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Rheinmetall – firepower for future main battle tanks

Faced with a rapidly evolving geopolitical situation, more and more European countries have been rethinking the role of mechanized armoured forces. The scenarios involving MBTs for national defence are currently experiencing a renaissance. At the same time many Leopard 2 user nations plan to use the weapon systems for a further 15-20 years. At Eurosatory 2016 Rheinmetall is presenting concepts for enhancing the firepower of present and future main battle tanks.

Rheinmetall is the main developer and manufacturer of all Leopard 2 120mm smoothbore weapon systems in service today, supplying both the gun and the ammunition. Furthermore the Group is a top specialist for Leopard 2 upgrade programmes. Continuously improving the performance of 120mm tank gun and ammunition technology is therefore one of Rheinmetall's principal tasks.

Leopard 2 users who want to upgrade their MBT fleet or parts of it to the more powerful 120mm L55 barrel are the target group for this technical approach. The intention is to achieve an upgraded 120mm L55 weapon system (working title L55A1) and a new generation of KE ammunition with a significantly improved performance against modern protection systems by 2018. Technically comparable solutions will also be offered for the standard barrel L44, i.e. the L44A1.

Prompted by initial considerations for a future MBT, Rheinmetall's Weapons and Ammunition division launched a company-financed 130mm demonstrator programme last year to confirm the anticipated significant increase in performance against modern threats.

Unveiled at Eurosatory for the first time, this 130mm/L51 weighs (without mounting components) 3,000 kilograms, while the current barrel length is 6,630 mm. In coming months, the 130mm/L51 gun will undergo comprehensive testing which is expected to confirm a quantum leap in performance compared with the tank main armament currently in use. A Leopard 2 successor vehicle would thus be capable of successfully engaging better-protected opponents in duel situations at larger ranges with superior firepower.

If a medium term requirement for a quick introduction of this weapon would come up, integration into an existing or new platform can be completed as a fall-back position in a reasonable time frame.

For more information, please contact:

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