

AsterX 2025: the Space Dimension of Military Defense

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The fifth edition of **AsterX 2025**, the military space exercise organized by the **French Space Command (Commandement de l'Espace - CDE)**, successfully concluded, taking place from **March 17 to 28, 2025** at the **Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES)** in **Toulouse**. The event, increasingly significant in the landscape of military space operations, saw a **marked international participation**, with **personnel from 12 partner nations**. Among these, Italy stood out, represented by the **Defense Space Operations Command (COS)**, an entity under the **Joint Operational Command (COVI)**, which operated with professionalism, competence, and a full spirit of international cooperation.

AsterX has now established itself as an essential platform for testing, training, and coordinating space capabilities in the military field. The 2025 edition involved **170 participants**, both military and civilian, with the aim of consolidating the operational readiness of CDE personnel and allies in conducting space operations in increasingly **complex, realistic, and multi-**

domain scenarios. This type of exercise reflects a growing strategic awareness: **space is a fully operational domain**, to be protected and used to effectively support activities in the air, on land, at sea, and in cyberspace.



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2. Italy at the Forefront: the Role of COS in the Exercise

The exercise was divided into two distinct phases: the first simulated a **French national response** to emerging threats in a competitive environment; the second focused on **cooperation with allies**, addressing scenarios of direct confrontation in a coalition logic. This transition from a national to an integrated approach allowed for concrete testing of interoperability mechanisms among the space forces of partner countries.

Italy played a leading role in the exercise. Two **Officers from the Defense Space Operations Command** were fully integrated into the international setup, holding **key positions in two of the main operational "cells"**. One Officer from the **COS** was designated as the **Director of the Space Command of the "GREEN" cell**, a simulated element representing the space support of an allied country. The other Officer, from the **Joint Interforce Management and Control SICRAL Center (CIGC SICRAL)**, assumed the role of **intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) manager** in the future planning team of the "BLUE" cell.

The exercise offered a complex scenario with **4,000 simulated space objects**, **18 events in different orbits**, and **10 types of threats**, including cyber threats. The challenges included

the **release of hostile nano-satellites**, **attacks on friendly satellite infrastructures**, and the threat of **ground-based air defense systems**, demonstrating how crucial the defense of space assets is in the modern operational context.



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3. Interoperability and Future: Towards an Integrated Space Defense

One of the central elements of AsterX 2025 was the strong focus on **multi-domain integration** . The presence of **Liaison Officers** from the air, land, maritime, and cyber sectors ensured essential operational synergy. This approach allowed for the active and coordinated function of space support to other components, adapting available resources to the specific tactical needs of each domain.

Italy's contribution was not limited to participation but represented a **strategic investment in the development of military space capabilities**. The experience gained by the two COS Officers in a high-tech international context had a concrete impact on interoperability, information sharing, and the strengthening of technical skills.

The importance of AsterX 2025 lies in its ability to **anticipate future conflicts**, where space will be a **fully operational theater**. In this context, Italy's presence in exercises of this magnitude confirms the **will to be a protagonist** in international space security and in maintaining informational and operational superiority in all domains, **while simultaneously strengthening strategic cooperation with top-tier allies**.

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