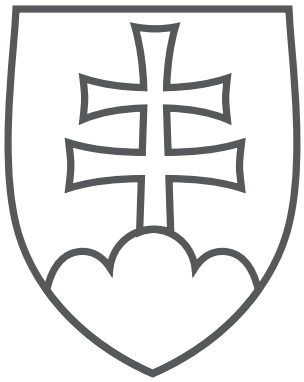

DEFENCE STRATEGY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

2021

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic is the cornerstone strategic document that delineates the main approaches of the Slovak Republic to ensuring its defence.

2. The Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic adheres to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, the Charter of the United Nations and other international treaties and agreements and takes into account strategic documents of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (hereafter referred to as "NATO"), the European Union (hereafter referred to as "EU") and further relevant documents dealing with defence, while complying with the Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic.

3. The Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic reflects the changing security environment, the state of preparedness of the Slovak Republic for defence and lessons learned from implementing the Slovak Republic's defence policy and developing its national defence system. This defence strategy formulates the basic framework of defence policy, its aims, and the ways and means of their implementation.

DEFENCE POLICY FRAMEWORK OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

I. The Strategic Context of Defence

4. The Slovak Republic is responsible for its own defence. It maintains peace, defends its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders and upholds its commitments from international treaties and agreements, by which it is bound.

5. No state is capable of facing the whole spectrum of security threats alone. The highest level of the Slovak Republic's defence is achieved through the synergy of its defence capacities and the defence capacities of the other NATO and EU member states, along with the functionality and internal cohesion of these organisations.

"The Slovak Republic is responsible for its own defence. ... For the Slovak Republic, there is no better alternative to NATO's collective defence."

6. NATO represents the primary framework for defence of the Slovak Republic and therefore the alliance with the other NATO member states is vitally important. For the Slovak Republic, there is no better alternative to NATO's collective defence. The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy provides opportunities for enhancing the Slovak Republic's defence.

7. NATO and EU membership enables the Slovak Republic together with Allies and partners to develop capabilities that it couldn't otherwise provide alone. Involvement in the defence efforts within NATO and the EU increases the ability of the Slovak Republic to promote its security interests in the world and to shape the broader security environment.

8. Defence of the Slovak Republic constitutes a part of ensuring its security. The Slovak Republic flexibly employs the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (hereafter referred to as "Armed Forces") and other defence capabilities as part of a whole-of-society effort to maintain its security, also in the occurrence of a non-military threat.

9. Slovak defence spending had been significantly below the 2% of GDP level. Coupled with the non-implementation of development plans it led to shortcomings in Armed Forces capacities and capabilities and in the Defence Support System, having implications for the Slovak Republic's ability to defend itself.

II. Politico-Military Conclusions from the Security Environment Assessment

10. Based on the Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic´s assessment of the security environment, the following has the biggest impact on how defence is provided for:

a) escalation of power competition among states, international law violations, ongoing use of military force in international relations, increase in modern conventional and nuclear forces capacities of states and their war fighting potential and increase in the ability of non-state actors to threaten the security interests of states,

b) erosion of arms control and disarmament regimes and of confidence and security building measures in Europe, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and introduction of next generation missiles,

c) development and proliferation of technologies and their military application that enhance the sophistication of threats, the complexity of their effects, their capacity to threaten the nation and shorten the available reaction time,

d) rise of threats related to cyberspace and space as operational domains, which can have a negative impact on the management of defence, command and control of the Armed Forces and the functionality of infrastructure vital to defence,

e) a deteriorated security environment in Europe, primarily as a result of violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation and other armed conflicts in the eastern part of Europe and in North Africa and the Middle East,

f) instability and tension among states and the accumulation of an extensive and modern military potential in the vicinity of NATO and EU member states' borders,

g) spreading of propaganda and disinformation activities that may have a negative impact on the cohesion of NATO and the EU and their ability to act and at the national level disrupt the stability of the democratic political system and decision-making mechanisms, weaken the trust of citizens in democracy and the rule of law as well as their will to defend their country, contribute to the polarization of society, support extremism and to question the significance of NATO and EU membership,

h) activities of foreign intelligence services, particularly their effort to infiltrate state administrative bodies and other forms of gathering information related to ensuring the defence of the state,

i) terrorism with the potential to threaten the Slovak Republic and its Allies and partners,

