

## DOMOLJUBNE IN VETERANSKE ORGANIZACIJE – PRIMER SLOVENIJE

## PATRIOT AND VETERAN ORGANISATIONS – THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

**Povzetek** V prispevku predstavljamo ugotovitve, ki izhajajo iz proučevanja slovenskih domoljubnih in veteranskih organizacij. Na tej podlagi razpravljamo o značilnostih funkcionalnega in socialnega imperativa. Pri tem obravnavamo devet organizacij, ki so povezane v posebno koordinacijo. Veteranstvo na Slovenskem ima več kot 140-letno tradicijo in posebno razvojno pot vse do obdobja po osamosvojitvi Slovenije pred četrto stoletje. Slovenski primer tako vključuje domoljubne in veteranske organizacije, povezane z veterani prve in druge svetovne vojne ter osamosvojitvenega obdobja 1990–1991, pa tudi generacije, povezane z mednarodnimi operacijami in misijami, v katerih slovenski vojaki in policisti sodelujejo zadnjih dvajset let. Slovenija ima sodoben in tudi zelo liberalen pristop k organizaciji ter delovanju domoljubnih in veteranskih društev in zvez, ki jih financira prek obrambnega ministrstva, izjema so organizacije vojnih in civilnih invalidov vojn, ki jih financira pristojno ministrstvo za socialne zadeve. Dve slovenski posebnosti sta povezani z vprašanjem, kako in kdo ščiti vrednote, ki jih zastopajo in ohranjajo domoljubne in veteranske organizacije, ter kako te dejavnosti lahko prispevajo k spravi zaradi dejanj, ki so med nacistično in fašistično okupacijo ter družbeno revolucijo najbolj razklale in razdelile številne generacije Slovencev, takrat in pozneje. Ugotovitve kažejo, da tranzicijsko obdobje teh zadev v Sloveniji še ni končano.

**Ključne besede** *Domoljubne in veteranske organizacije, društva, Koordinacija domoljubnih in veteranskih organizacij Slovenije, vojni veterani, zaščita vojnih veteranov.*

**Abstract** The paper presents the findings from the study of Slovenian patriot and veteran organizations (PVOs). On the basis of this, we discuss the characteristics of the functional and social imperative. In this respect, nine different PVOs are discussed, which are linked through a special coordination. Veteran activities on Slovenian soil have had an over 140-year old tradition and a special development path up to the

period after Slovenia gained independence a quarter of a century ago. Slovenian example includes PVOs related to First and Second World War veterans, veterans of the 1990 through 1991 independence period as well as the generations associated with international operations and missions, which have included Slovenian soldiers and police officers for the last twenty years. Slovenia has a modern, but also a very liberal approach to the organization and functioning of patriot and veteran societies and associations, which are financed by the Ministry of Defence, with the exception of military and civilian war-disabled organizations, funded by the Ministry responsible for social affairs. Two Slovenian particularities are linked to the question of how and who is protecting the values represented and cherished by PVOs, and how their activities can contribute to the reconciliation with respect to the offenses which during the time of Nazi-Fascist occupation and social revolution divided the then and many subsequent generations of Slovenians. According to the findings, the transition period with regard to these matters in Slovenia is not yet complete.

**Key words** *Patriot and veteran organizations, societies, coordination of patriot and veteran organizations of Slovenia, war veterans, protection of war veterans.*

**Introduction** On the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence of the Republic of Slovenia and the War for independent Slovenia, nine Slovenian PVOs took part in the preparation and execution of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the PFP Conflict Studies Working Group "Veterans and Society" Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants through history. The invitation to participate was also the beginning of research and study of the Slovenian case, which was later completed (Šteiner and Čas, 2017). In this paper we use and present a part of this research.

In the presentation of the applied methodological framework, we wish to emphasize that our study and discussion were based on the hypothesis that the structure and functioning of Slovenian organisations in the field of war veterans and military disabled was rather specific and was historically conditioned with its extremely transitional characteristics. In this respect, we have focused on nine patriotic and veteran societies and associations joining war veterans, civilian war veterans and the corps of military elders of four generations<sup>1</sup>. For the purposes of an explanatory single case study<sup>2</sup> our question was, what is the organisation of Slovenian PVOs, what are their mission, activities and the implementation of the public interest. Our research focused on finding answers to how the functional imperative<sup>3</sup> of PVOs was implemented and what were Slovenia's particularities with regard to the borderline between patriots and veterans, cooperation with state authorities, their financing, mutual and international cooperation, structure and number of members, as well

<sup>1</sup> These include First and Second World War elders, independence process and War for Slovenia elders and elders from post-cold war international operations. More in Guštin, 2016 and 2014, pp. 9–12.

