



Strategic partnership with Italian Republic

(14 May) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák completed a working trip to Italy. In Rome, he met with his counterpart, Minister of Defence of the Italian Republic Guido Crosetto. The result of their talks was the signing of a document between the SVK and ITA MODs, in which they declared their interest in relevant areas of Defence Industry cooperation. The Italian side expressed interest in the munitions and weapon systems at the manufacture of which Slovakia is strong. Both countries can see a potential for an exchange of offers for self-propelled howitzers and satellite and cyber technologies. Speaking of the document, Robert Kaliňák said: "There are many common themes we share with Italy. By signing this agreement, we are edging towards closer Defence Industry co-operation in order to strengthen our arms industry and to make a contribution to GDP growth, and thereby raise standards of living for our fellow citizens." He also remembered to thank Guido Crosetto for Italy's protection of SVK airspace from Mar 2023 to Mar 2024.

Dual education on the rise

(16 May) The MOD continues to roll out its dual education programme, combining secondary schooling and military training, to secondary schools across Slovakia. After the schools in Sečovce and Trnava, the MOD signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Handlová Secondary Vocational School, in the presence of SECGEN Peter Krajčirovič, Chair of the Trenčín Self-Governing Region Jaroslav Baška, and School Director Maroš Štorcel. In a statement, Mr Krajčirovič said: "We are seeing great interest in this programme, and we are responsibly trying to select high-quality secondary schools in the regions to educate future members of the Armed Forces. I am pleased that after Sečovce and Trnava, we have also found suitable conditions in Handlová, and we commit to continuing the programme in the country's other regions. The uniqueness of this dual education programme lies in the fact that students complete on-the-job training in military units and get real work experience with the Armed Forces." Starting in the 2026-27 school year, primary school graduates will be eligible to enrol on the dual education programme – to be delivered in conjunction with the MOD and Armed Forces.



Ex Locked Shields 2025

(12 May) The Slovak National Cybersecurity Team once again represented Slovakia successfully on the world's biggest and most complex cyber defence exercise – Locked Shields 2025 – organised by the Tallinn-based NATO CCD COE. SVK experts teamed up with their colleagues from Malta to form one of the 17 teams. Facing fierce competition from 41 countries, they took an excellent 5th place overall. The 230-strong SVK-MLT team consisted of cybersecurity experts from 27 organisations from across government, military, academia, and industry. The goal of LS25 was to test and enhance the national cybersecurity teams' preparedness to defend national IT systems and critical national infrastructure (CNI), including defence infrastructure, through a highly realistic simulation of cyberattacks.



Slovak Shield 2025 kicks off

(12 May) Over a thousand troops gathered at the Training Centre Lešť for Exercise Slovak Shield 2025 (SLSD25). This command and staff exercise is aimed at exercising and improving the ability of 12 Mech Bn Nitra, part of 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany, to plan and conduct defensive operations across the territory of Slovakia with support from Allied forces. A total of 350 international troops – soldiers of the Armed Forces from Hungary and Poland, members of the Indiana National Guard, and Spanish, Czech and Romanian soldiers of the NATO Multinational Brigade Slovakia – have been embedded with 12 Mech Bn TF for this year's SLSD25. After the planning and decision-making process in place, the exercise continues with Force Integration Training (FIT) activities and will culminate with a battalion-level tactical live-fire exercise (LFX) on 23-26 May. Reconnaissance, air and medical support to SLSD25 is provided by members of Slovakia's Special Operations Forces (SOF), Air Force (AF), and Defence Medical Service (DMS).



