

# REVIEW OF THE NEWS

- t a s r -

	DEŇ /MESIAC/ROK DAY/MONTH/YEAR
PONDELOK MONDAY	
UTOROK TUESDAY	
STREDA WEDNESDAY	<b>20.06.12</b>
ŠTVRTOK THURSDAY	
PIATOK FRIDAY	
SOBOTA SATURDAY	
NEDEĽA SUNDAY	

NEWS AGENCY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
SLOVAKIA

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NEWS BULLETIN IN ENGLISH FROM TASR  
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*The opinions included herein are not necessarily those of the publisher. The selection of news and translations has neither legal nor official authority.*

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# Contents

Contents .....	1
Foreign Relations.....	2
Opposition Demands Postponement of ESM Vote, Paska Rejects This .....	2
Fico: We Won't Postpone ESM Vote, It Will Be Ratified This Month .....	2
Slovakia Wants to Extend Mandate of Special Forces in Afghanistan .....	3
Fico: Greeks Realise Importance of European Integration .....	3
Domestic Policy.....	5
Laszlo Nagy to Become Government Proxy for Minorities at New Office .....	5
SDKU: Salaries and Bonuses of State-firm Managers Should Be Public .....	5
Fico: Government Serious about Minorities, Genuine Proxy Selected.....	5
Two KDH Nominees to Return Severance Cheques and Exit Party .....	6
Gasparovic: I Won't Appoint Centes before Constitutional Court Decides .....	6
Prochazka Unyielding in Ascribing Responsibility for Golden Handshakes .....	7
Protest against Eurozone Bail-outs to Take Place in Bratislava .....	7
Education and Culture .....	9
CNN Ranks Bazant Pohoda Festival among World's Top 50 Festivals.....	9
Caplovic Okays New German University .....	9
Teachers Air Grievances and Deliver For a Better Education System .....	10
Madaric: Corridors Free of Shrubbery to Be Made Around Castles .....	10
Crime and Justice .....	11
Razga: PG Official Mocked Protest and Misused Religious Theme .....	11
Police Finds 4 People and 16 Sheep Bunched Up Together in Car .....	11
Supreme Court Sends Former Drukos Head Mojzis to Prison for 8.5 Years .....	12
European Court Doesn't Confirm Organised Policy to Sterilise Roma.....	12
Hurbanovo: Rampaging Policeman Out to Kill Roma Family.....	12
Government Proxy: Hurbanovo Shooting Inexcusable and Unfathomable .....	13
Miscellaneous .....	14
Madaric: Zemkova's Recent Statements Smack of Media Games .....	14
Oily Substance Leaks into Danube River at Winter Port in Bratislava.....	14
Glvac Advocates Completing MOKYS, Halting It Would be Uneconomical .....	14
Ziga: Most of Diesel Removed from Danube River after Tuesday's Leak.....	15
Cardinal Korec Taken to Hospital with Failure of Basic Vital Functions .....	15
Supplement.....	16
Reznik: 2011 Was Among Most Difficult Years for TASR .....	16

# Foreign Relations

## ***Opposition Demands Postponement of ESM Vote, Paska Rejects This***

Bratislava, June 13 (TASR) - The Opposition is demanding that the vote on the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) be postponed from the parliamentary session set to begin on June 19, TASR learnt on Wednesday.

The Opposition wants to present the proposal at a meeting with Prime Minister Robert Fico (Smer-SD) on Thursday, after it failed to persuade Parliamentary Chair Pavol Paska (Smer-SD) on Wednesday.

Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) caucus chairman Juraj Miskov explained that it would be better to wait for the upcoming election in Greece (late June) and the ESM vote in Germany's Bundestag (early July).

"We view [the ESM] as a very serious matter, with Slovakia entering into a commitment that it can't abandon later, so we need to be cautious," said Miskov.

SDKU-DS caucus leader Ludovit Kanik agreed that such a commitment is a serious matter.

"We need to consider what commitments Slovakia will assume, and how this will affect our people, Slovakia's economy ... From this point of view, it's right to postpone the vote ... because there will be no way back," said Kanik.

According to Most-Hid caucus chief Laszlo Solymos, his party recognises its responsibilities towards the EU, "but the situation is turbulent, and it would be good to wait, so that we would be able to make a responsible decision".