"[T]he Slovak Republic ensures its defence and meets international commitments in a deteriorated and dynamically evolving security environment..."

j) massive illegal migration especially related to dysfunctional states and climate change; global health threats; extremism including its penetration into the Armed Forces, further executive elements of the national defence system and into state administrative bodies; and activities of entities geared towards the wilful usurpation of Armed Forces' or Armed Corps' tasks, the monopoly of which belongs exclusively to the state.

11. Implications for the Slovak Republic's defence policy are the following:

a) the Slovak Republic ensures its defence and meets international commitments in a deteriorated and dynamically evolving security environment, characterised by instability and low predictability,

b) the threat of an armed attack against the Slovak Republic is low, primarily due to its NATO and EU membership, yet it cannot be ruled out completely just as an armed attack against another member state that would require the Slovak Republic to meet its treaty obligations,

c) requirements placed on the quality of performance of the national defence system are increasing, including the information support of decision-making as well as on the readiness of Slovak defence capacities,

d) the evolution of military and non-military threats, including hybrid activities, requires the resilience of the state to be strengthened by both military and civilian means,

e) effective pre-emption and reaction to security threats is possible only through cooperation in international organisations of which the Slovak Republic is a member.

12. In its defence policy, the Slovak Republic reacts to the necessity of providing for its defence, to the advantages and responsibilities stemming from NATO and EU membership, to the level of its ability to defend itself and to the deteriorated security environment.

DEFENCE POLICY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

I. Primary Aim, Principles and Basic Instrument of the Defence Policy of the Slovak Republic

13. The primary aim of the Slovak Republic's defence policy is to preserve its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders, all of which are a necessary prerequisite of its security. To this end, the Slovak Republic strengthens the ability to defend itself and so contributes to enhancing NATO's and the EU's ability to act in the area of defence.

14. The Slovak government is responsible for the defence of the state. The National Council of the Slovak Republic, the President of the Slovak Republic, state administrative bodies, territorial self-government bodies, courts, the Public Prosecutor's Office, corporate and physical entities all take part in formulating and implementing the defence policy.

"The primary aim... is to preserve... [the] sovereignty [of the Slovak Republic], [its] territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders... [its] defence policy principles [are]: the peaceful resolution of disputes and prevention, deterrence, the right to self-defence, the proportionality and comprehensiveness of response... The national defence system is the basic instrument..."

15. The Slovak Republic's defence is a duty and a matter of honour for its citizens. The understanding of defence by citizens and their participation are of growing importance.

16. As a responsible state, a reliable ally and a trusted partner in international relations, the Slovak Republic applies the following defence policy principles: the peaceful resolution of disputes and prevention, deterrence, the right to self-defence, the proportionality and comprehensiveness of response.

17. The Slovak Republic prefers the peaceful resolution of disputes. It strives for a peaceful coexistence with all other states and acts in accordance with the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other principles of international law.

18. As part of conflict prevention, the Slovak Republic continuously assesses security threats and their risks and participates in supporting global peace, security and stability through preventive diplomacy, fostering of international cooperation and the employment of its Armed Forces. It participates in the United Nations, NATO, the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and international coalitions' military operations, missions and activities. Through these, the Slovak Republic contributes to crisis and conflict prevention and resolution, post-

conflict stabilisation, to the fight against terrorism and supports defence capacity building in other states, including NATO and EU partners.

