



Minister at IDEX 2021

(23 February) SVK defence manufacturers need genuine support in the form of right conditions at home and international marketing with partners abroad. In this way, the Ministry of Defence wants to drive their progress, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď announced at the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) 2021 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Speaking at the conclusion of the fair, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "IDEX is among the most significant international defence equipment exhibitions in the world, which is why I am pleased that Slovakia, too, was represented in the event. At the SVK Ministry of Defence Exhibition Stand, we along with DMD Group, an MOD-owned joint stock company, presented a line-up of SVK defence manufacturers' products and capabilities. Our aim was to open doors to the world for our exports." He emphasised that this comes as part of the initiative to offer real assistance to our domestic defence industry, which the SVK Government committed to in its 2020-2024 Government Manifesto.

As part of his official programme in the UAE, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď met with the UAE Minister of State for Defence Affairs, His Excellency Mohammed Ahmad Al Bowardi for talks on advancing bilateral cooperation between Slovakia and the United Arab Emirates in the field of defence and security. Thanks to the signing of the Agreement between Slovakia and the UAE concerning Protection and Exchange of Classified Information, our engagement with the UAE will now go from strength to strength. "This is an inevitable step which will take our cooperation to a higher level," explained Jaroslav Naď. The SVK Defence Minister's official visit to the UAE also involved meetings with the Defence Ministers of Greece and Egypt and the Deputy Defence Minister of the Czech Republic. Alongside presenting several SVK defence companies and their line-up of products, Mr Naď provided his colleagues with an update on the progress being made in delivering SVK modernisation projects. "The meetings also served the purpose of exchanging experience in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," added Jaroslav Naď.

INFO DAY for NGOs

(27 February) The MOD is hosting an INFO DAY with NGOs seeking an MOD grant. Aimed at introducing the MOD Grant Scheme and providing guidance on how to fill in the grant application form, the meeting will be carried out over videoconference (VTC) at 14:00 on 4 March.

Participants will be able to ask practical questions and verify their compliance with the procedures for preparing the required documentation. The aim is to prevent the most common mistakes applicants must avoid, which, otherwise, may result in low scores in the grant application evaluation process.

Those interested in the VTC consultations can send an email to dotacie@mod.gov.sk and register for the VTC no later than 16:00 on 2 March.

A rehearsal session and connectivity check will take place with the registered NGO applicants at 14:00 on 3 March to verify technical parameters and to prevent potential complications. The link to connect to the VTC will be sent to all registered email addresses of the applicants.

United Kingdom gifts germicidal lamps to Slovakia

(26 February) The United Kingdom gifted 67 new germicidal lamps to Slovakia to assist the SVK people in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. They will be utilised, among others, by the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok and local testing sites to which SVK military personnel have been assigned. On behalf of the SVK Ministry of Defence, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer thanked the UK Ambassador to Slovakia, HE Mr Nigel Baker at the Ministry of Defence. Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer said: "This is proof that our Allied relationship goes well over and above the standard scope of cooperation and that the bilateral engagement between both countries is successful."

The UK Government has provided a €31,300 grant to fund the gift, he added. During the meeting, Deputy Defence Minister Majer updated Ambassador Baker on the developing COVID-19 situation in Slovakia and the assistance tasks SVK Armed Forces members have been engaged on under the Military Aid to Civilian Authority (MACA) requests. They also paid attention to bilateral affairs, especially to military education and training, and the participation of SVK and UK armed forces in joint international exercises.



- On 25 Feb, Vajnory Barracks hosted a Change of Command (COC) ceremony for **Commander Bratislava Garrison**, with Col Slavomír Milde handing command over to Lt Col Miloš Arnold, in the presence of SVK Deputy Chief of Defence/Chief of Staff (DCHOD/COS) Maj Gen Štefan Kovács.

- Having been promoted to the rank of Colonel, Lt Col Štefan Rigas was introduced by Commander 1st Mechanised Brigade Brig Ivan Balog as the new Chief of Staff HQ **1st Mechanised Brigade**, with effect from 1 Mar, in succession to Col Peter Ondrejka who has been transferred to the Reserves.

- Lt Col Marián Brinček has been named the new **Commander ISTAR Battalion** and Maj Jaroslav Bobko the new Deputy Commander ISTAR Battalion with effect from 1 Mar.

