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**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria
to the United Nations, the OSCE and other International Organizations**

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Vienna, 14 April 2015

NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations, the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna presents its compliments to all Permanent Missions/Delegations to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre, and has the honour to submit Bulgaria's response to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security for 2015.

The response also contains voluntary information on Women, Peace and Security.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations, the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna avails itself of the opportunity to renew to all Permanent Missions/Delegations to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre the assurances of its highest consideration.

**To:
All OSCE Permanent Missions and Delegations
OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre**

Vienna



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**INFORMATION EXCHANGE
ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT ON POLITICO-MILITARY ASPECTS OF SECURITY
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

Section I: Inter-State elements

1. Account of measures to prevent and combat terrorism

1.1. (a) International agreements and arrangements related to preventing and combating terrorism to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party:

- Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, signed at Tokyo on 14 September 1963;
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at The Hague on 16 December 1970;
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on 23 September 1971;
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 14 December 1973;
- International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 17 December 1979;
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1980);
- Protocol on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on 24 February 1988;
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, done at Rome on 10 March 1988;
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, done at Rome on 10 March 1988;
- Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection, signed at Montreal on 1 March 1991;
- International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 15 December 1997;
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1999;
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the three Protocols to the Convention;
- Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel, 9 December 1994;

- European Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, signed at Strasbourg on 11 September 1977 and the Protocol to the European Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism ratified on 26 February 2004;

- The Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism was ratified in June 2006.

The Republic of Bulgaria has also ratified the main international legal instruments in the field of extradition and judicial co-operation on criminal matters:

- European Convention on Extradition (promulgated in SG, Issue 8 of 24.01.1999 and Issue 9 of 27.01.1995);

- Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition and Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (promulgated in SG, Issue 9 of 27.01.1995);

- European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (promulgated in SG, Issue 8 of 24.01.1995) and the two Protocols to the Convention;

- Convention on Transfer of Sentenced Persons (promulgated in SG, Issue 8 of 24.01.1995).

1.1. (b) Accession to and participation in other multilateral and bilateral agreements or measures undertaken to prevent and combat terrorist activities.

The Republic of Bulgaria is party to the following Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements Containing Clauses on Cooperation in the Suppression of Terrorism:

- Agreement on Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Cross-Border Crime signed on 26 May 1999 within the framework of the Initiative of Cooperation in South Eastern Europe;

- Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States on Cooperation in Combating Crime, in particular in its Organized Forms, signed on 2 October 1998;

- Cooperation Agreement among the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Turkey in Combating Terrorism, Organized Crime, Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Money Laundering, Arms and Human Trafficking and Other Major Crimes signed on 6 April 1998;

- Protocol for Enhanced Trilateral Cooperation in Combating Crime and Especially Cross-Border Crime among the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of Romania signed on 8 September 1998;

- Treaty of Understanding, Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the French Republic (State Gazette, issue 94/1993);

- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium on Police Cooperation and Protocol to Article 1 of the Agreement (subject to ratification, State Gazette, issue 29/2001);

- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Kingdom of Spain on Cooperation in the Fight against Crime (State Gazette, issue 12/2000);

- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and Government of the Italian Republic on Police Cooperation in the Fight against Organized Crime, promulg. SG 58/2001;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Public Order of the Republic of Albania signed on 24.01.1994 in Tirana and Protocol of Understanding between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Public Order of the Republic of Albania signed on 7 November 2000 in Tirana;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Public Order of the Hellenic Republic signed at Athens on 8 July 1991 and Protocol for the Implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation signed on 22 February 1996 in Sofia;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Macedonia signed on 20 October 1992 in Skopje;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of the Interior of Romania signed on 26 February 1992 in Bucharest and Protocol-Appendix to the Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of the Interior of Romania signed on 21 December 1995 in Sofia;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on Cooperation in the Fight against Organized Crime, Illicit Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors Trafficking, Terrorism and Other Serious Crimes signed on 5 November 2001 in Ljubljana;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Police Office /Europol Convention/ signed on 17 June 2003;
- Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Bulgaria on the Participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union Police Mission /EUPM/ in Bosnia and Herzegovina /BiH/, signed on 9 January 2003;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Turkey for police cooperation, promulg. SG 70/2001;
- Agreement for cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Turkey in the area of the fight against terrorism, organized crime, traffic of drugs and psychotropic substances, money laundry, traffic of weapons and people and other heavy crimes, promulg. SG 75/2001;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for cooperation in the fight against organized crime, illegal traffic of narcotic psychotropic substances and precursors, terrorism and other heavy crimes, promulg. SG 84/3.09.2002;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for cooperation in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, illegal traffic of narcotic substances and precursors, illegal migration and other heavy crimes, promulg. SG 62/2003;

- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Romania for cooperation in the fight against organized crime, illegal traffic of drugs and psychotropic substances, terrorism and other heavy crimes, promulg. SG 26/2004;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of South Africa for police cooperation, promulg. SG 5/14.01.2005;
- Agreement on Police Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Turkey signed on 2 February 2005;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for police cooperation, promulg. SG 10/2008;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania for cooperation in the area of countering terrorism, organized crime, illegal traffic as well as other crimes, promulg. SG 51/2008;
- Memorandum for cooperation between the Ministry of interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland for police cooperation in the fight against crime, promulg. SG 30/2009;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Malta for police cooperation, promulg. SG 52/2009;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Serbia for police cooperation, promulg. SG 11/ 2011;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Hungary for cooperation in the prevention and combating of crime, promulg. SG 49/2011;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Georgia for cooperation in the fight against crime, promulg. SG 59/2011;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on cooperation in the fight against crime, signed on 24 April 2012 in Sofia;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the fight against crime, signed in Baku on 27 April 2012;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on police cooperation, entered into force on 14 June 2012;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on police cooperation, signed on 13 September 2012 in Sofia;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the United States of America for enhancing the cooperation in the prevention and fight against heavy crime, signed on 10 October 2012 in Sofia, ratified on 30 January 2013;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the State of Kuwait for cooperation in the field of internal security, entered into force on 30 August 2013;

- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Portuguese Republic on cooperation in the fight against crime, entered into force on 20 August 2014.

1.2. National Legislation

Bulgaria has ratified 12 international Conventions and Protocols, relating to terrorism.

The following regulatory acts of the domestic legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria are related to the suppression of terrorism:

- National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (SG 19/2011)
- Military Doctrine;
- Military Strategy;
- White paper 2010 on Defence;
- Penal Code;
- Code of Criminal Procedure;
- Law on Special Intelligence Means;
- Law on Control over Explosives, Fire Arms and Ammunition;
- Law on the Export Control of Arms and Dual-Use Items and Technologies;
- Law for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Control over Toxic Chemical Substances and Their Precursors;
- Law on Measures against Financing of Terrorism;
- Law on Measures against Money Laundering;
- Law on the Ministry of the Interior;
- Law on Bulgarian Identity Documents;
- Regulations of Application of the Law on the Ministry of the Interior;
- Ordinance No. 17 of 14 December 1999 on the Conditions and Procedure of Attaining Civil Air Traffic Security;
- Decree No. 39 of 27 March 2000 of the Council of Ministers in implementation of Resolution 1267 (1999) of the UN Security Council "Freezing of Financial Resources Owned or Controlled by the Taliban Group";
- Special Decree No. 277 of the Council of Ministers of 12.12.2001 regarding the Measures to Combat International Terrorism Envisaged in Resolution 1373 (2001).

1.3 Roles and missions of military, paramilitary and security forces and the police in preventing and combating terrorism.

According to the National Security Strategy (2011) the primary goal of defence policy is to protect and reconfirm the national interests through the development, enhancement and execution of adequate defence capabilities and the building of a single pool of interoperable armed forces, able to perform the full spectrum of task, which stem from the new trends in the development of the geostrategic security environment.

The White Paper on Defence and the Armed Forces stipulates that the first mission of the Armed Forces is to guarantee the state's sovereignty and independence, and to defend the territorial integrity of the state and of NATO member-states through article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. At the same time, the Armed Forces should provide complementary capabilities to support international peace and security and to contribute to the national security in peace time.

The mission to support the international peace and security includes carrying out international and coalition commitments to participate in NATO and EU operations in response to crises; partaking in missions of the UN, the OSCE and other coalition structures; arms control related activities; the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, checking their media of proliferation and materials for production; international military partnerships; the provision of humanitarian relief; and the consolidation of trust and security.

The contribution to the national security in peace time includes: building/maintaining early warning capabilities for potential risks and threats; activities for control of sea and air space; deterrence operations; neutralising terrorist, extremist and criminal groups; protection and defence of strategic sites; protection and support to the population in case of natural disasters, industrial accidents and ecological crises; unexploded ordnance disposal; providing humanitarian relief; support to migration control; search and rescue activities; support when necessary to other government organisations and local authorities to prevent and overcome the consequences of terrorist attacks, natural disasters, industrial accidents, ecological crises and epidemics.

Among the main activities performed by the Ministry of Interior are the protection of the national security and the protection against terrorism. For this purpose has been established the Specialized Unit for Countering Terrorism (SUCT).

The Special Unit for Countering Terrorism (SUCT) is a specialized unit of the Ministry of Interior, directly subordinated to the Secretary General of the Ministry, for countering terrorist activities, protection of strategic and critical infrastructure, and for prevention and suppression of serious crime.

The SUCT is headed by a commander.

For the implementation of these activities the bodies of SUCT:

1. Prevent and suppress terrorist acts.
2. Detain and/or neutralize perpetrators of particularly dangerous crimes who are engaged or are likely to engage in armed resistance.
3. Set hostages free.
4. Organize and conduct protection of structures of the Mol, structures of state authorities and organizations during execution of their functions.
5. Participate in special operations organized by the chief and regional directorates of the Mol.

6. Locate, identify and neutralize by technical means and trained dogs explosives and explosive substances as well as develop technical means and methods for the implementation of these activities.

7. Conduct physico-chemical research and professional evaluation of explosive devices and their components.

The procedures for carrying out the listed activities are determined by an act of the Minister of Interior.

The use of SUCT for the implementation of the mentioned activities has to be permitted with a written order of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior for every individual case. In emergency situations the use of SUCT may be authorized by verbal order. In these cases the written order has to be issued not later than 24 hours.

