



Our pledges for NATO Summit

(27 June) At the upcoming NATO Summit in Brussels, the Slovak Republic will reaffirm its commitment to increased defence spending; express its support to NATO's open door policy; acknowledge its international crisis management commitments; and announce an increase in its force contribution to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan under the Government-approved mandate.

NATO-Russia relations and NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltics will be high on the agenda. The SVK Cabinet has approved the official positions of the SVK delegation to the NATO Summit, to be held on 11-12 July 2018 in the format of Heads of State and Government. The Slovak Republic will also reaffirm its intention to meet the NATO Capability Targets ensuing from NATO's collective defence requirements, including the commitment to stand up a Heavy Mechanised Brigade.

EU Ministerial in Luxembourg

(26 June) In implementing the PESCO EuroArtillery project, Slovakia wants to use its domestic defence industrial capacities as much as possible. This was confirmed by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš at the meeting of EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence at the EU FAC in Luxembourg. The aim of the SVK project is to develop a long-range precision artillery platform for coordinated use of artillery assets on multinational operations. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Italy participates in our project as a member and another 7 EU Member States have assumed the role of observers, while there are more countries considering to join the project."

The EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence assessed the implementation of the EU Global Strategy. They approved the governance rules for PESCO projects. As part of the EU initiative Slovakia will also participate in Military Mobility. They also met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, to discuss EU-NATO strategic cooperation.

Slovak V4 Presidency

(1 July) Slovakia took over the Presidency of the Vysehrad Group (SK PRES V4). Focus of the MOD will be on the stand-up of the EU V4 Battle Group (EU V4 BG), to be on stand-by in the second half of 2019, and of the V4 Joint Logistics Support Group Headquarters (V4 JLSG HQ) in support of NATO. The dominant issues in deepening V4 cooperation will be an exchange of experience on PESCO and coordination of national positions, including those presented within the V4, NATO and the EU.

Even during the Slovak V4 Presidency, the V4 countries will continue to focus on assistance and support to Ukraine and other partner countries in Europe via an exchange of experience on and support to the security sector reform. They will also work towards stepping up EU-NATO interactions, whilst acting in line with the Joint EU-NATO Declaration on Strengthening Strategic Cooperation.

The Hungarian V4 Presidency culminated with the meeting of V4 CHODs in Budapest on 25 and 26 June.

Armed Forces want to train over 300 active reservists next year

(26 June) Slovakia's Armed Forces want to train over 300 Active Reserves soldiers next year. Between 26 June and 31 August 2018, the reservists who meet the requirements are invited to apply for transfer to the Active Reserves via the Army Recruitment Teams, located in the regional capital cities, depending on their place of residence. Regular trade-specific exercises for active reservists will run across SVK Armed Forces units from April to June 2019. This year the SVK Armed Forces are planning to transfer 116 reservists to the Active Reserves for 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov, 79 reservists for CBRND Bn Rožňava, 95 reservists for Engr Bn Sereď, and 15 reservists for MP Dept Trenčín. Exercises for active reservists are scheduled from 15-26 April 2019 at 21st Cmbd Mech Bn Trebišov, from 20-31 May 2019 at CBRND Bn Rožňava, from 10-21 June 2019 at Engr Bn Sereď and at MP Dept Trenčín.



- State Secretary of the SVK MOD **Róbert Ondrejcsák** visited the Federal Republic of Germany on 27-28 June, to meet with Parliamentary State Secretary of the German MOD Thomas Silberhorn. They addressed bilateral cooperation, PESCO, and the upcoming NATO Summit. On 28 June, the officials were joined by the Czech Ambassador and opened a reception dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Czechoslovak Legion and Czechoslovakia.

- On 26-28 June, **Slovak-German staff-to-staff talks** were held in the German town of Strausberg. The SVK delegation, led by Chief of Staff Land HQ Col Ivan Balog, took part in the 9th staff-to-staff talks as a follow-on to the 2016 talks. The German delegation was led by the German Army's Chief for Support and Logistics Col (GS) Dirk Kipper.

- **Commander SVK Air Force** Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda along with the US and UK Ambassadors, HE Mr Adam Sterling and HE Mr Andrew Garth, participated in a commemoration ceremony on 27 June at Polomka, to pay tribute to the soldiers of the US Office of Strategic Service (OSS) and of the UK Special Operation Executive (SOE) who participated in the SNP.

- The last week of June saw an international training for **SVK and CZE Armed Forces obstacle clearance units** at the Training Centre Lešt. The Officer in Command of the exercise, involving over 40 troops, was DCOM 5th Engr Obstacle Clearance Company, of Engr Bn Sereď, 1st Lt Matej Ambroz.

