



From Folgore to Space: David Avino Leads Italy Towards Orbital Autonomy

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Italy accelerates on the path to strategic autonomy in space. It did so by presenting, three months ahead of schedule, the feasibility study for a new satellite constellation dedicated to **national security and defense**. An orbital network formed by **at least 100 satellites**, ready – according to estimates by the [Italian Space Agency](#) (ASI) – **within five years**. The document is already in the hands of the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, as confirmed by Minister Adolfo Urso, who has mandated ASI to consult Italian companies to verify its full feasibility on the industrial level.

The initiative, still without an official name but provisionally called **“National Constellation”**, represents a concrete response to the evolution of global space balances, increasingly influenced by private entities like Starlink, which has redefined operational standards and effectively monopolized orbital connectivity.

David Avino, from Commander of the Folgore to Pioneer of the New Space Economy

A central role in the new scenario is being played by **Argotec**, a Turin-based company that created the first satellite of the IRIDE program, the **Pathfinder Hawk**, launched in January 2025 and already operational in orbit. At the helm of the company is **David Avino**, an engineer and entrepreneur with a background that combines technology and service to the country: **former Battery Commander at the 185th Paratrooper Artillery Regiment "Folgore"**, Avino perfectly embodies the bridge between the needs of the defense world and the capabilities of the Italian space industry.

Under his leadership, Argotec has become one of the most innovative entities in the sector, inaugurating in Turin one of the most modern Space Factories in Europe, where micro and nanosatellites for scientific and operational missions are designed, assembled, and tested. The success of the Pathfinder – capable of acquiring high-resolution multispectral images – marks a concrete turning point in Italy's ability to independently produce high-performance satellites, scalable and ready for complex missions.

«**This first image acquired over Italy is a historic moment for the country and an important milestone in the field of Earth observation**», declared Avino. And he is right: today Italy is among the few European countries capable of closing the space supply chain internally, from design to ground data management.

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The Space Factory of Sitael in Mola di Bari, one of the most advanced facilities in Europe for satellite integration and testing: the technological heart of Italy's space revival

A New Phase for Italian Space

The announcement of the new security constellation comes at the culmination of a significant week for the sector. Minister Urso visited the **Sitael Hub in Mola di Bari**, another center of excellence, symbolizing an Italy that is organizing to produce massively and strategically. The

Space Economy is no longer a gamble, but an industrial reality involving dozens of SMEs, universities, research centers, and major national players.

This National Constellation will complement **IRIDE**, an ambitious Italian Earth observation program developed with **PNRR** funds, under the coordination of **ESA** and with the support of ASI. IRIDE foresees **six mini-constellations** for a total of over 60 satellites, dedicated to environmental, civil, and civil protection uses. It is a **constellation of constellations**, where companies like **Thales Alenia Space, Telespazio, Officina Stellare, Exprivia**, and many others are contributing to the construction of an integrated, modern, and sovereign system.

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Chiara Pertosa, President of Sitael, Space Factory of Mola di Bari: innovation and industry at the service of the new Italian space season.

Italy Between IRIDE and IRIS: Towards European Orbital Resilience

The National Constellation project naturally interfaces with **IRIS**, the European program for creating an autonomous satellite infrastructure dedicated to **resilience, connectivity, and security**. The goal is ambitious: to propose a European public alternative to Starlink, avoiding external dependencies for essential services.

In this scenario, Italy aims to be a **technological and operational leader**, bringing concrete know-how and already tested industrial capabilities to the European table.

ASI: Scientific and Strategic Stronghold of the Nation

The Italian Space Agency, founded in 1988, is today one of the main players on the global space scene. With headquarters in Rome and operational bases in Matera, Malindi, and Sardinia, ASI is involved in all major international missions, has been collaborating with **NASA** for years, and plays a leading role in the **VEGA** program.

Beyond exploration and science, space today is primarily **economy and strategy**. ASI works to ensure Italy an independent orbital future, where technology, industry, and defense can cooperate synergistically.

100 Satellites, a Symbol and a Challenge

The number **100**, besides representing the new Italian constellation, is a signal of the direction space is taking: SpaceX is preparing to decommission 100 old Starlink satellites, while Eutelsat has ordered 100 new units from Airbus to enhance OneWeb. The **New Italian Constellation** aims to enter this competitive scenario, but in a public, strategic, and national key.

Five years is a short time for such an ambitious project, but Italy has demonstrated, with IRIDE and with its visionary entrepreneurs like **David Avino**, that the will, competence, and industrial capability are all there. Space, today more than ever, is a matter of sovereignty. And Italy has decided to be there, at the forefront.