



Counter-UAS: SMARTSHOOTER integrates optronic sight on Benelli rifle

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TEL AVIV / URBINO — Israeli company **SMARTSHOOTER**, which specializes in the development of computational fire-control systems (Fire Control Systems - FCS), has announced the successful integration of its advanced **SMASH** optic onto a smoothbore shotgun manufactured by Italian firm **Benelli Armi S.p.A.**. The news marks a significant development in the use of *shotgun* platforms for C-UAS (Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems) missions, combining the effective range of shot ammunition with the guided precision of next-generation optronics.

Benelli Armi: Made in Italy excellence in international defense

Industry verification confirms the manufacturer's Italian identity beyond doubt. Founded in 1967 in **Urbino**, in the Marche region, Benelli Armi S.p.A. is one of the pillars of Italy's firearms industry. Having joined the **Beretta Holding** group in 1983, the company is historically renowned for its patented inertia system and for producing hunting and defensive shotguns used by military and police forces worldwide.

Among its most iconic platforms is the **Benelli M4 Super 90**, a patented gas-operated semi-automatic shotgun (Auto-Regulating Gas-Operated - ARGO), adopted in 1999 by the United States Marine Corps under the official designation **M1014** and now fielded by numerous NATO elite units.



SMASH technology: the algorithm in support of target engagement

Integration on a Benelli platform expands the application scope of the SMASH suite, which has so far been extensively tested and deployed on rifled assault rifles and crew-served weapons.

Unlike traditional aiming optics or reflex/red-dot systems, the SMARTSHOOTER system uses computer-vision algorithms and dynamic tracking:

1. **Target lock-on:** The operator sights the threat (a micro- or mini-drone used for FPV or reconnaissance) and selects the target through the optic's interface.
2. **Predictive calculation:** The processing unit continuously calculates the target's trajectory and the optimal firing solution, compensating for the movement of both the operator and the threat.
3. **Electronic trigger enablement:** The trigger mechanism is controlled by the optic, which unlocks the firing pin and releases the shot **exclusively** at the precise moment when the probability of impact (P_k - *Probability of Kill*) reaches the preset calculation threshold.

Applying this technology to smoothbore shotgun ammunition makes it possible to optimize the area saturation provided by shot or buckshot at close range, eliminating human error in estimating lead against high-speed drones with erratic flight paths.



Operational applications and testing of the SMASH suite

Integration on the Benelli shotgun is part of a SMASH technology development plan aimed at covering multiple engineering and tactical levels:

- **SMASH 2000 (Individual rifled assault rifles):** Operational qualification achieved by U.S. troops (US Army, US Air Force, USMC) and Belgian armed forces during the *Joint Multi-Domain C-UAS* course at the Grafenwoehr training range in Germany.
- **SMASH 3000 (Heavy machine guns):** Successfully tested during the joint *Project VANAHEIM/FLYTRAP* exercises (UK-U.S., 2025), demonstrating the ability to intercept drones at operational ranges of up to 400 meters.
- **SMASH Hopper (Remote weapon stations - RCWS):** A remotely operated turret module integrated and installed on tactical reconnaissance vehicles to provide mobile coverage for units.
- **SMASH Shotgun (Benelli semi-automatic shotgun):** A new configuration adapted to a smoothbore platform for point defense and very short-range C-UAS engagements using shot ammunition.

Although SMARTSHOOTER has not specified the particular Benelli shotgun variant used in laboratory testing, nor whether supply contracts are already active for this specific configuration, the pairing confirms the global trend toward turning conventional firearms into active nodes for short- and very-short-range air defense (SHORAD/VSHORAD).