



International fair IDEB 2018

(16 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened the 7th International Defence Exhibition Bratislava (IDEB) 2018, showcasing the latest line of products by 170 exhibitors from 18 countries. This year's theme was: Modernisation of Armed Forces. Traditionally, the event is held under the aegis of the SVK MOD. This year the MOD staged dynamic demonstrations and a static display of more than 300 pieces of vehicles, weapons and equipment.

Speaking at the IDEB 2018 Opening Ceremony, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "As a Minister of Defence, I am proud that after years we can finally boast an array of novelties – UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, upgraded infantry fighting vehicles, and the outcome of the Slovak-Finnish R&D programme thus far – the 8x8 armoured IFV prototype."

Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko said: "This year IDEB has attracted the highest number of Slovak defence manufacturers since the inception of the exhibition. This is yet another proof that our equipment has its place in the market, that it is world class, and that it has a chance to enter service not only with our Armed Forces but also with other militaries in the world."

General Secretary of the MOD's Service Office Ján Holko added: "I am pleased to announce that visitors to IDEB will be able to see the real outcome of our research and development, the [8x8] vehicle, which is world class."

At IDEB 2018, the MOD staged exhibitions dedicated to significant milestones, such as the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak Republic and its Armed Forces.

SVK CHOD attends NATO MCCS and EUMC in Brussels

(16 May) The European Union Military Committee met at the level of EU Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) in Brussels on 15 May. During the meeting, EU CHODs met with High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini, to discuss the implementation of the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS). A dominant theme of the meeting was CSDP missions and operations. Lt Gen Zmeko confirmed Slovakia's readiness to continue with its contributions to Operation EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before attending the EUMC, Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko also met with Chairman of the EUMC (CEUMC) General Mikhail Kos-tarakos.

Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko attended the regular spring NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session (MCCS) in Brussels on 16 May 2018. The main theme of the meeting was the strategic military aspects relating to the agenda of the forthcoming NATO Summit, to be held on 11-12 July 2018 in Brussels. Special attention was paid to the preparations for the transformation of NATO's Training and Capacity Building in Iraq (NTCB-I) to a fully fledged NATO mission. In the session for the CHODs of the countries contributing to the Canadian-led eFP Battlegroup in Latvia, Lt Gen Zmeko

TC Lešť hosts 6th Interdepartmental Rock Climbing Competition

(16 May) Bralce, the rock climbing site located in TC Lešť, was the venue of the 6th Interdepartmental Rock Climbing Competition on 15-16 May. Taking part in the event were soldiers from military units across the SVK Armed Forces, members of the Interior Ministry's Firefighting and Rescue Corps (HaZZ) and the Mountain Rescue Services (HZS). This year the final score took account of the points gained by two-member teams on the climbing route of the highest technical difficulty. In case the final scores were the same, the criterion for deciding the winners was the time achieved by the second member of the team on the hardest climbing route. In the two-member teams category, WO2 Vladimír Plachý, of HZS, excelled along the second hardest climbing route at Bralce, called Afghanistan, of Grade 9- on the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) scale of difficulty, and secured victory for himself and his teammate WO1 Martin Šimko. Maj Marek Biskupič, of Avalanche Prevention Centre (HZS), and his teammate Lt Ján Korenko, of HZS High Tatras, placed 2nd. The third place finishers were 1st Lt Anton Sedlák and Martin Buliak, both from Avalanche Prevention Centre (HZS). PFC Miroslav Duchyňa and Pte Martin Škrabák, of Logistics Battalion Hlohovec were the best military climbing team. The individuals category saw the climbers compete along a new climbing route, called Bat, of Grade 8+/9- on the UIAA scale of difficulty. Nobody managed to climb the entire Bat route. The highest to climb was Vladimír Plachý, followed by Marek Biskupič and Martin Buliak.



- SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš participated in a **commemorative event** to mark the 73rd anniversary of the end of WWII under the ruins of Muráň Castle on 19 May. He joined others in walking up the castle hill to pay tribute to the victims of the most destructive global conflict in the history of mankind.

- SVK personnel will undertake tasks in line with the role of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in **Latvia** from the second half of this year. The proposal to deploy two 6-month rotations, each of up to 152 active duty soldiers, was approved by Parliament on 16 May. Before receiving the Parliament's seal of approval, Slovakia's proposed contribution to NATO's eFP was given the go-ahead by the Security Council, the Cabinet, the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security, and the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

- The training of the soldiers in the **Active Reserves** has begun at CBRN Battalion Rožňava. 14 active reservists – of whom 7 are Voluntary Military Training (VMT) soldiers, 4 are ex-service personnel, and 3 are former compulsory military service personnel – have joined the historically first training of active reservists in this field. The training will run until 25 May.