<sup>2</sup> For the methodological basis of the explanatory single case study see Yin, 2009, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> For the definition of functional and social imperative of veteran organisations related to the First and Second World Wars see Prebilič and Juvan, 2014.

as the implementation of their mission and tasks. The above-mentioned questions are also being answered in the discussion, where, in addition to those questions, we also seek answers related to reconciliation and the implementation of other social imperative elements, such as values, attitude towards the historical memory and, most of all, patriotism, and to the question whether or not we need veteran organisations. In this respect, we start by providing the definitions of patriotism and war veterans, patriot organisations, veteran organisations and the attitude of the state towards these questions.

Our comparative analysis focused on the processing of statutory documents of the above-mentioned societies and associations and statistical indicators as well as the materials and presentations prepared for the aforementioned conference held in 2016 in Slovenia. Our main tool for the presentation of the situation and our findings was the descriptive method. Our semi-standardized interviews included the most prominent representatives of nine societies and associations under consideration. However, the authors obtained an important part of their findings from the participant observation within the Coordination organisation of Patriot and Veteran Organisations of Slovenia (CoPVOS). This article would certainly not be possible without the support and assistance of the president and members of the CoPVOS in the final part of our research and effort to prepare an article, for which we are grateful.

## 1 THE NOTION OF PATRIOTISM AND WAR VETERANS

### 1.1 The notion of patriotism

The Dictionary of Standard Slovene (*Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika*) defines patriotism (*domoljubje*) as love of home, homeland (SAZU, 2010). According to Žalec, patriotism is a special emotion or value; it is love of one's homeland. Love of homeland and patriotism are not the same as love of one's country or one's nation. A state is a means necessary for a good living of people with different homelands. Homeland primarily defines one's identity. (Žalec, 2006, p. 78). According to Putnam (2002, pp. 96–97), however, we must all live and judge from our own respective heritages while remaining open to insights and external criticism. To love home and one's homeland in a wider context is and will always be a noble act, since it helps and provides the livelihood both of a family and, consequently the people and the nation (Prebilič and Haček, 2011, p. 11).

In a patriotic society, one can rely on and trust other people, because they know they are patriots. If there is no such trust, there is room for manipulation with the people's feelings, and for the unnecessary and expensive politicization of various issues. The feeling of common identity, affiliation to a certain group of people, the feeling that other people are a part of us, helps us maintain the attitude of trust, mutual trust and solidarity, which the citizens need (Kymlicka, 1999, p. 27). Modern societies depend on a spontaneous support of their members, who have to be aware that the modern society is a joint venture and that cosmopolitanism and patriotism are not

mutually exclusive. Patriotism is also the basic component of a positive self-esteem. Democracy, personal growth and positive self-esteem are the values, which take the highest place on the chart of moral values and are closely related. Patriotism is like a foundation for their implementation. It is therefore a publically and socially important value and as such should also be nurtured in the public morals and ethics (Žalec, 2006, p. 79) or at all levels, but mainly with some public services and entities providing for national security of the Republic of Slovenia.

It is therefore hard to talk about patriotism, if we neglect or even conscientiously overlook the past. In this respect, one does not need to go too far back to find meaning of the patriotism of the Slovenians, knowing that they had fought for their independence since their inception. In the beginning, of course, these efforts were less successful and visible than in the contemporary history (Čas, 2009b, p. 38). Even in our former common state of Yugoslavia, we showed the love of our country and all the nations within it. However, we felt more for our narrow homeland – Slovenia, the Slovenian nation, the values of the Slovenian nation, our own identity (Čas, 2009a, p.177). In fact, we had no other option but to maintain our open patriotism and cosmopolitanism and to fight as Slovenians in the former Yugoslavia against non-open forms of patriotism. This had brought us to the point where we have expressed the identity of the Slovenian nation and patriotism through the independence of the Republic of Slovenia and demonstrated our open patriotism and cosmopolitanism by joining our new community, the European Union. Such open patriotism and cosmopolitanism is also expected from those who aspire to join the European Union (Čas, 2009b, p. 38). In none of those cases, however, the affiliation to the European Union cannot imply the renouncement of any system characteristic that defines us as a nation. Quite the opposite, a national identity is a prerequisite for the European one. You can only be a European if you are German, Slovenian, French, member of one of the European nations (Bučar, 2009, p. 70).

