

German Armed Forces**Germany to tap Ukrainian tech with missile purchase**

Bars strike system would be first offensive weapon developed in Ukraine to be purchased by the Bundeswehr



The initial small purchase of Bars would allow for testing followed by a larger order if the results are satisfactory © War Museum National Defence University of Ukraine

Laura Pitel in Berlin

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Germany is preparing to buy low-cost cruise missiles developed in Ukraine for its own armed forces, highlighting a shift in relations between Kyiv and its European allies as they increasingly seek to harness Ukrainian military technology.

German authorities are expected to finalise a deal in the coming weeks to buy an initial batch of the Bars missile for testing by the Bundeswehr, according to people familiar with the plans.

Bars — Ukrainian for snow leopard — is a jet-powered weapon with a range of up to 1,000km and a payload of up to 105kg, depending on the variant. While Ukrainians sometimes refer to it as a “drone missile”, Germany calls it a low-cost cruise missile.

The initial purchase would allow the military to conduct technical trials early next year, potentially paving the way for a larger order of several hundred if the results are satisfactory.

The plan forms part of a multipronged effort by [Germany](#) to strengthen European deterrence against Moscow by bolstering its arsenal of long-range strike weapons.



Bars is regularly used by Ukraine to strike military bases and energy facilities in Russia © Social Media/Reuters

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has named Bars as one of the weapons that is used to hit military bases and energy facilities inside Russia.

“It’s been the most mass-produced low-cost Ukrainian cruise missile,” said Fabian Hoffmann, a senior researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies. “It’s the one that has flown the most. That means that the system is probably the most mature. The Ukrainians — and also the Germans — have the most data on how it performs.”

In recent months, Bars has also been produced in Germany by a Ukrainian-German joint venture that is shrouded in secrecy. It was set up under a scheme called Build with Ukraine launched by Zelenskyy last year. The initial aim of the scheme was to produce weapons for Ukraine outside the country, helping to increase capacity and reduce the risk of Russian attacks as well as sharing expertise. A longer-term goal was to open up Nato markets to Ukrainian producers.

The first batch of German-made and German-funded Bars missiles was delivered to Ukraine in October.

The joint venture is now set to also produce for Germany, marking the first known purchase of an offensive weapon developed in Ukraine for the Bundeswehr's own use.

The plan forms part of a growing trend of Nato nations exploring Ukrainian technology for their own armies.

Denmark, Estonia and Latvia have signalled willingness to buy Ukrainian weapons. Denmark last month announced it was buying nine Dropla unmanned ground vehicles for testing.

The US Army last month awarded a \$10mn contract to the American subsidiary of the Ukrainian company Skyeton to buy its Raybird reconnaissance drone. Germany, which has become the largest provider of military aid to Ukraine since President Donald Trump slashed American support, has also expressed interest in the system.

The plan to acquire Bars also reflects shifting mindsets among German defence officials after years of slow and bureaucratic procurement focused on big defence contractors. Berlin is increasingly open to buying weapons from start-ups and to testing their products in parallel with drawing up contracts in order to speed up acquisition.

Germany has been seeking to build up its stocks of long-range weapons as part of a €780bn rearmament drive over the next five years in response to Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and doubts about US security guarantees for Europe under Trump.

Berlin has signed an initial deal to buy high-end Tomahawk missiles, made by the US defence giant Raytheon, after Trump cancelled plans to deploy a US battalion to Germany equipped with the cruise missiles. But Tomahawks are expensive and also face production bottlenecks that mean they are unlikely to be delivered before the 2030s.

Officials are simultaneously pursuing cheaper, more mass-producible systems. Alongside Bars, Germany also plans to buy and test a small batch of Anthem cruise missiles [made by the US-based start-up Covenant](#), which last week also announced a deal with Denmark.

Anthem costs roughly one-tenth of a Tomahawk's \$4mn-\$6mn price tag. Bars is even cheaper, according to one person familiar with the details, but officials are open to buying both systems. A possible purchase of Ukraine's Flamingo cruise missile has been put on hold for the time being.

The head of the German land forces, Christian Freuding, spoke in coded terms this month about Bars and Anthem without naming them, saying that he expected such systems to "complement conventional high-end cruise missiles".

He said: "These systems will allow us to engage targets at a depth of approximately 1,500km in large numbers, effectively saturating enemy air-defence systems."

More expensive weapons, he added, would be reserved for "targets of strategic importance".

Additional reporting by Fabrice Deprez in Kyiv

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