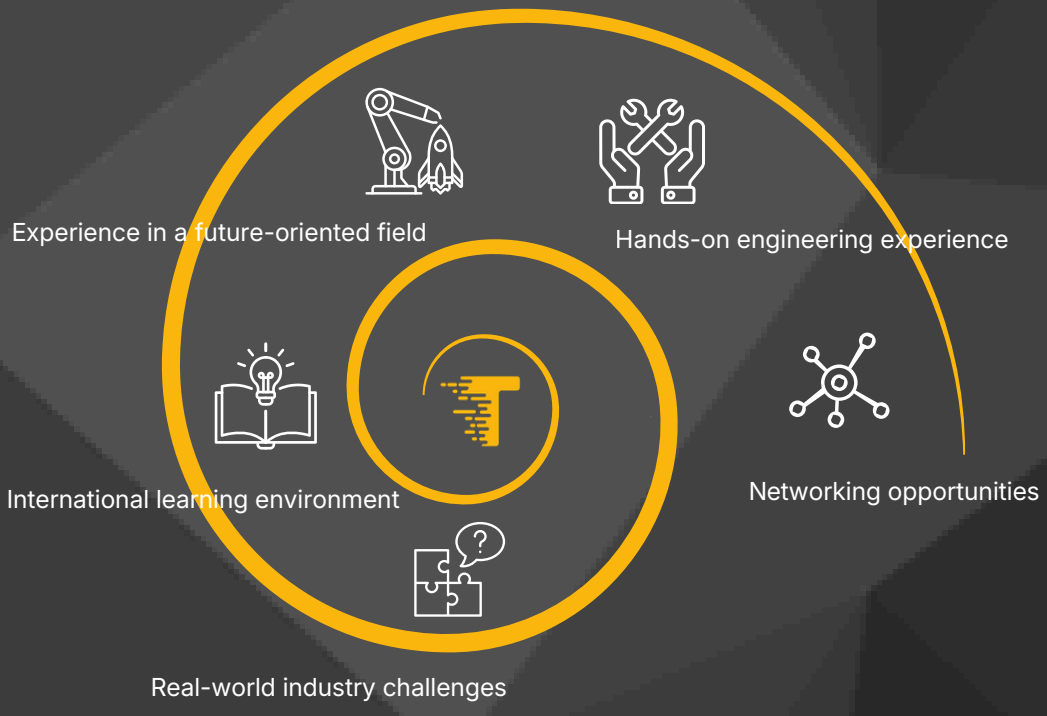
ubb techtransfer
UNIVERSITATEA BABEŞ-BOLYAI

ZENITH 2026

International Aerospace Summer School



NEWSLETTER NR. 14

Before the launch

Most summer schools follow a tired script.

You sit in a lecture hall, someone talks at you for four hours, you scribble notes you'll never read again, and you leave with a certificate that nobody cares about.
The connections you make are surface-level—trading LinkedIn profiles with people you'll never get in contact again. The projects, if they exist, are theoretical: design a solution, write a report, pretend it matters.
You walk away with a vague feeling that you should have learned something, but you can't quite name what it was.

ZENITH 2026 - International Aerospace Summer School, organised by **UBB TechTransfer**, the technology center of the **Babeș-Bolyai University**, refused this outdated script. Our Summer School was built on a different assumption. The schedule itself told a story, and the story was conceived to be so clear that even a tired, slightly overwhelmed student could feel the energy arc from day one.

The theme of the Summer School was of the most acute- the disrupting technology of drones and space industry- and its applications in everyone's life. Drone techology- beyond the hype- is an existencial inflection point of the most pressing kind, the importance of which does not need to be further stressed.

Space Tech evolves, nowadays, under our very eyes, into the private enterprise sector and becomes more and more a fact of our daily lives.

JULY 2026

WEEK 1

ZENITH 2026

International
Aerospace
Summer
School

TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO VALUE

Week 1. The launch pad ...

MODULE 1- GET ACQUAINTED, BREAK THE ICE

John Snow Hall became the base for the Summer School. And then, pronto, Diana & George Cristea (UBB), from the Babeș-Bolyai University, kicked things up with "**Let's Begin!, Mission: Connect – Building bridges, shaping community**" a friendly intro and a carefully designed bridge-building exercise.