19. The Slovak Republic supports the strengthening of the global system for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, the adherence to the treaty framework of conventional weapons control and confidence and security building measures in Europe. For the effective functioning of these control regimes, the Slovak Republic supports their modernisation and their applicability to new weapon systems, increased responsibility of participants for meeting their obligations and their proper verification.

20. The deterrence of an armed attack against the Slovak Republic is based on NATO's collective deterrence and defence potential and on the resolve to defend itself. Allies' nuclear weapons play a key role. The Slovak Republic contributes to the credibility of collective deterrence through its defence capacities and together with NATO member states through measures demonstrating Allied solidarity, including NATO's enhanced Forward Presence and military exercises.

21. The Slovak Republic considers collective defence as the most effective way of ensuring its defence. Within this framework, the Slovak Republic maintains and develops its ability to resist an armed attack. The Slovak Republic creates conditions for the reception of foreign armed forces to its territory, including the improvement of military mobility and the provision of Host Nation Support.

22. In the event of an armed attack, the Slovak Republic will employ all of its defence capacities and all available resources and measures at its disposal. It is also determined to react resolutely to hybrid activities aimed against its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders, even under the threshold of a regular response.

23. As part of NATO's defence effort, the Slovak Republic takes part in planning processes, generation of rapid reaction forces, military exercises and in the establishment and functioning of NATO structures, including the support for their activities on its own territory. It contributes to the development and employment of jointly-owned capabilities. In line with NATO initiatives, the Slovak Republic also participates in further measures that enhance the collective deterrence and defence potential, as well as its usability, including the development of military and civilian capabilities.

24. The Slovak Republic contributes to the development of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, while maintaining its complementarity to and avoiding duplicities with NATO. It takes advantage of the opportunities presented by a closer defence cooperation in the EU. The Slovak Republic meets its Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) binding obligations, including the generation of military capabilities and the employment of the Armed Forces. The Slovak Republic also partic-

ipates in planning processes, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and supports the competitiveness and innovativeness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. This way it also contributes to the fulfilment of the EU's ambition to act as a global actor and to the strengthening of the European pillar of NATO. It supports the NATO-EU strategic partnership in defence.

25. The Slovak Republic defends itself continuously in cyberspace as well. It creates conditions for the effective securing of information systems and networks of strategic and important facilities of defence infrastructure and elements of critical infrastructure.

26. The Slovak Republic supports NATO and EU initiatives aimed at minimising threats and taking advantage of opportunities provided by the space domain for the support of military activities, especially in areas such as intelligence, navigation and communications.

27. The Slovak Republic maintains its defence capacities for the continuous fulfilment of defence tasks. In the event of an imminent threat or an armed attack it will increase these capacities by Armed Forces mobilisation, economic mobilisation measures and other measures related to sustaining a war economy. As part of the ability of the country to resist an armed attack it will also ensure conditions for the acquisition of vitally important goods and services indispensable for the survival of the population and to ensure the protection of vitally important resources by economic mobilisation measures.

28. The Slovak Republic takes measures to prevent and resolve threats to its sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders proportionate to the scope, seriousness and urgency of the threat.

29. The Slovak Republic's approach to defence is comprehensive, engaging military and non-military instruments, the public, private and third sectors, political parties and the general public in the defence effort, with an emphasis on coordination and synergy of their activities.

30. The national defence system is the basic instrument of defence policy. The national defence system is a complex of managerial, executive, supporting and advisory elements, measures and their interrelationships geared towards the comprehensive preparation and providing for defence. The Slovak Republic adapts these elements, measures and interrelationships in a way that makes the system effective and efficient, including the decision-making in an unclear, unpredictable and rapidly changing situation.

31. The Slovak Republic will support the meeting of its basic defence policy aim by measures in the area of defence management, Armed Forces development, preparation and development of the Defence Support System, support for the Slovak defence industry, preparation of the general public for defence and measures in the area of resources for defence. These measures will also contribute to enhancing resilience of the state.

