

Defence System of the Republic of Slovenia

Member of NATO since 29 March 2004

Slovenia became a NATO member on 29 March 2004, and a European Union member on 1 May the same year. With the country's integration into the Euro-Atlantic establishments, the issue of the security and defence of the Republic of Slovenia became an active part of the European and international security and defence system. By assuming an active role in the international political and military organisations, and by constructively participating in regional security initiatives, Slovenia is taking part in resolving world crisis hotspots, and ensuring its own security. The cooperation of Slovenia's military capabilities in international crisis-response operations is thus becoming an integral part of the country's foreign policy.

The key objectives and priorities of the defence system development are based primarily on the following three factors: multinational integration and cooperation of SAF with Euro-Atlantic security alliances, enhanced cooperation in international operations and defence planning in accordance with the available defence funds.

Slovenia is building a responsive defence system adapted to the changes of the strategic environment. Intensive changes in the international environment require also changes in the SAF, whose priorities are effective national defence, cooperation in alliances and coalitions as well as in rescue and relief tasks in the event of natural and other disasters.

The main objective of the defence reform is to increase the efficiency and transparency of the defence system. The projected development of the Slovenian Armed Forces (a professional army) stipulates that by 2010 the forces will consist of 14,000 service members, of whom 8,500 will be in the active component and 5,500 in contract reserves.

Defence Expenditure

According to a projection of the reforms and development of the Slovenian defence system the portion of funds for defence within the GNP will rise from the current 1.7 % to 2% by 2008, and thus reach the target for defence expenditure until 2010. The plan stipulates the reduction of costs for personnel (to 50%), operational and maintenance costs (to 27%), and the increase of investment costs (to 23%). The targeted structure for the allocation of defence expenditure after 2010 is 50:30:30 for personnel costs, operation costs and investment costs, respectively.

Defence Aspects of Slovenia's Membership in the EU and NATO

Focus on activities in South Eastern Europe

The Republic of Slovenia is actively involved in forming and shaping European security and defence policies, and is, within the range of its capabilities, participating in all forms of international cooperation aimed at strengthening world peace. The focus of the country's international cooperation is centred on South Eastern Europe. As a responsible member of the international community and NATO, Slovenia is also willing to cooperate in other crisis areas. It is actively involved in NATO transformation agendas, which have concentrated on the concept of the deployment of armed forces, on the preparation of general political guidelines, on the changes in the generation of armed forces for deployment in operations, and on the coordination and preparation activities for Slovenia's participation in NATO operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Slovenia is also an active member of the Partnership for Peace programme, where it presented its views on the cooperation of NATO with Russia and the Ukraine, and on solving the issues in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, which NATO has designated as priority partner areas.

International Peacekeeping Operations

Slovenia's Participation in NATO and EU Operations

So far 2,200 Slovenian troops have participated in SAF was on the North Western Balkans region. With the stabilisation of security conditions, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and with the EU's takeover of the leadership of the peacekeeping mission at the end of 2004, Slovenia gradually withdrew troops from the country in 2005, and strengthened its presence in Kosovo and Afghanistan. In 2005 the Slovenian Armed Forces were included in the international forces of Kosovo Force (KFOR) and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under the auspices of NATO, in the EU-led EUFOR, and in the UNTSO operation in the Middle East, established by the UN.

Participation in NATO Operations

In comparison with other peacekeeping missions, the largest number of members (89) are participating in KFOR units and commands in Kosovo; a military police platoon operates across the entire area of Kosovo. Its tasks include mainly monitoring and control of military traffic. In November 2005, a motorised platoon, whose mission is to protect sacral objects and ethnic enclaves, was sent to the western Kosovo region. At the same time, eight members of the Multinational Land Forces were assigned to a six-month mission at the command centre in Prizren to perform various tasks. In 2006, Slovenian Armed Forces are planning to increase their contingent in Kosovo and in the entire region.

Since December 2003, when the Slovenian Government adopted the decision on the participation in the peace support operation in Afghanistan, five rotations have taken place. At the end of 2005, the number of Slovenian troops in Afghanistan was 58, most of whom were stationed in the Herat province in the western part of the country. Since the end of February 2006, Slovenia has been participating in NATO's peacekeeping mission NMT-I in Iraq with 4 army instructors.

Participation in EU Operations

Slovenian troops have been participating in the mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1997. When the mission was taken over by the EU, Slovenian troops became a part of the Althea mission. In 2005, 57 Slovenian troops, operating in twelve units across the entire area, were stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. SAF service members also participate in the EUFOR headquarters. A SAF medical unit providing general and emergency medical aid to members of the EUFOR, and to the civilian population, is stationed in the Butmir base in Sarajevo. In May 2006 this unit is planned to be relocated to Kosovo. The Althea mission also includes the Turbolet military aircraft, stationed at its home base in Slovenia, and occasionally employed for the needs of the EUFOR units. Three SAF service members are also stationed at the NATO headquarters in Sarajevo.

Peacekeeping Operations of SAF - February 2006	
MISSION	No. OF SAF TROOPS
Bosnia and Herzegovina - ALTHEA, EUFOR	91
Bosnia and Herzegovina – JOINT ENTERPRISE, NATO	3
Kosovo - JOINT ENTERPRISE, KFOR	90
USA, Tampa (FL) - CENTCOM, NATO	2
Syria – UNTSO	2
Afghanistan – ISAF	49
Iraq – NATO	4
TOTAL	241