



Minister Sklenár in Brussels

(23 May) In Brussels, Defence Minister Martin Sklenár joined other EU Defence Ministers for a series of meetings and held bilateral talks with German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius. Topics included joint defence support to Ukraine, the progress made in the delivery of artillery munitions to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and the impact of the war on the EU's future defence capabilities.

At the FAC-DEF meeting, Minister Sklenár underlined the need for the swift adoption of measures to increase European defence industrial capacity to meet the EU's ambition of sending one million artillery rounds to Ukraine and to replenish this type of ammunition and military stocks. "In the interests of supporting peace and stability in our region and in the world, continued support to Ukraine remains our priority number one," he said.

At the bilateral talks, Minister Sklenár updated Minister Pistorius on the defence policy priorities of the new MOD leadership and confirmed Slovakia's continuation of its transatlantic direction, modernisation efforts in the Slovak Armed Forces, and pledge to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence. The two appreciated the SVK-DEU defence relationship so far and reiterated their interest in seeing it go from strength to strength.

According to Mr Sklenár, Germany is our very close and credible partner, contributing to the NATO Battlegroup in Slovakia and safeguarding SVK skies with its Patriot missile system. We are also working together to repair UKR equipment at a battle damage repair facility in Michalovce. What's more, Germany is delivering Leopard 2A4 MBTs to Slovakia as compensation for the transfer of the Slovak BVP-1 IFVs to Ukraine and is going to gift a MANTIS system to Slovakia.

EU Defence Ministers also met in the EDA Steering Board to exchange views on capability implications of the war in Ukraine. Mr Sklenár also participated in a meeting with NATO Sec Gen Jens Stoltenberg, where Ministers took stock of EU-NATO cooperation.

Patriot heading to Vilnius

(25 May) The two German batteries of the Patriot missile interceptor system currently stationed in Slovakia will move to Lithuania to protect the NATO Summit in Vilnius. Lithuania has no such capability of its own and NATO troops there are not involved to the extent they are in Slovakia. "The repositioning of the weapons system comes as a natural part of developments after a responsible assessment of the security situation. As with the swift and major strengthening of Slovakia's air defences by our allies last spring, there is now a need for allied systems to be moved to Vilnius, whilst it holds true that the Alliance guarantees and actually secures the defence of every inch of Alliance territory and of its populations," Minister Sklenár said, emphasising that safeguarding SVK airspace remains a priority. In addition to SVK GBAD systems, Slovakia is protected by an Italian SAMP/T missile system and air defence assets of the NATO Multinational Battlegroup stationed at Lešť. In just a matter of weeks, Slovakia will receive the MANTIS system from Germany as a gift to protect its infrastructure in the east of the country. The MOD is in negotiations with allies and partners to further strengthen Slovakia's air defences. The joint DEU-SVK action will add to the security of the NATO Summit in Vilnius. NATO's air and missile defence will be high on the agenda of the summit in Vilnius.

Defence Minister discusses assistance to Ukraine with UDCG partners

(25 May) In a video conference with other defence leaders, Defence Minister Martin Sklenár attended a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (UDCG), addressing the operational needs of Ukraine's Armed Forces in its defence against Russia's aggression. "Whilst Ukraine is into its second year of defending itself heroically against the Russian aggressor, the international community's support to it is key. Therefore, we must not let up either. We are determined to continue to thoroughly assess all of the Ukrainian side's follow-on requirements to contribute to its defence as our resources allow," Sklenár said.

The head of the SVK MOD reminded that Slovakia is among the most active contributors of military assistance to Ukraine. SVK military aid to Ukraine so far has included the S-300 air defence system, Božena demining UGVs, 30 BVP-1 IFVs, five transport helicopters, munitions, fuel, 13 MiG-29s, and some assets of the SA-6 "Gainful" surface-to-air missile system. In addition to running a battle damage repair (BDR) workshop in Michalovce, Slovakia also provides training to Ukrainian forces under EUMAM UA.



► On 24 May, Defence Minister Martin Sklenár briefed SVK President Čaputová on the MOD's priorities in the coming period and the preparations for the NATO summit. Along with Foreign and European Affairs Minister Miroslav Wlachovský, he reaffirmed the continuity of SVK foreign policy towards our responsible alliance and predictable partnership with NATO and the EU, as well as our ongoing support to Ukraine.

► Also on 24 May, MOD subject matter experts (SMEs), led by Defence Minister Martin Sklenár and State Secretary Marian Majer, took part in the 8th "Together on Security and Defence" Conference, bringing together the SVK security & defence community. Traditionally, the conference serves as a forum for SMEs in various professional backgrounds to engage in open discussions about SVK security in the region's geopolitical space. Defence Minister Sklenár addressed the audience and State Secretary Majer spoke on a panel titled "Slovakia as a Reliable Ally". Also in attendance at the conference was Foreign and European Affairs Minister Wlachovský.

► Airmen of 51 Wing Prešov and of the Indiana National Guard took part in UH-60M aircrew and door gunnery qualification training at Camp Atterbury in the USA, resulting in the certification of the SVK airmen – two instructor pilots, three instructor technicians and a door gunner.

► Sgt Maj Martin Boháčik handed his role of the Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) for Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM) over to MSgt Imrich Fekete. With 32 years of service, Sgt Maj Boháčik is leaving the Service.

