Council of Ministers

PROGRAMME

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEFENCE CAPABILITIES OF THE BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES 2032

Programme
for the Development of the Defence Capabilities
of the Bulgarian Armed Forces
2032

Endorsed by the 44-th National Assembly on 11 February 2021

Address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria

Our main ambition has always been to build Bulgaria as a modern European country whose development is based on democracy, Euro-Atlantic values, the rule of law, economic prosperity and individual freedom and security for our citizens. The implementation of these priorities, enshrined in our Programme for Government, is inextricably linked to our activities on each sectorial policy.

National security and defence in particular are the foundation on which our society stands to build all other components of its statecraft and to create conditions for lasting prosperity. Therefore, in the period 2019-2020, the government conducted the Strategic Review of the National Security System and the Strategic Defence Review. This process set the benchmarks for long-term development and put the whole system of national security on a qualitatively new basis.

With regard to defence - for the first time in the recent history of the Bulgarian Armed Forces a strategic document with such a long-term scope is being developed - the current Programme for the Development of the Defence Capabilities of the Bulgarian Armed Forces 2032.

Programme 2032 creates the necessary conditions for the build-up and development of such armed forces with which to be able to adequately respond to the risks and threats to our security, to protect the Bulgarian sovereignty and its interests and values, while remaining a respected ally in the collective NATO defence and in the creation of European defence. This will allow us to affirm Bulgaria's role as an important security factor in Southeast Europe and the Black Sea region.

The commitment that our government has made with the National Plan to Increase Defence Spending to 2% of GDP of the Republic of Bulgaria by 2024 creates conditions for the implementation of the Programme 2032. We expect the funds to be spent efficiently and by the end of the planning period the key projects for acquisition of new and modern armaments and equipment to be implemented.

Programme 2032 sets ambitious tasks for governments to come in building and developing of the Bulgarian defence. I believe that the implementation of this strategic document will allow us by 2032 to have a modern, strong and increasingly integrated within NATO Bulgarian Armed Forces - a reliable guarantor of sovereignty, security, independence and territorial integrity of our country.

Boyko Borissov

Foreword by the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Order and Security and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria

At the end of 2020 the horizon of the Programme for the Development of the Defence Capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria 2020 expired. In order to ensure continuity in the achievements in the defence policy during the past period and to create conditions for long-term upgrading, pursuant to Measure 299 of the Government Programme 2017-2021, the Ministry of Defence has developed a new strategic document setting the parameters for the development of the Bulgarian Armed Forces in a long term until 2032 – the Programme for the Development of the Defence Capabilities of the Bulgarian Armed Forces 2032.

Programme 2032 is a result of the Strategic Defence Review conducted in 2019-2020 within the framework of the overall Strategic Review of the National Security System and the Strategic Defence Review. Its adoption by the National Assembly is an expression of the broad political agreement on the future of our Armed Forces and the build-up and development of their capabilities. The time horizon of the Programme spans up to 2032, covering the full mandate of three consecutive governments, thereby achieving the necessary harmonization of the national defence planning process with that in NATO. This is an essential prerequisite for the development of the necessary defence capabilities that will allow us to effectively participate in NATO's collective defence and in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.

The timeframe until 2032 will ensure continuity in the implementation of the objectives and priorities of defence policy, especially with regard to the implementation of priority projects for rearmament and modernization, and will ensure stability in the build-up and development of the Armed Forces. Based on the 2032 Programme, the Armed Forces Development Plan until 2026 will be developed. The program will be the basis also for the next plan - from 2027 to 2032. In addition, we will develop an Investment Plan-Programme of the Ministry of Defence until 2032 which will ensure the subsequent consistent, clear and transparent realization of the investment projects for rearmament and modernization.

We owe it to the Bulgarian society to achieve what is set in Programme 2032, turning its goals and priorities into concrete and measurable actions with visible results. I believe that the next governments will continue what has been started in the name of the security of the nation and the Homeland.

Krasimir Karakachanov

Contents

1. Purpose and Scope of the Programme ---- 6
2. The Security Environment and Its Influence on the Defence Capabilities Development ---- 6
   2.1. Global Security Environment – Long-Term Trends ---- 6
   2.2. Trends in the Defence Capability Development until 2032 ---- 8
3. Fundamentals of the Defence Policy ---- 9
   3.1. The Defence of the Country as a Major State Activity ---- 9
   3.2. Strategic Goal of the Defence Policy ---- 10
   3.3. Priorities of the Defence Policy ---- 10
   3.4. Role, Missions and Tasks of the Armed Forces ---- 10
   3.5. Level of Political Ambition ---- 11
   3.6. Bulgaria in NATO and the EU, Bilateral and Regional Cooperation ---- 12
4. Defence Planning ---- 14
5. Desired End State of the Armed Forces' Defence Capabilities by 2032 ---- 15
6. Building and Development of the Armed Forces' Defence Capabilities ---- 16
   6.1. Capabilities, Size and Structure of the Armed Forces ---- 16
   6.2. Development of the Integrated Ministry of Defence ---- 17
   6.3. Capabilities of the Joint Forces Command ---- 18
   6.4. Land Forces Capabilities ---- 19
   6.5. Air Force Capabilities ---- 20
   6.6. Navy Capabilities ---- 20
   6.7. Joint Special Operations Command Capabilities ---- 21
   6.8. Military Intelligence Capabilities ---- 21
   6.9. CIS and Cyber Defence Capabilities ---- 22
   6.10. Logistics Support Capabilities ---- 23
   6.11. Military Medical Support ---- 24
   6.12. Military Police Support ---- 25
   6.13. Military Geographic Support ---- 25
   6.14. Reserve ---- 26
   6.15. Command Structure and Command and Control System ---- 27
      6.15.1. Levels of Command and Control ---- 27
      6.15.2. Development of the Command Structure ---- 28
   6.16. Training ---- 29
   6.17. Armaments Policy – Defence Acquisition ---- 29
   6.18. Infrastructure ---- 31
   6.19. Trading Companies ---- 32
7. People in Defence ---- 32
   7.1. Personnel Selection, Recruitment, and Development ---- 33
      7.1.1. Selection and Recruitment ---- 34
      7.1.2. Career Development Model ---- 34
   7.2. Military Education ---- 35
   7.3. Social Policy ---- 36
8. Resource Provision ---- 36
   8.1. Defence Spending ---- 36
   8.2. Sources of Funding ---- 38
9. Way Forward ---- 39

1. Purpose and Scope of the Programme

The Programme for the Development of the Defence Capabilities of the Bulgarian Armed Forces 2032 (*Programme 2032*) has been developed per Art. 16, Paragraph 6 and Art. 22 (2) Paragraph 5 of the Law on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria. Programme 2032 ensures continuity and further builds-up upon the overall strategic rethink of the Bulgarian defence policy, as well as the need to build-up defence capabilities that are adequate to the challenges, stemming from the strategic environment. These above processes were initiated with the Programme for the Development of the Defence Capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria 2020, adopted by the National Assembly (Parliament) in 2015.

The purpose of Programme 2032 is to define the strategic framework and the principal parameters of the national defence policy and to ensure the build-up and sustainment of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BAF) capabilities. These capabilities need to be adequate to the risks and threats emanating from the security environment up to the year 2032, and, in some areas beyond this year.

This Programme, is a strategic defence document and determines the minimum defence capabilities needed by the BAF to fulfil the defined Level of ambition (LoA). The Programme sets out the parameters for development and defines the basic guidelines for build-up of the defence capabilities through the active engagement of the political, economic, technological, informational, military and civilian resources of the country. The ongoing processes of strategic rethink in NATO and the EU have also been taken into account.

Programme 2032 will serve as a basis for future elaboration of a Plan for Development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria up to 2026, a subsequent Plan for Development of the Armed Forces for the period 2027-2032, and a long-term Investment Plan-Programme 2032.

2. The Security Environment and Its Influence on the Defence Capabilities Development

2.1. Global Security Environment – Long-Term Trends

In a long-term perspective the security environment will be characterised by increased dynamics, acceleration and complication of the different destabilising processes. It will be increasingly difficult to identify the origin and scope of any potential future risks and threats. Globalisation will continue to be the major factor exerting influence on a geopolitical level.

Globally, there is a tendency toward a long-term political escalation and confrontation between the countries of the Euro-Atlantic community, who share democratic principles and values and a number of countries, who are ruled by authoritarian, totalitarian and religious regimes. The modernisation and rearmament programmes of many countries worldwide, based on the latest achievements in the field of science and technology, are a clear indicator of the growing importance of the Military power, as a guarantor for security and defence in general.

During the next 10-12 years, the probability for a prolonged global conventional conflict between the Major Powers will remain low. General instability and potential for conflicts will most likely be confined to individual geographic regions and countries, which have either opposing or interlocked interests and spheres of influence, and bear the characteristics of fragile or ineffective governmental and institutional capacity to cope with the challenges before them.

The borderline between external and internal security will become increasingly blurred. The combined use of classical and hybrid means to achieve established goals will be ever more intensive.

This will make the identification of the sources of threats difficult and, respectively, will impede any attempts at executing preventive and mitigating measures against them.

Hybrid threats will exert an increasingly negative impact both upon national and Allied security. The borderline between conflict and peace will be more indistinct. The Military instrument of power alone will not be sufficient to deal with such threats. In a long-term perspective, the counties of the Euro-Atlantic community will be persistent targets of increasing external hybrid influences.

Cyberspace will ever more be used as a field of confrontation and of imposing political and economic interests. Cyberspace certainly established itself as a new operational domain.

The trend in the growing danger of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation will persist. The international arms control and non-proliferation system shows a trend towards disintegration. The existing arms control architecture is in a state of crisis. The short-term prospects for revitalisation of the conventional arms control regime in its current form are pessimistic. Developments in the sphere of nuclear disarmament raise concerns related to strategic stability.

International terrorism, intertwining with international crime and the growing mobility of people, goods and information, will further hamper the abilities of individual countries to preventively counter this threat. Terrorism will continue to be a major threat to Bulgaria's security.

Economic problems, social inequality, armed conflicts, demographic pressure, depletion of vital resources (drinking water, arable land, etc.) and the growing occurrence of devastating natural disasters due to climate change, may lead to increased migration in the future. The risk of infiltration, through migration flows, of persons related to terrorism will remain constant.

Competition for access to and use of energy resources is a potential source for future conflicts. The increasing dependence on their supply will make global economies more vulnerable to potential cyber or physical attacks on energy transportation infrastructure of all sorts and forms.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the global vulnerability to the spread of infectious diseases and their potential to rapidly escalate into epidemics and pandemics, entailing serious long-term effects on countries, societies and economies. The growing interdependence of economies and markets, as well as the intensive movement of people and goods will continue to create conditions for the transmission of dangerous infectious diseases and will generate a constant epidemiological risk.

The negative demographic trend will exacerbate the problems related to the Armed forces staffing with young personnel. It will continue to burden the national budget and will be an additional obstacle to increasing the defence spending and modernisation of the Armed forces of the NATO and the EU countries.

The processes of economic integration of the Western Balkans into the EU will continue. However, full integration of all Western Balkan countries is not expected to occur by the year 2032. Reasons for this will be the unsuccessful and insufficient reforms, deficit of political will, and lack of implementing of the Euro-Atlantic values in reality. Russia will continue its actions directed at slowing down the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkan countries by using hybrid means of influence, based on radical nationalist and post-communist ideology and rejection of Euro-Atlantic values.

The Black Sea region will continue to be an area with a potential for conflict. Resolution and settlement of the current frozen conflicts in the region cannot be expected any time soon. A lasting solution to the Ukrainian crisis is unlikely to be achieved during the timeframe of this Programme. Russia will continue to make efforts to preserve the post-2014 military-strategic balance in the Black Sea and further alter it to its advantage.