Generally, we can say that the worse people feel in their respective environments, the less patriotism is present. Even excessive accentuation of merits of those “most deserving”, which clearly scorns others, does not enable or at least inhibits the identification with the “homeland”. It is the “home” of us all (Hribar, 2009, p. 18). »Despite the fast globalization process, patriotism will remain a topical sentiment, since home and homeland will also be known in the future. How they will be loved and treated in the future, however, depends on how well we will know it and how much pride we will take in it. One should not forget that patriotism has significantly contributed to the building of social cohesion of individual societies and, consequently, the homeland (Prebilič and Barle Lakota, 2010, p. 56).

## 1.2 The notion of war veterans

A war veteran is often defined as an old experienced soldier who had served his turn, or an elderly and experienced worker in a specific field (SAZU, 2010). In its definition, the War Veterans Act (ZVV-UPB2, 2006, Art.1) focuses on war veterans of 1991 and on persons who can hold a veteran status. Later, the act additionally

describes veterans as the persons who have participated in the national-liberation war (Second World War fighters and other people related to this war) and members of the national revolutionary organisation TIGR.

The role and the tasks of veteran organizations can in general be defined as an organisation representing veterans in their effort to obtain, maintain and improve their social status, assistance in all types of health care, improvement of their psycho-social status, and the formation of common standpoints, socializing, mutual assistance and omnipresent social reintegration and preservation of the historical memory and values in the system as well as in the society. Just as patriot organizations, war veteran organizations play an important role in the civil society. There is an important bastion of values in a modern society, an urgent pillar of historical memory and a reminder of difficult events and an important link between the civilian society and the defence and security system as well as someone who can provide assistance in the education process of the young.

### 1.3 War veteran and patriot

Considering the definition of a war veteran from the War Veterans Act, it is clear who a war veteran is. A war veteran can of course also be a patriot. However, everyone who considers themselves as a patriot cannot also be a war veteran. This fact should also be taken into consideration when determining the status of a veteran or patriot organization and can be highlighted as a subject of a separate discussion.

## 2 SLOVENIAN VETERAN AND PATRIOT ORGANISATIONS

Below we present nine Slovenian patriot and veteran societies and associations through their official definition, mission statement, activities and initial activities as well as their transition at the establishment of the independent Republic of Slovenia. We continue by presenting the organizations, which on 16 September 2008 in the Office of the President of the Republic of Slovenia and in his presence, officially signed the Agreement on the cooperation of patriot and veteran organizations of Slovenia<sup>4</sup>.

**The Association of "General Maister" Societies** (acronym ZDGM) is a federation of patriot associations which bring together descendants of General Maister's combatants and other people who want to preserve the memory of the historical work and patriotic message of General Rudolf Maister and his fighters for the northern border, as well as those who were actively involved in the efforts for the formation of independent Slovenia and are actively involved in patriot societies nurturing patriotism (Statutory contract, Art.1). The ZDGM covers mainly veteran activities related to the First World War.

<sup>4</sup> In 2012, the Association of Civilian War-Disabled of Slovenia also joined the CoPVOS, which now includes nine members (Podržaj, 2017).

The mission of the ZDGM is to promote national awareness of the Slovenians, to educate young generations of Slovenians in the form of patriotic activities and to preserve historical memory of the fights for the northern border, fights against fascism and fights for an independent Slovenia. In cooperation with the Slovenian Armed Forces and by working together with other patriot and veteran organizations, they promote patriotism and enhance the defence abilities of the Republic of Slovenia (ZDGM, 2016).

In the independent Slovenia, the ZDGM was established on 15 September 2005 (ZDGM, 2016), while the Ljubljana society had been active since 1998.

