Rheinmetall inaugurates Europe's largest ammunition factory

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Unterlüß, August 27, 2025 – Germany takes a decisive step in the European rearmament race. With the opening of the new Rheinmetall plant in Lower Saxony, near Hanover, the continent's largest ammunition factory comes to life. The inauguration, attended by NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, marks the beginning of a new phase in European industrial and strategic policy.

A record plant: time, costs, and capacity

The project required an investment of about **500 million euros** and only **15 months of work**, compared to the three years initially planned. The plant, as large as five football fields, has lines dedicated to the production of shells and final packaging. At full capacity, expected by 2027, it will be able to produce up to **350,000 155 mm shells per year**, providing an essential contribution to the needs of the Atlantic Alliance.

Already in 2025, the factory will ensure about **25,000 munitions**, starting a rapid growth process that within a few years will make Rheinmetall the beating heart of European artillery production.

The CEO of Rheinmetall, Armin Papperger, emphasized that the factory is not an endpoint but a starting point. The project is part of a broader plan aimed at creating a true **pan-European defense ecosystem**, with plants in various NATO countries.

The German group is already operational in the United Kingdom and Lithuania, while in Romania a contract worth **535 million euros** has been signed for the construction of a gunpowder factory that, at full capacity, will employ 700 workers. In Bulgaria, a joint venture is being studied for the construction of two plants – one dedicated to gunpowder and one to munitions – for a total investment **exceeding one billion euros**.

A widespread network of production hubs that will help ensure not only European industrial resilience but also the ability to sustain the war of attrition in Ukraine.

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Responding to the Ukrainian emergency

The opening of the new plant comes in a context of strong pressure on ammunition stocks. Since 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has highlighted Europe's serious shortcomings in arms production. NATO has set ambitious goals: to produce **2 million munitions by the end of 2025**.

With this factory, Rheinmetall will bring its total production capacity to about **700,000 shells per year**, helping to fill a gap that has pushed governments and industries to multiply efforts. Not surprisingly, in July 2024, the German government commissioned the group a **record order worth 8.5 billion euros** to supply its armed forces and allies.

The inauguration had a strong symbolic value. Mark Rutte, NATO Secretary General, called the plant “a symbol of the rebirth of European defense,” praising the speed of its realization. Minister Pistorius also spoke of a “milestone” for the **Zeitenwende**, the strategic shift announced by Germany after the Russian attack in 2022.

On the political level, the initiative strengthens Berlin's credibility as a central actor in European defense, in a context where there is increasing discussion of strategic autonomy and reducing dependence on the United States.

Beyond ammunition: new productions on the way

The Unterlüß site will not be limited to the production of conventional artillery. From 2026, the complex will expand its capacity to include the manufacture of **rocket engines**, a further step towards an integrated supply chain ranging from classic munitions to more advanced systems.

In perspective, the German model could serve as an example for other member states, accelerating the creation of a **European military industrial network** coordinated with NATO.

The Rheinmetall factory in Unterlüß is much more than an industrial investment: it is a political and strategic act. It represents the will of Germany and Europe to prepare for a future of increasingly intense geopolitical competition, strengthening defense capabilities and supporting Ukraine. In this sense, it is not just a production facility, but the tangible symbol of a new era for European security.

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