



Also on EuroArtillery in Brussels

(6 March) Slovakia's Indirect Fire Support EuroArtillery project is becoming a reality. On 6 March in Brussels, EU Defence Ministers approved the initial list of 17 collaborative projects of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the field of security and defence. Apart from the EuroArtillery project with Italy as our partner, Slovakia will support another 4 projects pioneered by its PESCO partners.

Speaking after the meeting of the Council of the EU, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš emphasised that in implementing the project the Slovak Republic can capitalise on its extensive expertise in the field of artillery systems development and manufacture and boost this niche defence capability in the EU.

Apart from its own project, Slovakia will team up with other PESCO partners and take part in the Military Mobility project (NLD), designed to simplify and expedite movements of military forces across Europe; the European Medical Command and the Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations (DEU); and the Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle/Amphibious Assault Vehicle/Light Armoured Vehicle project (ITA).

Also discussed at the meeting were EU missions and operations and the Cross-Border Military Transportation Roadmap, an initiative of the European Defence Agency (EDA). Legislatively, the EDA initiative aims to facilitate cross-border movements of military convoys. In a separate session with the NATO Deputy Secretary General, Ms Rose Gottemoeller, Ministers devoted their attention to the implementation of the Joint EU-NATO Declaration.

Allies pledge to refund costs

(9 March) NATO Allies have pledged to refund the total costs of the ongoing Slovak demining project in Iraq via the NATO Defence Capacity Building (DCB) Trust Fund. The project was prepared by a specialist SVK MOD and GS team in close collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of the Slovak Republic to NATO. The MOD was in discussions with Allies and received their pledge to refund the overall costs of the project. This means the MOD will deliver €1,038,000 of savings for the tax payers.

SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš emphasised: "Also in this way our Allies have expressed how highly they value our contribution to global security. The fact that we can save our tax payers more than a million euros from the state budget is yet another proof that the SVK MOD, under the SNS leadership, is committed to using the resources of the Slovak Republic and its citizens efficiently."

Several Allied countries, i.e. Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg and Croatia have decided to contribute to the Slovak project via the NATO DCB Trust Fund. This is an expression of unity and high consideration for the work of SVK demining trainers in Iraq.

SVK soldiers in Iraq are training Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) personnel not only in demining at Camp Besmaya, but they are also working closely with Poland in the field of maintenance and repairs of Soviet-era military equipment at Camp Taji. The SVK Armed Forces deployed in Iraq are not in a combat role, but they are on the ground under NATO's non-combat training activity, which is being implemented with the consent of the Republic of Iraq. On Monday (5 March 2018), NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited Camp Besmaya, where Allied trainers from the Slovak, Canadian and Spanish Armed Forces are working side-by-side in Iraq.

More attractive Active Reserves are a step closer to becoming a reality

(8 March) The SVK Parliamentary Committee on Economic Affairs approved the Conscription Amendment Act, whereby the soldiers in the reserves who have been transferred to the Active Reserves will undergo training to carry out tasks in the Armed Forces under more attractive conditions as from May 2018. The SVK Government gave its consent to the MOD-sponsored Conscription Amendment Act at the end of 2017 and it went through its first reading in Parliament in January 2018. SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš believes the Amendment Act will help the Armed Forces meet the trained strength target for the Active Reserves. The Amendment Act makes it possible for the MOD to reimburse salaries and travel costs incurred to and from an exercise not only to regular employees but also to the self-employed, as well to repay the costs incurred by employers for the payment of premiums for social and public health insurance. Additionally, the Amendment Act enables the soldiers in the reserves – holding the rank one below or two higher than their own rank required for the specific positions to be assigned to – to join the Active Reserves. This allows more candidates to meet the set requirements and thus qualify for transfer to the Active Reserves. Other new elements introduced are the provisions on non-attendance of active reservists at regular training and the obligation of active reservists to report changes in the conditions of their assignment to commanders. Finally, one change is that an active reservist is entitled to a commensurate part of rank-based pay only for the period of time spent on regular training or when performing tasks in favour of the SVK Armed Forces.



