

## SOCIAL SECURITY FOR FAMILIES OF MILITARY PROFESSIONALS OS SR

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### **Abstract:**

Within the framework of social security for professional soldiers, social security services are its support subsystem, from which spa care (support and maintenance of good health), recreational care (creating conditions and support for quality of life and family background) is provided, and this also includes security the funeral of a former professional soldier.

**Keywords:** social security, professional soldier, family

The armed forces of the Slovak Republic have created a relatively stable structure of social support and motivational programs for their professional soldiers. Through its activities, it tries to create a stable background for professional soldiers, the goal of which is to ensure acceptable conditions for the performance of their work, but also for family care.

In the military organization, we distinguish between mandatory and voluntary care for professional soldiers.

*Mandatory care* is primarily regulated by Act no. 281/2015 Coll. on the state service of professional soldiers and on the amendment and supplementation of certain laws as amended (hereinafter referred to as „Act No. 281/2015 Coll.“), Act No. 328/2002 Coll. on the social security of police officers and soldiers and on the amendment and supplementation of certain laws as amended (hereinafter referred to as „Act No. 328/2002 Coll.“) and Act No. 463/2003 Coll. on war veterans and on amendments to Act no. 328/2002 Coll. on the social security of policemen and soldiers and on the amendment of certain laws, as amended, as

amended.

According to the current legislation, care for a professional soldier can be divided as follows: general and health care, preventive rehabilitation, special conditions for the performance of state service, social security, care for war veterans and also other care for professional soldiers, which is provided through internal regulations of the Department of Defense.

*Further care for professional soldiers* is currently ensured in the following areas: care for the families of professional soldiers sent to fulfill tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic, psychological care for professional soldiers, spiritual care for professional soldiers, gender equality in the defense sector and, finally, prevention of socially undesirable phenomena in the defense sector (crime, extremism and radicalism, mobbing, corruption, alcoholism and other manifestations of drug addiction...).

### **Caring for professional soldiers and their families in the Empire**

Regular surveys among professional soldiers enable us to find out their opinions on current social issues. The most complex research to date, which dealt with the life needs and interests of professional soldiers (on which we collaborated in the form of consultations and joint research), was carried out in 2017 under the title Quality of life of professional soldiers, where one of the domains of quality of life was investigated „Care for professional soldiers and their families“. (Čukan et al. 2017a)

In addition to dissatisfaction with the financial evaluation of the work of a professional soldier, this domain was shown to be one of the most significant sources of dissatisfaction among professional soldiers, or sources of tension between satisfaction and importance in this area. It turns out that there is a certain shift in the area of care for families, as well as in the issues of social assistance to the soldiers themselves, and this area is gaining importance in the entire spectrum of the quality of life of professional soldiers. (Czirák, 2018)

The greatest dissatisfaction was with help when leaving the Slovak Armed Forces (searching for a new job), with support and assistance to professional soldiers when they arrive at a new unit (help with finding jobs for family members, schools for children, housing) and with planning a military career (having an idea, how your own career will develop in the near future).

Professional soldiers also perceive the care of a soldier's family during normal

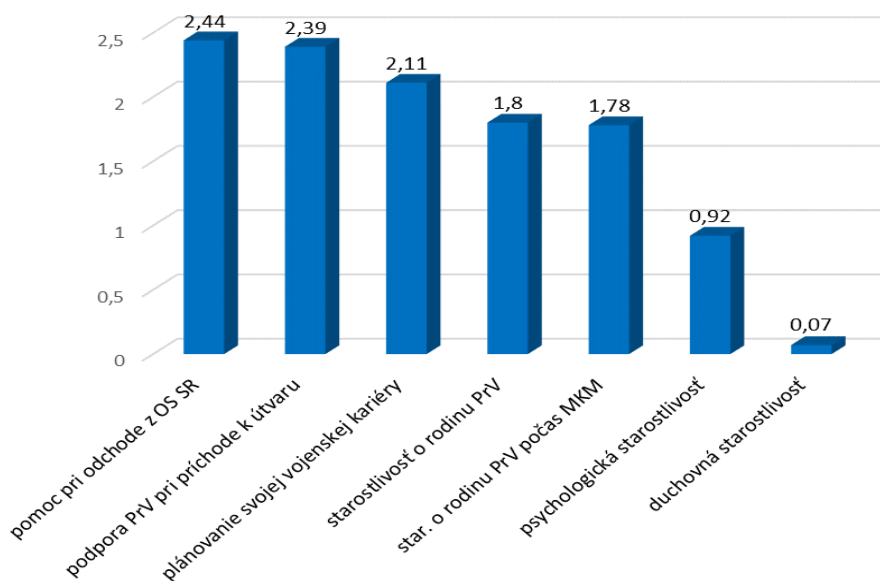
peacetime life and during deployment to international crisis management operations (hereinafter referred to as „OMKM“) as problematic. The range of problem areas was also confirmed indirectly through the answers given by the respondents as suggestions within the answers to the open questions.

