



MINISTERSTVO OBRANY
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY



MOD's unique project with a secondary school

(15 Jan) The MOD brought a pilot dual education project into life in partnership with the Sečovce Joint School. Its Secondary Vocational Technology and Services School is expanding the Personal and Property Security Study Programme with an extra class of 30 students to specialise in the military profession in the school year 2025/2026. On completion of the secondary school leaving examination, they will be fully prepared for service in the Armed Forces. This unique 4-year dual education programme offers a balanced mix of theory and work experience.

Secretary General of the MOD Service Office Peter Krajčirovič said: "We offer young people a host of advantages that will prepare them for life in a quality way. For students and their parents, it is important that this study programme secures not only an excellent career opportunity, but also substantial financial relief. The costs that families would otherwise have to bear are covered in full by the MOD. Every month the students will be better off financially thanks to a placement in an Armed Forces unit and other financial and material benefits."

Among the benefits are accommodation, meal, school essentials, and clothing allowances – which will greatly reduce the financial burden on parents, a financial benefit of up to 80 euros a month for the completed work placement in an Armed Forces unit, and pocket money of 100 euros a month, Director of the MOD Personnel and Social Affairs Dept Martin Rímeš said, adding, "Ultimately, there is an opportunity for the students to continue their studies at the SVK Military Academy, and, after graduation, their Initial Military Training will be shortened from seven to two weeks."

Rastislav Trnka, Chair of the Košice Self-Governing Region, said: "While 184 students were involved in the dual education system in the 2018/19 school year, five years on, in the 2023/24 school year, there were already 1,536 students. This means that almost every sixth student of the Košice District schools studies in the dual education system. I am pleased that with the Personal and Property Security Programme we will be the first in Slovakia to have a dual education project with the MOD. I wish Slovakia's first military secondary school class a lot of successful students, and I wish the students well in their future careers with a good employer." Michaela Štundová, Director of the Sečovce Joint School, said: "Students will be admitted to the school based on their results in the talent-oriented entrance exam, marks and placements in Olympiads and competitions at primary schools. All parties involved will benefit from this cooperation. We will be able to provide students with quality education at a high professional and material level, and the reputation of secondary education in the Košice Self-Governing Region will increase, as will the number of those interested in studies at the SVK Military Academy and in careers in the Armed Forces." Director of the MOD Personnel and Social Affairs Dept Martin Rímeš added that the MOD is planning identical dual education projects with other secondary schools in Strážske, Snina and Handlová.

Applications to the secondary schools in the 2025/2026 school year are to be submitted in writing by letter or electronically by custodial parents of the applicants under the age of 18 no later than 20 Feb 2025.

SVK MOD and Forces pay respects to Hejce air disaster victims

(19 Jan) DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, and MOD SEGGEN Peter Krajčirovič commemorated the 19th anniversary of the most tragic event in the Slovak Armed Forces' history at Háj-Nicovő War Cemetery in Liptovský Mikuláš.

A Slovak Air Force Antonov AN-24 transport aircraft, returning from KFOR in the Serbian province of Kosovo, crashed near the Hungarian village of Hejce on 19 Jan 2006. 41 soldiers and one civilian died in the disaster. This year, their memory was honoured by the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces at Háj-Nicovő War Cemetery and at the Hejce Air Disaster Memorials in the village of Hejce and on Hill Borső in Hungary.

Traditionally, on this day we also remember all MOD and Armed Forces military personnel who have given their lives in the line of duty on missions and operations abroad. "This special day of remembrance of all those who have died on missions and operations was born after the January 2006 tragedy. I attended the funerals of the victims in Prešov and other cities, because I knew many of the victims in person," Mr Kaliňák said in his remarks.

Respecting the memory of the Hejce air disaster victims, the SVK Government recently approved the SVK deployment to KFOR in Kosovo after fifteen years. "To make sure their work was not in vain," Minister Kaliňák added.



- For the first time as the SVK Air Chief, Brig Gen Martin Kúterka welcomed a **delegation of the U.S. Embassy** to the Slovak Air Force Headquarters Zvolen on 16 Jan. U.S. Defense Attaché LTC Joshua Passer, Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation LTC Steve Prater, U.S. Air Attaché LTC Jonathan J. St Peter, and Resident Ministry of Defense Air Advisor Christopher M. Roland were briefed on a future vision for the Slovak Air Force, especially the progress made across the F-16 Block 70 and UH-60M Programmes.

- 348 new trainee soldiers walked through the gates of 7 Tng Regt Martin to report for this year's first Initial Military Training (IMT).

- MP officers from MP Dept Vlkánová - Hronek completed the **Air Marshal Course**, supported by 46 Wng Kuchyňa, as part of their professional training with a focus on protecting aircraft crew members and passengers from security threats. The course concluded with the certification of the MP personnel, affirming their readiness to perform an Air Marshal's duties at an international level.

- **MSgt Marián Píffko**, Chief of the Airborne and Rescue Service at 46 Wng Kuchyňa, achieved a professional milestone of 4,000 jumps. He also holds Slovakia's best records in the individual and team jumps from a height of below 1,000m (3,280ft). Dep Cdr 46 Wng Kuchyňa Lt Col Gabriel Ťahla congratulated him on his achievement and wished him a lot of successful jumps in the future.

- **Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN)** has completed the installation of a new lighting system and a partial reconstruction of Trenčín airport's infrastructure. The work was launched in Sept 2024.

