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## **GRIPEN OFFSET TEAM DELIVER MANUFACTURING ORDERS TO THREE CZECH COMPANIES**

Autoliv Mekan AB of Sweden, the world's leading manufacturer of automotive safety products, such as seatbelt systems and airbags, has placed trial orders for the manufacture of auto components with three Czech companies as part of the Gripen offset and industrial co-operation programme for the Czech Republic.

Autoliv, which in 1956 pioneered seatbelt technology and today has 80 plants in more than 30 vehicle-producing countries employing more than 28,000 people, currently spends more than 1.96 billion Czech crowns per year with suppliers world-wide.

Subject to Brano Group a.s. of Hradec nad Moravici, Magnetron a.s. of Kromeriz and Karsit s.r.o. Jaromer meeting Autoliv's stringent quality standards and delivery performance requirements, the Swedish company intends to place additional manufacturing works in the Czech Republic in the future.

Anders Persson, Quality Manager at Autoliv, said: "We have visited the Czech Republic several times and, working with the Czech Gripen team, have identified several potential supplier partners. Autoliv is pleased to be launching co-operation with two Czech companies and looks forward to developing a successful, long-term relationship with each of them."

Hans Edlund, senior vice president at Gripen partner Saab of Sweden, comments: "Offset benefits linked to defence procurement programmes normally begin to flow after contract signature but Gripen partners Saab and BAE SYSTEMS adopt a different approach."

"The Czech Republic is now benefiting from 15 individual pre-contract offset projects and this clearly demonstrates our commitment to developing long-term industrial partnerships with a large number of Czech companies in both the defence and aerospace and commercial business sectors."

The Gripen programme of offset and industrial co-operation has been developed to meet the specific regional and industrial priorities of the Czech government. Offset programmes, identified for every region of the country, will bring investments, generate export revenues, promote export and secure employment. They will act as a catalyst for a tri-lateral trading and military relationship between Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic.

Gripen is the latest-technology, supersonic, multi-role fighter capable of fulfilling all Czech national, European and NATO defence needs for the next 30+ years. Fully interoperable with respect to NATO requirements and configuration of weapon systems, it is equipped with the latest combat-proven air-to-air and air-to-surface weaponry.

## **Ends**

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