Some negative sentiments and assessments towards the EU and NATO are witnessed in some Central and Eastern European countries. This is primarily due to increased influence by nationalist political parties that have accommodated public support mainly as a reaction to migration pressure. Russia and China will seek to ensure and expand their lasting presence in the region.

China's economic and military potential grows progressively, and this favours the increasing influence of Beijing globally. This development will open up opportunities, but also challenges for NATO.

The Middle East and North Africa will continue to be characterised by significant instability due to the numerous unresolved problems. The situation in Afghanistan will continue to generate instability in a mid-term perspective, both regionally and globally. The war in Syria is a projection of global and regional confrontations that also generates potential for a prolonged conflict.

NATO and the EU will continue to be the cornerstone of European and global security. NATO remains the most powerful defence alliance in the world and a pillar of collective defence.

The need for rapid and timely decision-making in NATO and the EU to deal with emerging crises will necessitate the search for and introduction of new and more effective procedures and operating rules on all levels, including national level.

2.2. Trends in the Defence Capability Development until 2032

Due to the consistent security environment deterioration, NATO has shifted its focus in capability development, focusing on Collective defence. Military forces that will participate in Collective defence, including the National defence forces, need to maintain a high level readiness posture now and in the future, both for domestic operations and for missions abroad.

Territorial defence forces and Host Nation Support (HNS) on NATO's Eastern Flank are a direct contribution to the Alliance's collective defence. HNS will be key in providing for NATO's collective defence operations on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Future conflicts may arise in all operational domains – land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. This places higher demands on the BAFs' capabilities to jointly interact with Allied forces and with other national security stakeholders.

Due to the increased hybrid threats environment, the informational realm has affirmed itself as another specific area for conduct of operations. This entails, in close cooperation with all other elements comprising the National Security System, the need to develop all necessary capabilities to counter the challenges in this domain.

Emerging and disruptive technologies (EDT) are also widely available and easily accessible. Such technologies can alter the global military power balance and ultimately decide the outcome of future military conflicts. EDTs can both pose a threat to NATO's military superiority and at the same time provide opportunities for strengthening the Alliance's collective defence.

EDTs will lead to the development and use of new capabilities. This however poses the risk of creating a significant technological gap between the Armed forces of different Allies, which might have a negative impact on interoperability and the ability to conduct joint operations. The above determines the importance of rearmament/modernisation of the BAF in the coming years.

Force protection in all areas and particularly information security is a priority. Cyberspace is highly accessible, thus providing more vulnerabilities to exploit. Cyber-attacks will continue to be an integral part of hybrid activities, including during the conduct of military operations. Cyber defence will be a crucial factor to achieve success in any operation. The Armed Forces must be capable to

counter malicious actions and attacks in cyberspace. They must also be ready to operate in an environment with limited access to and use of this domain.

The requirement to operate and protect in an electronic warfare environment will further increase. Modern operations are associated with continuous utilisation of the electromagnetic spectrum. The Armed Forces will need to operate in an increasingly complex electromagnetic environment, in a constant struggle to achieve radio-electronic superiority over the adversary. Hence, the importance of a combined use of kinetic and electromagnetic warfare, new and modern organisational arrangements and methods for protection will increase.

The progress made in the digital realm, data processing systems, artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, robotics, space-based platforms, high-precision systems, hypersonic weapons, new missile technologies, energy weapons, laser technologies, biotechnologies, non-lethal effects etc., will continue to influence the use of military power and hence the nature of conflict. This requires focusing on the acquisition of high-cost, high-tech capabilities for the BAF, through joint multinational projects within the framework of NATO and the EU, including through engagement of relevant NATO and EU agencies.

The tendency to maintain sufficient flexibility and decentralised decision-making within the command-and-control system (C2) will continue. The BAF will rely on systems for processing and dissemination of information based on artificial intelligence.

People will remain the core element of the defence system. The need to acquire new professional and leadership qualities adequate to the environment will be crucial to achieving success in the future.

3. Fundamentals of the Defence Policy

3.1. The Defence of the Country as a Major State Activity

Defence is a key part of the National Security System. Defence is a fundamental state activity that guarantees national security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the independence of the country. It provides for generating, maintaining and using the needed resources to shape and sustain a stable security environment. Defence is planned, prepared and implemented within the framework of the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria, the NATO collective defence and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU. It is implemented through effective use of the defence capabilities, including military, non-military and civil-military capabilities of the country.

The country's defence is a comprehensive inter-agency activity that comprises military and non-military components. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is the major contributor. Other state institutions in various situations - in peacetime and crises, including when martial law or war is declared - also contribute to its implementation.

In addition to the Parliament, the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Defence, other state bodies, local self-government and administration bodies as well as legal entities with assigned wartime tasks related to defence, contribute to the implementation of the country's defence. Within their respective competence, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the head of the State e-Government Agency, the head of the State Agency for National Security, the head of the State Intelligence Agency, the head of the National Security Service, the Bulgarian National Bank, the regional governors and the mayors of the municipalities, assisted by regional and municipal security councils, the legal entities with assigned wartime tasks related to the defence of the country, other legal entities, the Bulgarian Red Cross, inter alia, also have legal obligations and duties in this

area. The roles and tasks of all above mentioned institutions remain relevant. However, inter-agency coordination, in the framework of the comprehensive approach to security, grows in importance.

3.2. Strategic Goal of the Defence Policy

The strategic goal of the defence policy is to protect the territorial integrity and defend the national interests by building, maintaining and using capabilities adequate to the security environment, as well as to build interoperable modern Armed Forces with a single C2 System for both peacetime and crises.

Its fulfilment is based on:

- The implementation of a realistic, result-oriented, long-term, sustainable and consistent national defence policy aimed at building, maintaining and developing the Armed Forces' capabilities that are adequate to the security environment.
- The active participation of the country in the processes of planning, development and use of the NATO and the EU's defence capabilities.

3.3. Priorities of the Defence Policy

The defence policy priorities are defined by the constitutional obligations of the Armed Forces (*Article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria*) and are aimed at achieving the defence policy strategic goal. They are based on the protection of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bulgaria within the framework of the NATO collective defence and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU, as well as on specific, planned and resource-backed measures for their practical implementation.

NATO remains the cornerstone and a security guarantor. The development of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy does not call into question the role of NATO's collective defence and security assurance. The Common Security and Defence Policy complements and strengthens it by contributing to the build-up of stronger and more capable armed forces of the European Allies in NATO, including these of Bulgaria.

The defence policy priorities shall be developed in the following spheres:

- Development of the defence capabilities of the Armed Forces.
- Development of the non-military component of the defence system and provision of civilian resources for defence.
- Adequate training, taking into account the available capabilities and the risks and threats to security.
- Continuing and deepening the role of Bulgaria as a consistent NATO and EU member.
- Developing capabilities within the framework of NATO's collective capabilities, including providing HNS to Allied forces and assets.
- Effective bilateral and regional military cooperation, including the development of the strategic dialogue and partnership with the United States of America.
- Commitment to the people as the most important component of the defence capabilities.
- Development of the MoD as an effective integrated institution.
- Determined strategic communications, aimed at maintaining maximum public support.

3.4. Role, Missions and Tasks of the Armed Forces

The role of the Armed Forces is to guarantee the sovereignty, security and independence of the country, to protect its territorial integrity, to participate in NATO's collective defence and the EU

CSDP.

The Strategic Defence Review confirmed the validity in a long-term perspective of the three main Missions of the Armed Forces:

- **Mission Defence**

The BAF guarantee national sovereignty and independence and, under the conditions of collective defence, defend the territorial integrity of the country and the NATO member states, to establish a stable security environment.

- **Mission Support to International Peace and Security**

The BAF participate in NATO and EU crisis response missions and operations, in UN missions, OSCE and other coalition formats to prevent conflicts; to fight terrorism; to strengthen and increase trust, security and defence cooperation.

- **Mission Contribution to National Security in Peacetime**

The BAF maintain capabilities for prevention, early warning and neutralisation of potential risks and threats to the national security; provision of humanitarian aid and execution of rescue operations on national territory, in national maritime zones and beyond; neutralisation of unexploded ordnance; provision of assistance (if necessary) to migrant crises management efforts and border protection; counter-terrorism; protection of strategic sites; conduct rescue, evacuation and emergency disaster recovery activities aimed at coping with and/or overcoming the consequences in the event of disasters, terrorist attacks, spread of infectious diseases or other types of risks for the security of the Bulgarian citizens and Bulgarian values, as well as in coping with epidemics, caused by various diseases; participation in preparation of the population and infrastructure for defence and for activities in crises of military and non-military nature.

3.5. Level of Political Ambition

The national LoA related to the use of the Armed Forces in the three missions is:

- **For Mission Defence**

The Armed Forces guarantee the country's sovereignty and independence in a national format and protect its territorial integrity within NATO's system for collective defence.

The national authorities and institutions perform their duties as a Host nation. In performing Allied obligations and activities on the territory of other NATO member states, the Armed Forces contribute with land, air, naval, SOF formations and logistic capabilities from the set of forces set out and agreed within the NATO Defence Planning Process framework. The main capability contribution comprises a Land Forces' Mechanised brigade, alongside formations from other services, SOF and other branches of the Armed Forces.

- **For Mission Support to International Peace and Security**

In quantitative terms, the contribution consists of participation in missions and operations with rotation of one reinforced battalion (*battalion battle group*) or several smaller formations from the Services and SOF (*up to 1,000 service members*). The Naval Forces participate within the framework of the resource equivalence of one patrol vessel, for a period of up to six months within one year. The Air Force participates by providing transport aviation, with no rotations, for a period of up to six months within one year. The Joint Special Operations Command participates with staff officers and

one special operations tactical group. A National support element will provide support for participation in missions and operations.

- **For Mission Contribution to National Security in Peacetime**

Within the framework of all existing capabilities, the Armed Forces provide trained and ready formations tasked with maintaining security and coping with and/or overcoming the consequences of disasters as well as dealing with epidemics.

The level of political ambition under each mission is based on specific Allied responsibilities and commitments, the implementation of other national security-related tasks and on the defence spending commitments, in line with the NATO Wales Summit (2014) decisions and the National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product until 2024.

3.6. Bulgaria in NATO and the EU, Bilateral and Regional Cooperation

- **Bulgaria's contribution to NATO's collective defence**

Bulgaria's contribution to NATO's deterrence and defence posture by 2032 will focus in three main areas: fulfilment of the Defence Investment Pledge to reach 2% of the GDP for defence; investment and development of modern capabilities and achievement of the agreed Capability Targets for Bulgaria within the framework of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP); contribution to current operations, missions and other Alliance activities and commitments, incl. staffing of the NATO Command Structure.

In accordance with the National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product until 2024, approved by the Council of Ministers, this commitment will be achieved by a gradual increase of the respective indicators set in it. Achieving the political LoA requires that the defence spending is maintained at a level of not less than 2% of Gross Domestic Product after 2024, and keeping this level up to after the end of the mentioned programming period.

National projects for the acquisition of armament and equipment will synchronise the national priorities with those set out by the NATO NDPP.

Participation of Bulgaria in NATO operations and missions will continue to be a significant part of the country's contribution to the Alliance. With respect to other important NATO activities, commitments and initiatives, the national contribution will focus mainly on the measures to enhance the Alliance's security, the NATO's Tailored Forward Presence in the Black Sea and on the participation of combat-ready formations. Filling the national staffing quotas of the NCS will continue to be a priority of the Bulgarian defence human resources management policy.

- **Contribution to the EU Common Security and Defence Policy**

Bulgaria is actively involved in the process of development and implementation of the EU's Strategic Compass, through which the objectives of the EU Global Strategy will be transformed into specific action guidelines in the sphere of defence and security.

Our country Bulgaria will fulfil its politically binding commitments under the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the field of security and defence and will contribute to enhancing the European approach to the development of the defence capabilities through cooperation, taking into account the processes in NATO.

