



On cyber security

(21 July) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened the Cyber Security Cooperation Conference in Bratislava on 20 July. This was the first such event with international participation organised by the SVK Ministry of Defence under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, with the aim of discussing options for cyber defence and security cooperation at an expert level.

"Cyberspace was recognised at the NATO Warsaw Summit to be the 5th domain of operations. The recently adopted Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy acknowledged that cyber defence remains among the key tasks we are called upon. That is why the European Union needs to focus more on cyber security. The main priority is to have an open, free and especially secure cyberspace. At the same time, EU Member States must be ready to face all threats," said Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. He went on to say that the European Union should support political, operational and technical cooperation on cyber security between EU Member States, and as well extend cooperation with the key partners, such as the USA and NATO.

Cyber threats are among the main risks and perils of the last decade. The priorities of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union are, therefore, also geared towards consolidating the EU's unity and coherence in this field, noted Ivan Máčovsky, State Secretary at the SVK Ministry of Defence, who concluded the two-day Cyber Security Cooperation Conference on 21 July.

The event was attended, among others, by the Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency (EDA), Mr Jorge Domecq, who appreciated the SVK Defence Ministry's initiative to organise, under the SVK EU Presidency, a cyber security conference. At the same time, he underlined the significance of European cooperation in the cyber defence field. The EDA set up a platform for Member States to foster cooperation in this field over 4 years ago.

The MOD gives paramount attention to cyber threats. For this reason, it has incorporated the stepping-up of the fight against such threats into the White Paper on Defence of the Slovak Republic. A great success in this field was achieved by the Slovak cyber defence team who was rated the best from among the 26 participating countries at the recently organised international exercise NATO Locked Shields 2016.

SVK MOD to act as guarantor of NATO C-IED/EOD Trust Fund for Ukraine

(18 July) The Slovak Ministry of Defence will be a guarantor of a so-called NATO Trust Fund, one aimed at assisting Ukraine in developing counter-improvised explosive devices (C-IED) and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) capabilities. The SVK MOD will be responsible for the fund's development, play an active role in seeking potential donors and, based on available funds, manage projects for Ukrainian specialists. Slovakia's initiative to take over the fund's management was announced at the NATO Warsaw Summit by SVK President Andrej Kiska.

"The fact that the Alliance has accepted the Slovak Republic's promise to become a Lead Nation for the NATO Trust Fund should be viewed as a mark of recognition for our country and for the SVK Armed Forces from NATO. In the field of explosive ordnance disposal our armed forces are among the world's best," emphasised SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. Even in



the past, the Slovak Republic actively assisted Ukraine in training EOD specialists by organising C-IED specialised courses in its training facilities, based in Sereď, Nováky and Martin. This assistance was appreciated by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the June meeting with SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš.

That they have advanced EOD skills proficiency levels has been demonstrated by the SVK soldiers who have been deployed on numerous international crisis management operations and missions. EOD is one of the SVK Armed Forces' state-of-the-art capabilities – the NATO Centre of Excellence for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (NATO COE EOD) is located in Trenčín.

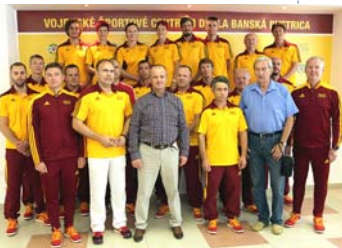
The NATO C-IED/EOD Trust Fund for Ukraine project is in the process of being developed. A team of specialists in the SVK MOD has been assigned to deal with this issue.

Minister gifts coins for luck to SVK Olympic team

(23 July) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the sportsmen and women from the Military Sport Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica (MSC DBB) who will represent Slovakia at the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. From among Slovakia's sport clubs and centres, the MSC DBB has the highest number of representatives on the Slovak delegation to the Olympic Games. The 19 sportsmen and women account for 40 per cent of the total strength. For 7 members of the MSC DBB, this will be an Olympic premiere. At the ceremony, the defence minister gifted memorial coins to the sportsmen and women, coaches and implementation team members. "I firmly believe you will turn them into medals," he said smilingly.