- After almost 15 years, SVK soldiers are once again participating in the multinational NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo, with the aim of strengthening security and stability in the Western Balkans (WB). 40 members of the SVK SOF's 52 ABN BN Jarník are ready for deployment. The departure ceremony was attended by SVK Forces leaders and families of the soldiers departing on a six-month tour of duty to Kosovo.
- On World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May, soldiers of the Slovak Contingent of EUFOR Op Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. members of the Liaison and Observation Teams (LOTs) from Novo Sarajevo and Foča donated blood in Novo Sarajevo to support the national IFRC organisation to save human lives in the country.
- On the morning of 14 May in the jubilee year of 2025, Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps personnel began the 65th International Military Pilgrimage (PMI) to Lourdes (14-20 May 2025) with Mass at St Sebastian's Cathedral in Bratislava. 214 SVK pilgrims from the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Justice and Finance, including the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour and the Ministry of Interior Band, met up with some 16,000 members of the militaries from 46 nations in Lourdes to attend PMI events, which include an international opening ceremony, special Masses, and a Marian twilight procession.
- Working closely with the SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps and MILMEDCOM Ružomberok, the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok observed International Nurses Day (IND) on 13 May, to thank all nurses and non-medical health workers for their dedicated work and to make the public aware of the importance of their profession. At the IND event, Bishop of the Forces and Armed Corps Mons František Rábek presented accolades to health workers for their long-time cooperation.

■ Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area hosted intensive training for BVP-1 and BPsV vehicle gunners, with the focus on firing the 9M14M MALJUTKA anti-tank guided missiles at fixed targets. Under the command of Lt Col Ján Štepit, members of 21 Mech Bn Trebišov, 22 Mech Bn Michalovce, 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany and 7 Trng Regt Martin took part.

■ In cooperation with experts from Proaviate, the Armed Forces Academy (AOS)'s Simulation Centre played host to a course titled **Assessing and Mitigating the Risk of Functional System Changes in the Air Traffic Management Environment** for inspectors, pilots, air traffic controllers and other experts involved in the investigation of air accidents and incidents, with both theory and practical modules.

■ In Lehota nad Rimavicou, AOS officer cadets commemorated VE Day 80 and Europe's liberation from Nazi occupation with the fifth iteration of the **VE Day March**. Along with Capt Martin Kožíak of the AOS Sports and PT Dept and members of the Forces, they marched through the country's Gemer-Malohont region. At each stop at the war memorials along the way, a short memorial service was held and words of gratitude were expressed to those who fought for our freedom.

■ For the third time since joining the GIE organisation, the Reservists and Sport- and Military-Themed Activities Association organised a meeting of twelve partner organisations. The Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš was the venue for an international conference titled **Resilience and Mental Preparedness of Populations for Unforeseen Events**. As part of the side programme, the participants also honoured the memory of the fallen 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps soldiers at Háj-Nicov WW2 Cemetery.

■ At SNP Barracks on 12 May, members of 2 SVK AF BDE Zvolen prepared a military-themed event with the focus on **topography and civil protection** for 60 students of "Ludovít Štúr" Grammar School in Zvolen. In addition to a static display of weapons and personal protection equipment (PPE), the soldiers also presented Defence Fire Service assets. As part of topographical training, they demonstrated how to work with a compass and a map. The students also learned about warning signals before giving first aid to mannequin patients under the guidance of the brigade's paramedics.

■ To mark the **International Day of Families**, Director of the MOD Kindergarten in Bratislava Miriam Hribíková invited kindergarteners, their parents, siblings and other loved ones to fun activities, supported by animators. Young and old tried their dexterity in a minigolf game and walking the tightrope, tested their patience, accuracy and skill in a circular labyrinth, and their steady hand, quick swing and accurate aim in hitting an inflatable target. Kids raced on push ride-ons, had a blast in the bouncy castle, and refreshed themselves with food and beverages at the refreshment stall. Of all attractions, the bubble show was most favoured by kids.

■ The **Slovak Air Force Cross Country Running Championships** – held under the auspices of SVK AF HQ Zvolen – was organised by 81 WG Sliac, with 12 male and two female soldiers in attendance. Day 1 was affected by rainy weather, so a shorter 5-km race took place along the Hron River. Day 2 saw a 10-km race in the vicinity of the Sliac Spa. After the races, COS Lt Col Henrieta Kolářik Deáková and Air Force PT Instructor Maj Tomáš Val announced the results at 81 WG Sliac. Among the women, Lt Jana Václavíková won both races. Among the men, Lt Col Vladimír Václavík was the fastest in the 5km race, and Pte Michal Pagáč in the 10km race.

