



Defence Minister in Stockholm

(8 Mar) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď attended an informal meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) in Stockholm on 7-8 Mar 2023. Defence Ministers devoted their attention to Russia's war against Ukraine, the options for backing the UKR Armed Forces, and the best practice for reimbursing the military equipment transferred from EU countries to Ukraine under the EPF off-budget funding mechanism. Minister Naď said: "To make peace in Ukraine without European assistance is impossible. The EU's credibility over Ukraine must be kept up, among others, via the European Peace Facility, which has come to demonstrate the trustworthiness, ability and willingness of European partners to uphold the values of humanism and the right to freedom, even beyond their borders." He reminded that the costs of military assistance to our eastern neighbour are reimbursed through the EPF, from which Slovakia has so far received a total of €82m. These funds will go towards purchasing munitions and weapons for the Slovak Armed Forces. Ministers also addressed the initiative for joint procurement of artillery ammunition to aid Ukraine and replenish domestic stockpiles. "The highest interest is in ramping up production of 155mm artillery shells, in line with the operational needs of the Ukrainian side," Mr Naď explained. Another part of the discussion was in relation to assessing the results of EUMAM UA. Under the EU-led training programme, Slovakia has been involved in training Ukrainian forces since as early as last year. Minister Naď relished separate conversations with UKR Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov, CZE Defence Minister Jana Černochová, SWE Minister for Defence Pål Jonson, BGR Defence Minister Dimitar Stoyanov, SVN Defence Minister Marjan Šarec, NLD Defence Minister Kaja Ollongren, and EU Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton.



Number 1 among hospitals

(9 Mar) The Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital (CMH-TH) Ružomberok has been ranked as the leader of Slovakia's university and teaching hospitals in the Dôvera Insurance Company 2022 ranking. Favourable patient satisfaction ratings confirm that the hospital ranks among the best medical facilities in the country. In his response to the news, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "The dedicated work of the hospital staff is a quality brand. The positive feedback reflects their commitment and ability to deliver the best medical services, for which they deserve our admiration and gratitude." In 2021, the military hospital was ranked no worse than 2nd best in the ranking. "My thanks go out to each and every colleague, as none of this success would have been possible without them working so hard," said Director of CMH-TH Assoc Prof Róbert Rusnák MD PhD.

Ministry of Defence launches the construction of a kindergarten

(10 Mar) The MOD is the first department in Slovakia to go ahead with the construction of its own kindergarten for up to 60 children of MOD military and civilian personnel at Kutuzov Barracks. The kindergarten's modular building will be made of pre-assembled steel-framed modules with the A0 Building Energy Rating Certificate and will embrace eco-friendly trends such as the green roof and solar panels. It will be possible to add extra modular units to the building. As confirmed by Secretary General of the MOD Service Office Peter Kozák, the kindergarten envisages the creation of a family-type kindergarten as a priority for MOD military and civilian personnel, with a strong community and environmental education programme. "As well as enriching the curriculum through the teaching of topics on the importance of armed forces and rescue services for our society, our kindergarten will be unique insofar as it will closely cooperate with the MOD Forestry Department and the Slovak Armed Forces Band," Mr Kozák explained, adding that the plan covers the construction of a rain garden with raised garden beds. Post-completion inspection is due in Aug 2023.



► Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď received His Excellency Mr Athanasios Ioannou, the new Greek Ambassador to Slovakia, at the MOD on 9 Mar. They discussed current defence cooperation as well as ways to deepen it. This was Ambassador Ioannou's first visit to the MOD since taking up his Diplomatic Service appointment in Slovakia.

► His Excellency Mr Gautam A. Rana, the U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia, along with U.S. Defense Attaché LTC Casey Shuff visited the Slovak Joint Operations Command (JOCOM) Banská Bystrica on 6 Mar. They were greeted by Brig Gen Martin Michalko. In addition to discussing the security situation and hybrid threats, they assessed the results of U.S.-SVK defence cooperation and outlined the possibilities for the future.

► The village of Pavlovce nad Uhom is putting the final touches to the Museum of Slovak Immigration to North America. Under the MOD Grant Scheme, the MOD has supported this project with €40,000. On 6 Mar, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď received a guided tour of the Museum from Chairman of the Immigration Museum Civic Association Assoc Prof Martin Javor of the University of Prešov.