The SVK Olympic sportsmen and women, with members of the Military Sport Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica having the highest number of representatives, took a ceremonial Olympic oath in the presence of SVK President Andrej Kiska at Bratislava Castle on 23 July. During the reception, the president wished them to fulfil their commitment to perform at their best.

Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, too, came to Bratislava Castle to show his support to the sportsmen and women. The following MSC DBB sportsmen and women will compete at Rio 2016: Dana Veldáková, MSgt Martina Hrašnová, Mária Gálíková, Mária Czaková, Matúš Bubeník, Marcel Lomnický, Cpl Anton Kučmín, MSgt Matej Tóth, Martin Tišťan and Sgt Dušan Majdán, whitewater kayaker Jakub Grigar, sprint canoeists MSgt Peter Gelle and Vincent Farkas, sport shooter SSgt Juraj Tužinský, swimmers Katarína Listopadová and Pte 1st Class Tomáš Klobučník, road cyclist Cpl Patrik Tybor, and weightlifter Pte 1st Class Ondrej Krúžel.



Commemoration in Košariská



(21 July) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid a visit to Košariská, the birthplace village of Gen Milan Rastislav Štefánik, to commemorate the 136th anniversary of his birth. He also visited Štefánik's birthplace home, which today houses a museum dedicated

to his memory. "The life and work of this politician, scientist, diplomat, general and spiritually rich person have remained and will always remain a permanent and ineradicable source of inspiration to us. Štefánik's successes, which have crossed the borders of our homeland, are a valuable heritage not only for the Slovaks but also for other nations in Europe and in the world too. Apart from this, Štefánik was, above all, a principled democrat and a dedicated patriot," he said.

US guest in visit to minister

(19 July) SVK Minister of Defence received the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State, Mr Hoyt Brian Yee. Main topics of discussion covered bilateral cooperation, the current status of security affairs in the world, an assessment of the NATO Warsaw Summit, as well as a presentation of the Slovak Republic's priorities in the field of defence and security. The military cooperation between the SVK REP and the USA, especially that with the Indiana National Guard and between the Special Operations Forces of both countries, has been described by the head of the SVK MOD as very intense.

Soldiers and children's university



(19 July) Soldiers of the 13th Mechanised Battalion in Levice prepared a programme for child students attending Children's Comenius University. Under the programme, they had the opportunity to try out the Jakub training wall, self-defence techniques,

assembly and disassembly of hand-held weapons, tactical training, crossing a contaminated area, and topographical training. Just before lunchtime they were visited by the SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. The event at Levice-based unit was supported by the presence of the director of the Aréna Theatre, Mr Juraj Kukura, the initiator of Children's Comenius University. He confirmed that the SVK Armed Forces' workshop is the most popular one with child students.

ATHENA Committee convenes

(19 July) The ATHENA Special Committee convened for the first time under the chairmanship of the Slovak Republic. As the country presiding the Council of the European Union, the SVK REP will exercise oversight over budgets for EU operations and missions. "Our task is to oversee a smooth funding of the EU-led missions and operations, which is one of the prerequisites for delivering a successful Common Security and Defence Policy," said Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. The members of the committee held discussions on budgets for the missions unfolding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia and the Republic of Central Africa. The priority of the ATHENA Special Committee is to ensure that the preparation of budgets for the EU's military operations and missions be transparent and financially effective.

Defence Policy Directors session

(22 July) The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, EU-led international crisis management operations, EU-NATO cooperation – even these were among the topics discussed at an informal meeting of the Defence Policy Directors of the EU Member States' Ministries of Defence, which was held in Bratislava on 21-22 July. The Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Mr Pedro Serrano introduced the current state of progress in drafting the report on implementation of the Policy Framework for Systematic and Long-Term Defence Cooperation, and informed of the current developments in preparations of the European Defence Action Plan.