**The Association cultivating the patriotic traditions of the Organization TIGR of Primorska** (shorter name **Primorska TIGR Association**, acronym **TIGR**) is a patriot association which connects members cultivating the traditions based on TIGR's tradition (TIGR, 2016).

The mission of the society is to cultivate the memory of the activities of the wartime TIGR organization and to raise awareness about the importance and role of antifascism in the region of Primorska between the two world wars as well as the real role of TIGR and its contribution to the annexation of the region to the native country (<http://www.tigr-drustvo.si/>). Efforts have been directed towards the goal to acknowledge after the years of silence the role of TIGR members and their importance in the fight against fascism and to provide the organisation with a historically justified value (TIGR, 2016).

The current TIGR society was founded on 21 May 1994. It was joined by the surviving members of the Organization TIGR of Venezia Giulia in Italy (the today's Primorska region), which had operated from 1927 to 1941, their relatives, supporters and friends, and others. Members of the society are also the Slovenians living in Italy<sup>5</sup>. It is a unified society, which is organized into nine territorial units.

**The Union of Slovenian Veteran Associations for the Values of the National Liberation Struggle of Slovenia** (acronym **ZZB NOB Slovenia** or **ZZB**) is a veteran organization of those involved in the fight against Nazism and Fascism and their younger supporters. It is one of the largest civil society organizations in Slovenia<sup>6</sup>, since, in addition to the still living fighters and activists of the National Liberation Struggle (hereinafter NOB), victims of war violence and other participants of the 1941-1945 National Liberation Struggle, it includes members who have a respectful and positive attitude towards NOB and are willing to participate in the efforts to promote the values of this struggle. These values include in particular: patriotism, liberalism, fight against Nazi-Fascism, sovereignty, comradeship,

<sup>5</sup> *In the ethnically mixed area of Italy, territorial clubs are active in Trieste, Gorizia and Veneto (ibid).*

<sup>6</sup> *Both due to its membership (42,000) and its 705 regional clubs in 82 societies.*

equality, solidarity, humanity, fairness, social justice and other values that ensure respect for human rights<sup>7</sup>.

The predecessor of the ZZB was established on 4 July 1948. In 1991, the ZZB exited the Yugoslav Association, and a year later reorganized and renamed itself. Since 1997, it has also been accepting those who had not participated in the National Liberation War. It obtained the current name in 2007 (ZZB, 2016). It has been full member of the World Veterans Federation (WVF) since 1993.

The **Union of War-Disabled Societies of Slovenia** (acronym **ZDVIS**) is a voluntary, autonomous, independent and non-profit union of war-disabled associations. It is a representative disabled people's organization for military wars and peacetime military disabled persons with the status of war-disabled, and other persons entitled to protection under the War Disability Act (Statute ZDVIS Art.1 and 2). It connects association of war disabled from the Second World War, the Slovenian Liberation War and the 1991 War for Slovenia.

The mission of the ZDVIS is to provide social and health protection and the protection of war disabled veterans. It provides assistance in exercising the rights guaranteed to beneficiaries, helps to overcome life difficulties due to disability, and provides training to maximize their independence in every-day life (<http://www.zdvis.si/o-nas>).

The predecessor of the ZDVIS in the post-war Yugoslavia was founded in 1945<sup>8</sup>. The ZDVIS was established on 19 December 1994. It has been actively involved in the disability movement of Slovenia and has since 1995 been linked to the National Council of Disability Organizations of Slovenia (hereinafter NSIOS). It has been full member of the WVF since 1997 (ZDVIS 2016).

The **Association of War-Disabled Civilians of Slovenia** (acronym **ZDCIVS**) is a representational disability organization of associations of civilian war disabled whose aim is to note, advocate and meet the specific common needs of the war-disabled civilians and represent their interests (Statute ZDCIVS, Art. 1). The ZDCIVS's activities are considered to be complementary to the work of public services in care for the disabled.

The association and the societies operate on the basis of human relations and solidarity between the people and are committed to peaceful settlement of disputes between people, between nations and between countries. With its international activities, the association aims at opposing war and all forms of aggression and terrorism (ZDCIVS Statute, Art. 10. and ZDCIVS, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from <http://www.zzb-nob.si/kdo-smo/o-nas/>.

