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NATO IN SLOVENIJA 15 LET POZNEJE: KAKO USPEŠNE SO BILE NAPOVEDI IZDATKOV ZA OBRAMBO

NATO AND SLOVENIA 15 YEARS ON: HOW ACCURATE WERE PROJECTIONS ABOUT DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

Povzetek Finančne posledice članstva v Natu so bile pred letom 2004 predmet razprave o razlogih za članstvo Slovenije v zavezništvu. Zato so se oblikovale ocene, na podlagi katerih so različni avtorji in ustanove napovedovali finančne obveznosti ter obrambne izdatke nove članice. Avtorja tega prispevka na podlagi primerjave ocen in stanja po 15 letih ugotavljata, kako uspešne so bile te napovedi. Prepoznavata objektivne okoliščine, na podlagi katerih se je izoblikovala (ne)uspešna napoved. Pri tem ugotavljata boljšo kakovost opredeljevanja obrambnih izdatkov kot prispevkov za Nato. Obenem opozarjata na nevarnost napačnega razumevanja resničnega zmanjšanja obrambnih izdatkov v Sloveniji kot posledice članstva.

Ključne besede *Obrambni izdatki, finančni prispevki, članstvo v Natu.*

Abstract The financial consequences of NATO membership had been a subject of debate in the reasons for Slovenian accession to the Alliance before 2004. In order to provide projections of financial obligations and defence expenditure of a new NATO member, some authors and institutions had developed appropriate financial assessments. Based on an analysis of the available sources the authors of this article try to find out how accurate those projections were. They recognize objective circumstances responsible for more or less accurate projections, observing a higher quality of assessments about future defence expenditure than those dealing with financial contributions to NATO budget. Among other messages they call for attention in avoiding possible wrong conclusions that the actual reduction of defence budget that had happened in reality is not a consequence of NATO membership as some projected.

Key words *Defence expenditure, financial contributions, NATO membership.*

Introduction On 29 March 2004 Slovenia became a full member of NATO. The accession process included, among other things, the country's entrance into the NATO Partnership Programme in 1994, the Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1997, which was one of the "key tools available for accession", and the conclusion of five Membership Action Plans (MAP) (Šavc, 2009, p 52). Previously Slovenia had experienced a "shock" in 1997 when it was not invited into NATO, because "it had neither the luck nor the geostrategic position of three new members"¹ (Kožar in Šavc, 2009, p 52); because "Slovenian foreign policy was too isolationistic and excluded from contributions to international security" (Jelušič, 2009, p 8); and because, among other things, "the USA did not support the accession of more than three members" and, for NATO, Slovenian membership "did not mean anything significant from the geopolitical and military perspective" (Bebler, 2009, pp 110-111).

In spite of this disappointment, political and other efforts in Slovenia continued towards the strategic goal of NATO membership, which was eventually the priority of all Governments after Independence in 1991, and "enforced by Parliament's resolutions on Slovenian membership of Euro-Atlantic integrations" (Bebler, p 107). The political will of the Alliance was confirmed by the signature of the Accession protocol on March 26 2003 by all members (ibid. p 113). The political will of Slovenia was confirmed the same year by 66% of voters, during the national referendum on NATO and the EU (Jelušič, 2009, p 7).

During the accession process, as in some other new NATO member countries, an intensive political, expert, and public debate on the "pros and cons" of NATO membership took place. Among the topics, a discussion on future defence expenditure and the financial consequences of NATO membership can be found. For this purpose some expert studies were prepared, which were intended to provide more accurate projections (assessments) to enable a better understanding of how NATO membership could impact the country's defence expenditure, and how much it would contribute to the Alliance's budget.

The purpose of this article is to answer the question of how accurate the projections of the financial costs associated with the defence of Slovenia as a new NATO member were. Based on a comparative analysis of financial projections (assessments) of defence expenditure in the last year before entering NATO (2003) and defence expenditure 15 years later (2018), we tried to evaluate the differences between the projected and the actual defence expenditure. An additional motive for the analysis was represented by the fact that during the 5th and the 10th anniversaries of NATO membership, no-one addressed this question. It should be noted that the authors have no intent of evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of NATO membership based on financial data, because NATO membership must be analyzed through the broader field of different aspects (political, security, economic, military, social, geopolitical, etc.) and not only from the financial perspective.