Students learned to let go, to lower inner barriers, to quit introvertism for the next four weeks (or attenuate it). They also learned how to be able to work in a team with the team members randomly assigned to them. This is how you'll start shaping the community you'll rely on for the next four weeks.

And then, scalling up- this is how you will learn how to make contacts and acquaintances in the real word, where connections matter.

Do not forget- YOUR NETWORK IS YOUR PROPELLANT.

These factors prompted the UBB TechTransfer team to choose them as the themes of this year's Summer School.

THE 4-WEEK RECAP:
WHAT WENT DOWN

Week 1

Week 1 grounded the student into the community and the core concepts. It established the Launch Pad, it enabled participants to get used to their Mission Control team- the crew of UBB TechTransfer. It made them engage on a stip learning curve, by getting them acquainted from the early stage with the core- the drone manufacturing firms.

Week 2

Week 2 was the Week of the Countdown. It expanded their horizon of knowledge into the space industry, offered niche knowledge on innovation funding, and a visit to a most serious actor of the drone business in Transylvania. At its end, in teams of four or five, students found out what their missions were- the challenges allocated to each team.

Week 3

Week 3 was the week of „Commit!". The dice were rolled, the die was cast, the point-of-no- return reached. Every participant knew by that time that if it stayed in the programme up to that point (and we will see what precisely made them stay!) they were in for the whole show. The pace accelerated, other session of inside knowledge and mentoring were organized, each team worked for a project.

Week 4

Week 4 ment the Liftoff. The Delivery. All led to Demo Day, the moment of truth, when the teams pitched their project in front of a jury of professionals. And so, ZENITH 2026 - International Aerospace Summer School cleared the launch pad.

MODULE 2- TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO VALUE

Kinga Hening, head of UBB TechTransfer briefly presented the university in an intro speach. Then, with a lecture **„How Ideas Travel: Understanding Ecosystems, Technology & Knowledge Transfer“** , Kinga showed how a spark of research becomes a product, a company, or a piece of technology that changes lives.

She drew a mental map of how universities, startups, and funding bodies actually interact—the invisible circuitry that powers innovation. Yes, a good idea needs a smart person behind it. But ideas travel through ecosystems, and students needed to know the terrain.

Day three was the day for the deep immersion into the ecosystem. The participants went on a field trip. First at the **BRAVEX** drone factory, where they could see the assembly line and discuss with specialists. The firm specializes in the design and fabrication of a vast array of drones: classical, jet-propelled, for different purposes: civilian, medical, agricultural, military (reconnaissance, anti-drone missions etc.). It was a hands-on approach of the tech and its problems (not among the least being the ethical ones).

No contrast could have been deeper between the BRAVEX plant- the technology of the future- and the deep dive participants took to the **Turda Gorges**- the Grand Canyon of the Cluj county. From the frontiers of the future they descended in depth and time with hundreds of meters and millions of years. The Turda Gorges are the timeless witnesses of geological epochs, of historical periods, there from time immemorial, serving as a reminder of what permanence means but also as a warning about the fragility of all things, technology included.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
BRAVEX


CSIKI
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URSUS
TechTransfer

In the first week, the participants got into contact with informations and knowledge that are not thaught at the regular courses in universities and of which they could not have a precise idea before, but that are indispensable in approaching an innovative tech business such as those that form the theme of the ZENITH 2026 -International Aerospace Summer School.

And what was on the menu of Week 1?
Only goodies: **Design Thinking & Problem Solving**, a workshop delivered by Adina Rus from EIT Digital Romania; then a seminar on **Business Modelling & Validation**, delivered by Călin Șipoș from Cluj Startups. Good ideas and creativity are not enough in the field of Aerospace tech. You need the ecosystem to support, validate, finance the foresaid ideas.

