



The infantry fighting and combat engineer variants delivered to the Legion.

# DELIVERY OF THE FIRST 8X8 DRAGON VEHICLES

Spanish Army takes delivery of 40 new armoured fighting vehicles at the Legion's Álvarez de Sotomayor base in Almería

**T**HE VCR 8x8 Dragon programme has reached a major milestone with the Spanish Army's acquisition of the first 40 wheeled armoured fighting vehicles. "This programme consolidates a model of a modern, forward-looking, balanced and sustainable army," said the Minister of Defence during the handover ceremony held on 16 January 2026 at the Legion's Álvarez de Sotomayor base in Almería.

Robles pointed out that the delivery of the 8x8s is the result of months of work, time, and effort. This vehicle meets the technical requirements of the Spanish Army's General Staff Document and is adapted to operate in the most demanding scenarios. Among its capabilities, the minister emphasised that the Dragon's design prioritises the safety of its crews, including providing advanced armour to withstand explosions and gunfire, "because our soldiers are what really matters".

"Thanks to this programme," she added, "the Spanish Army's interoperability has been improved, as have its reliability and commitment to NATO, EU and UN missions".

Against this backdrop, Spanish Army Chief of Staff Amador Enseñat emphasised that this vehicle is set to become the backbone of the Force 2035 project, designed to transform the military structure into a more modern model, connected to and interoperable with our Allies.

He also mentioned that the VCR 8x8 consolidates this model of a forward-looking, sustainable and well-balanced army, and linked this programme to those included in the Spanish Industrial and Technological Plan for Security and Defence, saying that they are "essential tools for meeting our obligations to our Allies but, above all, for implementing our commitment to modernisation and ensuring the capabilities of our Armed Forces".

State Secretary of Defence Amparo Valcarce underscored that this programme, with an investment of over €2.61 billion, has driven innovation in critical areas, created highly skilled jobs, improved the competitiveness of our industry and attracted significant returns throughout Spain's three industrial corridors where it is being developed.

Speaking on behalf of the industry, the President of Indra —the lead partner of the TESS Defence consortium since July 2025, which also comprises GDELS-Santa Bárbara Sistemas, SAPA Placencia, and Escribano Mechanical & Engineering— indicated that, following the transition in programme leadership, a 'diagnostic and planning' approach was implemented to address the accumulated delays. The VCR 8x8 Dragon, he continued, has been a considerable achievement of the Spanish industry's vision and capabilities and there is no doubt that,

with the necessary institutional support, it will become a reality of which we can be extremely proud.

The programme was established to replace legacy platforms, “primarily the BMR, Lince, and RG31,” as Admiral Aniceto Rosique, Director General for Armament and Materiel (DGAM), pointed out. This programme calls for the three-phase acquisition of a total of 998 vehicles. The first production phase, assigned to TESS Defence, comprises 348 units.

Of the first 40 armoured vehicles delivered in Almería, 15 are Infantry Fighting Vehicle (VCI) variants, 5 are Anti-Tank (ATGM) variants, and 20 are Combat Engineer Vehicle (VCZ) variants. Prior to entering service, all of them commenced the operational evaluation phase to test their real tactical capabilities. One more vehicle has been delivered to the Logistics Academy in Calatayud to train the maintenance crews.

Another 24 units are scheduled for delivery in the near future. These are the first mobile command post (VCPC) variants, currently undergoing the qualification process at the GDELS-Santa Bárbara factory in Alcalá de Guadaíra (Seville). While final assembly of the 8x8 Dragon has been conducted by this company at its Trubia factory in Oviedo up to now, the process is currently being transferred to Indra’s newly acquired ‘El Tallerón’ facility in Gijón, where the first vehicle has already arrived for facility validation.

The delivery of the new armoured fighting vehicles entails a training programme for their drivers, vehicle commanders, gunners and instructors, as well as for the maintenance crews. Additionally, simulators and an armament turret trainer have been provided to ensure that training takes place in optimal conditions.

It has also required the expansion of the initial logistical support, reinforcing the facilities at the *Álvarez de Sotomayor* base and acquiring the necessary materiel to deploy a mobile maintenance echelon.

## HIGHLY ADVANCED TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The aim of the 8x8 programme is to obtain a wheeled armoured fighting vehicle with various configurations and equipped with new technical solutions to address evolving threats.

As the Minister of Defence highlighted at the handover ceremony, the vehicle provides a high level of protection for the crew, significant internal volume and a payload capacity that provides a mission endurance of over 48 hours. Its firepower also stands out among its capabilities, not only because of the 12.7 and 30 mm remote control turrets and the missile integrated into the turret, but also because of the state-of-the-art



The Minister of Defence during the vehicle handover ceremony at the Legion's base in Almería, where the operational evaluation phase was officially initiated.

management system, which acts as a force multiplier for the 8x8's combat power.

The VCR has great mobility, reaching road speeds of up to 100 km/h. It demonstrates high stability on 60% longitudinal slopes and 30% lateral side slopes and is capable of surmounting vertical obstacles of up to 80 cm. It also has a high capacity for strategic, operational and tactical deployment and is fully certified for strategic airlift via the Spanish Air and Space Force's A400M aircraft.

