



NATO EOD

Demonstrations and Trials 2021

(13 October) Bratislava's Incheba Expo Arena hosted the opening ceremony for the 6th edition of the NATO EOD Demonstrations and Trials 2021, showcasing EOD/IEDD capabilities. Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' and DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda attended the opening ceremony for the event, with "Technological Innovations Influencing Future EOD and Related Capabilities" as this year's theme. 36 exhibitors from 17 countries were represented at the exhibition. The head of the MOD praised the international dimension of the event, organised by the NATO EOD COE Slovakia and co-organised by another four COEs from Czechia, Germany, Spain and Turkey. A number of new EOD/IEDD technologies and trends were presented at the exhibition. Aside from this, visitors from the ranks of the EOD/IEDD community viewed live demonstrations, toured a static display of equipment, and listened to lectures by experts at the theme-based conference.

SVK-UKR defence engagement

(11 October) There has been marked progress in the Slovak-Ukrainian defence engagement over the recent period, especially at the military professional level. Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' announced after his meeting with Ukrainian Chief of Defence Gen Lt Gen Valerii Zaluzhnyi, who is visiting Slovakia at the invitation of Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko. Minister Nad' said: "The Slovak Armed Forces' recent deployments to Ex Joint Endeavour 2021 and Ex Rapid Trident 2021 in Ukraine and Ukrainian participation in Ex Blonde Avalanche 2021 in Slovakia are testament to the strong partnership and defence engagement with our eastern neighbour. Recently, as a signal of support and cooperation, we also sent our troops to Ukraine to take part in the military parade to mark the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's independence." The current programme of SVK-UKR defence activities covers official visits, courses, assistance in capabilities generation, and reciprocal use of training facilities. At the meeting, Minister Nad' expressed Slovakia's full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and reform process towards Euro-Atlantic standards and structures.

Promotion of reservists

(14 October) Legislative changes are required to change the way reservists are promoted. The MOD is to adopt an Amendment Bill to prevent promotions from being abused as a thank you to public officials. The Amendment Bill was approved by the Parliamentary Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee. Under the legislative procedure, it is expected to enter into force on 1 Dec 2021. The Amendment Bill aims to regulate the promotion of reservists, particularly with ensuring that the ex-service personnel who are the recipients of Service pension or Service disablement pension can be promoted only after their conscription duty ceases, provided that they are not public figures. It also regulates the promotion of Active Reserves (AR) soldiers. The Amendment Bill, which is to amend and supplement the Act on Conscription, War Veterans and Social Welfare of Police and Military Personnel, still requires formal approval from the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security and Parliament.

Our soldiers side by side with our allies demonstrate a strong transatlantic bond

(15 October) In his official visit to Latvia, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer held a series of bilateral talks to discuss cooperation on security and defence and strategic communications and visited the SVK Contingent (SLOVCON) deployed on NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Ādaži, where 127 SVK soldiers are currently serving in command, support and artillery roles. During his talks with his counterpart, Latvian Deputy Defence Minister Jānis Garisons, Mr Majer appreciated the advancement of bilateral cooperation between the countries. Mr Majer also met with Director of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Jānis Sārts to discuss, among others, Slovakia's Action Plan for Coordination of the Fight Against Hybrid Threats, transatlantic partnership, NATO-EU cooperation, and strategic documents. On the above issues, Mr Majer also had a meeting with National Security Adviser to the President of Latvia Jānis Kazociņš. The Deputy Defence Minister's official programme continued with his participation in the Riga Conference 2021, where he appeared as a speaker on the panel titled "What is still holding Europe back from becoming a global actor?"



- The FY 2022 SVK Defence Budget will total €1.838bn, however, defence spending will reach €1.899bn or 1.8% of GDP on defence. This follows on from the SVK Government Budget Proposal for 2022-2024, which was endorsed by the Cabinet on 14 Oct.

- For his prompt collaboration and support in evacuating people from Afghanistan, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' gave thanks to HE Mr Ladislav Ballek, SVK Ambassador to Iran who is also accredited to Afghanistan and Pakistan. During their conversation on 12 Oct, Minister Nad' and Ambassador Ballek put forward their understanding of the current security and political situation in the Near East and of the associated security threats.

- On 11 Oct, the MOD filed a criminal complaint against Marián Kotleba MP and Milan Mazurek MP over the spread of hoax news. The subject of the complaint is the MPs spreading false and misleading information on the development and use of the MOVIR system in their videos released in the public domain.