The session with Anca Roman from ADR-NV and the INNO Platform, **Innovation Support for Deep Tech and Aerospace: Connecting Startups, Ecosystems and Growth Opportunities** guided participants through the protocol for discovering those support pillars. Paul Zoicaș from Techcelerator exchanged ideas with the students on **Building Investment-Ready Startups: From Founder Communities to Deep Tech Opportunities** and then, Adrian Drăgan, from Transylvania Angel Network delivered **From Business Model to Investor Readiness: Building Trust and Attracting Support**, a practical guide on how to find the initial, be it angel investors and how to work with them.

The learning curve was steep, the main lesson – THE ECOSYSTEM HAS POWER

JULY 2026

WEEK 2

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TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO VALUE

Week 2. Countdown ...

MODULE 1- NICHE KNOWLEDGE

Two workshops added granularity to the theme and its collaterat aspects.
First, Simonel David from **ROSPIN** led **"Innovation: New Space Area"** a session that dismantled the old idea of space as a government only playground. Discussed were small satellites, commercial launch services, low and medium altitude orbits and the multiplying opportunities in low Earth orbit.

It was followed by **"Mission Control: Treasure Hunt"** a collaborative challenge disguised as a a scavenger hunt designed by aerospace engineers. Then, Raluca Coșcodaru and Oana Ionescu from **UEFISCDI** tackled a subject that trips up even brilliant innovators: funding. Their session, **"Innovation Funding: Finding the Right Call and Building Competitive Proposals"** guided participants through the maze of European and national funding instruments.

Call texts were demystified, eligibility criteria clarified, the art of crafting a proposal that doesn't just describe a good idea but persuades reviewers to fund it- was analysed. Emphasys was put on the linguistics of project drafting- since the language of projects is an autonomous and highly specialised one. Attention was drawn to key-words that absolutely must be placed in the project draft, about ideas and themes that are de rigueur in such a call.

Then they pivoted to **„Responsible Research and Innovation in the Digital Era”**, a framework that asks you to consider the societal impact of your work before the prototype leaves the lab. You'll leave with a workfow: identify a funding call, design a project around it, and embed ethical thinking from day zero.


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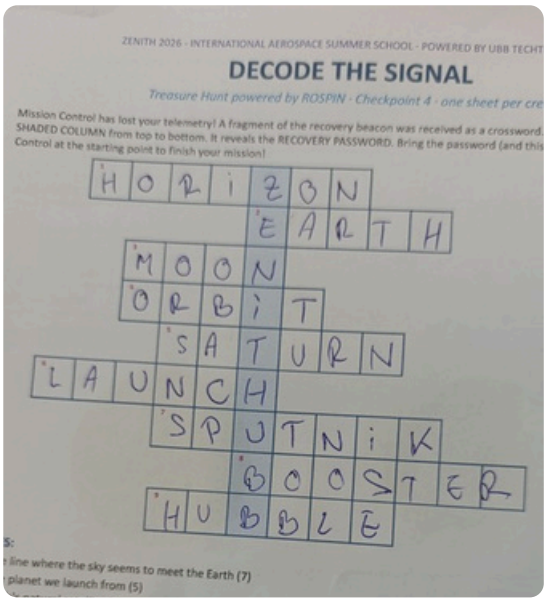
ZENITH 2026 · INTERNATIONAL AEROSPACE SUMMER SCHOOL · POWERED BY UBB TECHT
DECODE THE SIGNAL
Treasure Hunt powered by ROSPIN · Checkpoint 4 · one sheet per cre
Mission Control has lost your telemetry! A fragment of the recovery beacon was received as a crossword.
SHADED COLUMN from top to bottom. It reveals the RECOVERY PASSWORD. Bring the password (and this
Control at the starting point to finish your mission!
HORIZON
EARTH
MOON
ORBIT
SATURN
LAUNCH
SPUTNIK
BOOSTER
HUBBLE
line where the sky seems to meet the Earth (7)
planet we launch from (5)


