



Space and Defense: 2025 Changed the Global and Italian Scenario

Published on 26/12/2025

2025 was a turbulent year, and the space sector was one of the most evident reflections. Among **new geopolitical balances, unprecedented military choices, and profound industrial changes**, space has become a central domain for international security. A scenario that **directly involves Italy**, a founding country of ESA, an industrial leader in Europe, and a significant player within the EU and NATO.

European Space Agency Enters the Defense Field

For decades, ESA maintained a **strict separation between civil and military activities**. In 2025, this line was crossed: during the ministerial at the end of November, the **23 member states officially approved a role for the agency in support of defense**, accompanied by **funding of one billion euros**.

For Italy, which has **strategic expertise in Earth observation, telecommunications, and launchers, new industrial opportunities** arise, but also political questions on **dual use, governance, and national priorities**.

The United States Loosens Constraints on Offensive Space Operations

Throughout the year, Washington **strengthened the decision-making autonomy of Space Force and US Space Command** on the use of anti-satellite capabilities.

This is a **profound doctrinal change**, confirming that space is now considered **an operational domain on par with land, sea, and air**.

For Europe – and for Italy – this shift **strengthens the debate on the need for autonomous capabilities**, to reduce an increasingly evident strategic dependence on the United States.

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Space Missile Defense: The Return of a Controversial Idea

The revival of **space interceptors under the “Golden Dome” initiative** has evoked the specter of the “Star Wars” of the 1980s.

The real surprise, however, is the industrial model: **prize competitions and strong private self-financing**, without contractual guarantees.

An approach that could **also influence future European choices**, pushing towards **new models of public-private cooperation** in the advanced space sector.

SpaceX Increasingly Central: Even Defense Looks to Musk

SpaceX has consolidated its position not only in launches but also as a **global satellite operator**, positioning itself to provide **critical communication and data transmission services** to the US Department of Defense.

The willingness of American institutions to resort to **almost exclusive contracts with a single private actor** raises questions in Europe about **competition, resilience, and technological sovereignty**.

For Italy, the risk is **falling behind without a truly competitive European supply chain**.

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Stop to Satellite Images for Ukraine: The Signal That Shook Europe

The temporary suspension of Ukrainian access to **US commercial satellite images** had a huge political impact.

The message was clear: **space data is a tool of strategic power**.

The European reaction – with **new initiatives on Earth observation, security, and strategic autonomy** – opens up significant action space. **Italy, thanks to its satellite capabilities and role in ESA, can become one of the key players**.

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A Look at 2026

2025 has shown that **space is no longer a neutral domain**, but a **central element of defense and security policies**.

For Italy, the future involves **targeted investments, European cooperation, and protection of technological sovereignty**.

News link: <https://breakingdefense.com/2025/12/five-stories-that-surprised-the-space-world-2025-review/>