Photo: GLADIUS MAX

GLADIUS WEAPON STATIONS: A RESPONSE TO BOTH GROUND-BASED AND AERIAL THREATS

EVPÚ Defence a.s. has long focused on the development and production of remote weapon stations (RWS) designed for a wide range of platforms and weapon systems. These systems provide a broad spectrum of capabilities, ranging from observation and reconnaissance through target detection and tracking to target engagement, operating in both semi-automatic and fully automatic modes. At last year's IDET defence exhibition, the company introduced new variants of its GLADIUS weapon station family. To discuss how these systems have evolved since then and what capabilities they now offer, we spoke with Claudia Budayová, Director of Business Development and Sales at EVPÚ Defence.

At IDET 2025, the GLADIUS MAX weapon station was officially unveiled and subsequently received the Golden IDET Award. Could you outline its main characteristics?

GLADIUS MAX is a modular weapon system developed to address the growing demand for flexible defence against unmanned aerial systems (UAS) as well as ground-based threats. The station combines an integrated radar with an advanced electro-optical sight comprising a cooled thermal imaging camera, a daylight camera, and a laser rangefinder. A distinctive feature of the design is that the electro-optical sight operates independently of the weapon, which significantly enhances detection capabilities as well as the accuracy of target tracking and fire control. Radar integration allows GLADIUS MAX to detect threats at long range and engage them earlier than remote weapon stations relying solely on electro-optical sensors.

Which weapon systems is GLADIUS MAX designed for?

GLADIUS MAX is designed to be armed with a 30×113 mm automatic cannon. The system supports both single-feed and dual-feed ammunition configurations. The dual-feed variant enables the gunner to rapidly switch between two types of ammunition: high-explosive proximity fuzed rounds intended for aerial targets, and standard high-explosive dual-purpose ammunition for ground targets. This capability allows operators to select the optimal munition based on target type, reduces reaction time, simplifies logistics, and increases the number of engagements possible before reloading is required.

On which platforms can GLADIUS MAX be deployed?

The system is modular and configurable according to customer requirements. The weapon station is gyrostabilised, making it particularly suitable for deployment on mobile platforms, including not only land vehicles but also naval vessels. At the same time, it can be effectively employed as part of fixed defence platforms.

What capabilities does this weapon station offer in the context of the modern battlefield?

Thanks to the combination of radar and a cooled thermal imager, GLADIUS MAX can reliably detect both aerial and ground threats at significant distances, even under degraded visibility conditions. Once a threat is detected, the system automatically locks onto the target, initiates tracking, and applies the necessary ballistic corrections. The operator then only authorises the engagement. We are also able to supply the weapon station with our own control software and operator console, which is compact and meets modern requirements for ergonomics and user friendliness. At the same time, the system is fully prepared for integration into higher-level C4ISTAR systems, linking sensors, command posts, and combat assets into a single coherent operational framework.

GLADIUS MAX is structurally based on the GLADIUS 12 weapon station, which forms the backbone of your product line. Has this system also undergone further development?

Yes, this system has also evolved further. The GLADIUS 12 weapon station was for a long time primarily available in a configuration for a 12.7 mm heavy machine gun. In response to increasing demand for greater flexibility, we have developed a set of adapters that allow for straightforward weapon replacement within the mount. GLADIUS 12 can now be equipped not only with a 12.7 mm machine gun, but also with a 7.62 mm machine gun or a 40 mm grenade launcher. This variability allows the system to be tailored to specific mission requirements: the 12.7 mm machine gun can be used to engage lightly armoured targets and vehicles, the 7.62 mm machine gun for urban operations, while the grenade launcher is effective against targets behind cover or in entrenched positions.
As a result, a single platform can perform multiple mission types without the need to procure specialised variants. Armed forces can standardise on a single weapon station across units while simultaneously reducing costs related to training, maintenance, and spare parts logistics.