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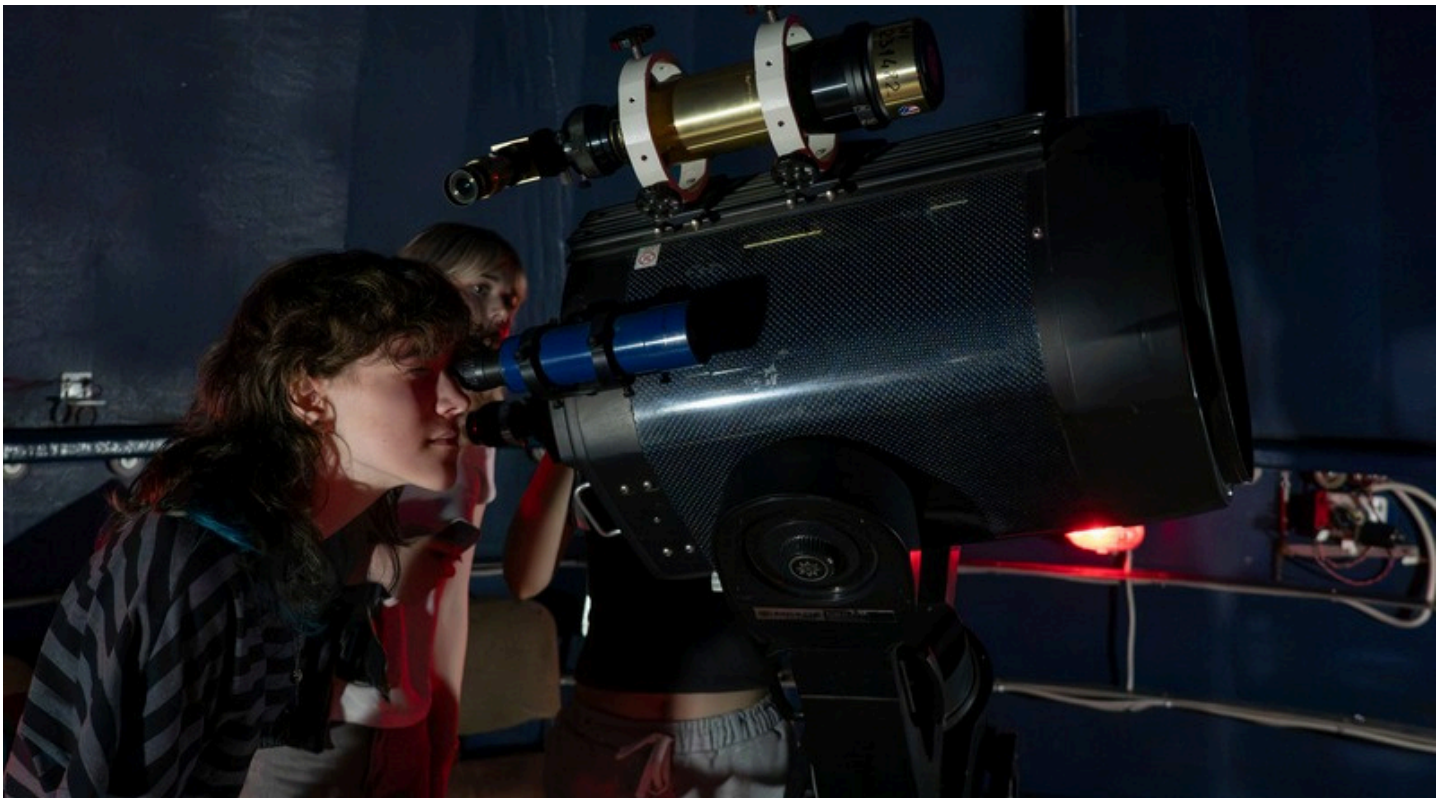
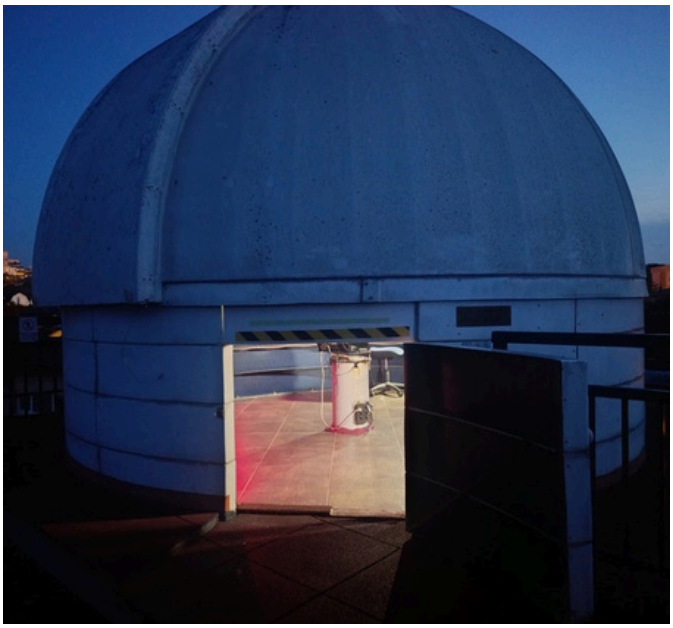
TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO VALUE!