Paska assured European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, who visited Slovakia on Tuesday, that the ESM will certainly be adopted at the parliamentary session beginning on June 19, as the governing Smer-SD party has enough votes at its disposal, even if the Opposition refused to back the bail-out mechanism for whatever reason. Shortly before the meeting with Paska, Van Rompuy held talks with Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic, widely viewed as a Smer ally, who told him that the Slovak vote will most likely be postponed.

bub/df

## ***Fico: We Won't Postpone ESM Vote, It Will Be Ratified This Month***

Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - All parliamentary parties with the exception of Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) have declared that they want to ratify the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) by the end of this month, Premier Robert Fico said after round-table talks with the Opposition on Thursday.

"We won't postpone the vote on ESM ratification. We want to do it at the upcoming parliamentary session [set to begin on June 19]," said Fico.

The premier added that Slovakia is an independent and sovereign country and that he would welcome it if more political parties ensured that ratification is successful.

Turning to growing rumours that the European Union could be split into a two-stream grouping in the future, Fico said that Slovakia should do everything it can to be viewed as a reliable and trustworthy partner that can be counted on as part of the more prosperous stream.

Fico went on to address the situation in Greece, saying that there would be more advantages than disadvantages if that country remained a part of the eurozone.

"However, he added that if the Greeks don't meet their obligations vis-a-vis the bail-out mechanisms and consolidation measures, Slovakia will join those who will want Greece to leave the monetary union. "This is the clear and unambiguous stance of the Slovak Government," he stressed.

When it comes to the upcoming general election in Greece on Sunday (June 17), the premier said that several scenarios are currently being studied at the Finance Ministry in case the election winner is an anti-European party.

"These scenarios are disastrous," said Fico, adding that the public will learn about them once talks with the Government's social partners are over.

len/df/tf

### ***Slovakia Wants to Extend Mandate of Special Forces in Afghanistan***

Prague/Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - The Defence Ministry wants to extend the mandate of the Slovak special unit currently deployed with the ISAF operation in Afghanistan, Defence Minister Martin Glvac (Smer-SD) confirmed to TASR after his meeting with Czech Foreign Affairs Minister Karl Schwarzenberg in Prague on Thursday.

Such a move is to be accompanied by structural changes to the composition of deployed units. "We'd like to replace the patrol unit with a unit boasting a higher degree of specialisation ... However, he need to agree on the co-operation model with other countries, as we're in a patrol group with Australia," said Glvac.

The Slovak special unit has a mandate for three half-year rotations and the second batch of soldiers is already deployed at the moment.

The two ministers also discussed the NATO Summit in Chicago as well as military operations in Afghanistan after 2014. "Slovakia and the Czech Republic are closer together than ever, with current economic situation forcing us to co-operate more and more ... which is the aim of NATO, too," said Glvac.

mf/tm

### ***Fico: Greeks Realise Importance of European Integration***

Bratislava, June 18 (TASR) - Prime Minister Robert Fico views the decision expressed by Greek voters in the country's general election on Sunday "in the spirit that they [the Greek voters] are aware of the significance of European integration and the euro as a common European currency," TASR learnt on Monday.

The Slovak premier was speaking after Greece's election was won by the conservative New Democracy on Sunday. This has mitigated fears of a potential Greek euro exit.

"The election is just the first step, though. Only the weeks to come will show what will follow from the political and election decision for the eurozone. A government that will launch intensive talks with the European Commission needs to be forged quickly in Greece. All this will claim a comparatively long period of time," said Fico at a press briefing during the Europe 2020 conference organised by the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) and the European Commission Representation in Bratislava.

The conference deals primarily with the future of Europe and Slovakia in areas such as employment, growth, social inclusion, energy, climate change, research and innovations.

tf/df



## Domestic Policy

### ***Laszlo Nagy to Become Government Proxy for Minorities at New Office***

Bratislava, June 13 (TASR) - Laszlo Nagy (Most-Hid) will be appointed Government Proxy for National Minorities on Thursday, the Government decided at its session on Wednesday.

Nagy will head a new office that will be set up at the same time. The Office of the Proxy for National Minorities will come directly under the Government's remit and will serve as its advisory body.

Among the main tasks of the proxy will be to prepare and carry out mid-term and long-term strategies aimed at sustaining, developing and supporting the rights of national minorities in Slovakia, especially in the sphere of culture and education.

gk/df

### ***SDKU: Salaries and Bonuses of State-firm Managers Should Be Public***

Bratislava, June 13 (TASR) - The opposition SDKU-DS party on Wednesday proposed publishing the salaries and various bonuses given to managers of state-run companies, introducing ceilings for bonuses at the same time.

SDKU is reacting to what many have described as the exorbitant severance payments aka 'golden parachutes' given to managers leaving their posts in companies that come under the remit of the Transport Ministry.

"We condemn such inappropriately high rewards for managers in state-run companies," SDKU MP Ivan Stefanec said at a press conference.