II. Defence Management

32. The aim in the area of defence management is its improvement by:

a) timely and coordinated identification and analysis of threats and their risks,

b) preparation of state administrative and territorial self-government bodies for the management and fulfilment of defence tasks,

c) preparation of defence capacities and planning their use in conjunction with NATO and EU planning processes,

d) timely, centralised and continuous decision-making in conjunction with the decision-making of international organisations,

e) verification and inspection of the readiness for defence and by an assessment of defence,

f) long-term continuity of defence policy.

"The aim in the area of defence management is its improvement by... timely... analysis of threats..., preparation of state administrative... bodies... continuous decision-making... [and] the long-term continuity of defence policy."

33. To ensure a timely identification and analysis of threats and their risks, including hybrid activities, capabilities of intelligence services, central state administrative bodies and respective expert elements will be enhanced. Information sharing, the process of coordinated interministerial analysis and the process of presenting information to appropriate constitutional and state authorities will be systemically arranged in order to facilitate timely decision-making.

34. The Slovak Republic will enhance the preparation of state administrative and territorial self-government bodies for the management and fulfilment of defence tasks. This preparation will be aimed at the way the national defence system functions, the facilitation of national defence support including Host Nation Support on Slovak territory and the facilitation of executive elements of the national defence system and the needs for survival of the population by economic mobilisation measures.

35. The readiness of central state administrative bodies and intelligence services for the management and fulfilment of defence tasks will also be improved by crisis management exercises. National Crisis Response System processes will be exercised, procedures will be aligned with NATO and the readiness of constitutional authorities for decision-making will be enhanced.

36. The Slovak Republic will ensure the interoperability of defence management communication and information systems, including real-time classified information sharing with Allies and partners in NATO and the EU.

37. The Slovak Republic will ensure the protection of classified information related to defence

in line with NATO standards, while taking into consideration the conditions for their protection during wartime.

38. In line with NATO and EU planning processes, the Slovak Republic will ensure an increased efficiency of the development and employment of defence capacities. This will be supported by a coordinated elaboration and harmonisation of a set of documents related to defence planning, planning of Armed Forces employment and their mobilisation, and economic mobilisation planning. Combined, these documents constitute the Plan of Defence of the Slovak Republic.

39. The Slovak Republic will ensure timely decision-making of constitutional and state authorities about defence in conjunction with the decision-making of international organisations, even under conditions of hybrid influencing. To maintain the continuity and resilience of defence management in wartime, the Slovak Republic will make particular plans and ensure material and technical conditions for the functioning of the National Defence Management Centre.

40. Preparedness for defence will be verified by a partial or a complex exercise and in wartime by a mobilisation exercise. The Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic (hereafter referred to as "Ministry of Defence") will enhance its inspection processes focused on the fulfilment of tasks related to the preparation and facilitation of defence by state administrative and territorial self-government bodies and it will enhance the assessment of defence.

41. In order to achieve a long-term continuity of defence policy and its public support, the Slovak government will develop its strategic communication, including the room for public debate about key questions of defence. The stability of the political consensus on how to ensure defence and its financing will be facilitated by an agreement of political parties.

III. Armed Forces Development

42. The aim in the area of Armed Forces development is to increase their capacities and capabilities in line with plans in order to fulfil all their tasks. The main task of the Armed Forces is the defence of the Slovak Republic and the fulfilment of international obligations. Planning of the development of the Armed Forces is based on the politico-military ambition of the Slovak Republic.

