Italy–Turkey: Perego di Cremnago, Masiello and Conserva visit Baykar

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Tekirdağ – Istanbul - A delegation from the Italian Ministry of Defense visited the facilities of Baykar, a Turkish leader in the field of unmanned aerial vehicles. The initiative, which is part of the industrial cooperation framework between **Leonardo** and **Baykar**, was attended by **Undersecretary of Defense Matteo Perego di Cremnago**, **Chief of Staff of the Army Corps General Carmine Masiello**, and **Chief of Staff of the Air Force Air Squadron General Antonio Conserva**.

The presence of Undersecretary Perego di Cremnago

As a liaison figure between political direction and industry, **Matteo Perego di Cremnago** led the mission with the aim of exploring the technological potential of the systems developed by Baykar and assessing possible synergies with the national industry.
The visit – which included the **AKINCI Flight Training and Test Center** in Çorlu and the headquarters of **Baykar in Istanbul** – takes place at a time of growing technological

cooperation between Italy and Turkey.

«Italy is closely watching the evolution of autonomous systems and new operational deployment scenarios,» stated Perego. «Our priority is to understand how emerging technologies can integrate with Italian and allied industrial capabilities, ensuring interoperability and security».

The Undersecretary, always attentive to the industrial sector and dual-use supply chains, emphasized the importance of a balance between innovation, sustainability, and the protection of national strategic interests.

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General Masiello: drones and integrated land capabilities

For the Italian Army, represented by **General Carmine Masiello**, the visit to Baykar has an operational significance.
The Chief of Staff followed with particular attention the demonstrations with the **Bayraktar TB3** , **AKINCI**, and **KIZILELMA**, focusing on the possibilities of integrated use between unmanned aerial systems and ground forces.

«Modern operations are based on the connection between platforms, sensors, and rapid reaction capabilities,» highlighted Masiello during the briefing. «The Army is interested in solutions that enhance situational awareness and tactical support in complex environments».

The Army's perspective is oriented towards multi-role drones capable of cooperating with maneuver units and precision artillery systems, in line with digitization programs and the

ongoing transformation of operational brigades.

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General Conserva: interoperability and aeronautical standards

For the Air Force, the mission was an opportunity to closely observe next-generation platforms like the **KIZILELMA**, considered the first Turkish autonomous combat aircraft. **General Antonio Conserva**, recently appointed head of the Armed Forces, emphasized the importance of ensuring full compatibility of new systems with European and NATO aeronautical architectures.

«The evolution of combat drones imposes increasingly stringent safety, command, and interoperability standards,» explained Conserva. «Every technical evaluation must consider the doctrine of use, integration with piloted platforms, and future multidomain warfare scenarios».

The Air Force's interest focuses on high-autonomy drones and “loyal wingman” platforms, capable of cooperating with fifth-generation fighters like the **F-35** and future systems of the **GCAP** program.

Leonardo–Baykar cooperation and Italian prospects

The visit was also attended by executives from **Leonardo**, including **Simone Ungaro** (co-head Strategy and Innovation) and **Carlo Gualdaroni** (Business Development), confirming the industrial dimension of the mission.

The partnership between Leonardo and Baykar, formalized in 2025 with the creation of the **joint venture LBA Systems**, aims to develop a new generation of European drones with an operational base in Italy and an integrated supply chain between the two countries.

The initiative is part of a broader framework of **Euro-Mediterranean industrial and technological integration**, with Italy positioned as a bridge between NATO, the EU, and Turkey.
According to industrial sources, LBA Systems will work on the development of sensors, avionics, and mission systems for medium to large-range armed and reconnaissance drones.

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A signal of high-level cooperation

The mission to Baykar marks a significant step in the bilateral dialogue between Rome and Ankara in the defense field.
The simultaneous presence of the political (Perego) and military (Masiello and Conserva) leadership confirms Italy's intention to combine **technical evaluation, political direction, and industrial cooperation** in a sector strategic for national security.

A Defense source concludes: «This visit is not a ceremonial act, but part of a concrete path to define Italy's role in the future of European defense and next-generation autonomous capabilities».

News link: https://www.defenceturkey.com/en/content/italian-defense-ministry-delegation-reviews-baykar-s-technology-on-site-6364