

2 October 2026

Successful SpaceX Rocket Launch:

Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A. and Argotec Deploy First Satellite for Military Air Defence Surveillance Into Orbit

Rheinmetall has achieved a decisive milestone within its new strategic partnership with Italian space company Argotec: On October 1, 2026, the first satellite developed within this collaboration was successfully launched into orbit aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 launch vehicle from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, United States.

With this successful launch, the Düsseldorf-based technology group, acting through its subsidiary Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A., initiates the targeted development of an independent, satellite-based capability for national security and military situational awareness, in close coordination with institutional stakeholders. The successful launch marks an important milestone in Rheinmetall's expanding activities in the space domain.

Focus on Airspace Surveillance and System Integration

The satellite programme, launched on 1 October 2026, focuses on gathering intelligence rather than on conventional mapping of ground objects. The program focuses on generating information rather than conventional mapping of ground objects. Instead, the sensors of the orbiting satellite identify ground-based indicators of emerging airborne threats, delivering critical early warning and provide data critical for air defense. The acquired situational data and imagery will be processed with the support of AI to integrate seamlessly into national defense and air defense systems, making them directly available to customers. The system combines different capability layers such as space-based observation, ground-based nodes, and tactical networks that will be managed through an advanced Command and Control Post, to meet new generation defense and security needs, allowing intelligence superiority missions.

In Argotec, Rheinmetall has found an industrial partner with extensive experience from NASA and other leading international space programs. Both partners are utilizing the current mission success to validate their respective technical capabilities in real-world operations and subsequently advance them through step-by-step joint development.

► Key facts

- Successful satellite launch on October 1, 2026, via a SpaceX launch vehicle in the USA
- Development of a satellite-based capability for airspace surveillance and situational awareness
- Strategic partnership between Rheinmetall Italia S.p.A. and Argotec (Italy)
- Direct integration of situational data into existing defense and air defense systems
- Part of Rheinmetall's comprehensive space strategy

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Core Element of a Future Satellite Constellation

"The successful launch of our first satellite marks a milestone in strengthening national security and space capabilities," states Armin Papperger, CEO of Rheinmetall AG. "Integrating space-based data into existing defence architectures is a critical step in addressing the changed security environment. This cooperation confirms the trust in our technological integration expertise and makes a vital contribution to technological sovereignty and resilient, networked situational awareness."

"The successful launch of this satellite is a key milestone in building the next generation space infrastructures, designed for operational and defence needs," said David Avino, CEO and founder of Argotec. "Together with Rheinmetall, we're turning space technology into a valuable operational asset, scalable, connected, and ready to support complex defence scenarios. This is an important step toward greater technological autonomy, as we transform data into near real-time information supporting decision-makers"

The medium- to long-term program is structured according to a modular approach. The completed launch establishes the technological foundation for validating operational functionality in orbit and consolidating subsequent funding phases.

Building on this initial capability, the space-based component is scheduled to expand progressively into a broader satellite constellation. A subsequent satellite launch is already firmly anchored in the program roadmap for 2028.

About Rheinmetall

Rheinmetall AG is an integrated technology group headquartered in Düsseldorf. Founded in 1889, the company is a leading international systems house for the defense industry and operates across the dimensions of land, air, sea, and space. With around 34,000 employees at approximately 160 locations worldwide, Rheinmetall has been listed on the DAX 40 since March 2023 and generated sales of €9.9 billion in fiscal year 2025.

About Argotec

Argotec is an international space company headquartered in Turin, Italy, specializing in the design, manufacturing, and operation of advanced satellite systems and space infrastructures for institutional, commercial, government, and defense customers worldwide. In 2022, Argotec became the only company in the world to have two microsatellites operating simultaneously in deep space as part of NASA's DART and Artemis I missions. Today, the company is involved in a number of flagship programs, including the HEO Earth observation constellation developed within Italy's IRIDE program and the HENON mission, which will study solar storms and space weather phenomena critical to the resilience of strategic infrastructure. The company also develops advanced dual-use technologies for satellite cooperation, edge computing, and data intelligence, supporting security, monitoring, and mission-critical applications across both civil and defense sectors. In 2024, Argotec inaugurated SpacePark, its highly automated satellite production facility in Turin. In 2026, the company further expanded its international footprint with the opening of its U.S. facility in Melbourne, Florida, and a telecommunications technology hub in California.