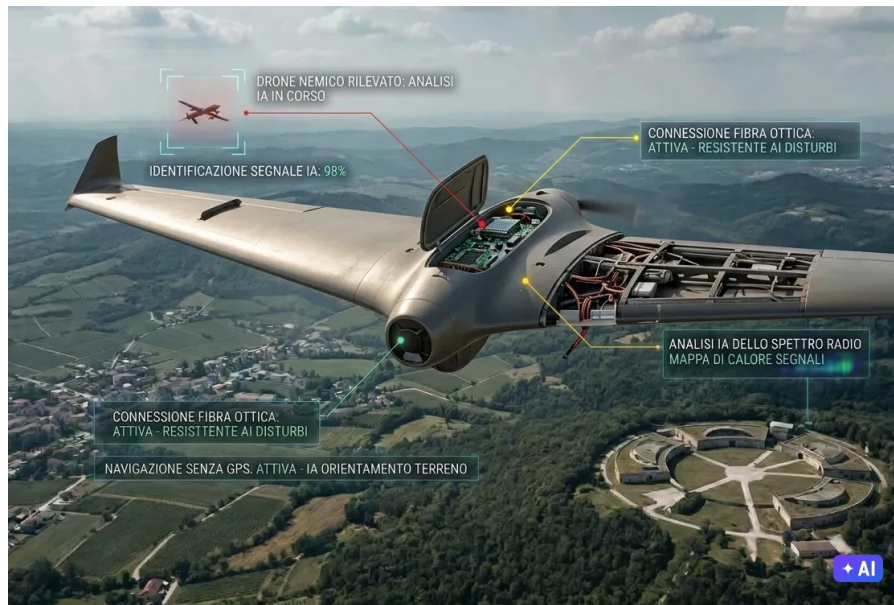




Drones, Artificial Intelligence and Fiber Optics: Ukrainian Experts Teach in the Verona Area

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VERONA – From the trenches of the Ukrainian front to the hills around Verona, to show Italian and European military personnel and experts how modern drone warfare is evolving. In recent days, a group of Ukrainian pilots and experts took part in a high-level exercise held at the former NATO base on Mount Calvarina, in Roncà (Verona), now operated by the Safe Foundation as a training and testing center.

The event was part of the **EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026**, held simultaneously in eight European countries. The aim of the initiative was to bring developers and military personnel face-to-face with battlefield realities, testing practical solutions across three key challenges: navigation without a satellite signal, autonomous coordination of drones and robots, and systems for detecting/countering hostile aircraft.

A Voice from the Front: AI to Save Lives

Lieutenant **Mykyta Puz**, of the Primo Corpo Azov, the officer responsible for relations with the defense industry, brought the operational experience of the Kyiv National Guard.

«Over the past twelve months, we have made extensive use of satellite communications to control reconnaissance, support, and attack drones. The results are tangible: they help us prevent attacks on our positions. The goal is to strengthen our capabilities and save lives».

Puz placed particular emphasis on the practical use of **Artificial Intelligence**, far removed from the usual theoretical concepts:

«A human being cannot identify a signal in an ocean of noise. Electronic reconnaissance systems intercept an impressive quantity of signals: AI allows us to precisely identify, among thousands of frequencies, only those associated with enemy drones heading toward us. This is where artificial intelligence truly makes a difference».

Technology and Strategy: Fiber-Optic Drones and Market Agility

In addition to satellite links, the exercise also discussed drones guided via an extremely thin **fiber-optic** cable that unspools in flight. This technology makes drone controls completely immune to radio jamming and interference. Although they are more expensive and less widespread than traditional radio-controlled drones, they remain essential for extremely high-precision missions.

Lieutenant Puz also highlighted the contrast between Russia's and Ukraine's industrial structures:

- **Russia** has a state-run, highly integrated industry capable of producing enormous volumes at any cost.
- **Ukraine**, as a democracy, relies on the flexibility, competitiveness, and agility of the free market.

As Andrea D'Angelo, president of the Safe Foundation, emphasized, bringing participants into the real-world environment allows them to engage with actual operational requirements. Ukraine's appeal to Europe is clear: combine advanced Western technology with the direct, field experience gained over four years of war.