



Ministry of Defense Republic of Bulgaria

Dealing with Explosive Remnants of War and Redundant Ammunitions Bulgarian Experience

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THE BULGARIAN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- Law on control over explosive substances, fire arms and ammunitions
- Law on waste management
- Law on the export control over arms and double use articles and technologies
- Regulations on the conditions and order of conducting activities related to explosive substances, fire arms and ammunitions, and the control over them in the Ministry of Defense
- National Program for the utilization and destruction of the excessive ammunitions on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted in 2004
- Currently, the National Program is included in the list of the 11 priority investment projects for the modernization of the Armed Forces



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THE TRAGEDY AROUND SOFIA

On 03 July 2008 the warehouses for ammunitions near Sofia airport exploded



Incident on February 03, 2010 when ammunition plant “Mindzur”, near the city of Montana, was on fire



ISSUES WITH EXCESSIVE AMMUNITIONS

- In 2003, more than 160 000 tons of ammunitions were concentrated in the warehouses of the MoD, more than 7 000 tons of them were kept under the open sky
- In 2003, 59 000 tons of ammunitions were declared excessive, and after the restructuring of the Bulgarian army, at the beginning of 2005, their amount increased and reached 67 000 tons.
- At present, there are more than 20 000 tons of excessive ammunitions including:
 - Small arms ammunitions;
 - Aviation means of destruction;
 - Ammunitions for the Air Force (aviation bombs);
 - Antiaircraft missiles and elements for them;
 - Maritime ammunitions;
 - Engineering ammunitions.

It is expected that in the process of execution the “Plan 2015” for modernization of the Bulgarian armed forces more than 30 000 tons of ammunitions will be declared excessive



SOLUTIONS

- The main method applied for the utilization of excessive ammunitions – decomposition in laboratories, separation of the individual elements and subsequently achieve commercial realization of products.

- Process of utilization

In 2002, 18 tons of ammunitions were utilized and 944 tons were sold.

In 2003 and 2004, more than 4 tons were utilized.

In the last five years approximately 6 500 tons of ammunitions were utilized, financed by external donors such as the State Department of USA and the United Nations Program of Development.

Currently, the Integrated Program Team was established with goal to utilize the excessive ammunitions by employing private companies.



CONSEQUENCES

Eliminating the consequences of the incident will take at least two more years, and will involve spending great amount of financial means, engaging a great number of experts.





RECONSTRUCTION

The activities in the reconstruction of the area after the incident are organized in accordance the requirements of the ecological legislation, good interaction with the bodies of the Ministry of the Environment and Waters, and the local authorities.





CLEANING OF THE REGION

The process of cleaning the region, which includes land and water spaces that are a part of the National Ecological Network “NATURA 2000” is organized in accordance to the limitations that are in force in the protected zone with a view not to disturb the process of nest-making of the wild birds.





SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN THE REGION

- **15.03.2008** - explosion in a warehouse for ammunitions of the Albanian Army in the village of Gerdech, 14 kilometers to north of Tirana
- **10.07.2008** - explosions near the town of Kagan, Uzbekistan, in the missile-artillery warehouses, that remained there from the time of the military operations of the USSR in Afghanistan.
- **04.09.2009** - incident in the factory “Parvi Partizxan” in the town of Uzjice, situated approximately 150 kilometers from Belgrade
- **13.11.2009** - incident in the warehouses near the town of Ulianovsk, in the military compound in the base “Arsenal-31”
- **03.02.2010** - ammunition utilization plant “Mindzur”, near the city of Montana, was on fire.



CONCLUSIONS

- The utilization is particularly topical, and it solves one of the basic problems of the reform in the Bulgarian army and in the defense industry in general.
- following the Generic Preventive Measure under CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War in Bulgaria is just one of benefits.
- It is an activity of great volume and technical complexity.
- Modern technologies, technological equipment, technically prepared staff and considerable financial means are necessary in order to fulfill the process of utilization of excessive ammunitions successfully.



**Thank you very much
for your attention**

Lt Col. Nikolay Nikolov, PhD