



The NATO Supreme Commander in Europe: “NATO must innovate like the Ukrainians”

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Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the Ukrainian armed forces have consistently innovated to acquire the technologies and equipment necessary for defensive operations. An approach that NATO should study and possibly adopt. This was stated by Air Force General Alexis G. Grynkeiwich, **NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)**, speaking at the **LANDEURO 2025** symposium in Wiesbaden, Germany.

“Anyone who has studied the art of war knows that there is nothing like combat operations to stimulate innovation: when your life depends on what you do, you are forced to change”, Grynkeiwich said during his speech in front of an audience of NATO military leaders and defense industry representatives.

Innovation in the digital age

According to Grynkeiwich, the war in Ukraine has shown for the first time how the need to innovate on the field translates into a digital era characterized by unmanned capabilities and additive manufacturing technologies, such as 3D printing.

“One of the lessons I have learned from Ukraine is that we need to understand what mechanisms we can build within our armed forces to enable the same pace of innovation that the Ukrainians have demonstrated so successfully”, he explained.

An aspect that particularly impressed the commander was the ability of Ukrainian brigades to collaborate with industrial partners, achieving innovations not in years, but in a few days.

A new relationship with the industry

Speaking to both military leaders and the defense industry, Grynkeiwich emphasized that NATO is now seeking innovative technologies. He urged companies in the sector to do their part and military decision-makers to simplify acquisition processes to allow the industry to quickly meet the Alliance's needs.

“We have a shopping list. This list comes from our plans, and we can tell the industry exactly what we need”, the general stated. “For all the leaders present, I believe it is our duty to demand rapid delivery from the industry and, at the same time, take responsibility for providing them with the tools to do so through more efficient acquisition processes.”

The urgency is clear: *“We need real capabilities and we want them as soon as possible. We cannot afford to wait. Promises for the future are no longer enough; new technologies must start to be integrated into the Alliance's armies, air forces, and navies as soon as possible.”*

Activating the defense industry on both sides of the Atlantic

To achieve this goal, Grynkeiwich stated that the defense industry, both in North America and Europe, must step up its efforts and operate as a single integrated industrial base.

“At this stage, the defense industrial base on both sides of the Atlantic must fully activate”, he reiterated. “It's not about choosing whether to invest in one area or another; it's necessary to build a seamless industrial base capable of providing capabilities and

quantities to the Alliance.”

An unprecedented investment

According to Grynkewich, NATO now has the necessary resources to support this transformation. Last month, in fact, the allies agreed to allocate **5% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** to defense, a result the general described as a *“historic milestone”*.

“This demonstrates the collective will of the Alliance, with every single country supporting the military requirements and committing to bringing these capabilities to the field”, he concluded.

With this vision, NATO is preparing to face future challenges not only with more resources but with a new mindset oriented towards continuous innovation, taking inspiration from a Ukraine that, under the pressure of war, has managed to transform its defense into a laboratory of technological creativity.