- On 14 Oct, representatives of the Defence and Interior Ministries signed the Implementation Agreement on Mutual Cooperation. It lists specific areas of cooperation such as joint training exercises for SCO19 officers and 5th SOF Regiment personnel, sharing of expertise and skills, and parachute training. This provides the space for potential military assistance in high profile incidents as part of domestic crisis management operations.

- Thanks to funding from the Pontis Foundation's Mobis Fund, the Ministry of Defence Aeromedical Centre and Outpatient Clinic Sliac has received a CA-800 corneal topographer to facilitate a complete examination of the anterior corneal surface by ophthalmologists.

- In the latest edition of Azimuth 2417 we report on the SVK soldiers assigned to the Intermediate Reserve Force in support of Op EUFOR Althea and on the 52th Airborne Battalion Trebišov's deployment to Ex Quick Response 2021, with the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Romania and Turkey.

- The MOD is gradually introducing a series of electric mobility measures at its defence establishments. The MOD Accommodation Agency (BARMO) has installed an electric vehicle charging point (EVCP) at its service accommodation facility in Bratislava.

- Instructors of the Mobilisation Manning and Courses Section delivered the Basic Course for K-1 Specialists designed to improve the K-1 specialists' theoretical knowledge of placing troops on stand-by, combat readiness, and SVK Armed Forces mobilisation as a prerequisite for professional growth.

- Lt Col Jozef Kuchta and Maj Jaroslav Kompan of the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) visited the Defence Institution Building School (DIBS) in Georgia, to support their colleagues ahead of the NATO accreditation process for DIBS and to share lessons learned from the AOS's formal accreditation by NATO in 2017.

- Due to the worsening pandemic situation, the MOD Outpatient Clinic in Bratislava urges patients with respiratory symptoms to consult with the doctor by phone or email ahead of visiting the clinic.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as 20 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 18-24 October 2021. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Sliac – Moldava nad Bodvou, Záhore – Dubnica nad Váhom, Trebišov – Rožňava, Lešť – Hlohovec, Zemianske Kostolany – Martin and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Rožňava and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Trenčín and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Nitra and back, and within the city of Nitra. There will also be a SVK military rail movement from Piešťany to Rožňava.

V4 Chiefs of Defence Meeting in Hungary

(14 October) On 13-14 Oct, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko participated in the V4 Chief of Defence Meeting in Hungary. Topics of discussion included increasing operational readiness, training and exercises, building and developing military capabilities for the defence of our region in the face of current and future threats. The V4 CHODs discussed their lessons learned from COVID-19 operations, the evacuation of civilians from Afghanistan, as well as touching on illegal migration in the region. Another key issue on the agenda was the V4 EU BG with

the planned stand-by period in the first half of 2023. In this context, Gen Zmeko offered Ex Slovak Shield 2023 as a training activity for the units assigned to the V4 EU BG. Day



Fire breaks out in military hospital

(17 October) At 07:30am on Sunday, an electrical short circuit sparked a fire in the attic of the Surgery Pavilion, Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital Ružomberok. As a result, the hospital was immediately evacuated. Neither patients nor staff were in danger. All of them were safe. Due to damage to the building, the hospital managers decided to halt the planned operations at the Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Emergency Surgery, and Vascular Surgery Departments. For more information, patients can call us on 044 438 2929 or email us at uvn@uvn.sk.

Predeployment training for eFP

(15 October) On 4-15 Oct, members of the Self-propelled Artillery Battalion Michalovce, led by Lt Col Marek Uchaľ, underwent intense predeployment training ahead of deploying on NATO's eFP in Latvia later this December. Part 1 of the training focused on theory and preparation of the ZUZANA 2 SpGHs. These are soon to replace their previous variants in Latvia. Part 2 of the intense training (11-15 Oct) saw a Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) exercise on Kamienka nad Cirochou Training Area, to determine the readiness of the deploying troops.

Soldiers to assist once again

(14 October) Members of the SVK Armed Forces will assist alongside medical professionals and hygiene specialists in the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Acting on the recommendation of the Ministry of Health, this proposal, relying on a deployment of up to 500 soldiers, was approved by the Cabinet. They will support regional public health authorities and selected hospitals in organisational, administrative and medical roles until 31 Dec 2021. All details will be specified in an agreement between the MOD and MOH.

Firefighters in action

(15 October) On 11-15 Oct, the Training Centre Lešť hosted a coordination exercise for the Defence Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) units serving with the SVK Air Force, i.e. the DFRS units from the Transport Wing Kuchyňa, Tactical Wing Sliac and Helicopter Wing Prešov. The aim of the exercise was to align their actions, to practise incident response skills, and to train new personnel. Military firefighters tested their coordination with military medics from the Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General and members of the Emergency Medical Services.