► BARMO has installed public-access automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at the entrances to its hostels in Bratislava, Martin, Trenčín and Žilina. The AED provides lifesaving defibrillation to victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

► The 30th Professionally Qualified Officers (PQO) Course opened at the Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš on 6 Mar, with 61 university and college graduates and 9 staff from across Defence as course participants.

► 13 Mech Bn Levice hosted joint training for dogs and dog handlers from across the Armed Services and Police Forces, under the aegis of the Director of the Police Enforcement Activities Dept Bratislava.

► Members of 53 Fld Svc Bn Hlohovec took part in a tactical exercise involving the Rail Operations Company declared as one of Slovakia's NATO Capability Targets, as well as in a 72-hour field training activity.

► WW2 veteran Zuzana Petreje celebrated her 100th birthday on 9 Mar in Opatovce nad Nitrou. On behalf of the Minister of Defence, Richard Zimányi, head of the MOD Office for Veterans Affairs, presented her with the Commemorative Veterans Cross.

► Sport shooter Patrik Jány (SVK) of the Dukla Military Sports Centre scooped the silver medal at the 10m European Shooting Champs in Estonia's Tallinn.

► Skier Adam Žampa (SVK) of the Dukla Military Sports Centre placed 22nd at the FIS Alpine Skiing World Cup in Slovenia's Kranjska Gora.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents SVK Army soldiers engaging with school students in Zvolen live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

New equipment for MILMEDCOM

(9 Mar) After submitting a bid for funding under the EU Integrated Regional Operational Programme (IROP) Open Call for Projects, the MOD has received €1,944,690 in non-repayable funding to buy medical devices and laboratory equipment for the Slovak Military Medical Command (MILMEDCOM). In his statement on the healthcare equipment upgrade, Brig Gen Roman Jantoš MD, Commander of MILMEDCOM and Surgeon General of the Slovak Armed Forces, said: "The medical equipment will enable us to respond to emergencies caused by a virus or a pandemic and to carry on business as usual at MILMEDCOM." The first batch of medical equipment, worth almost €1m, was delivered on 6 March. Most recently, the MOD and MILMEDCOM are working closely to prepare projects on energy efficiency and savings.

Jaroslav Naď visits Michalovce



(6 Mar) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď visited Michalovce-based members of 21 Self-propelled Artillery Battalion and 22 Mechanised Battalion, as well as their barracks where he was keen to learn about the latest improvements in Service conditions. While investing over €425,000 in the maintenance of neglected defence infrastructure there last year,

the MOD has set aside €1,719,565 for this purpose this year. Its determination to improve the conditions for service personnel is best evidenced by the four-fold rise in maintenance investment.

Higher accommodation standards

(9 Mar) By refurbishing and repairing the accommodation facilities under the MOD Accommodation Agency (BARMO)'s remit, the MOD works to raise accommodation standards for soldiers and civil servants. One of such facilities is the hostel in SNP Heroes Street in Martin. The MOD spent €750,000 to upgrade it last year. In 2022, the MOD spent €1,085,120 on the upgrades to its accommodation facilities and €346,718 on the repair of its flats under BARMO's remit. Whilst the buildings in Bratislava and Martin have already been upgraded, the one in Trenčín is now being refurbished, and the refurbishment of that in Žilina is due to start still this year.

Challenging winter mountain training at the High Tatras

(10 Mar) Deploying to the High Tatras for winter training, CZE reconnaissance troops of the NATO Multinational Battlegroup Slovakia practised their ability to move across snow and ice, as well as gaining first-hand experience of what it takes to get out of an avalanche under the watchful eye of instructors. The CZE Recce Coy takes part in mountain training every year. Back at home in Czechia, there are mountains of low altitudes where they are used to moving between 15km to 30km. In Slovakia, they made the best of an environment that was unfamiliar to them. Their ascent to Mt Chopok and its surroundings was a challenge – they moved 6km along the trail with a height difference of 1,000m. With their rucksacks on their backs, it was a real toil. In addition to moving on the skis and snowshoes, they also carried out a search and rescue (SAR) mission, using the avalanche transceivers, probes and shovels. As a rule, recce troops move separately from each other across a variety of terrains and must be ready to help each other in unusually complicated situations.

