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EDITORIAL

DEFENCE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

In these days in Slovenia, many volunteers, firefighters, soldiers, and members of the Civil Protection Service are in various ways providing help in the flooded areas. We are accustomed to various crises. Memories and experiences from the European migrant crisis in 2015 and the COVID-19 pandemic four years later are still very fresh. In the face of the surprise brought by the full extent of the water disaster, we also recall the floods in 2010 and 2012, as well as the ice storm that challenged us in 2014. An old piece of news was republished in the daily newspaper, mentioning severe floods in almost the same area of Slovenia in the distant year of 1926. One year has just passed since the extensive wildfire in the Karst region.

We wonder, if our country is adequately prepared for the various surprises that are happening with increased frequency?

Exposure to extensive and unpredictable climate, health, security, and other changes appears to be on the rise. The national security system is constantly being tested in various ways. Unfortunately, this is not only the case in Slovenia, but also broadly around the European Union, the Alliance, and in other locations around the world. This also puts to the test various elements of international cooperation. For the Contemporary Military Challenges, the events related to security, defence, and the military are, nevertheless, the most interesting. In these areas, we can contribute the most and continuously learn while working with others. The crises listed at the beginning prompt a reconsideration of many things, such as the legal basis for the functioning of the national (defence) security system, its education, training and development, coordination, sharing of lessons learned, connecting with other stakeholders in the country and beyond regarding crisis resolution, and the list goes on.

In 2023, Slovenia has an increased amount of financial resources available for equipment, research, development, and innovation in the defence field. The

commitments to NATO to allocate 20% of the defence budget to this area have not been fulfilled for a long time. Despite the strengthening of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy with a focus on the year 2016 when it adopted the Security Strategy and decided to invest more in its security and defence, no significant progress has been made in this field in our country.

In addition to the previously mentioned crises and security challenges, the war in Ukraine has held up a mirror to all of us in the European Union, and consequently, it has provided a motivation for thoughtful reflection on how we see ourselves and our future in terms of security as well.

With accelerated investments in equipment, research, development, and innovation in 2023, many new, but also old questions arise. One such question is whether Slovenia needs a military faculty or not. Could a publicly accredited institution with a research group within it significantly contribute to the strengthening of new equipment, research, development, and innovation in the defence field?

In a period when we, together with European Union member states, are trying to strengthen our Common Security and Defence Policy by implementing various research, development, and innovation activities to establish, ensure, and increase medium and long-term defence system capabilities, protection against natural and other disasters, and the promotion of the national defence technology and industrial base, such an institution or organizational unit could provide excellent support to the country in this area.

Someone might point out that, in Slovenia, military subjects are developed by the Faculty of Social Sciences, which is certainly true. However, what is predominantly needed in the European Union at this time is what we have been putting aside for many years – scientific development, weapons and equipment, knowledge in the field of security, defence, and the military. Historically, Slovenia has never been particularly inclined toward weapons, the military, and the defence of the state. Whenever an aggressor appeared, we responded appropriately and took care of our defence. However, historically, we have always been more interested in other societal areas. Unfortunately, recent experiences demand more of our attention in terms of individual, societal, state, and international security.

Despite having an excellent selection of various academics, researchers, and experts in the Slovenian public education and academic sphere, there are still many opportunities for collaboration and progress in these domains. The authors of the articles in this issue of the Contemporary Military Challenges continue to discuss various topics and offer some suggestions and solutions for addressing contemporary security challenges.

Pavel Vuk has researched the interaction between two systems – military organization and educational institutions. In the article *Military science and educational institutions*, he also addresses the question of what military science is and how it is understood within the modern educational system. This reflection is particularly important for Slovenia, as military science has not been systematically developed.

Another area related to the Slovenian Armed Forces is addressed by **Gregor Potočnik** in his article *Proposal to supplement Slovenian legislation in the military field*. The author emphasizes the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the existing legislation related to the defence field. The reform should be based on current events and experiences in the international environment, with a focus on the development of interdisciplinary content in the field of military science.

Ethical issues are also connected to the military domain. The article by **Dejan Okovič** *Managing ethical risks in military education* deals with how ethics are represented within the Slovenian Armed Forces in general and how they are integrated into the Slovenian military education and training system. The author also highlights the challenges of ethical risk management.

Maja Garb continues the discussion on military ethics in her article *Military and ethics: How are ethical leaders produced?* She presents the work of a research group on factors influencing ethical leadership. This research was conducted within NATO's Science and Technology Organization. It is the inclusion of military ethics in military education and training that holds long-term significance for the behaviour of military personnel in performing their duties.