According to them, it is necessary to improve the care of professional soldiers and their families, not only during participation in OMKM, but also during service in Slovakia and especially when arriving at a new unit (Chart No. 1).

### Graph no. 1

Experiencing the tension of PrV in the area of quality of life „care for PrV and their families“

(n = 583; stress level: 0-0.99 - weak; 1-1.99 - moderate; 2-2.99 - strong)



Source: (MO, 2018)

Another important area is the military career of the respondents, in which they would like to have a greater degree of certainty resulting from a better knowledge of their career in the short and medium term, a greater degree of stability in the place of service and at the end of their career they would welcome much more help from the armed forces in the transition to the labor market. In accordance with the research methodology, project questions were used, in which

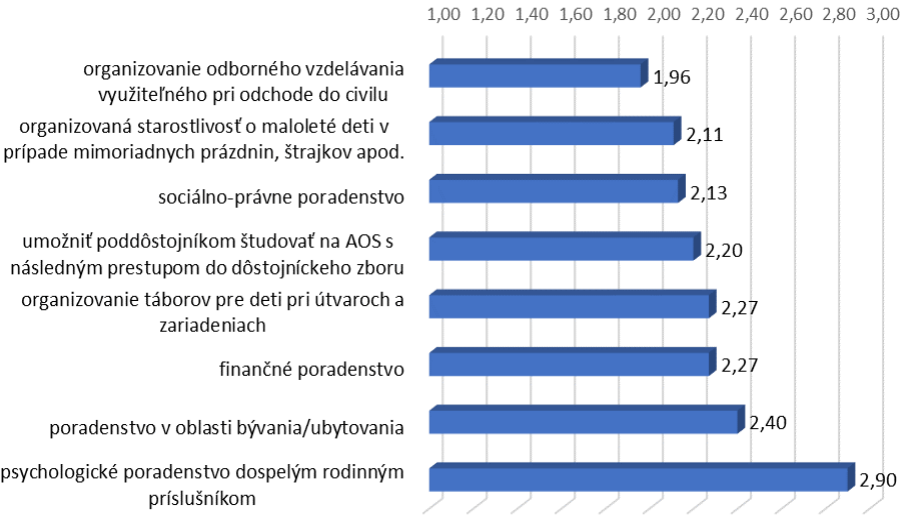
the respondents had the opportunity to assign a specific degree of importance/unimportance to the selected ones that did not yet exist in the conditions of OS SR, respectively. rare, but possible, concrete forms of care for professional soldiers and their families.

All the offered options were addressed to the respondents, while the options that interested them the most were: organizing vocational training that can be used when leaving the civil service; organized care for minor children in case of, for example, special holidays, strikes, etc. and providing social and legal advice.

They were least interested in the possibility of providing psychological counseling to adult family members (Chart No. 2).

**Graph no. 2**

Importance of selected forms of care for professional soldiers and their families according to respondents (n=583; scale: 1 - most important,..., 5 - least important; arithmetic mean)



Source: (MO, 2018)

In the second projection question, professional soldiers had the opportunity to comment on potential measures to support the harmonization of work and family life and potential care programs for professional soldiers and their families. The respondents had to choose the three most important from the group of measures

and programs.

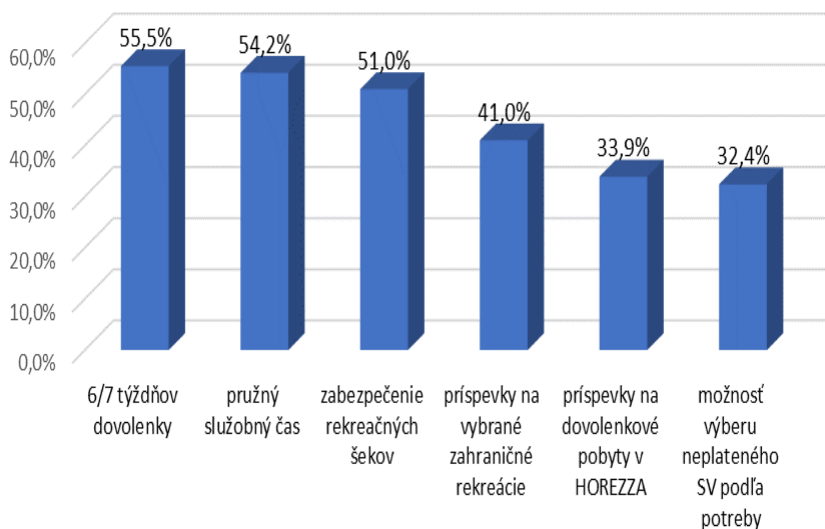
Of the potential measures to support the harmonization of work and family life, more than half of the interviewed professional soldiers prefer the following: 6/7 weeks of vacation - 55.5%, flexible duty time - 54.2% and provision of recreation checks (voucher for reimbursing a recreational stay in another as a military recreation facility - at home or abroad) - 51.0% (Graph No. 3).