- On 27 June, a commemoration was held at the grave to mark the 280th birthday anniversary of **Ladislav Škultéty Gábríši**, who, having been in the service of 4 Emperors, is known as "Imperial Eternal Soldier". In attendance were DCOM Land Forces Brig Karol Navrátil, CSEL Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš, and other CSEs from across the SVK Armed Forces.

- SVK troops preparing for the next **UNFICYP** rotation concluded their final tactical pre-deployment exercise, dubbed Blue Beret, on Nitra Garrison's Koliňanský Vrch training range on 26-27 June.

- The SVK MOD wants to alert the drivers in Slovakia to take caution as there will be 21 Allied **military movements** across Slovakia over the period from 2-8 July 2018. They will mainly involve US, HRV and POL troops. Drivers should also pay attention to the movements of SVK Army convoys transporting oversized cargo of equipment along the route Nitra – Training Centre Lešt. There will also be railway movements of SVK troops along the route Šarišské Lúky – Sása Pliešovce.

Tank Days Laugarício – A Day with Land Forces

(30 June) The 6th edition of Tank Days Laugarício – A Day with Land Forces were held close to Trenčianske Stankovce under the aegis of SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and

Chairman of the Trenčín Self-Governing Region Jaroslav Baška. The event was attended by Chairman of the Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko, CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko, Commander SVK Land Forces Maj Gen Jiří Joch, representatives of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Slovakia, and other guests. Nearly 200 pieces of wheeled and tracked vehicles, historic motorcycles, and aircraft were on display, and dynamic demonstrations and battle re-enactments were performed. The theme of the major re-enactment was the liberation of Western



Slovakia of 1945, with the greatest tank battle during the liberation of Slovakia. Among the novelties on display were a German Leopard 1A5, an upgraded SVK Army IFV, and Patria 8x8. SVK Armed Forces and Military Police units put on dynamic displays. The Czech Army introduced their Pandur 8x8 and Iveco 4x4 vehicles.

Maj Gen (Rtd) Juraj Baránek along with other motorcyclists on their "Motorbike Ride in tribute to Forgotten Heroes", commemorating all soldiers, policemen, firefighters and rescuers who have laid down their lives in the service of their country, came to support the event. They continued their ride on to Trenčín, where at the M. R. Štefánik Bust they remembered the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Czechoslovakia.

On cooperation with France

(28 June) SVK Minister of Defence met with the Ambassador of the French Republic to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Christophe Léonzi, at MOD Main Building, to discuss the main topics of interest and take bilateral cooperation forward, especially on Permanent Structure Cooperation (PESCO), as well as reflecting on current security developments in the wider European region.

SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "That we jointly develop the EU's PESCO projects is a clear declaration of unity, cohesion and solidarity amongst Allies. We will cooperate with France, our European and NATO Ally, on three projects as part of this initiative." In addition to Military Mobility, European Medical Command (EMC) and Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations, he noted that Slovakia's EuroArtillery project is a prospective area of cooperation too. In this respect, he appreciated and encouraged France's interest in participating in this project.



During the meeting, Minister Gajdoš and Ambassador Léonzi looked into ways to expand the existing Franco-Slovak defence collaboration on education and training activities. They also discussed the planned

increases in Slovakia's defence spending aligned to the ongoing modernization process and the upcoming NATO Summit. Finally, they talked about the centenary commemorations of the tragic death of General M. R. Štefánik in Slovakia next year, with the planned joint flypast of the Slovak, French and Italian Air Force aircraft.

4x4 vehicles on trial

(27 June) Tests and verification trials of 4x4 combat armoured vehicles/multipurpose tactical vehicles have continued at the Military Technical and Testing Institute (VTSÚ) Záhorie, to verify the technical specifications of all 4x4 platforms on trial. The results of the tests will then form an analytical section of the document which will, upon its submission, be pending approval by the SVK Cabinet.

A total of 8 vehicles will be trialled, including the COBRA 2, EJDER YALCIN, PATRIOT and EAGLE. These four vehicles have made it into the second round of the negotiations. Another 4 vehicles that were on display as new or upgraded platforms at IDEB 2018 – GERLACH, PERUN, ALIGATOR MASTER 2 and SHERPA Light APC – have joined the trialling process. The parameters of these vehicles will be measured as well. The MOD seeks to gain a comprehensive picture of verified technical data on as many 4x4 platforms of potential contractors as possible.

The procurement of 4x4 vehicles is being carried out in line with the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with an Outlook to 2030.