

„The First Extensive Program for the Romanian Army and the National Industry: the 8X8 Armored Vehicle.”

The program of the 8x8 armored vehicle represents a major objective for the Romanian armed forces for the following years. Within the transformation, development, and modernization plan proposed by the Romanian Army for the following decade, developing a modern carrier represents both a prerequisite to enhance our troops' mobility and combat capacity, and a product with export potential.

This program needs to be approved by the Parliament, through the joint Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and for this purpose the Government needs to issue a decision or even to propose a bill. What legislative tools the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Economy and the Government as a whole will employ in order for the 8x8 armored vehicle project to have the necessary legal grounds and to actually start, remains to be seen.

In November 2016 ROMARM and the German company Rheinmetall Defence signed an agreement in order to set up a joint venture that would do research, develop and manufacture a new model for the 8x8 armored vehicle. Its production is estimated to start in 2019, at Moreni Factory, part of CN ROMARM. The Army intends to purchase the first batch of 272 units and the contract is scheduled to be signed this summer.

It is estimated that the involvement of the Romanian companies at the onset of this multiannual project will amount to 40%, which will represent an important breath of fresh air both for state-owned companies and for private companies in Romania and, in the future, the involvement of state-owned companies is to increase up to 60%. The multiannual planning approved by Romania's Supreme Defense Council (CSAT) estimated a total value of 2 billion euros for this program, whereas the overall number of carriers needed is estimated at 600.

The 8x8 armored vehicle program can be an opportunity for the national defense industry, which will thus take part in the production of the first product of high technological value manufactured in Romania in the past 27 years. The statements made by the officials within the Ministry of Economy who are involved in this project, while attending other New Strategy Center events, showed that the carrier is desired to have an important series of qualities which would make it competitive on the global arms market: buoyancy, ballistic protection, low cost, modularity, and ergonomics.

At this debate, New Strategy Center wants the Romanian decision makers and the representatives of Rheinmetall Defence to be able to present further details related to this project, its development, and the industrial cooperation.

This debate is part of the series of events entitled '**Romanian Army Endowment Programs. Cooperation Opportunities for the National Industry**' launched by New Strategy Center.