According to Stefanec, all salaries and bonuses above €1,500 per month should be made public, while ceilings should be set by individual ministers. In addition, Stefanec proposed the introduction of a rule of proportion between performance and rewards.

"Managers should be rewarded for their performance and not leaving," he said, adding that the overall economic results of the given company should serve as the basis for awarding bonuses.

It was recently reported that former director of state-run rail company ZSSK Cargo Pavol Kravec was given a severance payment of €170,000, while former chief of the Slovak Post Office Marcela Hrda received €178,000. Transport Ministry spokesman Martin Kona earlier this week said that KDH nominees who were replaced after the election have received a total of €750,000 in severance payments according to preliminary checks carried out by the ministry's new leadership.

bub/df

### ***Fico: Government Serious about Minorities, Genuine Proxy Selected***

Bratislava, June 13 (TASR) - The Government has chosen Laszlo Nagy (Most-Hid) to become the new Government Proxy for National Minorities in order to demonstrate its serious attitude to this agenda, said Prime Minister Robert Fico on Wednesday.

"We want to show clearly that we're serious when it comes to handing over this agenda to those who really live with these people [minorities]," said Fico, adding that the Government hasn't selected an artificial candidate. [Laszlo Nagy is ethnic-Hungarian. - ed. note]

Fico also indicated that the Government will follow the same principle when searching for a government proxy for the Roma communities. "We're looking for a person directly from such an environment," he said.

Fico also assessed the decision to co-operate with Nagy, who is an opposition representative, as a courageous and extraordinary approach.

According to Fico, the powers of the proxy are the same as those of the deputy premier for minorities - a post that has been allowed to lapse during the current term of office.

Another body due to be set up is the Office of the Government Proxy for a Civil Society.

gk/df/bub

### ***Two KDH Nominees to Return Severance Cheques and Exit Party***

Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - Former nominees of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) in the state-run railway company ZSSK Pavel Kravec and Pavol Tarcala will return the severance payments received when they were dismissed from their posts, KDH chairman Jan Figel announced after the party's extraordinary session on Thursday.

At the same time, Figel stated that both Kravec and Tarcala are terminating their party membership immediately, so that they won't damage KDH's reputation any further.

"This gesture is unprecedented ... and it should set an example for many others," said Figel.

Kravec, the former director of ZSSK, received €170,000 as a golden parachute, while ZSSK managerial board member Tarcala's dismissal was cushioned by €100,000.

At the same time, Figel called on other former managers of state-run companies who received exaggerated bonuses to return the money. "We're calling on Prime Minister Robert Fico to publish the data on bonuses in state companies ... paid over the past ten years," said Figel, who, in the end, accepted only part of the blame for the fiasco.

These nominees represent a big disappointment for me, Figel said, but in the same breath he praised how much work was done at the Transport Ministry during KDH's recent tenure (July 2010-April 2012). "I personally didn't sign any specific sums - only in the case of Slovak Post, I agreed with the conditions a year in advance," he argued.

[Marcela Hrda, who received €178,000 when leaving Slovak Post, was not part of today's developments at KDH - ed. note]

gk/tm

### ***Gasparovic: I Won't Appoint Centes before Constitutional Court Decides***

Bratislava, June 15 (TASR) - President Ivan Gasparovic on Friday reiterated that he won't appoint Jozef Centes as prosecutor-general (PG) before the Constitutional Court pronounces a verdict on the matter.

It will be exactly one year on Sunday since Centes was elected as PG by Parliament after a long saga that involved accusations of vote-buying and arguments over the correct procedure, but Gasparovic has been refusing to appoint him ever since.

"I won't do anything before the Constitutional Court decides. It isn't my matter," said Gasparovic, who added that as a president, he won't put his signature to anything that involves suspicions of vote-buying and corruption.



"Let Parliament decide on the matter without the president's signature. The president doesn't wish to sign vis-a-vis issues that have been disputed," said Gasparovic.

The PG's Office has been headed on an interim basis by First Deputy PG Ladislav Tichy since the term of office of former PG Dobroslav Trnka expired.

Meanwhile, both Trnka (who lost the parliamentary vote to Centes) and later Centes each submitted complaints to the Constitutional Court over what they described as a violation of the right to access to elected and other public offices.

In addition, a group of MPs turned to the Constitutional Court with a request for clarification on how the president should proceed in appointing public officials if his opinion on a candidate-elect differs from the view of Parliament.

bub/df

### ***Prochazka Unyielding in Ascribing Responsibility for Golden Handshakes***

Bratislava, June 15 (TASR) - Christian Democrat (KDH) MP Radoslav Prochazka stands firm in his view that political responsibility must be ascribed over the golden handshakes that some of the party's nominees in state enterprises received upon leaving the companies concerned, TASR learnt on Friday.

