PRESS RELEASE 30. 6. 2026

CSG Enters the Next Phase of Global Growth: Strengthening Its Leadership Team with Top Defence Executives

Just a few years ago, CSG was predominantly Czech and Slovak. Today, it is drawing senior talent from leading defence companies including Rheinmetall, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, BAE Systems, General Dynamics and Kongsberg. Foreign acquisitions, rapid growth and its stock market listing have turned CSG into one of the most attractive destinations for experienced managers in the global defence industry.

"I think people are attracted above all by the opportunity to truly build something. In large corporations, a manager's role is often about maintaining an existing system. At CSG, top experts from around the world can quickly put their ideas into practice, play a part in major strategic decisions, and directly influence the direction of the group. In my view, that is why more and more experienced managers are choosing CSG as the next step in their careers," says Michal Strnad, majority owner and Chairman of the Board of CSG.

From a Czech Group to a Global Player

A series of foreign acquisitions, from Spain's FMG through Italy's Fiocchi to the US-based The Kinetic Group, has transformed CSG into one of the most important players in the global defence industry. With over 14,000 employees and production plants in Europe, the USA, and Asia, CSG is now building a management team that reflects its international importance.

"Five years ago, we had to persuade candidates to take a business with Czechoslovak roots seriously. Today, we are talking to people from companies such as Rheinmetall, Northrop Grumman, BAE Systems, and Kongsberg, who are actively following CSG's development themselves. That is perhaps the most visible proof of the transformation we have undergone," says Alena Kozáková, member of the Board of Directors and HR Director of CSG.

IPO Opened the Door to Global Talent

One key milestone in how CSG is perceived abroad was its stock market listing in January 2026. The IPO increased its international visibility while also confirming its position among the most important defence and industrial groups in Europe. This quickly translated into interest from managers with backgrounds in global corporations.

"The IPO fundamentally changed how CSG is perceived around the world. For many managers, it confirmed that CSG had reached a size and level of governance comparable to the largest global players. That is now helping us attract precisely these kinds of professionals," adds Alena Kozáková.

New Positions for a New Stage of Growth

The industrial group's transformation is reflected not only in the arrival of new people, but also in the creation of entirely new management roles. One of these is Group Chief Strategy Officer, held by Thomas Berge Nielsen since April. He joined CSG after more than ten years at Rheinmetall, where he led international business activities and strategy. Before that, he also worked at Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace.

"At Rheinmetall, I had the opportunity to help build one of Europe's most successful defence companies. But when I followed CSG's development, I saw something extraordinary: a company that, within a few years, had managed to grow from a regional player into a global group while retaining the ability to make decisions quickly. It was precisely this combination of scale, ambition and entrepreneurial spirit that convinced me to join the group. Most large corporations today are dealing with how to maintain their growth rate. CSG is dealing with how to grow even faster. Such an opportunity does not come along often in a career," says Nielsen.

A Manager from Rheinmetall and Hanwha Takes the Helm of the Largest Defence Division

Another significant addition is Australian Ben Hudson. In June he became CEO of the CSG Land Systems division and also became CSG's Chief Technology Officer. Hudson joined this industrial group from Hanwha, having previously held senior management positions at Rheinmetall, BAE Systems and General Dynamics European Land Systems. Before that, he also served as an officer in the Australian Army. During his career, he led major programs for customers around the world across all defence domains: land, air, naval, space, and cyber. Among other things, he contributed to the development and deployment of innovative high-tech systems that give NATO and its allies a technological edge.

"CSG combines the industrial strength of an established group with the energy, ambition, and ability to rapidly turn strategic vision into concrete cutting-edge products. For customers in NATO countries and other allied states, this means systems and technologies delivered at the speed, scale and level of innovation that the current security environment requires. The group's ambition is not only to respond to market developments, but to actively help shape the future of the European defence industry," explains Hudson.

A Direct Approach to Decision-Making Is a Competitive Advantage

The growing importance of the United States for CSG is also demonstrated by the June arrival of David Jacobs as President of CSG Defense North America. Jacobs spent almost fifteen years at Northrop Grumman and Raytheon, where he focused on strategy, acquisitions, and the development of defence activities.

