



Military Police preparing for Slovakia's Presidency of Council of EU

(9 May) Military Police are busy with preparations for Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. For the first time, they will be providing the protected persons with motorcycle escort. To this end, the Military Police members underwent training at Trenčín airport. "Military Police will co-ordinate their activities concerning protection and escort of the protected persons with the Ministry of Interior. It is crucial to have such capability, which is commonplace in the neighbouring Czech Republic, to ensure that all the activities are harmonized. Motorcycles offer greater manoeuvrability, agility and ability to swerve quickly in busy traffic. Military Police has the appropriate equipment at their disposal allowing for the use of motorcycles in the adverse weather conditions," said Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. He pointed out that Military Police will also use motorcycles in the future, to escort VIP guests arriving at the Department of Defence for official visits. As explained by Director of MP Col Milan Hamar, motorcycle training was divided into two stages. Military Police had to cope with all sorts of crisis situations both at low and high speed. "Training was conducted under supervision of the instructor from the Office of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic for the Protection of Constitutional Officials and Diplomatic Missions," emphasized Head of MP. In the future, Military Police will undergo training aimed at riding motorcycles on different road surfaces in the difficult climatic conditions. Military Police underwent preparations for Slovakia's Presidency also at the beginning of April. Together with their Czech colleagues and the Office of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic for the Protection of Constitutional Officials and Diplomatic Missions, they rehearsed how to proceed jointly in providing VIP protection within the exercise Guardian 2016.



Commemorating heroes

(9 May) On the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the victory over fascism (Victory Day) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid tribute to the victims of WWII in an official ceremony at Slavín Memorial. The commemoration ceremony was graced with the presence of SVK Prime Minister Robert Fico, Vice-Chairman of the SVK National Council Béla Bugár and the other government members, members of Parliament and war veterans.

"At this memorial, we pay tribute to the heroes who laid down their lives in a liberation fight so that we could live in peace. Liberty should never be taken for granted, it must be safeguarded and held in the highest esteem," accentuated Minister Gajdoš.

As to participation of the war veterans, Head of the Defence Department reminded that they are a vivid example of the significance of unity and perseverance in achieving the common goal. "They dared to defy the Nazi machine, hence winning liberty for us all," he said.

The members of the SVK Armed Forces and employees of the Defence Department marked the Victory Day in the SVK MOD Club in a solemn ceremony.

"If we want to keep our country safe, state defence must be our first and immediate priority," pointed out SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. He noted that in the upcoming period, the focus of the Department of Defence will be, among other important tasks, on strengthening patriotism and positive attitude of the Slovak people to their country and raising the national defence awareness among the citizens.

On the ceremonial gathering, the Order of the President of the Slovak Republic and the Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces was read out and the military medals and badges were awarded.

- On 13 May, State Secretary Ivan Máčovsky attended a deployment ceremony held in Žilina for the members of the 5th Special Forces Regiment and SVK Land Forces troops prior to deploying to Afghanistan in support to operation **Resolute Support**. The members of the 5th Special Forces Regiment will perform the specific tasks concerning preparation of the Afghan security forces. Lt Col Lubomír Rapko will take up the post of the SVK contingent commander in Afghanistan.
- On 10 – 11 May, a company tactical exercise dubbed **Operation Encounter** took place in the Training Centre Lešť, making use of MILES 2000 simulation system. The challenge was taken up by the 1st and 2nd mechanized company of the 21st combined mechanized battalion Trebišov. The encounter between the companies, which were supported by combat support units and the 21st combined battalion dressing station, CIMIC and PSYOPS tactical teams and the combat service support company from the CSS battalion Prešov, was won by the 1st mechanized company under the lead of the Company Deputy Commander FLT Marián Gonda.
- On 9 May, on the premises of the UNFICYP HQs in Nicosia, Cyprus, the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus held working-level talks. Tasked with security of this significant event was the Force Military Police Unit (FMPU), namely the members of the **SVK Military Police**, who provided protection and escorts. Provost Marshal FMPU Maj Leon Gale expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their professionalism and preparedness.

