



On European security and defence cooperation in Brussels

(17 May) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' addressed the most topical issues in the field of defence and security, as EU defence ministers came together for discussions at the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) and at the EDA's Ministerial Steering Board.

Central themes of the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) meeting included the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the EU's Strategic Compass in the context of driving efficiency across the EU's CSDP missions and operations, and the security situation in the Sahel region.

At that meeting, Jaroslav Nad' confirmed that in response to the actions of the Russian paramilitary groups in Mali, Slovakia supports a temporary suspension of the EU operational missions in Mali. "Despite the exceptionally complicated security situation in this African country, where three members of the Slovak Armed Forces have been serving with EUTM Mali, Slovakia remains committed to supporting Mali in its fight against local terrorist threats. We must find a way to keep our presence in this region, stay united and continue to build on our cooperation," he said.

In debating the Russian aggression against Ukraine, EU defence ministers agreed on the need for continued military assistance to Ukraine. "Any peace agreement must reflect the main demands of the Ukrainian side so as to ensure the security and stability of Ukraine," Minister Nad' said. Referencing the extent of damage to Ukrainian infrastructure with no parallel in post-1945 Europe, he stressed that Ukraine will need extensive EU funding to rebuild its country.

At the EDA's Ministerial Steering Board meeting, chaired by HR/VP Josep Borrell, the Slovak side supported the initiative to establish a Hub for EU Defence Innovation. Faced with rising inflation, the main challenge will be to support defence industry stakeholders so that they can respond to increased demand for military equipment and technology, Mr Nad' concluded.



Help from Materiel Reserves Agency

(19 May) The MOD is to take delivery of 686 pieces of replacement parts from the Materiel Reserves Agency's stocks to be used mainly for repairs of P-V3S trucks, BVP-1 and BVP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, and T-72 tanks. A transfer agreement on spares worth over €467 000 was signed today by representatives of the MOD and the Agency at MOD Main Building. "Military spare parts have been lying in the warehouses of the Materiel Reserves Agency for decades, however, the armed forces will no longer be able to use some of them, while others are valuable articles because their acquisition is complicated today. After a series of meetings, we are going to make best use of this materiel exactly where it is most needed – in the Armed Forces. By doing so, we will prevent it from losing its value, as was the case with the spare parts for the SU-22 engines," said Minister Nad'. The MOD wants to continue to work closely with the Agency to make sure the Agency has the replacement parts essential to getting the MOD's needs met in a time of crisis. Just recently, on 5 May, additional military equipment from the Agency's stocks was transferred to the Military Technical & Testing Institute (VTSÚ) Záhorie. Director of VTSÚ František Petráš took over Tatra trucks and semi-trailers to help the Institute deliver its test and evaluation (T&E) programmes.

Nearly 200 new military professionals swear their Oath of Allegiance at Martin base

(20 May) 194 trainee soldiers, of whom 55 were women, completed a passing out parade to mark the end of their initial military training (IMT) at the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin. DDM Marian Majer and DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda attended the ceremony. "To protect the sovereignty and independence of the Slovak Republic, you have pledged to put in all your efforts and even sacrifice your own lives, which is the highest commitment and the ultimate sacrifice one can make in the line of duty. This commitment involves protecting each and every Slovak citizen," said Majer. Earlier this February, 463 young soldiers, the highest number of soldiers to pass out of training on a single day in the history of the Slovak Armed Forces, took the Oath of Allegiance. After completing the IMT, the trainee soldiers will move on to branch-specialised training. On their successful completion, they will report to military units of the Slovak Armed Forces.



- Members of **21 Sp Arty Bn Michalovce**, part of 2 Mech Bde, led by Lt Col Marek Uchaf, underwent predeployment training at MTA Valaškovce ahead of deploying on NATO's eFP in Latvia. On 18 May, they conducted training firings under the theme of Artillery Battery in Conduct of Missions on Offensive Operation. COM SVK ARMY Maj Gen Pach inspected their readiness in person.

- Working closely with the CZE Army's Munitions Testing Centre, the SVK Army's 4 Log Regt Trenčín, **44 Logistics Service Centre and Munitions Testing Centre Nováky** will host meetings with CZE experts on 16-20 May, to discuss tests on explosives, explosive items and munitions and inter-laboratory test comparisons. The centres have exchanged expertise in the above areas, plus in munitions decommissioning, new technology, and handling munitions in line with ISO/IEC 17025:2017, as well as cooperating on laboratory, technical and firing tests.

- Following coordination drills, a company tactical exercise, directed by Lt Col Gabriel Janovics, marked another training phase of **1 Mech Coy**, part of 12 Mech Bn Nitra, at TC Lešť on 16-17 May.

- Members of 12 Mech Bn, part of 1 Mech Bde, led by Coy Com Capt Róbert Patay underwent a **36-hour intense training programme**, including a force-on-force (FOF) exercise supported by the MILES 2000 system. This marked the end of their preparation for a tactical exercise as part of Ex Slovak Shield 2022.

- After two years' pause over coronavirus, the **62nd International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes** took place on 13-15 May, bringing together armed forces and armed corps from 50 countries worldwide. Slovakia was represented by 130 military and civilian pilgrims, led by Roman Catholic Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek, with music support provided by the Military Band Banská Bystrica.

