



## Defence Industry Day

(20 October) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened Slovak Defence Industry Day at the Military Technical and Testing Institute Záhorie. The event was organised at the occasion of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union by the Ministry of Defence in conjunction with the Security and Defence Industry Association of the Slovak Republic, so that locally manufactured advanced military hardware and armaments could as well be presented to foreign representatives. In doing so, the Ministry of Defence is delivering on its commitment to support the domestic arms and defence industry, as laid down in the SVK Government Manifesto Commitments.

According to the head of the MOD, 20 October marked an opportunity to make the Slovak arms manufacturers more visible by presenting their line-up of defence products. "We are committed to supporting our arms and defence industry through organising similar events even in the future, because the industry's development means securing jobs for people," said the Minister. He highlighted the achievements of Slovak defence systems designers and producers who have a lot to offer to our Armed Forces as well as to foreign partners.

During the event, Anton Hrnko, the Chairman of the Committee on Defence and Security, of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, underscored the rich history of the Slovak defence industry, as well as its present and future. In his statement, Marián Andraščík, the Chairman of the Security and Defence Industry Association of the Slovak Republic, appreciated the support given by the current MOD leaders to domestic defence manufacturers.

Slovak Defence Industry Day also saw the armaments and equipment currently in service with the SVK Armed Forces being showcased during dynamic and static displays. Today, the inventory of the SVK Armed Forces contains up to 140 types of armaments, vehicles and materiel – these all being the defence industry products of domestic provenance.

## Minister awards soldiers

(21 October) The SVK Minister of Defence awarded soldiers and Military Police personnel for rescuing human lives and providing assistance in road



traffic accidents during a military ceremony in Trenčín. The awards were presented to the soldiers – MSgt Radovan Rybanský and MSgt Miroslav Martiňák and the Military Police serviceman and woman – Capt Dušan Martiška and SSgt Mariana Králiková. The Minister also thanked the military policeman MSgt Roman Olšavský, Sgt 1st Class Peter Samuhel and Sgt 1st Class Martin Kvašal. Among the awarded personnel were also MSgt Peter Palák (MP) and MSgt Peter Tuma. The Defence Minister's Commemorative Coins and Letters of Thanks were presented to Sgt 1st Class Luboš Fides, Sgt Martin Drobec, Pte 1st Class Stepan Kolos, and Sgt 1st Class Eduard Čiesko.

## Minister of Defence meets with Vajnory mayor and local government members

(17 October) The Minister of Defence met with the mayor of Bratislava – Vajnory Urban District Ján Mrva, local government members, and Mrs Anna Zemanová, a Member of the National Council the Slovak Republic. At the meeting, he explained to them the bare essentials of the operations to be undertaken by the NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU), which is headquartered in their urban district. Along with the Commander of the SVK NFIU, Col Jozef Zekucia, he took questions from the audience. He assured the mayor and the local government members that the NFIU is meant to be neither a military base nor a combat unit. A team of planners, of whom up to 20 will make up the international staff, will be operating within the territory of Slovakia. "As we build the NFIU in Slovakia, we strengthen our security. In no way can we speak of a military base. In peacetime, it will participate in planning and supporting activities. However, if the circumstances require so, the NFIU will oversee the preparations, coordination and support to smooth Reception, Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM) of NATO troops in the event of their deployment across the territory of the Slovak Republic with the consent of national authorities," explained the Minister. The Slovak NFIU was officially activated on 1 September 2016. It operates under the command of the NATO Multinational Corps Northeast Szczecin, rather than falling under the remit of the SVK Armed Forces. The NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) in Slovakia is to reach Initial Operational Capability (IOC) on 1 January 2017 and Full Operational Capability (FOC) on 1 June 2017. Apart from Slovakia, other NFIU sites have already been built or are being built in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania and Hungary.



- On 20 Oct, the upgraded shooting ranges at the Training Centre Lešť hosted the **12th MOD Combat Shooting Competition for SVK armed components**. Competing in two-member teams, a total of 137 participants fired the Makarov 9mm pistol, the vz. (SER) 58 submachine gun, and the Luger 9mm pistol. The Olympian SSGt Juraj Tužinský opened the competition by firing a shot from the submachine gun. The 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina won the completion and became the holder of the rotating challenge cup.

- On 17 Oct, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic Gen Milan Maxim opened the first of a series of 8 exhibitions entitled **National Presentation of Art by Handicapped Artists in the Slovak Republic** – warriors with a destiny and obstacles, which is being held on the premises of the Military Forests and Estates of the Slovak Republic, a state-run plant in Malacky. As part of the project, almost 250 artworks by handicapped artists will be on display during the exhibitions to be staged in 8 garrison towns. Originally conceived by the Slovak Agency for Support of Citizens with Health Disabilities, the project is now being carried out under the auspices of the Chief of Defence and the Minister of Defence.

- The Training Centre Lešť hosted a **concentrated gunner – operator training** on 18-21 Oct. Elements from 11th Mechanised Battalion Martin and 12th Mechanised Battalion Nitra underwent a week-long unit gunnery training for gunners and operators of BVP-2 Infantry Fighting Vehicles, 9P148 Armoured Personnel Carriers, and 9P135 Anti-Tank Rocket Systems.

