Italy focuses on spy satellites: €640 million plan to secure space

Published on 16/03/2026

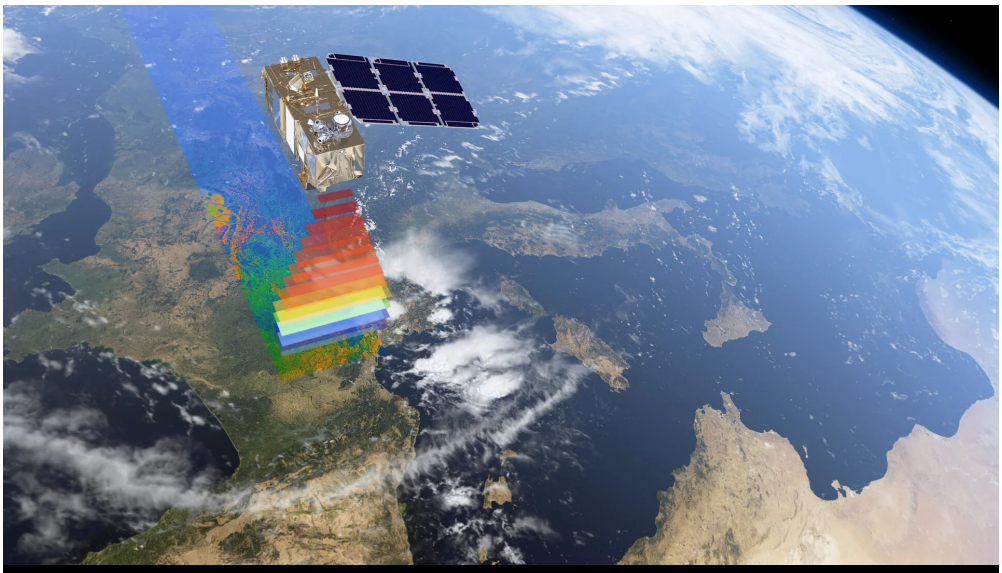
Italy accelerates on the space security front and puts **€640 million** on the table to strengthen its military observation capability from Earth. The **Ministry of Defense**, in concert with the **MEF**, has indeed transmitted to Parliament the decree relating to the second phase of the program for the development of a **third-generation military optical satellite system**, considered increasingly strategic in the current geopolitical scenario.

The project aims to create a constellation of satellites capable of collecting high-precision images, useful for monitoring crisis areas, military movements, and operational theaters. In a context marked by international instability, tensions in the Middle East, and the growth of cyber risks, space is now treated as a true domain of national security, on par with land, sea, air, and cyberspace.

Cost revised upwards

The plan does not start from scratch. A first phase of the program was authorized in 2022 with an allocation of **€264 million**, while the initially planned total cost was **€590 million**. With the new decree, however, the value rises to **€640 million**, with an increase of **€50 million**.

According to the documentation transmitted by the government, the increase is mainly linked to the adaptation of the program's protection systems. The central issue is the introduction of **post-quantum cryptography**, a technology intended to strengthen communication security even in the future, when quantum computers could undermine current encryption systems.



Italy focuses on spy satellites: €640 million plan to secure space

The three components of the program

The planned resources are distributed over three main chapters:

- **€500 million** for the construction of the satellites;
- **€90 million** for launches;
- **€50 million** for updating security and encryption systems.

The phase now under examination by Parliament is worth **€292.6 million** and covers the period between **2026 and 2031**, during which the system's satellites should be built and launched into orbit. A residual part, amounting to **€83 million**, will instead have to be covered with subsequent measures.

A piece of the Defense strategy

The program fits into a broader framework of strengthening the Italian military instrument. In recent months, the government has intensified the use of modernization and development plans, with the aim of making national defense capacity more autonomous and technologically advanced.

In this scenario, the Italian space sector confirms itself as one of the most sensitive industrial assets. Alongside the major defense and aerospace groups, innovative entities of the new space economy are also contributing to consolidating national skills in satellite manufacturing and related services. Among these is Argotec, a Turin-based company specializing in small satellites and advanced space systems, often cited as an example of the growth of an Italian supply chain capable of supporting the traditional big players.

Italy focuses on spy satellites: €640 million plan to secure space

Towards structural reform

The satellite dossier is alongside the broader Defense reform announced by Minister **Guido Crosetto**, which aims to redesign the structure of the military instrument. Among the hypotheses under study are a reserve of about **10,000 volunteers** and new structures dedicated to **cybersecurity**.

In short, space is no longer just a technological or industrial frontier, but increasingly a strategic stronghold. And with the new satellite program, Italy tries to secure one of the decisive grounds of future security.

News link: https://www.milanofinanza.it/news/l-italia-punta-sui-satelliti-spia-il-piano-da-600-milioni-per-blindare-lo-spazio-202603131926067452?refresh_cens#google_vignette