► 71 Command Support Battalion (Com Spt Bn) underwent tactical training at Turecký vrch. The exercising troops were faced with a simulated flooding of the surrounding areas and villages, transported material, set up inflatable tents, and delivered food supplies.

► An Initial military training (IMT) programme for trainee soldiers and professionally qualified officers has culminated in a 72-hour intensive tactical training exercise, putting to the test the practical skills of 124 male and female trainee soldiers in the field. On completion of the training, the passing out parade is due on 2 June.

► The M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy's Department of Social Sciences and Languages hosted the 21st international "New Trends of Professional Training in the Armed Forces" Conference. The opening remarks were delivered by Deputy Commandant for Quality and Development Assoc Prof Vladimír Andrassy. Also in attendance at the conference were representatives of the SVK MOD, Police Academy of Prague (CZE), Land Forces Academy of Wrocław (POL), and Jagiellonian University of Krakow (POL). Bulgaria's National Military Academy took part in the event via video link.

► On 17 June, the RC Bishopric of the Forces is organising the 13th "In the Footsteps of Sts Cyril and Methodius" Pilgrimage to Zalavár, Hungary. Transport is for free, with the scheduled departure and arrival of the coach at 06:30/19:00 from/at St Sebastian's Cathedral, Pekná cesta, Bratislava. Those interested should contact military chaplains of the Bishopric no later than 9 June.

► Selecting the best out of 2,338 entries, a panel of judges, made up of artists and MOD military and civilian personnel, announced the winners of the 22nd MOD Drawing and Painting Competition. Celebrating in first places in the Junior and Senior Pupils categories are Amélia Petkovičová, of Veľká Hradná Primary School and Karolína Schmögnerová, of Comenius Primary School in Smižany. The Defence Magazine editorial staff will display the best entries in Slovakia's cities.

FULL FIELD KIT

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

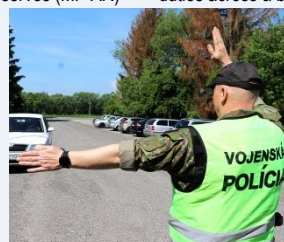
Military Police Active Reserves soldiers undergo training

(26 May) The Military Police Department Vlkánová - Hronsek hosted training for 20 Military Police Active Reserves (MP AR) soldiers, including one female reservist, on 15-26 May.

Director of the Department's Training and Military Working Dog (MWD) Branch Lt Col Marián Turanský reminded that for most of these reservists this was their fourth training session, but there were a few new reservists in training.

Combining both theory and practice, the MP AR training was divided into several modules, including all-arms, combat engineer, topography and CBRN training.

The soldiers went through all relevant SOPs, whilst applying behavioural psychology to cope with non-standard situations. Also included in the training were legal issues relating to duties & responsibilities, as well as legislative updates essential for service in the SVK Military Police.



Putting theory into practice, they took over the force protection duties across a base, and, for the first time, used a service vehicle to patrol it.

With 21 years of service in the Army including 14 years as a military policeman, Maj (Res) Miloš Soliar, of EOD COE Trenčín, who leads the MP AR unit, said: "We familiarised ourselves with new surveillance and scanning systems that make protecting buildings and screening vehicles and people more efficient," before adding that "compared to the first training session, this training provided more legal issues for consideration and more practical activities for base security. For example, we used scanners to check vehicle undercarriages and people." To make sure that MP AR soldiers are trained to high standards, Lt Col Marián Turanský stressed that the results of all training sessions are thoroughly analysed, as are all the recommendations and lessons learned.

'A Lot of Professions, One Mission'

(22 May) The MOD wants to build on last year's successful trend of drawing in prospective recruits for the Slovak Armed Forces. The MOD is launching a new recruitment campaign, as reflected in its slogan: 'A Lot of Professions, One Mission'. Recruitment adverts which will be shown on television, aired on radio, and displayed on billboards, combined with over 100,000 leaflets promoting the Armed Forces, are at the core of the nation-wide campaign. Over the past months, presentation activities by armed forces at public events, job fairs, and secondary and tertiary schools across the entirety of Slovakia have formed a key element of the campaign, with military personnel providing information on the roles in the Armed Forces and the Terms and Conditions of Service, as well as presenting combat equipment and clothing. The campaign is aimed at increasing the total strength of SVK Forces personnel by 20%.

State Secretary at IDET



(24 May) State Secretary Marian Majer visited IDET 2023 in Brno. Several SVK defence firms presented their portfolios of products and services at the trade show, with stands from the SVK MOD and the SVK

ZBOP. In addition to viewing the top-of-the-line combat equipment and gear on display and promoting the SVK defence firms, Mr Majer took the opportunity to meet separately with CZE Deputy Defence Minister Daniel Blažkovec and ITA Deputy Defence Minister Matteo Perego di Crennago, to discuss the bilateral defence agenda.

Ailsa Domanová dies aged 95



(22 May) Ailsa Domanová, the only woman with SVK citizenship to have been awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth II, passed away on Mon 22 May. She received the OBE for her service to WW2 veterans

and personal contribution to forming the bilateral relationship between the UK and Slovakia. She initiated the design of the Western Resistance Memorial, which was unveiled in Bratislava's Šafárik Square in 2003. In 2007, she was awarded the Order of the White Double Cross 3rd Class by the SVK president for her life-long mission of taking the SVK-UK relationship to a new level.