



## Defence Minister welcomes Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany

(8 April) SVK Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic Peter Gajdoš met with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, H.E. Thomas Götz. The key topic of their meeting were preparations of a visit and bilateral meeting with the Minister of Defence of Germany, Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen, who is to visit Bratislava within the GLOBSEC Forum. "This will be an excellent opportunity to discuss current security issues and demonstrate the results of our active military cooperation," said Minister Gajdoš. The partners emphasized the growing trend in bilateral cooperation, including military education; cooperation between experts on re-armament; as well as cooperation between the land forces, including the planned participation of German troops in the upcoming international exercise dubbed Slovak Shield, which will be held in Slovakia in autumn 2016. Minister Gajdoš informed the Ambassador of Germany on the priorities of the SVK MOD that will be translated into the SVK Government's Programme Declaration. Besides international commitments, he talked about revising the materials on security and defence concepts that must reflect the change in the security environment; about drafting a realistic modernization plan of the SVK Armed Forces; as well as about using financial resources more effectively.



## With respect and gratitude

(4 April) In the presence of Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic Peter Gajdoš, Prime Minister Róbert Fico and other members of the Government, a commemoration ceremony on the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the liberation of Bratislava took place at the Slávin Memorial. "Living in peace is one of the greatest values. Therefore it is important to continuously commemorate and revere those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom," remarked the Minister of Defence, adding that especially younger generations often show no interest in significant events in our history, and for that reason it is necessary to commemorate the heroic deeds of our forebears.

State Secretary of the SVK MOD Ivan Máčovský together with 2nd Deputy CHOD of the SVK Armed Forces Brig Gen Jindřich Joch commemorated the anniversary of the capital's liberation at the Victory Memorial situated on Eugen Suchoň Square in Bratislava.

## Trenčín praises veterans

(6 April) At Trenčín Garrison Club, State Secretary of the SVK MOD Ivan Máčovský has opened an exposition dedicated to war veterans. The opening ceremony saw Chief of the SVK General Staff Gen Milan Maxim, together with the representatives of the MOD and the Armed Forces, as well as representatives of war veterans' organizations. "The period of WWII, Slovak soldiers committed into action on both Eastern and Western Fronts, as well as in the Slovak National Uprising serve as excellent examples of bravery of our compatriots, for which they deserve our deepest respect," stressed State Secretary Máčovský, adding that we should also express our esteem to the modern war veterans who professionally represent the Slovak Republic and the SVK Armed Forces, and who have earned respect and credit in the international environment as well. At present, the SVK MOD registers 277 live war veterans who participated in the national fight for liberation, and more than 7,000 modern war veterans who served in missions abroad.

- After more than 2 years, the change has taken place at the position of Chief of Staff of the 2nd mechanized brigade HQs. From 17 February 2014 until 31 March 2016, the position was held by Col Lubomír Kochanský, who terminated his career as a professional soldier after having served 28 years in the SVK Armed Forces. On 1 April, Commander of the 2nd mechanized brigade Brig Gen Martin Stoklasa appointed to the post of Chief of Staff of the 2nd mechanized brigade HQs Lt Col Jozef Ivan, who was on this occasion promoted to the rank of Colonel.

- On the premises of Sliach Air Base, an inspection visit from Ukraine was held on 6 April in accordance with the Vienna Document 2011. The inspection group, accompanied by members of the SVK Verification Centre of the SVK MOD, was welcomed by Deputy Chief of Staff of the SVK Air Force HQs Col Vladimír Kováč and Deputy Commander of the tactical wing Sliach Lt Col Martin Kuterka. Briefings by the representatives of the SVK Air Force and the tactical wing Sliach were given on the premises of the simulation centre.

- The newly established NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU) will take up the opportunity that comes along with participation in **Saber Strike 16**, one of the largest multinational exercises to be held this summer, to test their abilities to rapidly deploy the NATO Response Force. The exercise will put to the test their ability to ensure the multinational response in the region of Eastern Europe. Part of the same will be Dragon Ride II, a 2,400 – km – long tactical movement of the 2nd Cavalry from Germany to the Baltic region. The main focus of the staff rehearsal, which was held in Poland, was on planning the deployment of the NATO Response Force which would be coordinated by NFIU in the area of deployment. For the SVK NFIU, it was Deputy Commander Lt Col Marcel Janiga and Maj Mário Knábel who took part in the rehearsal.

- 2nd Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Brig Gen Jindřich Joch received the incoming Non-Resident **Defence Attaché of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** accredited to the Slovak Republic Group Captain Mike Longstaff. They evaluated mutual cooperation so far. Brig Gen Joch informed the guest of the activities in relation of the upcoming Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In the position of Defence Attaché, Gp Capt Longstaff will replace Col Andrew Shepherd.

- In the period from April to May, flights of the **US military aircraft** over the territory of the Slovak Republic will be allowed. It is a part of the scheduled and in a long term coordinated training activity of our Allied Partner. The US was granted permission for low-level flights of Hercules C-130 aircraft. The flights should be made over the Northern and Eastern Slovakia. Department of Defence takes this opportunity to assure the inhabitants that every particular flyover will be announced in advance by the US and that compliance with the agreed conditions will be monitored.