Bulgaria will continue its active participation in various projects under the PESCO. The Deployable Modular Underwater Intervention Capability Package (DIVEPACK) project (in which Bulgaria is the lead nation) is expected to reach full operational capabilities by the end of 2024. We

will continue to work actively in all parts of the projects on improving the military mobility in Europe and on the construction of a network of logistical hubs to support operations.

Bulgaria will participate effectively in the development of innovative defence capabilities by the initiation of and involvement in projects under the European Defence Fund, whose major goal is to enhance the European defence technological and industrial base. We will also strengthen our cooperation with the European Defence Agency.

Integration of the results of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence and our contribution to the EU's PESCO in the national defence planning process will deepen.

Bulgaria will continue to participate with trained military formations in the EU battlegroups and the CSDP operations and missions, which are the main practical expression of our contribution to international peace and security.

Bulgaria will support the efforts to build-up the defence capacity of key EU partners, with a major focus on the Western Balkans, the Eastern neighbourhood and the regions to the south of its territory. In this way, the Republic of Bulgaria will contribute to achieving the goals and the implementation of the tasks under the European Peace Facility.

- **Bilateral and Regional Defence Cooperation**

Through adequate bilateral defence cooperation, the MoD will work to strengthen the national reputation and support the implementation of projects and initiatives of shared interest with key Allies, i.e., projects and initiatives aimed at developing the necessary priority capabilities. At the heart of our efforts to deepen bilateral cooperation, will stand the priority to enhance interoperability and to eliminate the dependence of our defence capabilities on countries outside NATO and the EU. The aim is to put an irreversible end to the dependence on the Russian military-industrial complex for repairs and maintenance of legacy Soviet equipment.

The main bilateral cooperation focus in the sphere of security and defence will be put on enhancing the Strategic Partnership with the United States and the practical implementation of the activities, outlined in the Roadmap for Defence Cooperation between Bulgaria and the United States 2020-2030. The goal is to direct the funding, provided to Bulgaria through different U.S. programmes, towards supporting the Bulgarian efforts to develop modern defence capabilities, to increase the readiness of our Armed Forces, to enhance their interoperability and to improve the qualification of the personnel. Implementation of joint projects that contribute to the enhancement of naval cooperation in the Black Sea region; modernisation of the Armed Forces; joint training and exercises; defence infrastructure; cyber defence; military education and individual training, will be given a priority. The implementation of the main priorities and operational guidelines from the Roadmap will also significantly assist the implementation of the agreed NATO Capability Targets. Moreover, this will increase the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the process of modern defence capabilities development.

An important strand in the development of the cooperation with the United States will be the bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement joint activities implementation and the efficient and effective increase in the use of the Joint Facilities. The Joint Facilities will remain essentially important for the sustainment and development of the Bulgarian Armed Forces' capabilities, as well as for the implementation of specific projects in the field of infrastructure. As a result of the implementation of the Agreement, the U.S. Government will continue to provide significant resources, necessary for the conduct of training and exercises of the Bulgarian military formations. Having the potential to expand these joint activities, within the framework of the Agreement, Bulgaria

is exploring the possibilities for an expanded U.S. military presence with troop rotations, as well as for enhancing joint training and exercises.

The intensification of good neighbourly relations, while strictly pursuing our national interests, will be among the major priorities of the Bulgarian defence cooperation policy.

Under the framework of the leading regional security format – *the South-East Europe Defence Ministerial Process (SEEDM),* Bulgaria will continue to take steps aimed at expanding the regional defence cooperation in Southeast Europe. Such steps will be based on implementing specific joint projects, with visible results to the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe and its physical manifestation – the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG). Bulgaria's contribution to this initiative will be in the prime focus during the period 2021-2023 when Bulgaria will chair SEEDMP. With the aim to enhance the defence capabilities and increase interoperability in the region, the Open-door policy and flexible participation of the countries involved will continue.

4. Defence Planning

Defence planning will be aimed at determining, building-up and developing the necessary defence capabilities and providing the required human, financial, material and other resources and services. Given the security environment, planning for defence is based on threat-informed, capabilities-based methodology, in compliance with the available and planned financial resources. Implementation of projects for building, developing and maintaining national defence capabilities will be conducted in conjunction with the NDPP and the EU's defence capabilities development process, exploiting all opportunities to achieve maximum effect with optimal use of resources through the development of a result-oriented programming budget.

The Minimum Military Requirements (MMRs), defined during the SDR, will ensure successful implementation of the Armed Forces' tasks under each mission. These requirements were formulated based on planning scenarios that predicted the use of the Armed Forces, both as a main and as a supporting military instrument of power, to guarantee the sovereignty of Bulgaria in a national format, and to protect the country's territorial integrity in an Allied format.

The MMRs necessitate the acceleration of the process of rearmament/modernisation in order to achieve interoperability and increase the efficiency of the defence resources.

This Programme is the first one to cover such a long-term period. The reason is that it is not realistic for the formulated during the SDR total number of 188 minimum defence capabilities to be attained in a short-term perspective. Their full implementation requires huge financial resources of over BGN 36 billion, which is an amount that the State budget cannot afford to spend in a short-term period. In order to ensure realistic financing from the State budget, calculations under Programme 2032 were only made for the minimum defined requirement of 38 priority defence capabilities.

The projected financial framework for the period up to 2032 that is based on the commitment to increase defence spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product, will provide for only 25% of the necessary financial resources needed to implement all 188 minimum military capabilities, i.e. for 38 of them. This requires their further prioritisation in order to select the ones that are of key importance for the implementation of the Armed Forces' tasks under the three Defence missions, as well as for any associated increase of the size of the Armed Forces.

The long-term planning period (until 2032) necessitates the defence capabilities acquisition process to be conducted in two stages - from 2021 to 2026 and from 2027 to 2032. Respective Armed Forces' development plans have to be elaborated for each of these stages.

5. Desired End State of the Armed Forces' Defence Capabilities by 2032

The Bulgarian Armed Forces have to be modern, interoperable, with a single C2 System for peacetime and crises and should have at their disposal the Main priority defence capabilities, adequate to the risks and threats.

This goal will be achieved through:

- Acquisition and use of new armoured vehicles for the Land Forces, multi-role combat aircraft for the Air Force, modular patrol vessels for the Navy, new armoured vehicles for the Special Operations Forces as well by the acquisition of new 3D radars, remote-controlled systems and drones coupled with the protection means against such systems, modernisation of the available weapon systems and equipment in the main combat formations and the combat and logistic support formations of the Land Forces, the Air Force, the Navy and in the formations and structures directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence;
- Enhancing the combat capabilities of the Armed Forces, the combat support and combat service support capabilities and the Host Nation Support capabilities. Special attention will be directed at building up situational awareness, electronic warfare capabilities and high-precision strike systems;
- Implementing sustained and systematic efforts to fulfil the NATO Capability Targets for Bulgaria, with the main priority – building-up the capabilities of a heavy infantry brigade of the Land Forces;
- Active participation in the Alliance's initiatives on enhancing the deterrence and defence posture and the measures under the Tailored Forward Presence in the Black Sea;
- Participation in the in the EU Coordinated Annual Review on Defence and the opportunities of joint development and acquisition of defence capabilities, provided by the PESCO and the European Defence Fund.
- Implementation of the activities under the Strategic Defence Partnership with the United States and taking full advantage of all the opportunities provided by the Ten-Year Roadmap for Defence Cooperation up to 2030, with a focus on the build-up of defence capabilities.
- Overcoming the problem with staffing by introducing a package of complex information, financial and social measures, aimed at increasing the interest in the military profession and motivating the service members to continue their military service. If under this Programme, the legislative measures undertaken to introduce voluntary military service do not achieve the desired effect, alternative approaches would have to be sought.
- Increasing the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the forces by introducing new, contemporary educational and training qualification programmes, assessment standards adequate to the requirements as well as simulation systems, modern equipment, devices, doctrines, tactics, techniques and procedures.
- Increasing the quantity and complexity of the joint training and exercises with Allies, especially with the United States and the neighbouring countries, with the aim to enhance interoperability.
- Construction and maintenance of adequate general and specialised defence infrastructure and decommissioning of unnecessary infrastructure per the developed vision.
- Introduction of modern, high-tech, artificial intelligence-based systems for extraction, processing, analysis and dissemination of information, incl. for common recognised operational picture in all domains, and elaboration of relevant procedures intended to reduce the response time.

- Building adequate capabilities aimed at providing the Armed Forces and the country's defence with the necessary civilian resources.
- Applying modern, effective and efficient defence management of the processes within the integrated MoD.

Thus by 2032, the Defence system will function effectively and efficiently to a maximum degree within NATO's collective defence and the emerging European defence. It will also function as an integral part of the indigenous National Security System, with well-developed mechanisms, capable of rapid and effective inter-institutional interaction, interoperability and ability to share capabilities with other national agencies.

By the end of the planning period, the shortage of capabilities in the main combat, combat support and combat service support formations of the three Services has to be overcome. The priority efforts will be focused on the NATO and EU declared formations, as well as on the implementation of the NATO Capability Targets.

The systematic efforts in recruitment and retainment of motivated and trained personnel, based on adequate pay and a new career model, will lead to overcoming the acute problem of filling vacant positions in the forces.

Due to the planned technological rearmament, the Armed Forces will have the minimum necessary quantity of major combat and support platforms. Parallel to the acquisition of new platforms, any obsolete equipment will be decommissioned.

By 2032, the National defence system will be to a large extent integrated into the Alliance collective defence system. Bulgaria will actively contribute to multinational NATO and the EU formations deployed on the territory of Allied countries. Such formations will simultaneously be established on Bulgarian territory as well. This will add value to both the national defence and NATO's collective defence.

6. Building and Development of the Armed Forces' Defence Capabilities

6.1. Capabilities, Size and Structure of the Armed Forces

The Armed Forces form the fundament of the defence capabilities of the Republic of Bulgaria. The defence capabilities development is linked to the ability to fulfil responsibilities under the Missions *Defence* and *Support to international peace and security*. The third Mission – *Contribution to National Security in Peacetime* will continue to be carried out with capabilities available for the other two missions.

Bulgaria will develop capabilities for adequate response to the risks and threats arising from the use of EDTs that might have a possible negative impact on the country's defence and security. The focus will be on cyber defence capabilities and on building the resilience of the C2 System and the Systems for acquisition, analysis and dissemination of information.

To fulfil the assigned missions and tasks, the Armed Forces will maintain a total strength of no less than 43,000 personnel, including 3,000 personnel of the Voluntary reserve.

The defence capabilities development will be based on the following components: doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and interoperability.

The Armed Forces will continue to develop balanced capabilities in all components, under a single Command and Control System for peacetime and in crises.

Functionally, the Armed Forces will comprise of Deterrence Forces and Defence Forces, in accordance with the NATO system of categorisation of military forces.

The recently conducted review on the capabilities and structure of the Armed Forces, as well as the assessment of the operational concepts under the planning scenarios, require an optimisation of the organisational structure of the Joint Forces Command, the Land Forces, the Air Force, the Navy, the Joint Special Operations Command as well as the establishment of new structures.

The organisational structure of the Armed Forces (Fig. 1) includes the Bulgarian Army (Joint Forces Command, the three services - the Land Forces, the Air Force and the Navy, the Joint Special Operations Command, the Communications and Information Support and Cyber Defence Command, the Logistics Support Command and the structures directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence, which do not operate under the Law for the State Administration. The Armed Forces also comprise of military personnel working at the MoD and the structures that are directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence, which operate under the Law for the State Administration.