¹ *The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.*

1 2003: PROJECTIONS AND ACTUAL DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

Based on data acquired from the MOD, defence expenditure in Slovenia in 2003 was 369 million EUR² in total, or 1.4% of GDP. The MOD budget was 321 million EUR or 5.14% of the Government budget, from which the Slovenian Armed Forces were allocated 251 million EUR or 78% of the MOD budget (approximately 4% of the Government budget) (MOD, 2019). The analysis shows that in 2003 approximately 56% of expenditure was allocated to personnel, 22% to operations and 22% to investments (Barjaktarević, 2003, pp 5-6).

Some public statements associated with the projections of financial costs after accession to NATO were collected and published by Kovačič, Gregorčič and Fabjančič (2002, pp 65-69 and 72):

- The “membership fee” for NATO “is something between 0.5 and 1% of the national defence budget, which is for Slovenia between 1.5 and 3 million USD” (around 1.4-2.8 million EUR³).
- NATO membership “in the long run reduces the defence expenditure of NATO members”.
- New NATO members should contribute “only 2.5% of income” to the NATO budget.
- “An effective system of armed neutrality should cost Slovenia approximately 3-4% of GDP.”
- “From 2000 to 2010 the Slovenian defence budget will be increased from 1.46% to 2.3% of GDP.”
- “Together with the membership fee, the Slovenian defence budget should be increased by an additional 0.75 GDP due to NATO membership.”
- Costs associated with the accession would be “even higher than 100 million USD annually in the current decade” (around 95 million EUR).
- Due to the professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces the total defence needs will be “2.5-3% of GDP in total”.
- “In the next four years Slovenia can afford defence expenditure at a level of 1.7% of GDP, maximum”.
- New NATO members are expected “to increase expenditure on defence”.

In 1998, the Centre for Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Defence prepared an Assessment of Costs for Slovenian Accession to NATO⁴. In their introductory remarks, the working group responsible for the development of the assessment pointed out a problem of methodology, because “accurate and comprehensive procedures and methods for the calculation of costs do not exist” and the working group could only rely on “the national development and development trends and

² Defence expenditure comprises the MOD Budget (excluding the finances of the Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (URSZR) and the Inspectorate for Protection against Natural and other Disasters (IRSVNDN)), and includes expenditure for the Directorate for the Security of Classified Data (UVTP), and military pensions. The Slovenian currency of the time, Tolar (SIT), has been converted to EUR using the formal exchange rate published by the Bank of Slovenia on 31 December; i.e. 1 EUR = 236.6903 SIT).

³ USD were converted to EUR using the European Central Bank (ECB) exchange list, 31 December 2002.

⁴ Orig. "Ocena stroškov vključevanja Slovenije v Nato".

experiences of other countries”. Therefore the paper is an “expert’s compromise”, which “emphasizes the NATO enlargement costs at the strategic level” (Kromar, Dobravc, Vuk and Arnejčič, 1998, p 3). They referred to the National Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia for NATO membership⁵, which projected the percentage of defence expenditure for 2003 to be at the level of 2.3% of GDP. Projections developed in the Ministry of Defence for the period 2000-2003 showed that there was a planned level of 1.91% of GDP for 2003⁶ (ibid. p 14). In discussing the NATO budget they quote that “something between 0.5 and 1% of the national defence budget” should be allocated to this purpose, and, for example, contributions to NATO in 2003 should be 3-5.8 million USD, which is around 2.8-5.5 million EUR⁷. In order to understand their assessments it should be noted that they predicted Slovenia would “become a full NATO member in 2000” (ibid. pp 29 and 31). This means that their assessment for 2003 actually represents the projected defence expenditure and financial obligations of Slovenia as a NATO member.

