



Space and Defense: Argotec—led by former Folgore officer David Avino—and Rheinmetall score success with SpaceX

Published on 02/10/2026

Europe's defense and security landscape has taken a strategically significant leap forward: on October 1, 2026, from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, a SpaceX Falcon 9 launch vehicle successfully placed into orbit the first satellite for military surveillance and air defense. This is not a theoretical exercise or a promise on paper, but a concrete industrial milestone, born of the strong synergy between two European technology giants: Italy's **Argotec**.

The strategic partnership: when ingenuity meets operational capability

The program, formally launched on 1° October 2026, sees the Düsseldorf-based giant—through its subsidiary **Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A.**—forge a strategic alliance with **Argotec**, a Turin-based center of excellence led by **David Avino**. Former officer of the **Brigata Paracadutisti**

"Folgore" — the historic elite unit of the Esercito Italiano, from which he inherited rigorous discipline, strategic vision and the determination to push beyond the boundaries of the impossible, Avino has built a company with a leading pedigree in international space programs and at NASA.

This collaboration combines Germany's deep systems expertise in defense with the advanced know-how of Italy's aerospace industry in the design and management of satellite infrastructure , led by those who have made operational readiness and excellence their life's mission.

As **Armin Papperger**, CEO of Rheinmetall AG, emphasized:

"The successful launch of our first satellite marks a milestone in strengthening national security and space capabilities. The integration of data from space into existing defense systems is a crucial step in responding to the changing geopolitical context."

Reaffirming the tangible nature of the operation is **David Avino**, CEO and founder of Argotec:

"Together with Rheinmetall, we are transforming space technology into a valuable, scalable, connected operational asset ready to support complex defense scenarios. This is a decisive step toward greater technological autonomy, based on turning data into valuable information to support decision-making processes."

Technology Serving Security: Surveillance and Artificial Intelligence

Unlike traditional territorial mapping satellites, this program focuses on targeted intelligence collection. Advanced onboard sensors are designed to detect ground-based indicators of potential emerging air threats, providing early warning and crucial *insights* for air defense operations.

The infrastructure's added value lies in its interconnected architecture: the data and images captured are processed with the aid of artificial intelligence and integrated directly into existing national and air defense systems. All of this is managed by an advanced Command and Control Node that integrates space assets, ground stations and tactical networks into an unprecedented operational whole.

A defined, future-oriented roadmap

This initial launch represents only the cornerstone of a medium- to long-term industrial plan based on a modular approach. The immediate objective is to validate operational capabilities in orbit, but the industrial roadmap already calls for a major expansion of the space domain, with the aim of creating a genuine satellite constellation, whose next launch is scheduled for **2028**.

The industrial partnership between Rheinmetall and Argotec — supported by industrial leadership and the operational toughness inherited from Italian parachute units — demonstrates how Europe can turn strategic vision into tangible assets, matching deeds rather than rhetoric to safeguard the continent's security and resilience.

News link:

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