakers and sessions shown are confirmed at the time of publication. Further speakers to be announced.

DAY TWO Thursday 5 November 2026

10:30 – 11:00

OPENING ADDRESS

Entering the German defence supply chain: the manufacturing lens

- What a credible entry route into defence manufacturing requires in practice, and a proportionate route through it for SMEs and start-ups.
- The pros and cons of working with a prime contractor versus as a specialist component or service supplier.
- Your compliance checklist: from ISO 9001, ISO 27001 and EN 9100 to BSI-Grundschutz and AQAP 2110.

SPEAKER: Stephan Michelfeit, Managing Director, Michelfeit Consulting

11:05 – 11:30

Increasing production trust and performance through next-generation data analytics

- What makes a good candidate for data analytics: identifying the hidden parameters in complex systems that drive product performance.
- Choosing your battles — prioritising critical parameters by severity versus likelihood, for manufacturers without a data science team.
- Recalibrating and relaxing specifications to reduce cost and improve schedule reliability without hurting performance.

SPEAKER: Dr Dawid Kupidura, Head of Manufacturing Engineering and Industrialisation, Thales Deutschland GmbH

11:30 – 11:50

KEYNOTE

NATO Engine: industrialising defence innovation at speed and at scale

- Inside the NATO Engine, announced at the July 2026 NATO Summit as part of the NATO Innovation Scale-Up Package.
- How it matchmakes civilian manufacturers holding leasable production capacity with defence scale-ups ready to industrialise.
- How to get involved in the NATO Engine during its pilot year, starting now.

SPEAKER: Nikos Loutas, Director Innovation, Defence Industry, Innovation and Armaments Division, NATO

11:50 – 12:40

The defence factory that thinks for itself: autonomy, digital twinning and agentic AI

- The automation technologies most immediately relevant to defence scale-up, and what they mean in practice at Tier 2 and Tier 3.
- The standards, data architecture, cybersecurity and connectivity requirements that underpin AI-driven production optimisation.
- How to sequence automation investment on an SME budget when you cannot automate everything at once.
- The workforce reality: the skills needed, where the shortages are, and how to retain and retrain talent through the transition.

SPEAKERS: Nikos Loutas, Director Innovation, Defence Industry, Innovation and Armaments Division, NATO • Stefan Balkowiec, CEO, Graphdome (working with the European Space Agency)

12:40 – 13:00

CASE STUDY

From low-volume, high-complexity production to defence-grade output at scale

- How one manufacturer moved from slow, highly engineered small-batch output to sustained high-volume production without sacrificing precision.
- Repurposing civilian production for defence components and beyond and the lessons learned.

SPEAKER: Christoph Erhardt, Senior Manager Customer Production Success, Protolabs

13:00 – 14:00

Networking lunch, exhibition exploration & networking

14:00 – 14:30

Compliant by design: why export control starts on the drawing board

- Why classification is a design decision, not a compliance one, and how to recognise the moment a component choice becomes a legal one.
- What the German AWG and AWV regime and EU Regulation 2021/821 mean for the parts and suppliers an engineer specifies.
- How US content entering the bill of materials constrains European sales under ITAR and EAR — and how to design around it early.

14:30 – 14:45

Infrastructure as a strategic enabler: the demand signals for the manufacturing community

- Defence infrastructure and its broadening remit, from bridges, ports and fuel networks to spectrum and space capabilities.
- Germany's €500 billion infrastructure investment fund over the next 12 years, and what the new acceleration legislation changes.
- Where the constraints are — ammunition storage bottlenecks, fuel storage expansion, permitting — and how to find the work.

14:45 – 15:00

From design to deployment, faster: combining testing and simulation to accelerate defence engineering

- Moving from zero-prototype "hope & pray" and an iterative "test, discover & fix" approach towards a more predictive "combine, validate & "get it right" workflow
- Insight into what capabilities can be bought from proven automotive practice, and how it can help the defence sector deliver complex products faster, with less risk and greater confidence that they will work as intended

15:00 – 15:30

Sourcing sovereign: supply ecosystem thinking around advanced materials

- The materials categories where European defence programmes face the most acute supply risk, and where sovereign sourcing is becoming a qualification requirement.
- What REACH and environmental compliance mean in practice for advanced materials in defence applications.
- The fastest-growing segments: ceramics, high-temperature AM feedstock, stealth coatings and the supplier profiles primes are seeking to fill gaps.

SPEAKER: Dr Stu Morris, Business Growth Leader – Aerospace, Toray Advanced Composites

15:30

Conference close

ALSO AT READINESS EUROPE 2026

- Exhibition floor: meet primes, OEMs and suppliers from across all tiers of the European defence industrial base.
- Networking: dedicated lunch and exhibition time on both days, plus the drinks reception from 16:30 on 4 November.

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