

IAF BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)
Finance and Investment: The Practitioners' Perspectives (2)

Author: Dr. Krzysztof Kanawka
Blue Dot Solutions, Poland, krzysztof.kanawka@kosmonauta.net

SAFE HAVEN FOR UKRAINIAN SPACE STARTUPS IN POLISH ACCELERATION PROGRAM

Abstract

On the 24th of February 2022, the Russian Federation carried out an unprovoked, illegal and baseless attack on the democratic republic of Ukraine. As of the date of writing (07.03.2022), more than 1.7 million refugees have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries. Due to historical and cultural ties, most of Ukrainians chose Poland as their new and, hopefully temporary, home. Poland has accepted more than 1 million Ukrainians refugees in the first 11 days of the war. Experts estimate that up to 5 million Ukrainians may flee for Poland in the next weeks or months of the war.

During the Cold War, Ukraine was the most advanced Soviet Republic in terms of space technologies. Even until this year's invasion, Ukraine had one of the best space sector infrastructure and personnel in Eastern Europe. Many Ukrainians working in this field are now fleeing Ukraine because they don't want their technologies stolen by their invader, the Russian Federation.

In this XXI century, Europe must restrain from stealing the intellectual property from the Ukrainian refugees that are fleeing the war. Many politicians and European companies may think that they would help the Ukrainian scientists by hiring them and using their potential in their companies or governmental structures.

How can it be done to conserve Ukrainian creativity until the conflict is over? One already existing solution is the "Space3ac Poland Prize II" business accelerator organized in partnership with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development. The experiences gained from this accelerator may provide a valuable reference point for future programmes supporting the reconstruction of the Ukrainian space sector.

Unlike most acceleration schemes, Space3ac is an equity-free program, allowing all Startups to keep their intellectual property. This program is aimed directly at foreign Startups whose goal is to establish subsidiary companies in Poland. Thanks to European Funds, Ukrainian Startups could receive up to 60.000,00 EUR without giving up any of their intellectual property. In this way we hope that Poland could be a safe haven for Ukrainian space startups wishing to continue their work during this time of crisis.