

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 the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria, and will take place in the state-of-the art International Training Centre for first responders in Montana (some 150km from Bulgaria’s capital Sofia).

This complex exercise 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

Allies, partners and international organisations are welcome to use NATO Exercise BULGARIA 2025 to test and validate their response plans, procedures and capabilities, to test border-crossing in an emergency, and to improve interaction. They should identify the assets they plan to exercise and determine the disciplines in which they want to participate.

For any questions, please reach out to:

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Map of Bulgaria with the exercise location

Objectives

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

1. Build resilience and interoperability through improved disaster preparedness, planning, prevention and response, and strengthen the capability of NATO Allies and partners to manage complex emergencies and respond to security challenges, including climate change and hybrid threats.
2. Exchange of knowledge and good practices on the coordination and response capacities of the participating states and organizations.
3. Build up cooperation between civilian and military actors in responding to a range of crises.
4. Encourage cooperation between Allies and partners, and with NATO, including by on facilitation of vital civil cross-border transport.
5. Contribute to NATO’s defence capacity-building support to partners.
6. Test and improve Bulgaria’s host nation support capacities.
7. Send a public signal to audiences in Allied and partner countries about the value of cooperation through NATO.



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.

The exercise scenario is developed to meet all participants’ objectives. In line with those, 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 training objectives to realistic challenges are ironed out during planning conferences ahead of the exercise.

Organisation

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

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 requirements of the host nation and participants, and develop the scenario.

Two planning conferences are organised for the prospective participants:

- 14-17 January 2025 in Sofia, Bulgaria
- 20-22 May 2025 in Sofia, Bulgaria

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 post-exercise 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 fictitious but realistic challenges, including information manipulation and disinformation, complications related to climate change, population movements, etc.

The full scenario will be developed in the months prior to the exercise conduct.

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

Conduct

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

Here is why you should join

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

The exercise will be an essential training and networking opportunity. It will enable regional cooperation in emergencies, civil-military interactions in a wide range of crises, logistics coordination and 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 shared by NATO and the Host Nation. Participating nations and organisations cover their own costs related to the exercise. 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	
MAY '24																								
JUNE																								
JULY																								
AUGUST																								
SEPTEMBER																								
OCTOBER																								
NOVEMBER																								
DECEMBER																								
JANUARY '25																								
FEBRUARY																								
MARCH																								
APRIL																								
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JULY																								
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SEPTEMBER																								
OCTOBER																								
NOVEMBER																								
DECEMBER																								
JANUARY '26																								
FEBRUARY																								

Legend	
	Exercise event
	NATO holiday
	Bulgarian holiday
	Weekend