



NATO CI COE declared open

(19 October) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Polish Minister of National Defence Antoni Macierewicz along with the Directors of the Military Intelligence Services of both countries opened the NATO Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence (NATO CI COE) in Krakow. This is a joint SVK-POL contribution to the collective defence of NATO Member States. The project has so far been joined by another 8 NATO partners – Czechia, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary, Germany, Romania, Slovenia and Italy.

As Head of the SVK MOD noted, the idea of establishing the NATO Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence (NATO CI CoE) was born out of the strong partnership between Slovakia and Poland. "This shows that our countries want to actively shape the security environment, to predict risks and to fend off threats that are ever-increasingly unpredictable," said Minister Gajdoš.

The NATO Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence (NATO CI COE) was awarded accreditation by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in February 2017 and its readiness was recently tested during Exercise STEADFAST INTEREST 2017.

Active Reserves call for a change

(18 October) 55 people have signed up for the Active Reserves project in the second year of its existence. This means the Armed Forces will fall short of the intended target to train up to 219 soldiers in the Reserve. For this reason, the MOD leaders are initiating an amendment act, so that more potential candidates can meet the entry conditions. Commenting on the situation, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Being unable to meet the set target, of course, we admit one cannot speak of success. But already back then when we launched the selection process, we made the point that there was a need for an amendment act. And it is now in the process of going through interdepartmental consultations. I believe we will upgrade the conditions so that more candidates can fulfil the criteria, because a lot more people were interested in joining the project at the Army Recruitment Groups." The highest interest in joining the Active Reserves was reported in the Trnava region (10), while the lowest interest was recorded in the Žilina region (3). A total of 49 men and 6 women applied for the Active Reserves training, of whom 17 were graduates of voluntary military training (VMT). The candidates for joining the Active Reserves will now be screened to establish whether they meet the requirements, including the legal ones and psychological profiles.

MOD has no secrets about the procurement of 4x4 and 8x8 vehicles

(22 October) The SVK Government, who is responsible for defence planning in conformity with valid legislation, has made no final decision on the procurement of 4x4 and 8x8 vehicle platforms. Admittedly, the MOD has submitted a document detailing a potential way of procuring them for discussion in interdepartmental consultations in a restricted regime. However, this is only a proposal for a potential solution in line with the Government's valid commitment. Once comments have been worked into the document and approved by the SVK Security Council and Government, the final solution will be presented to the public. At this moment it would be premature to do so, given the fact that only the Government can decide on the final solution. Changes may still arise out of the ongoing interdepartmental consultations.

The SVK MOD recently presented to the public the Defence and Military Strategies of the Slovak Republic and the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Developing the SVK Armed Forces with an Outlook to 2030, where the MOD clearly set out the priorities for the upcoming period. This sort of plan had been non-existent in Slovakia for almost 25 years. The document has been available to the public and this principle has been observed ever since work started on the document. Moreover, at a recent press conference all questions were answered and ambiguities cleared. It was explained that the plan covers investments in military assets and that some information is subject to classification. Despite this, as a reaction to the statements by some

SVK SD17 culminates with Capabilities Demonstration Day

(19 October) In the presence of Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrmko, CHOD Gen Milan Maxim, DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko, COM LF Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, Brig Gen Timothy Thomblenson of the Indiana National Guard, and other distinguished guests, Slovak Shield 2017, a two-tier Command Post Exercise (CPX) with partial deployment of troops and with the aid of simulation technologies, culminated with a Capabilities Demonstration Day on Lešť Training Area.

Gen Maxim underscored that the exercise is not only a culmination of the year-long training cycle but also of the preparations for the certification of National Commitment 2013 – Mechanised Brigade (NC 2013 – Mech Bde) for NATO's Forces of Lower Readiness (FLR), in other words, a SVK deployable contribution to NATO's collective defence, which is slated for next year. "The exercising troops have met all set objectives in all respects," concluded Gen Maxim with satisfaction. The distinguished visitors witnessed a FIBUA (fighting in a built-up area) demonstration involving the capabilities of a tactical unit on the range at Oremland. Taking part in the exercise were 1,287 troops from Slovakia, Czechia, and the Indiana National Guard with 340 pieces of vehicles and equipment. The exercises put to the test the ability of the Mech Bde Prešov's HQ and Staff to plan and to conduct operations across SVK territory. It included setting up a command post in a combined manner and engaging manoeuvre units in conducting offensive and defences ops, Combat Support (CS) units in giving fire support to manoeuvre units, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) in carrying out SOF missions.



- Commander SVK Air Force Brig Lubomír Svoboda participated in the **NATO Air Chiefs Symposium 2017 (NACS II)** in Ramstein, Germany on 16-17 Oct 2017. The meeting at Allied Air Command, AIRCOM HQ at Ramstein Air Base was chaired by General Tod Wolters, Commander of Allied Air Command (AIRCOM), United States Air Forces Europe – United States Air Force Africa (USAFE-AFAFRICA).

