



# SLOVENIA'S WAY INTO NATO

**Slovenia is carrying out intensive preparations for and activities connected with integration into the Alliance in political, legal, security, defence, military, financial and other fields.**

**Slovenia fulfils the basic criteria for NATO membership, published in the NATO Enlargement Paper in 1995:**

- **stable democratic social and political system;**
- **functioning market economy;**
- **respect for human rights;**
- **civilian control of armed forces;**
- **good relations with neighbouring countries.**

**S**lovenia is aware that the tasks and goals set out in the Annual National Programme for the Implementation of the Membership Action Plan (ANP/MAP) 2001-2002 must be implemented, and that this will be under the constant scrutiny of NATO. One of the most important activities of this kind was the NATO team of experts' visit to Ljubljana, from 12 to 15 February 2002, during which Slovenia's membership preparations in individual areas were closely examined.

An analysis of the ANP/MAP 2001-2002 so far shows successful implementation of tasks and goals. Yet at the same time Slovenia is aware that some improvements have to be

made, among them in the field of public support for NATO membership. The effort to increase the public awareness and support was strongly and unequivocally demonstrated by the public presentation of opinions in the National Assembly on 16 January 2002 entitled: Slovenia prior to the NATO Summit in Prague, at which the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Foreign and Defence Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces, the opposition leader in the National Assembly, the Director of the Public Relations and Media Office, numerous deputies and others resolutely

**30th March 1994 – Signature of the Partnership for Peace Framework Document by Slovenia. Signed by Janez Drnovsek (Prime Minister). (Photo: NATO)**





advocated Slovenia's membership in NATO. Opponents of Slovenia's membership also presented their views, including two National Assembly deputies. The Director of the NATO Office of Information and Press, Dr. Jamie Shea, appeared as a special guest. The event was broadcast live on national TV.

### **PUBLIC OPINION**

The most extensive public opinion poll in the past few years (on this question) was conducted in 420 places throughout Slovenia in November 2001 by the Public Opinion Poll Centre. The results were published in January 2002 and showed that 53% of the persons polled supported Slovenia's joining NATO, 24% were against it and 23% were undecided. Only 4% of the persons interviewed believed that Slovenia would never join NATO; 24% believed that Slovenia would become an Alliance member by 2004; 33% thought that this would happen sometime during the years 2005 to 2008; and 7% believed that this would happen after 2008.

### **SLOVENIA AND SEE**

Slovenia is well aware of its role in contributing to security in the region of South-East Europe. In this spirit it has been actively participating in NATO-led peace support operations. There are 110 Slovenian Armed Forces members and 20 civilian police officers within the SFOR, KFOR, UNMIK and other organizations (OSCE in Kosovo and Macedonia). In addition to the present contribution, Slovenia will assign an additional Combat Company from the 10<sup>th</sup> Motorized Battalion to SFOR. This company, consisting of 109 troops, will be trained for action in compliance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty providing collective defence for Member Countries, thereby attaining one of the partnership goals.

Slovenia is also active in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (in which it participates as a contributor and carries out economic and other projects), as well as SECI, the CEI and the NATO initiatives SEEGROUP and SEECAP. Slovene companies are among the

most important investors in the SEE region, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina where Slovenia is the leading foreign investor.

### **HARMONIZING THE LAWS**

On November 28, 2001, the National Assembly adopted the "Long-Term Program for Restructuring the Slovenian Armed Forces". The aim of the program is to form a modern, efficient and realistic force which will provide national defence, participate in the system of collective defence and contribute to security in the region.

In March 2002 the Parliament passed the law eliminating the ban on the entry of nuclear powered combat ships or ships with nuclear weapons in Slovene waters.

### **AFTER SEPTEMBER 11**

Slovenia has been actively engaged in the fight against terrorism through the exchange of intelligence information, the prevention of money laundering and illegal immigration, etc.

After the September 11 attacks in the USA Slovenia was also among the first countries to offer support to the US (plasma, forensic experts and assistance in search and rescue operations).

On November 7, 2001, the House of Representatives in the US Congress adopted the Gerald B. Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act supporting further NATO enlargement. According to this Act, Slovenia should receive USD 4.5 million in assistance in the fiscal year 2002. A similar act was also adopted by the Senate Committee on International Relations.

In June 2001, an agreement was reached between the US Army and the Port of Koper on the use of the port as a logistics base for the supply and transport of US military units within SFOR. This was carried out successfully from 20 August to 6 October 2001.

Thanks to the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET), 200 Slovenian Army officers, taking part in one-month or longer training programs, have received training in the US since 1993.

### **COOPERATING WITH ITALY, HUNGARY AND CROATIA**

Slovenia has been cooperating with Italy, Hungary and Croatia in the "Quadrilateral Initiative", and Italian-Hungarian-Slovenian Multinational Land Force is being formed within this cooperation.

### **THE ITF**

The International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF), headquartered at Ig near Ljubljana, has demined more than one half of the entire cleared territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ITF, also active in Croatia and Albania, has concluded its activities in Kosovo and started demining operations in Macedonia. It has also signed a cooperation agreement with the FRY. So far, the ITF has received donations of over US\$75 million from 23 countries and 25 donor organizations and companies.

In December 2001, the US Congress allocated USD 14 million for matching donations in the fiscal year 2002 defence budget.

### **TO ENSURE SLOVENIA'S OWN SECURITY**

In January 2001, the non-partisan Slovene Committee on NATO was established, in which most members are representatives of the civil society, of academia and intellectuals. The task of the committee is to promote support for Slovenia's accession to NATO and to organise different public panels, meetings and discussions. Slovenia is one of the initiators of the Vilnius Group of candidate countries for NATO membership. In April 2001, a meeting of political directors from foreign ministries of the Vilnius Group was held, in which Croatia took part for the first time. In October 2001, a meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of the Vilnius Group was held in Bled, at which a joint statement was adopted. The main focus of the meeting – in addition to NATO enlargement – was joint combat against terrorism.

Slovenia is well aware of the fact that, despite evident progress made, it cannot indulge in self-satisfaction but must continue to endeavour to meet membership criteria to the best of its abilities.