In February 2015 the National Assembly adopted changes to the Law for the Ministry of Interior which introduced two major structural changes - unification of Chief Directorate "Criminal Police" and Chief Directorate "Security Police" into a new structure – Chief Directorate "National Police" and integrating in the Ministry of Interior Chief Directorate "Combating Organized Crime". The latter was formerly a part of State Agency "National Security".

The main goals of creating Chief Directorate "National Police" are as follows:

- Establishment of a more stable legal and structural basis for the functioning of the law enforcement authorities;
- Avoiding the duplication of functions;
- Enhancing the effectiveness of the police forces and achieving administrative economy;
- Better material and financial support of the fight against crime by means of optimal location of resources and their most rational use.

Chief Directorate „Combating Organized Crime“ is a specialized national structure for conducting operations and search, and security, information, control, prevention, imposing administrative sanctions and crime investigation activities to counter organized criminal activities of local and transnational criminal structures related to:

1. Violation of customs regime, monetary, tax and social insurance systems.
2. Narcotic drugs, their analogues and precursors.
3. Cybercrime and crimes committed into or by computer networks and systems.
4. Intellectual property.
5. False or counterfeit currency, payment tools and official documents.
6. Trafficking in persons.
7. Trafficking of cultural artefacts.
8. Firearms, explosives, chemical, biological and other hazardous means and substances, as well as arms, products and technologies with dual use.
9. Corruption in the state authorities.
10. Terrorist related activities, use of hazardous means and substances, striking fear, taking of hostages, kidnapping in order to gain profit and violent activities.
11. Money laundering and gambling.

12. Concluding unprofitable contracts, money laundering and fraudulently utilizing EU funds.

2. Stationing of armed forces on foreign territory

2.1. Provide information on stationing of your State armed forces on the territory of other participating States in accordance with freely negotiated agreements as well as in accordance with international law.

The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria - Article 84, point 11 - introduces a permission regime for sending Bulgarian troops outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. With Decision N 23/1995 the Constitutional Court made an obligatory interpretation of Article 84, point 11, according to which the National Assembly has the exclusive competence to deliver permission to send Bulgarian troops outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria on a case-by-case basis, when it is of military or military-political character. Respectively, the National Assembly adopts a decision, where the number and types of the Bulgarian troops are specified, as well as the location, timing and way of using them outside the territory of the country.

The permission for sending Bulgarian troops outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria when it is not of a military or military-political character is given by other state bodies.

On 18 March 2004 the Bulgarian Parliament ratified the Washington Treaty, which entered into force for Bulgaria on 29 March 2004. As a member of NATO, the Republic of Bulgaria ratified the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Regarding the Status of Their Forces (NATO SOFA) and the other related documents.

The coming into effect of the new Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria superseded the former law on sending and employment of Bulgarian forces outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, the subject having been now covered in the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria. In this connection, there are three bodies having decision-making authority regarding the sending of Bulgarian forces out of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria: the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, and the Minister of Defence.

The National Assembly gives permission for sending and employment of Bulgarian forces out of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria with political military purposes.

The Council of Ministers gives permission for sending and employment of Bulgarian forces out of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria for the purposes of:

1. Carrying out allied commitments resulting from an international treaty, ratified, promulgated and in effect with regard to the Republic of Bulgaria, with which an alliance of a political military nature is established.
2. Participation in humanitarian missions.
3. Participation in activities of no political military nature.

The Minister of Defence gives permission for dispatch and employment of Bulgarian forces out of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria when the following conditions are observed:

1. Up to 300 servicemen and/or military equipment, and/or up to three military aircraft, and/or one naval ship with their crews for participation in activities of no political and military nature.

2. Up to 600 servicemen and/or military equipment, and/or up to three naval ships inclusive, and/or up to five military aircraft with their crews on the territory of an allied state for participation in activities of no political and military nature.
3. Military medical teams and field hospitals for medical support of combat activities and/or prevention and coping with the consequences of epidemics and other mass diseases threatening the lives of a significant portion of the population in the respective area.

3. Implementation of other international commitments related to the Code of Conduct

3.1 Provide information on how your State ensures that commitments in the field of arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building as an element of indivisible security are implemented in good faith

The Republic of Bulgaria has signed and ratified all major multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, such as:

- Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction;
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction;
- Ottawa Convention for the prohibition of Anti-Personnel Landmines;
- Convention on Cluster Munitions;
- Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects;
- Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe;
- Treaty on Open Skies;
- UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;
- Global Exchange of Military Information;
- UN Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures;
- UN Register of Conventional Arms.

The Republic of Bulgaria is an active member of the export control regimes, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, the Zangger Committee, the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

3.2. Provide information on how your State pursues arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures with a view to enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area

The Republic of Bulgaria is a party to a number of bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements aimed at further enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area:

- Protocol between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia on CSBMs complimenting the Vienna Document-2011.
- Document on CSBMs in the Naval Field in the Black Sea, 25 April 2002, signed by the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine;
- Agreement on the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe, signed in Skopje on 26 September 1998, by Albania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Romania and Turkey;
- Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, 12 February 2000, signed by Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey;
- BLACKSEEFOR Agreement, 2 April 2001, signed by the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine;
- Joint Declaration on Responsible Arms Transfers (Regional Conference on Export Controls), adopted in Sofia on 14/15 Dec 1999 by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, USA;
- Statement on Harmonization of End-Use/End-User Certificates. (Regional Conference on Export Controls), done in Sofia, 14/15 Dec 1999, by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey and USA;
- Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons. (Stability Pact, Working Table III on Security Issues), 18 Nov 1999, participating states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey;
- Agreement on Co-operation to Prevent and Combat Trans-Border Crime (SECI), signed in Bucharest on 26 May 1999 by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey.