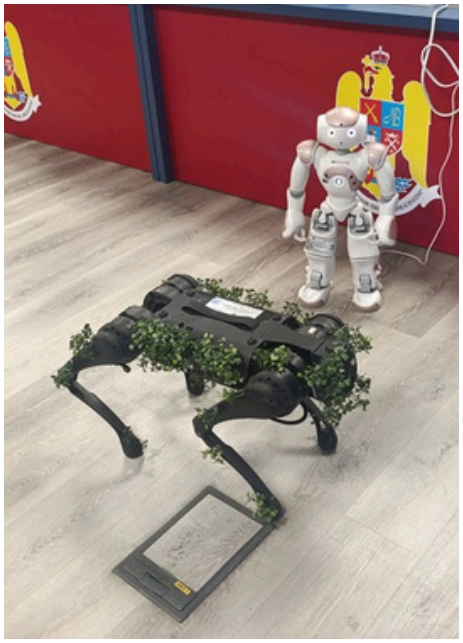
"A Night Under the Stars" seamed metaphorical but it wasn't.



MODULE 2- FIELD TRIPS TO THE ORIGINS OF THE UNIVERSE

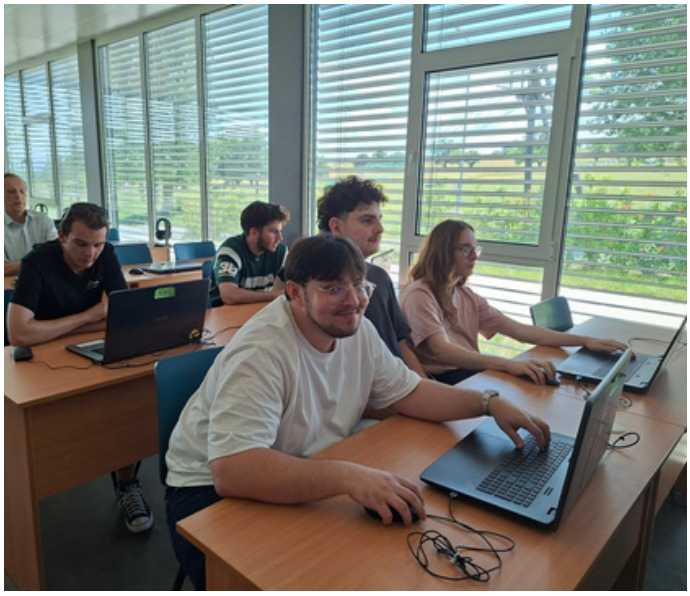
One beautiful night on July the 14th, when skies miraculously cleared after an overcast day, we headed to the Astronomic Observator on Cireșilor Street, where researchers **Liviu Mircea** from Babeș-Bolyai University and **Diana Laufer** from Givatayim Observatory Tel Aviv guided us through a tour of celestial wonders: planet Venus, Moon's craters, the Messier 13 Globular Star Cluster in the Hercules constellation, the Messier 57 Ring Nebula of Lyra, Arcturus, one of the brightest stars of the Northern hemisphere, the Messier 81 Galaxy of Ursa Maior.





A different experience met us when visiting the **"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy** in Sibiu.

Under the guidance of colonel Alexandru Baboș, the students had an extensive tour of the Academy, but the main point of interest the **Center for Training in Advanced Technologies**, where different capabilities and technologies are tested and put to use.



Challenge Reveal ...

