



## PESCO's second wave

(20 November) The second wave of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects – the joint initiative of EU countries is becoming a reality. This was confirmed by EU defence and foreign affairs ministers at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) in Brussels.

In addition to PESCO, the discussion focused on reviewing the implementation of the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), which, over 2 years on since its official release, is yielding the desired results as the EU steps up its engagement in security and defence.

On the EU GS and PESCO, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The Slovak Republic has been actively involved in delivering on the priorities of the EU Global Strategy. This is evidenced by our participation in PESCO, where we have participated in specific projects aimed at developing defence capabilities, whilst advancing cooperation among EU countries. As part of the so-called second wave of PESCO projects, which has been approved today, the Slovak Republic will join another 3 projects. As a regular member of 1 project and as an observer of 2 projects with an option to join later." He added that Slovakia's EuroArtillery – Indirect Fire Support project had made it among the initial 17 collaborative PESCO projects.

The V4 EU BG will be reinforced by Croatia in 2019. This was confirmed by the V4 defence ministers and their Croatian counterpart as they signed the Note of Accession of Croatia in a signing ceremony held on the margins of the EU Defence Ministers Meeting in Brussels on 20 Nov. Endorsed by the V4 defence ministers during their meeting in Tatranská Lomnica on 15 Nov, Croatia's accession to the V4 EU BG follows on from a series of expert level meetings.

## Memorial to peacemakers

(22 November) A new Memorial, commissioned in memory of the servicemen and women who have died on crisis management missions and operations abroad, has been unveiled in the grounds of the Memorial and War Cemetery on Háj-Nicovô Hill in Liptovský Mikuláš. Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Every time our soldiers deploy to a crisis region in different parts of the world, we believe they will come back safe and sound to their close ones on accomplishment of their professional mission. Unfortunately, 58 of them have not made it back home. Having built this Memorial, we want to pay our respects to them and reaffirm our pledge we have repeated so many times – we will never forget you! May this place of commemoration never be deserted." Reminiscing about those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country, CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "We never forget our heroes and we will always return to them in our hearts and minds." In his remarks, Mayor of LM Ján Blcháč appreciated the cooperation between the LM city authorities and the MOD in building this place of commemoration.



## Soldiers join floorball league

(23 November) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš wants to stir up pupils' and students' interest in doing sports and following a healthy lifestyle as a prerequisite to join the Army. Towards this end, the MOD has teamed up with the TV JOJ Foundation to cooperate in the SVK Floorball League project. Symbolically, the league was kicked off with a friendly floorball match between the Olympic legends team whose careers have been closely associated with the Military Sports Centre (VŠC) Dukla Banská Bystrica and the SVK female national floorball team. Both teams turned out at the Sports Hall of the VŠC Dukla Banská Bystrica to demonstrate their support for some 500 primary school pupils from around Banská Bystrica and Žilina and the project itself. Joining in with the VŠC Olympic legends team, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Sports have belonged to the military profession and the 'floorball league' provides us with a unique opportunity to bring soldiers and students together. I believe that our servicemen and women will inspire young people to fight and compete and that they will be the right role models to instil a desire in them to join the Army one day." He further noted that soldiers will compete in a separate category of the SVK Floorball League and that the MOD encourages them to visit schools and train pupils and students in their spare time. Vladimír Fatka, administrator of the TV JOJ Foundation, said: "We highly value the cooperation with the SVK MOD and we are happy that the students involved in our SVK Floorball League can see positive role models, while the advantages of the military profession are explained to them. Through the floorball contest, we have managed to attract huge crowds of students – we are now into the second year with over 100,000 children taking part in the league. Also thanks to such events as this friendly match between the Olympic legends led by Minister Gajdoš and our best Slovak female floorball players, students can better understand the importance of sports, movement and healthy lifestyle."



■ On 21 Nov, U.S. Defense Attaché Lt Col Jakub Andrews paid a visit to the Army HQ Trenčín, where he was welcomed by Commander of the SVK Army Maj Gen Jindřich Joch.

■ From among the Army's Other Ranks and NCOs, Cpl Lukáš Vnučko, of 12th Mech Bn Nitra, and Sgt 1st Class Martin Chovanec, of CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin, were named **Best Soldier and NCO of the Year**. Sgt 1st Class Chovanec is nominated for the Best Armed Forces NCO of the Year Award, which will be announced on 13 Dec in Košariská.

■ The Transport Wing Kuchyňa was the venue of **Ex Multiplex 2018**, involving personnel from the Transport Wing Kuchyňa, Tactical Wing Sliac, Helicopter Wing Prešov, and the Interior Ministry QRA Police Unit. The aim of the exercise was to fast-rope from the helicopter hovering above the ground.

■ At the invitation of HUN CHOD Lt Gen Ferenc Korom and CSEL of the Hungarian Defence Forces CSM István Kriston, **CSEL of the SVK Armed Forces** Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš took part in the International Command Senior Enlisted Leaders Conference in Balatónakarattya.

