

MEDIA RELEASE

► WEAPON AND AMMUNITION

23 July 2026

Foundation-Laying ceremony in Aschau: Rheinmetall is constructing one of Europe's largest and most modern powder plants – national production capacity for over one million propellant charge modules

Rheinmetall is one of the largest ammunition manufacturers in the Western world and is continuing to significantly expand its production capacity through the Project Firepower.

For this purpose, one of Europe's largest and most modern powder factories is being constructed at Rheinmetall's long-standing Aschau am Inn site, which is also home to the headquarters of its subsidiary Rheinmetall

Nitrochemie. The Minister-President of the Free State of Bavaria, Dr Markus Söder, Member of the Bavarian Parliament, the Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Defence, Dr Nils Schmid, and the Bavarian Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy, Dr Hubert Aiwanger, Member of the Bavarian Parliament, attended the foundation-laying ceremony.

Production capacity for propellant components for barrel artillery and other large-calibre systems will be significantly expanded at the Aschau site. The site currently covers 90 hectares and is set to grow to around 110 hectares. Several hundred million Euro will be invested in the project. The workforce in Aschau continues to grow. Since 2022, the number of employees has risen by around 80 per cent to over 800. Several hundred more jobs are set to be created, meaning that 1,400 employees will work here in future.

Production is set to begin gradually at the newly established facilities from 2027 onwards. The Aschau site currently operates in shifts around the clock to produce around 1,700 tonnes of powder and 300,000 propellant charge modules per year. Over the next 24 months, the production of powder and propellant charge modules is set to more than double. This equates to an additional 2,500 tonnes of powder, over five million combustible components, and over one million modular propellant charge modules to be manufactured in Aschau. The entire value chain for modular propellant charges is managed from a single source and site. Maximum production capacity will be reached in 2028.



► Key facts

- Rheinmetall subsidiary Nitrochemie Aschau is expanding significantly
- One of the largest and most modern powder factories is being constructed
- Several hundred new jobs; expansion of production to over one million propellant charge modules

► Contact

Dr. Jan-Phillipp Weisswange
Deputy Head of Public Relations
Spokesperson Weapon and Ammunition
Tel.: +49 211 473 4287
jan-phillipp.weisswange@rheinmetall.com
rheinmetall.com

Oliver Hoffmann
Head of Public Relations
Tel.: +49 211 473 4748
oliver.hoffmann@rheinmetall.com
rheinmetall.com

► Social media

✕ @Rheinmetallag
@Rheinmetallag
in Rheinmetall
▶ Rheinmetall

WhatsApp



The propellant charge, or powder, is one of the most important components in weapon systems. Once ignited, it burns in a controlled manner, leaving no residue. This propels the projectile out of the barrel and towards the target.



“Security and defence capability are the prerequisites for freedom: the laying of the foundation stone for the plant expansion of Rheinmetall’s subsidiary Nitrochemie in Aschau am Inn is a good day for security,” said Minister-President Dr Markus Söder. “Rheinmetall is investing €500 million in Europe’s largest and most modern powder factory. This makes a decisive contribution to resilience and autonomy in the defence sector and creates 500 new, secure jobs in the region. This benefits Germany, the EU and NATO. After all, only those who can defend themselves will not be attacked. In Bavaria, security and defence are a priority – a third of Germany’s defence technology companies are based in the Free State. With our own Defence Industry Act, we are ensuring that defence companies are given priority. Just as with the Bundeswehr Act, we are pioneers throughout Germany!”

Parliamentary State Secretary Dr Nils Schmid: “Expanding production capacity in Germany, particularly for ammunition, is a security necessity and is also of the utmost importance to our partners. I am therefore grateful that the security and defence industry is making efforts at all levels to make supply chains more resilient. The results are truly impressive. The new facility here in Aschau is a response to the urgent demand for ammunition in Germany and across Europe. The additional production capacity will, overall, enhance Germany’s and Europe’s strategic autonomy. It demonstrates that democratic states are prepared to take responsibility and stand up for one another. On behalf of the Federal Government, we wish you a swift construction process and every success with this important contribution to the defence of Germany and Europe.”

Armin Papperger, CEO of Rheinmetall AG: “Since its foundation, Rheinmetall has been a competence centre for weapons and ammunition systems. We are one of the few manufacturers in the ammunition sector to cover the entire value chain, from propellant charges and primers to fuzes and shell bodies, as well as explosive and active charges. None of these components shall be a bottleneck. This is particularly important when it comes to propellant, as there are only a few manufacturers worldwide. Self-sufficiency is therefore crucial. The Aschau site will thus make a decisive contribution to the national sovereignty and credible defence capability of Germany and Europe”.

Background: Rheinmetall’s Firepower project and further capacity expansion



In response to the urgent need for ammunition in the Western world, Rheinmetall has launched Project Firepower. The company is investing heavily in its manufacturing operations by building new plants, such as the one in Unterlüß, and expanding existing sites, such as Nitrochemie. The aim is to increase the Group’s annual propellant powder capacity to 20,000 tonnes by 2030, in order to meet the ammunition requirements of the Bundeswehr, NATO and the EU. Over a fifth of this capacity – 4,200 tonnes – will come from Aschau. Rheinmetall is investing a total of around €650 million in the production of propellant powder and its

energy-intensive precursors, €350 million of which is being invested in Aschau. Alongside the Aschau am Inn site, production facilities in Wimmis (Switzerland) as well as in Murcia and Burgos (Spain), amongst others, are contributing to the capacity expansion.

About the Nitrochemie Group

The Nitrochemie Group is a German-Swiss company. It is based in Wimmis in the Swiss canton of Bern and in Aschau am Inn in Upper Bavaria.

Both sites have a long-standing tradition of gunpowder production: Wimmis has been manufacturing gunpowder since the end of the First World War. The Aschau site has been operating under the name WNC Nitrochemie since 1953 and has been producing gunpowder there. It was taken over by Rheinmetall in 1994.

In 1998, SM Schweizerische Munitionsunternehmung AG's (Swiss Munition Company) "Powder & Charges" division in Wimmis merged with WNC Nitrochemie to form the Nitrochemie Group. Since then, the Aschau site has operated as Nitrochemie Aschau GmbH, while the Swiss site has operated as Nitrochemie Wimmis AG.