At the end of this, the respondents answered which of the offered potential care programs they would prefer and should be implemented in our armed forces as a matter of priority. Almost half of respondents favor the following potential care programs for professional soldiers and their families:

- support for vocational training of one's own choice (49.3%),
- family programs (family service, own preschool facilities for children of soldiers, etc. (48.8%),
- support for obtaining a higher level of education according to one's choice (48.4%).

### Graph no. 3

PrV preferences for potential measures to support the harmonization of work and family life (n = 583)



Source: (MO, 2018)

## **Direction and development of care for professional soldiers and their families**

Caring for soldiers in our conditions has its own history and tradition (system of social management; system of education and culture), which, however, were primarily aimed at soldiers of compulsory (basic) service. With the onset of the professionalization of the armed forces, this system did not adapt to the new conditions until it finally dissolved definitively in the structures of personnel management. In the eyes of the commanders, this element had no merit, as they believed that the new professional soldiers who joined the armed forces voluntarily could take care of themselves and there was no reason for the existence of a special care system. However, ongoing researches constantly signaled that a large part of the command corps for the care of subordinate soldiers,

Personnel management, which took over the previous elements of the system of education and culture, formally preserved them within the defined Doctrine of Personnel Management (SVD-10 B), where two pillars of personnel security are defined: personnel administration and quality of life assurance. Ensuring the quality of life can be defined as a complex of activities connected with the care of social security, cultural and sports activities and activities, psychological support and care, relaxation, appreciation and remuneration of personnel and care for the families of professional soldiers. In practice, however, the situation is problematic and also in the entire armed forces.

Certain elements of the quality of life, or of care for professional soldiers are included in some documents, or were even conceptually developed (e.g.: Concept of stimulation and motivation), but in practice their fulfillment was not monitored, controlled, and this whole area was underappreciated. about professional soldiers and their families through the professionalization of activities, as also stated in the document „Model of the quality of life of professional soldiers and its monitoring and assessment mechanisms“ (Čukan, K. et al., 2017b and Internal document. Bratislava: Mo SR, 2017 ) where one of the tasks is to introduce experts for social services and counseling, care for professional soldiers and their families, and gender equality into the personnel management structures of military units from the battalion level.

This system should cover the following basic areas:

- monitoring of social processes in military units and proposals for socio-technical measures to the commander,
- counseling service and care programs,
- management of culture and education.

The mentioned basic areas should be realized through the following possibilities:

- ascertaining the state of the quality of life, proposing measures to increase it and solving shortcomings for commanders,
- monitoring and optimization of the level of leadership of people and relations in military units,
- the development of military units as teams through educational activities,
- social counseling and social assistance,
- detecting and solving socio-pathological phenomena in the department (alcoholism, drugs, gambling, extremism, bullying, discrimination, harassment,...),
- application of support programs for professional soldiers and their families, war veterans and service pensioners,
- developing and strengthening the organizational culture of the unit (monitoring, proposals for measures and their implementation in the areas of: organizational climate, discipline, values and norms, specific social relations and activities, soldier's identity, structure /authority, power, control/, visions and goals),
- ensuring cultural and sports activities in the conditions of separation of military units as part of military exercises in training areas and during deployment in OMKM) and ensuring relaxation and regeneration of forces through department facilities, respectively. facilities of the Ministry of Defence,
- ensuring educational activities – social science seminars, education in the spirit of the traditions of the unit and the armed forces (hall of honor and glory).
- developing further education of experts for social services and counseling (VO-M10, ČŠp 473).

In order to exercise these abilities, it is necessary to acquire a certain amount of knowledge and, based on practical results, continue to transform it into further education.

