



## Minister briefs D&S Committee

(21 November) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš today briefed MPs from the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security on the SVK Armed Forces' most extensive modernisation project – the procurement of the military 8x8 and 4x4 vehicle fleets. He did so at the earliest session of the Committee following the Government's meeting where he received the mandate to go ahead with the procurement procedure for the combat vehicles.

The overall costs of the 8x8 vehicle procurement programme should not exceed €417 million, with the estimated price of 1 vehicle amounting up to €4 million with VAT. The procurement will be implemented from 2018 through to 2024. In the case of the 4x4 vehicles, the maximum overall costs are set at €782.7 million, with the estimated price of 1 vehicle ranging from €1.2 million to €3.5 million with VAT, depending on each platform variant. The development of the 4x4 vehicles is expected to be completed in 2018 and the vehicles will come into service from 2019 through to 2029. Both vehicle programmes will receive funding from the MOD budget and, most importantly, they will involve Slovak defence producers in the entire process to the maximum extent possible.

The SVK MOD insists that the procurement process has been transparent. For this reason, last week the MOD released a communiqué based on the procurement document, an assessment of which was made by the Value for Money Unit, of the SVK Ministry of Finance.

## Assessment by NATO experts

(24 November) NATO experts on defence planning met with a SVK MOD expert team on MOD premises. The aim of the meeting was to take stock of Slovakia's existing and planned capabilities, international contributions, and its involvement international activities. From the perspective of defence planning, this is one of the most important activities. The NATO expert team was led by the Director of Defence Planning, Defence Policy and Planning Division at NATO HQ, Paul Savereux.

"Assessments of NATO Allies' defence plans take place in a regular two-year cycle as part of the entire [NATO defence planning] process. The aim of such bilateral meetings is to assess how the requirements for delivering the capabilities that our country is contributing to the so-called NATO Capability Targets 2017 have been incorporated," explained the Director General of the Defence Management, Armed Forces Development and Defence Planning Department at MOD, Brig Josef Pokorný, who led the discussions on behalf of the Slovak side.

The assessment itself builds on the process of assigning and approving capability targets. For example, the Slovak Republic has committed itself to achieving Full Operational Capability (FOC) of a mechanised brigade. Through a NATO meeting such as the one that took place in Slovakia last week, the country will obtain information on the Alliance's real ability to undertake its tasks in the context of the NATO Strategic Concept as well as a comprehensive picture of Allied capabilities and the progress made by Allies in putting their defence plans into action.

Paul Savereux was also received by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejčák. At the meeting it was stated that the new strategic documents and plans, combined with higher investment in defence, put in place the pre-requisites necessary for restarting the development of the SVK Armed Forces after years of decline, giving Slovakia greater ability to secure its defence and to deliver on the commitments it has signed up for in NATO.

## NATO DSACEUR General Sir James Everard in visit to SVK

(22 November) At the invitation of SVK Chief of Defence (CHOD) General Milan Maxim, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) General Sir James Everard paid a visit to the Slovak Republic. On his visit, he was first received by State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Róbert Ondrejčák. He reassured General Everard that our country is moving in a stable Euro-Atlantic direction. The delegation, led by General Everard, familiarised themselves with the SVK Armed Forces' current structure, performance of tasks, and its role in crisis management operations. The end of the meeting was dedicated to the issue of implementing the adopted Graduated Response Plan, the drafting of which also involved SVK subject matter specialists.



- Two members of the SVK Armed Forces are already working in Latvia, where they are preparing the ground for the deployment of a SVK Mechanised Company-sized unit along with essential support as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. SVK will dispatch up to 152 military professionals to Latvia in two rotations. In Latvia, the SVK liaison officers have been working under the command of Canada since 15 Nov, with one officer posted to the Operations Section and the other one working in the Logistics Section at eFP BG HQ. The SVK military is currently in the phase of preparing and planning the final structure of its force contribution.

- Members of **Gen M.R. Štefánik Transport Wing (TW Kuchyňa)** commemorated the 48th anniversary of the air disaster that claimed the life of Czechoslovak pilot Lt Col František Maxa on 20 Nov. An act of remembrance was held at the Air Disaster Memorial located in a military forest adjacent to TW Kuchyňa. Also in attendance were members of the Czech Air Force and the next of kin of the victim. The act of remembrance was led by TW Kuchyňa's Staff Chaplain Capt Slavko Ganaj. Commander TW Kuchyňa Col Peter Prokop addressed the gathered audience.

- On 14-15 Nov, TW Sliach hosted a selection process for the personnel to be deployed with the **UNFICYP** September 2018 rotation. The candidates took a language proficiency test, were assessed on basic combat skills, and had interviews. The selected personnel will undertake a four-week training at AAM Bde Nitra.