- On 5 Mar, the new **Commander of the SVK Armed Forces Logistics Office**, Col Jozef Ševčík, convened a gathering of Logistics Office personnel and employees. He briefed them on the Office's future direction and development, as well as presenting the nominated personnel with the SVK Minister of Defence Commemorative Medal to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Slovak Republic and the SVK Armed Forces.
- On 6 Mar, Helicopter Wing Prešov (Heli Wng PO) hosted a **Helicopter Wing Commander's meeting of commanders**, in the presence of Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, Commander SVK Air Force. Lt Col Peter Križ, DCOM Heli Wng PO, who is currently substituting for COM Heli Wng PO, gave his assessment of the discipline levels, assets damage list, road traffic accidents, and morbidity levels. He also briefed commanders and chiefs on the 2018 training and exercise goals. Finally, Maj Gen Svoboda presented the nominated personnel with the SVK Minister of Defence Commemorative Medal to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Slovak Republic and the SVK Armed Forces.
- During the second week of March, a **training exercise of a CBRN Platoon** (CBRN Battalion Rožňava) to be deployed with 12th Mechanised Battalion Group was held at CBRN Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostoľany. The main aim of the training was for the CBRN experts to apply their expertise by practising basic and advanced CBRN skills essential for working with substitute toxic chemicals.
- To mark International Women's Day, Trenčín Garrison Club opened an exhibition entitled **Women in Painting Art** on 6 Mar. The paintings by mostly Slovak painters capture women engaging in most diverse activities.
- Lt Col Peter Križ, DCOM Heli Wng PO, received a four-man **inspection team from Ukraine** at Helicopter Wing Prešov on 6 Mar. The inspection visit to this declared site was conducted in line with the notification format prescribed in the OSCE Vienna Document 2011.
- **Bratislava Garrison Club** warmly invites you to an exhibition of computer, visual, audial military and photographic devices, instruments and tools for a "Retro" household, which will be held from 1 Mar to 30 Apr, from Mon to Fri from 8:00am – 15:00pm.
- Ružomberok Garrison hosted the **Deployable CIS Commander Change of Command (COC)** ceremony on 3 Mar. The outgoing commander, Col Štefan Pobjiak, who will take up an appointment at SVK Land Forces HQ, handed over to the incoming commander, Col Marián Šanta, with effect from 1 Mar 2018.
- The SVK MOD wishes to inform the drivers in Slovakia about the **upcoming Allied military movements**, scheduled from 12-18 Mar 2018. A total of 29 Allied road moves will take place across Slovakia over the period. They will mainly involve HUN and SRB troops en route to UNFICYP and U.S. and POL troops transporting their equipment. This week will also see SVK military round trip convoys along the routes: Rožňava – Lešť, Rožňava – Zemianske Kostoľany, Rožňava – Zemianske Kostoľany – Lešť; as well as SVK military movements with oversize cargo of equipment along the routes: Trebišov – Martin, Trebišov – TC Lešť, Trebišov – Ozorovce Field Training Ground, Trebišov – Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area, Hlohovec – Koliňany Training Area.

On regional cooperation

(7 March) The 878th plenary meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation under the SVK Presidency continued with a discussion on military regional engagement, with a focus on the V4 military and defence cooperation. As a representative of the country holding the rotating Presidency of the Visegrad Group, György Rábai, Head of the Defence Policy Section at Hungary's Defence Ministry, presented the results of the V4 cooperation. As the next V4 Presidency holder as from July 2018, Slovakia was represented by Bohuš Kuchta, Political Director of the SVK Ministry of Defence. In their speeches, both officials focused on the review and assessment of the V4 military and defence cooperation thus far and that of the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC), where Hungary is currently holding the CEDC Presidency too. The speakers underlined the fact that regional cooperation is taking on a special dimension in today's changed security environment. They highlighted the growing significance of this cooperation and supported it with practical results. Slovakia sees the recently concluded process of preparing the Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic for Cooperation on Mutual Protection of Airspace as a great success of the V4. The Political Director went on to inform that during the upcoming Slovak V4 Presidency Slovakia is planning to step up its role in coordinating the V4 positions on NATO-EU cooperation and building the EU V4 Battlegroup. In light of the EU agenda, more efforts will be dedicated to the exchange of experience on PESCO cooperation and starting a discussion on a potential joint V4 PESCO project that may be launched in the second wave of the PESCO projects.

