



## DES celebrates its 10th anniversary with 17,733 attendees and puts the spotlight on the next generation of AI

The event showcased the latest developments in AI agents and examined the main challenges facing the technology sector, with inputs from 637 international experts

On the third day, the event addressed the transformation of defense in the age of data and drones, as well as the growing role of satellites, with leaders from the European Space Agency, Deutsche Telekom and Germany's DLR GfR

Madrid, June 12, 2026. – [DES – Digital Enterprise Show 2026](#), Europe's largest event on AI, has concluded a very special edition celebrating its tenth anniversary. From June 9–11, **17,733 international executives** attended the event, where they learned how AI, along with other exponential technologies, is boosting the profitability, efficiency and sustainability of large corporations, SMEs and government agencies.

DES 2026 has generated an economic impact exceeding **30 million euros** in Málaga, Spain, while also placing the city at the center of the European debate on AI agents. These advancements were explored by the **637 international experts** who gathered at the Digital Business World Congress, the largest forum on digitalization at the EU level. In addition, they all addressed the issues shaping the sector, such as scaling AI to maximize return on investment; the new world order marked by technological sovereignty, geopolitics and ethics; the construction of resilient digital infrastructures; and the role of human talent.

Attendees also had the opportunity to discover a total of **706 innovations** presented by **403 companies** that took part in "Universo DES," the ecosystem of hyper-specialized events created to mark the fair's tenth anniversary.

### Defense is entering a new era

For the first time, DES hosted a defense forum in response to the ongoing evolution of unmanned systems and autonomous platforms, which have transformed the way military operations are planned and conducted. The forum addressed this paradigm shift with experts such as **Rosalía Machín**, a Civil Guard commander in the Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity Directorate, who discussed the new elements that have come into play, including the cognitive domain and cyberspace, "*requiring us to rethink security from a multidomain perspective*".

**Silvia Gamo**, executive director of the Circle Foundation for Defense and Security Technologies, also spoke at the event, noting that the technologies being used "*are not new*", as they were first deployed during the Cold War and the Vietnam War. However, she emphasized that the conflict in Ukraine has marked a turning point due to their use "*on a massive scale and in tactical operations*". "*Technologically speaking, the way we fight is changing*", she stated, also pointing to the future of drone swarms and these systems' ability to distribute tasks and reorganize themselves. Along the same lines,

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**Antonio Martín**, IoT Global Business Development Manager at Deutsche Telekom IoT, emphasized that *“the nature of conflict has changed dramatically”* and that defense must rely on civilian innovations, satellites and new connectivity capabilities.

According to experts, the major challenge now lies in strengthening resilience, command and control, data protection, and cooperation among the public sector, private companies, and academia. Martín warned that technologies are not only changing military operations but also attacks in the so-called *“gray zone”*, ranging from disinformation to actions aimed at destabilizing public security. *“It is very cheap to attack and excessively expensive to defend”*, he noted, arguing that public-private collaboration will be essential because *“technology is advancing so rapidly that, today, the public sector depends on the private sector”*.

### **Satellites: A key component in data security**

Space is emerging as a new strategic frontier for defense and global security. For this reason, experts from the European Space Agency and Germany’s DLR GfR, along with executives from technology centers, have analyzed the role of satellites in intelligence, surveillance, communications and the protection of critical infrastructure. **Joan Mas**, scientific director of Eurecat’s digital division, explained that the organization is working on defense-related innovation, particularly in *“data mining, data science, agent-based AI, classical artificial intelligence and quantum computing”*, a field they have incorporated since 2023.

In this context, **Nil Angli**, Head of Business Applications and Partnerships at the European Space Agency, noted that the agency is known for space exploration, but that there is an increasingly important aspect: *“using space assets to build resilience in our businesses”*. In his view, satellites are already part of all critical operations, since *“the only way to have access to all the data is to rely on them”*. For this reason, he emphasized that they are an essential component for the development of AI and that, to ensure the secure transmission of information from space, it will also be necessary to strengthen *“the security of artificial intelligence algorithms”*.

Experts agreed that technological sovereignty, regulation, and international collaboration will be key to protecting space as a strategic infrastructure. Francisco Gallardo, a Global Navigation Satellite System engineer at the German aerospace company DLR GfR mbH, noted that *“the problem with space is that it requires a significant initial investment”*, which is why *“cooperation among countries is essential.”* He also emphasized the importance of advancing space sustainability, preventing collisions and establishing *“clear policies and regulations governing satellites operations and orbital space”*. Along the same lines, Mas argued that *“we need regulation, because otherwise a disaster could occur”*, while Gallardo noted that monitoring and protecting space systems is essential because *“we need effective oversight and monitoring of space assets”*.

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**[About DES | Digital Enterprise Show \(June 9-11, 2026, FYCMA, Malaga\)](#)**: DES – Digital Enterprise Show is an event organized by Nebext – Next Business Exhibitions in collaboration with Malaga City Council and the Regional Government of Andalusia. Over nine editions, it has become the largest European professional event on exponential technologies and one of the world’s leading events, offering senior management the latest solutions and products to accompany large corporations, SMEs, and European public administrations towards digital transformation. Over three days, we combine technology and innovation with digital leadership, technological solutions to improve customer and employee experience, optimization of

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operational processes and the identification of new business models, services and products from all industries.

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