- On 4 May, the members of ISTAR battalion took part in a focused exercise dubbed **Life and Health Protection**, designed for the students of 5th – 9th year of the Elementary School at Kúpeľná street in Prešov. They prepared 4 work-places, where the students could familiarize themselves with the radiological and chemical reconnaissance devices and personal protective equipment. The children also took part in a running competition, while wearing protective clothing OPCH 02.
- On 10 May, on the premises of the Trenčín Garrison Club, Military Police organized a **workshop** for the employees tasked with crime prevention at the headquarters, in the units and facilities of the SVK Armed Forces. The workshop was led by Maj Peter Rochovský, Head of the MP Investigation Section. The members of the MP Investigation Section evaluated crime data and performance of tasks in the field of crime prevention in 2015. The members of the Police Enforcement Section evaluated the law enforcement measures, assessed the traffic and security situation and facilities protection. Some of the representatives of the SVK General Staff, Land Forces HQs and Air Force HQs engaged as speakers in the workshop as well.
- On 10 – 12 May, training of the Operational HQs of the Visegrad Four EU Battle Group (V4 EU BG) was conducted in Krakow, Poland, as part of recurrent training of the same. The aim of the exercise **Spring Challenge 2016** was to rehearse the process of activation of the international Headquarters, cementing the agreed operational procedures and briefing the Staff members on the current situation in all the possible areas of deployment of the V4 EU BG. Twelve troops from the SVK Armed Forces took part in the exercise.
- On 9 – 13 May, nearly ninety members of the 2nd mechanized brigade Prešov and the other professional soldiers from the SVK Armed Forces participated in the planning of the exercise **Slovak Shield 2016** in the Multifunctional Supply Base Nemšová. The **comprehensive staff rehearsal** at the wider command post was aimed at preparing the operations order and tailoring it to the individual circumstances of each deployed unit or formation within the combined tasks force. The rehearsal was one of the brigade's fundamental tasks with respect to the exercise to be held in autumn this year.

On border together



(12 May) On 11 – 12 May, the regular border meeting of the Slovak and Czech General Staffs took place in Brezová pod Bradlom. General Milan Maxim held negotiations with General of the Army Josef Bečvář on support and participation of the

Army of the Czech Republic in the autumn exercise **Slovak Shield 2016**, on possibilities of co-operative repair and maintenance of the equipment and on engagement in the multinational operations. They concurred on the need for consolidation of the stance towards the issues that emerged prior to the Warsaw Summit and V4 Chiefs of Defence meeting. They officially signed the concept of cooperation between the Land Forces of the Army of the Czech Republic and the SVK Land Forces. Both delegations laid wreaths to Gen Štefánik's burial mound in Bradlo.

Slalom racers' moment of triumph

(15 May) On 14 May, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš expressed his congratulation to the Alexander Sľafkovský and Michal Martikán, the sportsmen from the MSC Dukla Banská Bystrica, on the success they had notched up at the European Canoe Slalom Championships in Liptovský Mikuláš. "The gold medal for our team, and particularly gold and silver in the Olympic category of the individuals is a notable success for Dukla as well as for Slovakia," he said. On the phone, the Minister extended his thanks also to the MSC Dukla Director Richard Galovič.

On Sunday, the MSC Dukla sportsmen scored again at the Championship. The gold medal in men's C2 category was won by Tomáš Kučera and Ján Bábik. In the women's K1 category, Elena Kaliská finished fourth. "Our sportsmen triumphed over the other competitors. MSC Dukla won three gold medals and one silver medal for Slovakia. As the Defence Minister, I sincerely congratulate them and hereby make a pledge of support," said Peter Gajdoš.

Meeting with Ambassador



(13 May) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the Israeli Ambassador Zvi Aviner Vapni. They discussed the priorities and topical issues of bilateral cooperation. "Defence is the matter of the state as well as of each of its citizens. That is why we will seek consensus in producing all the state defence-related strategic documents," the Minister informed the Ambassador. "It is my priority to ensure transparent modernization, development and regular rehearsals." Peter Gajdoš congratulated the State of Israel on the agreement endorsed by the North Atlantic Council, which will make it possible for the country to open the permanent mission to NATO in Brussels.

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Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opens International Defence Exhibition IDEB 2016 in Bratislava

(10 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš officially opened the International Defence Exhibition IDEB 2016 in Bratislava. The main themes of the 6th edition of the exhibition were modernization of the armed forces, police and intelligence in the light of the current security situation, and Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the EU.

"It is my pleasure to open the Exhibition for the first time in my capacity as Defence Minister and welcome all the exhibitors. We view this event also as an opportunity to promote domestic manufacturers in the field of the SVK defence and arms industry, which is one of the Government's Manifesto commitments," said the Minister.

Unveiled for the first time in Slovakia at the Exhibition was the new lightweight mobile howitzer EVA, with six-wheel drive, and the tracked self-propelled autonomous artillery system DIANA, which is a product of cooperation between Poland and Slovakia. "I would be most glad to see some of the exhibits included in the inventory of our Armed Forces, hence contributing to their modernization. I am convinced that the Slovak Republic's citizens deserve



responsibly trained and prepared armed forces, well-equipped with modern equipment that would be compatible with that of the other NATO and EU countries," stated Head of the Defence

Department Peter Gajdoš.

On the margins of IDEB 2016, Peter Gajdoš met also with Jorge Domecq, Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency (EDA). They talked about possibilities of further cooperation, as well as about the upcoming Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "Slovakia considers participation in some of the EDA projects. Currently, we evaluate information on possible participation," he said.

He informed EDA Chief Executive of preparations for Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union and of the accompanying events. Equally, the Minister introduced him into the V4 joint projects.

At IDEB 2016, the Department of Defence mounted static displays and organized dynamic demonstrations by the armed forces and Military Police. Equally, the Military Sport Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica and Gen. M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy had their representation in the event. The Exhibition saw altogether 152 exhibitors from 20 countries, and Slovakia was represented by 37 entities.