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Rheinmetall and MBDA: Joint venture will efficiently combine development and production of state-of-the-art laser weapon systems

Düsseldorf/Schrobenhausen, 5 January 2026 – Rheinmetall and MBDA in Germany are planning on establishing a joint venture for their naval laser activities in the first quarter of 2026. Based on their existing cooperation since 2019 and the successful implementation of a naval laser demonstrator, the new company will develop and provide high-performance, innovative laser weapon systems, initially for the navy.

The German Navy is to receive an operational laser weapon system to complement its guns and guided missiles. It is particularly effective in counter striking drones and other highly agile targets at short and very short ranges. MBDA and Rheinmetall are ideally positioned to accomplish this task, as they have earlier jointly developed a demonstrator that has already been integrated on a naval vessel and successfully tested under operational conditions for a year. All necessary capabilities to engage targets precisely, quickly, and with minimal collateral damage were attested.

Even when faced with the most challenging targets and adverse environmental conditions, the system has proven its ability to track a target the size of a One-Euro coin at a great distance with stability, and concentrate the energy of the laser weapon precisely on that target. This level of precision prevents the weapon from overshooting the target, ensuring maximum safety.

Within the framework of their existing partnership, the two companies have developed a system that meets all customer requirements.

“This step demonstrates the potential of determined industrial and technological cooperation in Germany in order to produce cutting-edge technology”, said Roman Köhne, Head of Rheinmetall’s Weapons and Munitions division. “From the very beginning, both partners have been focussing on their strengths. Hence, this has enabled us to offer a unique product in a short period of time to the Bundeswehr. And from the beginning, nationalising the technology was the main object. One of the goals is to maintain, create and expand jobs in Germany in the long term, as well as ensuring national sovereignty and security of supply in times of crisis”.

“With this GmbH (private limited company under German law), we are setting new standards in the development and production of state-of-the-art military laser weapon systems, designed and made in Germany”, explains Thomas Gottschild, CEO of MBDA Germany. “This accentuates the benefits of many years

► Key facts

- ▷ GmbH (private limited company under German law) to be established for the development of a highly innovative naval laser weapon system
- ▷ Further development of the successfully tested maritime laser weapon demonstrator for future land-based applications
- ▷ Cutting-edge technology ‘Designed and Made in Germany’

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of collaboration and highlights the dedication of both companies to bringing the tried-and-tested maritime product to the market swiftly, and providing the Bundeswehr with additional drone defence capabilities. By combining our complementary, innovative core competencies, we can offer the German Navy a laser weapon system that is technologically advanced, qualified and operational”.

Following a successful one-year trial period at sea, during which more than 100 firing and tracking tests were conducted against various targets, including ‘Blue Sky’ without using the landscape to capture the beam, the laser demonstrator was transferred to the Laser Competence Centre of the Military Technical Service for Weapons and Ammunition (WTD 91) in Meppen for further testing. It has been taken back into operation and is also being used for further land-based drone defence testing.

About Rheinmetall

Rheinmetall is a leading international defence system house and a driver of forward-looking innovations in civilian markets. Through its technologies, products and systems, the corporation creates the indispensable foundation for peace, freedom and sustainable development, namely security. With over 40,000 employees at more than 170 locations worldwide, the DAX-listed corporation generated sales of approximately €9.8 billion in the fiscal year of 2024.

About MBDA

MBDA is the only European multinational corporation to be a global leader in complex weapon systems. The more than 18,000 employees ensure the national sovereignties of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, as well as of other allied nations. MBDA is the only European company capable of developing and producing complex weapons to meet the operational requirements of land, sea and air forces. MBDA is a joint venture between Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%) and Leonardo (25%).

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