



## Changes to MOD leadership

(25 Oct) Following his appointment by President Čaputová, Robert Kaliňák assumed the post of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. In the past, he took on the Cabinet role of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior several times. In addition, he also served as Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security and as Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on the Control of the Slovak Information Service (SIS). From 2010 to 2012, he was a member of the Permanent Delegation of the Slovak Parliament to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NPA). Mr Kaliňák has a legal education background. Before becoming involved in politics, he practiced law in the private sector. Igor Melicher is the new Deputy Defence Minister and Peter Krajčirovič is the new Secretary General of the MOD Service Office.

The MOD hosted a farewell ceremony for the outgoing Defence Minister, Martin Sklenár, on 25 Oct. He had been the Defence Minister since the appointment of the caretaker government in mid-May. Previously, he served as Director of the MOD Defence Policy Department.



## Air Force takes over MANTIS

(24 Oct) During a handover ceremony at 11 Slovak Air Force Brigade Nitra, the Slovak Air Force took delivery of two MANTIS air defence systems to boost Slovakia's already fielded GBAD capabilities on its eastern border with Ukraine. In attendance at the ceremony were Defence Minister Martin Sklenár, DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, Deputy Inspector General of the Bundeswehr Lt Gen Markus Laubenthal, and other invited guests.

The MANTIS air defence systems are currently being fielded to 11 SVK AF Bde Nitra. They will protect facilities in eastern Slovakia. Over 100 SVK air defenders have been trained on MANTIS, including on all aspects of operation and firing. Each of the two MANTIS systems consists of six automatic weapon stations (optionally available with up to eight guns), two sensor units, and a command post. The package from Germany also includes 5 surveillance radars with a range of up to 100km and specialist training for SVK military personnel. MANTIS is a stationary, fully automated weapon station designed to provide continuous air defence cover for ground installations such as military bases or forward operating bases (FOBs), defending against the effects of incoming rockets, artillery rounds, mortar shells, and UAVs. Germany originally developed MANTIS to protect Bundeswehr camps in Afghanistan.

## Farewell to COM SVK ARMY Maj Gen Ivan Pach at Presidential Palace

(27 Oct) President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová bid her farewell to Maj Gen Ivan Pach, who is retiring after more than 44 years of service in the Slovak Armed Forces. Maj Gen Pach has finished his career as Commander of the Slovak Army. The President thanked him for his service to the country, highlighting his work within NATO structures and as head of the Army, including his leadership of the Army's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

To mark the end of Maj Gen Ivan Pach's tenure as COM SVK ARMY, a farewell ceremony took place in the courtyard of the Grassalkovich Palace in Bratislava on 26 Oct. Also in attendance were Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko. Maj Gen Ivan Pach's last assignment on active duty was COM SVK ARMY, with effect from 1 September 2020. Throughout his career, he repeatedly worked within NATO structures, for example, as Chief of the Military Staff, JFC Brunssum. Before being sent to NATO structures, he served as Chief of Staff for Strategic Planning, SVK DS.



► Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko attended a homecoming ceremony for SVK service personnel returning from missions and operations abroad at the Levice base.

► After the successful end of the 2nd iteration of the Leopard 2A4 MBT conversion training course with tank live firing as its culmination, 14 Tnk Bn Trebišov has been hosting the 3rd iteration of the course, which started on 23 Oct.

► 5 SOF Rgt Žilina was visited by COM 601 SOF GRP Prostějov Col Tomáš Krampala and COM SOF SPT CTR Olomouc Lt Col Pavel Habuda. They were welcomed by COM 5 SOF Rgt Col Peter Zochňák, DCOM Maj Kornel Káňik, and RSM Sgt Maj Roman Kostúrik.

► The Chief of the SVK Military Representative (MILREP)'s Office at SHAPE received Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek, who along with Army Chaplain Capt František Krušínský and Bishopric Secretary for Culture František Krušínský visited Slovak believers living and working in Belgium on 23 Oct. The pastoral visit began with a gathering of the SVK service personnel at SHAPE and continued with a discussion.

► In response to a military aid to the civil authorities (MACA) request from the mayor of Zniev, on 23 Oct, a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter crew from 51 Wing Prešov flew to Zniev Castle to drop off an underslung load, including a water container, timber logs, and sand bags, with a total weight of over 4 tonnes. The material was transported for reconstruction works to the castle.

► St John's Chateaux hosted the 14th edition of the National and International Defence Conference 2023 in Liptovský Ján. The main organiser of the international scientific conference is the Security and Defence Department, AOS Liptovský Mikuláš. In attendance at the conference were experts representing defence and civilian colleges and establishments from Czechia, Poland, Hungary, China and Slovakia. The SVK MOD and DS also took part. The next conference will take place on 17-18 Oct 2024.

