Defense and Investments: On May 31st, Does Italy Risk a Technological Standstill?

Published on 16/05/2026

Faced with an increasingly complex international scenario, the main tool for modernizing our Armed Forces risks running dry for the first time in ten years. The days to avoid the blockade are very limited.

A **machine that risks stopping** after a decade of uninterrupted running, just as the rest of Europe accelerates military spending. This is the uncertain scenario looming over the future of the Defense and Security sector in Italy.

At the center of the issue is the **Fund for the implementation of multi-year investment programs for national defense needs**: the true technological, industrial, and operational engine of the Italian military instrument.

The history of a strategic fund

To understand the importance of this tool, it is necessary to take a step back and look at its financial evolution, which began well before the recent geopolitical tensions in Eastern Europe:

- **2016 (Renzi Government - Minister Pinotti):** The Fund is established with Law no. 232, laying the foundations for long-term military investment planning.
- **2020 (Conte II Government - Minister Guerini):** With Law no. 178, the tool is reintroduced and reshaped with a **fifteen-year horizon**. A strategic and forward-looking move, made before the Russian aggression in Ukraine.
- **2021-2025:** The Fund is annually refinanced consistently, ensuring the continuity of modernization programs and the certainty of orders.
- **2026: The stopping point.** For the current year, no funding has been allocated in the national budget law.

Defense and Investments: Does Italy risk a technological standstill? The uncertainty of the May 31st deadline

The uncertainty of the European SAFE Fund and the countdown

The decision not to fund the national Fund for 2026 is linked to a specific European gamble. It has been decided to freeze internal resources while waiting to tap into the **European SAFE Fund**, a financial flexibility tool strongly requested from Brussels by the current Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto.

However, time is running out. The final deadline to formally activate the request and access these funds is set for **next May 31st**.

If the Government does not formalize the request within the deadline, the European resources will not arrive, and the national Fund will remain unfunded for the first time after five consecutive years of refinancing.

What's at stake: security and high technology

The consequences of not unlocking the funds would not only reflect on the operational and logistical readiness of our units but would have a profound impact on the entire country system:

- **Military Programs:** Crucial modernization projects for all Armed Forces are at risk, starting with a historically penalized sector like the Army.
- **Industrial Impact:** The Defense sector is one of the main drivers for high technology and the Italian mechanical industry. Without funds, our technological supply chain risks losing international competitiveness.
- **International Context:** While Italy finds itself at a bureaucratic crossroads, European partners like Spain, Germany, and the main EU countries have already launched massive and historic military modernization plans to respond to the complex global geopolitical situation.

Towards May 31st

The clock is ticking. There are very few days left to a deadline that **will determine Italy's geopolitical weight and industrial credibility in the European strategic chessboard**. The hope is that the bureaucratic and political machine moves in time, avoiding projecting the image of an uncertain Italy unable to look to the future with the foresight that the times require.