

## POLISH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE: FOUR UAV TYPES TO BE DELIVERED BEFORE 2022

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**During the meeting of the Polish Parliamentary National Defence Committee Wojciech Skurkiewicz (Secretary of State at the Polish Ministry of Defence) announced that MALE Zefir UAVs, Tactical Gryf UAVs, tactical short range Orlik UAVs and Wizjer mini-UAVs would be delivered between 2020 and 2022. Some of the agreements are expected to be signed by the end of this year.**

The issue of the modernization programmes discussed during the meeting of the Parliamentary National Defence Committee included detailed information concerning the UAV systems. The discussion was initiated by the opposition MPs. Since some time now, no relevant information pertaining to that matter has been made public. It seems that lack of progress exists in case of the major programmes. Meanwhile, specific information was provided with regards to the smaller size systems that remain available domestically.

For instance, in case of the Wizjer programme *“documentation that is required to start the procurement procedure is being prepared; The procurement is planned to be launched during the first quarter of 2018, while agreement is planned to be concluded in 2019”*, Deputy Minister Skurkiewicz informed.

Wizjer programme concerns acquisition of 25 UAVs offering a range of 30 kilometres until the end of 2022. The systems in question would be used at the level of battalion-sized units. The first systems are to be delivered in 2020.

When it comes to the Orlik programme, concerning the Brigade-level UAV systems, the negotiation with the selected contractor is already underway. The Orlik system is to be delivered by a consortium led by PGZ, involving the Bydgoszcz WZL-2 facility and the Warsaw-based PIT-RADWAR company. This means that the E-310 system is going to be acquired here. The agreement is expected to be concluded during the second quarter of this year. 12 packages are planned to be delivered, 4 of which would be received between 2020-2022. Optionally, procurement of another eight UAV bundles is considered. Each of the packages shall include a control station and 4 UAVs.

**[Read More: Air Fair 2017: “Orlik” Programme. A Consortium of Polish Companies to Offer Tactical Drones for the Polish Ministry of Defence.](#)**

Going up the ladder we reach the level of tactical medium range UAVs that are to be employed at the level of division, referred to as “Gryf”. These systems shall be capable of staying airborne for more than 20 hours, and they are expected to carry guided munitions. The procedure, Skurkiewicz informs, is expected to be launched after the Polish Ministry of Defence reaches a consensus concerning the optimal procurement process, which may take some time. Despite the above, here the Ministry declares that 6 packages would be acquired (4 aircraft, control system, data analysis system – in a

single package) between 2020 and 2022, with optional procurement of another 6 bundles later on.

In case of the heaviest Zefir UAV, it is expected that the said platform would carry bombs and guided missiles, falling within the MALE category. Here, the choice remains limited. *“Procedure the goal of which would be to acquire the system is going to be carried out following a decision on selection of the government with whom we would be working”* – stated Skurkiewicz – *“Two variants are on the table: cooperation with the USA and Israel. Only then we will be making further decisions regarding the negotiation.”*

When it comes to the MALE platforms, there have been two contenders here: Elbit Systems Hermes 900 and General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper. Both designs are available solely through an intergovernmental agreement, thus the potential contractor needs to be selected in advance. Ultimately, the plan is to cover acquisition of four packages including ground station and 3 aircraft each. The Ministry plans to acquire 2 systems (packages) as such until 2022 and another two later, optionally.

One shall add that the whole procurement is planned to begin in 2020 and end until 2022. Further deliveries are only optional, and they would be taking place after 2022, until full UAV saturation is obtained in the Polish military. On the other hand, one should note that Ważka multicopter UAV programme was disregarded. The system in question would be used in urbanized areas, and since the very beginning it was the least advanced of the initiatives.

Furthermore, we could also mention loitering munitions – here the Armament Inspectorate has recently initiated a “technical dialogue”. The above concerns a portable system fitted with interchangeable observation or combat-observation warheads/systems.

The plans within the scope of UAV procurements do not pertain to a “thousand drones”, mentioned by Minister Macierewicz last year, nonetheless the aforesaid scope appears to be ambitious. The only thing that raises some concern is accumulation of so many procurement programmes across so short period of time - 2020-2022.

The MoD shall focus on precise planning of expenditure, and step away from declarations made with regards to the most costly programmes. It shall also be noted that Orlik programme is the only one, in case of which specific, yet not new, information emerged.