



Russian threat, Europe gets serious: 1,500 Paratroopers jump in France in the ex. Orion-26.

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France raises the level and prepares its forces, together with allied countries, for the **high-intensity war scenario in Europe**. With the exercise **Orion 26**, Paris has launched the **largest military maneuver on French soil since the Cold War**, a clear strategic signal in the context of deteriorating continental security and increasing tensions with Russia.

The exercise, which began on February 8, spans a period of **three months** and involves over **10,000 military personnel, 25 naval units, and 140 aircraft**, serving as a general rehearsal for **European collective defense**, albeit **outside of a NATO command**.

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The airborne forces open the front

One of the key moments of Orion 26 was the **massive drop of about 1,500 paratroopers** from France and the UK, carried out between the **Orléans-Bricy Air Base 123** and the area of **Coëtquidan**, in Brittany.

An action designed to test **decision-making speed, multinational coordination, and immediate combat capability**, fundamental elements in a scenario of rapid escalation.

*"It's quite a bold operation," Colonel **Colomban de Poncharra**, commander of the 3rd Marine Parachute Regiment of the French Marines, told [Euronews](#).*

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Modern warfare: autonomy and resilience on the ground

Orion 26 is built around three key concepts of contemporary warfare:

- **Speed of intervention**
- **Operational resilience**
- **Logistical and tactical autonomy**

The airborne units must be able to **withstand for 48-72 hours** in a hostile environment, operating with **drones, ammunition, sensors, and their own communication systems**, without immediate support.

"The role of the paratroopers is to create a local breach, unlock a tactical front, and allow the entry of heavier forces," explained de Poncharra.

A doctrine that reflects the return to **large-scale conventional operations**, after decades of stabilization missions.

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Real military cooperation, not symbolic

Although not a NATO exercise, Orion 26 features a **strong multinational and joint dimension**, involving the French army, navy, and air force along with allied contingents.

"This exercise is special for its joint and multinational dimension," Lieutenant Dorian of the 3rd Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment also told Euronews "British military personnel are also operating on our aircraft".

Among the countries involved are also Italian military personnel, engaged in drop activities and coordination with French units.

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A fictitious conflict, a real threat

The operational scenario revolves around a simulated conflict between two imaginary states, **“Arnland”** and **“Mercury”**, used as an **indirect representation of current tensions with Russia**.

From **hybrid warfare**, cyber, political pressure, and destabilization, the scenario quickly evolves into a **conventional armed conflict**, with territorial control, air superiority, and combined maneuver.

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Paris' message to Europe

Orion 26 is much more than an exercise: it is a **political and military message**.

France demonstrates its intention to take a leading role in **European military preparation**, strengthening cooperation among allies and testing the ability to face a high-intensity conflict on the continent.

Paratroopers jumping, large maneuvers, real interoperability: **Europe prepares for the worst-case scenario, hoping never to face it.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4b-Xv19z3M>

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Sources:

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