43. The politico-military ambition of the Slovak Republic is the readiness of the Armed Forces to fulfil the following tasks:

a) to effectively ensure the defence of the Slovak Republic with all standing and mobilised forces and means, with the assistance provided by other NATO or EU member states,

b) to assist a NATO member state as part of collective defence by capacities and capabilities within the scope of Slovak obligations, the basis of which is a heavy mechanised infantry brigade and designated air force capacities or aid and assist an EU member state by the same scope of capacities and capabilities,

c) to contribute to the peace, security and stability outside of Slovak territory, generally under the leadership of international organisations and in line with international law in the following manner:

1. to the NATO enhanced Forward Presence and to military operations and missions up to the extent of a battalion and a company of land forces or their resource equivalent of other forces with rotation,

2. to NATO and EU rapid reaction forces and high readiness forces up to the extent of a battalion group and a battalion of land forces or their resource equivalent of other forces without rotation,

3. the over-all contribution according to points 1 and 2 will not exceed the scope of a battalion group without rotation and a battalion and a company of land forces with rotation or their resource equivalents of other forces,

"The aim in the area of Armed Forces development is to increase their capacities and capabilities in line with plans in order to fulfil all their tasks."

d) to take part in maintaining internal security by providing assistance during emergencies or other non-military crisis situation and take part in some tasks of the Police Force in line with the Slovak legal system.

44. Within the scope of the Slovak politico-military ambition, the Armed Forces are prepared to ensure:

a) the inviolability of Slovak airspace as part of the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System,

b) the defence of Facilities of Special Importance and Other Important Facilities and the protection of facilities within the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence,

c) that tasks pertaining to Host Nation Sup-

port provided by the Slovak Republic are carried out,

d) international cooperation of Armed Forces including cooperation in training,

e) provision of humanitarian aid outside Slovak territory,

f) the detachment of military personnel to NATO and EU structures and HQs,

g) the support for Military Intelligence in performing tasks related to cyber-defence and cyber-security,

h) their participation in countering hybrid activities.

45. The Armed Forces will increase their readiness to carry out the decisions of the constitutional authorities of the Slovak Republic. They will maintain their round-the-clock situational awareness and information for supporting the decision-making process, functional command and control processes, the system for putting forces on alert and up-to-date plans. They will also ensure their preparedness to induct persons and materiel during their mobilisation as well as their preparedness to receive goods and services within the Defence Support System.

46. Armed Forces development will focus on the following areas:

a) the structure, composition, capacities and capabilities that stem from their tasks, the Slovak Republic's membership in international organisations and from the character of new threats, and take into account developments in military science; command and control structures will be proportionate to the size of the Armed Forces;

b) the replenishing and retention of military personnel in sufficient numbers and quality, the improvement of their education, expertise and physical preparedness, psychological resilience, their patriotism and the development of leadership qualities of commanders; sustaining the competitiveness of military service in the labour market,

c) the increase in numbers and readiness of the Armed Forces reserves and the increase of supplies of materiel and ammunition for these reserves,

d) the modernisation, replacement and introduction of new, modern and technologically sophisticated equipment and sufficient supplies of material and ammunition in line with NATO standards; the priority is the equipment and material for the heavy mechanised infantry brigade as the priority NATO Capability Target for the Slovak Republic,

e) first-rate training, including joint exercises, also utilising modern simulation technologies, military exercises carried out with foreign armed forces focusing on the defence of the Slovak Republic and meeting international obligations,

f) the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure to facilitate first-rate training, the utilisation and storage of new military equipment, the protection of facilities and the improvement of living conditions of professional soldiers,

g) the preparation of the Armed Forces together with Armed Corps, Armed Security Corps and other rescue services of the Integrated Rescue System for defence and the preparation of the Armed Forces to carry out certain

tasks of the Police Force or participate in the activities of the Integrated Rescue System; the Armed Forces also prepare themselves for the employment of their specific capabilities against hybrid activities.

47. In the development of its Armed Forces, the Slovak Republic will ensure their mobility, effective fire-power, deployability, sustainability, flexibility, resilience, including the maintenance of resilient communication and information systems and their defence against cyber-attacks, and capabilities to carry out tasks in differing geographical and climactic conditions in such a way, as to be prepared to carry out a wide spectrum of military operations including high intensity operations. The Armed Forces will be interoperable according to NATO standards.