At least two additional assessments developed within the Ministry of Defence later were associated with NATO membership. One of these was intended for discussion by the Parliament’s Defence Board and the Board for International Relations. It talks about the expected financial obligations and burdens coming from the process of accession to NATO. An analysis of this assessment shows that it originated from US studies on NATO enlargement. It defines financial costs as direct (linked to NATO membership) and indirect (they exist even if the country is not in NATO). Direct costs are contributions to the NATO civilian and military budget and the NATO investment programme (NSIP), and costs for national missions to NATO HQ (MOD, 1997, p 3). It was assessed that the total direct costs for Slovenia “would be around 8-10 million USD (7.6-9.5 million EUR) annually in the next 10 years”, from which “around 65% would be allocated to contributions, infrastructure and the required transformation of the armed forces” (ibid. p 5). From graphs nos. 9 and 10 which were enclosed it can be seen that the direct costs (derived from the US study on NATO enlargement) would be from 1.45 to 1.88 million USD (1.3-1.7 million EUR). This assessment has limited value for the purposes of this article, because it neither defines the percentage of GDP that Slovenia should dedicate to defence nor does it address the structure of defence expenditure, and as for contributions to the NATO budget, one can only guess because the authors of the assessment did not explain the direct costs in detail.

The second assessment by the Ministry of Defence was prepared by a working group which mainly focused its efforts on Slovenian contributions to the NATO budget. With regard to the projections of defence expenditure, it used the revised national report on defence planning and capabilities conducted within the Planning and Review Process (PARP). The working group used the assumption that Slovenia

⁵ *Orig. "Nacionalna strategija Republike Slovenije za vstop v Nato".*

⁶ *They also mention 2.06% of GDP, but this number cannot be used for the purposes of this article because it also includes expenditure on the Natural and Other Disasters relief system.*

⁷ *ECB, 31 December 2002.*

“would be a full NATO member in 2005”. Because at the time an accurate sharing of the NATO budget was not known, the working group prepared the projection that contributions to the NATO budget should range from 5 to 10 million USD (4.77-9.54 million EUR) (Kovač and others, 2002, p 2), which means that the percentage dedicated to those contributions would be 0.09-0.1% of GDP, or 5.4-6.6% of defence expenditure (ibid. p 5).

Zorko carried out research on defence expenditure and pointed out that Slovenia “dedicated the highest percentage in its history” in 1992, when it reached 2% of GDP. Analyzing defence expenditure from Independence (1991) to 2003, he found that the lowest level was 1.23% in 2000. In 2003, a year before the accession to NATO, it was 1.57% of GDP (Zorko, 2004, pp 32 and 36). He explained the growth in defence expenditure as a consequence of the professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces (employment of soldiers and termination of compulsory military service), and their equipping and modernization. He used figures from the projected defence expenditure after accession to NATO of 1.63% of GDP up to 2% in 2008 (ibid., p 40). With regard to the contributions to the NATO budget, he used formal data published by the Government, which stated that the allocated percentage for Slovenia within the total NATO budget should be 0.26%, and so Slovenia should contribute to the civilian budget, military budget and the NATO security investment programme (NSIP) in 2006 the total amount of 2,833,120 EUR (Ibid. pp 45-48).

A study prepared by the US Congressional Budget Office in 1996 involved only the Visegrád group of countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and can only indirectly show expectations of the growth in defence expenditure for Slovenia as a new NATO member. This study states that all new NATO members should increase current defence expenditure (e.g. Poland by 1.4%, the Czech Republic 1.1%, Slovakia 1.5% and Hungary 1.1%) (SPO, 1996, p 40).

