

POLISH TANK DESTROYERS: NEXT STAGE OF THE OTTOKAR-BRZOZA PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME

Ottokar-Brzoza programme, aimed at acquisition of a new tank destroyer for the Polish military, has just entered another phase. A lot of symptoms suggest that the Polish Ministry of Defence is going to acquire tank destroyers equipped with ATGMs that would provide the platform in question with an ability to neutralize the threats beyond the line of sight.

Cpt. Krzysztof Płatek, spokesman for the Armament Inspectorate of the Polish MoD announced that Ottokar-Brzoza tank destroyer programme is currently in the analytical-conceptual phase. This stage is scheduled to end during the first quarter of 2020. Among the several entities originally submitting their requests to participate in the technical dialogue, the following ones have been invited to participate:

1. Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa S.A.
2. OBRUM Sp. z o.o.;
3. Huta Stalowa Wola S.A.;
4. MBDA UK
5. IMI Systems – Elbit Systems Ltd.;

MBDA's offer is relatively the best known one, since the company is pitching its Brimstone missiles in the Ottokar-Brzoza programme, along with a land-based launcher. Brimstone missiles could also be easily integrated with the Topaz fire control system. The primary mode in which the system operates assumes that active millimeter radar is used by the missile to detect a target designated by an external source (UAV, forward observer). It is also possible to introduce dual-guidance system (laser-based). MBDA also declares that it may integrate the equipment on any tracked platform indicated by the Poles.

Meanwhile, the details pertaining to the Israeli offer are not known.

Ottokar-Brzoza vehicles are expected to be capable of destroying tanks protected by active protection systems (of soft-kill and hard-kill class). A modern tracked platform is to serve as a carrier of the weapons system. Most probably it is also assumed that the carrier would be delivered by the Polish industry. The dialogue also involves the PGZ Group, along with two of its subsidiaries that remain capable of delivering and integrating a platform as such.

Implementation of the Ottokar-Brzoza programme, the codename of which is derived from the name of the founder of the artillery element of the Polish Legions, Brig. general Ottokar Brzoza-Brzezina, is to ensure a qualitative leap for the Polish tank-destroyer units. It is a foundation that could be used to restore the 14th Anti-Tank Artillery Regiment in Suwałki, that would be founded on the current 14th Squadron. The above unit is still operating the obsolete 9P133 vehicles with Malyutka launchers using

the BRDM-2 platform as the base vehicle. It would undoubtedly be difficult to imagine establishment of a new unit without new equipment being provided as reintroduction of the 9P133 platforms that had been withdrawn earlier would be far from being rational.