

Airbus Defence and Space sovereign space intelligence consortium with Rohde & Schwarz, constellr, Orbint and HPS

Berlin Air Show, Germany - 10 June 2026 – Airbus Defence and Space has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Rohde & Schwarz, constellr, Orbint and High Performance Space Structure Systems (HPS) to collaborate on a satellite-based Earth observation and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) solution. Led by Airbus as prime contractor and system integrator, the consortium brings together five complementary German specialists to address growing governmental demand for sovereign, end-to-end space-based surveillance capabilities, independent of non-European dependencies.

"Europe has the talent, the technology, and the industrial base to build its own space intelligence infrastructure and the strategic imperative to do so," said Mike Schöllhorn, CEO of Airbus Defence and Space. "This consortium brings together five German companies whose capabilities are genuinely complementary. Together we can deliver a sovereign, end-to-end solution that no single company could offer alone."

"This partnership demonstrates the value of combining the proven expertise of established players with fresh innovation and highly specialized emerging capabilities into operational value for our customers," said Thomas Bohne, Vice President SIGINT / EW, Rohde & Schwarz. "Rohde & Schwarz has built its reputation on world-class RF technology and mission-critical signal intelligence capabilities. We are committed to working with innovative technology players who bring new perspectives and complementary expertise. Together, we can help shape a sovereign European ISR capability that is technologically strong, resilient, and independent."

"This is a mission before it is a contract. We are joining this consortium because thermal infrared reconnaissance - the ability to detect operational activity, equipment state, and early-warning indicators that remain invisible to optical and radar sensors - is precisely where the ISR capability gap is greatest. We are proud to contribute that alongside Airbus, and to bring an already operational, sovereign German thermal ISR capability into a programme of this strategic importance", said Max Gulde, CEO and Co-Founder, constellr.

"It is a very positive sign that German prime contractors like Airbus Defence and Space are already incorporating German supplier SMEs like HPS into their system concepts right from the start. We are technically capable of delivering, extremely agile when it comes to scaling, and, above all, oriented toward the long term. A sovereign space architecture offers sufficient opportunities for the entire German space ecosystem, and the political will can be implemented very effectively. Many thanks to Airbus for his motivation to bring SMEs on board for defense missions", said Ernst K. Pfeiffer, CEO of HPS GmbH.

"The operational environment is changing faster than ever, with growing complexity across both the space and security domains," said Alexander Schmidt, Co-CEO of Orbint. "We are proud to contribute our NewSpace and UniBw M DNA while our consortium partners provide the industrial performance, scalability, and reliability. Bringing prime and start-up together as

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genuine partners is exactly what is needed to strengthen sovereign German and European capabilities.”

The five partners combine complementary capabilities across the full intelligence chain, and proven expertise along every stage of modern Earth observation and ISR. Airbus is responsible for overall mission and system architecture, end-to-end integration, programme management, and the customer interface.

Rohde & Schwarz provides high-performance RF components, signal processing technologies, and radar antenna systems, core competencies developed over decades for the most demanding security applications. Orbint brings geolocation methods, data processing algorithms, and system concept contributions. HPS delivers space-qualified deployable mesh reflector antennas optimised for high-frequency Earth observation and communication payloads. constellr contributes thermal infrared satellite systems based on both its current and next-generation platforms, supporting initial and full operational capability.

The joint solution addresses the full Earth observation chain, covering multi-sensor tasking, collection, processing, exploitation and dissemination. It integrates RF-sensors, electro-optical and infrared (EO/IR), synthetic aperture radar (SAR)-derived products, and signal-related geospatial intelligence outputs into coherent, customer-ready services.

The consortium’s formation reflects a growing recognition across European governments and defence institutions that strategic autonomy requires indigenous space intelligence capabilities. With all five companies headquartered in Germany, the partnership represents a concentrated national industrial response to that demand and a concrete step towards a European sovereign ISR architecture.

The parties have started their collaboration on a non-exclusive basis.



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