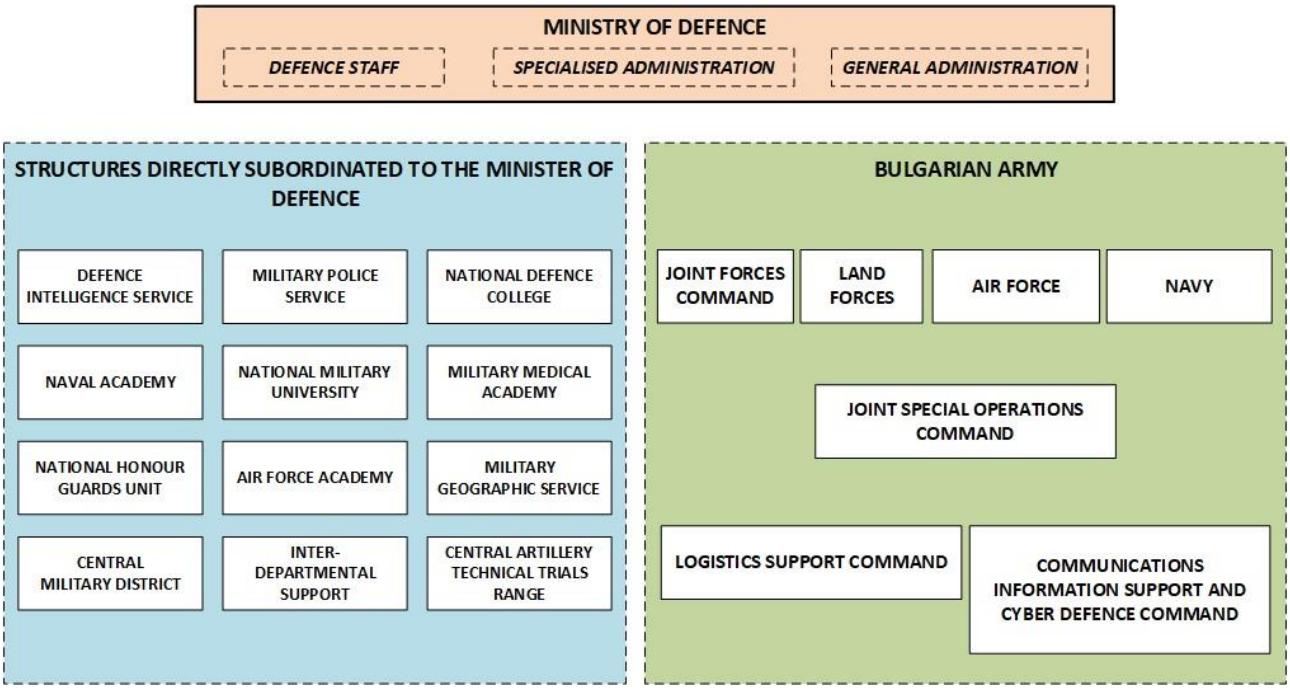

Figure 1 – Organisational Structure of the Armed Forces

6.2. Development of the Integrated Ministry of Defence

The defence policy of the Republic of Bulgaria necessitates to maintain the integrated structure of the MoD as an integral part of the National Security System and a major link to the NATO collective defence system and the EU CSDP. The integrated MoD will have to constantly analyse and improve its internal organisation and structures.

Within the period of Programme 2032, the efforts will be focused on the application of modern defence management and best practices. Effective results, efficient management of information, knowledge and resources will be crucially important in the development of the defence capabilities and enhancing readiness of the Armed Forces. **In this area, the main priority until 2032 will be to improve the transparency, cooperation, confidence and assessment sharing between the civilian and military expertise of the MoD.**

A successful development of the MoD requires a modern vision. The trends in the development of the security environment require that by 2032 the MoD be adequately prepared to deal with any security risks and threats to the national interests. This also requires that the Ministry

should have the capacity to counter hybrid threats within the framework of the National Security System. As a state body assisting the Minister of Defence, the MoD has to be actively involved in all NATO and EU activities, aimed at guaranteeing the military security of the country. As a civil-military structure, it must be engaged with society, to protect the population and raise the national values to a higher level.

The implementation of this vision will require the systematic application of the following principles: upholding national interests; indivisibility of the Bulgarian, NATO and EU security; engagement of the MoD with the structures of the National Security System, the scientific and expert community; independence of military expertise and the expert assessments provided by the specialised administration; harmonisation of the defence policy with the parameters of the strategic and conceptual framework of NATO and the EU; realistic approach to setting goals and striking an optimal cost-effectiveness balance; transparency and accountability in all stages and activities performed by the MoD.

The promulgation of good governance practices in the actual development of the Ministry by 2032 will be implemented through:

Striking a balance between political control and effective process management through the use of professional and independent military and civilian expertise.

- Enhancing synchronisation between policy objectives and the available resources by strengthening the role of advisory bodies in the process of taking complex decisions and presenting them to the Defence Council.
- Optimisation of the information awareness management by enhancing the information-technological base, personnel training, and organisational culture.
- Development of the linkages among the different structures on a functional principle, and employing an architectural approach.
- Improvement of the internal cohesion among the specialised administration, the Defence Staff and the general administration through clear differentiation of the responsibilities and areas of cooperation and interaction. The Defence Staff, as an integrated part of the MoD, will continue to plan and manage the defence capabilities development, plan the use of the Armed Forces, plan for conducting training and exercise activities, and develop strategic forecasting, analyses, military assessments and decision-making recommendations in the sphere of defence.

In terms of personnel and administrative capacity, the main priority will be to provide opportunities to enhance the employees' professional training through participation in master's degree programmes in country and abroad, provide qualification courses and language training. Success in the development of the MoD must be based upon a change in the organisational culture and ethos with the aim to achieve high professionalism, respect for personal and organisational integrity and strict abidance of law.

With respect to administrative environment, the goal will be to achieve full digitalisation of the processes in the Ministry, transition to electronic datasets processing decision-making. With the introduction of new technologies, the personnel and the organisational structure will be gradually optimised and streamlined, which will allow further adaptation of financial resources towards the development of defence capabilities.

6.3. Capabilities of the Joint Forces Command

The Joint Forces Command (JFC) is an operational level structure responsible for planning and conducting joint operations under the three missions of the Armed Forces, as well as for providing

administrative support and national control of the military formations participating in operations and missions abroad. The JFC executes command and operational management of the military formations, which are under its direct subordination and of those forces and assets, designated for participation in joint operations.

The JFC plans, organises, manages and coordinates the implementation of joint training, joint reconnaissance, joint logistics and communication-information support during joint operations under the three missions of the Armed Forces. It will build-up up and develop the following capabilities:

- For Mission *Defence* – for planning and conducting joint operations; for planning and implementing the participation of the Bulgarian military formations in NATO collective defence operations; for planning, organising and coordinating the activities related to entry, deployment and subsequent movement of Allied forces on the territory of the Bulgaria.
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for planning and implementing the participation of the Armed Forces' contingents in operations and missions abroad.
- For Mission *Contribution to national security in peacetime* – for planning and conducting activities on assisting other state structures and agencies, including those responsible for the provision of security and providing assistance to the population in times of natural or man-made disasters.

The *JFC's LoA* is to build-up and develop capabilities necessary for planning and conducting of a joint limited-scale operation.

6.4. Land Forces Capabilities

The Land Forces are the major Service and carrier of the BAF's main combat capabilities.

The Land Forces will develop and maintain capabilities for the defence of the Bulgaria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. With pre-declared and trained forces, the Land Forces will participate in a Collective defence operation outside national territory. They will maintain readiness and participate with contingents and formations in crisis response operations abroad in support of international peace and security. The Land Forces will assist the central and territorial bodies of the executive power and the local self-government bodies regarding the training, support and protection of the population, the national economy and infrastructure in crisis management and in overcoming the consequences of crises. They will provide assistance to internal security agencies and structures in guarding the state border and other strategic sites in the fight against terrorism and during illegal migration crisis.

The Land Forces will build-up and develop the following capabilities:

- For Mission *Defence* for conducting a joint defence operation of the country and NATO; for participation in Allied collective defence operations abroad.
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for participation in international crisis response missions and operations abroad; for participation in arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, confidence and security-building measures.
- For Mission *Contribution to National Security in Peacetime* – with the capabilities at hand, the Land Forces will contribute to the protection of critical infrastructure, to counter terrorism, to provide assistance in the event of natural disasters and crises of a non-military nature, to provide assistance to the Border police in guarding the state's border.

The *Land Forces' LoA* is to build-up and develop adequate capabilities to plan and conduct ground-based operations with a Land Forces Component, up to the level of a limited-scale operation.

6.5. Air Force Capabilities

The Air Force will develop and maintain capabilities for defending the Bulgaria's air sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. With pre-declared and trained forces, the Air Force will be ready to participate in a collective defence operation abroad. It will maintain readiness to participate in crisis response operations in support of international peace and security and to provide assistance to the population in disasters, provide humanitarian aid and execute rescue operations.

To fulfil the tasks arising from the three missions of the Armed Forces, the Air Force will build-up, maintain and develop the following capabilities:

- For Mission *Defence* – for planning and conducting air operations; maintaining the capabilities necessary for participation in the collective defence system and for ensuring the Allied Forces' deployment on the Bulgarian territory; capabilities for monitoring, control and protection of the airspace within the framework of the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System.
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for ensuring air mobility; participation in SAR operations, evacuation; prevention of arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; provision of support in humanitarian aid operations.
- For Mission *Contribution to national security in peacetime* – for maintaining the readiness of the Air Force's early warning, command and control system for managing forces and assets; for ensuring air mobility, including transportation of people and goods; disaster relief; participation in SAR operations, evacuation; extinguishing fires from the air.

The *Air Force's LoA* is to build-up and maintain adequate capabilities for planning and conducting air operations by an Air Force Component, up to the level of a limited-scale operation.

6.6. Navy Capabilities

The Navy will develop and maintain capabilities for the defence of the independence, territorial integrity and maritime sovereignty of the Bulgaria. It will maintain capabilities for conducting operations in defence of the country's interests in the maritime spaces of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Navy is ready to perform rescue and emergency rescue activities in the Black Sea area of responsibility and counter-terrorism operations and overcoming the effects of terrorism. With pre-declared and trained forces, the Navy will participate in collective defence operations outside the Bulgaria's maritime zones. It will maintain readiness to contribute to crisis response operations in support of international peace and security and to provide assistance to the population in disasters, provide humanitarian aid and conduct rescue operations.

To fulfil the tasks arising from the missions of the Armed Forces, the Navy will maintain and develop the following capabilities:

- For Mission *Defence* – national maritime space surveillance and protection capabilities; capabilities for the country's defence and participation in an Allied collective defence operation.
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for participation in international crisis response missions and operations outside of the country and maritime space; for implementation of confidence and security-building measures.
- For Mission *Contribution to national security in peacetime* – for building up and maintaining situational awareness in the national maritime spaces; for providing navigation support and control of shipping; for conducting counter-terrorism maritime operations and international criminal groups activities; for escorting military and/or merchant's vessels; for protecting the critical maritime

infrastructure; for emergency rescue and medical evacuation activities at sea; for providing assistance to the population in disasters.

The *Navy's LoA* is to build-up and maintain adequate capabilities for planning and conducting naval operations with a Naval Component, up to the level of a limited-scale operation.

6.7. Joint Special Operations Command Capabilities

The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) will plan, build-up and develop capabilities, necessary to execute special operations on land, sea and in the air independently or in coordination and with support provided by the other services of the Armed Forces. The JSOC will perform command and control of the special operation formations under its direct subordination and management of formations assigned to it in conducting special operations in or outside the territory of the Bulgaria.

The Special Operations Forces will develop and maintain capabilities under the three missions of the Armed Forces as follows:

- For Mission *Defence* – for planning and conducting special operations of military assistance, special reconnaissance and direct actions; for participation in Allied collective defence operations in and outside the territory of the country.
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for participation in international crisis response operations abroad aimed at ensuring peace and security; for the implementation of confidence and security-building measures.
- For Mission *Contribution to National Security in Peacetime* – to conduct, operations aimed at assisting the security bodies, counterterrorism; hostage rescue; provide assistance during natural disasters and crises of a non-military nature.

The *JSOC's LoA* is to build-up and maintain adequate capabilities for planning and conducting special operations with a Special Operations Component, up to the level of a limited-scale operation.

