Beyond Aid: Could Ukraine Be Preparing France for War?

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On 3 November 2026, the European Commission and France's public investment bank announced a planned partnership linking French companies with Ukrainian defense startups. It includes €150 million in EU guarantees and €13 million in grants, intended to mobilize over €480 million in Bpifrance financing over three years and establish 30 startup partnerships. The scheme targets drones, electronic protection, communications and other dual-use technologies. It remains subject to the Commission's inter-service consultation and final contractual documentation.

What stands out is that, beyond France's economic objectives, this partnership may also gain strategic significance amid European concerns over the Russian threat.

Since 2022, following Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine has accumulated specialized expertise in adapting military technologies to prolonged conflicts, particularly in the use of drones and electronic defense. It is

no coincidence that, in 2026, the European Commission had already recognized the importance of integrating Ukraine's battle-tested experience into Europe's defense industrial base, while the European Council also emphasized drawing on Ukraine's experience with emerging technologies to strengthen European military capabilities.

Furthermore, it is worth recalling that, in 2025, France's National Strategic Review warned that "*there is a particularly high risk of a major high-intensity war in Europe, outside our national territory, involving France and its allies, particularly European ones, by 2030*", and that it was therefore vital for France and Europe to be prepared for such a scenario. The document also emphasizes the need to modernize French military and industrial capabilities in preparation for these potential high-intensity conflicts.

Officially, the initiative is designed to help French companies enter and invest in the Ukrainian market. Nevertheless, it could also serve a strategic purpose: to give French industry access to Ukrainian innovation as Europe prepares for possible future confrontations. Therefore, as France strengthens Ukraine's defense industry to resist Russia today, is it also learning how to confront Russia tomorrow?

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