Italy Prepares Cyber Army: 1,500 Units for National Digital Defense

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Rome, October 17, 2025 – Italy is preparing to enter the new frontier of defense: cyberspace. The Minister of Defense **Guido Crosetto**, speaking on the sidelines of the Comolake forum, announced the creation of a **national cyber force**, aimed at protecting the country from cyber attacks and acting, if necessary, autonomously in the digital domain.

> *"A first structure should be launched that can count on 1,200-1,500 units, largely operational," said Crosetto, "but the goal is to reach a larger, fully autonomous workforce capable of effectively acting across the entire threat spectrum."*

War in Cyberspace

Cyber attacks against European civilian and military infrastructures have multiplied since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, often conducted by pro-Russian hacker groups.
Crosetto recalled how "all of Europe constantly suffers digital incursions, without always being

able to react proportionally."
The new cyber structure responds precisely to this need: to move from a purely defensive posture to an **active response capability**, with dedicated means, personnel, and rules of engagement.

The move is also part of the broader framework outlined by the **European Commission**, which has included **cyber, artificial intelligence, and electronic warfare** among the pillars of future common defense, alongside military mobility, drones, missiles, and artillery systems.

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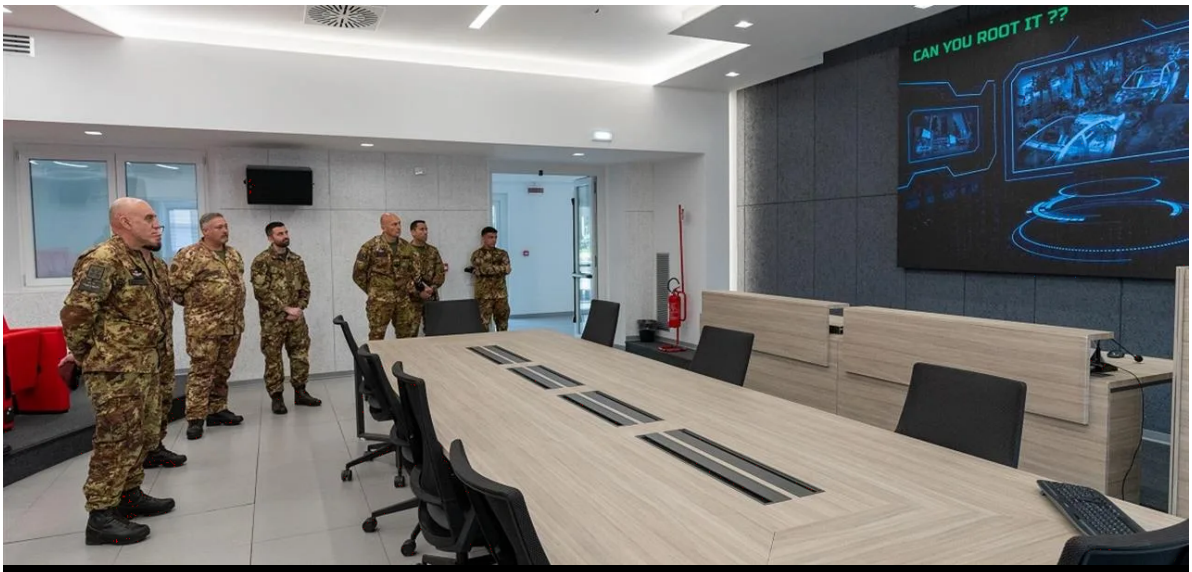
What Exists Today

The "cyber-army" project is based on already consolidated operational foundations.
Since 2020, the Italian Defense has had the **Network Operations Command (COR)**, a joint structure responsible for the security of IT systems and operations in the digital domain.
The COR ensures the technical-operational defense of the Ministry's networks, manages incidents and vulnerabilities, and coordinates information between different theaters and the Armed Forces.

At the Armed Forces level, the Army has also established the **9th Cyber Security Regiment "Rombo"**, part of the **Tactical Information Brigade**, specialized in network protection, cyber intelligence, and electronic warfare.
Recently elevated to regiment status, the "Rombo" represents the most advanced component of Italian land cyber-warfare.

On the General Staff front, the **VI Department "Informatics, Cyber, and Telecommunications"** operates, with strategic and technical guidance functions.
At the national level, civil coordination is entrusted to the **National Cybersecurity Agency (ACN)**, established in 2021, which collaborates with Defense to ensure the security of critical infrastructures.



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An Interforce and Interministerial Project

The initiative involves a **24/7/365 operational structure**, composed of **military and civilian** personnel, capable of reacting in real-time to any cyber threat.
The civilian component will be crucial for tapping into technological, academic, and industrial expertise, often more developed in the private sector today.

The new "National Cyber Army," according to sources from **CyberSecItalia** and **Formiche.net**, should be legally framed in the **DDL Minardo**, currently under parliamentary discussion, which will define roles, responsibilities, and the chain of command.
The operational model will follow the logic of **Joint Cyber Commands** already active in other NATO countries, with permanent command centers and active deterrence capabilities.

The main tasks of the new cyber force include:

1. **Protecting national critical infrastructures** (energy, transport, telecommunications, finance).

2. **Defending military systems** and command and control networks of missions in Italy and abroad.
3. **Conducting countermeasure operations** against hostile or state-sponsored attacks.
4. **Ensuring the digital resilience** of the country's system and the operational continuity of essential services.
5. **Developing cooperation with NATO, EU, and industrial partners** in the field of cyber defense.

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The plan also includes a strong investment in **specialized training**, with dedicated courses at military training schools, joint programs with universities and research centers, and the creation of a **national cyber hub**.

Open Challenges

The implementation of the project will have to face some crucial challenges:

- **Recruitment and retention of talent**, in a labor market where cybersecurity is highly competitive.
- **Regulatory clarity** on rules of engagement and the legitimacy of active operations.
- **Avoiding duplication** with the National Cybersecurity Agency and other civil structures.
- **Technological interoperability** between the different Armed Forces and allied partners.

- **Constant updating** of skills and tools, to face increasingly advanced threats based on artificial intelligence and deepfake.

With the launch of the Cyber Army, Italy aims to enter the club of countries with an **autonomous military cyber capability**, adding a new operational domain alongside traditional forces.
A step that concerns not only digital security but also the **technological and strategic sovereignty** of the country, in the context of a global competition increasingly played out behind a screen.

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