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Helping the helpers: Rheinmetall to supply federal authorities in Germany with up to six million respiratory protection masks

Rheinmetall is stepping in to support the German government in the coronavirus crisis by supplying high-quality respiratory protection masks. Thanks to its global production and sales networks, especially in China, Rheinmetall has succeeded in sourcing urgently needed protective equipment. Within a few days, around a million Chinese-made masks (protection class FFP2) will be supplied to the responsible Bundeswehr procurement authorities in Koblenz. Together with a partner company, Rheinmetall has taken complete charge of the procurement and transport logistics as well as quality inspection.

A contract to this effect has now been signed with the Federal Office for Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-service Support (BAAINBw). The contract encompasses an option for the supply of a further five million masks by Rheinmetall.

At the beginning of March, Germany's Federal Ministry of Health turned to the Ministry of Defence for help in combatting the coronavirus pandemic. Together with procurement agencies of the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Interior Ministry, BAAINBw is now working to source the urgently required equipment for maintaining the healthcare system and protecting the population.

Rheinmetall – and not just because it is one of the Bundeswehr's top equipment suppliers – feels a strong obligation to lend a hand in the current crisis by helping to overcome the shortage of medical equipment.

As Armin Papperger, chairman of the executive board of Rheinmetall AG, explains: "In taking this step, we're not just trying to do whatever we can to halt the spread of the coronavirus in Germany. We specifically want to help the people who are helping us: doctors, emergency medical technicians, nurses, care providers – in short, the folks whose help we all depend on. And that goes for the civil and medical sphere alike."

These masks provide protection from infection by the COVID-19 virus and other pathogens. They have become very hard to find in the global marketplace. Rheinmetall sees its success in securing large numbers of these masks as a first step in providing fast, unbureaucratic assistance to healthcare providers and medical facilities.

In addition, Rheinmetall has identified further areas where it can provide quick support. For example, a number of the Group's business units are able to produce disinfectant in their excellent laboratories. In South Africa, a plant operated by its

► Key facts

- ▷ Fast, unbureaucratic supply of urgently required masks for protection against COVID-19 infection
- ▷ The Group's global network gives it ready access to production sources
- ▷ Help in other areas also possible

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subsidiary Rheinmetall Denel Munition near Cape Town is already producing up to 100,000 litres of disinfectant a day, something urgently required by the country's healthcare sector.

Furthermore, along with other forms of support, Rheinmetall is examining ways of furnishing protective clothing and more masks on a large scale, as well as assembling medical equipment such as ventilators.