

Israel's trainer decision to hinge on industrial factors

By: [Arie Egozi](#) Tel Aviv
12.1.2012

The value of Israeli defence systems that will be purchased by Italy or South Korea if a trainer made by one of their domestic companies is selected by the Israeli air force will play a major role in the latter selection.

Udi Shani, director general of the Israeli defence ministry, visited Italy and South Korea in recent weeks and met with local officials to evaluate the extent of "industrial cooperation" that could be included as part of the proposed trainer deal. This pits the Alenia Aermacchi M-346 against the Korea Aerospace Industries T-50.

"The two aircraft answer our needs, so the purchase of Israeli-made systems by Italy or Korea will have a major effect," a source said.

Rome is understood to have already made a written commitment linked to a possible purchase of airborne early warning aircraft built by Israel Aerospace Industries. Seoul has said it intends to purchase different Israeli-made defence systems, but is not yet ready to sign an official commitment.