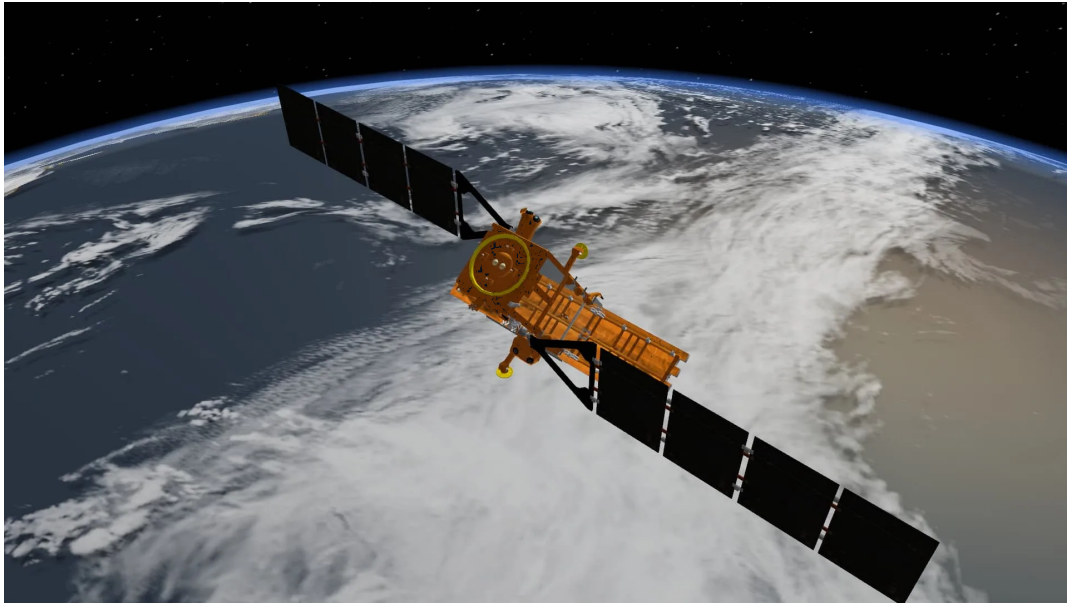




Italy "covers" Ukraine from space: radar intelligence in new arms package

Published on 20/10/2026

As possible disruptions or limitations to the support provided by Elon Musk's American Starlink satellite system are feared, Italy is stepping in with its thirteenth military aid package for Ukraine, providing a top-tier technological contribution: access to its own “eyes” in space. Specifically, the Italian government will provide Volodymyr Zelensky's troops with access to imagery from **two radar satellites in the Cosmo-SkyMed constellation**. These are high-tech satellites, built by Thales Alenia Space (a Leonardo-Thales joint venture), operated by the Italian Space Agency (ASI) and funded by the Ministry of Defense.

How they work and why they are essential

Unlike the Starlink network (which provides internet connectivity through a megaconstellation of around 10,000 satellites), Cosmo-SkyMed satellites perform **radar intelligence and reconnaissance** functions:

- **High-definition imaging:** They have excellent resolution, capable of detecting extremely small targets.
- **All-weather and nighttime capability:** They can capture clear images by day, at night, with skies obscured by clouds or rain, and even during storms.
- **Tactical support in the field:** They enable the precise location of Russian military vehicles, trenches, and enemy positions, facilitating the command of Ukrainian drones and artillery units.

The constellation's latest satellite was launched at the start of the year (January 2) from Vandenberg, California, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The agreement's limits and the "red line"

The confidential agreement between the Italian government and Kyiv sets out precise rules:

1. **Access limited to Ukrainian territory:** Kyiv's forces will have access only to satellite intelligence concerning Ukrainian territory.
2. **Ban on attacks inside Russian territory:** Intelligence provided by Italy **must not** be used to guide offensives or air strikes within Russia's borders. This impassable "red line" has been set to avoid direct involvement in the escalation of the conflict.

The strategic picture and the new package

Access to Cosmo-SkyMed technology has already been successfully tested in the past (the government extended the use of the data nearly five years ago). The need to strengthen this collaboration also became clear in light of U.S. political dynamics and uncertainty over the continuity of U.S. intelligence provision.

In addition to satellite capabilities, the new Italian aid package submitted for review by Copasir includes:

- A batch of munitions for **Samp-T** anti-missile batteries.
- Additional technical and electrical support.