► In the presence of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, a meeting of generals from the SVK Generals Club was held at Topoľčany Garrison Club. Comdr 1 Mech Bde Brig Gen Alexander Koliňák welcomed over three dozen SVK generals, led by the chairman of the Club, Lt Gen (Ret'd) Peter Vojtek.

► The first conference dedicated to breast cancer screening programmes took place in Bratislava. Five screening facilities in Slovakia were officially recognised at the conference. Based on the application of European quality indicators for mammography in Slovakia in 2022, as the citation reads, the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok "meets the highest guaranteed standards of mammography screening".

► Supported by 22 Mech Bn and 21 Sp Arty Bn, 4th- and 5th-year Officer Cadets (OCs) of the G-20 Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) from AOS Liptovský Mikuláš underwent training in Michalovce. The training focused on developing their G-20 MOS knowledge and skills essential for the Slovak Armed Forces. While the 4th-year OCs received training on artillery systems, the 5th-year OCs were trained on the most advanced reconnaissance devices, including JIM COMPACT, MOSKITO TI+ and STERNA TNF.

► With her balanced performance in the second round of the women's giant slalom at the Alpine Skiing World Cup in Austria's Sölden, Petra Vihová, skier of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, secured 3rd place. This marks her 67th podium placement in her career.

► Dukla's race walkers did very well at the Race Walking Meeting in Zittau – the Silver leg of this year's World Athletics Race Walking Tour. Hana Burzalová finished 2nd in the women's 20km race walk, Dominik Černý placed 3rd in the men's 20km event, and Kristína Zámečníková (51:44) and Lukáš Rosenbaum (46:16) took 1st and 2nd in the Junior women's and men's 10km races, respectively.

## FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the SVK Armed Forces Sports Awards live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

## Slovakia's first female general



(24 Oct) Five SVK Armed Forces soldiers took over their Certificate of Promotion from the hands of President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová during a promotion ceremony at

the Grassalkovich Palace in Bratislava. Defence Staff (DS) Col Martin Kuterka and Col Beáta Hanušniaková were promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. Importantly, Col Beáta Hanušniaková is the first servicewoman to be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the SVK military. Brig Gen Martin Stoklasa (COS OPS, SVK DS), Brig Gen Ladislav Dohun (Chief of the Presidential Military Office) and Brig Gen Tibor Králik (COM NATO HQ MND-C Hungary) were promoted to the rank of Major General.

## Complex staff rehearsal

(24 Oct) The SVK Defence Staff hosted a four-day complex staff rehearsal to test the readiness of the SVK Defence Staff (DS) members and selected personnel of the Joint Operations Command, individual Commands of the Forces, and the Joint Command Brigade to conduct a defensive military campaign. The staff rehearsal opening ceremony was attended by CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Peter Babiar, COS SP DS Brig Gen Slavomír Verčimák, COS OPS SPT DS Brig Gen Marek Banas, and other military officials. The aim of the complex staff rehearsal was to practice the DS's ability to conduct a defensive military campaign, provide situational awareness and execute the evaluation and decision-making processes in the military campaign, and make the commanders pay due attention to enhancing the operational readiness of the Forces.

## AOS Commandant awarded



(24 Oct) An award ceremony for the Commandant of the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS), Assoc Prof Jozef Puttera, was held in the presence of SVK DS

staffers at the MOD Club. There, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko presented the SVK CHOD Plaque and Commemorative Cross 2nd Grade in Silver to the AOS Commandant for his long-term work towards enhancing Slovakia's tertiary military education. The AOS Commandant used the occasion to present the Tertiary Military Education Establishment 50th Anniversary Medal to the CHOD.

## SVK Armed Forces CSEL's PDW workshop

(24 Oct) Command Senior Enlisted Leaders (CSELs) from across the Slovak Armed Forces and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) from the SVK Defence Staff participated in a professional development workshop (PDW) chaired by the CSEL for the Slovak Armed Forces. Day 1 was devoted to the areas of interest posing challenges to most of our Alliance partners from amongst the ranks of NCOs. Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel gave their perspective on Human Performance (HP). An NCO of the Czech Cyber and Information Force described how best to approach the digital environment and provided a briefing on the Digital Force Protection programme in the Czech Armed Forces. Commandant of the NCO Academy Sgt Maj Jozef Antolik presented international cooperation opportunities for NCOs. MSgt Andrej Milovčík, a graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA), shared his overseas study experience.