"After my experience in strategy and business development at some of the largest defence companies in the world, I was very excited by the opportunity to join CSG. What I appreciate about CSG is its efficient and direct approach to decision-making. The company's majority owner has an ambitious vision for global growth and, at the same time, a long-term commitment to the company's development," says Jacobs.

CSG Attracts Managers Behind Billion-Pound Deals

The influx of experienced foreign managers concerns not only CSG's headquarters, but also its key subsidiaries. One such manager, Matthew Harvey, joined Excalibur Army in May as Chief Commercial Officer. This British manager brings more than twenty years of experience in the defence and aerospace industries, gained at BAE Systems, Leonardo and Marshall Aerospace & Defence Group.

“During my career, I have had the opportunity to work on contracts worth hundreds of millions of pounds. CSG convinced me with its combination of strong products, a healthy business, and extraordinary ambition to grow. When I met the group’s leadership, it was clear to me that its ambitions do not end in Europe. Few companies today offer the opportunity to be part of such dynamic global expansion. Many companies talk about growth. At CSG, I saw it with my own eyes,” says Harvey.

In January, Tom Winney joined Tatra Export as its CEO. He had previously worked at KNDS, Rheinmetall/BAE Systems Land and BAE Systems.

“In my career to date, I have led business campaigns in dozens of countries and worked on programs worth billions of pounds. At CSG, I found a company with great ambitions and a culture based on speed and flexibility, which are key to meeting the demands currently facing the defence industry,” says Winney.

Alexander Rüstig, who previously headed the German ammunition company RWS and has also held senior management positions at Schaeffler, became a significant addition to the Fiocchi Group at the beginning of the year.

“I have spent most of my professional life in the defence industry and have had the opportunity to follow the development of the world’s major players. CSG convinced me with its long-term vision and willingness to invest in production, technology, and people. It is clear that the group does not want to be merely a major European manufacturer, but one of the key global players,” notes Rüstig.

A Story That Also Captured the Interest of Capital Markets

The IPO also required the creation of a new position responsible for communication with investors and capital markets, held by Peter Russell since the end of last year. He has many years of experience communicating with capital markets on behalf of publicly traded companies, and he previously worked at companies such as Avast, Rentokil Initial, and before that J.P. Morgan.

“I have spent my entire career in capital markets and worked at major publicly traded companies. What interested me about CSG was a rare combination of factors: a fast-growing business with strong cash flow, an owner with a long-term vision and a strategy that is clearly defined and difficult to replicate. The IPO made it possible to present the story of a company that was highly respected in the defence industry to a wider circle of investors,” explains Russell.

Global Ambitions

Just a few years ago, managers joining CSG came primarily from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Today, this industrial group is attracting leaders who built their careers at places such as Rheinmetall, Northrop Grumman, BAE Systems, Raytheon, Kongsberg, and J.P. Morgan. A change of this kind says something about the quality of individual hires, and above all the transformation of CSG itself: from a regional industrial group into a respected player in the global defence industry.

“When we speak today with candidates from global companies, we no longer have to persuade them to come to CSG. Instead, they ask what role they can play in the next phase of our growth. And that is a change over recent years,” concludes Alena Kozáková.

About CSG

CSG N.V. ("CSG") is a Dutch company and a leading European defence industrial group, with its top management headquartered in Prague, Czech Republic. CSG develops and delivers defence and industrial technologies that contribute to a safer and more stable future. The Group focuses on the development and manufacturing of strategically important products, systems and technologies in the fields of defence and ammunition, as well as in related sectors such as aerospace. CSG operates key manufacturing facilities in the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia and India, and exports its products worldwide. The Group continues to invest in the growth of its portfolio companies and the expansion of its core business activities. Key companies within the Group include Excalibur Army (Czech Republic, land systems), Tatra Trucks (Czech Republic, vehicles), MSM Group (Slovakia, artillery ammunition) and The Kinetic Group (United States, small-calibre ammunition). CSG employs more than 14,000 people across its integrated and affiliated companies. In 2025, the Group reported annual revenues of EUR 6.7 billion. CSG shares are traded on Euronext Amsterdam under the ticker **CSG**.
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