Section II: Intra-State elements

1. National planning and decision-making process

1.1. What is the national planning and decision-making process in determining/approving military posture and defence expenditures in your State?

Planning and decision making process is defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Law on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria. The President, the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers and other bodies are involved in this process.

The National Assembly adopts the Law of Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, National Security Concept, National Security Strategy and the Military Doctrine,

approves long term programs for the development of the Armed Forces, approves the Defence budget and defines the size of the Armed Forces.

The President of the Republic is Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. One of his authorities is to endorse Armed Forces' Strategic plans.

The Council of Ministers carries out the overall leadership of the Armed Forces.

For additional information see the Military Doctrine, Military Strategy and White paper on Defence on www.mod.bg.

The Defence budget is an integral part of the State budget. Each year the National Assembly adopts the law on the State budget for the next fiscal year. The defence expenditures are being controlled by the Parliament and other bodies vested with power by law.

For the fiscal year 2015 the defence expenditures are 954 589 000 BGN.

2. Existing structures and procedures

2.1. What are the constitutionally established procedures for ensuring democratic political control of military, paramilitary and internal security forces, intelligence services and the police?

Military:

The principle of democratic control over the Armed Forces in the Republic of Bulgaria as one of the fundamental principles of building a democratic society, is stipulated in the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, through division of powers of the ruling bodies - the National Assembly, the President, the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Defence, the Constitutional Court and the legislative power.

The National Assembly adopted a new Law on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria (promulgated in SG/iss. 35, in effect as of May 12th 2009). The Law was further amended and modified in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. It regulates the public relationships concerning the defence of the state, the defence and Armed Forces leadership, the structure and management of the Ministry of Defence, the statute of the military and civilian employees in its structures. The Law introduces a new structure of the Ministry of Defence, called "an integrated model" to ensure the defence of the state and to provide leadership and command of the Armed Forces in peacetime. In peacetime the Armed Forces cannot be given tasks of internal political character.

The integrity of the structure of the Ministry of Defence is explicitly stated. Special attention in the Law is devoted to the integration of the Bulgarian Armed Forces within the structure of the Ministry of Defence. The Armed Forces consist of the Bulgarian Army, the Military Police Service, the Military Information Service, the War College and the Military Academies, as well as the National Guard Unit, the Military-Geographical Service, the Static CIS and the Reserve of the Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defence consists of the Defence Staff, the General Administration and the Specialized Administration.

Police:

The structure and functions of the Bulgarian Police are regulated by the Act for the Ministry of Interior and the Regulation for the Implementation of the Act for the Ministry of Interior. Under the Act for the Ministry of Interior the activities of the Police are aimed at protecting the rights and freedoms of the citizens, the national security and public order.

2.2. How is the fulfilment of these procedures ensured, and which constitutionally established authorities/institutions are responsible for exercising these procedures?

The basic new provisions are as follow:

- The National Assembly decides on programs or investment projects for acquisition or modernization of weapons and equipment when the value exceeds 100 million BGN;
- The Council of Ministers adopts the National Defence Strategy, endorses Plan for Development of the Armed Forces and decides on programs or investment projects for acquisition or modernization of weapons and equipment when the value is between 50 and 100 million BGN;
- The Minister of Defence approves programs or investment projects for acquisition or modernization of weapons and equipment when the value does not exceed 50 million BGN;
- A new position of Permanent Secretary of Defence is introduced, who is the highest rank civil servant in the MoD. The Permanent Secretary of Defence assists the Minister of Defence in the formulation and execution of defence policy and management of human, material and financial resources. He/she is appointed by the Minister of Defence after selection and in coordination with the Prime Minister for a period of four years. The Permanent Secretary of Defence's responsibilities are related to drawing up and actualization of the normative basis which regulates the structure and functioning of the MoD, defence planning, programming and budgeting, control of the execution of the budget, planning and control of projects for supplies and services necessary for the build-up of the planned defence capabilities, international military cooperation, qualification and career development of the civil servants, interaction with NGOs and syndicates.

The authority of the National Assembly (the Parliament) involves the following group of issues according to which it shall:

- Resolve on Declaration of War and Conclusion of Peace;
- Introduce martial law or a state of emergency on all or a part of the country's territory on a motion from the President or the Council of Ministers;
- Approve the deployment of foreign troops on the territory of the country or their crossing of that territory;
- Ratify or denounce by a law all international instruments of military nature;
- Adopt the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria on a motion from the Council of Ministers;

- Determine the size of the Armed Forces and adopt programs for their development on a motion from the Council of Ministers;
- Establish the funds from the State Budget required for the defence of the country and for the deployment of Bulgarian troops in missions and operations outside the country's borders;
- Open, transform, rename and close military academies and post-secondary military educational institutions as well as branches and departments within them where regulated jobs training and education is performed;
- Execute parliamentary control over executive authorities' bodies which function in the field of defence.

