MEDIARELEASE

▶ *RHEINMETALL*

26 March 2026

Rheinmetall, MIRA and Rheinbahn launch pilot for teleoperated on-demand shuttles

Operations at Düsseldorf Airport to begin in May 2026 – teleoperation as a building block for flexible and cost-efficient public transport

Rheinmetall AG, MIRA GmbH and Rheinbahn AG announced during the XPONENTIAL Europe trade fair the launch of a joint pilot operation for remotely operated on-demand shuttles at Düsseldorf Airport. Operations are set to begin in May 2026. The shuttle route will connect the airport railway station and the EUREF Campus with the airport terminal– entirely on public roads.

Teleoperation a key technology for new mobility concepts

As part of the pilot project, remote vehicle operation will be tested as a key technology for the flexible and cost-efficient deployment of on-demand shuttle services in urban environments. The vehicles will be driven from a remote operations center by certified remote drivers. During the test phase, a safety driver will accompany operations to provide an additional layer of safety. The goal is to further develop and systematically evaluate the technology under real traffic conditions.

The project focuses on four key areas:

1. Operational safety and system stability
2. Integration into existing traffic and control structures
3. Passenger acceptance
4. Cost efficiency and scalability

The insights gained will lay the foundation for potential future deployment in public transport, as well as in other application areas such as logistics and agriculture.

Rheinbahn: innovation with clear benefits for public transport

Annette Grabbe, Rheinbahn CEO, said:

“Public transport is facing structural challenges regarding staffing and financing. If we want to ensure reliable service, we must systematically explore technological options. That is why we are breaking new ground and testing technologies where they must prove their value: during day-to-day operations.”

Annette Grabbe: “The pilot operation of teleoperated on-demand shuttles on public roads is an important step. Based on robust data, we will assess whether and how teleoperation can become a permanent part of our operating model. For us, the focus is not on the technology itself, but on its tangible added value for a high-performing, resilient and affordable public transport system. What matters is that new technologies help us make our operations more stable and deliver real everyday benefits for our passengers.”

▶ Key facts

- Rheinmetall and Düsseldorf-based Rheinbahn AG are collaborating
- Pilot operation of a teleoperated shuttle at Düsseldorf Airport
- Test operations will begin in May 2026
- The insights gained will form the basis for potential future use in public transportation

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Bridging the gap from pilot project to real-world operations

Rheinmetall and MIRA also see the project as an important milestone. Win Neidlinger, CEO of MIRA GmbH, said:

“With our teleoperation solution, we are making an important contribution to shaping a future-proof and resilient public transport system. By enabling efficient teleoperation of on-demand shuttles, we are helping to address staff shortages in a practical way, creating the basis for reliably and economic mobility services.

This pilot operation marks an important milestone in elevating teleoperation beyond the pilot stage into concrete real-world applications in public transport.”

Dr Stephan Keller, Mayor of the City of Düsseldorf, emphasized:

“Innovations like this do not emerge in isolation; they are the result of strong partnerships working together in practice. With Rheinbahn and MIRA, Düsseldorf is demonstrating in concrete terms how new technologies can perform in everyday operations. For us as a city, it is essential to create the right framework conditions and make projects like this possible. This is how we build a modern, high-performing public transport system that will continue to serve people reliably in the future - while also strengthening Düsseldorf as a hub for the mobility of tomorrow.”

Part of a European future project

The pilot operation is part of the PoQuaSIA research project, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) as part of the European 8ra initiative. The initiative aims to establish a resilient and scalable digital infrastructure for safety-critical applications.

Rheinmetall and MIRA are jointly developing an integrated overall system consisting of highly secure cloud infrastructure, an IoT platform, and real-time fleet and route management. This secure cloud infrastructure forms the technological backbone of teleoperation. It connects vehicles, operators and operational processes in real time, enabling low latency, high availability and the scalable integration of multiple vehicles.

In doing so, it creates a key prerequisite for the cost-efficient operation of teleoperated fleets in public transport - and, in the future, autonomous fleets as well.