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North Hesse Defence Hub: Rheinmetall to build new logistics centre at Kassel Airport – State of Hesse supports strategic investment

The State Government of Hesse and Rheinmetall intend to work together to further develop and economically strengthen North Hesse as a centre for innovation and defence. Minister-President Boris Rhein, Minister for Economic Affairs Kaweh Mansoori and Armin Papperger, CEO of Rheinmetall AG, presented the plans for the 'North Hesse Defence Hub' on Thursday, 27 August 2026, at Kassel Airport. They also signed a corresponding Memorandum of Understanding. With funding from the State of Hesse, Rheinmetall will establish a new logistics and technology centre at Kassel-Calden Airport, expand its site in Kassel and develop new technologies locally. The total investment amounts to a three-digit million sum in millions of euros.

With an available floor area of over 30,000 square metres, the logistics centre will be one of the Group's most significant infrastructure investments in Germany. The facility, which is to be built in the municipality of Calden in the very close vicinity of Kassel Airport, is scheduled to be operational at the end of 2027. This will create a defence hub in Northern Hesse that will have significance far beyond the region and generate new jobs among partners and suppliers. The new logistics centre is set to significantly boost the company's operational capacity and ensure the efficient processing of both domestic and international orders. The modern infrastructure will enable shorter processing times, optimised supply chains and higher delivery quality – factors that are of crucial importance given the growing demand for Rheinmetall products.



Furthermore, Rheinmetall is planning to establish a drone test centre at its new site in Calden. The aim is to capitalise on the site's infrastructural advantages, combined with the unique local conditions, for the further development and testing of Rheinmetall drones. Unlike other airports, Kassel Airport offers unique opportunities for drone testing. The planned Hessian Drone Competence Centre also provides Rheinmetall with a valuable locational advantage at the airport.

Minister-President Boris Rhein: "Rheinmetall's multi-million investment is a strong signal for North Hesse as a centre of innovation and defence. In future, the North Hesse Defence Hub will link Kassel's industrial strength with the strategic infrastructure of Kassel Airport. Kassel-Calden is, and will remain, a key component of the transport infrastructure in North Hesse. The airport serves general aviation and is a business hub. Furthermore, we are intending to establish it even more firmly in future as a military hub, for Bundeswehr training flights and

► Keyfacts

- State of Hesse supports new logistics centre at Kassel Airport, built by Rheinmetall
- Investments in the triple-million-euro-range, funding by the State of Hesse
- 30.000 sqm plant is due to be operational by the end of 2027
- A key element of Rheinmetall's growth strategy in the field of tactical military vehicles
- Customers will benefit from shorter processing times, optimised supply chains and higher delivery quality
- Rheinmetall also plans to establish a drone test centre at its new site in Calden

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for research into and testing of new drone technologies”, said Hesse’s Minister-President Boris Rhein. Referring to the project’s significance for the region, he added: “I am very grateful to Rheinmetall for joining us today to launch this forward-looking project and, in doing so, to take North Hesse as a centre for innovation and defence to a new level. These investments will create additional value and jobs. And in these economically challenging times, we are sending a message of confidence: our Defence Hub will become a driver of growth for the strong region of North Hesse”.

Kaweh Mansoori, Minister for Economic Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, highlighted the importance of North Hesse as a business hub for the state, Germany and Europe: “A government capable of taking effective action must guarantee security – and in doing so, it needs a strong, innovative and resilient economy. Resilience means having reliable structures, technological expertise and the capacity to act independently. North Hesse offers the ideal conditions for this: industrial strength, excellent research, innovative companies and a highly skilled workforce. We intend to develop this potential in a targeted manner. In this way, we will strengthen Germany’s and Europe’s capacity to act, whilst at the same time securing good jobs and value creation in the region”.

Armin Papperger, Chief Executive of Rheinmetall AG: “We regard this investment as a strategic move with a view to significant orders in the field of military vehicles, which we can expect to receive in future from both Germany and abroad. We are preparing for the future and are strengthening our capabilities for the benefit of our customers. The new logistics centre is a key element of Rheinmetall’s growth strategy in the tactical vehicle sector, particularly for our German customer – the Bundeswehr. We are especially grateful to the State of Hesse for the support we have received for this project”.

Björn Bernhard, CEO of Rheinmetall’s Vehicle Systems Division: “We are creating a new hub in the heart of Germany. With the new engineering, logistics and support centre in Calden, in the district of Kassel, we are sending a clear signal regarding the long-term viability of our site in North Hesse. Not only are we laying the foundations for even more efficient order processing, but we are also taking responsibility for the region. I would also like to thank the town, the district of Kassel and the municipality of Calden, as they are all supporting us to the best of their ability”.

The site at Kassel Airport was selected following a thorough analysis of possible alternatives. The good transportation links, the proximity to the existing Rheinmetall plant in Kassel (Mittelfeld Industrial Park) and the availability of land for a large-scale facility were clear arguments in favour of this site.

Decreasing traffic in the northern part of Kassel

Another key objective of the investment is to achieve a noticeable reduction in factory traffic in the area around the existing Rheinmetall plant in the northern part of Kassel. By relocating logistical processes and transport flows to the new centre at Kassel Airport, the aim is to significantly reduce lorry and delivery traffic around the traditional factory site.

This not only benefits the company itself, but also significantly reduces traffic on the neighbouring roads and in the residential areas of Kassel. Rheinmetall is thus living up to its responsibilities as a regional employer and business partner, and is actively contributing to improving the quality of life in the region.

New jobs for the region

The construction and operation of the new logistics centre will create additional jobs in the Kassel district – both during the construction phase and in the long run, once operations are up

and running. Rheinmetall is thus strengthening its role as a major employer in the Kassel metropolitan region and reaffirming its commitment to North Hesse as a business location. The new roles will cover a broad spectrum of skills, ranging from logistics and warehouse specialists to technical and administrative roles.

In addition, an area of around 1,200 square metres of the Defence Hub is earmarked as a training centre. In future, staff from both the Kassel plant and other Rheinmetall sites will receive initial and further training there. Calden will thus take on a strategic role as a centre of excellence within the Rheinmetall Group and contribute to company-wide skills development and staff development.

Rheinmetall in Kassel

The Kassel site of Rheinmetall Landsystems GmbH is the centre of excellence within Rheinmetall AG's 'Vehicle Systems Europe' division for the development, manufacture and maintenance of state-of-the-art tactical wheeled and tracked vehicles, including a wide range of integrated equipment packages. Around 2,200 employees currently work at the Rheinmetall site in Kassel.