The Italian Army receives the first Skynex system: technological breakthrough for C-UAS and SHORAD defense

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SABAUDIA (LT) – With an official ceremony held on December 18, 2025, at the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command in Sabaudia, the Italian Army officially took delivery of its first **Skynex** battery. Italy thus becomes the **first NATO member country** to introduce Rheinmetall's short-range air defense system into active service, marking a decisive step in bridging the capability gap against the growing drone threat (C-UAS).

The order, valued at **73 million euros**, was signed in January 2025 with Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A. The contract also includes an option for an additional three systems, with a total estimated value of **204 million euros**.

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A response to the lessons of the Ukrainian conflict

The introduction of Skynex addresses the urgent need to protect critical infrastructure and field units from very short-range threats (V-SHORAD). The experiences gained in the field in Ukraine have shown how kamikaze drones and low-altitude cruise missiles have become central elements of modern warfare.

Unlike missile systems, which are often too expensive to be used against swarms of cheap drones, Skynex focuses on **kinetic precision**.

Technical features: The heart of the system

The system is based on a modular architecture that separates sensors from effectors, allowing unprecedented operational flexibility.

Component	Technical Specifications
Effector	Revolver Gun Mk3 35mm
Rate of fire	1,000 rounds per minute
Effective range	Up to 4,000 meters
Radar Sensor	XTAR 3D (coverage up to 50 km)
Ammunition	Programmable "Ahead" (anti-jamming)

The **Ahead** ammunition, a flagship of Rheinmetall technology, releases a cloud of tungsten sub-projectiles just before impact, saturating the target's trajectory. This capability makes it particularly effective against small and highly maneuverable targets, such as modified commercial drones or loitering munitions.

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Integration and Modularity

One of the strengths chosen by Italy is the system's ability to act as a "brain" for local air defense. Skynex can indeed integrate radars and guns already in inventory, such as the **Skyguard** and **Skyshield** families, within a single command and control (C2) network.

> *"The adoption of Skynex sets a new standard for cannon defense within NATO," said a Rheinmetall spokesperson. "The effectiveness demonstrated in real combat conditions in Ukraine underscores the importance of having layered and economically sustainable air defenses."*

Next Steps

The Italian Army will now begin the operational training and tactical integration phase at the Sabaudia base. If the options for the remaining three systems are exercised, Italy will be able to rely on one of the most advanced point defense networks in Europe, capable of protecting logistical nodes and urban centers from future asymmetric threats.

News link: https://www.rheinmetall.com/en/media/news-watch/news/2025/12/2025-12-23-rheinmetall-hands-over-first-skynex-system-to-italy