- Ema Kapustová, member of the **Dukla Military Sports Centre (MSC)**, won Bronze in the women's 10km individual pursuit at the Biathlon Junior Championships in Obertilliach, Austria. Henrieta Horvátová, another Dukla MSC member, scooped Silver in the women's 12.5km individual pursuit.

- 48 military personnel, including the Staff Chaplain of the Maj **Gen Otto Smik Tactical Wing Sliach**, have been assigned to support the Zvolen hospital.

- On 25 Feb, SNP Martin-Podháj Barracks hosted a Change of Command (COC) ceremony for **Commander Supply Base II**, with Lt Col Štefan Oravkin taking over command from Col Ondrej Bagačka.

- On 23 Feb, Deputy Commander of the Slovak Air Force Brig Ladislav Dohun presented the **Minister of Interior Badge** to members of the SVK Air Force HQ for supporting Op Shared Responsibility to halt the spread of COVID-19. That same day, Lt Col Ján Hric handed the Badge over to selected members of the SLOVCON UNFICYP at HQ Sector 4 in Famagusta. And the next day, Commander Helicopter Wing Prešov Col Peter Kríž presented the Badge to selected Wing members.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as 11 Allied road movements by US, CZE and POL troops are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 1 to 7 March 2021. The MOD stresses that the Allied transits have been approved in line with the SVK Public Health Authority-issued guidelines. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct road movements from/to: Michalovce – Hlohovec, Martin – Trebišov, Michalovce – Prešov, Nitra – Prešov, Hlohovec – Prešov, Prešov – Nemecká and back, Hlohovec – Trenčín and back, Trenčín – Trebišov, Trebišov – Poruba pod Vihorlatom and back, Michalovce – Kamenica nad Cirochou, Trebišov – Hlohovec, Prešov – Trenčín, Trebišov – Veľké Ozorovce and back, Trenčín – Nitra, Topoľčany – Nemecká, Trebišov – Martin, and Prešov – Mokrada. Also scheduled over the given week are rail movements from/to: Kamenica nad Cirochou – Prešov, Vlkánová – Sliach – Zemianske Kostoľany, Zemianske Kostoľany – Prešov, and Zemianske Kostoľany – Vlkánová – Sliach.



Thank you to Service leavers

(26 February) Led by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, representatives of the Ministry of Defence bade farewell to members of the Slovak Armed Forces leaving the Service.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Military experts who have put in an unbelievable amount of work over years of their service in the Armed Forces to the benefit of building and developing SVK Defence are quitting our ranks. After their challenging service to the country and discharging their duties responsibly under the Oath of Allegiance over their long and distinguished careers, from my heart I wish them the best of health, calm and peace, and plenty of well-deserved rest. They deserve our sincere "Thank You" and respect for everything they have done for Defence and Slovakia."

Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "After so many years of service, nobody finds it easy on transfer to the Reserves. Also for this reason, I wish all of you lots of happiness and success in your personal lives and I firmly believe that you will hold no grudges against the military and that you will always find your way to us."

During the farewell ceremony, the Defence Minister and the Chief of Defence presented military medals to the leavers of the Slovak Armed Forces.

Good-bye to civilians

(26 February) Secretary General of the SVK MOD Service Office Peter Kozák bade farewell to long-time civil servants of the MOD Human Resources Department. Among those reaching retirement are Mária

Dobiášová after 30 years in the MOD, Katarína Duchoňová, the founder of the Civil Servants Unions, after 28 years in the MOD, and Lt Col (Rtd) Ján Vincel after 43 years in the MOD and 30 years of service as in the Armed Forces. Secretary General Peter Kozák thanked them for their long record of dedicated work and presented them the SVK Minister of Defence Memorial Medal.



Alternative procedures training for helicopter insertion and extraction



(26 February) Intense training in alternative procedures for helicopter insertion and extraction was conducted simultaneously at two different locations the last week of February.

The 23-24 Feb training at Trenčín Airport involved members of the 5th Special Forces Regiment, a 4-member Mi-17M helicopter crew, and, later, a five-member Search and Rescue (SAR) Mi-17 helicopter crew. The 24-25 Feb training at Prešov Air Base, home to the UH-60M helicopter fleet, saw 3 instructors of the 5th Special Forces Regiment and experienced UH-60M helicopter crews guiding members of the home-based Parachute, Airborne and Rescue Service through theory and practice, including safety procedures, with a focus on Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction (FRIES) and Rappelling.