

The need for a reliable CBRN defence capability within the Bulgarian armed forces is supported by a CBRN Defence Regiment and related units at company (platoon) level within the formations. They provide the troops and the population with protection against weapons of mass destruction, terrorist attacks and toxic industrial hazards. Specialisation in CBRN defence and the environment is one of the priorities for the Bulgarian armed forces within Nato.

CBRN capabilities are required to clarify and evaluate the scope and consequences of toxic industrial hazards, engage in CBRN reconnaissance of the epicentre of an industrial accident or WMD attack and decontaminate, as well as engage in consequence management and environmental monitoring in the theatre of operations or Bulgarian territory.

In support of national and collective security, we developed military CBRN capabilities as well as units to support Civil Protection and the Ministry of Interior in dealing with non-military tasks. We support regionally-based modules to be used in the event of crisis and deal with disasters and industrial accidents. The CBRN units declared for Nato are: a CBRN battalion; a CBRN company; and a CBRN reconnaissance team. In addition, for the EU forces, we have declared a decontamination company.

The Bulgarian armed forces have ratified more than 30 Nato standardisation agreements in the area of CBRN, whose realisation requires the use of modern CBRN means. The CBRN reconnaissance teams of the Bulgarian armed forces (priority is given to those intended for the Nato-deployable forces) are in the process of equipping with CBRN reconnaissance and surveillance capability, meeting Nato standards for operational and technical compatibility with allies' analogous systems. The CBRN defence units do not have trained specialists, or the necessary equipment for biological reconnaissance and quantitative and qualitative analysis of biological agents. Only the medical units of Bulgarian armed forces perform these tasks.



*The Bulgarian MoD is going through wholesale CBRN improvement
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Balkan brothers

Part of the Nato standardisation documents are ratified with the proviso that Bulgaria will not apply the standard to the biological weapons aspect until devices for biological reconnaissance and analysis are acquired. In 2008, Bulgaria purchased 100 sets for biological analysis. The acquisition of devices for detection and identification of biological agents will start after 2012.

The Bulgarian government approved an investment project for the acquisition of reconnaissance, early warning and monitoring systems for nuclear, chemical and biological agents in order to modernise the Bulgarian armed forces in the area of CBRN defence. The project implementation will increase the operational capabilities of CBRN teams. The project corresponds to the specialisation of the Bulgarian armed forces, and contributes to the implementation of the Prague Initiative for building capabilities in the CBRN defence area.

The project is aimed at reaching interoperability and preparing the declared forces for participation in the full spectrum of Alliance operations. We adopted a balanced approach to gradually build and tailor the military units, combining preservation, restoration and development of the capacity of the existing equipment and purchasing some new in a view of attaining full integration with Nato members.

The army CBRN Defence Regiment is the biggest CBRN defence unit of the Bulgarian armed forces, and has the most responsibility for the successful Bulgarian integration into Nato in the CBRN defence area. Because of this, and implementing the Force Goals, a battalion from the regiment has been declared for participation in the full spectrum of Nato operations. Currently, the battalion has reached certain capabilities, according to the memorandums, schedule and funding. The battalion was certified at national level for participation in the full spectrum of operations, and Nato representatives confirmed this certification. In April 2010, a Nato Component Commands Commission will verify the battalion's combat readiness for participation in



You looking at me? Bulgaria is keen to be a proactive Natopartner.
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multinational joint operations.

From 2005, units of the regiment (CBRN reconnaissance and decontamination) have been included into the Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion rotations of the Nato Response Force (NRF). During their participation in the Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion certification exercises, they proved interoperable and equal to analogous partners units in terms of knowledge, skill and application of the Alliance's requirements and procedures. However, they do fall behind in equipment, and the CBRN defence battalion is planning to be re-equipped in order to ensure full interoperability. We have started the procedure for acquiring CBRN reconnaissance vehicles and, at a later stage, we plan to purchase decontamination stations and a mobile CBRN laboratory. After finishing the

process of re-equipment, the battalion will become fully interoperable with Nato formations.

In parallel, we plan to re-equip the declared decontamination unit for the European Forces. Thus, after realising the modernisation projects and following the continuous process of study and implementation of Nato standardisation agreements and documents concerning CBRN defence, we envisage the regiment will become a modern and interoperable Nato unit.

I would just like to sum up by saying that we are following our own Bulgarian model, consistent with Alliance's requirements, Bulgaria's situation, assumed obligations and funding available for modernisation. I think it is fair to say that, by striving to reach a more generalist capability, we are closer to the American and British models.