An assessment of future defence expenditure was also prepared by the RAND Corporation, which pointed out, among other things, the economic advantages of NATO membership: (1) in the long run NATO members can reduce defence expenditure because of specialization and a lack of the need to develop all capabilities; (2) membership allows for relocation of defence sources for other purposes (3) it enables the possibility of acquiring sensitive technologies; and (4) NATO membership provides a safe environment which is attractive to foreign investment (Larrabee, Peters and Zycher, 2002, pp 23-24). When assessing defence expenditure, the RAND team used Slovenian plans which were provided by the Annual National Programme of the Republic of Slovenia for the implementation of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) 2001-2003. The transformation of the Slovenian Armed Forces was incorporated into this document, requiring around 41.9 million USD per year in the period 2002-2007 (ibid. p 7). They recognized a disproportion in the projected defence budget, with the planned development of the armed forces having a planned growth of only 17.2 million USD per year. Taking into account the costs associated with the change in military structure, there should have been, for example, in 2003, a

required percentage of defence expenditure of 1.67% of GDP, and 1.76% of GDP in 2005. The data for 2006 and 2007 were not available to the RAND team⁸ (ibid. p 13).

At the end of the accession talks between the NATO teams and new members it was agreed that Slovenia's contribution to the NATO budget should be 0.26% of the NATO budget, or 0.3018% for those projects in which not all NATO members participate (e.g. 2,506,950 EUR in 2005 and 2,833,120 EUR in 2006) (NATO, 2003).

2 15 YEARS LATER: DEFENCE EXPENDITURE IN 2018

Defence expenditure in Slovenia in 2018 was 463 million EUR or 1.01% of GDP. The Ministry of Defence spent 454 million EUR, or 4.8% of the state budget. Around 360 million EUR were allocated to the Slovenian Armed Forces, which was 79% of the Ministry's budget. The Slovenian Armed Forces spent 3.81% of the state budget. The structure of defence expenditure in 2018 was as follows: 71% on personnel, 21.9% on operations and 7.1% on investments (MOD, 2019).

In 2018 Slovenia contributed 0.54 million EUR to the NATO civilian budget, 2.4 million EUR to the NATO military budget, and 1.4 million EUR to the NATO Security investment programme; 4.4 million EUR in total. Besides this, Slovenia paid costs for strategic transportation, the NATO Command structure, the Centres of Excellence and some other projects. Total contributions to NATO were 8.2 million EUR (MOD, 2019), which is around 1.8% of the defence budget. It should be noted that the contributions to the NATO civilian and military budgets and the investment programme follow the agreed Slovenian share (0.26% in general), while other costs depend on the country's will to join certain common projects (e.g. strategic transportation) or the use of NATO agencies for certain projects (e.g. maintenance or the modernization of equipment). Questions about the costs associated with NATO membership were also raised by Members of Parliament⁹.

3 ANALYSIS

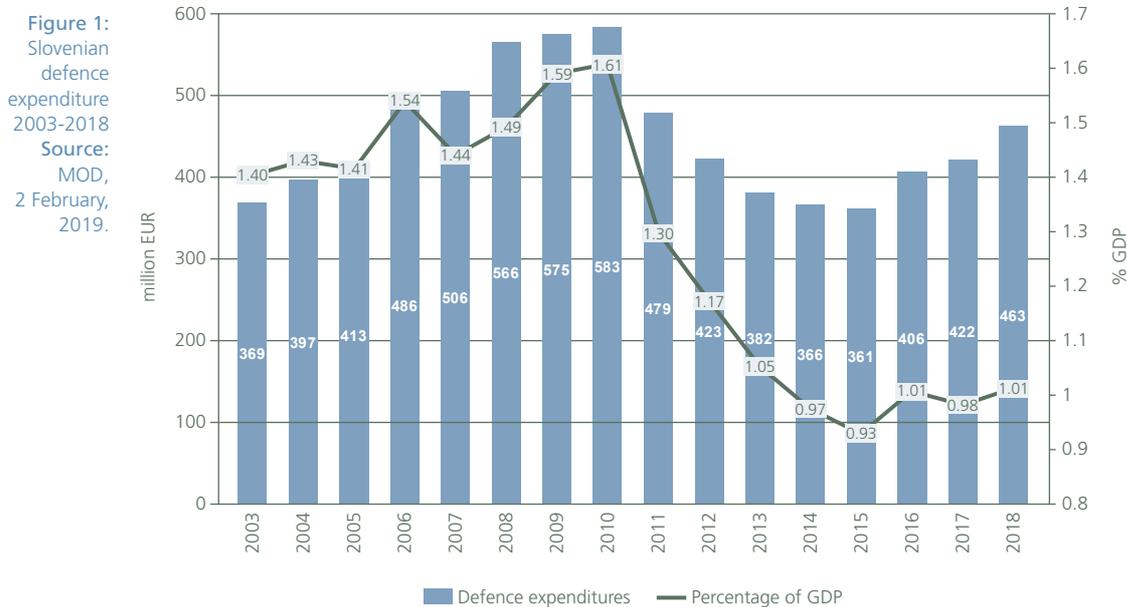
Slovenia had begun to increase defence expenditure some years before its accession to NATO. By the end of the accession process in 2003, it had reached a level of 1.4% of GDP. This trend of growth in both nominal and relative terms continued during the first seven-year period of membership, and was mainly the result of the professionalization of the armed forces, participation in multinational operations and missions, and the modernization of the armed forces (see figures in Figure 1). The growth was planned through national strategic guidance and planning documents for the whole 15 years and more, as a result of the national intent to develop the required defence capabilities of the country, which set priorities on the professionalization

