Ares 2/25: the Ariete Brigade creates the new armored generation

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In the heart of the **Cellina-Meduna** range, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, the live-fire exercise "**Ares 2/25**" took place in recent days, involving a unit of the **132nd Tank Regiment** of the Armored Brigade "Ariete". The training activity represents one of the most significant milestones in the training path of new tankers and is part of a broader operational preparation program in view of full integration into the rapid response capabilities of the Atlantic Alliance.

For the newly assigned soldiers to the unit, "Ares 2/25" marked the conclusion of two intense weeks of training, structured in different modes and scenarios. The units operated on multiple levels: "virtual" activities, using the advanced simulation system **VBS3**, "blank" exercises for tactical coordination, and a continuous nighttime phase aimed at testing command, orientation, and combat capabilities in uncertain and hostile operational contexts.

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This modular methodology, alternating between simulated and real environments, aims to progressively enhance the crews' capabilities, with particular attention to interoperability and risk management in complex scenarios. The Cellina-Meduna, due to its size and versatility, confirms itself as an excellent range in the national training landscape, capable of supporting both tactical and technical-logistical training of armored vehicles.

The exercise is not an isolated episode but an integral part of the Ariete Brigade's training calendar, in preparation for the future **NATO “Tier 2” certification**, which requires full operational readiness for deployment in collective defense missions. In this perspective, the tank units will also be engaged in further large-scale training events in Italy and abroad in the coming months.

But the range is just one of the two tracks along which the transformation of the Italian heavy component moves. The second concerns the **development of new next-generation tanks**, at the center of the strategic collaboration between Italy and Germany.

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The future is armored: 100 new tanks by 2029

Alongside the training evolution, the Italian Army is preparing for a **historic technological transition**, thanks to the industrial project shared between **Leonardo** and **Rheinmetall**, aimed at deeply renewing the national armored fleet. By 2029, in fact, the **delivery of the first 100 new tanks** is expected, with an estimated total value of over **20 billion euros** in the coming years.

The scope of the project was outlined by **Roberto Cingolani**, CEO of Leonardo, in an interview with the German newspaper *Der Spiegel*. The new combat system will be based on the **Panther KF-51** tank, a modular platform developed by Rheinmetall, equipped with network connectivity capabilities with **drones, satellites, and other digital assets**. The goal is to provide the Army with an armored system capable of operating in a multi-domain scenario, integrating sensors, digital commands, and advanced protection.

The KF51 Panther: The revolutionary Tank for the Italian Army - brigatafolgore.net

Leonardo Rheinmetall Military Vehicles: a concrete joint venture

The implementation of the program is entrusted to the **joint venture Leonardo Rheinmetall Military Vehicles (LRMV)**, with its registered office in **Rome** and production plant in **La Spezia**. The cooperation model is distinguished by the balance in the distribution of activities: **60% of operations will be carried out in Italy**, the remaining **40% in Germany**. It is an already operational agreement, with defined roles and timelines, breaking the traditional slowness of European programs.

Not surprisingly, the difference with the **MGCS** (Main Ground Combat System) program is clear. The latter, promoted by France and Germany, is still stuck at the conceptual phase, while Italy and Germany have already defined production lines, objectives, and investments. “The difference is that the Mgcs is just an announcement. We already know how to divide the work over the next fifteen years,” said Cingolani.

A new model for Europe?

In the context of a European defense often slowed down by **industrial fragmentation** and **political divergences**, the LRMV model proposes itself as a **concrete laboratory of cooperation**. Not just a bilateral agreement, but a potential example for other future projects. In a Europe seeking a new strategic centrality, the Italian path to armored modernization stands out for pragmatism, speed, and vision.

In conclusion, while the young tankers of the 132nd hone their operational skills in the field, the future of the Army is also being built in workshops, laboratories, and decision-making centers where the new generation of Italian armored vehicles takes shape. From the firing line to the Panther, Italy is taking steps towards a more modern, lethal, and interconnected land force.

News link: https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/ruestung-manager-roberto-cingolani-ueber-verteidigung-nicht-zulassen-dass-die-nato-zerfaellt-a-78c026e6-cd5c-4ec7-a331-96b09487de27