Drones: France and Ukraine accelerate, Italy urgently needs to implement a National Industrial Plan

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The news, anticipated by *FranceInfo Dimanche*, is sensational: the French car manufacturer Renault will establish a plant for drone production in Ukraine. According to the announcement made last Friday by the French Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu, the production will take place in collaboration with an SME in the defense sector and will be located a few dozen kilometers from the front. The drones will be destined for the Ukrainian army but also for the French one, which will use them for training purposes.

The European race in the drone war

The initiative responds to a concrete need: by 2025 Ukraine plans to deploy over **4.5 million drones**, responsible – according to estimates – for **70% of the destruction of Russian equipment on the front line**. Drones are no longer an elite tool but a **low-cost shock mass**,

adaptable, expendable, devastating.

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A striking proof came a few days ago, with **Operation Spider Web**, conducted by the Ukrainian secret services (SBU) with FPV drones: an attack that annihilated part of the Russian air fleet, bypassing electronic countermeasures thanks to anti-GPS technologies developed by companies like Sine.Engineering. The event shook Western defenses, so much so that the Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, Gen. David Allvin, declared: *"It makes us realize how the idea of impenetrable military sanctuaries is now obsolete."*

France and Germany are moving. What about Italy?

The attack triggered deep reflection in Western capitals. In the United States, there is discussion on how to adopt the same offensive approach, less sophisticated but more effective. In Germany, the Bundeswehr has already launched a plan for the rapid acquisition of kamikaze and economical drones, adopting the principle of **Software Defined Defence**: the value is in the software, not just in the hardware.

And Italy? Despite the **high concentration of companies with specific know-how in the UAV sector**, **a national strategy for the industrial production of military drones** is still lacking, particularly swarm, autonomous, or kamikaze drones.

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Italian industrial capabilities are there

The potential is not lacking. Some of the main Italian companies active in the sector include:

- **Italdron** (Ravenna): specialized in the design and construction of highly innovative professional drones.
- **DroneBase** (Rimini): active since 2012, boasts experience in the production and customization of UAVs.
- **Flytop**: focused on civil and smart city applications, but with dual-use technologies.
- **Nimbus**: at the forefront of research and development for technological drones.
- **Dronus**: innovative start-up developing “drone-in-a-box” solutions, perfect for automated operations.
- **DIFLY**: focused on next-generation drones with extended autonomy.
- **Leonardo**: the main player in national defense, producer of the Falco EVO and partner in the European Eurodrone program.
- **Piaggio Aerospace**: collaborates with Leonardo on the P2HH Hammerhead drone.

Despite this landscape, **none of these entities have yet been involved in a national program for the mass production of military drones**. Initiatives remain isolated, often relegated to prototypes or experimental projects.

What does the Ministry of Defense say?

The **Multi-Year Defense Program Document** mentions allocations for drones and UAS, but lacks an **integrated strategic vision**. There is no plan – to date – to develop a **military drone industrial chain**, with quantitative objectives, clear roles, and coordination between companies, universities, and armed forces. While **France, Germany, and the United States adopt modular, scalable, and adaptive models**, Italy remains tied to slow and centralized industrial processes.

Yet, the lesson from Ukraine is clear: **war is fought with agility and distributed intelligence**, not just with firepower.

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Drones: software before hardware

The Ukrainian success shows that effectiveness lies not only in the physical platform but in its ability to adapt. Real-time feedback from the trenches allows for continuous updates. “Every day we receive data from those in the trenches. This way we can evolve faster than the enemy,” explain Ukrainian engineers Andriy Chulyk and Andriy Zvirko.

This principle, which **overturns the paradigm of Western military procurement**, is at the heart of General Allvin's reflections: “Not everything has to be sophisticated. It just needs to generate an effect.” The same goes for the Chief of Staff of the US Army, Gen. Randy George,

who has harshly criticized the slowness of procurement: “Technology evolves in the pocket, not in the corridors of the Pentagon.”

Towards an industrial and doctrinal revolution

The 100,000 euro drone is not always more useful than a hundred 1,000 euro drones. Ukraine, France, Germany have understood this. Italy will have to choose whether to **remain anchored to legacy models** or **embrace an industrial and doctrinal revolution**. To do so, the following are needed:

- **A national consortium for the military drone**, bringing together Leonardo, SMEs, and universities.
- **An extraordinary fund** to accelerate prototypes, testing, and production.
- **A training and experimentation center** dedicated to autonomous warfare, in line with what the Ukrainian army is already doing.

The drone war is already a reality. Renault has understood it, Paris is moving, Berlin accelerates. Italy has the industrial capabilities, but must decide whether to put them at the service of a new military strategy. Without concrete and coordinated action, the risk is to remain **spectators of a revolution** that rewrites the rules of conflict every day.

News link: https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2025/06/08/renault-produce-droni-da-guerra-ucraina-esercito-francese-ultime-notizie/8019533/