Skynex: The European Drone Killer Conquering Ukraine and Protecting Italy's Skies - Video

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The automated anti-aircraft artillery system **Skynex**, developed by the German company Rheinmetall, is establishing itself as one of the most effective solutions in the **defense against drones and short-range aerial threats**. Its success in Ukraine, where it demonstrated remarkable performance in real combat scenarios, has attracted the attention of numerous countries, including Italy.

Skynex in Ukraine: A "Combat Proven" on the Field

In the hands of the Ukrainian Air Forces, the Skynex system has shown exceptional performance in intercepting and **destroying attack drones used by the Russian Federation, including those similar to the Iranian Shahed**. Videos released by the Ukrainian Air Force have highlighted the effectiveness and precision of the 35 mm automatic cannon, the heart of the system, in neutralizing various aerial targets.

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The ability to employ **AHEAD programmable ammunition** (Advanced Hit Efficiency and Destruction), which **explodes near the target creating a lethal cloud of sub-projectiles,** makes Skynex extremely effective against threats difficult to engage with traditional systems, such as low-cost drones, loitering munitions, and suicide UAVs. This technology has generated enthusiasm among Ukrainian military, becoming a symbol of resistance and technological modernity.

Italy Focuses on the Skynex System

In January 2025, **the Italian Army formalized an order with Rheinmetall for the purchase of the first Skynex system, valued at 73 million euros, becoming the first NATO country to acquire it after its deployment in Ukraine**. The contract includes the fire platform with Revolver Gun Mk3 cannons, X-TAR 3D radar, and AHEAD ammunition, as well as logistical services, training, and technical support. Delivery is expected in the second quarter of 2026.

An option for an additional three systems is also foreseen, which would bring the total investment to approximately 280 million euros. This highlights Italy's clear intention to strengthen its very short-range air defense, particularly in an anti-drone function, in response to new threats that have emerged in recent conflicts.

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A Modular and Cost-Effective System

Skynex stands out not only for its advanced technological capabilities but also for its **low operational cost** compared to missile-based systems. The **use of kinetic ammunition allows for neutralizing economic threats without employing interceptors costing hundreds of thousands of euros**. Additionally, its **modularity** allows integration into complex environments such as airports, operational bases, civilian infrastructures, and critical sites.

A Production Spanning Italy, Germany, and Switzerland

The Skynex system is an example of **European industrial collaboration**. **The platform is designed and integrated in Italy, at the Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A. plant in Rome**, where the fire management system, **the X-TAR3D three-dimensional radar**, and all electronic and command components are developed and assembled. The **35 mm Revolver Gun Mk3 cannon is produced in Switzerland** by Rheinmetall Air Defence (heir to the historic Oerlikon Contraves), while **the AHEAD programmable ammunition** comes from plants in Germany and Switzerland. This mixed production chain ensures high-quality standards, flexible logistics, and full compatibility with NATO requirements.

International Expansion: Qatar and Romania

Besides Ukraine and Italy, Qatar was also among the first to acquire the Skynex system, with a contract worth over 210 million euros. Other European countries like Romania are also integrating some components into their defense systems, testifying to the global interest in this advanced solution.

The **Skynex system, with its configuration including a detection and tracking unit, a control station, and four 35 mm fire units,** is designed to counter threats from missiles, artillery, mortars, drones, and loitering munitions, both for national defense and for the protection of contingents in operational areas.

To see the Skynex system in action, you can watch Skynex in action: the Ukrainian Air Force shows new footage of downed drones. This video shows the Skynex system in action, shooting down Russian drones.