

HARPIA, KRUK AND NAREW – PLN 185 BILLION TO COVER THE MODERNIZATION OF THE POLISH MILITARY

Polish Ministry of Defence is going to spend PLN 185 billion modernizing the Armed Forces, within the term between 2017 and 2026. This is the assumption that has been made within the framework of the newly adopted Technical Modernization Plan. Among the plan's tasks, acquisition of a new generation fighter aircraft (Harpia) and SHORAD system (Narew) as well as new attack helicopters (Kruk) have been listed as the top priorities.

The plan was presented on Thursday by Mariusz Błaszczak (head of the MoD) and General Rajmund T. Andrzejczak (head of the General Staff). The meeting for the media, covering the aforesaid issue, was held at the General Command of the Armed Forces in Warsaw.

According to the legal framework within which the modernization has been embedded, the *Technical Modernization Plan* (which is the document's name) covers a period of a decade and is updated every 4 years. Formerly valid document covered the period between 2013 and 2022. Head of the Polish Ministry of Defence, Mariusz Błaszczak, announced the assumptions of the plans extending to the year 2026. The MoD somehow fails to inform the public opinion about the fact that the new plan covers the timeline with its beginning set in the early 2017.

Within the term between 2017 and 2026 the MoD plans to spend around 180 billion zlotys on modernization. Distributing this amount between the years, the funding is going to take shape as follows:

- 2017 - ca. PLN 8.8 billion;
- 2018 - ca. PLN 12.5 billion (including the extra Wisła programme funds);
- 2019 - ca. PLN 11 billion;
- 2020 - ca. PLN 14 billion;
- 2021 - ca. PLN 17.6 billion;
- 2022 - ca. PLN 19.2 billion;
- 2023 - ca. PLN 20.3 billion;
- 2024 - ca. PLN 25 billion;
- 2025 - ca. PLN 25.9 billion;
- 2026 - ca. PLN 30.8 billion;

The Ministry also showcased a selection of tasks envisaged within the plan, including the programmes as follows:

1. Harpia - acquisition of 32 5th generation multi-role combat aircraft;

2. Narew - SHORAD system;
3. Kruk - attack helicopters;
4. Cyber.mil.pl - modern cryptographic and IT hardware, expenditure is to be contained in an amount of PLN 3 billion;
5. Wisła - medium range air defence system;
6. Gryf - tactical UAVs;
7. Ważka - micro UAVs;
8. Płomykówka - maritime patrol aircraft;
9. Miecznik - coastal defence vessel;
10. Orka - submarines;
11. Regina - Krab howitzer squadron fire module elements;
12. Rak - self propelled mortars based on the Rosomak APC;
13. Homar - long range rocket artillery;
14. Pustelnik - light ATGM launchers;
15. Borsuk - infantry fighting vehicle;
16. Mustang - high mobility passenger/cargo vehicles;

Błaszczak announced that the modern equipment shall be first sent to the Eastern flank, and particularly assigned to the 18th Mechanized Division with its command established in Siedlce, as of September 2018.

The plan has been issued with a delay of almost 800 days. The Ministry was facing a lot of criticism for that reason, expressed by the opposing political parties. The delay has been explained by the MoD since some time now, with justification coming in a form of the Strategic Defence Review (2016 and 2017) and change of the leadership (Mariusz Błaszczak replacing Antoni Macierewicz as the head of the MoD in January 2018). Only after the authority was transferred, the work on the modernization plan could have been sped up.

The 2017-26 plan had to be preceded by publishing of other documents, as the law assumes. First, the President had to define the main directions in which development of the military shall be pursued. Then, in June 2018, the government has adopted specific directions for reconstruction and technical modernization of the armed forces. In November 2018 the head of the MoD signed the Armed Forces Development Programme, covering the period between 2017 and 2026.

The priority adopted is to reinforce the north-eastern part of Poland. Hence the acceleration of the process in which the Siedlce-based 18th Mechanized Division is formed. The element has been founded in September 2018. The above circumstances also had an impact on decision to provide more equipment to the 16th Mechanized Division in Białobrzegi and to place a greater emphasis on the Multinational Division North East with its command located in Elbląg. The latter unit has achieved readiness in late 2018. The plan also assumes that Suwałki-based anti-tank artillery regiment would be resuscitated, replacing a squadron-sized unit currently stationed in the region.

According to the information released by the MoD, the efforts related to the Territorial Defence component would be continued. Furthermore, the Ministry is going to focus on establishing a cyber component (the concept of which has been presented in early February) and introduction of a new C2 system, that has been valid since 23rd December 2018.

Within the scope of modernization the MoD also placed an emphasis on modern air defences and rocket artillery assets, when showcasing the concept in November 2018.

As long as no new technical modernization plan had existed, the MoD could not have been making any finance-related decisions reaching beyond 2022 (the horizon defined for the previous edition of

the document). No legal basis existed to sign agreements the implementation of which would reach beyond that year.

It was in late 2018 when amendments were introduced into the Act on Transformation and Technical Modernization and Financing of the Armed Forces, assuming that the upcoming editions of the plan would cover a term of 15 years, instead of a decade.