Prochazka went on to say that party chairman Jan Figel bears political accountability for the issue. "I'm curious myself to see in what way he [Figel] will accept responsibility, but I'm sure that it won't be the same hollow declaration that [Premier Robert] Fico came up with in the 'Privilegium' case," said Prochazka.

The KDH MP was referring to a scandal that plagued the Labour Ministry during Fico's 2006-10 government. It was discovered in August 2007 that Privilegium, an organisation for which then labour minister Viera Tomanova (Smer-SD) once worked, had been given two grants worth a total of Sk2 million (€66,000) by the ministry in 2006 after the organisation provided false information in its grant application. Smer chairman Fico said that he was accepting responsibility for the issue. "This meant absolutely nothing in the end," said Prochazka.

Figel announced after the party's extraordinary session on Thursday that former KDH nominees in state-run railway company ZSSK - Pavel Kravec and Pavol Tarcala - will return the severance payments that they received (€170,000 and €100,000, respectively) when they were dismissed from their posts. Figel also called on other former managers of state-run companies who received exaggerated bonuses to return the money.

tf/df/mf

### ***Protest against Eurozone Bail-outs to Take Place in Bratislava***

Bratislava, June 18 (TASR) - People who disagree with further bail-outs for eurozone members will express their opposition in front of the Government Office between 3 p.m.-8 p.m. on Tuesday, it was announced on Monday.

A protest march will begin on Zamocka Street at 6 p.m. and will continue to the Presidential Palace on Hodzovo Square via Palisady, with the protesters urging MPs to reject any more bail-outs.

"The protest should express the dissatisfaction of Slovak citizens with the Government's actions, which, according to the publicised statements of Prime Minister Robert Fico, will pursue further increases in and ratification of bail-outs," said protest organiser Pariska Olivova.

Such measures will land Slovakia in further debt and will draw it into an even greater financial crisis than the one in which it

already finds itself, stressed Olivova. "In a situation in which Slovakia is offering state bonds on the market and is borrowing to repay its own debts and to run the country, people think that it's irresponsible for Slovakia to lend money to a country in which the level of state support for the unemployed is around €1,000 [per month] and up to two years of severance pay upon leaving employment is being paid," said Olivova, in an apparent reference to Greece.

Olivova also emphasised that half of Slovak citizens are living on the verge of poverty and that such decisions will lead the country even into bigger decay and its people into poverty. "We urge the Government and its members to reject such an overgenerous gesture towards countries that have behaved irresponsibly and got themselves into excessive debts, and to think about its own citizens as well," she stated.

Olivova described the increase in bail-out funds as treason, and therefore demanded that the Government should issue a memorandum concerning the increase in the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). "Such a serious matter that affects all of us should be decided by the people. If the Government ignores the demands of its citizens, this will be the last peaceful protest, and dissatisfied people will exercise their right to resistance according to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic," she added.

df/tf

## Education and Culture

### ***CNN Ranks Bazant Pohoda Festival among World's Top 50 Festivals***

Bratislava, June 12 (TASR) - The news portal of CNN Television has included Slovakia's biggest music festival Bazant Pohoda, due to be kicked off in Trenčin on July 5, among the top 50 festivals in the world, TASR learn on Tuesday.

Organisers of the event are delighted to hear the news. "We're proud. There are plenty of great festivals in the world and we're glad that CNN has noticed ours. We feel really well among festivals such as Glastonbury [UK] and Roskilde [Denmark]," said director of Bazant Pohoda Michal Kascak, adding that they will do all they can to make the 16th year even better than all the previous years.

"The aim of the game here is to relax (which is exactly what Pohoda means)," writes Jade Bremner, author on the article. The atmosphere at the concerts in Trenčin are recalled in the text as well. "They [Pohoda organisers] released thousands of Thai lanterns into the sky. It looked beautiful," the article quotes Ricky Fabulous from Belleruche as saying.

CNN's chart includes 50 festivals from all over the world. Pohoda has already got into similar tables, for example, when British online magazine DMC Update ranked it among 60 best festivals in the world. Pohoda was also declared the third best festival of the summer of 2011 at the Festival Awards Europe chart run by a prestigious server Virtualfestivals.com.