MODULE 3- ORDER OF MISSION

Week two concluded on Friday when two drone manufacturing firms, **BRAVEX** and OVES Enterprise, one drone start-up, **Solomonar** and one hub, **ClujStartup** presented the challenges to the already formed teams. Due to the sensitive nature of the challenges, we will pass on their description. Suffice to say, this is when the countdown started. Participants now know their task. They know they have to work in a given time allocation. They must base their work on their general knowledge and on all the information they were transmitted up till now during the summer school.

GUIDANCE IS INTERNAL

JULY 2026

WEEK 3

ZENITH 2026

International
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TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO VALUE

Week 3. We have «commit!»

MODULE 1- DEEP WORK AND EXPERT NAVIGATION

After two weeks of accumulating, the participants haven't left. No one sounded the bell, no one gave up. Inspite of the beautiful, at times scorching, summer outside, they preffered the air conditioned inside of «Universitas» base. They knew that none of them will give up and that all will complete the task to the final.

Experienced mentors from the ecosystem- Smaranda Ignat (**SAVENSIA & PROPTECH**), Kinga Hening (**UBB TechTransfer**), Adina Rus (**28 Digital Romani**a) Călin Șipoș (**Cluj Startups**), Mircea Vădan (**BRAVEX**) and Simonel David **(ROSPIN**) supported the teams in their efforts to deliver on the missions.

Their experience helped students work around difficult points in their projects, get them down-to-earth when heads went too much above clouds and, generaly, maintaint the workflow in the domain of feasable.

Because by now, teams found themselves deep into the messy middle of each respective mission. Ideas that looked clean on the worksheet sprouted complications. That's normal. That's growth. The mentors weren't there to give answers; they were there to help frame better questions.

Remember: YOUR MENTOR IS YOUR FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR


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Market


rule
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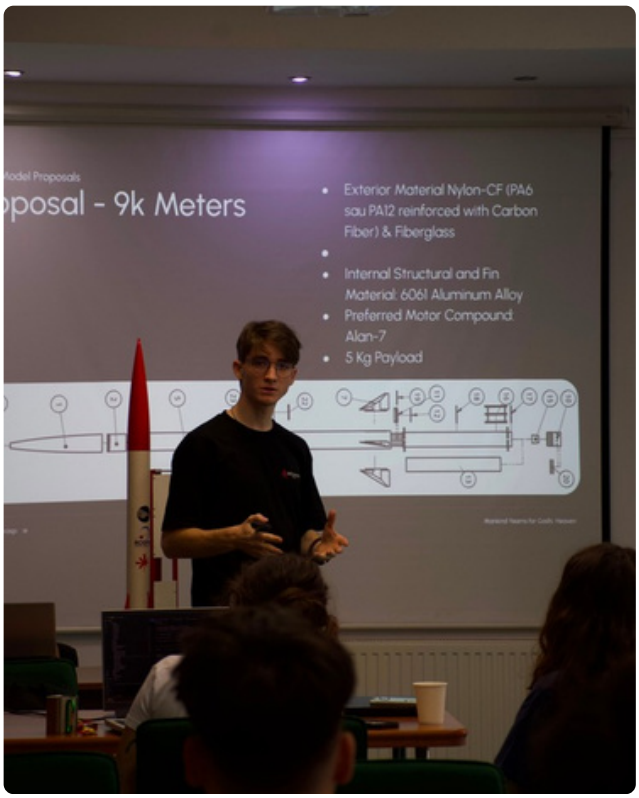
posal - 9k Meters
Exterior Material Nylon-CF (PA6 sau PA12 reinforced with Carbon Fiber) & Fiberglass
Internal Structural and Fin Material: 6061 Aluminum Alloy
Preferred Motor Compound: Alan-7
5 Kg Payload


Proprietate Intelectuală
& Viză etică

Eventhough centered on work, another two important workshops were organised.

MODULE 2- NICHE KNOWLEDGE

First, Gelu Vac, from **Defense-X**, the annual defense innovation event and hackathon hosted by the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy in Sibiu, Romania, elaborated in an interactive session on „**Innovation Beyond the Lab: Building Deep Tech Startups in Aerospace and Defence**". With his experience in technology transfer from classified military applications to civilian markets and *vice versa*, Gelu Vac touched the specific challenges of navigating dual-use regulations, long procurement cycles, and high-stakes testing environments.