Tactical Medicine Course



(5 March) The Central Military Hospital SNP Ružomberok – Faculty Hospital and the Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General Ružomberok – Detached Facility Liptovský Mikuláš hosted a pilot tactical medicine course. Designed in close collaboration between the two organisations, plus the Military Medical Services, the SVK Air Force and the 5th SOF Regiment, the course was aimed at training the nursing staff and medics to be deployed on international crisis management operations in delivering urgent medical care, whilst reflecting the requirements of the SVK Armed Forces. The course was attended by SVK personnel and was joined by a CZE Army soldier, of Training HQ, Military Academy Vyškov.

Remembering generals

(6 March) Members of the SVK General Staff and the SVK Generals Club along with representatives of the Slovak Anti-Nazi Fighters Union attended a ceremony at the Appeasement Memorial at Kutuzov Barracks in Bratislava, to pay their respects to the memory of the four Slovak WWII generals – Rudolf Viest, Ján Golian, Štefan Jurech and Augustín Malár – who were executed at the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp in March 1945. In his speech, Lt Gen (in the reserves) Peter Vojtek clarified the historical background of the event. The concluding remarks of Ordinary František Rábek were followed by the playing of the Last Post.

SVK MOD is launching a campaign to promote Voluntary Military Training

(5 March) These days the SVK MOD is launching a marketing and communication campaign to increase public awareness of the Voluntary Military Training (VMT) scheme. The MOD seeks to reach out to as many young people as possible, to awaken their interest in the defence of our country on the principle of voluntariness, and to strengthen their patriotism. The motto of this year's campaign is: "Our country needs each of us – YOU TOO!" SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "In line with the SVK Government Manifesto Commitments and the Slovak National Party Manifesto, Voluntary Military Training is among our priorities. And it is high time we considered ways to stimulate people's interest in the defence of our country and touch them to the extent that they see it as their honour and duty. Therefore, we are not giving up on the VMT project and we are ready to train more young people." As part of this year's campaign, the MOD has prepared a VMT promotion video which will be screened across the cinemas in Slovakia's regional capitals. The video will be distributed via the Facebook and YouTube social networks. Additionally, the campaign counts on the billboard advertising at Coach Terminals and Train Stations, whilst some MOD and Army recruitment cars will be decorated with an outer decal design

promoting VMT. The campaign will also feature lectures and military physical training competitions for secondary school goers, which represent a potential source of candidates. The MOD will distribute brochures and posters to all secondary schools, colleges and universities in Slovakia, education branches at the regional administrative offices, job centres, and municipalities. Currently, the MOD is looking into ways to ensure a media partnership with media representatives. Moreover, VMT will be promoted in the MOD-sponsored Defence Monthly, which is distributed to secondary schools, colleges and universities on a monthly basis. The campaign will be officially launched by the MOD and SVK Armed Forces leaders in a joint press conference. The Voluntary Military Training scheme is aimed at young people who wish to undergo military training. Thanks to this, they will have developed the skills and knowledge essential to enable them to perform military and crisis management tasks. Over the course of the 11-month-long VMT training, the trainees will be provided with free accommodation and catering, and the transport costs will be fully reimbursed to them. They will also receive military clothing and weapons for training and are entitled to a lump sum payment of over €1,100 for the entire duration of the training.