The whole article is available on <http://www.cnn.go.com/explorations/play/worlds-50-best-summer-music-festivals-008106?page=0,1>.

gk/tm/mf

### ***Caplovic Okays New German University***

Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - Despite his pledge not to approve any new private universities, Education Minister Dusan Caplovic has submitted a proposal to set up a private university with German as the language of tuition, TASR learnt on Thursday.

According to Caplovic, the so-called Goethe Uni is an exception because it has ties with a German university and is considered high-quality.

"Slovakia needs high-quality education facilities, and this university has ties with the university in Frankfurt, which is among the best," said Caplovic, adding that the university will attract foreign lecturers as well as students from the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary and Poland.

The Goethe Uni, which comes under the auspices of the German Embassy in Slovakia, will offer curricula covering media and marketing communications, trade, hotels and spas.

Caplovic said that Slovakia is open to other prestigious universities with high-quality tuition.

"I think that international competition from renowned universities will put pressure on the quality of education in our university system," said the education minister.

len/df/tf

***Teachers Air Grievances and Deliver For a Better Education System***

Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - The Government is trying to consolidate the public finances, so it's difficult to ensure hikes in teachers' salaries in the near future, Prime Minister Robert Fico said on Thursday.

Fico was speaking to teachers who came to Parliament earlier in the day to hand over a 'petition for a better education system' with almost 56,000 signatures.

"I understand that public servants living off their salaries constantly feel, and often justifiably, that what they are paid doesn't correspond with the importance of what they do. But we aren't magicians," Fico said, adding that they are limited by the state budget possibilities.

The petition is calling for a pay-rise for starting teachers to 1.2-fold the average pay in Slovakia. The current starting salary for a teacher reaches €500 a month, which is far below the average of €770.

Teachers are also urging the Government to invest at least 6 percent of GDP in education (currently on 4.4 percent according to UN statistics). Apart from that, they want their retirement age to be set at 56 years (62 general age) or after 30 years of work in the education system.

According to Ludovit Sebeledi, organiser of the petition, there is enough money available, but its re-distribution is wrong. As an example he mentioned the excessive golden parachutes paid to the managers of state-run companies.

"A bonus worth €170,000 for 14 months of work would represent 25 years of hard, genuine work in the classroom for a teacher. Somebody has to go to jail for this," said Sebeledi.

gk/tm

***Madaric: Corridors Free of Shrubbery to Be Made Around Castles***

Krasna Horka, June 18 (TASR) - Culture Minister Marek Madaric on Monday said that historical sites, such as castles, should be protected with 15-metre wide corridors that would be free of any trees and shrubbery.

Madaric was speaking to TASR after making an inspection at the Krasna Horka Castle (Kosice region), which was in March severely damaged with a fire that broke out after youths from a nearby Roma settlement played with matches under the castle hill covered by dry grass and bushes.

The minister noted that the insurer providing insurance to monuments under the remit of the Culture Ministry is also interested in making sure that the probability of damage is as low as possible.

Madaric conceded that environmentalists may not be happy with the plan, however.

[In the Middle Ages, castle hills used to be cleared in order to prevent enemies from easily setting the castle on fire. - ed. note]

bub/tm

## Crime and Justice

### ***Razga: PG Official Mocked Protest and Misused Religious Theme***

Bratislava, June 12 (TASR) - An official in the service of the Prosecutor-General's Office in May pasted a leaflet on the door of the PG's Office demanding a "thorough investigation into the crucifixion of Jesus Christ", thereby mocking both the Occupy PG protest and insensitively misusing a religious theme, Occupy PG co-organiser Filip Razga said at a press conference on Tuesday.

"As this pitiful act outraged the wider public, we decided to ask the PG's Office for a clear stance on the matter. Unfortunately, they still haven't responded," said Razga.

The Occupy PG protest was launched on May 1 in front of the PG's Office in Bratislava, with activists demanding that the Property Origin Disclosure Act should be observed properly, that the public should be informed on a regular basis about the legal dispute between Penta financial group co-owner Jaroslav Hascak and investigative journalist Tom Nicholson concerning the Gorilla scandal, and that the police action against demonstrators at one of the Gorilla Protest rallies in Bratislava in early March should be investigated.

Razga at the press conference stated that the PG's Office isn't doing everything it should in order to see major corruption scandals investigated. The protest involving around 20 activists in front of the PG's office has continued since May 1, therefore, with the protesters collecting signatures under a petition demanding the introduction of anti-corruption measures and the scrapping of the 50-percent threshold necessary for a referendum to be declared valid.