6.8. Military Intelligence Capabilities

The aim of the military intelligence remains unchanged – to obtain, process and disseminate intelligence information in the interest of Bulgaria's defence, of national and collective security; to provide early warning on the risks and threats thereof; and to provide intelligence support for national, Allied or coalition operations and missions.

A key element of the early warning system, military intelligence must have at its disposal the necessary capabilities for monitoring, surveillance and intelligence within the full range of operations. It must be able to obtain real-time information from the air, land, sea, the electromagnetic space and cyberspace. In response to the changes in the security environment and the emerging risks and threats, the acquisition of new, specific capabilities for acquisition, analysis and exchange of intelligence information is crucial.

At the strategic level, the military intelligence will be organised and conducted by intelligence forces of the MoD organised as a Military Intelligence Service (MIS). This Service will function as a special security service and will be one of the major elements of the early warning system with respect to the risks and threats to the national security and defence of the Republic of Bulgaria, the implementation of the country's commitments to the NATO and EU intelligence communities and the partner services as well.

The MIS is a structure directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence that maintains and develops capabilities for performing strategic intelligence through human resources and technical means. The MIS collects and processes the entire information obtained by the defence intelligence bodies or received by NATO and EU intelligence agencies, by the separate intelligence services of the NATO and EU member states, and by partner services. The MIS performs strategic management of the intelligence process in the BAF and assists the Chief of Defence in exercising his duty with respect to intelligence management in the Armed Forces.

The LoA of the military intelligence is to build up and develop, by 2032, capabilities for: a unified intelligence CIS, aimed at exchanging intelligence information at strategic, operational and tactical levels; achieving 'Joint Effects' in conducting information operations; Strategic Intelligence Information Centre; information provision and intelligence support to the Supreme Command, the headquarters, troops and forces; cyber intelligence; electronics intelligence; geospatial intelligence; imagery intelligence.

6.9. CIS and Cyber Defence Capabilities

The communications and information support and cyber defence system of the Armed Forces' C2 is provided through the bodies and structures responsible for the planning, build-up, development, operation and maintenance of the communications, information, navigation, and cyber defence systems at HQs, troops, and forces at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of command, both stationary and mobile. The Communications and Information System (CIS) provides the functionality of the C2 of the Armed Forces and ensures effective information exchange that is necessary for the MoD's interaction with other ministries and agencies, as well as with NATO and the EU.

At the strategic level, the CIS structures support the Minister of Defence in managing the structures that form the Integrated Crisis Management Communications and Information System of the country.

The capabilities of the system for communication and information support and cyber defence of the C2 of the Armed Forces will be developed in the following directions: improve the cyber defence policy in accordance with the national framework and with those of NATO and the EU; establish cyber defence bodies at the strategic, operational and tactical levels and further develop cyber defence structures; develop and maintain technical infrastructure for cyber defence research, education, and training; improve the information systems and broaden the scope of the network infrastructure based on building and maintaining a network of cloud computing technology data centres; improve the capabilities for surveillance, analysis, response to communication and information incidents and cyber-attacks, and recovery of the communications, information, and navigation systems; upgrade the navigation and sensor systems in accordance with NATO and EU trends; unify the Armed Forces' CIS services and combining and deconflicting them with the services that are provided by the Single Electronic Communications Network of the State Administration and National Security; achieve the necessary interoperability of our country's CIS networks with those of NATO and the EU; extend the scope and functionalities of NATO networks for exchange of classified information to the tactical level; increase the capacity of the networks for exchange of national classified information through expanding and protecting them by using nationally approved cryptographic devices; acquire and timely putting into operation of modern information and communications technologies.

Setting up the **Communications and Information Support and Cyber Defence Command (CISCDC)** and its reaching full operational capability is a priority.

The CISCDC is envisaged to support, build up and develop capabilities, in order to create the conditions allowing the operation and functioning of the wartime state governance bodies as well as the communications and information support and cyber defence of the C2 System at the strategic level, in the following directions: further develop the stationary communications and information system; provide the full range of communications and information services relevant for the strategic level; connecting the formations directly subordinated to the strategic level; provide and maintain secure national and Allied classified information exchange for the strategic level; logistically support the deployed stationary communications and information nodes; build up the capabilities for surveillance, analysis, response to communication and information incidents and cyber-attacks, and recovery of the communications and information systems at the strategic level, as well as the cyber defence education and training capabilities.

The formations under the CISCDC will support, build and develop the following capabilities:

- For Mission *"Defence"* – for communications and information support and cyber defence for wartime state governance and the strategic level C2 System, as well as for secure national and Allied classified information exchange at strategic level.
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for communications and information support and cyber defence provided for national control of formations participating in international crisis response operations abroad.
- For Mission *Contribution to national security in peacetime* – already built up and developed capabilities will contribute to cyber defence of critical infrastructure.

The *CISCDC LoA* is to is to build-up and attain capabilities for planning and for creating conditions for functioning of the wartime state governance bodies and provide communications and information support and cyber defence of the C2 System at strategic level, both stationary and deployable.

6.10. Logistics Support Capabilities

The Armed Forces logistics system will develop capabilities for training, deployment support, provision of Host Nation Support, and for independent logistics support to forces in executing their assigned missions and tasks.

To achieve these results, Bulgaria will combine in the most optimal way the resource capacity of the national economy with the existing forms of multinational logistics support. Opportunities provided by NATO Agencies as well as opportunities related to participation in programmes, projects and initiatives of the Alliance and the EU as well as with separate Allies, in both bilateral and multilateral formats will be used in a more active way.

Priority will be set upon the development of stationary and mobile logistics support capabilities related to maintaining the required stocks of materiel, as well as the distribution and delivery thereof; maintenance and repair of the basic armaments and equipment; movement and transportation; support of military infrastructure; increasing the mobility of the declared forces and provision of timely and effective logistics support in the course of operations; Host Nation Support to Allied forces and structures that are deployed, operate or pass through the territory of Bulgaria.

Establishing a **Logistics Support Command** (LSC) and reaching its full operational capabilities is a priority.

The LSC is envisaged to provide logistics support to the Armed Forces in peacetime, during crisis and conflict, and to NATO forces deployed on the territory of Bulgaria.

To implement the logistics support tasks related to the three missions of the Armed Forces, the LSC will maintain and further develop the following defence capabilities:

- For Mission *Defence* – for providing joint logistics support in defence of the country; logistics support for the national formations designated for participation in collective defence activities abroad; providing military aid as part of Host Nation Support;
- For Mission *Support to international peace and security* – for participation in international crisis response operations abroad for guaranteeing peace and security; provision of logistics support to national formations, designated to participate in NATO operations, in implementing obligations under the Alliance's collective defence abroad;
- For Mission *Contribution to national security in peacetime* – for providing support to state and local authorities in times of disasters and non-military crisis; capabilities to support the Border Police authorities in guarding the state border.

The *LSC's LoA* is to achieve capabilities for planning and providing logistics support for a limited-scale operation as well as to implement the relevant military commitments related to providing effective Host Nation Support.

6.11. Military Medical Support

Medical support is a comprehensive set of activities implemented with the aim to preserve, strengthen and recover the health of the Armed Forces personnel in their daily activities and training, improvement of the operational readiness and implementation of the three core missions of the Armed Forces. It will be maintained and further developed according to NATO standards and national requirements. The main challenge until 2032 will be to improve the diagnostic and therapeutic capacities and to establish single integrated medical support for peacetime, crisis and conflict. This support should be adequate to the structure, missions and tasks of the military formations, having a potential for effective employment of the resources available.

In order to enhance the medical support capabilities of the Armed Forces, the efforts until 2032 will be focused on the improvement and modernisation of the clinical facilities, particularly the emergency medical aid and treatment of afflictions and disorders analogous to combat trauma, Acquisition of new medical equipment for diagnosis and treatment, compliant with modern requirements, will be done on an annual basis.

A priority will be set upon the renovation of the medical aid stations and other medical facilities situated within the military formations. Where facilities are deemed beyond repair, we will proceed to design, build up in successive phases, commission and put into operation of new, advanced medical aid stations in order to cover the full range of Role 1 medical care activities as per NATO standards.

A launch of a project for acquisition of ground medical evacuation capability through the purchase of new field ambulances to support the medical aid stations in the military formations, as well as Hospitals subordinated to the Military Medical Academy is also envisaged. This will improve the efficiency of military medical support with respect to training, execution of operations and all other activities, incl. those related to Host Nation Support.

We envisage the establishment of a training centre that will offer a variety of courses for ambulance crews, combat paramedics, instructors and medics (for ex. Advanced Trauma Life

Support courses - NTLS and CTLS). Among the capabilities to be developed are video-telemedical capabilities, which will enable the exchange of treatment and diagnosis information among medical aid stations (land and ship-based), the Military Medical Academy's subordinated hospitals, and the respective ambulance crews.

By 2032 the Military Medical Academy will increase its anti-epidemic capabilities. This will be achieved by acquiring capabilities for diagnostics and treatment of infectious diseases and by modernising the available treatment facilities, in compliance with modern requirements, incl. for isolation of patients with infectious diseases.

6.12. Military Police Support

The Military Police Service as a specialised entity of the Armed Forces will continue to maintain and develop new military police capabilities in the context of the three missions of the Armed Forces. It will provide military police support to the Armed Forces across the full spectrum of military police activities.

The Military Police Service is a specialised public order organisation subordinated to the Minister of Defence. Its mission is to create the necessary favourable conditions for the fulfilment of the missions, functions, and tasks of the Armed Forces.

The Military Police Service will maintain and develop capabilities for:

- Prevention, detection and investigation of criminal activity and police registration of suspects.
- Expert and criminology activities.
- Anti-terrorism activities at the MoD level, the structures subordinated directly to the Minister of Defence, and the Armed Forces.
- Investigation of military aircraft incidents.
- Military police support and protection of personnel, sites and facilities, materiel, armament and equipment, during exercises and activities or events of the Armed Forces.
- Provision of general security and security control.
- Traffic control and military vehicles safety;
- Fire safety and prevention.
- Activities related to foreign military forces, their bases and vehicles on the territory of Bulgaria, regarding the international agreements.
- Information activities related to collecting, processing, storing, analysing, using and providing information relevant to the functions of the Service.

Programme 2032 requires certain amendments to the legislative and regulatory framework to be implemented in order to enable more efficient planning and use of the military police capabilities in operations. This end result will bring to an enhanced coordination between the Military Police Service and the Defence Staff. This will also enable the Chief of Defence to assign specific operational tasks to the military police formations, related to the protection of persons, sites, and facilities, escorting, convoying, force protection, and other activities associated with the conduct of operations during peacetime, crisis and conflict. Through such amendments the Military Police Service will acquire new capabilities different from the ones that the National police service has for times of crisis and conflict.

6.13. Military Geographic Support

Military geographic support to the Armed Forces operations will continue to be provided by the Military Geographic Service (MGS).

The MGS will maintain and develop the available capabilities for the timely production of digital and analogue geographical (excluding meteorological and hydrographic) information and its dissemination, for exchange of geographical information and services in standard formats, and application of NATO-approved geospatial producing standards and interoperability.

In the interest of national security and the defence, the MGS will remain subordinated to the Minister of Defence and will continue to be the only body in the country generating geo-informational support during peacetime, crises and conflict, not only to the Armed Forces but also to the rest of the state authorities and public bodies.

The MGS will implement enhanced requirements for geospatial information coverage, in terms of relevance, authenticity, integrity, timeliness and compatibility, to provide creation and release of ground and terrain information products and digital data in the framework of national and Collective defence.

6.14. Reserve

The Reserve of the Armed Forces will continue to be built up in conformity with an amended legislative and regulatory framework, with a composition, size and structure corresponding to the operational needs of the Armed forces.

Abolishment of the conscription military service affected the composition, quality and capacity of the Reserve. It is critically necessary to take prompt action to implement a new approach to the creation, building up, management, control, use and training of mobilisation reservists and the population in general for defence. The drastic reduction in the numbers of Bulgarians with military training (mobilisation reservists) must be overcome.