- Members of the Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Michalovce are taking part in **Joint Fires 2017**, an international exercise involving artillery support units, which is being held on 15-27 Oct on Hradište Training Area in the Czech Republic. Operating alongside Czech and U.S. artillery units, they practise early and precise fire support from 152mm and 155mm gun systems, assisted by contemporary reconnaissance and target determination assets.

- At the invitation of the Spanish Army's 1st Military Police Battalion, Maj Jaroslav Slančík and MSgt Marcel Fraňo took part in **Guardian Angel 2017**, an international Military Police (MP) exercise held at the Betera Training Centre, Spain. It was aimed at rehearsing and testing planning, coordination, and MP support to international crisis management operations, as well as aligning procedures with NATO and national doctrines.

- On 16-17 Oct, members of the Stationary Communications and Information Systems (CIS) Trenčín assisted in **upgrading the graves of fallen WWI soldiers** on the grounds of the Munitions Depot Trenčín – Kubrá. While working off duty and in cooperation with Sered-based engineers, they installed 400 new gravestones.

- On 17 Oct, the Institute of Military History (VHÚ) Bratislava hosted a working meeting between VHÚ Director Col Miloslav Čaplovic and a French delegation from the Paris-based Musée de l'Armée, including Lt Col Christoph Bertrand, Emmanuel Ranvoisy, and Carine Lachevre. The meeting focused on the preparations being made for the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI. The French colleagues informed VHÚ representatives of their intent to stage an exhibition entitled **1917 – 1923: War in the East without End?** For the visitors to the museum, the exhibition will portray the destinies of the Central and Eastern European nations. The exhibition will open on 5 Oct 2018.

- The SVK MOD informs the public of the **upcoming Allied military movements**, scheduled from 23 to 29 Oct 2017. A total of 26 Allied road moves will take place across Slovakia. Also planned are SVK Armed Forces convoys from Ružomberok to Sučany Garrison's training ground.

Memorial unveiled in Žilina

(16 October) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security/Deputy Chairman of the Slovak National Party (SNS) Anton Hrmko, and Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim, with the participation of U.S. Ambassador HE Mr Adam Sterling, unveiled a memorial dedicated to the memory of the 5th Special Forces Regiment members who died in the course of performing their duties. Captain Edmund Makovnik and Sgt 1st Class Patrik Fraňia along with U.S. Air Force Captain David Lyon lost their lives in a suicide vehicle-borne IED attack on their convoy in Afghanistan on 27 December 2013. The Minister very much appreciated that in this case the idea to build the place of commemoration and reflection had come entirely out of the initiative of their fellow soldiers from the elite SOF regiment. A. Hrmko said it should be applauded that a place of commemoration and remembrance has been created on the grounds of the 5th Special Forces Regiment. "Likewise, I appreciate that the Ministry of Defence is preparing a central memorial," he remarked. According to Chief of Defence Gen Maxim, soldiers never forget their colleagues and friends who lost their lives in the line of duty.



VMT soldiers swear an oath

(17 October) 82 graduates of voluntary military training (VMT) completed their training in Martin on 17 October. On swearing the oath of allegiance they were promoted to 2nd Degree Private. In attendance at the oath-taking ceremony were Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and CHOD Gen Milan Maxim. Compared to the pilot project estimates, the Minister underscored that over twice as many VMT soldiers as previously expected have been trained this year. Gen Maxim hailed the commitment of VMT soldiers with which they approached the military training. Among the novelties of this year's VMT was the shorter length of the training (11 weeks down from 12 weeks) and the motivational pay of over €1,100. Aside from basic military training (BMT) in the SVK Armed Forces, today the VMT project is the only legal way of undertaking military training in Slovakia.

procurement and delivery was framed by the defence budget estimates. And it contains an efficient and economical rearmament process, with detailed descriptions and timelines of procurement plans and deliveries. The MOD clearly declares that the procurement procedures proposed are transparent and comply with the Slovak Republic's valid legislative framework and the EU's rules for acquisition of defence products and services, which clearly set out the basic forms and conditions for bidding procedures. In essence, defence contracts in the field of defence and security substantially differ from those in the civilian sector. The procedures for awarding contracts in the field of defence and security are regulated by Act No. 343/2015 Coll., whereas Section 5 thereof is directly determined by Directive 2009/81/ES. This directive honours the fact that, in supporting the gradual formation of the European market in defence systems, national security remains the exclusive responsibility of each and every EU Member State. In this respect, procurement of military equipment is a specific process, because the required technical parameters/utility value must be defined by experts of the SVK Armed Forces. While observing the procurement regulations, also analysed were the options that are available as part of the R&D cooperation programme of EU Member States. The proposed method of the combat vehicles' procurement contains the principle of Comprehensive Solution, which fully satisfies the operational and technical requirements of the SVK Armed Forces, and the principle of Value for Money, to make sure that the tax payers' money is spent with maximum efficiency.