### **Content and tasks of the care system for professional soldiers and their families**

Empirical research that was carried out in the Department of Defense shows that among professional soldiers there is a significant interest in providing services in the field of care for professional soldiers and their families, and at the same time

they consider the current situation to be very unsatisfactory. The existing care programs mainly cover their deployment phase in the OMKM and post-return psychological care, which is currently partially covered by various entities in their area of competence (commander, commanding non-commissioned officer, chaplain, psychologist, personnel specialist, physical trainer). In reality, however, there is no entity for which such care would be the main functional content and which would be responsible for its complex implementation in military units.

The content and tasks of the care system for professional soldiers and their families in our armed forces are determined by the critical situations to which this system and its individual elements respond. In particular, the following can be considered problematic situations arising from the performance of the state service of a professional soldier:

- transition to a new crew,
- sending a professional soldier to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic,
- the return of a professional soldier from performing tasks outside the Slovak Republic,
- long-term sending of professional soldiers to SC/KOK/training,
- short-term sending of professional soldiers for SC/education/training,
- end of military career,
- life after the end of the military career.

Specific care programs that are one-time, short-term, or long-term should be directed to address these situations. These programs contain the goal, the actors who are involved in their solution, the individual steps of the activity and the timeline for their implementation. The focus of the system of care for professional soldiers and their families is the introduction into the life of a new functionalelement of personnel security, which should monitor individual areas of the quality of life of professional soldiers, guide the related processes and implement the activities themselves for the benefit of professional soldiers and their families - an expert for social services and counseling (VO-M10; ČŠp 473).

*Specialist for social services acounselings* should cover, ensure and manage the entire system of care for professional soldiers and their families, with the exception of specialized programs under the purview of the psychological, medical and spiritual service. Care for professional soldiers and their families should be part of a comprehensive system of social services and counseling.

*Centralization of care programs* and their transition under a new entity with professional competence should ensure the efficiency of the entire care system



for professional soldiers and their families. When providing care programs, an expert for social services and counseling should also use and develop cooperation with representatives of regional self-government and public administration, as well as with civil associations with a professional relationship with OS SR.

### **Care programs for professional soldiers and their families**

Currently, these concepts are already being implemented in OS SR, respectively, programs aimed at caring for professional soldiers:

- The concept of care for the families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic,
- Methodological guidance for commanders and designated teams of workers responsible for caring for the families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic,
- Program of psychological care for professional soldiers after returning from OMKM,
- Orientation program for professional soldiers upon arrival at a military unit.

So far, the Ministry of Defense has paid the most attention to support measures related to the deployment of professional soldiers in the area of OMKM. This area is addressed by the Concept of care for the families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic and the subsequent Methodological Guidelines for commanders and designated teams of workers responsible for the care of families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic. The purpose of these documents is to ensure the correct and uniform procedure of the commander ensuring the preparation of the members of the unit before deployment to the operation and also the implementation of care for their families before deployment, during the deployment and after the end of the deployment to fulfill tasks outside the Slovak Republic.

The procedures in these materials are based on common practice and available personnel, financial and material resources.

The care of the families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic is the responsibility of the commander and the team designated by him, which consists of a personnel management worker, a psychologist, a doctor, a legal advisor and a military chaplain. It is implemented through meetings with families, which are provided not only by the commander

responsible for pre-operation preparation, but also by the commander of the sending unit. It can also be implemented in the form of cultural-social and sports events or activities for children. Due to the fact that units are no longer sent to military operations from one unit, but from several units of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, the attendance at meetings has naturally decreased. Therefore, the first and third meetings are carried out as part of the farewell and welcome, where it is assumed that the family will be present, and the second is organized by the sending commander, where it is assumed

The results of current empirical research carried out in the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic show that there is a significant difference in the content of the care services offered to the families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic by the Department of Defense and the real needs of the families of these soldiers.

The concept itself states that professional soldiers would also welcome other forms of support that are more time-consuming and organizational, such as:

- direct assistance in case of need, specifically provision of child care and provision of assistance in case of emergency (e.g. assistance services in case of an accident, etc.),
- measures to improve the contact and awareness of professional soldiers and their family members, of which the most preferred were the improvement of the possibilities of contact with the family during deployment (internet, telephone),
- establishment of a website accessible only to deployed professional soldiers and their family members,
- events for wives/partners to meet - organizing cultural and social events, sports events for children, organizing meetings of partners for mutual exchange of experiences and information.

*The concept of care for the families of professional soldiers sent to perform tasks outside the territory of the Slovak Republic* also states that one of the tasks of the support teams is also the creation and strengthening of informal ties between the families of professional soldiers as a prerequisite for the emergence of self-help solutions to crisis situations within the military community, which, however, could not always be realized due to the great distance of the households of posted professional soldiers from the sending location department.