- On 1 April, in the Chapel of the 21st combined mechanized battalion Trebišov, the Ordinary of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps of the Slovak Republic Mons. František Rábek promoted spiritual and chaplaincy care therein to **Divine Mercy Parish**. The Pontifical Mass was celebrated in the presence of Deputy Commander of the 2nd mechanized brigade Prešov Col Ján Parimucha, Commander of the 21st combined battalion Trebišov Lt Col Róbert Funtal, Commander of the 23rd motorized battalion Trebišov Lt Col Róbert Plávka and the other guests. The establishment as Divine Mercy Parish was preceded by consecration of the renovated chapel and altar.

## Fine-arts competition



(5 April) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim and Obrana monthly, edited by SVK MOD, announce the 15th edition of the fine-arts competition dubbed Soldiers – as seen through the eyes of children. The jury, comprised of the professional creative artists, employees of the Defence Department and professional soldiers, will nominate three works in the category of the younger pupils as well as three works in the category of the older pupils. The winners in either category will be presented with diplomas and valuable gift items. The best works will be published in Obrana monthly as well as on the Defence Department's web page. The contestants are invited to forward their works, with the sender's address, address and class of the sender's school, telephone and date of birth endorsed on each work no later than 13 May to: Editorial office of Obrana monthly, Kutuzovova 8, 832 47 Bratislava.

## Opportunities for students

(5 April) The Open Day organized in the airfield Prešov, particularly on the premises of the General Ján Ambruš Helicopter Wing, attracted dozens of young people. They welcomed the opportunity to get more information on study possibilities for those interested in a military career. They will be given an opportunity to study at the civilian Faculty of Aeronautics of the Technical University in Košice. Starting from the academic year 2016/2017, the engineering study will open up for the graduates of the bachelor's studies in the selected fields of study, which students will be admitted to the state service as professional soldiers in the SVK Armed Forces. This is facilitated by the new Act on State Service of professional soldiers, pursuant to which Act it is feasible to undergo preparatory state service also in other than military university. Costs of the studies, to include pilot training, will be covered from the defence budget. Cadets will receive free accommodation and full board and will be issued all military equipment and clothing. Equally, they will have a guaranteed monthly income equal to minimum wage.

## Recruits in Martin



(4 April) Gates of the training battalion opened on 4 April for 95 male candidates and 16 female candidates for preparatory state service, who will undergo initial military training here. For a period of the next 7 weeks, the 4th Czechoslovak Brigade barracks in

Martin will become their home-place. After the initial procedures and after they will have been issued military equipment and clothing, the recruits will be assigned to the respective training platoons. After completing basic military training, a passing-out ceremony will take place on 20 May and the recruits will enter the stage of specialized training.

## Military police make preparations to ensure performance of tasks connected with Slovakia's presidency of the EU Council

(7 April) Within an exercise dubbed Guardian, SVK military policemen together with their Czech colleagues and the SVK Interior Ministry's Office for Protection of Constitutional Officials and Diplomatic Missions rehearsed joint procedures to be followed when performing VIP protection. They will use the acquired experience during upcoming Slovakia's presidency of the Council of the EU, as well as in the international crisis management. "Performance of our Military Police is highly appreciated not only at home, but abroad as well. I am glad we can benefit from the know-how of the Office for Protection of Constitutional Officials and Diplomatic Missions, and harmonize our procedures in such a way, so that we can handle the upcoming presidency on a high level," said State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marián Saloň.

Speaking about harmonization of joint operational procedures of the separate units, Director of the Military Police Col Milan Hamar said: "The development of the current security situation in the surrounding countries and whole Europe indicates we pay attention to and rehearse the joint operational procedures." Col Hamar also remarked that, especially over the past year, the SVK Military Police had been equipped with new weapons and vehicles. "This is the first time motorcycles were introduced into the inventory of the SVK Armed Forces, and are likewise earmarked for protection of persons. In a relatively short time, we must arrange a specialized training for drivers, whose final stage will be the so-called 'school of shear'. Accordingly, it is important to finish the construction of communication and information systems in order to be fully compatible with our



foreign partners," he explained. At the same time, Col Hamar appreciated that the new SVK MOD's administration supports the completion of the upgrade of the Military Police. The SVK

Military Police cooperates with the SVK Interior Ministry's Office for Protection of Constitutional Officials and Diplomatic Missions in the long term, namely in the field of police support of the Protocol's events and VIP protection. To a great extent, mutual cooperation is expected also during Slovakia's presidency of the Council of the EU. Chief of the SVK General Staff Gen Milan Maxim and Vice President of the Police Corps Gen Lubomír Ábel also appreciated the excellent course of cooperation. "I consider the fact that our Military Police do not train only on their own, but together with other armed services, as highly positive. The Military Police is therefore well prepared, which we are justly proud of," noted Gen Maxim. Speaking positively about other joint training activities of soldiers and policemen, Gen Ábel added: "We do welcome these kinds of exercises."