



Low-Cost Shield for Europe: Italy and E5 Allies Invest in Ukrainian Drones

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Electronic warfare and autonomous assault drones: France, Poland, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy launch the LEAP program to address asymmetric threats and doubts about NATO's resilience in the Trump era.

Five European nations have announced **a new joint military program for the production of low-cost air defense systems and autonomous drones**. The cornerstone of the project lies in integrating the **strategic and technological experience accumulated by Ukraine** over four years of conflict against Russia.

The initiative, which sees the so-called **E5 group (France, Poland, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy)** united, aims to secure continental borders. It complements other emerging projects, such as the "drone wall" along the borders with Russia and Belarus, designed to promptly intercept and track violations of European airspace.



Drones: France and Ukraine accelerate, Italy urgently needs to implement a National Industrial Plan -
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The LEAP Program: Tackling Costs Before Targets

The program has been officially named **LEAP** (*Low-Cost Effectors and Autonomous Platforms*). The main goal is to bridge an economic and tactical paradox that has so far penalized Western defenses.

*"We have some of the best equipment on the planet to shoot down aerial threats," said **Luke Pollard**, UK Minister for Defense Readiness and Industry. "The problem is that to be effective against low-cost missiles and drones, we must ensure that the cost of defense is proportionate to that of the threat."*

Polish Defense Minister **Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz** confirmed the signing of the agreement that provides for joint investments in the development, production, and procurement of combat payloads and kinetic and electronic interception systems enhanced by **artificial intelligence**.

The current economic paradox of air defense is clearly evident in the comparison between threats and responses deployed, as happened in September 2025, when some Russian drones violated Polish airspace. Faced with enemy kamikaze drones costing a few thousand dollars, NATO is now forced to react by deploying multimillion-dollar jets and high-tech missiles, with a huge waste of financial resources. The goal of the LEAP program is precisely to break this asymmetry, neutralizing hostile drones at a fraction of the current price, thanks to the use of cutting-edge but economical electronic or kinetic countermeasures.

The Ukrainian Laboratory and Border Tensions

Both Moscow and Kyiv have turned the battlefield into a tragic and advanced laboratory of aerial warfare, rewriting the rules of modern tactics. Poland is already actively collaborating with Ukraine in training programs and joint manufacturing projects.

The need to accelerate on LEAP was also dictated by a series of "hostile" drone incursions (often attributed to Moscow, which denies any responsibility) that have recently tested the security of European airports and borders.

The Shadow of Trump and the Future of European Defense

The acceleration imposed by the European Union on the defense front comes at a time of deep geopolitical uncertainty, amplified by strong criticisms from US President Donald Trump towards NATO and the military spending of European partners. Added to this are recent diplomatic tensions raised by Washington's claims on Greenland (a territory of Denmark, a NATO ally), which have undermined the internal stability of the alliance.



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Kaja Kallas, Head of European Union Diplomacy, commented on the situation by highlighting the continent's change of pace:

"Europe's security is more uncertain than it has been for decades. If we want to keep our continent safe, we must strengthen our hard power. Europe is responding by investing record amounts. It's not about competing with NATO, but about making Europe stronger

within NATO. A stronger Europe also strengthens the entire alliance."