The President of the Republic of Bulgaria

The President of the Republic as Head of state, interacting with the other state bodies, executes his powers for the establishment of stable security environment and the development of the Republic of Bulgaria as a democratic state. The President shall preside over the Consultative National Security Council and is the Supreme Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria both in peace- and wartime.

The President executes his powers on a motion from the Council of Ministers through which he:

- Shall endorse the Armed Forces Strategic Action Plans;
- Shall alert the Armed Forces or part of them to a higher level of combat and operational readiness;
- Shall proclaim general or partial mobilization;
- Shall appoint and dismiss the higher command of the Armed Forces and shall bestow all higher military ranks.

In case of military conflict or war, the President:

- Shall proclaim a state of war in the case of an armed attack against Bulgaria or whether urgent actions are required by virtue of an international commitment, or shall proclaim martial law or any other state of emergency whenever the National Assembly is not in session; the National Assembly shall then be immediately convened to endorse the decision;
- Coordinates foreign policy efforts for participation in international security organizations and structures aiming at military conflicts resolving or war-ending settlements;
- Presides the Supreme Command, issues decrees on the preparation of the country and the Armed Forces for war and combat actions;
- Organizes the implementation of wartime plans on a motion from the Council of Ministers;
- Introduces restrictive measures on information concerning the defence of the country;
- Proposes motions to the National Assembly for the conclusion of peace.

The Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers performs the general leadership of defence and the Armed Forces assisted by a Security Council, and:

- Controls and implements the state policy in the area of defence;
- Elaborates and submits to the National Assembly the Draft National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Adopts the National Defence Strategy;
- Controls and coordinates the defence planning of the country;
- Proposes a motion to the National Assembly on the size of the Armed Forces and the adoption of the country's Armed Forces development;
- Adopts a plan for the development of the Armed Forces;
- Adopts the Armed Forces Strategic Action Plans and submits them for endorsement to the President of the Republic;
- Adopts the Draft Wartime Budget on a motion by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Defence, submits it for approval to the National Assembly and organizes its implementation;
- Adopts, on a motion from the Minister of Defence, a State Wartime Plan for the provision and management of the defence civilian resources other than the resources and means stipulated in the Armed Forces Plans and organizes its implementation;
- Adopts programs for the establishment and equipment on the territory of the country of facilities and zones for defence purposes and assigns the control over their implementation to the Minister of Defence;
- Adopts programs for the armament and re-armament of the Armed Forces and for the establishment and development of the defence technological industrial base;
- Adopts Strategy for the development of the defence technological base;
- Controls the preparedness of the population, the economy, wartime reserves and the defence infrastructure of the country;
- Proposes to the President of the Republic the introduction of a higher alert level of combat and operational readiness as well as the proclamation of general or partial mobilization;
- Adopts, on a motion from the Minister of Defence, decisions on the execution of a Strategic Defence Review and/or periodic Strategic Reviews;
- Adopts mobilization plans and performs the general leadership of the Armed Forces mobilization and the transition of the country from peacetime to a state of war;
- Determines the normative terms and conditions for the establishment, storage and utilization of wartime reserves and other wartime raw materials and specifies the requirements to the transport, energy, information and warehouse systems, urban areas and industrial facilities in accordance with the needs of defence;

- Establishes, transforms and closes departments, branches and institutes to the military academies and post-secondary military schools on a motion from the Minister of Defence;
- Within the total size of the Armed Forces, endorses the number of the military by military ranks with the exception of higher officer ranks;
- Proposes a motion to the President of the Republic for the appointment and dismissal of the higher command of the Armed Forces and for promotion into higher military ranks;
- Approves and permits the deployment of foreign and allied troops on the territory of the country or their crossing of that territory in cases stipulated in a special law;
- Approves the implementation of projects on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria which are wholly or partially financed by NATO defence investments program;
- Assigns wartime tasks on the defence of the country to state bodies, the bodies of local self-government, local administration and legal entities.

The Minister of Defence

A special point in the Law is dedicated to the normative regulation of the functions and authority of the Minister of Defence as a specialized body of the executive authorities for the shaping and implementation of the state policy in the field of defence. In execution of his/her main duties the Minister of Defence:

1. Controls defence planning.
2. Elaborates the Draft Budget of the Ministry and controls its implementation.
3. Controls the activities on information provision to the interest of defence.
4. Approves the participation of military units in disaster relief operations on the basis of submitted request by the relative state body in compliance with the plans for the conduct of rescue operations and urgent emergency and reconstruction activities.
5. Controls the standardization, codification and certification of defence and specialized products for the needs of the Armed Forces in compliance with the NATO and EU Standardization Agreements, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a Party.
6. Endorses Military Doctrines and the operational plans of the Armed Forces on a motion from the Chief of Defence.
7. Appoints and recalls representatives of the Ministry to international organizations, the defence attachés and the employees of their offices and controls their activities.
8. Executes the general oversight of military education and research and development activities.
9. Coordinates, on a motion from the Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications the rules and regulations of the work of the Unified civil-military air traffic control system for air space monitoring; together with the Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications oversees and controls the use of the territorial sea of the Republic of Bulgaria and the internal waters for military purposes.

