



Defense Boom and Orbital Autonomy: the Industrial Response Between Planet Labs' Global Expansion and Italy's Space Supply Chain

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Berlin / Rome — While in Berlin, California-based **Planet Labs** inaugurated a new high-resolution satellite factory to meet growing European defense security and intelligence needs, Italy is playing a leading role in the geopolitical and industrial space landscape. The drive for strategic autonomy and the reduction of external technological dependencies is underpinned by the national industrial supply chain, a key and competitive pillar.

Details of Planet Labs' international investment

- **A multimillion-euro investment:** CEO Will Marshall described the investment as an “eight-figure sum” in euros to establish technical capabilities in Berlin.
- **Doubling production:** The new facility aims to produce high-resolution Pelican optical satellites at a maximum rate of 60 units per year, doubling the company's global output.

- **Growth in the defense sector:** Today, defense accounts for approximately 60% of the company's business, with growth accelerated by the Ukraine crisis and declining U.S. support for European security.

Italy's position and competition from domestic companies

In this race for orbital autonomy, Italy is not standing by and is fielding an advanced, integrated industrial ecosystem. Driven by the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy and the Italian Space Agency (ASI), the country aims to strengthen a sovereign European supply chain — an alternative to non-European giants such as Starlink — capable of competing directly in international markets.

A symbol of this drive is represented by figures such as **David Avino** (founder and CEO of Argotec and former officer of the Brigata Paracadutisti "Folgore"), whose career combines military discipline and strategic vision with cutting-edge technological innovation. Around facilities such as Argotec's *SpacePark* on the outskirts of Turin and Sitael's *Space Factory* in Mola di Bari (one of Europe's most advanced facilities for satellite integration and testing), Italy's industry draws on a dense network of excellence.

Key players in this "constellation of constellations" include:

- **Thales Alenia Space and Telespazio:** long-standing leaders in the manufacture of major space systems, Earth observation services, and the management of complex orbital infrastructure.
- **Argotec:** a leading developer of high-performance microsatellites (also a key player in major programs such as the IRIDE constellation and planetary defense missions).
- **Sitael:** a center of excellence in electric propulsion and serial satellite production.
- **Officina Stellare and Exprivia:** leaders respectively in advanced optics/space telescopes and the analysis and management of advanced digital data flows.

A European and sovereign response

While Germany is allocating substantial resources (such as the 35 billion euros planned through 2030 for communications and observation) and is focusing on programs such as *Spock 2*, Italy has demonstrated that it possesses the technological know-how and industrial capabilities

already proven in the field to play a leading role. The synergy between military expertise, strategic vision and industrial innovation thus enables Europe to chart a concrete course toward genuine technological and space sovereignty.

[Interview with Argotec CEO David Avino - Space Park](#)