In the short term, the legislative framework is being amended in order to improve the conditions for receiving military training on a voluntary basis. If within one planning cycle (4 years) the above-mentioned approach fails to deliver the sought outcome for staffing the wartime formations with mobilisation reservists, we will have to seek broad public support for the introduction of compulsory military training for Bulgarian citizens, under Article 59, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Armed Forces Reserve will continue to comprise **a volunteer reserve** and **a mobilisation reserve force.**

The **volunteer reserve** is part of the peacetime/crises/conflict structures. An undermanned or undertrained voluntary reserve would call into question the capabilities of the forces. In the medium term, conditions need to be put in place to enable filling the vacant positions and to allow for targeted and effective planning, training, and use of the voluntary reserve.

The strength of the voluntary reserve will not be changed and will remains at 3,000 personnel. The need to enhance the mobilisation capabilities of the forces and for the establishment of the crises/conflict formations assigned thereto will be achieved at the expense of redistributing the voluntary reserve. This will result in saving funds.

Bulgaria plans to improve the system for recruitment and selection of candidates. To raise the level of professional selection and military training, commanders and HQs, the Central Office of Military Districts and its subordinated structures, the military educational institutions and centres will be engaged. As a priority, the positions in the Armed Forces' voluntary reserve formations will be reviewed, along with their functions and tasks.

In accordance with the Law of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, the **mobilisation reserve force** comprises mobilisation reservists and equipment designated to staff and equip military formations in times of crises/conflict.

The abolishment of conscription military service and the negative demographic factors have led to a decrease in the number of Bulgarian citizens who have received military training. The reservists of the existing reserve are ageing, and the younger generations remain without initial and specialised military training required for enrolment and registration in the military roster. This necessitates the undertaking of activities aimed at finding a more effective approach to the build-up, management, control, training and use of the Reserve of Bulgarian citizens to meet the needs of the Armed Forces. A training system needs to be put in place to prepare Bulgarian citizens for the defence of the Homeland, in accordance to Article 59, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria. Alternative approaches concerning the mobilisation reserve's manning need to be sought through legislative changes in training and mobilisation.

The planning and management of the Armed Forces Reserve and mobilisation processes necessitate the need for their rethink and transformation. The adopted decentralised model, implemented by various structures of the MoD, must be replaced with centralisation and establishment of a unified structure at the strategic level tasked with implementing policy, organisation, executing management, coordination and control over the whole process concerning the Reserve of the Armed Forces.

The implementation of the above measures, coupled with adequate state-level commitments, will motivate the Bulgarian citizens to voluntarily and actively participate in the process of receiving military training for the defence of the country.

6.15. Command Structure and Command and Control System

The dynamic changes in the security environment bring forward ever increasing demands on the resilience, efficiency and effectiveness of the command structure. To adapt the latter to the new environment, we need to ensure its flexible functioning in alignment with Allied requirements. Rapid transition from peacetime to functioning in crises and conflicts is critical to its efficiency and effectiveness and the success of operations.

When planning a crisis response operation, the Chief of Defence defines, based on the established command structure of the Armed Forces, a model of a specific command and control system to ensure achievement of the objectives, through efficient and effective actions of the components and the military units and reliable Combat Support and Combat Service Support.

6.15.1. Levels of Command and Control

The established *political strategic level* of leadership and control of defence, as well as the three levels of command and control of the Armed Forces: *strategic, operational and tactical* will be retained.

The **Political Strategic Level** of leadership and control of defence comprises the Parliament, the President, the Council of Ministers, and the Minister of Defence. The Political Strategic Level sets out defence and security policies, gives political guidance to the strategic level, and supervises its implementation. In addition, the political level assigns tasks to other ministries, agencies, and government bodies with statutory defence responsibilities and duties and supervises their implementation.

The **Strategic Level** of command and control of the Armed Forces comprises the President of the Republic of Bulgaria (*acting in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in wartime*), the Minister of Defence, and the Chief of Defence supported by the Defence Staff. The Chief of Defence, supported by the Defence Staff, transforms the political guidance into military actions, missions, and operations; provides military expertise to inform the political decision-making process; guides the build-up of the defence capabilities and the development of the Armed Forces, the conduct of advanced planning and crisis response planning; guides, coordinates and synchronises the processes on the operational level; coordinates the processes and interacts with the NATO and EU Military Authorities.

The **Operational Level** of command and control comprises the Commanders of the Joint Forces Command, the Land Forces, the Air Force, the NAVY, the Joint Special Operations Command, the Logistics Support Command, and the Communications and Information Support and Cyber Defence Command. The operational level focuses on planning, preparing, and conduct of single and joint operations to achieve the objectives set before them; training of troops and forces; maintaining comprehensive situational awareness; interaction and coordination of the tactical formations activities. In a joint operation, the Joint Forces Command executes operational command and control of those components, assigned to the operation, assesses the completed phases of the operation, and organises the interaction and coordination with the Allied operational commander.

The **Tactical Level** comprises the commanders exercising tactical command and control of their subordinated military formations and units. In a joint operation, the tactical level (i.e. components from the Armed Forces' Services, the Joint Special Operations Command and military formations) conducts operations and tactical actions to achieve the objectives set before them.

6.15.2. Development of the Command Structure

The Command Structure of the Armed Forces includes the Supreme Command (in wartime), the MoD with the Defence Staff integrated therein, the Joint Forces Command, the Land Forces Command, the Air Force Command, the Navy Command, the Joint Special Operations Command, the Logistics Support Command, and the Communications and Information Support and Cyber Defence Command.

The development of the Command Structure will be focused on adapting the strategic and the operational level architecture, with the aim to achieve prompt transition from peacetime to crises and conflict, as well as to increase the flexibility in designating an efficient and effective command and control system for each specific operation. A new operational level will be introduced, in which the separate Commands will be subordinated to the Chief of Defence. Their current organisational structure will be transformed in line with the requirements, necessary to conduct missions and operations.

The nature of the tasks demands transforming the chain of command of the Armed Forces in order to ensure flexibility and room for manoeuvre of the components and the military formations. It needs to set the principle of mission command as the conceptual basis of command and control. Such an approach will lead to effective achievement of objectives and efficient use of resources. It is deemed practical, the hierarchical level of the Joint Forces Command and the Services' commands to be at the same level, and at the same time subordinate all Commands at the operational level to the Chief of Defence.

The analysis of the security environment and the tasks carried out requires the establishment of two new commands at the operational level – the *Logistics Support Command* and the *Communications and Information Support and Cyber Defence Command*.

At the tactical level, the tactical Commands will be adapted to ensure that new armament and equipment being put into service is most successful and in line with NATO interoperability requirements. Implementing an architectural approach to building up the C2 System will optimise the effective and efficient use of capabilities to achieve the operational objectives.

6.16. Training

Training is an essential activity and its efficient and effective planning and conduct is a key driver for the success in operations.

Therefore, training will be conducted in line with the tasks stemming from the three missions of the Armed Forces, but with a special emphasis on mission *Defence*. Training will have as a priority the following:

- Update of doctrines, programmes and standards, taking into account the introduction of new high-tech combat, combat support and combat service support capabilities and implement the lessons learned and the results of armed conflict analysis and adapt the training to the new readiness requirements.
- Operationalise the new combat platforms, armament, and equipment and achieve full operational capability.
- Train and certify the NATO Response Force designated military formations;
- Provide training, targeted at efficient and effective implementation of the Host Nation Support commitments.
- Increase the number of Joint training with live exercises, including in an international format.
- Increase the use of simulation systems, simulators and training equipment.
- Intensify the use of the three Services' training centres and the joint Bulgarian-U.S. facilities.
- Implement the training-related activities of the 10-Year Roadmap for Defence Cooperation with the USA.
- Modernise the obsolete and obsolescent infrastructure of training centres and ranges, firing ranges, and other sites related to the training and readiness.

6.17. Armaments Policy – Defence Acquisition

The build-up of the material components of defence capabilities, including the long-term support elements (integrated logistics support), is implemented through the System of Defence Acquisition, based on the approaches adopted and the requirements and priorities set. The aim is to satisfy, to the maximum extent possible, the needs of the contracting authorities/users. The end result must be an effective and efficient use of defence resources in acquiring and sustaining defence capabilities, as well as in decommissioning surpluses, throughout their full life cycle, and at optimum cost.

The acquisition of goods and the provision of services will be guided by the following general principles: provide for the needs of the contracting authorities/users to the maximum extent possible; protect the interest of contracting authorities to the fullest extent possible and make the best use of

available funds (best value for money); support a comprehensive planning and acquisition process to achieve and sustain the required defence capabilities, taking into account opportunities to provide security of supply; ensure publicity and transparency of the processes; comply with the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination; benefit, as far as possible, from the provisions of the Public Procurement Act for in-house procurement.

The investment projects on rearmament/modernisation of the Armed Forces will encompass the full defence product life cycle – acquisition, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning – supported by the relevant and appropriate planning and timely provision of the necessary funding. The disposal and dismantling, being defence product life cycle phases, will be preceded by relevant and appropriate implementation procedures. The goal is to implement the MoD's Own-source Revenues Plan along with reducing the costs of armament and equipment decommissioning.

To speed up the process of acquiring key military capabilities under the conditions of a deteriorating security environment, the implementation of the armaments policy will involve the following mechanisms and approaches:

- Creating strategic partnerships when acquiring armament and equipment under government-to-government agreements, concluded in compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ensuring spreading payments out over long-term, including for second-hand equipment.
- Ensuring optimal use of the potential and the capabilities of the Bulgarian defence industry in the process of acquisition and maintenance of armament and equipment, including when determining the existence of essential national interest according to the national legislation.
- Making wider use of the NATO Agencies for procurement of and support to priority defence capabilities.

The successful completion of acquisition processes requires developing a balanced system of indicators to measure the effectiveness, as well as a Strategic road map for defence acquisition. The Minister of Defence will also issue Ministerial Guidance on the functional policies in this area.

To develop the Bulgarian Defence Technical Industrial Base (BDTIB) and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of defence investment use, the initiative, effort, and leading role of the State and the MoD must be sustainably enhanced. It is beneficial, following the example of the leading NATO and EU countries, to enable the MoD to commission the BDTIB entities to implement research projects that are aimed at the development and production of advanced weapon and equipment systems, to generate national/local potential, reduce dependency from foreign suppliers and ensure participation in joint projects with Allies and partners.

Regarding research and development (R&D) in defence, it will be necessary to specialise in activities and areas which have proven to be promising and forward-looking and which have a direct impact on building up and developing the capabilities of the Armed Forces and the defence products life cycle management. Guaranteeing and managing quality, standardisation, certification, codification, and testing of defence products must be in line with the latest developments and must be adequately regulated and properly harmonised with those of NATO and the EU.

The NATO Allies and especially the United States, being Bulgaria's strategic defence partner, will remain world leaders in emerging technologies. Hence the Bulgarian R&D must seek its development in this context, coordinating and aligning the national effort with the efforts of our

Allies. The focus must be put on the Republic of Bulgaria's contribution to protecting NATO's technological edge and preventing illegal access of non-NATO and non-EU state competitors to critically important technologies, intellectual property, and R&D.

The successful attainment of the goals and priorities of defence acquisition and the related armaments policy will be achieved through the planned and consistent implementation of the **Investment Plan-Programme 2032**. The Investment Plan-Programme will be developed based on the objectives, priorities, and resource macro framework defined in this Programme, as adopted by the National Assembly, as well as based on the Plans for the Development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria until 2032. The Investment Plan-Programme will comprise current projects and investment intentions to implement the main projects on the acquisition of key defence capabilities, including the projected implementation schedule and estimated capital expenditure required for each one of them. The Investment Plan-Programme must be timely reviewed and updated following any changes in the resource or political framework regarding the development and build-up of the priority capabilities of the Armed Forces that may have occurred, as well as following any Defence Review. The Investment Plan-Programme will need broad public and political support to ensure continuity, development of the capabilities of the Armed Forces as planned, and their modernisation, consistent with the endorsed Plans for the Development of the Armed Forces.