Then, the best and most flamboyant trainer Babeș - Bolyai University can provide, namely professor Răzvan Chereches, from the School of Public Health, coached the participants into a secret art. „**How to pitch?**" analyzed every possible detail of this lesser-known art, from how to breathe while delivering to rehersal techniques, body posture, clothing, mimic, face expression, voice modulation, text to be rehearsed, pshycological tips for a better pitch- which, eventualy, makes or breaks the future of your project.

Finally, Mihai Mareș from La Înălțime Drone Academy presented „**From certification to career: Building the drone pilot ecosystem**" about how a specific skill set—drone piloting, certification, maintenance—can become an entire career infrastructure.

It should have been a F*ckup Night. But the name was already a brand, and it was already taken.

MODULE 3 - STORY NIGHT

Although, we must mention- f*ckups are good, especially when happening at early ages. The earlier it happens (and what is earlier for a professional than student life?) the better- you have all the time to rebound, to regenerate, to recuperate, to learn from the mistakes and apply the lessons for your future success. Just in the exact same way airplane incidents better happen at high altitude, where you have lots of air and meters between you and the ground for recovery.

So, we divised a **story night** instead.

And it has all worth it. The location was good- a splendid mansion kindly put at our disposal by the **Romanian Academy** - **the Cluj-Napoca Branch** - the bar was great- the soft drinks and fruit juices cold- and the speakers were of the highest status in their field of expertize.

Gelu Vac from **Defense-X** shared his experiences working in AI and technology innovation across healthcare and defense.

Ovidiu Rațiu is the CEO of **CDS Wirelles**- a spin-off deeply embeded in industrial applications for the space industry.

Claudiu Tănăselia is a researcher at **ICIA INOE2000** and the discoverer of asteroid (843293) Tănăselia.

The stories were interesting, the feedback lively, and the night, once again, beautiful and starry, after a cloudy day.

The evening was moderated by **Simonel-Olimpiu David** - Business Development Director at **ROSPIN**, DevOps engineer at COERA, working at the intersection of cloud infrastructure and Earth Observation.


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WEEK 4

ZENITH 2026

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TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO VALUE

Week 4. Liftoff

MODULE MEMENTO- AI AIN'T RIGHT ALL THE TIME

Work. Work. Work... And work.

All for the Demo Day. The Day of the Pitch. The Day of Truth. Everything but the mission striped away. The schedule, with one exception, read the same line every morning: "Team work on business challenge with mentors." This is by design. Explaining the project. Preparing. Building. Decisions happened faster. Debates got shorter and sharper.

The accumulated trust of three weeks of collaboration began to show. Team work. One team member polishing the pitch deck, another one stress-tests the financial model. Someone else timing rehearsals. The room develops a rhythm. Simplify. Cut one slide. Add another. Reorder the opening story. The secret to a great Demo Day pitch is ruthless clarity.

One sharp reminder- lecturer Dana Cristolțan guest session about the fact that ***„Not Every Mental Health Technology Works: Why Evidence-Based Validation Matters“***. It was an unexpected angle in an aerospace summer school, and that was exactly the point. Innovation in any field—including mental health tech—requires rigorous validation. It is about fundamental questions: How do we know your solution actually solves the problem? What's our evidence? It's a gift of perspective from a domain you might never have explored otherwise.

At **StartUp Spotlight** we were joined by the team from @**Redshift Aerospace** (Lucas Toma Lucas, Rotariu Șerban, and Mureșan Sergio) and by Erik Maidik from **CO2 Angels**, who shared their journey as young techpreneurs, their successes, mistakes and how they overcame them.

And then...

... and then...

DEMO DAY

Where everything worked perfectly, all presentations functioned without a glitch, every oral presentation was exactly in time and not a second more. And all were straight to the point.

And the winners were: all the participating students.

Because the knowledge accumulated in the four weeks at the ZENITH 2026 - International Aerospace Summer School organized by UBB TechTransfer will (hopefully) benefit all of them. And the experience. The friendships. The network (which is your propelant, remember?).