⁸ All data was provided by the Ministry of Defence.

⁹ The Ministry of Defence has answered questions received from Parliament four times: on 23 June 2016, 18 July 2016, 17 January 2018 and 13 March 2018.

and modernization of the armed forces. A target level of 2% of GDP was already set by national plans for 2008 – way before the NATO members decided at Wales 2014 that this level should be a commonly agreed obligation.

The highest level of defence expenditure in the last 15 years was achieved in 2010 (1.61% of GDP). After 2010, defence expenditure began to decline and in 2015 reached its lowest level in the history of the independent Slovenian state (0.93% of GDP). The reason for the decline was mainly the financial and economic crisis. In 2016 growth was observed once more, primarily due to additional finances the MOD received to cover the costs associated with the deployment of the Slovenian Armed Forces to national borders during the migration crisis, and because of the political awareness of the need to invest more into national defence which was, among other things, recognized during the regular annual readiness report of the armed forces to the President of the Republic, and through the findings of the Strategic Defence Review conducted in 2016¹⁰ (Government of Slovenia – GOS, 2016). However, the gap in the development of military capabilities due to the financial crisis, in spite of the current strong political will for continual growth in defence expenditure, cannot be filled for another ten years, and even longer may be needed for the modernization of the armed forces.



¹⁰ Among other findings of the Strategic Defence Review was also the conclusion that “there is a need to correct the mid-term projections of defence expenditure. In order to economically use the already established capabilities of the Republic of Slovenia, and for the establishment of the priority capabilities Slovenia needs for national purposes and the fulfilment of obligations within NATO and the EU, there should be at least a nominal growth in the defence budget of 30-45 million EUR annually”.

The analysis of the MOD budget shows that in the last 15 years the highest percentage of the state budget allocated to defence was in 2008 (6.45%), and the lowest in 2015 (3.51%) (see Figure 2). The rises and falls in the defence budget correspond to changes in the percentage of defence expenditure within GDP in general. It should be noted that the Government of the Republic of Slovenia actually began to reduce the defence budget in 2009, which was two years before the decline in defence expenditure in relation to GDP could be observed; the relatively high percentage of GDP in 2009 and 2010 was successfully maintained due to certain outside factors (e.g. Slovenia received a patrol ship and some air defence weapons to the amount of 53 million EUR from Russia, as a bilaterally agreed solution to paying debts from the time of Yugoslavia). We can observe nominal growth from 2015 onwards; however, defence expenditure is still not at the same level as before the financial crisis. Moreover, the percentage of the state budget dedicated to defence after 15 years is still lower than before NATO membership.



