



Royal Navy, by 2027 the new “DragonFire” lasers to shoot down drones will be in service

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The British Royal Navy is preparing to enter a new era of air defense: the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence has awarded **MBDA UK** a contract worth **316 million pounds** to equip the fleet with the **DragonFire** laser system, one of the most advanced technologies in the world against drones. The first installations are expected by **2027**, when a Type 45 unit of the Royal Navy will be equipped with the directed energy weapon.

The DragonFire recently demonstrated its effectiveness during tests conducted at the **Hebrides range in Scotland**, where it neutralized a high-speed drone. According to the Ministry of Defence, this is the **first operational high-power laser capability in Europe**, a strategic step for London in the new global scenario dominated by low-cost threats and the massive use of drones.

An economical and extremely precise response to new threats

One of the strengths of the DragonFire is the cost of engagement: just **10 pounds per shot**, a negligible amount compared to traditional missiles that can exceed **hundreds of thousands of pounds** per single interception. Added to this is a precision described as “surgical”: the laser can hit an object the size of a **one-pound coin from a kilometer away**.

The system, developed by **MBDA UK** in collaboration with **QinetiQ** and **Leonardo**, **will be delivered almost five years ahead of the initial plans**. In the most recent tests, it shot down targets flying up to **650 km/h**, confirming the operational maturity of the technology.

The DragonFire project is part of the broader British strategy on directed energy weapons, supported by the **Strategic Defence Review**, which has allocated nearly **1 billion pounds** to accelerate these programs during the current legislature. The investment, in addition to strengthening the country's defensive capability, will allow the creation or maintenance of **hundreds of jobs** in the national technology sector.

According to Luke Pollard, Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry *“this technology will put the Royal Navy at the forefront of NATO innovation, offering a decisive capability to protect the United Kingdom and its allies”*.



The “DragonFire” laser system, developed by MBDA UK in collaboration with QinetiQ and Leonardo, shown in test configuration on a land platform - Copyright British Defence Ministry

MBDA leading in Europe: the race for military lasers intensifies

MBDA, already known for systems like **Aster** and **Mistral**, is today one of the main players in the field of laser weapons. The company is working on similar programs in **Germany** (with Rheinmetall), in **Italy** (with Leonardo for a light naval laser), and in **France**, where it controls the majority of the company **Cilas**, producer of the anti-drone system **Helma-P**.

With the arrival of the DragonFire on the Royal Navy in 2027, the United Kingdom will be the first European country to deploy an operational high-power laser, marking the beginning of a new phase in drone defense and the future of directed energy weapon systems.

News link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/boost-for-armed-forces-as-new-laser-weapon-takes-down-high-speed-drones>