■ Slalom canoeists from the **Dukla Military Sports Centre** Michal Martikán and Marko Mirgrodský, together with Matej Beňuš, won 3rd place in the men's canoe team event at the 2025 European Canoe Slalom Championships at the Vaires-sur-Marne Olympic Nautical Stadium on 15 May.

FULL FIELD KIT

**Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme
presents the winners of the Military Act of the
Year 2024 Awards at 21.05 on Fri.**

VE Day 80 event at Muráň

(17 May) On Sat, DEPMINDEF Igor Melicher paid tribute to the fallen soldiers in the 'Great Meadow', one of the largest WW2 Resistance airfields, at a VE Day 80 anniversary event near the village of Muráň. Along with SVK MPs and other guests, he paid homage to the heroes of the Slovak National Uprising, the Red Army, the Romanian Royal Army, the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps, the partisans, and all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. "Today, Europe needs peace, dialogue and mutual understanding," Mr Melicher said in a statement.

DEPMINDEF tours FEINDEF 25

(16 May) DEPMINDEF Martin Vojtašovič received a tour of Spain's leading International Defence & Security Exhibition (FEINDEF 25) in Madrid. This strategic platform, where new technological visions meet with practical solutions, drew over 44,000 visitors, experts, institutions and companies from all over the world. 92 international delegations from 61 countries took part. While at the trade show, Mr Vojtašovič met with former NATO SECGEN Javier Solana.

NATO-EU MC meeting

(14 May) CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko attended the 193rd NATO-EU Military Committee in Brussels, chaired by NATO MC Chair Adm Giuseppe Cavo Dragone. Chiefs of Defence focused on making NATO's deterrence and defence stronger and the provision of continued support for Ukraine. They also said goodbye to the outgoing SACEUR, Gen Christopher G. Cavoli. The meeting was the last before the NATO Hague Summit in June.

F-16 Block 70C SN 1006's arrival

(13 May) After a successful check flight of several hours from Lockheed Martin's Greenville site, a single-seat SVK F-16 Block 70C Serial Number (SN) 1006 fighter jet landed at Morris Air National Guard Base (ANGB), home to the ANG's 162 WG – the F-16 fighter pilot training unit in Tucson, Arizona. The ceremonial arrival was attended by Foreign Liaison Officer Col Adolf Uličný (SVK F) and the Slovak Air Force pilots of 81 WG Sliac on the F-16 training programme in the US. Col Uličný thanked Lt Col Ch. Morton of 152 FW for flying the jet safely to Morris ANGB. Yet another SVK F-16 will arrive at 162 WG within a week. This means the SVK cadre of pilots will soon have three jets available for training. Aircraft 1006 will now join a two-seat F-16D Block 70, SN 1102, which has already completed its first 100 flight hours without any serious malfunction.

Indiana Guardsmen in Slovakia

(16 May) Building on last year's SVK military delegation's visit to Indiana – led by CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko – where it was agreed to renew cooperation on NCO education and training,

a delegation of the Indiana National Guard, led by the State Command Sergeant Major of the Indiana National Guard, CSM Joshua Brown, travelled to Slovakia for a State Partnership Programme (SPP)-sponsored visit. The Indiana delegation, accompanied in Slovakia by CSEL of the SVK Forces Sgt Maj Imrich Fekete, was received by the Armed Forces' senior leadership – CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Slavomír Verčimák. In their discussions, they remained focused on deeper cooperation in NCO training, expanding the State Partnership Programme with now over 30 years of experience, and the security challenges in Ukraine and in the world. "The visit represents a significant milestone for our entire NCO Corps. Our U.S. partners bring so much valuable expertise and experience that we can implement in our training process," Sgt Maj Fekete stressed.