



## Visiting soldiers in BiH

(13 December) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko today visited Slovak service members deployed in support of EUFOR Op ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During his visit to BiH, head of the MOD met with the outgoing BiH Defence Minister, Mrs Marina Pendeš, Commander EUFOR, Major General Reinhard Trischak, and Commander and Senior Military Representative at NATO Headquarters - Sarajevo, Brig Gen William J. Edwards. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Slovakia has been involved in building and supporting stability in the Western Balkan region through EUFOR Op ALTHEA since 2004, in other words, for the past 15 years. This is a clear signal of our longstanding support for Bosnia and Herzegovina in its efforts to secure its stability and integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures." The Minister further said that Slovakia is ready to contribute to the operation as long as needed.

During the meeting, Minister Gajdoš thanked soldiers for their service in promoting peace and security. "I know that serving far away from your families and close ones is demanding and this is all the more true over Christmas. Yet, the tasks you are performing are truly important and I am immensely proud of your achievements," he said, adding that the Slovak Liaison and Observation Team (LOT) in Sarajevo is looked on by our partners as a model to be followed by other LOTs operating across the country.

According to Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, service members deployed on EUFOR Op ALTHEA have performed their duties with utmost commitment and in line with the given mandate. "The operation is secured personnel-wise and logistics-wise and we cannot see any obstacles to performing the duties into the future. What has come out of today's talks is the request to strengthen some capabilities and we will consult on that within the MOD," he added.

Commander of the Slovak Contingent on EUFOR Op ALTHEA Lt Col Peter Gavač briefed the Defence Minister on the course of the deployment and current developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "The situation in the country has been influenced by frequent protests and the political situation remains very fragile. Nevertheless, the position of locals on EUFOR Op ALTHEA is prevalently positive," he reported. Finally, he thanked the Minister and the CHOD for their visit as well as for bringing the soldiers' family members to BiH. The Minister and the CHOD brought the soldiers a Christmas tree, gifts and ingredients for the traditional Christmas sauerkraut soup. Yet, to them, the most precious were their family members who travelled to BiH as part of the Slovak delegation.

The Slovak Republic has been part of EUFOR Op ALTHEA since 2004. The aim of the operation is to stabilise the security environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina, work towards the fulfilment of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), and build the capabilities of BiH armed forces. A total of 889 SVK Armed Forces members have rotated in and out of the operation. Currently, 41 SVK personnel (1 servicewoman) are deployed in support of EUFOR Op ALTHEA.

## Celebrating 25 years of Institute of Military History

(11 December) The SVK MOD hosted a ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Institute of Military History (VHU). Apart from the Institute's military and civilian staff, the ceremony was attended by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš, Maj Gen Josef Pokorný and Maj Gen Miroslav Lorinc, and other guests. After presenting military medals to selected personnel, the Defence Minister addressed the audience and thanked the awardees for their achievements, underlining the importance of history for the present and future of Slovakia. In his speech, Director of the Institute Col Miloslav Čaplovič analysed the Institute's activities, past and present, and outlined his future vision for the Institute as a scientific, research, archiving and museum institution under the remit of the SVK MOD. He thanked the MOD leadership for their wide and varied support to the VHU's mission.



- **Petra Vihová**, member of the Slovak National Team and sportswoman of the Dukla Banská Bystrica Military Sports Centre, won the parallel slalom race at the FIS Ski World Cup on 15 Dec 2019 in St. Moritz, Switzerland. This is her 10th World Cup victory.

- Bratislava Garrison staffers held a Christmas meeting where **Commander of Bratislava Garrison Col Slavomír Milde** thanks all staff members for the job well done this year and for the preparation of the ceremonial concert in tribute to 100 years of Bratislava Garrison.

- The Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin hosted the **Baking and Cooking Retraining Course** for bakers and cooks on 12 Dec 2019. The course was completed by 24 service members (16 servicewomen) from across the Slovak Armed Forces.

- Working in collaboration with the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Civil-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations Centre Martin hosted the **Humanitarian Operations Course**. This was the second such course this year.

- **Ivan Elko**, General Bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia, met with members of the Central Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the Slovak Armed Forces and Corps and MOD employees on 11 Dec 2019.

- Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 13 **Allied road movements** from 16 Dec to 22 Dec 2019 in Slovakia. During the week, SVK Army convoys will ferry oversized cargo from Trebišov to Veľké Ozorovce, from Martin to Hlohovec and from Trebišov to Prešov.

## Full Field Kit this week

**Live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat on Regina Radio's Full Field Kit, which is aimed at soldiers and all those who care about homeland security and defence, you will learn about how our soldiers deployed on missions and operations abroad will be spending their X-mas and MOD leaders will extend their season's greetings to our listeners. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and opinions. Please, write to us at [plnapolna@mod.gov.sk](mailto:plnapolna@mod.gov.sk).**

## Slovak Armed Forces Practical Military Swimming Championships

(9 December) The Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš hosted the 16th Slovak Armed Forces Practical Military Swimming Championships. 31 contestants, i.e. servicemen and women from across 14 units and facilities of the Slovak Armed Forces, took part in 6 swimming disciplines this year. For example, they swam 100m in basic diving gear and 100m Armed Forces Issue M85 Field Uniform with weights and a firearm replica. The last two disciplines involved clearing underwater obstacles and retrieving sunken items. Women



competed regardless of their age, while men were divided into the U30, U40, and O40 age categories. Winners of the competition were Pte Nikol Zacharová (AOS Liptovský Mikuláš), PFC Tomáš Puchlý (Hlohovec), Sgt Marek Sovský (Nitra) and Maj Peter Gerec (AOS Liptovský Mikuláš). They received prizes from Dušan Litva, director of the Championships and head of the Physical Training and Sports

Department, AOS. Having participated in all 16 Championships, Sgt Marek Sovský claimed his 13th gold medal.

## Humanitarian aid

(13 December) Humanitarian aid worth nearly 44,000 euros was today handed over for a primary school in Afghanistan's Mazar Sharif by representatives of the Defence, Foreign and European Affairs, and Interior Ministries and the State Material Reserves Authority during a ceremony at Milan Rastislav Štefánik Airport in Bratislava. Speaking on behalf of the SVK MOD, Brig Gen Slavomír Staviarský, Director General of the Defence Management, Armed Forces Development, and Defence Planning Department, said: "Generally speaking, the MOD and the Armed Forces are not the standard providers of humanitarian aid, but if the legislation and conditions allow so, we know that when delivering humanitarian and development aid we cannot do without the assistance of armed forces, particularly in the countries where our soldiers are deployed on crisis management operations."



## MOD Literary Competition

(10 December) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and General Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Ján Holko gave prizes to the winners of the 15th MOD Literary Competition at MOD Main Building today (10 December 2019). A total of 132 entries by both secondary and tertiary school students were evaluated this year. Rebeka Morvaiová, of the Vavrínec Benedikt Nedožerský Grammar School in Prievidza, placed 1st in the secondary school category. The highest number of votes in an online vote won Mária Kromková, of Comenius University in Bratislava, first place in the tertiary school category.

## Appeal for donations

We appeal for financial donations so we can help Cpl Jozef Bilohuščin, member of the ISTAR Bn Prešov, who was among those who lost their flats in the gas explosion of the tower block on Mukačevska Street in Prešov on 6 Dec 2019. Donations can be made via a bank transfer into the Military Support Foundation's account at: SK40 7500 0000 0040 2151 8640.