- Almost €16,000 were raised at the charity concert titled "Through the Eyes of the Heart" on 21 Apr. The fundraiser was organised by the Central Office of **Ecumenical Pastoral Service (ESP)** to support children in Ukraine. ESP is preparing three 12-day therapeutic summer camps for kids from Bucha and Hostomel. They will take place at the National Ethnographic Ukrainian Village Complex near Kyiv. The summer camps will be supported by educators, psychologists and priests of the Orthodox Church.

- The latest edition of **Azimuth 24/7**, the SVK Armed Forces' YouTube channel, presents training firings from MLRSs.

- As part of their Transport Logistics subject this summer semester, young logisticians of the **Armed Forces Academy** tested their theoretical knowledge in practice. At 41 Supply Base Nemšová and 42 Supply Base Poprad, they were b the tasks of the bases, stocktaking, claims procedures, procurement and movements of materiel. They also assisted personnel of 21 Sp Arty Bn Michalovce in moving vehicles onto wagons and became familiar with the Rail Cargo Group CSKD Terminal in Žilina.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents Ex Slovak Shield 2022 live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

International Exercise Slovak Shield 2022 kicks off

(20 May) As part of Ex Slovak Shield 2022, the Training Centre (TC) Lešť hosted the opening ceremony for a tactical battalion exercise. Ex Slovak Shield is directed by COM 1st Mech Bde Brig Gen Alexander Kollárik, while COM 12th Mech Bn Lt Col Gabriel Janovics is in command of the exercising troops. In his opening remarks, COM SVK Army and Exercise Director Maj Gen Ivan Pach welcomed all participants and partners to Ex Slovak Shield and underlined the importance of the exercise for strengthening NATO's eastern flank in the face of the war in Ukraine. The training audience includes service members of the U.S. Army Europe and the Indiana National Guard (ING), HUN and U.S. command staff, the CZE eFP troops deployed to Slovakia, as well as representatives of the newly established Hungary-based NATO Headquarters Multinational Division - Centre (HQ MND-C), led by Maj Gen Denis Tretinjak. The exercising brigades report to HQ MND-C as the next superior level of

STRENGTH - COURAGE - READINESS

Those interested in joining Voluntary Military Training are invited to apply for the selection process by 6 June. Thanks to the VMT training scheduled from 6 July to 23 Sept, they will develop basic soldiering skills and increase their physical fitness and mental resistance. On completion of the training, they are eligible to receive over €1,300 and will be promoted to 2nd Class Pte and transferred to the Reserves. For more information, go to www.vojenskapriprava.sk.

High demand for crisis management

(18 May) A four-day Crisis Management, Integrated Rescue System and Civil Defence Course is taking place at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš. The course is designed for civil servants from government ministries and agencies, and public and local authorities with the view to increasing their readiness to handle crisis situations, provide solutions to incidents, and combat hybrid threats. On the course, they will develop practical skills in crisis control support. Later, they can move on to train as crisis managers at the AOS Simulation Centre. As demand for this course is very high, the organiser will offer two more courses this year.

Soldiers through the eyes of kids



(19 May) A total of 328 primary schools and 28 individuals participated in the 21st MOD Painting and Drawing Contest, intended for primary school pupils. The expert panel, made up of artists, MOD employees and

soldiers, evaluated 2,545 entries, the second highest number of entries in the history of the contest. Jakub Kurák, of J. J. Thurzo Primary School in Detva, and Barbora Brindžáková, of Krosnianska Primary School in Košice, won the Junior and Senior Pupils categories, respectively. Winners of both categories will receive certificates, souvenirs and cash prizes. Selected entries will be on display at the MOD and the Nové Mesto Shopping Mall in Bratislava.

NATO MC in CHOD Session

(19 May) The central theme of the 187th Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session was NATO's adaptation to the new security situation after 24 Feb. The NATO Secretary General stressed that the Alliance had strengthened its presence on the eastern flank since the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and that it would continue to do so, including through the adaptation of its military structures and reinforcements on the eastern flank. Allied Chiefs of Defence welcomed Finland's and Sweden's interest in joining NATO and received an update on the situation in Ukraine from UKR CHOD Gen Valeriy Zaluzhnyy by video call.



command. Among those exercising at TC Lešť are Nitra-based Mech Bn troops and two U.S. Army units, including a Stryker company and an engineer company. Elsewhere, the Váh training ground is hosting a joint exercise for SVK and U.S. engineers – an EOD platoon, part of 901st Engr Bn, and an ING engineer platoon. It is there that the U.S. engineers are exercising with Slovak equipment. The exercise is supported by real life support (RLS) teams under the command of the SVK Army's CSS Bde. There are six RLS teams preparing food and serving meals at eight field feeding locations across Lešť. Overall, 300 soldiers are involved in the logistics of the exercise.

In addition to field catering and accommodation operations, the logisticians are tasked with coordinating movements of materiel and equipment, loading wagons, storing munitions, refuelling, and supporting a Role 1 medical treatment facility. Voice and data services on the exercise are provided by signals of the Deployable CIS Base.