- Selection for the Best Soldier** of the Training Year (TY) 2016 from among the Other Ranks and the NCO Corps of the SVK Armed Forces got underway at the Combat Support Service (CSS) Battalion Prešov on 17 Oct. The CSS Commander's Selection Board chose Sgt Anton Lazorik, of the Repairs Coy, as the Battalion's Best NCO and Cpl Jaroslav Adamkovič, of the CSS Coy, as the Battalion's Best Soldier. The winners will represent the Battalion at the Best Soldier event to be held at the Combat Service Support Brigade Trenčín.

- As part of their voluntary activities, members of the Stationary CIS Base gave a helping hand in **restoring the graves of World War I soldiers** at the Ammunition Depot Trenčín – Kubrá. Through their active approach and commitment to installing new gravestones, they contributed to restoring the place of reverence, which has been maintained under the initiative of Lt Gen (Ret) Pavol Honzek.

- During a ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the episcopal ordination of Mons František Rábek at a Nitra City Council's meeting, the mayor of Nitra Jozef Dvonč presented **Mons František Rábek**, the Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps and the former Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Nitra, respectively, with the Mayor of Nitra Award for his personal merit in building Christian schools, fostering spiritual culture, and deepening the relationship between the Church representatives and the city officials.

- As the Military Council of the Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces convened, on 18 Oct **Gen Milan Maxim** awarded 17 soldiers from across the units and facilities of the SVK Armed Forces for their excellent results and personal commitment during Ex Tobruq Legacy and Ex Slovak Shield.

- SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš thanked the outgoing Chairman of the SVK Employees' Trade Union in Defence, **Marián Lacko**, for his 24 years of work in favour of the Union. He recognised his contribution by presenting him with the Defence Minister's Commemorative Medal (3rd Grade) for his long-term dedicated work. "Let me thank you for everything you have done for the MOD. I think that we have always found consensus in spite of engaging in sometimes challenging negotiations," said the head of the MOD. JUDr Marián Lacko has left his position after 24 years of work.

- On 20 Oct, the Congress Hall of VUC Trenčín hosted the **7th Assembly of the SVK Employees' Trade Union in Defence (SVK ETU DEF)**. The outgoing Chairman of the SVK ETU DEF, Marián Lacko, was succeeded by Mária Huszlicsková. Among other things, the delegates of the assembly voted for a new executive board. Its members now include Alena Camberová, Viliam Jánošík, Viktor Mudrák and Alexandra Váňová, who concurrently holds the position of Deputy Chairwoman of the SVK ETU DEF. Katarína Krajčová was named the new Chairwoman of the Review Commission.

- On 21 Oct, members of the Combat Support Service Battalion (CSS Bn) Prešov formed up for a ceremony to mark the **60th anniversary of the unit's establishment**. After recalling the historical milestones, the Chief of Staff (COS) at CSS Bn, Maj Vladimír Sobek, delivered a ceremonial speech. The Commander of CSS Bn, Lt Col Daniel Draganovský, handed out the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic Badges to the members of the battalion. The ceremony marking the unit's jubilee anniversary was rounded off with a formal parade.

## New UNFICYP Force Commander



(18 October) Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir, of Bangladesh, took up the appointment as Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on 10 Oct. In the first days he attended briefings and meetings with the key UNFICYP officials. At the conclusion of the first working week, he

visited the Argentine helicopter unit (UN Flight) and had a familiarisation flight over Sector 2. He then visited the Slovak Engineer Platoon at Camp Tatry, which is based at the UNFICYP HQ in Nicosia. This week Maj Gen Kabir will host UNIFIL, UNTSO, UNDOF and MFO Force Commanders for a two-day conference on the UNFICYP HQ premises to jointly discuss the status of the current regional affairs. On Monday, 24 October, he will pay his first visit to Sector 4, where soldiers from the SVK-HUN-SRB-UKR Contingent carry out operational tasks alongside each other under the command of Lt Col Rudolf Eštok.

## Inspectors train at Lešť

(21 October) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited the Training Centre Lešť to see the preparations for the practical phase of the Initial International Training Course for the Future Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) Inspectors. A total of 75 participants, coming from all around the world, are attending the course and want to become CTBT inspectors, once the CTBT comes into effect. The Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), Lassina Zerbo, the State Secretary at the SVK Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Lukáš Parizek, and the Chairwoman of the Office for Nuclear Supervision of the Slovak Republic, Marta Žiaková, expressed their satisfaction with the preparations. The training course runs from 16 to 28 October, with the practical phase starting this week at Lešť.

## MOD's Drop of Blood



(18 October) Given the fact there has been a long-term shortage of blood at the Central Military Hospital in Ružomberok, the SVK Ministry of Defence prepared a mobile blood donation activity for its employees, professional soldiers, and journalists

could participate, too. Among those who came to donate the precious liquid was Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, who has been a regular blood donor for a long time. Speaking about the Military Hospital in Ružomberok, the Minister said that it delivers the doctrine of blood security in the State. The event was supported by Military Police personnel, led by Col Michal Migát, the Director of the Military Police. The MOD's Drop of Blood campaign, organised by the medical staff from the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok, saw the participation of dozens of soldiers and civilian employees.

## Orientation Course in Brussels

(21 October) Being held under the auspices of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the General M. R. Štefánik SVK Armed Forces Academy (SVK AFA) in conjunction with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) conducted a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Orientation Course on the premises of the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the European Union on 17-21 Oct. The aim of the course was to provide 56 attendees, drawn from the EU Member States, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the EU Institutions in Brussels, with basic information on the organisation, competences and agenda of the main EU structures operating in the field of the EU's CSDP. The course was led by a specialist advisor from the SVK AFA's Institute for Security and Defence Studies, Col Peter Tóth.