The aforementioned form of care is followed by the Psychological Care Program for professional soldiers after returning from OMKM. The aim of this program is mainly to improve the quality of the implementation of psychological

care for professional soldiers after the end of their deployment in the OMKM. The psychological care program represents three consecutive implementation phases. It provides psychological care for professional soldiers after the end of their deployment to OMKM and for professional soldiers of declared units of high readiness forces. The main priority of the Psychological Care Program is the provision of psychological care for professional soldiers in the risk period of 3-6 months after returning from OMKM.

Military psychologists are responsible for the Psychological Care Program for professional soldiers after returning from OMKM. This program is currently fully functional, but its amendment is being prepared due to the changed conditions in operations, the emergence of new operations and also in view of knowledge from practice. SR in 2017 by adopting the Orientation Program for professional soldiers upon arrival in the military. The purpose of this program is to ensure the preparation and recruitment of professional soldiers to the units, components and facilities of the Slovak Armed Forces.

The goal is to ensure an individual approach to each professional soldier by superior officials. The program establishes the procedure and set of activities that will be carried out in the orientation process after the arrival of soldiers to the military unit. Professional soldiers, however, demand significantly more help, which would also be aimed at their family members upon arrival at the new unit.

Given that organizations change in accordance with evolving political demands and tasks, it is essential that NATO diversify the qualifications and expertise of its staff. The key to inducing lasting structural change is organizational transformation. The first action plan covered the periods 2007-2010 and set the following goals:

- establish and maintain NATO's diversity and gender equality policy framework;
- take measures to improve NATO's working environment;
- support and improve NATO's image as an employer of choice.

For each of these goals, annual goals were set, for which the development of progress is monitored every year. The current action plan should include flexible forms of work and an effort to gain as much as possible from the inclusion of a diversity perspective. Diversity can be measured in numbers, but it should not limit efforts to achieve balanced statistics. More specifically, the goal would be mainstream inclusion, which in practice means that efforts are made to ensure that a diverse workforce works well together.

In this chapter, we have compiled knowledge from the given issue from current scientific and professional texts as well as legislative materials. In it, we also

provide an overview of research related to the given issue and a gender audit in the military organization of the Slovak Republic, in which we participated as expert scientific consultants or directly as solvers of these most important scientific research projects of the Department of Social Sciences and Languages of the Milan Rastislav Štefánik Academy of the Armed Forces in Liptovský Mikuláš and the Human Resources Section of the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic:

- *Organizational culture in the armed forces of the Slovak Republic (2006-2009)* the aim was to identify the organizational culture of OS SR and the main types of subcultures occurring in its components. Based on this information, determine the impact of the organizational culture on the fulfillment of the goals and tasks of the OS SR and on the changes taking place in the OS SR. Compare the results found with the results found in Hungary and the Czech Republic.
- *The system of complete assurance of the quality of life of a soldier of the professional armed forces of the Slovak Republic (2008-2009)* the aim was to identify decisive determinants and factors that significantly influence the quality of life and career of a professional soldier of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic in general and by individual categories separately, with an emphasis on junior officers. Empirical research to find out the degree of their influence and propose measures to improve the quality of the comprehensive provision of military professional service of professional soldiers of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic.
- *Family of a professional soldier (2011-2012)* the aim was to find out empirically to what extent the family and the performance of the military profession influence each other, ie to what extent the private sphere interferes with the work sphere and vice versa. The intention is to find out the causes of uneven horizontal distribution of women in individual military specialties and to identify the advantages and disadvantages of equal access to service positions in the armed forces. Map the obstacles in the career of professional female soldiers within individual military specialties from the point of view of women and commanders.
- *Preparation of the officer corps of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic to assume the social position of the military elite in the armed forces of the Slovak Republic and in society (2016-2017)*, the aim was to define the current perception of the military elite in the armed forces of the Slovak Republic and in society, and to assess the level of all-round training of the military elite at the present time. To propose new approaches to the definition of the term military elite. Map elites and military elites from a gender perspective. To optimize the system of quality

training of military elites in the armed forces of the Slovak Republic.

- *Human-legal aspects of the organization and activities of the troops with an emphasis on issues of gender equality (2016-2017)*, the aim was to carry out a theoretically empirical analysis of the observance of human rights, including gender equality, acceptance of otherness and their institutional security within the framework of domestic and international crisis management. To provide expert arguments for a long-term conceptual solution to the issue of human rights aspects of the military organization and activities of the troops under the purview of the Human Resources Section of the Slovak Ministry of Defense.

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