

Press Release

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LS²: launch of a strategic partnership to ensure the operational readiness of Belgian land force vehicles

The Belgian Ministry of Defence has officially confirmed the launch of the Land Systems Logistic Support (LS²), an industrial partnership bringing together John Cockerill Defense, FN Herstal and Thales. This ambitious and unprecedented initiative aims to ensure the long-term maintenance of all vehicles and embedded systems of the Belgian Land Force and to guarantee their long-term operational availability. Thibault Lambrecht is appointed CEO of LS² and will take up his duties early February.

This project, with a duration of **20 years**, is based on a strong and **unprecedented industrial cooperation between three major defence industry companies: John Cockerill Defense, FN Herstal and Thales Belgium.**

By pooling their expertise in the service of Belgian sovereignty, the three partners have formed a joint venture dedicated to the maintenance, modernisation and logistical support of all land force vehicles and their information systems, communication and armament.

Thanks to the pooling of skills of the three partners, LS² will allow:

- To ensure **integrated and coherent** support, improving the availability of land-based capabilities;
- To strengthen the **technological and industrial sovereignty** of Belgium;
- To maintain and develop critical skills on the national territory;
- To create **highly skilled jobs** and foster sustainable local investments;
- To introduce modernized and streamlined maintenance solutions compared to existing devices.

These maintenance activities will be carried out at various Land Force bases on Belgian territory.

The Minister of Defence, Théo Francken, approved the terms of the agreement, which constitutes a **strategic investment for Belgium**, with the objectives of **strengthening strategic defence autonomy, preserving and developing national industrial skills, creating skilled jobs**, and **ensuring the operational availability** of land capabilities in the long term.

Theo Francken, Belgian Minister of Defence: “*With LS², we demonstrate what Belgium is capable of when our defence industry joins forces. This is a first in our country: an integrated, all-in-one solution that elevates our vehicles to a higher level and strengthens the combat capability of our units. LS² proves that collaboration is not a compromise, but an accelerator. Our companies reinforce one another — and together, they reinforce our Defence.*”

Thierry Renaudin, CEO of John Cockerill Defense: « *LS² is the alliance of three leaders in their field who, together, want to meet the essential need for maintenance in operational condition of Belgian Defense vehicles. LS² thus constitutes a pillar of sovereignty in the field of defense and a*

lever for the continued development of our activities in support of the armed forces. John Cockerill Defense is proud to put its bicentenary expertise at the service of this strategic industrial partnership and to strengthen its cooperation with Defense. »

Julien Compère, CEO of FN Herstal: « *LS² guarantees the Land Force that its vehicles and their armament will be operational at all times to accomplish their missions and gives our industries a long-term visibility favorable to local investments. The contract also illustrates our commitment to developing tailor-made solutions that meet the specific needs of our partner armed forces. »*

Alain Quevrin, CEO of Thales Belgium: « *We are proud of the trust placed in us by the Belgian Defence through the creation of LS², which marks a decisive step for the national industry. By joining our forces, we guarantee the availability and performance of all Land Force vehicles for decades to come, in order to ensure that Belgian military vehicles remain in operational condition. This confidence reinforces our commitment to provide reliable solutions fully adapted to the operational requirements of Defence. »*

Thibault Lambrecht, CEO of LS²: « *The LS² teams are fully committed to launching this project and delivering high-quality support to the Belgian Land Forces. We are determined to stand alongside the Belgian military personnel who already ensure the maintenance and operational readiness of the Army's systems. At the core of our ethos lie the reliability of our work, the dedication of our employees, and the agility of our organisation to collectively meet the challenges that our armed forces may face. We are proud to be a long-term partner and look to the future with pride and determination.* »

Over the next few months, LS² will start:

- The operational implementation of the **joint venture**;
- The gradual resumption of maintenance activities within Land Force bases;
- The deployment of a **transition plan** ensuring the continuity of fleet support;
- The set-up of an agenda for the ramp up of technical and industrial capacities;
- The implementation of a joint partner and Defence **readiness tracking system**.

These steps will ensure an harmonized entry into service of the program and optimize, from the first year, the performance of terrestrial support.

The Belgian Government, the Ministry of Defence and the three partners welcome this major step forward, which illustrates Belgium's desire to be part of **an integrated European defence** system, while enhancing its **industrial know-how**.

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Press contact

Julien Marique, julien.marique@johncockerill.com +32 (0) 475 30 08 91

