
ROMANIA TO AWARD ARMORED VEHICLES DEAL TO GERMANY'S RHEINMETALL

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WARSAW, Poland □ Romanian Prime Minister Dacian Ciolos has announced that the country's Defence Ministry is planning to award a contract for the delivery of armored personnel carriers (APC) to Germany's Rheinmetall Defence. The company is to team up with a state-run Romanian manufacturer and launch a plant in Romania that will produce the APCs.

"There will be a partnership, a Romanian-German joint venture, which will allow Rheinmetall to obtain the contract from the Ministry of Defence and build an armored personnel carrier that will be first supplied to the Romanian military," Ciolos told local broadcaster Europa FM in an Nov. 17 interview.

Under the plan, the new APCs will replace Romanias TAB vehicles, which are a locally built variant of the Soviet-designed BTR-70. The amount of the planned acquisition was not disclosed, but the Romanian Armed Forces is planning to replace about 1,500 such vehicles in the coming years.

"A portion of the funds will stay in Romania and allow to create new jobs here," Ciolos said.

According to the prime minister, the countrys Defense Ministry is seeking to conclude similar deals with foreign manufacturers for other military procurements. This includes the planned acquisition of new corvettes for the Romanian Navy, according to Ciolos.

The prime minister said that for 2017, the Romanian government is aiming to allocate a maximum of 2 percent of the countrys gross domestic product to defense expenditure.

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