Andrej Lucny from a civil association called Direct Democracy, who also appeared at the press conference, said that activists are also collecting signatures under a petition entitled 'For a Better Slovakia', which is aimed at preventing corruption. This initiative has already been signed by several well-known people, such as MEP Peter Stastny (SDKU-DS), Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) MPs Peter Osusky and Lucia Nicholsonova, Bratislava Old Town mayor Tatiana Rosova (SDKU-DS) and actor Stefan Skrucany.

Razga added that an anonymous person has given them material from the Police Corps Presidium that states that the idleness of the special prosecutor is presenting an obstacle to the investigation of several corruption scandals.

bub/df/tf

### ***Police Finds 4 People and 16 Sheep Bunched Up Together in Car***

Lucenec, June 13 (TASR) - Police patrol that stopped a Skoda Favorit compact on early Wednesday due to suspicion the car seemed overloaded couldn't have been more surprised when they discovered its passengers were actually four people and 16 sheep.

As TASR learned from Banska Bystrica Regional Police spokesperson Maria Faltaniova, all the sheep were stolen. "They stole the animals on late Tuesday. From a sheep pen near Mikusovce (Banska Bystrica region), the thieves loaded the animals through an open window into the car parked nearby," said Faltaniova. She added that the owner was fleeced for property worth €1,810.

Police stopped the car on the road in Lucenec (Banska Bystrica region). "Police patrol found out that the men, sitting in the car among the sheep, are crime suspects. They called on the men to identify themselves. Subsequently, one of the suspects attempted to escape," said the spokesperson.

All the sheep thieves were apprehended and can face up to two years in jail.

mf/tm

### ***Supreme Court Sends Former Drukos Head Mojzis to Prison for 8.5 Years***

Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - Former director of non-banking financial company Drukos Frantisek Mojzis was sentenced to 8.5 years in prison for fraud by a three-member senate of the Supreme Court headed by Milan Karabin on Wednesday.

Mojzis was escorted to prison immediately after the verdict was pronounced. The senate rejected Mojzis's appeal against a decision made by the Specialised Penal Court in Pezinok (Bratislava region) last year.

"I'm neither villain nor fraudster. I'd rather die ... just as there were attempts to kill me in the past," said Mojzis.

Mojzis claimed that Drukos was a prosperous and dynamic company that also had other projects that certain people "attempted to destroy". This included the construction of flats in Germany and projects in Romania, Mongolia and Iran. For example, Mojzis allegedly planned to mine coal in Mongolia with the aim of exporting it to China.

The court found Mojzis guilty of tricking 1,367 Drukos clients out a total of almost €8 million, and 30,000 members of a co-operative called BVD out of around €120 million. According to the court, Mojzis abused people's trust and lack of experience, deceiving them with an advertisement in which he promised yields of up to 31 percent of their deposits.

The court stated that Mojzis was well aware that he wouldn't be able to keep to such commitments. Mojzis used the deposits of new clients to pay older ones and cover operational costs in a classic 'pyramid scheme'.

bub/df/tf

### ***European Court Doesn't Confirm Organised Policy to Sterilise Roma***

Bratislava, June 14 (TASR) - Doctors from the local hospital in Gelnica who sterilised a minor Roma girl without her consent in 2001 didn't act with malice, their actions were not racially motivated and the sterilisation was not part of any organised policy, reads the verdict of the European Court for Human Rights.

On June 12, the European Court ruled on the complaint filed by the sterilised girl against Slovakia, with the information being published on the Justice Ministry's website.

The young woman was sterilised at 17 without her full and informed consent, a fact due to which the European Court awarded her the compensation worth €25,000 and €5,000 to pay for her advocate.

Referring to the compensation pay-out, lawyer Vanda Durbakova said: "This case represents another significant development in our long-term effort to secure compensation for Roma women sterilised in Slovakia against their will."

mf/tm/gk

### ***Hurbanovo: Rampaging Policeman Out to Kill Roma Family***

Hurbanovo, June 16 (TASR) - Saturday's shooting spree in Hurbanovo, in which a policeman killed three people and left other two injured, is set to be investigated by the Office For Fight Against Organised Crime.

"It's still very recent a case. All potential motives will be investigated as well as the history of attacked family and other circumstances," Interior Minister Robert Kalinak said on the same day.

The minister thanked all police members, who risked their own lives to put an end to the perpetrator's murderous rampage. "They put their lives on the line because his gun was still loaded," said Kalinak.

Shortly after 10 a.m., the off-duty officer identified by police only as Milan J., 51, pulled up his Fiat Punto in front of a building at Komarnanska 5, inhabited by two Roma families. He got out of the car and started to fire off shots from his semi-automatic pistol CZ 52, which he held in illegal possession. Three people were killed while other two wound up in hospital. Among victims were a 44-year-old man, his 19-year-old son and 24-year-old son-in-law. The second son was hit by the bullet in the chest while his wife got shot in her leg. Subsequently, the policeman walked to the house of Hurbanovo Mayor Margita Zemkova, sat on its front steps and aimed the gun at his own head, threatening to commit suicide.

