

23 February 2024

Market breakthrough in Austria: Rheinmetall supplying Skyranger air defence system on Pandur wheeled armoured vehicle

As part of its ongoing military build-up, Austria has awarded the Düsseldorf-based tech group Rheinmetall a significant air defence project. Worth a figure in the mid-three-digit million-euro range, the contract encompasses the cutting-edge Skyranger air defence system. Delivery commences in 2026.

Under the project, Rheinmetall is serving as a subcontractor of GDELS, the vehicle maker tasked with upgrading Austria's fleet of Pandur wheeled armoured vehicles, part of the Austrian Army's push to improve its operational mobility. The Skyranger is a versatile turret solution that can be mounted on a variety of suitable vehicle platforms, including the 6x6 GDELS Pandur EVO.

Part of Austria's Pandur fleet – 36 vehicles – will be equipped with the Skyranger turret, giving them a mobile air defence capability. Skyranger combines state-of-the-art sensors with a high-performance 30mm automatic cannon and guided missiles, in this case the Mistral.



Coming in the wake of a Skyranger development contract from Hungary in December 2023, this first series production order marks a major market breakthrough for the innovative new system.

The Skyranger 30's breakthrough in Austria sets the stage for further advances in Europe. Orders from Germany and Denmark are expected soon, and – following successful conclusion of the development contract – from Hungary as well.

In the words of Armin Papperger, chairman of the executive board of Rheinmetall AG, "We greatly appreciate the trust of our friends and partners in Austria. Developed in Switzerland by Rheinmetall, this system will make a decisive contribution to improving air defence capabilities, first in Austria but soon in other countries, too."

The procurement of thirty-six Skyranger 30 air defence systems mounted on the 6x6 GDELS Pandur EVO places Austria at the forefront of mobile ground-based air defence in Europe. Following an extraordinary, comprehensive, internationally acclaimed situation analysis, the Austrian Army made the complete renewal of its air defence capabilities a top priority. Decided on in December 2023, the modernization and upgrade of Austria's existing stationary 35mm systems to

► Key facts

- Austria procuring 36 Skyranger 30 air defence systems on Pandur EVO 6x6 vehicles from GDELS
- Serial production order a market breakthrough for Skyranger 30
- Delivery starts in 2026
- Versatility: Suitable platforms Lynx, Boxer, Pandur
- Armament: high-performance 30mm automatic cannon and Mistral guided missiles
- Effective defence against aerial threats, especially drones

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Skyguard Next Generation (NG) status was the first step. Now, following the decision to introduce the Skyranger 30, the capability gap in mobile air defence will soon be bridged as well.

“This order underscores once again Rheinmetall’s technological lead in short-range air defence”, declares Oliver Dürr, CEO of Rheinmetall Air Defence.

With the almost simultaneous introduction of a rapidly deployable 35mm solution, the Austrian military is now pointing the way in contemporary air defence. Progressive networking and integration of existing and higher-echelon systems will result in decisive strategic advantages.

Working in close cooperation with Austria’s exceptionally competent decisionmakers, Rheinmetall specialists designed a special lightweight version of the Skyranger 30 that can be readily integrated into the GDELS Pandur. The Skyranger 30 effectively counters current and emerging aerial threats to ground forces, enabling them to focus on their prime tasks. A meticulously thought-out combination of different effectors, maximum mobility, a large elevation range and state-of-the-art sensors enable autonomous and networked operations alike.

The new contract highlights Rheinmetall’s role in reequipping the armed forces of Europe to contend with new threats, including stationary and mobile air defence solutions from Rheinmetall Air Defence, headed by Oliver Dürr.