<sup>8</sup> On the Slovenian ground as early as in 1875, the Maribor Veterans and Healthcare Association was established (ZDVIS, 2016).

The predecessor of the ZDCIVS was established on 22 December 1970; in 1977, it was renamed the Association of Slovenian civilian war-disabled and retained its name in independent Slovenia. It has been operating under today's name since 2002. It has been actively involved in the disability movement of Slovenia, and since 1995 a part of NSIOS. In the international environment, it has been a co-founder of the European Association of War Invalids (ZDCIVS, 2016).

The **Union of Veterans of the War for Slovenia** (acronym **ZVVS**) is a veteran organization whose members took part in the preparations for war or in direct defence activities during the war in the period from May 1990 to October 1991 (ZVVS, 2016). It is non-partisan, non-political, non-profit organization of societies and individuals with the status of the 1991 war veterans (<http://www.zvvs.si/?stran=onas.html>).

The ZVVS's mission is to preserve the historical memory<sup>9</sup> of the said period, and to develop patriotism and care for social status and position of war veterans in Slovenia as well as to cooperate internationally with similar organizations in order to increase the visibility of the organization in Slovenia and abroad (VRO, 2016).

The ZVVS was established as the Association of Veterans of the War for Slovenia on 10 October 1993. In 2000, it was transformed into the Union of the Veterans of the War for Slovenia. (ZVVS, 2016). It has been full member of the WVF since 1994.

**The Association of Police Veteran Societies “Sever”** (shorter name **Association “Sever”** or acronym **ZPVDS**) is a veteran organization related to Slovenia's independence process. It is a voluntary, apolitical and patriotic association of police veteran societies. Members of the “Sever” societies are members of internal affairs bodies of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter ONZ) or volunteers who had taken part in ONZs' activities to protect the democratic processes in Slovenia or in the 1991 War for Slovenia (Sever, 2016). In 2017, the veterans within the ZPVDS adopted a special Charter of Fundamental values which defines the eight values on which to base the formation of goals and implementation of tasks of the ZPVDS and society members<sup>10</sup>.

The Association “Sever” was founded on 26 March 1994 as an integrated association for the entire country. The association was named after the famous operation “Sever” (North) and the activities and then ONZs of 1 December 1989 in Ljubljana<sup>11</sup>. The transformation of the association of societies in today's association began in 1998

<sup>9</sup> *The ZZVS celebrates its day on 17 May in memory of the day when the 1990 order to hand over the weapons from Territorial Defence depots was ignored and the National Defence Manoeuvre Structure (MSNZ) project was launched.*

<sup>10</sup> *See more at <http://www.zdruzenje-sever.si/sl/news/zdruzenje-sever/redna-letna-skupscina-zveze-policijskih-veteranskih-drustev-sever2.html>.*

<sup>11</sup> *This was a meaningful activity to disconnect from the federal authorities and their repressive bodies. Therefore, 1 December also marks the memorial day of the Association “Sever” (ZPVD, 2016).*

and was completed in 2002. Since 2009, it is also a full member of the WVF, which is a unique example in this international association.

**The Association of MORiS clubs and societies** (shorter name **Association MORiS** or acronym **MORiS**) is a non-political and volunteer organization that connects clubs and societies whose members act in the public interest in the field of defence and war veterans.

The mission of the association is to combine and preserve the historical significance of the MSNZ, the 27<sup>th</sup> Territorial Defence Safety Unit and the 30<sup>th</sup> Development Group, later called the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Brigade MORiS during the preparations for the independence, defence of independence and statehood, and during the War for Slovenia (Vaš, 2017 p. 3). Through its programme the association carries out educational, cultural, artistic, sports and recreational activities. Through its members, it retains veteran, country-loyal and patriotic traditions, high ethical standards and a model of Slovenian military professionalism and Slovenian soldiers throughout the historical period of national existence (ibid).

The MORiS association was founded by ten societies on 11 November 2008. Its structure results from the guideline to ensure a broad integration of civilian associations<sup>12</sup>.