The police SWAT team and negotiator were deployed to the scene and, two hours later, managed to convince the perpetrator to give himself up.

According to the minister, the officer worked for the police for 20 years and no complaints have ever been filed against him. Neither his colleagues nor the Hurbanovo Mayor have ever noticed anything out of ordinary about his behaviour. Married with two daughters, the man was quite popular in Svaty Peter village, where he lives. Inhabitants of Svaty Peter now fear a Roma revenge. Minister Kalinak assured public that police will secure law and order in Hurbanovo and neighbouring villages.

mf

### ***Government Proxy: Hurbanovo Shooting Inexcusable and Unfathomable***

Bratislava, June 18 (TASR) - Government Proxy for the Roma Communities Miroslav Pollak has expressed his profound sympathy to the relatives of those shot dead in a killing spree in Hurbanovo (Nitra region) on Saturday, TASR learnt on Monday.

Pollak went on to describe the incident as inexcusable and unfathomable. He announced that he'll meet representatives of the Police Corps later in the day and will ask them to carry out a thorough investigation into the case and to adopt effective measures in order to prevent such occurrences from happening again.

The Government proxy also directed an appeal to the media, urging journalists to provide sensitive coverage of the issue, as "the unobjective and unfair provision of information contributes to an increase in tension between the Roma and the rest of the population".

An off-duty town police officer, identified for now by the police only as Milan J., 51, pulled up his Fiat Punto on Saturday morning in front of a building on Hurbanovo's Komarnanska Street inhabited by two Roma families. He opened fire with an illegally-held gun, shooting dead three people while injuring another two. All five casualties were members of a single Roma family.

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## Miscellaneous

### ***Madaric: Zemkova's Recent Statements Smack of Media Games***

Bratislava, June 12 (TASR) - Recent statements made by Radio and Television Slovakia (RTVS) head Miloslava Zemkova reek of certain media games, Culture Minister Marek Madaric said on Tuesday in response to Zemkova's statement that her task at RTVS can, under certain circumstances, be viewed as completed.

Zemkova also announced that she will leave her current post of her own accord. "If she wants to leave, then so be it, but let her not send out confusing signals that are making people at RTVS itself feel uncertain. It brings no good to a positive view of this medium," said Madaric in an interview for TASR.

The minister went on to give assurances that the ministry isn't working on any purpose-built changes to the law in order to dismiss the RTVS top ranks. No change to the way in which the RTVS head is elected (via Parliament) is planned, either.

Madaric was reluctant to comment on RTVS's planned digitalisation project or on its new web site. "I'm beginning to feel that some people are waiting for a pretext to say that they're even being politically persecuted. I'm a culture minister, and I don't have the powers nor do I feel like interfering in the powers and role of the RTVS general director or RTVS as such," said Madaric.

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### ***Oily Substance Leaks into Danube River at Winter Port in Bratislava***

Bratislava, June 12 (TASR) - Around 17,000 litres of an unidentified oily substance leaked into the Danube River at the Male Palenisko transshipment terminal at Bratislava's Winter Port early on Tuesday, the Bratislava police and fire brigade told TASR later in the day.

According to preliminary information, a pumping tube was damaged while pumping the oily substance into a vessel. A total of 19 pieces of fire-fighting equipment and 39 fire-fighters were deployed to tackle the incident. Experts have discovered the oily substance in both the Danube River and in its tributary the Little Danube.

The police have launched an investigation concerning the crime of violating the protection of water and air, which carries a possible prison sentence of one to five years.

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### ***Glvac Advocates Completing MOKYS, Halting It Would be Uneconomical***

Bratislava, June 12 (TASR) - It would be highly uneconomical to put a stop to the armed forces' mobile communications system (MOKYS) project, Defence Minister Martin Glvac (Smer-SD) said on Tuesday.

Glvac also voiced his certainty that, when it is completed, MOKYS will operate well. "I'm sure that the system is good, functional and will be useful, and I'm not even thinking about not pursuing the contract or not completing it after all that investment," he said, adding that to pull out of the deal would be very disadvantageous for the ministry.

It will be possible to transport the mobile communications system on vehicles that the armed forces currently have at their disposal, he added.



Former prime minister Iveta Radicova filed a criminal complaint over the MOKYS public procurement, as several controversial contracts related to MOKYS were signed between 2005-10. Despite the fact that the value of the project has topped €200 million, the system still isn't operational.

