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## **Rheinmetall to upgrade 128 Polish Leopard 2 main battle tanks – order worth of about €220 million**

Rheinmetall has booked another major modernization order for heavy tanks. Poland has just awarded the Düsseldorf-based Group a contract for overhauling 128 Leopard 2 MBTs.

In cooperation with Poland's Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa (PGZ) and ZM Bumar-Łabędy S.A., Rheinmetall will serve as a strategic partner, supplying crucial key capabilities, including electronics and weapon technology. The project represents roughly €220 million in sales volume for Rheinmetall.

During the course of modernization, the 128 Leopard 2 A4 main battle tanks purchased in 2002 by the Polish Army from surplus Bundeswehr stocks will be upgraded to Leopard 2 PL standard, which corresponds to the German Leopard 2 A5 and A6.

Following Canada and Indonesia, Poland is now the third Leopard user nation to turn to Rheinmetall as the technology partner of choice for a major modernization programme. Besides the Bundeswehr, the armed forces of 17 countries now have Leopard 2 tanks in their inventories.

### **Value added in Poland too**

Rheinmetall's willingness to share technology and operate in tandem with local industry proved decisive in prompting the Polish government to select Rheinmetall as its strategic partner. For Poland, the contract will mean the creation of highly skilled jobs as well as obtaining valuable defence technology know-how.

On 28 December 2015, the Armament Inspectorate of the Polish armed forces awarded PGZ (as general contractor) and ZM Bumar-Łabędy S.A. (as integrator) a contract to upgrade the combat effectiveness of the Leopard 2 A4. Rheinmetall played a key role in preparing the upgrade package, having already established itself as a strategic partner by this point. Just signed, the contract lays out the details of Rheinmetall's role in the modernization package.

## **An ambitious timeline for comprehensive modernization**

The contract specifies that the consortium is to deliver a prototype by the end of 2017. Once the Polish armed forces have granted authorization for series production, Rheinmetall will revamp a further five tanks starting in 2018. The next twelve tanks will undergo modernization at Bumar-Łabędy under Rheinmetall supervision. After this, the Polish contractors will take charge of the project, retrofitting and shipping the remaining 110 tanks.

First and foremost, the upgrade programme focuses on improving the tank's main armament and fire control technology, as well as adding state-of-the-art electronic components and enhanced force protection features.

The fire control unit software will be adapted for new types of ammunition, which Rheinmetall has also developed and manufactured for the Leopard, while the sensor suite will be expanded to include a latest-generation thermal imaging device. Furthermore, the main gun, equipped with an L44 barrel from Rheinmetall (including, among other things, the barrel recoil system, breech and muzzle brake) will be modified to fire two new ammunition types, the DM11 HE (a time-delay shaped charge round) and the DM63 KE (a sabot round with temperature-independent powder).

Made by IBD Deisenroth, the new AMAP protection elements offer improved protection against KE and HE ammunition. Moreover, the installation of new mine-resistant seats and a fire extinguisher and suppression system assures optimum protection for the crew.

Rheinmetall is also responsible for the new built-in system for controlling and monitoring the vehicle components as well as data distribution.

Along with advantages regarding precision and space, new electric turret drives will reduce the risk to the crew. Finally, in order to improve situational awareness to the rear of the vehicle and assist the driver, a video camera will be installed.

## **More than forty years of competence in tank engineering**

As one of the world's foremost suppliers of army technology systems, Rheinmetall has over forty years' experience in developing and producing armoured fighting and support vehicles. The Leopard 2 continues to set the global standard for excellence in main battle tank design, with over 3,600 built.

During procurement of the Leopard 2 MBT by the armed forces of Germany and the Netherlands, Rheinmetall played a central part in development and production. Out of a total of 2,125 Leopard 2 A4 produced, Rheinmetall completely built 977 vehicles at its plant in Kiel, shipping them directly to end customers in Germany and the Netherlands.

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