- The SVK MOD joined the pan-European **'Museums and Galleries at Night'** festival on 19 May. The Military History Museums Piešťany, Svidník and Dukla were open to public for free until midnight. The aim of the event was to present Slovak military history and key historic milestones.

- Exercise **SCREENER 2018**, the largest international exercise for reconnaissance troops, got underway on Libavá Training Area and across the Beskydy Mountain Nature Reserve in the Czech Republic on 14 May. Taking part in the exercise are members of HQ 2nd Mech Bde Prešov and ISTAR Bn Prešov. The aim of the exercise is to practise the capabilities of recon patrols, intelligence officers, and EXCON members of staff in an international environment. The exercise will run until 25 May, with the participation of 1,600 troops from CZE, POL, AUT, SVK and USA.

- UK Defence Attaché G/Cpt Michael Longstaff** paid an office call with Commander SVK Air Force Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda at the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM on 17 May. The main theme was Exercise Slovak Hawk. Also discussed was the Crash and Rescue project, the participation of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the SVK Air Force in airshows in Slovakia and the UK, respectively.

Visitors to SVK MOD

(18 May) The deepening of the SVK-IND bilateral ties, the promotion of the Slovak defence industry, and military equipment modernisation programmes were high on the agenda of the meeting between SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Minister of State for External Affairs of India Shri M. J. Akbar at MOD Main Building on 16 May. Head of the MOD suggested the use of the Training Centre Lešť, the SVK Air Force simulators, and the International Staff Officers Course (ISOC) at the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in LM as potential areas of cooperation on training and education with the Indian Armed Forces. Minister Gajdoš informed Minister Akbar about the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with an Outlook to 2030.

Current security challenges, NATO cooperation, Slovakia's support for Montenegro in its EU integration efforts, as well as exploring ways to promote SVK-MNE cooperation were the key issues on the agenda of the meeting between Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and his Montenegrin counterpart Predrag Bošković on 18 May. On Montenegro's EU integration, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The Slovak Republic has always supported and will continue to support Montenegro's EU prospects. I am convinced that Montenegro's pro-European and pro-Atlantic direction is a significant impulse driving the stabilization of the Western Balkans." In an effort to take their bilateral cooperation forward, the Ministers reflected on the reforms of both armed forces, armaments programmes, and military education. On the latter, Minister Gajdoš reiterated Slovakia's offer of cooperation on CBRN training, keeping the SVK Armed Forces Academy-delivered ISOC open to Montenegrin soldiers, and suggested they participate in EOD training at the NATO EOD COE in Slovakia.

In talks with Estonian Minister of Defence Jüri Luik on 18 May, Minister Gajdoš addressed bilateral defence engagement, NATO's eFP and defence modernization. Minister Gajdoš said: "We are partners with Estonia in NATO and the EU. That is why we have a basis to build on and take our bilateral cooperation forward, be it in the fields of education, military exercises, PESCO or the defence industry." In the meeting, Head of the SVK MOD underscored the cooperation on military education between the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Slovakia and the Baltic Defence College in Estonia, which has been evolving under the umbrella of CEFME. Minister Gajdoš informed his counterpart about the SVK contribution to NATO's training activity in Iraq (NTCB-I), where SVK soldiers are training ISF personnel in mechanical demining, including train-the-trainer (TtT) programme, as well as how to maintain and repair Soviet-era assets. They also talked about the deployment of 152 SVK personnel to the Baltics as part of NATO's eFP. Head of the SVK MOD underscored the success of the Slovak-led PESCO Indirect Fire Support project, also known as EuroArtillery.

Minister Gajdoš and CHOD Lt Gen Zmeko had the honour and pleasure of receiving SACT General Denis Mercier at the MOD on 17 May. General Mercier was updated on the current deployments of SVK personnel on missions and operations abroad and the modernization efforts taken forward by the SVK MOD in furtherance of NATO requirements.

Chairman of the NATO Military Committee (CMC) General Petr Pavel had an office call with Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and SVK Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko at the MOD on 18 May, to discuss security and defence issues such as Slovakia's deliverables for the NATO Alliance, the SVK troop deployments on international crisis management missions and operations, as well as the forthcoming NATO Summit in Brussels. They also talked about the MOD-sponsored Strategic Documents and the ongoing modernization of the Armed Forces, as well as addressing the NATO-EU cooperation, PESCO, Slovakia's EuroArtillery project, and military mobility. Head of the MOD thanked General Pavel for his four-year tenure as CMC.



announced the readiness of the SVK Armed Forces' mechanised unit to deploy to Latvia.