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### ***Ziga: Most of Diesel Removed from Danube River after Tuesday's Leak***

Bratislava, June 13 (TASR) - Most of the diesel that leaked into the Danube River at the Male Palenisko transshipment terminal at Bratislava's Winter Port on Tuesday has been removed from the river and the situation has been stabilised, Environment Minister Peter Ziga said on Wednesday.

"I believe that the situation will be absolutely normal on the Danube River within a few hours or days at most," said Ziga.

Meanwhile, a working group has been set up to evaluate the situation on a regular basis. The results of tests on the water in the river should be known later in the day.

The leak of 13,600 litres of diesel was caused by human error. The entity responsible could face a fine of €168,000.

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### ***Cardinal Korec Taken to Hospital with Failure of Basic Vital Functions***

Nitra, June 14 (TASR) - Cardinal Jan Chryzostom Korec (88), bishop emeritus of the Roman Catholic diocese of Nitra, has been admitted to the local Faculty Hospital due to the failure of basic vital functions, deputy director of the hospital Alena Durisova told TASR on Thursday.

The cardinal's condition has been stabilised but remains critical, said Durisova.

Korec was taken to Nitra hospital on Wednesday morning.

"He was suffering from a severe septic shock and a ruptured appendix. He also has severe inflammation of the peritoneum. We carried out surgery immediately," said Durisova.

Korec was consecrated as a priest in secrecy in 1950. One year later, he was secretly consecrated as a bishop by bishop Pavol Hnilica. He had a blue-collar job until 1960 but continued to carry out his religious duties on the quiet. The Communist regime later sentenced him to 12 years in prison for treason. Following his release he worked as a lift repairman. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989 he became rector of the Priests Seminary in Bratislava. Pope John Paul II made him into a cardinal in 1991.

Prime Minister Robert Fico recently described cardinal Korec as one of the most outstanding living people in Slovakia.

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## Supplement

### ***Reznik: 2011 Was Among Most Difficult Years for TASR***

Bratislava, June 12 (TASR) - The year 2011 was one of the most difficult for the News Agency of the Slovak Republic (TASR), states the agency's 2011 annual report presented to members of the parliamentary media committee by TASR board chairman Vladimir Masar on Tuesday.

According to the agency's director general Jaroslav Reznik, TASR cut its operational budget by close to one-third. Meanwhile, the sum that TASR receives from the state vis-a-vis its provision of services in the public interest was almost halved (by 47.08 percent) on an annual basis.

"The agency shouldn't be the subject of the manifestos of individual governments; more often than not with completely contradicting views of its further development. Political elites must make it clear whether or not they want a standard news agency or want to have it privatised by one of the lobbying and entrepreneurial groupings," said Reznik.

Despite its woes, TASR led the agency market last year. "We kept track of all major and minor events alike. We were present at all foreign trips made by our [Slovakia's] top officials," he asserted.

According to TASR's 2011 annual report, which the committee agreed to take into consideration, the agency ended last year with a surplus of €50,667. Total incomes stood at €3.511 million, while expenditures reached €3.461 million. TASR managed to keep going despite its operational budget being cut by nearly 29 percent on the year, or close to €1.4 million.

Last year's contribution from the state was the second-lowest in TASR's history, as only 1993, the first year of its independent existence after splitting from the former Czechoslovak Press Agency (CSTK), saw a lower state subsidy.

The agency released a total of 252,401 news reports last year, of which 155,513 were plain text, 17,848 were audio recordings, 73,277 photographs, 6,119 videos and four graphs. It had 127 employees as of the end of 2011.

Speaking to the committee members, Masar stressed that TASR board members praised the quality of the agency's news releases, its innovative approach in introducing new products, improvements in services for both clients and the public, and its emphasis on non-commercial information.

"The agency's news coverage is well-balanced, based on pluralism, and provides a sufficient volume of relevant information enabling one to decide freely on one's own opinions. The board also views in a favourable light the agency's activities in the area of processing archives and information in the public interest," said Masar.

According to the board, the restrictive measures applied by TASR's management are unavoidable and progressive, said Masar, who went on to point to a warning issued by an independent auditor, according to whom a further cut in the state contribution to TASR could jeopardise the agency's ability to meet its legally-prescribed tasks in the public interest.

Governing Smer-SD party MP Miroslav Ciz advocated a rise in the state's co-funding for TASR. "It's obvious that the money that will go there won't be squandered but will be used in a proper manner and in line with [TASR's] objectives," he said.

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