



## Ukraine: Fedorov launches the ‘Army of Robots’; first battlefield results expected within six months

**The former defense minister aims to deploy robots in the most dangerous phases of an assault within a year, without infantry alongside them.**

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**Mykhailo Fedorov**, formerly Ukraine’s defense minister and now **Advisor for Defense Innovation to Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto**, has launched a new initiative aimed at accelerating the development of ground robots for the battlefield.

The connection with Italy is particularly significant. Fedorov is no longer part of the Kyiv government and is developing the project from the **private sector**, while continuing to work in Ukraine and collaborate with the Ukrainian Armed Forces. At the same time, he has agreed to advise Crosetto on military innovation, drones, unmanned systems, and air defense.

The initiative, called **Army of Robots**, was presented on **September 26, 2026, at IT Arena in Lviv**. It is not a new military unit nor, at least for now, a Ukrainian government program: Fedorov describes it as an **ecosystem** capable of bringing together engineers, startups, investors, and defense-tech companies; funding projects; testing them alongside the military; and rapidly moving into production those that prove effective in the field.

## From Army of Drones to Army of Robots

The model follows that of **Army of Drones**, launched in 2022 when Fedorov was minister of digital transformation. That program helped rapidly expand Ukraine's drone market, public procurement, and operator training.

Fedorov now wants to apply a similar approach to ground robotics.

"We will invest in defense-tech companies, launch our own technology projects, build research and development capabilities, test solutions with the military, and scale up production as quickly as possible of what actually works in the field," he said when presenting the initiative.

The stated goal is far more ambitious than simply automating logistics: **to progressively reduce the presence of soldiers during the most dangerous phases of ground combat**, assigning reconnaissance, transport, evacuation, position defense, and eventually offensive operations to machines.

In the preceding days, Fedorov had described this transformation as requiring a new **"Manhattan Project" dedicated to robotic and fully autonomous warfare systems**, arguing that artificial intelligence and unmanned systems could play an increasingly central role in future conflicts.

## Humanoid robots at the front

During the presentation in Lviv, an artificial intelligence-generated video was also shown, featuring humanoid robots and machines in different configurations engaged in combat.

The images, however, above all present a **technological vision**: many of the systems shown in the video are not currently deployed on the Ukrainian battlefield. The ground robots actually in use are mainly remotely controlled vehicles intended for logistics, ammunition transport,

casualty evacuation or, in some cases, equipped with weapon systems.

Fedorov set extremely aggressive deadlines. The project aims to achieve within **six months** an initial combat result attributable to a humanoid robot and, within **twelve months**, to see an assault on an enemy position conducted through its most dangerous phases without infantry directly involved in the initial action.

These are objectives stated by the former minister, not a description of capabilities already available.

## **Ukraine already uses thousands of ground robots**

The drive to robotize the front began while Fedorov was still leading the Ministry of Defense.

In April 2026, Kyiv announced its intention to procure **25,000 unmanned ground vehicles in the first half of the year**, more than double the number for 2025. In March alone, according to figures released by the ministry at the time, robotic systems carried out more than **9,000 missions**.

Fedorov had identified the progressive removal of soldiers from logistics missions closest to the line of contact as an objective, seeking to shift the transport of supplies and other activities particularly exposed to enemy FPV drones to robotic systems.

Army of Robots now seeks to go further: not only remotely controlled vehicles carrying materiel, but platforms with increasing levels of autonomy and integrated with sensors, aerial drones and artificial intelligence systems.

## **Fedorov remains in Ukraine, but also works with Crosetto**

Fedorov's current position deserves particular attention.

After being removed from leadership of the Ministry of Defense in **July 2026**, the former minister declined other government posts proposed by the Ukrainian presidency and announced his intention to continue his work in the technology and defense sector.

In an interview given after leaving the government, he made clear that he intended to **remain in Ukraine** and devote his future activities to developing technologies considered decisive for

the war, including frontline robotization, sensors, artificial intelligence and low-cost weapon systems.

At the end of August, however, a link with Italy also emerged.

Defense Minister **Guido Crosetto** met with Fedorov and announced that the former Ukrainian minister had agreed to serve as his advisor as **Defense Innovation Advisor**.

«Today, simply knowing about new technologies is no longer enough,» Crosetto explained, stressing the need to rapidly turn experimentation into operational capabilities that can be used on a large scale. His discussion with Fedorov focused in particular on **drones, unmanned systems, air defense, and the evolution of the military technology ecosystem**.

Undersecretary of Defense Matteo Perego di Cremona subsequently described Fedorov's presence as an Advisor as an opportunity to bring battlefield-tested experience into the Italian defense establishment and accelerate the relationship between research, industry, and operational capabilities.

## **A connection Italy should also follow**

The creation of Army of Robots is therefore particularly relevant from an Italian perspective as well.

Fedorov is seeking to build an ecosystem in Ukraine in which **technological development, private capital, military experimentation, and industrial production** are linked through extremely rapid cycles. It is precisely Ukraine's experience in shortening the time between prototype, field testing, and production that Crosetto identified as one of the aspects of greatest interest to Italian defense.

Fedorov therefore continues to operate directly within Ukraine's defense-tech ecosystem, while part of that experience is simultaneously being made available to the Italian defense minister.

**Army of Robots** will therefore be worth watching not only to understand how far Kyiv will actually succeed in replacing personnel with robotic systems in the most exposed areas of the front, but also because its creator is now one of the advisors selected by Crosetto to address the technological transformation of Italian defense.

## Summary

Former Ukrainian minister Mykhailo Fedorov, now Guido Crosetto's advisor on defense innovation, launches Army of Robots: a private ecosystem to develop and test robots with Ukrainian forces, designed to reduce the presence of infantry in the most dangerous missions. The goal: accelerate the transition from prototype to battlefield.

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**News link:** <https://www.defensenews.com/unmanned/2026/09/30/ukraines-former-defense-minister-launches-manhattan-project-for-killer-robots/>