10. Elaborates a list of the military airfields which can accept foreign military aircraft, and together with the Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications elaborates a list of the military airfields which can be determined as reserve airfields for Bulgarian civil aircraft performing international and domestic public transport services.
11. Controls the activities referring to the provision of aviation safety and airworthiness of military aircraft and issues the ordinance on the terms and conditions for the implementation of this activity.
12. Determines the rules and regulations for aircraft accident investigations with Bulgarian military aircraft as well as of foreign military aircraft on the territory of the country.

In addition to the above autonomous powers, the Minister of Defence has a number of other competences which he carries out upon motion from the Chief of Defence, and which pertain to the use of weapons, ordnance and combat vehicles by Bulgarian military formations. The Minister gives permission for such use in the following cases:

1. Seizure of a Bulgarian and/or Allied combat vehicle within the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria with the aim of committing a terrorist or other act that may have dangerous consequences for the population and/or the sovereignty of the country.
2. Intrusion into territorial airspace or breaking airspace regulations regarding flights over the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria conducted by a foreign aerial vehicle flying in a way bringing about suspicions that it might be used as a weapon for terrorist activities.
3. Intrusion into the internal sea waters and territorial sea of the Republic of Bulgaria conducted by a foreign ship or other vessel refusing to stop or objecting, or resorting to violent means to prevent its arrest.
4. Threat of terrorist activities or danger of potential use of weapons of mass destruction within the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

In the above cases, the Minister of Defence shall be obligated to immediately notify the Prime Minister and the President of the action taken. The Allies and EU Member States will be subsequently notified if the threat of terrorist activities or the danger of potential use of weapons of mass destruction can put them at risk as well.

In addition to the above, the Minister of Defence also proposes motions or drafts of the following:

1. National Military Strategy.
2. Plan for the Organizational Build-Up and Development of the Armed Forces and Their Strength.
3. State Wartime Plan.
4. Armed Forces Strategic Action Plans.
5. Motions on alerting the Armed Forces or part thereof to a higher level of combat readiness and/or proclaiming general or partial mobilization.

6. Motions on ministerial positions, requiring higher officer ranks, motions on appointment and dismissal of the higher command of the Armed Forces and bestowal of higher military ranks to officers at the Ministry.
7. Conducting Strategic and/or Periodic Defence Reviews.
8. Armed Forces Armament and Rearmament Programs, and, together with the Minister of Economy, Draft Programs on the Build-Up and Development of the Defence Technological and Industrial Base.
9. Strength of regular and mobilization reserves.
10. Draft projects for the establishment, development and maintenance of an Integrated Communication and Information System for command and control of the state and the armed forces in a state of emergency, martial law, or in a state of war.

A Defence Council is established under the Minister of Defence as a joint advisory body consisting of Deputy Ministers of Defence, Chief of the Political Cabinet, the Chief of Defence and his deputies; the Permanent Secretary of Defence; the Commander of the Joint Operational Command; the Chiefs of Army, Air Force, and Navy as well as other members as appointed by the Minister of Defence.

Chief of Defence

The Chief of Defence is the highest military position; the CHOD is immediate superior to the personnel of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. The Chief of Defence executes his command powers directly or through the Commander of the Joint Operational Command, the Chiefs of Army, Air Force, and Navy.

The Chief of Defence is appointed by the President of the Republic on a motion from the Council of Ministers for a four-year term of office.

The Chief of Defence is subordinate to the President of the Republic when executing his powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and is immediate subordinate to the Minister of Defence.

The Chief of Defence directly guides and is responsible for:

1. Preparing of ministerial orders for use of formations of the Bulgarian Army and proposals for placing of the Armed Forces or a part of them in advanced readiness.
2. Proposals to the Minister of Defence for declaration of general or partial mobilization.
3. Preparing of rules and procedures for use of arms and equipment.
4. Preparing of National Defence Strategy and Strategic Action Plans for the Armed Forces.
5. Entering into and discarding from service of weapons and equipment.
6. Preparing of doctrines, conceptions for conduct of operations and standards for training and use of forces.
7. Determining of the required defence capabilities.
8. The battle readiness and operational capabilities of the Bulgarian Army.
9. Developing of the manuals of the Armed Forces.

10. The functioning of the Staff of Defence.

The main task of the Armed Forces is to guarantee the sovereignty and independence of the country and to protect its territorial integrity. In peacetime, no tasks related to the national policy can be assigned to them.

The Minister of Interior

The Minister of Interior is accountable to the Council of Ministers, which is guided by the Constitution and laws in the implementation of the internal and foreign policy of the country.

2.3. What are the roles and missions of military, paramilitary and security forces, and how does your State control that such forces act solely within the constitutional framework?

Military:

In compliance with Article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Armed Forces guarantee the sovereignty, security and independence of the country and protect its territorial integrity. This idea is further developed in the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.

With the adoption of the Law on The State Agency "National Security" the Security Service of the Ministry of defence was renamed into Military Police Service with main responsibility of protecting the law and public order and discipline as well as conducting investigations and preventing any criminal activity within the Armed Forces and the structures of the Ministry of defence. The military counterintelligence since 1st January 2008 is responsibility of the State Agency "National Security".

In 2011 a new Law on Military Police was adopted by the Parliament and entered into force. This law provides for the activities and authorities of the Military police and its interaction with other state bodies and organizations. Among the principles guiding the activity of the Military Police Service are: consistency with the Constitution, Laws and International Treaties, guarantee of the rights and freedoms of the citizens and their dignity, execution of civilian control over the Military Police Service activities, etc.

