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Rheinmetall offers Croatia a long-term strategic industrial partnership: Rheinmetall Unmanned Vehicles to become a centre of future defence

Croatia is set to become one of Europe's key hubs for the development, production and export of advanced defence technologies in the field of unmanned systems, creating new opportunities for domestic industry, exports, research and development.

ZAGREB, 8 July 2026 – Rheinmetall AG, one of Europe's leading technology and defence companies, today presented Rheinmetall Unmanned Vehicles d.o.o., its joint venture with the Croatian company DOK-ING, marking the beginning of a long-term strategic industrial partnership between Rheinmetall and the Republic of Croatia.

The Inauguration Ceremony was attended by Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Armin Papperger, Chief Executive Officer of Rheinmetall AG, Vjekoslav Majetić, Founder of DOK-ING, members of the Croatian Government, as well as numerous representatives of Croatian state institutions, the diplomatic corps, industry, academia and international partners.

The establishment of the company represents the first step in Rheinmetall's long-term vision for Croatia, which includes the development of Croatian industrial, technological and manufacturing capabilities in partnership with domestic industry, research institutions, universities and shipyards, integrating them into Rheinmetall's European and global programmes. The objective is to position Croatia as one of Europe's key centres for the development, production and export of unmanned systems and other advanced defence technologies.

ARMIN PAPPERGER, CEO OF RHEINMETALL AG:

"We aim to build a broad industrial partnership with Croatia that will include local suppliers, the shipbuilding industry, research institutions and academia. Croatia has the expertise, industrial tradition and talented people required to become a manufacturing and development hub for advanced defence technologies. Together, we can build capabilities that will serve Croatia, Europe and our allies, while creating new export opportunities for Croatian industry."

The newly established Rheinmetall Unmanned Vehicles represents the first and most important step in implementing this strategy. The company will combine DOK-ING's more than thirty years of expertise in unmanned systems with Rheinmetall's global development, manufacturing and market capabilities, creating a new European centre for the development of next-generation unmanned ground platforms.

► Key facts

- Rheinmetall Unmanned Vehicles d.o.o. presented
- Joint venture of Rheinmetall and the Croatian company DOK-ING
- Beginning of a long-term strategic industrial partnership between Rheinmetall and the Republic of Croatia

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Croatian expertise as part of a global system

Research, development and engineering capabilities will remain in Croatia, while the joint venture will provide Croatian experts with access to global markets, advanced technologies, serial production and international development programmes.

Its objective is to develop a new generation of unmanned and autonomous ground platforms for military and security applications, including combat support systems, combat engineering operations, mine clearance and other high-risk missions, building on DOK-ING's Komodo platform and Rheinmetall's expertise in the integration of complex defence systems.

VJEKOSLAV MAJETIĆ, FOUNDER OF DOK-ING:

"More than thirty years ago, DOK-ING was founded on the belief that Croatian knowledge and expertise could create technologies capable of changing the world. Today, we are not closing one chapter—we are opening a new one. I firmly believe that technologies developed in Croatia will contribute to Europe's security and demonstrate that Croatian industry can stand alongside the world's leading companies as an equal partner. I am particularly proud that Croatian engineers will have the opportunity to develop, here in Zagreb, systems that will shape the future of the European defence industry."

An industrial partnership that goes beyond a single investment

Rheinmetall's strategy in Croatia extends far beyond the development of unmanned ground systems. The company is already present in the naval sector and has, over recent months, further expanded its cooperation with Croatian industry, the shipbuilding sector and academia. This creates the foundations for the long-term localisation of production, the development of new technologies and the stronger integration of Croatian companies into European defence programmes.

Rheinmetall's industrial model is based on creating local value through the development of domestic suppliers, technology transfer, strengthened research and development, the creation of new jobs and the establishment of sustainable manufacturing capacities with strong export potential.

For this reason, Croatia's role in Rheinmetall's strategy extends well beyond hosting a single investment. Croatia has the opportunity to become Rheinmetall's long-term industrial partner in Southeast Europe.

ANDREJ PLENKOVIĆ, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA:

"I congratulate Rheinmetall and DOK-ING on strengthening their partnership, marking a new chapter in the development of Croatia's defence industry and an important step forward in advanced technologies, innovation, and the strengthening of domestic industrial capabilities.

We want to build a Croatia that develops, manufactures, and exports the most advanced technologies while actively contributing to Europe's security. This strategic partnership between DOK-ING and Rheinmetall confirms that Croatia is not only a user of advanced technologies, but also a country that helps develop and create them. In today's evolving security environment, Europe is rapidly strengthening its defence capabilities and industrial base, and Croatia is actively contributing to these efforts. We are implementing the largest modernisation cycle of the Croatian Armed Forces, increasing investment in defence, and supporting the growth of Croatia's defence industry, which brings together around 200 companies, employs more than 3,000 people, and achieves strong export results across EU and NATO markets. It is particularly important that key development activities will remain in Croatia, where a Centre of Competence for the development of autonomous and uncrewed ground systems will be established. This will enable Croatian engineers, experts, and researchers to play an active role in developing the cutting-edge technologies that will shape the future of defence and security."

Rheinmetall's approach is fully aligned with the objectives of Croatia's Industrial Development Plan 2027–2034, including strengthening competitiveness, increasing exports, fostering innovation, accelerating digitalisation and integrating Croatian industry into European value chains. At the same time, the project contributes to strengthening Europe's defence industrial base, resilient supply chains and technological sovereignty.

Prime Minister Andrej Plenković and Armin Papperger, Chief Executive Officer of Rheinmetall AG, also held a bilateral meeting to discuss the further development of Rheinmetall's activities in Croatia, future investments, the integration of Croatian companies into international supply chains and opportunities for expanding manufacturing and research capacities.