6.18. Infrastructure

Defence infrastructure will be developed in the following two directions: *Deployment and Infrastructure;* and *Investment*.

The *Deployment and Infrastructure* will include activities related to providing the Armed Forces with the appropriate infrastructure, reducing the volume of property to what is necessary for the implementation of the functions and tasks of the Armed Forces, and reducing maintenance costs of properties that are still used. Under this direction, the Services and the structures subordinated directly to the Minister of Defence have set out their specific needs, and this does not entail any significant changes related to the stationing of the military formations.

The financial constraints necessitate targeting resources towards maintaining the actively used infrastructure, rather than towards excess properties.

The need for providing physical security to properties that are no longer used will be analysed several times a year, taking appropriate action to reduce the number of security guards personnel and transition to high-tech systems and CCTV surveillance.

The *Investment* direction will include, inter alia, the capability packages to be developed under the NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP). A total of 11 capability packages are envisaged to be developed in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria over the period 2020-2026.

As a priority, the sites in the locations of permanent stationing of the Armed Forces and the housing stock of the MoD will be repaired and renovated. In the population centres where there are no military formations stationed, the existing property will be disposed of.

The MoD will pursue the established policies and practices for sale of surplus property through tendering procedures. The MoD will also transfer unnecessary property to State and municipal authorities and bodies free of charge. The MoD will continue its policy on dealing with excess property, reducing cost of use and management of real estate, in line with the Vision for

overall transfer of ownership of surplus garrisons and military installations, in accordance with relevant legislative and regulatory framework.

In transferring ownership of excess property, opportunities for receiving consideration must be sought. To satisfy the housing needs of the service members the acquisition of housing properties will continue via legal procedures for assignment of construction rights on MoD's property in exchange of certain number of homes. This will contribute to implementing the MoD's policy for raising motivation and quality of life of the service members and employees.

6.19. Trading Companies

The Minister of Defence will exercise his rights in his capacity as the sole owner of the capital of trading companies, owned by the MoD. The tasks of these trading companies ought to be connected to the needs of the Armed Forces. Their activities should be focused on contributing to the build-up, development, and maintenance of the defence capabilities. The specific character of these activities necessitates the produce and delivery of highly specialised and, at times, unique goods and services, thus directly contributing to the defence capabilities and use of the Armed Forces in operations.

To meet the new operational requirements, management of the trading companies will be changed, channelling their production capacity towards achieving direct contribution in providing the Armed Forces with interoperable gear and armament, manufacturing new equipment or repairing and overhauling the legacy equipment, necessary for participation in missions and operations.

Stabilisation and improvement of the financial performance of these trading companies will be accomplished through further improvement of their management. Action must be taken to expeditiously dispose of properties where there is no commercial interest, by launching procedures for their scrapping, destruction or making them available free of charge. This will result in reducing the cost of their maintenance and guarding.

The introduction of the option for in-house procurement into the Law for Public Procurement established legal grounds for direct conclusion of contracts between the contracting authority and companies, provided that such companies meet the requirements stipulated by law. This establishes real prerequisites for financial-economic stabilisation, which will lead to an increase in revenues obtained from dividends and taxes. The application of internal mechanisms and procedures is envisaged to ensure transparency and to prevent and counter corruption.

The trading companies' activities are mostly focused on contribution to national security in peacetime. The MoD will continue to provide methodological guidance and exercise control over the operations of those companies in wartime, too, in compliance with the wartime tasks assigned to them.

Phased divestiture is envisaged of those trading companies with no contribution to the capabilities or operations of the Armed Forces, based on the results of in-depth economic, financial, and operational analysis.

7. People in Defence

Human resources' potential is the key factor of economic growth, ensuring a competitive advantage. Organisations are increasingly declaring people as the most valuable asset to invest in, as the existing models and social systems are overburdened and have reached the point where they are no longer viable. More and more business models are being reworked, the goods and services offered are being reconsidered, and social systems are being rediscovered. The organisations are streamlining

and modifying their practices regarding their human potential, in an effort to unlock the potential of the right people and in the right place, thus achieving a competitive advantage, despite existing challenges.

The human resources in the Armed Forces perform their duties in a special State structure that is under civilian authority and control. This distinct situation makes them face specific requirements to have the capacity to perform the tasks of the military formations and structures that they are part of. The effective implementation of a wide spectrum of defence and security tasks assigned to the Armed Forces requires the service members to be always available and capable of performing their duties.

It is these specific characteristics of the service in the Armed Forces that distinguish it from civilian employment. As a consequence, human resource management in defence could be defined as - strategic and consistent approach to managing the most valuable asset - people in defence, who, individually or collectively, contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

People are the central potential and a guarantee for the success of every single activity in defence. Employing modern approaches, and clearly stated rules and mechanisms for efficient and effective human resource management, the defence system and the Armed Forces will be staffed with prepared and motivated personnel. To this end, the processes of attracting, recruiting and selecting personnel will be planned and implemented, based on the overall assessment of risks and the existing labour market competition.

The human resource management system will provide for:

- Building and maintaining forces that are staffed with personnel possessing the necessary knowledge, skills and habits to fulfil the missions and tasks of the Armed Forces.
- Fulfilling the personnel's potential by adopting the "management through competence" approach.
- Create leaders who can achieve connectedness of the Armed Forces' strategic goals with the management of human potential therein.
- Optimisation and increase of the human resource management structures' capacity, with the aim to transform them into a strategic element of the management system of the defence and the Armed Forces.
- Improvement of the policy for remuneration and increase of the living standard of the men and women in defence, to attain social status corresponding to their high responsibilities and restricted civil rights.

7.1. Personnel Selection, Recruitment, and Development

The state and condition of the human resources, the Reserve of the Armed Forces and the social policy require to focus efforts on taking and implementing long-term measures aimed at:

- Resolving the existing problem with the vacant positions in the formations.
- Improving the model of starting military service and career development of the service members.
- Improving the social status and motivation and enhancing the quality of life of the personnel.
- Determining and ensuring adequate pay for the people in defence, consistent with their contribution to the accomplishment of objectives.

Priority will be given to working on finding a lasting solution to the problem with the high number of vacancies in the Armed Forces. The long-term demographic projections show that labour

shortages in the Republic of Bulgaria will grow. This will pose additional challenges to the personnel selection, recruitment and development system.

The introduction of new technologies in the Armed Forces will entail new projection of positions, change in the ratio of categories of service members and amendments to the organisational and personnel establishment of the military formations.

7.1.1. Selection and Recruitment

The high number of vacant positions, the anticipated reduction in the number of candidates for military service and the increase in the number of those retired from military service due to reaching the age limit, requires changing the conditions for starting a military career, serving in the Armed Forces and retiring from military service, and including also creating opportunities for the accelerated career development of promising personnel.

Therefore:

- In the short term, the conduct of recruitment by a single commission for a specific Service by regions will be legally regulated; the terms and conditions concerning the admission of personnel for military service will be alleviated for people who have previously served in the Armed Forces.
- In the medium term, a Single Basic Military Training Centre will be established at the Vasil Levski National Military University. This centre will organise and conduct recruitment for candidates for military service and will provide basic military training to service members.

7.1.2. Career Development Model

In the short term, new indicators of the timeline parameters regarding the military service duration and the relevant contracts will be regulated. The requirements regarding training and education of service members at the G. S. Rakovski National Defence College, the high military schools and the professional non-commissioned officers' colleges will be modified.

In the medium term, the stages of career development based on education and qualification will be clearly separated and distinguished. The service members will also be provided with an option for accelerated career development.

The implementation of the above-stated activities will help to establish a career development model that comprises clearly outlined stages for career development, depending on education, consistency of career development in terms of acquired additional qualifications.

To ensure more successful functioning of the Career development model, a System for Management and Improvement of Personal Qualities will be introduced, with the aim to analyse and assess the skills and abilities of officers, to discover their potential, to encourage them to improve their intellectual capacities, and to provide them with options for career advancement.

The procedures for identifying training needs and determining the requirements for participation in training courses, aimed at the acquisition of and rising in qualification, or upskilling, will be refined. This will be achieved with the intention of provide support to commanders in the field of individual training planning and career development plans with respect to subordinate military and civilian personnel.

An approach to provide education and training throughout the whole period of military service is currently being adopted. The underlying goal is to keep people in defence prepared and adequate to the dynamically evolving security environment, the development of technologies, military science and art. A roadmap for individual training, directly related to career development models of officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers will also be elaborated.

To increase interoperability, we will refine and amend the legislative and regulatory framework to allow for attracting as many candidates as possible for English language courses.

The centralised competition procedure for recruitment to a specific Service will make the process of admission to start military service more efficient.

The best contribution to the efficiency of the competitions for soldiers' positions will be provided by the introduction of a Single Centre, responsible for providing initial basic military training to those admitted to serve in the Armed Forces.

7.2. Military Education

The military education system will continuously develop its academic and technological capacity. It will train highly qualified personnel for the Armed Forces, the System for Protection of the National Security and the national economy, taking into account the dynamics of the security environment and the evolution of military science and art, and will broadly apply information technologies. The military educational institutions will provide an active and practical experience-oriented learning process, which will encourage practical and critical thinking skills in military students, officer cadets and cadets.

The institutions of military education will formulate an institutional complex of qualities (portfolio) and they will enhance the interaction and synergy among each other. The aim is to raise their profile to make them more attractive for the structures recruiting personnel for the Armed Forces, for other ministries and agencies, as well as for the domestic and foreign higher education market. The development of the higher education military schools until 2032 will be carried out, following the concepts adopted in the course of the Strategic Defence Review.

The curricula and syllabi will be updated and new educational programmes will be elaborated in the Military Science professional field, in alignment with the advancement of technologies and military science.

Efforts will be focused on integrating professional training in the curricula and syllabi of academic specialities *Organisation, Command and Control of Military Formations at the Tactical Level* and *Organisation, Command and Control of Military Formations at the Operational Level* in the Military Science professional field.

At the G. S. Rakovski National Defence College, the length of studies for the acquisition of the educational and qualification degree of 'master' in the professional field of Military Science, academic speciality *Organisation, Command and Control of Military Formations at the Operational Level*, a full-time form of instruction, will be reduced to a duration of one academic year.

The respective legislation and regulations will be amended and refined, in order to provide for professional growth of faculty members and the introduction of more options for qualification, through internships at home and abroad, accompanied by adapting the payment policy to stimulate and retain the teaching, scholarly and research staff.

The training of the non-commissioned officers will be aligned with the State Educational Standards at Professional Colleges for Non-Commissioned Officers (PCNCOs) only.

Steps will be taken to conduct individual training of soldiers at training centres and PCNCOs within the military schools of higher education.

A model of education will be adopted, aimed at the acquisition of professional qualifications by service members from the non-commissioned officers' corps, who have solid initial military training. This could be non-commissioned officers who have graduated from either a non-commissioned officers' school or PCNCO (or enlisted professional military education college), have

graduated from equivalent schools or colleges abroad, or (alternatively) have gained sufficient relevant experience from participation in missions, operations, or assignments abroad.

We will create the opportunity for introducing military science-oriented specialities in the secondary education system. Joint projects will be developed among the military schools of higher education and the vocational secondary schools.

7.3. Social Policy

Providing people in defence with sufficient payment, competitive to the labour market is a persistent effort that will have a long-term impact until and beyond 2032. The focus will be on establishing conditions, aimed at enhancing the motivation of people in defence, hiring and retaining of high-quality, adequately trained and qualified personnel.

In the short term: review the terms and conditions providing for additional payment; develop a new policy to provide for making use of properties from the housing stock of the MoD, including the establishment of compensation funds, adequate with regard to the market rent prices and consistent with the garrison locations.