For more information see Military Doctrine, Military Strategy and "White Paper 2010 on Defence" on the website of the Ministry of Defence – www.mod.bg.

Paramilitary Forces:

Art. 49 of the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria forbids the establishment in the territory of Bulgaria of military or other formations employing military organization or armaments and combat equipment, or such envisaging carrying out of military duties, unless otherwise provided for by law or other act of the Council of Ministers.

Intelligence Services:

The intelligence services are subject to political and democratic control according to the Constitution and laws. The control is ensured by the fact that the intelligence services are subordinated to the President and to the Minister of Defence.

With the amendment to the State Agency for National Security Act from 2013, combating organised crime was included in the range of the activities carried out by the Agency. As a result, the Chief Directorate “Combating Organised Crime” to the Ministry of Interior was transferred structurally and functionally to the State Agency for National Security.

The State Agency for National Security carries out activities to protect the national security against encroachments on the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Bulgaria, its territorial integrity and national interests, the constitutional order established in the country, and the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens, related to:

1. Endangerment of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State and the unity of the nation.
2. Anti-constitutional activities.
3. International terrorism and extremism as well as their financing.
4. Activities of groups and persons supporting foreign services, terrorist or extremist organisations.
5. International trade of weapons and dual-use items or technologies.

Ministry of Interior

The main tasks of the Ministry of Interior include:

1. Protection of public order.
2. Protection of the rights and freedoms of the citizens and protection of their life, health and property.
3. Providing investigation of crimes.
4. Border control and guarding the state border.
5. Protection of the national security and protection from terrorism, together with the State Agency for National Security.

The main activities of the Ministry of Interior for fulfilling the abovementioned tasks include:

1. Collecting, analysing and assessing information, forecasting and developing strategic directions related to the national security.
2. Preventing forcible change of the constitutionally established order in the Republic of Bulgaria.
3. Countering criminality through uncovering and investigating crimes.
4. Preventive activities.
5. Protection of public order.
6. Protection of strategic and especially important sites determined by an act of the Council of Ministers.
7. Preventing acts of terrorism (together with the State Agency for National Security):
 - developing and using special technical means and methods for preventing terrorist activities;

- developing and applying specific physical and chemical methods and means, and carrying out explosion-technical examination and assessment of explosives or of elements of explosive devices.

As far as the investigation of crimes is concerned, the Ministry of Interior (the police authorities) is competent for the investigation of the conventional crime, the State Agency "National Security" investigates the organized crime and the Prosecutor's Office investigates terrorism.

Other activities may be assigned to the Ministry of Interior only by law.

3. Procedures related to different forces personnel

3.1. What kind of procedures for recruitment and call-up of personnel for service in your military, paramilitary and internal security forces does your State have?

Military:

The Law on Defence and Armed Forces introduces a contract which regulates the execution of the military service.

The servicemen shall not participate in meetings and manifestations of political parties, movements and coalitions when in uniform.

A serviceman or a civilian servant whose duties with the MoD are related to management or control, after dismissal from the occupied position, for a period of three years shall not conclude a contract, participate as a partner or shareholder, act as a manager or a member of a guiding or control organ of companies or corporations, which have been subject to his/her management or control or has been concluding contacts with them in the course of his/her last year of work with the MoD.

The same rule is valid also for a serviceman or a civilian servant who during his/her last year of work with the MoD has participated in procedures for conduct of tenders, or in procedures related to grants of funds from the EU. Such a person for a period of three years after dismissal from the occupied position shall not participate or represent other persons in such procedures before the structures of the MoD where he/she has worked.

3.2. What kind of exemptions or alternatives to military service does your State have?

In the Republic of Bulgaria there is no compulsory military service. Thus, as a consequence, there is no alternative military service.

3.3 What are the legal and the administrative procedures to protect the rights of all forces personnel as well as conscripts?

Military:

Our legislation envisages different means through which the rights of the servicemen are protected. The principle is that they have all the rights stemming from the Constitution and the laws, in case anything else is not envisaged in the Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Dismissal of the career servicemen is subject to legal control. The disputes are considered in compliance with the conditions and the provisions of the Administrative Law and the court procedures for these cases are free of charge. When the career serviceman is disputing the lawfulness of his dismissal he can require pleading the dismissal unlawful and cancelling the dismissal, bringing back to the previous job and compensation for the time during which he was unemployed because of that dismissal.

The career servicemen have the right of court protection in the following cases:

1. Providing the authorised material allowances.
2. Compensations for material and non material injuries during or because of his duties.
3. Validity of the signed contract for career military service.

The servicemen are decommissioned in the manner they have been promoted as stipulated in the Manual for military service and the Armed Forces Codes, while taking away the military rank is done at court.

The reservists, when summoned because of mobilisation, as well as their families, can not be evicted from their houses, while they are in service or mobilisation. The implementation of the court decisions against them and eviction orders are postponed till the end of the duration of the service.

Ministry of Interior:

The activities and working conditions of the employees of the Ministry of Interior (police officers) are entirely regulated by the Ministry of Interior Act. The police officers have all the rights under international and European law, which Bulgaria applies, including equality/equal treatment of genders in the police, payment for overtime work, first category of labour and early retirement, compensation and reduced working time for employees who work in harmful, hazardous, or specific conditions etc.