■ **HQ Bratislava Garrison** named members of the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour Cpl Matej Hockicko, Senior Guard of 1st Company, and Sgt Lukáš Kameniar, Guard Specialist of 2nd Company, Best Soldier of the Year and Best NCO of the Year, respectively.

■ On 21 Nov, Col Slavomír Milde received **Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps** Mons František Rábek. During the meeting, Mons Rábek thanked Col Milde for the work his staff had carried out in support of the events organised by the Ordinariate. They also discussed establishing a permanent position for a military chaplain to offer pastoral service to military personnel of Bratislava Garrison.

■ Members of the SVK Armed Forces took part in the **Open Doors Day** of Exnárova Private Secondary School in Bratislava's Ružinov on 20 Nov. The school provides technical education and graduates are qualified to find employment in the SVK Armed Forces.

■ Drivers are asked by the MOD to be alert and drive with care as there will be **19 Allied military road movements**, mostly involving US, CZE and POL troops, across Slovakia between 26 Nov and 2 Dec 2018. In addition, SVK Army vehicles carrying oversized cargo will move on the routes: Nové Mesto nad Váhom – Trenčín; Martin – Trenčín – Sereď; Nitra – Levice – Sliac; Sereď – Trnava – Trenčín; Sereď – Trnava – Martin. And there will also be a military railway movement on the route: Nové Mesto nad Váhom – Trebišov.

## Service pay will go up

(24 November) Service pay will increase significantly next year. This follows on from the Personnel Management Concept which is now being finalised. The MOD will submit it to the Cabinet for consideration this December. Under the new pay arrangements, the minimum pay for an active duty soldier should reach the average monthly salary in the national economy. As of today, a 2nd Degree Private serving up to 1 year earns €707.50, whereas he will earn €778.25 after the 10-percent indexation as from January 2019. And with additional changes included, regular soldier's pay will go up by an additional €300. The new Concept also reckons on a change to the remuneration of active duty soldiers which under the new pay system is not to be based on the rank but on the official appointment performed by a member of the SVK Armed Forces. On this, the MOD will submit a legislative proposal to the Cabinet in January 2019. The MOD leadership has already been in negotiation with the Ministry of Finance over the change to the pay particulars, with the intention of covering the cost of the increased pay and the change to the pay system from the allocated 2019 Defence budget. If the Concept and the legislative proposal are approved, the change to the pay system, including the pay increase, will take effect from mid-2019.

## SVK-U.S. NCO Course



(20 November) Held under the aegis of CSEL of the SVK Armed Forces Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš and Indiana National Guard State Command Sergeant Major/Senior Enlisted Leader CSM James R. Gordon, the NCO Academy Martin

hosted the Battle Staff NCO Course, led by INNG instructors, for the third time already. The aim of the course was to provide basic information on planning and decision-making, planning and conduct of operations in the operational environment, and to practise the work of NCO battle staff at the operational level. Therefore, the course also incorporated Ex VALLEY THUNDER, with course attendees working as battle staff members.

## Ex Joint Cooperation 2018

(21 November) 11 members of the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin, led by Capt Denisa Haasová, of Land Forces HQ, participated in Ex Joint Cooperation 2018 in Nienburg, Germany. This was the third such exercise where our CIMIC specialists honed their skills alongside their colleagues from 21 countries under the supervision of the Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence (CCOE CIMIC), located in The Hague, the Netherlands. The exercise was geared towards liaison activities, including realistic meetings with actors and interpreters as if in the area of deployment, reporting and situational updates. The exercise was well prepared and professionally executed in field conditions, mirroring the contemporary operational environment in which CIMIC specialists work.

## IFV gunners/operators undertake live fire training

(23 November) Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) operators/gunners, of Mech Bde Topoľčany, underwent live fire training at the Training Centre Lešť during the third week of November. The officer commanding the training activity, Capt Ladislav Gurský, of Mech Bn Levice, pointed out that the aim of the training was to sharpen the knowledge and skills of IFV gunners/operators in the operation of the BVP-2 weapons system and the IFV. "And to work through the successive stages of specific scenarios. While at Lešť, they progressed through three basic training phases – theory, rehearsal, and live firing. The theory phase saw them deepening their knowledge of the vehicle's design features,



weapons operation, observation and target designation systems. During the rehearsal phase, they rehearsed the drills on the preparatory and firing lines, switching from "slow movement mode" to "firing mode", conducting initial firing and giving feedback for fire correction. During the last phase, they carried out live firing," explained Capt Ladislav Gurský. Asked what was most challenging about the exercise, the gunners agreed on one thing: firing while on the move. This is because it requires a high degree of synchronization between the crew, from preparing the IFV for combat, switching to "firing mode", target detection and designation where the vehicle commander steps in, to the firing itself.