**The Association of Slovenian Officers** (acronym **ZSČ**) is a voluntary, independent, expert, stakeholder and professional association of societies. It joins military officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers as well as other experts both active and reserve component. In this respect, they particularly seek to strengthen patriotism, support and solidarity, and conservation activities and forms of organization in defence and security as well as to preserve the activities and organisational form in the field of defence and security, and civil disaster relief (ZSČ, 2016).

The predecessor of the association was founded in 1952 as an expert organization of reserve military elders. The Officer Association of Slovenia (acronym ZČS) was founded after the Slovenia's gaining of independence on 12 October 1993. On 10 March 2007, it was renamed the Association of Slovenian Officers (ZSČ) as we know it today. The Association of Slovenian Peacekeepers (acronym ZSM)<sup>13</sup> was founded in 2013. In the process of defence and military transition, the ZČS/ZSČ carried out an extremely important role in the demobilization of military personnel after the war of independence and in the suspension of the model of mass armed forces, transition to professional manning, and the professionalization of armed forces (ZSČ, 2016). The ZSČ is involved in several forms of international and bilateral cooperation.

<sup>12</sup> In March 2017, the following societies were incorporated into the association: 13 shooting, 3 veteran and martial arts respectively, 2 sports and soccer respectively, and one automobile, equestrian, aviation, archery, singing, student and history club respectively (Adapted from Vaš, 2017, p. 6).

<sup>13</sup> It includes the so-called fourth generation of veterans who have since 1997 participated in international operations and missions, but also their predecessors from 1950s and 1960s.

### 3 DISCUSSION

In the discussion, we will touch upon the relationship of the state and its representatives towards the values followed by the veteran PVOs as well as the issue of their contribution and role in the reconciliation. We continue by assessing the impact of the society's transition characteristics on the operation of PVOs as well as the examples of politicizing and the approach to the financing of the PVOs. We note the characteristics of civil-military cooperation of the discussed PVOs with the Slovenian Armed Forces and the Police. Additionally, we present the findings and discuss the specificities of Slovenian PVOs in view of their mission, status within the WVF and specific status of public interest in the Slovenian society. This is associated with the representativeness in the field of war veterans and the implementation of the functional imperative of veteran organizations as well as the number of PVO members and the number of war veterans within them.

We shall begin the discussion with the **attitude of the state and its representatives towards the values** as an important starting point. Patriot and veteran organizations are in a specific way related to people, values and the historical memory. In this respect, a historical distance can affect the preservation of historical memory, which war veterans consider a very delicate area. This is particularly true in the case of converting generally accepted historical facts and interference with socially accepted values and fundamental human rights. The practice has already provided answers to the question of whether the death of the last veteran gives an end to veteran values of a certain generation. As we observe these changes and development in the transition countries, it is precisely with the PVOs that the question arises when with regard to the feelings and perceptions of values and events these should be preserved and when faulted, and whether with war veterans this is at all possible and reasonable. It is a challenge of a transformative character, since it requires complex changes – be it at the individual level - from warrior into a peacekeeper, between good and evil, between a war offender and a victim, or be it at the level of society - between the right and a wrong side in time of war violence. It can also affect the relations between occupiers and defenders, or uprising and collaboration, all through to the dilemmas of a good or bad country and its social structure and administration during which war veterans implemented their mission. A continuously respective positive attitude towards the abovementioned facts by the state or state representatives is very important. This challenge is also difficult due to the stance of veteran organizations as natural and representational defenders of values and messages as well as the belief that their socially acknowledged actions had been appropriate. As a rule, this was in conflict with some counterparties, thus it is also important to touch the questions and challenges related to the reconciliation.

With regard to the **contribution and role of Slovenian PVOs to reconciliation**, we should state that there are no visible results. The trend is even directed and managed in the opposite direction. This means that there is more emphasis of readiness and highlighting of the importance of reconciliation, but the practice does not follow this. The reasons for this could be found in a branched and diverse structure of Slovenian PVOs, which includes veterans of the first and second world wars, the independence

war and post-cold war international operations. However, more than that, the reasons for the politicization attempts of PVOs lies in the strengthening of ideological divisions in the society, in the cases of misrepresentation and reinterpretation of historical facts and in the emergence of intolerance. Moreover, the diverse structure of a generation's veteran organizations is not an isolated phenomenon in Europe, especially when it comes to the so-called third generation of veterans from the period at the end of the Cold War and democratization processes. We have already presented nine PVOs. However, due to *weltanschauung* and ideology-based divisions, it comes to the establishment of parallel PVOs in Slovenia. It can be concluded that as a result of the abovementioned facts Slovenian PVOs, are more than on the reconciliation focused on the protection of the historical memory and values arising thereof.

