

## DEVELOPMENT

- **1972:** The President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) orders the formation of special units in all the republics of the state to fight terrorism, which begins to emerge in Europe and the world in the early 1970s.
- **March 1973:** By order of the President of the SFRY, as a result of the first experiences in the anti-terrorist struggle (operation Raduša or Feniks), a Police Corps of the Republican Secretariat of the Interior is established.
- **1977:** Renaming of the Police Corps as the Police Protection Unit, within which a Police Corps for Special Tasks is organised, with a Special Tasks Platoon as the forerunner of today's Special Unit. The period up to 1990 is marked by the search for an appropriate organisational model and liquidity of personnel within the Police Protection Unit.
- **1990:** Establishment of the Special Unit of the Ministry of the Interior, which becomes an independent organisational unit within the Ministry, reporting directly to the Minister. This period is marked by the preparations for the independence of the Republic of Slovenia.
- **1991:** Active participation in the War of Independence. The unit consolidates the trust it has earned.
- **2000:** With the reorganisation of the Ministry of the Interior and the Police, the Special Unit becomes an internal organisational unit of the General Police Directorate.
- **2004:** With Slovenia's entry into the European Union, the Special Unit becomes a member of the Atlas Network of European Special Intervention Units.
- **2010:** With the reorganisation of the General Police Directorate the Police Specialities Directorate is established, comprising the Special Unit, the Security and Protection Centre, the Air Support Unit and the Operations and Communications Centre.
- **2021:** With the reorganisation of the Police, the Special Unit becomes an independent internal organisational unit of the General Police Directorate.



## GOLDEN ORDER OF FREEDOM

For its role in the independence of the country and in the war for Slovenia, the Special Unit was awarded the Golden Order of Freedom on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1998. The then President of the Republic of Slovenia justified the award on the grounds of "outstanding merits in the defence of freedom and the assertion of Slovenia's sovereignty", and individual members of the unit were also awarded high honours for their activities during the 1991 War of Independence.



The statue of the Special Unit symbolically depicts a member of the unit, his or her determination, confidence, strength, courage, superior competence and readiness to carry out the most demanding security tasks.



# 50 YEARS OF THE SPECIAL UNIT



Issued by: Ministry of the Interior, Police  
Prepared by: General Police Directorate, Special Unit and Public Relations Division  
Design: Ministry of the Interior, Administrative Operations Service  
No. of copies: 300  
Printed by: Tisk Žnidarič d. o. o.  
Ljubljana, March 2023



ALWAYS READY

The main mission of the Special Unit is to fight terrorism, organised crime and other forms of extreme violence that pose a high risk to people's safety, health or lives. Since its establishment in 1973, the Special Unit has been operating throughout Slovenia and, with its mobility, tailored tactics, modern weaponry and specialist equipment, is capable of tackling the most demanding security challenges.



THE SPECIAL UNIT'S TASKS

In addition to combating terrorism, organised crime and other forms of extreme violence, members of the Special Unit of the Slovenian Police also arrest perpetrators of the most serious crimes, resolve hostage situations and kidnappings, carry out EOD tasks, protect domestic and foreign statesmen of the highest rank, and escort



high-value or hazardous shipments. They assist in case of natural and other disasters and perform other tasks requiring the highest degree of physical and psychological fitness, superior training and special skills. The unit also includes members of the Bomb Disposal Unit, who carry out anti-terrorist and explosive device inspections and investigations related to explosives and other hazardous substances.

THE SPECIAL UNIT'S MOTTO: "TRAINED TO HELP BUT NOT AFRAID TO STRIKE"

True to their motto, the members of the unit are highly trained. They undergo a rigorous selection process and basic physical, tactical and psychological training before joining the unit, and throughout their time in the unit they practice, drill and hone a variety of skills, which requires exceptional mental and physical fitness. The training includes physical and tactical drills, psychological preparation, shooting practice and tactical and operational training.



This means they are ready at any moment for the most dangerous police tasks. They strive to ensure a high level of security for both potential suspects as well as innocent bystanders, while at the same time being able to take care of their own safety. Due to the nature of their work, they do not expose themselves to the public and usually carry out their duties masked.

MANY SPECIALITIES WITHIN THE UNIT

The members of the Special Unit are part of different operational teams, where mutual trust and a sense of teamwork are of paramount importance, each working as a well-oiled machine. Thus, specially trained police officers are organised into specialised teams, including:

- breachers (specialists in gaining access to buildings),
- sharpshooters (specially trained in camouflage, surveillance, reconnaissance and handling specialist weaponry),
- climbers – cavers (specialists in work at height and depth, such as in mountains and caves, rappelling and climbing buildings, helicopter work),
- dog handlers (proficient in handling Special Unit service dogs),



- special vehicle drivers (trained to drive a variety of special vehicles, such as armoured vehicles),
- paramedics (specialists trained in tactical medicine), and
- divers (police officers trained in diving and underwater and water tactics).



COOPERATION WITH OTHER UNITS AND ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP OF ATLAS

Members of the Special Unit often work together with other police units, both in specific operations and in training. They are particularly proud of their active membership of the Atlas Network of European Special Intervention Units, which includes counter-terrorism units from EU Member States, Iceland, Switzerland and Norway. In Atlas they are known as the Red Panthers.

The Slovenian Police Special Unit is very active in several Atlas working groups, in particular the Entry Group and the Sniper Forum, where it enjoys a high profile, having organised several international workshops and meetings.



The network has various standing working groups and forums, such as Building (a working group dealing with the unification of standards in the field of work on buildings), Entry (a technical group dealing with entry into buildings through a variety of media, from doors, windows and walls to roofs), Naval (a working group dealing with all aspects of counter-terrorism units on the water), Transport (a working group dealing with all aspects of counter-terrorism unit operations on means of transport other than vessels and aircraft), Aircraft (a working group addressing all aspects of counter-terrorism unit operations related to aircrafts), Sniper (a forum that harmonises sniper operation standards related to weapons, tactics, equipment and other operational and tactical data), Nego (a forum that harmonises negotiator operation standards for Special Forces), and others.

FIVE DECADES OF ARDUOUS DEVELOPMENT

Since its establishment in 1973, the Special Unit has undergone a challenging evolutionary journey, which was defined mainly by it being incorporated into the Ministry of the Interior and the Police and it being renamed from time to time, while its core mission has remained unchanged throughout the years. To date, it has progressed into an elite police unit that maintains an extremely high level of operational effectiveness as a guarantee that serious crime and terrorism will never prevail in Slovenia.