48. The following also participate in fulfilling the politico-military ambition of the Slovak Republic:

a) Military Police mainly carries out the tasks of police protection of the Ministry of Defence, the Armed Forces and military facilities, providing support to the Armed Forces by carrying out police activities in the area of their deployment and providing support to foreign armed forces on Slovak territory, contributes to military operations and missions outside Slovak territory and acts in cases of misdemeanours and crimes; it develops its structure and capabilities to meet these tasks,

b) Military Intelligence mainly carries out the tasks of providing intelligence support for defence, both within country and abroad and participates in state intelligence protection, and that including against hybrid activities; it facilitates the defence of the Slovak Republic and the meeting of collective defence obligations in cyberspace; it enhances its intelligence capabilities and develops and strengthens capacities and capabilities to carry out supportive, defensive, offensive and intelligence cyber-operations.

49. The meeting of NATO Capability Targets for the Slovak Republic will be prioritised in the development of the Armed Forces, Military Police and Military Intelligence.

50. The Slovak Republic develops the capabilities of its Armed Forces, Military Police and Military Intelligence also by way of international cooperation within NATO, the EU, the Visegrad Group and bilaterally, with an emphasis on strategic allies.

IV. Preparation and Development of the Defence Support System

51. The aim in the area of preparing and developing the Defence Support System is to broaden its scope and usability particularly by enhancing the planning of defence, the mechanisms of economic mobilisation for defence and defence research and development.

52. The Ministry of Defence and other central administrative bodies will provide, as part of the Defence Support System, the Armed Forces and foreign armed forces on Slovak territory with defence infrastructure, goods, services and state material reserves. The Slovak Republic provides this support to foreign armed forces through the Armed Forces.

"The aim in the area of preparing and developing the Defence Support System is to broaden its scope and usability... by enhancing the planning of defence, the mechanisms of economic mobilisation for defence and defence research and development."

53. The Slovak Republic will focus on the creation, maintenance and development of the defence infrastructure of transportation, communication and information systems, state material reserves, energy production and distribution, drinking water supply and the control and operations centres of constitutional authorities and Armed Forces command centres in wartime. Transport infrastructure development will also focus on improving military mobility in the context of NATO and EU requirements. The protection and defence of Facilities of Special Importance and Other Important Facilities involved in defence and their operation in a crisis situation will be ensured.

54. The availability and continuous supply of goods for the replenishment of losses and consumption by the Armed Forces and other elements of the national defence system in wartime and the provision of services to these elements for the purposes of defence will be ensured by means of economic mobilisation.

55. The supply of goods, the provision of services and the maintenance of production capacities will be facilitated by the appropriate central administrative bodies through a contractual relationship especially with an economic mobilisation entity or an entrepreneur or another legal entity that may be designated as an economic mobilisation entity. The same entity should supply goods or provide services to the Armed Forces and other elements of the national defence system in peacetime as well as in wartime.

56. The Slovak Republic will increase supplies of the state material reserves for the purposes of defence, so that together with the supplies of the

Armed Forces at their disposal in peacetime, they will cover the needs of the Armed Forces.

57. The Slovak Republic will support defence research and development aimed particularly at Armed Forces capacity and capability development by increased spending and the stability and transparency of development priorities. In the sphere of modern, emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, the Slovak Republic will focus on cooperation with other NATO and EU member states. Research and development will also focus on the potential military application of dual-use technologies.

58. The Slovak Republic will support the involvement of domestic scientific, research, development and industrial entities in international defence research and development programs and projects, especially within NATO and the EU.

V. Support of the Slovak Defence Industry

59. The aim in the area of supporting the Slovak defence industry is to increase its share in facilitating defence and in international cooperation by creating systemic preconditions for a wider utilization of its capacities of manufacturing, delivery of goods and provision of services, as well as in research and development.