An analysis of assessments developed to answer the question of the defence expenditure Slovenia, as a full NATO member, should dedicate shows that all authors projected an enhancement in defence expenditure. There was a certain agreement that enhancement was required due to the professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces after the termination of conscription, its modernization, enhanced participation in multinational missions and operations (mainly NATO), contributions

to the NATO budget, and costs associated with working positions within the NATO structure. There were differences in views on the amount of additional growth there should be, which ranged from 0.6 to 1.6% of GDP, or from half to more than twice the budget of the year before NATO accession. In total they projected defence expenditure at 2-3% of GDP (see Figure 3).



In reality defence expenditure within the last 15 years has never reached the level forecast; in fact it reached a level higher than before accession by only about 0.15% of GDP. At the end of this period they had reached a level even lower, by only about 0.3% of GDP compared to the level before NATO membership. Simply put, those who assessed that there would be a need to enhance defence expenditure were right, but they all projected a higher level than has been actually been reached. The closest to the real figures were those who projected a required level of 2% of GDP. This was the level defined, among other things, by the Resolution on the General Long-Term Programme for the Development and Equipping of the Slovenian Armed Forces 2025¹¹ adopted by Parliament (Parliament, 2010). This is also the target level Slovenia set along with other NATO members at Wales 2014¹² (NATO, 2014).

¹¹ The resolution, among other things, states: “The changes in the level of defence expenditure in the Republic of Slovenia should be heading towards 2% of GDP in the long-term. This is to enable the Republic of Slovenia to strive for fulfilment of its political obligations within the Alliance. Due to economic circumstances and the wider social situation, the realization of this ambition could be implemented even after 2025”.

¹² During the NATO summit in Wales the allies agreed that those “currently meeting the NATO guideline to spend a minimum of 2% of their GDP on defence will aim to continue to do so”, while those who do not should “aim to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade”.

Observing the trend of defence expenditure through the 15 years one can come to the incorrect conclusion that NATO membership has resulted in reduced defence expenditure. It is true that because of NATO Slovenia does not need to develop certain capabilities or procure specific equipment for national defence (e.g. fighter aircraft for air defence); however, Slovenia is well behind the national plans in the development of its planned capabilities, as was also recognized by the Strategic Defence Review in 2016¹³. Some of these capabilities are also purposed for the defence of the Alliance, within the framework of NATO capability targets.

There is a need to recognize a difference between the required level of defence expenditure and the level that politics is willing to allocate to defence. After political decisions in Parliament and in NATO talks, 2% of GDP is what we may consider to be the required level. It is apparent that the growth in defence expenditure should continue. We can read how this growth is planned in the Mid-Term Defence Programme 2018-2023 which, among other things, expects that defence expenditure will grow “about 43 million EUR annually on average to reach a nominal level of 679 million EUR in 2023”. This means that in 2023 there will be more financial resources in nominal terms available for defence than in any other year since Independence. What that will be as a percentage of GDP is hard to assess, because we do not know what GDP will be in that year. According to the current projections mentioned in the Mid-Term Defence Programme it should be 1.11% of GDP, and the goal is “to reach 1.2% of GDP in 2025” (GOS, 2018, p 15). In this case, defence expenditure in 2023 in relative terms will be lower by 0.2% of GDP than in the last year before Slovenia’s accession to NATO.

