Call for Abstracts

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

Building European Strategic Autonomy Through Unmanned Systems and Human Centric Defence Innovation

DRONE SUMMIT 2026

RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

The State Centre for Defence Logistics and Procurement

Dates: **25-26 May 2026**
Venue: **Riga Technical University (RTU), Ķīpsalas iela 6A, Riga, LV-1048**
Language: **English**

On 27 May 2026, Riga summons decision makers, security analysts, innovators, defence experts, and military industry for the annual Drone Summit 2026. The summit for the second consecutive year is organised by the Riga Technical University (RTU) in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia and brings together major stakeholders and shareholders that shape the contemporary UxS evolution. The summit will invite political leaders, defence officials, military commanders, representatives of the academic community, industry executives, and international partners to strengthen NATO and allied strategic autonomy, advance drone capabilities, and reinforce the NATO drone ecosystem through coordinated policy, industrial cooperation, and operational innovation.

In light of the summit, the organizers are pleased to announced the first ever Drone Summit 2026 Academic Conference. This side-event is organized by RTU and hosted at the university's premises. This event serves as the evidence-based policy and research pillar of the summit and is officially a part of the summit program. The objective of the event is to map the technological advancement of drone systems to identify areas for transformation and disruption.

CONFERENCE MISSION AND POLICY IMPACT

This academic conference aims at strengthening NATO scientific and technological capacity with UxS by addressing critical gaps and areas for improvement with operational readiness, regulation, industrial capability, and human capital. The challenge for the conference is to deliver policy recommendations and technological roadmap to advance strategic competitiveness and defence preparedness for allied partners.

CONFERENCE TOPICS

WE INVITE ORIGINAL RESEARCH THAT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING THEMATIC DIRECTIONS:

- **Operational use of UxS in multi-domain and electromagnetically contested environments,** including force structure adaptation and counter-drone operations (electronic, kinetic, and electromagnetic), as well as dual-use applications for defence and civil protection;

- **Critical enabling technologies for UxS operations,** notably GNSS-denied navigation and resilient positioning, advanced wireless and optical communications and sensing technologies (including 5G/6G, optical fiber and free-space optical links), energy and power systems (including batteries and power electronics), electromagnetic spectrum engineering, and innovative counter-UAV technologies;

- **UxS systems engineering and design,** including AI-enabled autonomy, command and control, swarm and cooperative systems, communication and sensing system design, digital twin-based design and validation, emerging quantum-enabled capabilities and cybersecurity and trustworthiness of UxS platforms (securely embedded AI, firmware integrity, and hardware trust);

- **Defence industry development and ecosystem aspects,** including governance, regulation, standardisation, and human capacity building (covering education, human capital, civil preparedness, and societal resilience).

DRONE SUMMIT 2026

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE 25–26 May 2026

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE

- Academia and PhD candidates
- Doctrine, defence and security analysts
- Engineers and tech experts
- Military and defence policy analysts
- R&D in defence industry representatives

IMPORTANT DATES

- Call for Abstracts opens: **16 March 2026**
- Abstract submission deadline: **30 April 2026**
- Notification of acceptance: **by 10 May 2026**
- Conference dates: **25–26 May 2026**

STRATEGIC PARTNERS OF THE DRONE SUMMIT 2026 ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

The Academic Conference is organised in close coordination with national and international partners across the defence, security, and innovation ecosystems.

- Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia
- Latvian National Defence Academy
- Baltic Security Foundation
- NATO SPS
- Other national and international institutional partners

PRESENTATION FORMAT

Accepted abstracts may be presented as oral presentations.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Language: English
- Length: 250 words
- Submissions shall represent original research or analytical work and must not be under review elsewhere.
- The Academic Programme Committee will review abstracts based on their relevance, originality, methodological rigor, and relevance to the conference themes.
- Authors are responsible for compliance with applicable research ethics and legal regulations

ABSTRACT MUST INCLUDE:

- Title
- Author(s): name, affiliation, contact details
- Research aim, objectives, and relevance
- Methodology or analytical approach
- Key findings or expected results
- **Expected impact or relevance, including technical, operational, or policy aspects, where applicable**

MORE INFORMATION:

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PUBLICATION AND DATA PROTECTION

After the conference, a digital Book of Abstracts with eISBN will be published. Authors retain copyright of their work.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and used solely for conference administration and publication purposes. Since this event shall accompany the Drone Summit 2026, the conference organisers reserve the right to review the participant lists in line with the security requirements.

REGISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

All participants must complete conference registration. For each accepted abstract, **at least one author must register and attend onsite.**

Participants attending onsite will be required to present a valid personal identification document (passport or ID card) for access to the Drone Summit 2026 venues. More details about the conference participation will be provided to the registered participants prior to the event.