60. Competitiveness and economic efficiency are conditions necessary for the use of defence industry capacities that provide goods and services to elements of the national defence system. Interoperable Armed Forces equipment and material, its repair and maintenance during the entirety of their life cycle and the preparation of personnel will be prioritised. The Slovak Republic will support the ability of this industry to ensure the quality, security and stability of the supply of goods and the provision of services, including in wartime.

61. The Slovak Republic will support the participation of its domestic defence industry in supplying goods and providing services for the Armed Forces by stability and transparency of its multiannual armament and research and development plans. Communication between appropriate ministries and defence industry entities will be intensified, also concerning the business opportunities for their products abroad.

62. The Slovak Republic will support the fair participation of its domestic defence industry in international cooperation while also taking advantage of joint capability development projects and the possibilities of joint/common funding and collaborative procurement within NATO and the EU. The Slovak Republic will also support its broader involvement in carrying out projects with foreign partners in the field of Armed Forces equipment, including the transfer of appropriate know-how and personnel preparation requisite for the servicing of this equipment.

"The aim in the area of supporting the Slovak defence industry is to increase its share in facilitating defence and in international cooperation by creating... preconditions for a wider utilization of its capacities..."

VI. Preparing the General Public for Defence

63. The aim in the area of preparing the general public for defence is to increase its preparedness by providing objective information about ensuring defence, by the attainment of knowledge and skills necessary in crisis situations and by increasing defence awareness and practical preparedness of citizens for defence. Such preparation will also contribute to satisfying citizens' interest in military matters, strengthening of social cohesion, and to countering extremism.

64. As part of strategic communication of the Slovak Republic, public administrative bodies will provide within their purview information to the public about ensuring defence, including the importance of NATO and EU membership. The Armed Forces will participate in these informative activities. Providing information to the general public will contribute to the resilience of the population against disinformation and harmful propaganda from foreign or domestic environments, to its trust in public administrative bodies and to its support for the Slovak Republic's NATO and EU membership. In wartime, the coordination of information activities will be provided by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic and county and district security councils.

"The aim in the area of preparing the general public for defence is to increase its preparedness for defence by providing... information..., [by broadening] knowledge and skills [during the educational process]... and by increasing... practical preparedness..."

65. Knowledge and skills of the general public necessary in a crisis situation will be broadened during the educational process in primary and secondary schools focused on defence education, defence preparation, preparation for civil protection, medical preparation, special-interest, technical and sports activities. The Ministry of Defence will present its requirements for the content of defence education and defence preparation to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. The Armed Forces and other elements of the national defence system will take part in such education and preparation. The Ministry of Defence will support the preparation of teachers in this sphere utilizing its educational capacities.

66. The Slovak Republic will support the increase of defence awareness and practical preparedness of its citizens for defence by military training carried out voluntarily. The opportunity to enrol in the Armed Forces active reserves will be afforded to a wider group of citizens, while the conditions of their training will be improved. This will contribute to the creation of the Armed Forces reserves.

67. Public activities of the Armed Forces involving defence themes, together with the coop-

eration with civic associations and non-profit organisations will contribute to sparking the interest of citizens in preparations for defence.

68. Civic associations, non-profit organisations providing a public benefit and registered churches and religious societies can contribute to preparing the general public for defence. The Ministry of Defence will improve the conditions under which they participate in such activities.

VII. Resourcing Defence

69. The aim in resourcing defence is to ensure the quality of human resources, modern material resources and financial resources that are foreseeable in the long-term in the scope required by national defence, as well as their efficient and transparent use.