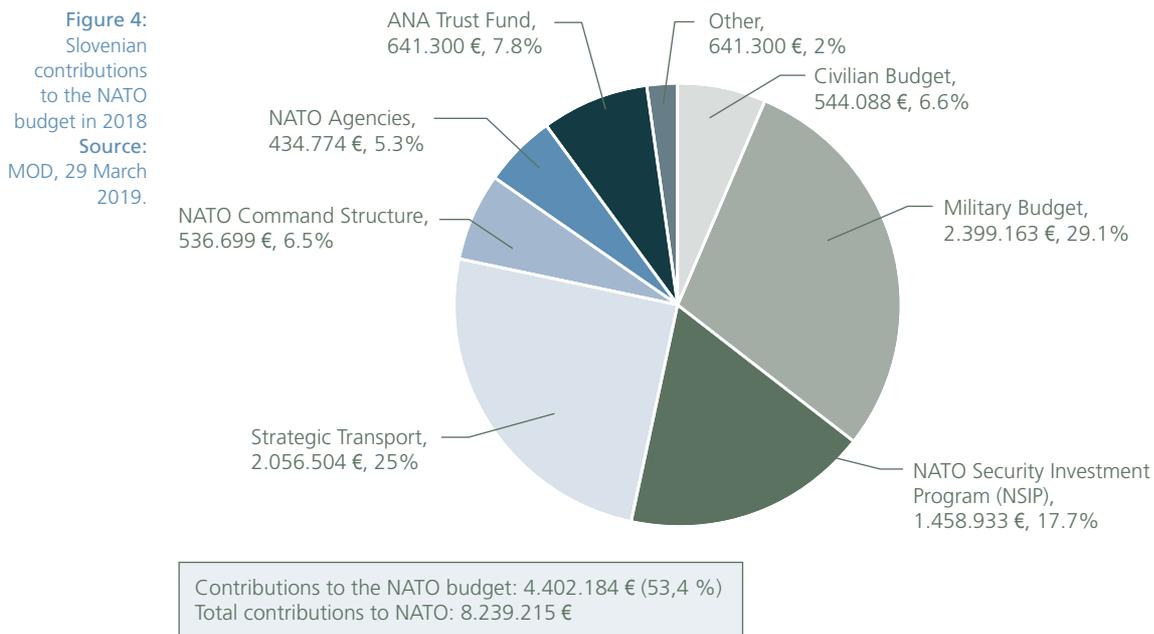
The Mid-Term Defence Programme, in its introductory remarks, emphasizes that the “fulfilment of obligations agreed in Wales on the growth in defence expenditure in order to reach 2% of GDP will be achieved in phases”, which leads to the conclusion that in the next mid-term period there is no possibility of establishing the required defence capabilities, and the trend of growth should continue taking into account the politically reasonable level¹⁴. Therefore Slovenia will not be able to meet some forecasts of a long-term reduction in defence expenditure as a result of NATO membership.

Analyzing the projections of Slovenian contributions to the NATO budget, we compared payments for the civilian budget, the military budget and the security investment programme, because they are derived from the constant share the allies agreed among themselves, and because other payments depend on the national will to join certain NATO programmes. The authors who prepared assessments of the costs associated with NATO membership and projected contributions to the NATO

¹³ “The defence system of the Republic of Slovenia has stalled in its development. It currently does not reach the required level of ability to deal with future threats and risks to the national security, and cannot achieve all the assigned goals and tasks or set up all the necessary defence capabilities.”

¹⁴ At the end of 2018 the Government of Slovenia announced that the target level of expenditure is 1.5% of GDP in 2025. This decision is waiting to be incorporated into appropriate strategic guidance and planning documents.

budget could not have had the possibility of knowing about those “other payments”, and they relied on data on contributions to the NATO budget by NATO members comparable in size to Slovenia. The structure of the contributions Slovenia provided in 2018 is shown in Figure 4.