In the medium term: develop adequate social policy to provide for improvement of the social status of service members; introduce additional remuneration for serving in economically well-developed regions of the country; introduce a model of determining the severance pay upon dismissal from military service, depending not only on the number of years served, but also on the non-performed part of the contract, and ensuing liabilities and obligations in accordance with the Law on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.

An important focus will be to identify opportunities to introduce a third (occupational) pension pillar for service members.

Until 2032, the social policy will aim at:

- Providing a high social status of the service members and supporting them with relevant social benefits package, both while in service and after retirement;
- Raising the average monthly salaries at the MoD and the Armed Forces, aimed at closing the gap and catching up with the national average, thus enhancing the motivation of the candidates for military service and defence personnel;
- Enhancing the motivation of the service members and retaining them in service, aimed at filling the vacancies at the formations.

8. Resource Provision

8.1. Defence Spending

To achieve the optimal balance among the necessary defence capabilities, the execution of the Armed Forces' missions and tasks, and the available financial resources, a gradual increase in defence spending until reaching 2% of the Gross Domestic Product will be necessary, in compliance with the National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product until 2024. With regard to defence capability planning, it is critical to ensure predictable, transparent, and stable funding for the Armed Forces until 2032. Effective and efficient spending of resources will be achieved reaching a ratio between personnel costs/ operation and maintenance costs/ capital expenditure of 60:20:20, out of the total expenditure of the MoD. It is envisaged that 20% of the estimated defence spending be planned for the acquisition of new armament and equipment until 2024.

For the period 2025-2032, the estimated defence spending must be maintained at a level of at least 2% of the Gross Domestic Product, depending on the economic growth of the country. The ratio of personnel costs/operation and maintenance costs/capital spending, out of the total expenditure of the MoD, must be maintained at 60:20:20, while at least 20% of defence spending is envisaged to be planned for acquisition of new armament and equipment.

The defence resource spending for the build-up and maintenance of the defence capabilities of the Armed Forces and for fulfilling the LoA must be within the framework of the estimated financial resources available for the period 2021-2032. In compliance with the projected financial framework of the MoD until 2032, priority must be given to providing funds for defence capabilities from the List of Priority Capabilities to be Built-up by 2032, with an emphasis on the Declared Forces and the implementation of the NATO's Capability Targets apportioned to Bulgaria.

The personnel costs need to comprise the funds required for filling the vacancies in the Armed Forces, giving priority to staffing the military formations, designated to NATO and the EU. Personnel costs should also provide for gradually increasing the pay of the people in defence, in response to the increased competition in the labour market and harmonised with the national policy for income increase, aimed at the reaching of the European levels.

In the long term, the planned funding for capital expenditure will put in place conditions conducive to launching priority investment projects on rearmament/modernisation of the Armed Forces, linked to the priority capabilities of the Armed Forces. The investment projects' planning must encompass the full defence products life cycle – acquisition, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning – supported by the relevant provision of the necessary funding.

The MoD's budget allocations are to be provided within the expenditure ceilings for the respective budget year. The state Central budget should only provide for funding for the implementation of the major investment projects on rearmament/modernisation of the Armed Forces, as approved by the National Assembly. The terms and procedure regarding such provision will be specified in respective Decrees on the execution of the State budget for each budget year. Regarding the provision of entirely new or additional tasks assigned to the MoD, including the release of radio frequency spectrum for civil needs, additional funding, above the expenditure ceiling set for the MoD, must be provided on annual basis.

Due to the changes in the country's macroeconomic indicators resulting from the counter-pandemic measures and to preserve the projected financial framework of the MoD, following the above-stated defence spending percentage of the projected Gross Domestic Product, the MoD's budget will be amended. The lowered Gross Domestic Product projections for the period until 2032, according to the Ministry of Finance data, provided at the end of 2020, will not allow for providing the minimum defence spending, required to guarantee the fulfilment of the LoA, including the commitments of to NATO and the EU.

To make up for this shortage, the defence spending must comply strictly to the levels set out in the National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product until 2024. After 2024, the defence spending should be maintained at a level of at least 2% of the GDP until 2032, and at a higher level should the economic situation permit it. This intends to compensate for the deficit caused by the fall in GDP in absolute terms as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lowering the defence spending below these thresholds will have a negative impact on the capabilities, structures, staffing, operation and maintenance and training, the planned ratio between the spending categories, the launching and scope of the investment projects, and as a result, on the

overall capacity of the Armed Forces to carry out the role, missions and tasks assigned to them. This will also have negative impact on the Level of political ambition.

Building defence capabilities adequate to the security risks is impossible without proper provision of sufficient defence spending. Increasing the defence spending to 2% of the GDP until 2024 and above that percentage in the event of favourable economic development is not an end in itself. It takes into consideration the economic implications of the counter-pandemic measures. It also takes into account the deteriorated security environment and the global trend towards a substantial increase in defence spending. An increase in defence spending provides significant added value to the measures aimed at overcoming the economic recession as it results in creating new jobs, in promoting and incentivising the production and services, and in the development of the Bulgarian defence industrial base through the transfer of new advanced technologies.

The Strategic Defence Review has provided for the implementation of the National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product until 2024, not including expenditure for pensions, military courts and prosecution offices, for the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria to NATO, or the contribution made by Bulgaria to the NATO civilian budget. These additional expenditures will only formally be included in defence spending during planning, accounting for and reporting of defence spending to NATO.

Defence resource planning and management at the MoD and the Armed Forces will continue to be based on the programming principle. The practical implementation of the programming approach provides for long-term binding of the defence resources with the required capabilities, allows for effective and efficient allocation of resources for implementing the priority objectives, capabilities, and programmes, and establishes conditions conducive to ensuring resource management transparency and civilian control over defence budget spending. This system is compatible with NATO planning principles and provides an appropriate basis for reporting and accounting while enabling the National Assembly, the Bulgarian public, and the Allies to assess and evaluate the programmes and the MoD budget.

8.2. Sources of Funding

The **defence budget** remains the main source of funding for the build-up of the Armed Forces defence capabilities, alongside the defence spending allocated in the Central State Budget.

Through the introduction of appropriate legislative and regulatory amendments, it is envisaged that budget allocations will be provided within the expenditure ceilings of the MoD. The state Central budget should only provide for funding of the major investment rearmament/modernisation projects, as approved by the National Assembly. The terms and procedure regarding such provision will be specified in the respective Decrees on the execution of the budget.

The process of defence capabilities build-up cannot be executed within a single budget year, nor planned to be carried out in a medium term perspective. This is a long-term process. Furthermore, a *sine qua non* condition for the successful implementation of the process and the effective and efficient resource spending need to guarantee funding within the amounts initially calculated.

The implementation of the modernisation projects approved by the Parliament will be provided for by Central budget allocations, designated to the MoD.

External sources of funding could be:

- NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP), which is used for the acquisition of capabilities beyond the framework of the national resources of the individual Member States and make part of the collective defence.

- Bilateral funding mechanisms with the USA. Security Assistance Programmes of the US Government will be used for defence capabilities build-up. Under the Foreign Military Financing, contracts for the acquisition of defence-related goods and services in support of the Capability Targets will be implemented.
- European Programmes. To increase the growth of incoming funds under the EU Structural Funds programmes for the 2021-2032 period, the MoD will further develop mechanisms for their potential use.

The concrete terms and values of the financial parameters in the sources of funding will be substantiated in an upcoming Plan for the Development of the Armed Forces until 2026, which will be approved by the Council of Ministers.

9. Way Forward

Defence is one of the core activities of the State and is planned, prepared, and executed within the framework of NATO and the EU CSDP, through effective and efficient utilisation of the national defence capabilities. These include the military and civilian instruments of power. In this context, Programme 2032, as a key defence policy document, setting out the strategic parameters and shaping in the long term the build-up and maintenance of adequate to the risks and threats defence capabilities of the BAF. The achievement of the objectives stated in this Programme will depend in the long term on whether the succession Bulgarian governments will ensure continuity of the defence policy priorities over the programming period, along with maintaining strong public support to provide adequate defence resources.

For successful achievement of the set objectives, the following priority guidelines for future work are set out for the medium term (until 2026), for the longer-term (until 2032) and beyond:

• Elaboration of a Plan for the Development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria 2026 and a successive Plan 2027-2032.

• Elaboration, endorsement, provision of resources and consistent implementation of an Investment Plan-Programme 2032.

• Ensuring that COVID-19 pandemic, with its implications on the economy and finances, does not become a security and defence crisis, due to redirecting critically needed funds to other sectors.

• Active involvement of the MoD in the process of building the State's resilience, ensuring enhanced inter-agency coordination in the context of the comprehensive approach to security.

• Initiation of legislative changes to ensure the implementation of the objectives and priorities of Programme 2032 and the respective structural, functional, and organisational changes laid down in the Plan for the Development of the Armed Forces.

• Continuation of a firm and persistent implementation of the major investment projects. Any staggered payment schedules due to unforeseen financial and economic situation in the future may be modified and renegotiated, but termination of the projects should be avoided.

• Reaching a lasting national consensus and securing a long-term political support for maintaining adequate and sufficient defence spending levels in order to enable implementation of the parameters laid down in this Programme.

• Fulfilment of the Wales Defence Investment Pledge, following the estimates contained in the National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the GDP until 2024, while allocating at least 20% for the acquisition of new armament and equipment. To implement the parameters of Programme 2032, after 2024, the defence spending should be maintained at a level of at least 2% of the GDP until 2032. If in the future the economic situation so allows, it must be kept at a higher level,

to compensate for the deficit caused by the fall in the GDP in absolute terms as a result of the counter-pandemic measures.

• Maintaining the strong and unwavering political will to continue to pursue measures and activities aimed at resolving the problem with the high number of vacancies in the Armed Forces and enhancing the motivation for recruitment and retaining personnel in the professional military service through annual pay rises for service members by an average of 10% for the period up to 2032, as well as the political will to introduce new, effective and practicable principles and approaches in human resource management in defence.

• Taking strong, adequately resourced, consistent, and focused action aimed at allowing the country to catch up and to fully implement the national commitments undertaken concerning NATO's Capability Targets package, channelling the efforts and resources to the priority Targets.

• Focused work on implementing the commitments related to the build-up of the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture, following the decisions made at the Wales, Warsaw and Brussels Summits.

• More active involvement in building NATO's Tailored Forward Presence in the Black Sea region, the NATO Readiness Initiative, and NATO and EU missions and operations.

• Advancing the strategic partnership with the US and implementing the priorities laid down in the Roadmap for Defence Cooperation, in the interest of speeding up modernisation.

• Participation in Allied military formations in the territories of other NATO Member States, as well as building up such formations in Bulgaria.

• Developing capabilities for providing Host Nation Support to Allied forces and assets.

• Implementation of joint projects in defence capabilities build-up and maintenance, together with Allied countries within the NATO and EU frameworks.

• Maximum use of NATO and EU Agencies in the process of build-up of the BAF capabilities.

• Contribution to the EU CSDP and avoiding duplication of efforts and resources between NATO and the EU.

• Furthering the active participation in capability building projects under the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation.

By 2032, the BAF should have the main priority defence capabilities and will be able to cover a big portion of the minimum military requirements for the implementation of their tasks stemming from the three missions. The development of modern and adaptive defence capabilities adequate to the risks and threats must, however, continue beyond the year 2032. The lack of planned, consistent, and targeted investment for rearmament/modernisation of the Armed Forces over the past 30 years has led to a significant defence capability deficit. Compensating for this deficit will require much more time and financial resources than the ones envisioned by this Programme. Thus, building up and developing a considerable part of the required capabilities of the Armed Forces will continue beyond 2032. The final success is conditional on the wide public support and lasting political consensus on the long-term objectives and priorities set out herein, as well as on the consistency and continuity of the defence policy to be pursued by the successive Bulgarian governments until 2032 and beyond.

* * *