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MEET THE JURY: Colonel Alexandru BABOȘ, Oana BUZATU, Simonel DAVID, Călin ȘIPOȘ and Mircea VĂDAN.


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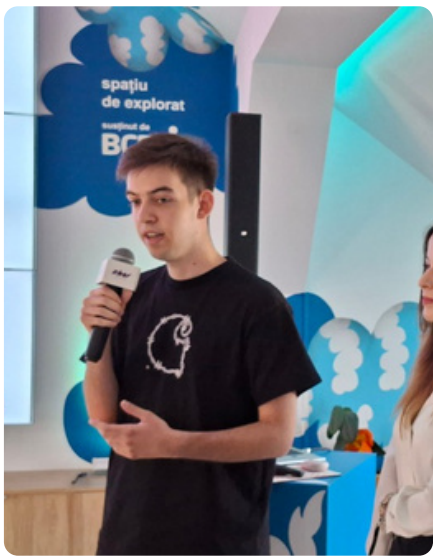
spațiu
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SPACE EDUCATION
WITHOUT BORDERS


Industry &
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Partnerships


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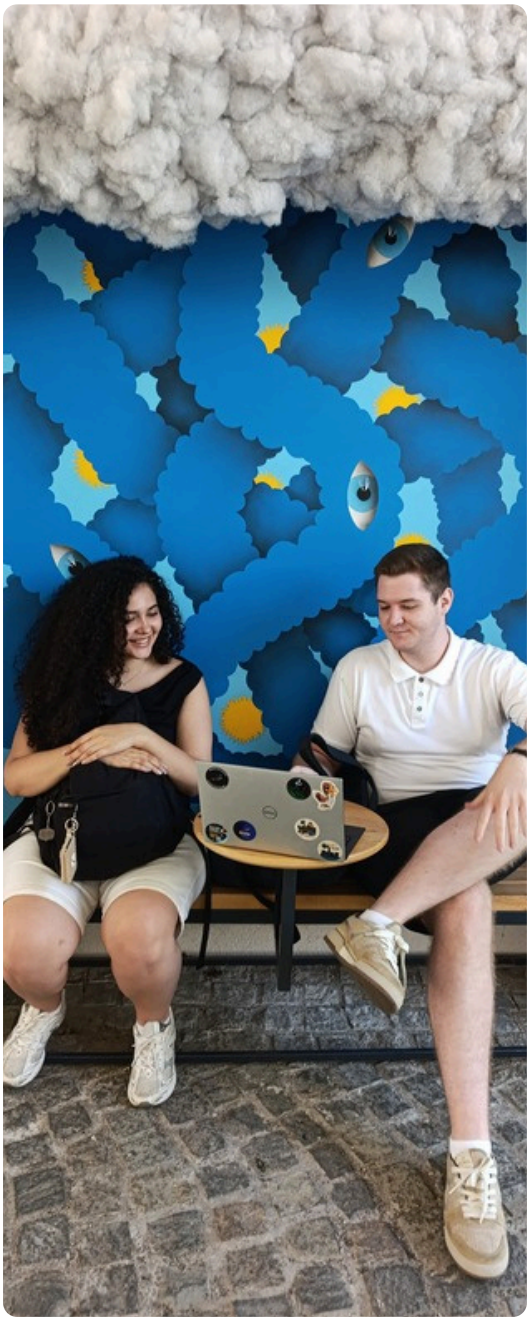


spațiu
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And the winners were:

- **Team SKYSHIELD**- Ist Prize
- **Team CATS**- IInd Prize
- **Team ADAPTIVE TRACKING-** IIIrd Prize

After action report

ZENITH 2026 - International Aerospace Summer School, organized by UBB TechTransfer has cleared the pad**.**

We, at Mission Control of the operation, are expecting next year's volunteers for other, inciting adventures into science and knowledge.

UBB TechTransfer Mission Control:

- **Kinga Hening**- Head of UBB TechTransfer
- **Alina Guliciuc**- Tech Transfer Officer
- **Horațiu Damian**- Tech Transfer Officer
- **Páll-Szabó Ferenc**- Tech Transfer Officer

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