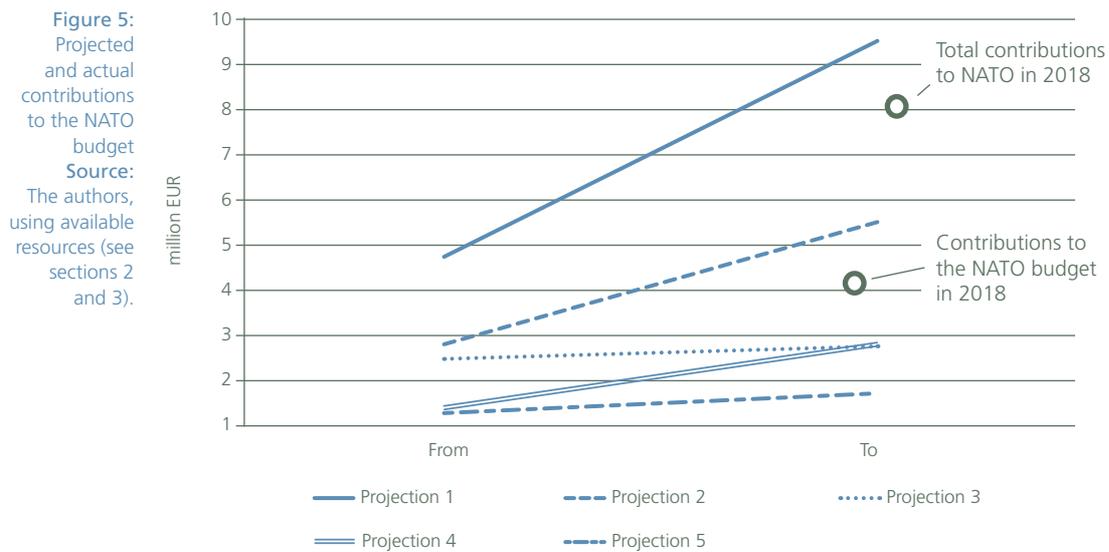


Based on an analysis of projections of the percentage of GDP dedicated to defence, we found relatively synchronized perspectives between authors, which is not the case when they talk about contributions to the NATO budget, where we can observe very large differences and projections ranging from 1.4 to almost 10 million EUR. Even within the Ministry of Defence two projections differ significantly (one talks about 1.3-1.7 million EUR and the other 4.77-9.54 million EUR). These projections are shown in Figure 5.

The closest assessment to reality is the one which talks about 2.8-5.5 million EUR (the actual contributions to the NATO budget in 2018 were around 4.2 million EUR). In reality the total amount paid to NATO in 2018 was 8.2 million EUR. The difference between 4.2 and 8.2 million comes from other payments (e.g. for the NATO Command structure, the new NATO Headquarters, the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund, the development of common capabilities, and so on).

When “judging” the (un)successful projections we should take into account the difficulties the authors were facing when developing those projections. Until 2003

when the final accession talks (negotiations) ended, the authors were not in a position to know what the agreed share for Slovenia within the total NATO budget would be. They also could not predict the NATO enlargement process (as the share directly depends on the number of NATO members).



Conclusion Based on our analysis of the assessed and actual Slovenian defence expenditure and financial obligations in NATO, we conclude that the projections about defence expenditure were relatively accurate. They all talked about required growth. The authors of these projections generally argued that the required level after accession should be above 2% of GDP. This is above the level that is today a commonly agreed target line within the Alliance, also set by national strategic guidance and planning documents.

The fact that after an initial rise in defence expenditure Slovenia began to reduce it, and that today the share of the state budget dedicated to defence is lower than before accession to NATO, does not confirm the forecast that defence expenditure would decline as a result of NATO membership. The reduction is a result of the financial crisis and political decisions. There is a need for further growth in defence expenditure, not because it was agreed within the alliance, but because national assessments emphasise that defence capabilities and the readiness of the armed forces are not at the planned level or the level required by the changing international security environment.

Projections about Slovenia's contributions to the NATO budget were less accurate. Almost all authors projected a lower amount of payment than is experienced today. We can assume the methodology for calculating those contributions was not so familiar to them at the time, and also that the data of comparable allied countries were of limited value for the accuracy of the projections¹⁵. In addition, the authors had no possibility of taking into account future obligations derived from changes in NATO's financial policy, costs associated with the requirement to deploy military and civilian personnel to NATO Headquarters and institutions and their operational costs, and the national decision to take part in different projects or use the services of NATO agencies.

The assessments of the future costs of new NATO members were developed in the period 1997-2003 in circumstances that probably did not provide all the possibilities for a detailed understanding of NATO's financial mechanisms. In spite of this fact and other objective obstacles some of them were close to today's reality. The question remains for further research of whether they (those both accurate and inaccurate) played any role within the decision-making process during the accession period. Arguments for and against NATO membership included the financial aspects of membership; however, there was no intensive debate about the financial consequences in all the questions addressed during the national debate on the reasons to join NATO.

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¹⁵ It is not known whether the authors from the Ministry of Defence had tried to acquire financial data from the last three new members before 2003 (Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary).

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