In addition to what has been mentioned, in assessing **the impact of transitional characteristics of the society on the functioning of PVOs** several examples of politicization and party subordination of PVOs can be highlighted in Slovenia. This is primarily reflected in the functioning of parallel PVOs (for example: Association for the Values of Slovenia's Independence (acronym VSO) and the Patriotic TIGR - May 13). The question is whether the new law on NGOs, which is being prepared in accordance with European legislation, will manage to stop the politicisation of veterans with the definitions that non-governmental organizations, including patriot and veteran organisations must not establish political parties. With regard to their role in the social development, the political sensibility of war veterans is understandable and in line with the expectations of the public. It has been particularly obvious among second- and third-generation veterans. If in the former Yugoslavia, Second World War veterans and national liberation struggle fighters enjoyed the status of a political party through their veteran organization, they are now faced with especially difficult challenges due to the attempts of marginalization or distortion of historical facts. On the other hand, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation veterans, who had through military and non-military independence and democratization activities and other transitional changes gone through special personal and social transformation, became sensitive to the labelling with the forces of continuity. This is especially due to the fact that the transformation did not occur only in the field of politics, but also in the field of the repressive apparatus in which they were involved, as well as its operation<sup>14</sup>. The above-mentioned facts represent the characteristics of the process of the reintegration of war veterans into the society, which has proved as special in transition countries.

Examining the **financing of PVOs** in the case of Slovenia indicates that the Ministry of Defence is the administrator and financier of the discussed PVOs (ZDGM, TIGR, ZZB, ZVVS, ZPVDS, MORiS). Funding from the state budget is implemented on the basis of the applicable rules on the criteria for co-financing the activities of societies or associations of war veterans<sup>15</sup>. The programmes of societies in the field of war disabled

<sup>14</sup> Operation of the ONZ (today's police structures) of 1 December 1989 or the reaction to the attempted seizure or weapons to Slovenian Territorial Defence forces in May 1990 can be highlighted as the most important ones.

<sup>15</sup> See more at [http://www.mo.gov.si/si/medijsko\\_sredisce/sporocila/archive/2017/3/browse/1/](http://www.mo.gov.si/si/medijsko_sredisce/sporocila/archive/2017/3/browse/1/).

and victims of war violence are co-financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (hereinafter Ministry of Labour). The Slovenian Armed Forces, on the other hand co-finances the ZSČ. Funds from the state budget are an important source of financing of the discussed associations. However, it is also important to mention the resources that the societies get within their local communities from the municipalities or from membership in the form of compulsory membership fees and other financial contributions.

The **cooperation of the Slovenian Armed Forces** with the discussed PVOs is conducted within the framework of the so-called civil-military cooperation (hereinafter CIMIC). This in Slovenian case also include several other civilian organizations, associations and societies operating in the public interest in the field of defence, sports, training and humanitarian activities. For this purpose, annual CIMIC plans are drafted for each organization following the principle of transparency and reciprocity. It should, however, be noted that annual plans are also signed for the cooperation of the Police and the ZPVD Sever. They are used to coordinate joint projects and activities.

The study further reveals **more specifics of Slovenian PVOs**. The first one is associated with the already mentioned PVOs connecting four generations of veterans. In fact, only two generations have been granted the status of war veterans by the state (the second and the third). Further, we note that in the case of Slovenia it is not possible to clearly distinguish between veterans and other patriot organizations. If in this attempt, we classify Slovenian veteran PVOs according to whether they are connected with the WVF<sup>16</sup>, we find that there are only four in the case of Slovenia: ZZB, ZDVIS, ZVVS and ZPVDS.

