

Better prepared for disasters and crises NATO Emergency Management Exercise “BULGARIA 2025”



The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is NATO's mechanism for responding to civil emergencies, including disasters, technological incidents, and acts of terrorism.

To support emergency preparedness and resilience, the EADRCC organises regular consequence management exercises on behalf of NATO. There, civil protection actors (civilian and military) work together to improve their ability to respond to a wide range of crises, manage the consequences of disasters, and build up their resilience.

EADRCC exercises are among the world's largest and most complex multinational activities in the field of emergency management. Allies and partners are invited to participate, and so are relevant International Organisations, researchers and innovators.

Bulgaria 2025

The 20th NATO Emergency Management will take place in Bulgaria from 7 to 12 September 2025. It is organised jointly by the EADRCC and Bulgaria's Ministry of Interior, and will take place in the state-of-the-art International Training Centre for first responders in Montana (80km North of Bulgaria's capital, Sofia).

The Exercise BULGARIA 2025 will focus on enhancing resilience, improving disaster preparedness, and fostering civil-military cooperation in emergency response. It will bring together participants from NATO Allies, partner nations, and international organizations to enhance their ability to respond effectively to a large-scale, complex emergency.

How to engage

EADRCC exercises are designed to help Allies and partners improve their emergency preparedness and response capabilities in realistic scenarios, reflecting the complexity of emergency response systems. Therefore, the contribution of Allies, partners, and other relevant stakeholders - such as international organisations - are vital, and welcome, throughout the planning of BULGARIA 2025.

Allies, partners, and international organisations can use Exercise BULGARIA 2025 to test and validate their response plans, procedures and capabilities, such as in cases of border-crossings in an emergency, or bilateral and multilateral interactions. Prospective participants should identify the assets they plan to exercise and determine the disciplines in which they want to participate.



Map of Bulgaria with the exercise location

For any questions, please reach out to:

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Objectives

The primary objectives of NATO Emergency Management Exercise “BULGARIA 2025” are:

1. Build resilience and interoperability through improved disaster preparedness,
2. planning, prevention and response, strengthening the capability of NATO Allies
3. and partners to manage complex emergencies in a challenging security environment.
4. Knowledge exchange and sharing good practices on the coordination and response
5. capacities of the participants.
6. Strengthening cooperation between civilian and military actors in responding to a range of crises.
7. Encourage cooperation between Allies and partners, and with NATO, including on facilitation of vital civil cross-border transport.
8. Support partners' defence capacity-building through NATO.
9. Showcase the value and importance of cooperation through NATO.
10. Test and improve Bulgaria's host nation support capacities.



NATO's most recent emergency management exercise took place in North Macedonia in 2021

The specific exercise objectives are shaped by the participating countries and organisations, in line with their needs and training priorities. The planning conferences and exercise preparation work are essential for potential participants to share their needs and priorities, ensuring an effective exercise.

The exercise scenario is developed to meet the participants' objectives. Therefore, the scenario can include different disciplines, e.g. search and rescue, response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear attacks, water rescue, large scale population movements, etc.

The details of participation, scenarios, and matching of training objectives to realistic challenges are integrated into the exercise during the planning conferences ahead of the exercise.

Organisation

Each EADRCC exercises has five phases: inception, concept, planning, execution and evaluation. The latter three phases cover approximately one calendar year.

At the moment, Exercise BULGARIA 2025 is in the planning phase. A Core Planning Team leads the planning, scenario development, conduct, and evaluation of the exercise. It consists of 45 experts from 14 countries brought together by NATO and the host nation.

The Core Planning Team is currently working to align the host nation's and participants' requirements and develop the scenario.

Two planning conferences are organised for the prospective participants:

- A Main Planning Conference, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 14-17 January 2025.
- A Final Planning Conference, in Sofia, Bulgaria, between 20-23 May 2025.

The exercise conduct (including field operations) is scheduled for 7-12 September 2025.

All aspects of the exercise will be evaluated and discussed in a Lessons Identified Conference, in early 2026.

Lead-in Scenario

The initial scenario trigger is a major earthquake, followed by secondary emergencies in the vicinity of Montana. The participants will face realistic challenges, including information manipulation and disinformation, complications related to climate change, population movements, etc.

The full scenario is being developed at the moment, taking into account real risks in the current security environment as well as the training objectives of the participants.

Disciplines

The exercise will feature a range of emergency response disciplines, including:

- Civil-Military Cooperation
- Host nation support
- Urban search and rescue (USAR), including cultural heritage preservation, and rope rescue
- Water search and rescue (WSAR)
- Chemical, radiological and nuclear incident management
- Emergency medical response, including EMT-1 (fixed and rolling) and EMT-2 capabilities
- Information threats and media relations
- Possible other participant-initiated disciplines



The Montana training centre

Benefits of participating

The value of the exercise extends beyond operational training. BULGARIA 2025 offers a platform for knowledge sharing, enabling participants to gain insights into effective emergency management strategies. By strengthening cooperation among national and international entities, the exercise enhances interoperability and readiness for disasters internationally. The exercise also supports resilience building by helping participating nations meet NATO's Baseline Requirements while fostering regional collaboration to manage cross-border emergencies.

NATO Emergency Management Exercise BULGARIA 2025 will bring together hundreds of professionals to respond to today's disruptions and tomorrow's threats, building future resilience and connecting leading professionals.

The exercise will enable regional cooperation and civil-military interactions in a wide range of crises. In this context, Exercise BULGARIA 2025 will also put to the test host nation support and national logistics coordination, all the while leveraging the latest technologies in disaster response.

Participants will benefit from immersive training challenges and an exchange with counterparts and seasoned experts from other countries and organisations.

At a time of complex crises, sharing resources, strategies and experiences and working collectively to find solutions, benefits practitioners, policy makers and leaders at every level.

Financial aspects

The costs of organising the exercise are shared by NATO and the Host Nation. Participating nations and organisations cover their own exercise-related costs. NATO funds may be available to support the participation of teams from eligible partner nations.

More information

<https://eadrcc.cmdrcoe.org/>

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Exercise Planning Chart - България 2025 Bulgaria

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
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Legend

- Exercise event
- NATO holiday
- Bulgarian holiday
- Weekend