- On 16 Nov, Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base (TMRB) Martin hosted a predeployment ceremony for the soldiers deploying on **Resolute Support Mission** in Afghanistan. In attendance at the ceremony were Commander SVK LF, Maj Gen Jindřich Joch and Commander Crisis Management Strategic Centre (CMSC) at SVK GS, Col Ján Buiňák. By signing the protocols, they confirmed the transfer of the unit's command from SVK Land Forces to CMSC. The ceremony was concluded with the unit marching off the square.

- Selection for the **Best Soldier of the Year from among the NCOs and Other Ranks** in C2SW Zvolen occurred on 16 Nov. The selection board unanimously selected Cpl Marek Polgár, of Command Support Company (SVK Air Force), as Best Soldier of the Year in the Other Ranks, and SSgt Lucia Kubiková was chosen as Best NCO of the Year. Both of them received gifts from COM C2SW Zvolen Col Vladimír Jaklovský.

- The SVK MOD issues this traffic update to alert SVK residents to the upcoming **Allied military movements**, scheduled from 27 Nov to 3 Dec 2017. A total of 24 Allied road moves and 1 railway movement will take place across Slovakia over the period. The road moves will mainly include CZE convoys transporting material and convoys in support of exercises at the Training Centre Lešť and in Zemianske Kostolany.

## Official statement from Patria on the joint SVK-FIN 8x8 vehicle programme

The Slovak and Finnish Ministries of Defence have today announced the launch of a joint 8x8 infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) development programme, and Patria has been selected to deliver a new Patria 8x8 chassis for the 8x8 IFVs. The industrial partners selected by the Ministries of Defence of both countries are Konstruktia-Defence, a.s. (prime contractor), Patria Land Systems Oy (newly developed chassis) and EVPÚ, a.s. (weapon system). The 8x8 combat armoured vehicle programme starts with a testing phase in Slovakia, and after the trials in Slovakia the vehicle will be tested in Finland this winter. Based on the results of the development programme and successful tests, the SVK MOD plans to procure up to 81 IFVs as part of this SVK Armed Forces modernisation programme to be delivered in the period 2018-2024.



## 50th NATO Charity Bazaar

(19 November) Military professionals from the Office of Military Representative of the Slovak Republic to NATO, headed by Maj Gen Ondřej Novosad, along with their families, in tandem with employees of the SVK MOD's Defence Management, Armed Forces Development and Defence Planning Department, employees of the SVK Foreign and EU Affairs Ministry and the Interior Ministry's Permanent Delegation to NATO joined the 50th NATO Charity Bazaar (NCB) on 18-19 Nov 2017 in Brussels. Sponsored by NATO Allies and Partners, the NCB is a joint charity event whose proceeds go on projects in support of children and people in need and people with health problems. The main aim of the NCB is to donate the funds raised via sales of national presents, products and food specialties to selected charity organisations. This year the event was enriched by performances of the Považan Folklore Ensemble (SVK). The SVK REP has applied for funding with the NCB to support a project of MŠK Senec to purchase sports clothing and equipment for disadvantaged children from and around Senec.



## Training for Op Sophia II

(22 November) In light of the SVK Military Police (MP) personnel's scheduled deployment on EUNAVOR MED Operation SOPHIA early next year, 14 members of the Crisis Management Sections, of the MP Departments Vlkavová and Prešov, will partake in multinational training at Eckernförde Naval Base and at Neustadt Naval Base in Hostein, Germany.

The training, led by instructors from the Boarding Company (Bordeinsatzkompanie), of the Sea Battalion (Seebataillon), based at Eckernförde Naval Base, is geared towards practising closed quarters battle (CQB), developing the skills necessary for crews of combat vessels, mastering tactical procedures for conducting visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) operations by going through and capturing suspicious vessels, weapons, dangerous materials, and uncovering smuggling networks and smugglers.

The Patria AMVXP 8x8 vehicle includes NATO and EU proven solutions which fulfil customers' requirements. "During this programme, we will develop – together with EVPÚ, a. s., Konstruktia-Defence, a. s., and other partners of the Slovak defence industry – a new version of the amphibious AMVXP integrated with the Turra weapon system, fulfilling the requirements of both Slovakian and Finnish Defence Forces. We have had continuous production in our manufacturing network since 2003, which creates capability to short lead time deliveries. We also have solid and strong experience of technology transfer programmes and localization of manufacturing of vehicles, which will create work and business opportunities in Slovakia, when the serial production and delivery phase comes in", confirmed Mika Kari, President of Land Business Unit Patria.