

WILL THE POLISH INDUSTRY MODERNIZE ARVS FOR THE LEOPARD TANK UNITS?

The Armament Inspectorate of the Polish MoD announced that a single consortium submitted its bid in the procedure concerning the modernization of Bergepanzer-2 ARVs. The group is led by the PGZ entity. The consortium also includes PGZ companies that have potential at their disposal, which would allow them to get involved in the armoured-platforms-related projects.

Spokesperson of the Armament Inspectorate, Lt. Col. Robert Wincencik, informed us that the procedure aimed at selecting the entity which would modernize the Bergepanzer-2 ARV has gained interest of a single consortium, formed by PGZ S.A., ZM Bumar-Labędy S.A. and WZM S.A. The armoured recovery vehicle in question is used to secure the operational activities undertaken by the Leopard 2A4/A5 main battle tanks. In the future the platform would also support the Leopard 2PL vehicles.

Before the above happened, Gliwice and Poznan based PGZ companies had prepared mutually competitive offers concerning the potential modernization of the ARVs. For instance, the PHO entity (Polish Defence Holding, involving the Bumar-Labędy facility and FFG Flensburger Fahrzeugbau Gesellschaft mbH company acting as the strategic partner), and, as a separate entity, the Rheinmetall company, submitted their requests to participate in the “technical dialogue” procedure in January 2014.

Two years later, Bergepanzer 2 platform modernized in collaboration with the FFG entity was presented by the WZM Poznań [Military Automotive Works] facility which was tasked with carrying out the upgrades. However, a consortium formed by PGZ and both of the companies above submitted a request to participate in the procedure described here.

This may mean that a new approach adopted by the PGZ finally became valid, as the group is willing to make effective use of the potential offered by the individual companies, with a proper emphasis being placed on mutual cooperation and coordination of the undertaken activities. At the moment, PGZ’s Code is being implemented by the Group, introducing regulations related to internal collaboration. The Code assumes that activities undertaken in the individual areas would be coordinated by domain-specific bureaus.

Implementation of the code may make the individual companies act as a part of a larger organism. Another goal is to eliminate the competitiveness emerging internally. The upgrade programme related to Bergepanzer would involve the “armour” industry gathered within a single consortium, which, in practical terms, should translate into better collaboration.

The Bergepanzers’ upgrade procedure initiated in September is said to bear a meaning for the basic national security interest. The whole programme covers upgrade for 8 platforms, with optional

upgrades expected in case of another 20 vehicles. The primary portion of the work is to be carried out between 2018 and 2022. The optional part would take place between 2018 and 2022 or later.

In total the Polish military utilizes 28 Bergepanzer 2 vehicles, for the purpose of supporting Leopard 2A4/A5 main battle tank units. The vehicles in question based on the Leopard 1 platform are not capable of supporting the 2A5 and 2PL tanks, hence the modernization.

In July 2017 the Armament Inspectorate announced that analytical-conceptual phase began, the goal of which would be to procure new ARVs which would be capable of supporting platforms with their weight exceeding 60 tonnes. In practical terms the above refers mainly to Leopard 2A5 and 2PL main battle tanks. It cannot be ruled out that upgraded Bergepanzers and new vehicles would be complementary, with the latter having an ability to carry out the most tough missions.

Alongside the BPz 2 platform, the Polish military also utilizes T-72M1 based WZT-3/M ARV, as well as the older WZT-2 ARVs based on T-55. The number of the former remains insufficient to support all of the elements that operate the T-72M1/PT-91 tanks.