Space Operations Command: General Danilo Figà succeeds General Luca Monaco

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ROME – The change of command ceremony at the top of the **Space Operations Command (COS)** took place in Vigna di Valle, at the Joint Sicral Management and Control Center. Brigadier General **Danilo Figà** officially took over the leadership of the unit, succeeding Brigadier General **Luca Monaco**, who held the position since May 2022.

The handover took place in the presence of the Chief of Staff of the Joint Operational Command (COVI), Air Force General **Michele Oballa**.

Continuity and challenges of the new mandate

General Figà, who previously served as Chief of Staff of the same COS, assumes command responsibility without interruption. His mandate will focus on **consolidating the capabilities with which Defense monitors the orbital environment**, coordinates satellite assets, and

ensures support for operations in the land, maritime, air, and cyber domains.

During his speech, General Oballa emphasized the strategic importance of the sector:

> *Space is no longer just a technological sector, but an essential component of military operations.*

The achievements of the Monaco four-year period and his strategic vision for the future

The handover concludes a four-year period of great achievements guided by the forward-looking vision of General Luca Monaco, who skillfully interpreted the challenges of a space environment defined as *congested, contested, and competitive*. Under his leadership, the COS charted the course for the defense of the future Space, founded on cutting-edge operational pillars:

- **Strengthening Space Domain Awareness:** Monaco highlighted the need for increasingly advanced awareness of the space scenario, capable of monitoring debris, detecting anomalous maneuvers, and preventing collisions using advanced space-based sensors (space-based SSA), multifunction telescopes, and artificial intelligence algorithms to manage a vast volume of data.
- **Operational readiness and reactive launch:** Monaco's vision anticipated the need for a "Country System" approach to ensure assets ready for launch, capable of quickly replacing any compromised satellites, adopting reactivity models similar to those of the U.S. Space Force.
- **Integrated command and control and resilience:** Facing multidomain complexity, Monaco pushed for Command and Control solutions based on machine learning support (always keeping humans in the decision-making loop) and a satellite architecture based on constellations of small satellites in low Earth orbit (LEO and VLEO), more flexible, economical, and resilient than traditional large assets.
- **Concrete historical achievements:** Among the most significant results achieved are the conduct of the **first national orbital decommissioning** of a military satellite (transferring *Sicral 1* to a safe graveyard orbit) and the decisive contribution to the establishment of the **National Prs Center**, an infrastructure dedicated to the encrypted service of the European

Galileo program for authorized government users.

Towards a new operational dimension

The work of the new commander will follow the excellent work set by Monaco and complete interforce integration. The new **Space Operations Room** – integrated into the *Joint Operations Center* of COVI – will aim to make multidomain planning increasingly incisive.

The strategic objective for the near future will be to merge protected communications, Earth observation, satellite navigation, and orbital data into a unified operational framework, transforming space informational superiority into a concrete **operational advantage** for the Italian Armed Forces.