Germany Accelerates on Military Starlink: An Opportunity for Italy Too

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January 26, 2026 — Berlin pushes for strategic autonomy in military space. According to press leaks and a company confirmation, **Rheinmetall** and **OHB** are discussing a possible cooperation to participate in future public tenders related to a **German military satellite network** in low orbit, designed to ensure secure and resilient communications for the **Bundeswehr**, with ambitions comparable to those of Starlink. The dossier is part of the German plan of **35 billion euros by 2030** for defense space capabilities.

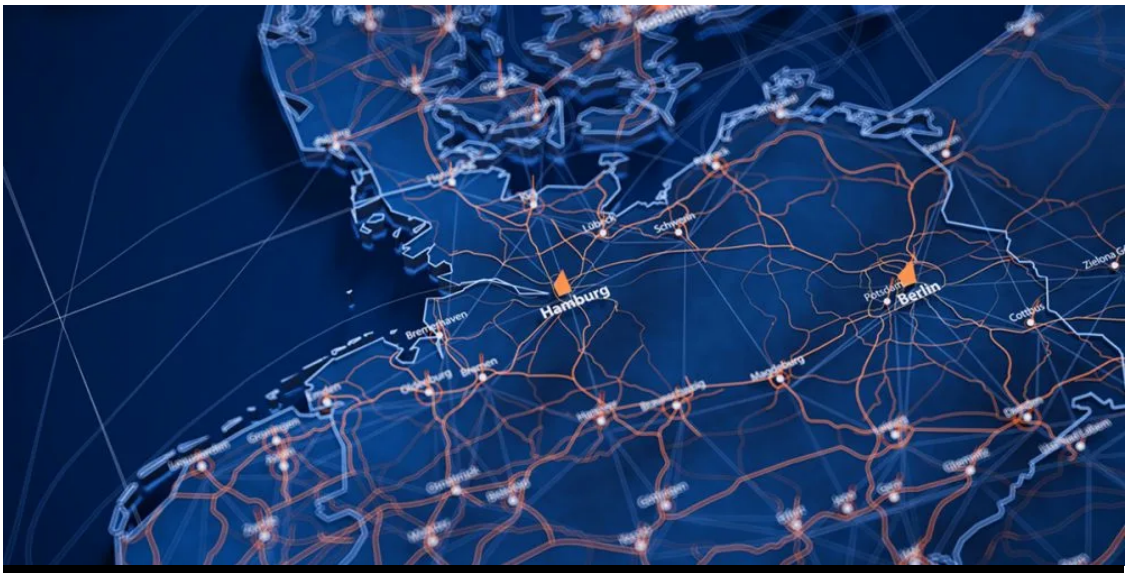
The truly significant element, however, is not just national: if this constellation were to emerge as a German "sovereign" infrastructure, it could risk becoming a de facto standard in Europe. For this reason, **Italy should collaborate from the start**, aiming for an industrial and operational role in the program, instead of merely observing from the outside.

A Project Destined to Set a Precedent in Europe

The logic of the LEO constellation is clear: **low latency, dense coverage, redundancy** and greater service continuity even in degraded scenarios. It is a leap compared to traditional systems in geostationary orbit, valuable but more exposed to saturation and with different latency profiles.

If Germany proceeds quickly (there is talk of already defined requirements and upcoming tenders), the program could:

- set replicable technical and security requirements elsewhere,
- catalyze the European supply chain on terminals, ground segments, and cyber,
- guide NATO and European interoperability choices.



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Why Italy Should Be Involved: Three Concrete Reasons

1) Autonomy and European Strategic “Weight”

A European military LEO infrastructure cannot be credible if it remains the project of a single country. Joining as a partner gives Italy a voice on governance, security requirements, operational priorities, and rules of engagement.

2) Synergy with Already Mature Italian Capabilities

Italy has solid expertise in **government satcom**, **ground segment**, **system integration**, and operations (in addition to a broad industrial ecosystem). Even if the core of the project is LEO broadband, the game is won on what “surrounds” the satellites: terminals, networks, cyber,

management, training, service continuity.

3) Industrial Economy: Jobs and Technology Where It Really Matters

Constellations are not just “satellites”: they are mass production, supply chain, software, cryptography, ground stations, maintenance, services. A late entry risks leaving Italy with only marginal subcontracts.

How Italy Can Collaborate (in a Useful and Negotiable Way)

Here are the most realistic pillars for an Italy–Germany collaboration that is not symbolic:

- **Ground Segment and Operations**: design/management of control stations and gateways, monitoring and operational continuity services, with centers in Italy as a European redundant node.
- **Terminals and Tactical Networks**: field terminals for land and naval forces, platform integration, spectrum/interference management, and cyber/anti-jamming hardening.
- **Security and Cryptography**: “zero trust” architectures, key management, certifications, and European supply chain security.
- **Integration with Italian and European Assets**: interoperability with national systems (satcom and sensors) and with EU initiatives, avoiding duplicates and making the constellation “federable.”
- **Production and Components**: contribution to payload, subsystems, space electronics, network and orchestration software, with industrial shares bound from the start.

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The Political Condition: Not “Buying a Service,” but Co-Designing It

To truly matter, Italy should set the collaboration on three key clauses:

- **co-governance** (access to requirements, roadmap, crisis management),
- **measurable industrial impacts** (workshare, IP, production),
- **operational sovereignty** (guaranteed access, priority in emergencies, multi-node resilience).

Conclusion

Germany is opening a trajectory that could become the backbone of European military communications in low orbit. For Italy, the choice is not between “joining or not,” but between **entering now to influence architecture and supply chain** or arriving later, when standards and contracts are already written.

News link: https://unn.ua/en/news/european-starlink-alternative-rheinmetall-and-ohb-to-create-their-own-internet-network-for-the-german-army