70. For the purposes of defence, the Slovak Republic will ensure:

a) human resources primarily in the Armed Forces, in all other executive elements of the national defence system and in state administrative bodies, while improving their selection and preparation and ensuring their professionalism, expertise, moral qualities, favourable conditions for their retention; and will take measures to prevent or suppress manifestations and actions motivated by extremism or hatred,

b) material resources, predominantly for the development and employment of the Armed Forces, remaining executive elements of the national defence system and for the Defence Support System, which create conditions for successful mission execution, while taking into account technological developments and their implications for war fighting; and will also ensure the security and stability of the supply of goods and the provision of services,

c) financial resources in line with NATO and EU obligations with the ambition of achieving the 2% GDP level in 2024 and maintain them at least at that level from that date onward, a minimum of 20% of defence spending on major Armed Forces equipment and related research and development and aim towards dedicating 2% of defence spending to defence research and development; these resources will also contribute to the economic development of the Slovak Republic.

"The aim in resourcing defence is to ensure the quality of human resources, modern material resources and financial resources that are foreseeable in the long-term..., as well as their efficient and transparent use."

71. The Slovak Republic will strive to gain financial support within the international cooperation framework, especially for infrastructure and the reduction of environmental burdens within the purview of the Ministry of Defence, for the support of its defence industry, research and development, as well as education. For this purpose, it will especially take advantage of EU structural funds, the European Defence Fund, the NATO Security Investment Programme and bilateral mechanisms.

72. In wartime, the Slovak Republic will ensure an increase in resources by mobilising the Armed Forces, by measures of economic mobilisation for defence and by a wartime state budget.

73. The Slovak Republic will ensure the efficient and transparent utilization of resources by:

a) improving defence planning processes, in which budgeting is governed by programming and long-term planning and is tied in with the acquisition process,

b) harmonising its defence planning with the NATO Defence Planning Process, while taking into account EU military capability planning,

c) improving the measuring of results by enhancing the availability of information for decision-making and by open and objective communication with the public, including the disclosure of contracts,

d) implementing the value-for-money principle, improving the preparation, assessment and execution of investments, competitive and transparent acquisitions and regular defence spending reviews,

e) optimising the administrative structure of the Ministry of Defence and the command structures of the Armed Forces,

f) implementing comprehensive quality management at the Ministry of Defence, aimed at enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency in attaining aims,

g) enhancing the energy efficiency of Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces activities; this way also lowering their negative impact on the environment,

h) improving the Armed Forces armament processes, which are tied in with creating their structures, replenishing personnel and with gaining capabilities, while taking into account the life cycle of equipment and opportunities for their unification,

i) introducing a way of financing unplanned employment of the Armed Forces abroad following the decisions of Slovak constitutional authorities in a way that will not be at the expense of operating and developing the Armed Forces,

j) expanding inter-ministerial cooperation primarily in preparing personnel, state infrastructure utilization, armament and acquisition of material and related services, as well as the cooperation with the private sector and academia, primarily in the spheres of education, research and development and materiel supply,

k) taking advantage of international cooperation, primarily by harmonising development aims by pooling, sharing or specialising capabilities and taking advantage of services and expertise of NATO and the EU and their agencies.

CONCLUSION

74. The Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic sets up the politico-strategic framework for follow-on strategic, conceptual and planning documents as well as the update of defence legal acts.

75. The Slovak government is responsible for the implementation of the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic. Particular ministries and further central state administrative bodies facilitate its implementation within their purview.

76. Constitutional authorities will support the implementation of the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic particularly by responsibly financing defence and efficiently allocating resources in order to achieve aims. This implementation may also be influenced by developments in the security environment.

77. The implementation of the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic is evaluated transparently by an annual Comprehensive Assessment of Defence of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of Defence will submit this evaluation to the Defence and Security Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. This committee may inform the general assembly of the National Council of the Slovak Republic about significant findings.

78. The Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic is updated on the basis of the findings of a strategic defence review, in the event of a significant change in the security environment of the Slovak Republic or of the level of defence spending or following an update of the Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic.

DEFENCE STRATEGY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic was approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 27 January 2021

Published by the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic
Kutuzovova 8, 832 47 Bratislava
www.mosr.sk

First edition
NOT FOR SALE

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ISBN 978-80-89261-88-8
EAN 9788089261888