- The **SVK Defence Language Institute (DLI) Director's Methodology Days** took place at a MOD facility in Tatranské Zrubý. DLI lecturers, testers and teachers shared their Military English (ME) expertise and experience, teaching methods and feedback on the training activities abroad and were briefed on the new challenges that lie ahead in 2025. There was also an opportunity to meet new colleagues and lay the foundations for quality cooperation across the DLI.

- The Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces commemorated the 85th anniversary of the formation of the **1st Czechoslovak Foot Division in France**, commanded by Div Gen Rudolf Viest, on 15 Jan 1940.

- The **Ophthalmology Clinic**, part of CMH - TH Ružomberok, has announced that the Intravitreal Application Centre will be running at limited capacity from 1 Jan to 1 Apr. Over the period, new patients will not be accepted for treatment.

- The Bishopric of the SVK Forces and Armed Corps commemorated the **Feast Day of St Sebastian**, the Patron Saint of the Bishopric Cathedral and the Bishopric itself, with a Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop of the Forces and Armed Corps Mons František Rábek, who was appointed 1st Bishop of the Bishopric on the Feast Day of St Sebastian in 2003.

- The Bishopric of the SVK Forces and Armed Corps has released the **Bishopric of the SVK Forces and Armed Corps Pilgrimages 2025**. The dates, prices, conditions and application forms are available [on the internet](#).

- From among a total of 28 karateka from 8 countries, karate fighter **Roman Hřčka** from the Dukla Military Sports Centre won the 1st place in the Kata Male Seniors category at the Grand Prix Croatia in Rijeka, a qualification event for the European Seniors Karate Championships to be held in May 2025.

- With a time of 1:27.09, Dukla's luge athletes **Christián Bosman** and **Bruno Mick** won a gold medal in the U23 category at the **Luge World Cup** in Winterberg, Germany.

Construction works on new MH Prešov are progressing according to plan

(17 Jan) PM Robert Fico, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, and Health Minister Kamil Šaško were updated on the progress that has been made to date on the construction of the new Military Hospital (MH) in Prešov during their visit to the construction site. The new MH project is regarded as the SVK Government's strategic investment.

The J. A. Reiman Teaching Hospital in Prešov has been incorporated into the Defence Medical Services (DMS) system since 1 July 2024. "This is a huge project and I am pleased that the MOD has committed a significant part of its budget to the hospital's construction, thereby contributing to a consolidation of public finances," PM Fico said.

Whilst significantly increasing the quality and availability of healthcare services in eastern Slovakia, the new medical facility will serve not only SVK service members, but, above all, civilian patients.

Minister meets ambassadors

(14 Jan) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák received British Ambassador Nigel Baker and Turkish Ambassador Erkan Özor at the Ministry of Defence in Bratislava, to discuss current security challenges as well as his upcoming working trips. On 20 Jan, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák joined Prime Minister Robert Fico on his official visit to Türkiye.

NATO Defence Chiefs at MCCS

(16 Jan) SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko took part in this year's first meeting of the NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session (MCCS) at NATO HQ in Brussels. NATO's new Secretary General Mark Rutte presented the key priorities and

challenges for the coming year. Allied CHODs focused on cooperation and their response to global challenges, as well as addressing military cooperation, standardisation and interoperability with over 25 NATO Partners. Finally, they bid farewell to the outgoing Chair of the NATO Military Committee (CMC), Adm Rob Bauer (NLD), and welcomed his successor, Adm Giuseppe Cavo Dragone (ITA).

Slovaks and Slovenians together

(15 Jan) DEPMINDEF Martin Vojašovič received Slovenian Ambassador Stanislav Raščan. "Our countries have had good relations for a long time, and the topics we discussed at today's meeting have only confirmed that. Together, we identified potential areas of cooperation between our defence industries and topics for mutual exchange of expertise and information," Mr Vojašovič said. Ambassador Raščan confirmed Slovenia's interest in continued contribution to the TC Leš' based NATO MNB SVK. In addition, SVN soldiers will soon join forces with SVK peacekeepers to serve in UNFICYP.

A new memorial plaque in Jasło

(15 Jan) It is not only for SVK and CZE artillerymen that 15 Jan 1945 is associated with the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps artillerymen's engagement in a battle at Jasło in Poland, with the date becoming Artillery and Missile Forces Day for the two nations. At the initiative of the CZE and SVK Artillery Association, a memorial plaque was unveiled in Jasło to mark the 80th anniversary of the battle. The ceremony was attended by President of the CZE and SVK Artillery Community Col (Ret'd) Jozef Kavecký, DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Slavomír Verčimák, representatives of the SVK, CZE and POL Armed Forces, and future artillerymen from the SVK Military Academy.

"We want this hospital to be completed with high quality and as soon as possible. We must cope with immense pressure on a daily basis. Yet, we are looking at 2027 as a realistic

completion date," Minister Kaliňák said, confirming that last year the hospital's debt of €80mil was paid off and it now has a balanced budget.

"The SVK Government's decision to build a new hospital is admirable, courageous and good. We have worked 24/7 on this project so far," Director of CMH Ružomberok and Construction Coordinator of MH Prešov Marián Krížko said.

"The new hospital should keep all the departments it has today, plus we want to add the Neurosurgery Dept. In the future, we will also be working to develop medical education programmes," Director of the J. A. Reiman Teaching Hospital Juraj Smatana added.

