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Cutting-edge drone defence technology: Italy receives its first Skynex air defence system from Rheinmetall

Handover to the Italian Army at the Sabaudia base has been completed

The Italian Army has received its first Skynex air defence system from Rheinmetall. On 18 December 2025, the first Skynex battery was handed over to the Italian Army at the Comando Artiglieria Controaeri (Air Defence Artillery Command) in Sabaudia. This gives the Italian Army the capability to defend against air attacks at close and very close range. In particular, it will enable effective countermeasures against drones, which – as seen in the war in Ukraine – are playing an increasingly important role in current and future conflicts and are bringing warfare into cities.

It was only in January 2025 that Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A., Rome, received the order to deliver the first system with a total value of €73 million. The contract also includes an option for three additional systems.

Italy is the first NATO member state to introduce Rheinmetall's Skynex technology including the Revolver Gun Mk3 35mm. The order is thus an important corner stone in Rheinmetall's strategy of establishing a new standard in the field of cannon-based air defence for international armed forces.

NATO member Romania also recently opted for Skynex in combination with another type of gun already in service there (GDF-009 twin guns). Skynex air defence systems are already proving their quality to the Ukrainian armed forces in the harsh conditions of war, protecting people and property from airborne threats.

The Skynex Air Defence System

Skynex is a cannon-based air defence system and is therefore especially suitable for close-range protection where guided weapons cannot operate effectively. The 35mm Revolver Gun Mk3 cannons have a cadence of 1,000 rounds per minute and a range of up to 4 kilometres. The system uses programmable Ahead ammunition that is resistant to electronic countermeasures and ensures precise target engagement. In terms of cost-effectiveness, the ammunition is significantly more efficient than comparable missile-based systems.



► Key facts

- Strategically important customer in the NATO area: Italy introduces Skynex air defence system
- First system ordered valued €73m
- Option for three additional systems worth €204m
- Rheinmetall: Technological leader in air defence

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Operational successes in the Ukraine underline the efficiency with which the cannon-based air defence system can defend against air targets – especially cruise missiles and drones.

Skynex is based on the concept of separating the airspace surveillance from the effectors. Italy has opted for the configuration with the XTAR 3D radar from Rheinmetall, which can monitor the airspace in a radius of up to 50 km.

Thanks to its existing modularity, the required resources can be connected to the command-and-control network depending on the mission. Skynex offers great autonomy in terms of sensors and effectors, as to integrating a wide range of modern air defence systems into the system. The only requirement is the presence of a dedicated tracking unit.

In addition to individual sensors and effectors, existing air defence systems such as Rheinmetall's Skyshield and Skyguard families can also be integrated into the new architecture as firing units. The detected air situation is displayed in a remote command-and-control centre on a map with the sensors and effectors positioned in the field, thus easing a target assignment to the air defence assets connected to the system.

More on the functionality of Skynex here: [Link](#)