4. Implementation of other political norms, principles, decisions and international humanitarian law

4.1. How does your State ensure that International Humanitarian Law and Law of War are made widely available, e.g., through military training programmes and regulations?

The Republic of Bulgaria is a party to the four Geneva Conventions. The Additional Protocols of 1977 were ratified in 1989. The Bulgarian Red Cross has issued a significant number of publications, containing the basic documents of international humanitarian law. The Ministry of Defence, with the assistance of the International Red Cross has published and disseminated among the Armed Forces the Handbook on wartime law by Frederick de Moulinin. Pocket-size editions have been printed in big numbers for dissemination among the personnel of the Armed Forces. Education in international humanitarian law is included in the curriculum of the military schools and the Military Academy. The platoon and company commanders are obliged to organise similar courses for their units on an annual basis. In addition, mission-orientated briefings are conducted prior to participation of Bulgarian contingents in PSO. The establishment and functioning of political parties' and political movements' structures as well as carrying out of political activities within the Armed Forces shall be forbidden.

Section III: Public access and contact information

1. Public access

1.1 How is the public informed about the provisions of the Code of Conduct?

The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria is committed to ensuring broad public access to military and police information, with the exception of a limited number of issues, defined by law as classified information. A special law called Public Information Access Act was enacted and promulgated in State Gazette number 55/2000, which further facilitates the public access to information related to the activities of the state administration.

Ministry of Defence

The Code of Conduct is published on the official web page of the MoD along with other related documents that concern politico-military aspects of security.

On the official web page of the MoD in section “News” is published an announcing message regarding the exchange of information on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in this exchange.

A Public Relations Directorate has been established at the MoD which is responsible for preparing and disseminating information to the mass media and the general public. The Minister of Defence and his deputies hold press-conferences on a regular basis. The Minister, his deputies, the Chief of Defence, his deputies and some heads of directorates in the MoD are obliged to stage a “reception day” for the general public once monthly. On such a day any individual can raise with them any public or personal issue, related to the Armed Forces.

1.2 What additional information related to the Code of Conduct, e.g., replies to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct, is made publicly available in your State?

The budget of the Bulgarian Armed Forces is approved by the National Assembly and is available to the public. The Ministry of Defence has at its disposal an official web page where the information is regularly renewed as well as its own weekly edition – the newspaper named “Bulgarian Army”, and the Military television channel.

1.3 How does your State ensure public access to information related to your State’s armed forces?

The public authorities, according to their competencies, are obliged to ensure the correct information of the citizens on the activities of the public interest. A special law called Public Information Access Act was enacted and promulgated in State Magazine number 55/2000, which further facilitates the public access to information related to the activities of the state administration.

According to the provisions of the Law on decisional transparency in the public administration, the Ministry of Defence has the obligation to publish the normative acts regulating its organization and functioning, financial resources, budget, programs and strategies, the list of the documents of public interest, etc.

2. Contact information

National Point of Contact:

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Section IV: Women, Peace and Security

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the UNSCR 1325 in 2010, the Ministry of Defence has adopted an Action Plan for its Implementation. The Action Plan provides mechanisms to embed the principles, laid out in UNSC Resolution 1325 and the relevant UNSCRs, within the structures of Bulgaria's Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces. Listed measures and guidelines include:

- Enhancing the role of women at all levels of decision-making;
- Reviewing and updating the legislative framework regarding the military service in compliance with the European and national legislation in place, in order to create conditions conducive to the elimination of discrimination practices;
- Organizing and participating in joint activities raising awareness among home and foreign public about good practices and lessons learned with regard to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325;
- Improving the gender balance in all structures of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces;
- Eliminating the informal restrictions for women in professional areas, academic subjects, post-graduate qualifications, educational degrees and forms of study when applying for the acquisition of Bachelor's Degree in Military Studies, with a professional qualification Military Officer;
- Taking into account the importance of stressing the gender balance when disseminating information at all levels and when participating in conferences, seminars and working meetings;
- Adapting operational work to NATO and EU standards when formulating orders for the conduct of missions and operations, focusing on: interaction with the indigenous female population in the area of responsibility, cross-cultural communication, and standards of conduct;
- Ensuring gender balance in the structures participating in missions and operations, especially in components in direct contact with the indigenous population;
- Maintaining the necessary level of support for the process of implementation of UNSCR 1325, so that the Armed Forces are sufficiently provided with information on the relevant issues.

As a result of the Action Plan, restrictions for women to attend all specialties at the national military educational system have been removed. Changes in policies have made it possible for women to apply to all positions within the Armed Forces.

Special efforts have been taken to strengthen the position of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria to expand cooperation in the region of South-East Europe with regard to enactment of gender policies. A project on “Female Leaders in Security and Defence”, with Bulgaria as lead nation, was approved for implementation within the framework of the South Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Process (SEDM). Subsequently, the project has been included in Tier 1 of Multinational Projects within NATO’s Smart Defence Initiative.

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, the Ministry of Defence in collaboration with interested NGOs will continue its efforts of strengthening the cooperation between NATO members and partners in the South Eastern Europe.