The vehicle features a modular and open system that facilitates continuous evolution and improvement. It integrates advanced Command, Control, and Communications (C3) suites, ensuring seamless coordination and interopera-

bility among crew members across their respective onboard workstations. The system is based on a modular, open, and scalable network architecture, supported by a redundant fibre optic ring. It is capable of operating in degraded environments, ensuring persistent communications without data loss or service interruptions.

Its advanced voice and data communications system ensures seamless interoperability with the legacy fleet assets, while integrating state-of-the-art personal combat, satellite, and HF digital radio systems. It also has an integrated battlefield management system that optimises the control of operations.

All the systems are integrated into several intelligent terminals that help crews to operate through a user-friendly human-machine interface, allowing intuitive and efficient control of all vehicle functions.

## STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

With over 70% national industrial participation, Spain retains design authority over the 8x8. This ensures sovereign control over all vehicle configurations and the capability to execute system upgrades throughout their service life. This capability provides full strategic autonomy, reduces dependence on third parties and facilitates access to international markets.

Each of the four partners in the TESS Defence consortium provides a specialised pillar of industrial expertise: Escribano is a leader in the on-board weapon systems; Indra, in the vehicle's mission system, communications system and electronic architecture; SAPA, in the drive train, the power generation system and the auxiliary power unit; and Santa Bárbara, in the armoured structure, electrical architecture and all other systems of the platform.

In addition, the programme serves as a driving force that integrates over 400 national suppliers, distributed throughout our country across various industrial corridors and technological clusters.

**Víctor Hernández**  
**Photos: María José Muñoz**

# VCR 8x8 DRAGON

The objective of the programme is to provide the Spanish Army with a wheeled armoured fighting vehicle (VCR) that is highly adaptable to different tasks and capable of operating in peacekeeping missions and high-intensity conflicts, using new technical solutions to counter evolving threats. A total of 998 platforms will be procured across three production phases.

The first phase, awarded to TESS Defence, covers the initial delivery of 348 units.

30 mm cannon  
(adaptable to 40 mm)

GUARDIAN 30  
WEAPONS STATION

Twin missile launcher on  
anti-tank versions

High mobility, height  
adjustable suspension  
and tire pressure control



Capacity

3 crew members - 6 soldiers



Weight

33

Tonnes



Autonomy

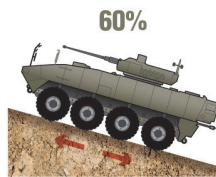
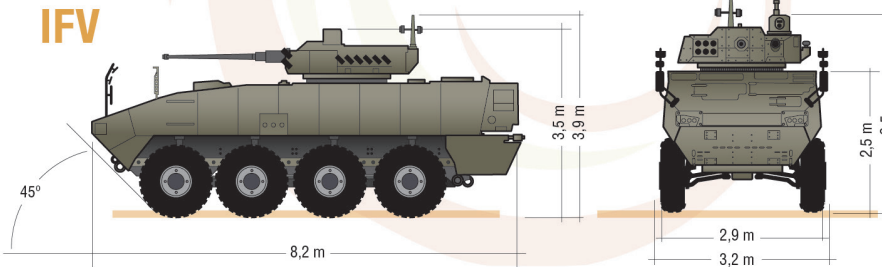
550 km



Max. speed

100 km/h

IFV



Longitudinal slope



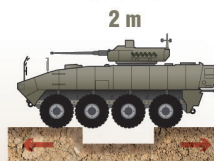
Maximum lateral slope



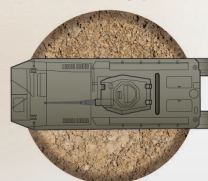
Vertical obstacle



Wading capacity



Maximum gap



Combat autonomy

In addition to the rear ramp, it has an emergency exit.

Vehicular radio antenna

Auxiliary Power Unit (APU)

Safe, self-sealing and anti-deflagration fuel tanks

# IFV

(Infantry Fighting Vehicle)

Two types of ammunition (high-explosive and piercing)

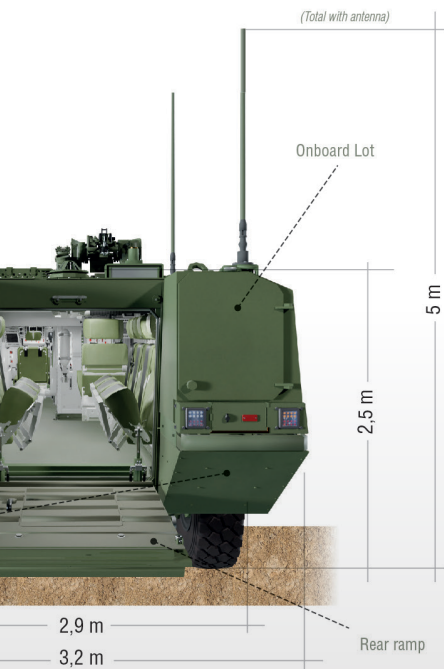


Automatic target recognition

Modular, open and scalable mission system includes multi-function terminals and vehicle navigation

Powerful 540 kW engine set and a high-efficiency SW624 multi-speed transmission

Integrated software-defined communications that allow networking (NEC)



Two-axis gyroscopic stabilisation

Great load capacity platform and high ballistic protection, against mines and NBC



## 4 VERSIONS

Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV)



Armoured Command Vehicle (ACV)



Combat Engineering Vehicle (CEV)



Forward Observer Combat Vehicle (FOCV)



Infographic: INFOGRÁFICA DISEÑO Y COMUNICACIÓN