**The representativeness of PVOs** in the field of war veterans and war invalids can be credibly verified through the fact whether a majority of their members enjoy the status of war veterans or war disabled and civilian war disabled. The study shows that, under that criterion, there are two such veteran (ZVVS and ZPVDS) and two disability organizations (ZDVIS and ZDCIVS) in Slovenia. It should be added, however, that the association, which is responsible for the mission of First World War veterans and the society of the TIGR organization no longer have any veteran with the appropriate status from that period<sup>17</sup>, that at the end of 2016, the veteran organization (ZZB), which takes care of the Second World War veterans and national liberation struggle fighters had only 8,000 members with the status of Second World War veteran<sup>18</sup>, out of a total of 42,000 members in the societies it comprises.

<sup>16</sup> *The World Veterans Federation (WVF) is the largest international non-profit, non-governmental organization. Established in Paris, France in 1950 by founding members from 8 countries, namely: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Turkey, USA and Yugoslavia. The WVF is now a Federation of 172 veteran organizations from 121 countries representing some 45 million veterans worldwide. The WVF for Europe includes over 70 different national veteran associations from 40 countries (<http://www.wvf-fmac.org/>).*

<sup>17</sup> *The last General Maister's fighter in Slovenia was Friderik Kralj, Slovenian NCO, partisan and Maister's fighter for the northern border; born in 1900, who died in 1999. The last TIGR member and participant of the national liberation struggle died in 2013; it was Franc Čopi - Borotin, born in 1916.*

<sup>18</sup> *And just over 1,600 members with a status of victim of war.*

When classifying Slovenian PVOs according to the **status of public interest** granted to them by the state, it can be established, in addition to the peculiarities of statuses granted by state authorities, that out of the nine discussed organizations there are five veteran, two war disabled, one professional (ZSČ) and one patriot (TIGR). The public interest in the field of defence has been granted to four associations, but is practically implemented by all nine PVOs, if we take into consideration the annual agreements on cooperation with the Slovenian Armed Forces. As a special feature, we can add that two PVOs implement the public interest in the field of education and one in the field of culture. Seven types of public status, however, have been granted in the areas covered by five ministries. Officially, only five of them, plus two conditional (war disability organizations, AN) have been officially granted the status of a veteran organisation. However, considering the above-mentioned representativeness, there are only four such associations. The overview of acquired statuses of public interest broken down by PVOs in 2016 is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:**  
Overview of  
acquired statuses  
of public interest  
by PVOs in 2016

No	PVO	Area of public interest for which the status has been granted						
		war veterans	war disabled	war graves	war violence	defence	education & training	culture
1.	ZDGM	X				X	X	X
2.	TIGR						X <sup>19</sup>	
3.	ZZB	X		X	X			
4.	ZDVIS		X					
5.	ZDCIVS		X					
6.	ZVVS	X				X		
7.	ZPVDS	X		X				
8.	MORIS	X				X		
9.	ZSČ					X		
TOTAL		5	2	2	1	4	2	1

When examining the **mission and the implementation of the functional imperative of veteran organizations** one can determine that patriotism is prevailing. In this respect, in the missions of PVOs, the functional imperative concerning the care for the social security of veterans, care for the health safety and assistance as well as the care of sick veterans, the participation in the regulation of the veteran status affairs and maintenance of memorials and war graves is somehow pushed aside. That is also confirmed by the fact that the state has granted 17 statuses of public interest to

<sup>19</sup> Also includes the field of national consciousness strengthening.

nine PVOs. It is our estimate that Slovenian PVOs in their effort to compensate for status-covered war veterans and war disabled resort under the umbrella of patriot organizations and the wide openness enabled by the Societies Act. This transitional change in the functional imperative of veteran organizations can be characterized as a shift from caring for war veterans to the efforts to maintain the mission and their historical role. The shift is conditioned by the fact that veterans are aging and passing away. In the social imperative, the change can be seen in the shift from the emphasis on the acquisition and merit to the achieving of understanding and respect for the values for which the veterans strive. In other words, the functional imperative is a shift from material to immaterial components, while the social imperative is a shift from the exposure and exaltation of heroes to the highlighting of messages inherent to peace and justice.

When **displaying the number of war veterans in Slovenia**, we emphasize that the granting of the status of war veterans and official records are the responsibility of the State and its administrative units. It is a Slovenian peculiarity that the normatively veteran protection of independence-war veterans, who enjoy very limited benefits, is associated with the age of 55. This leads to the fact that individuals identify the importance of the status, which leads them to attempt to acquire it. However, the status of veterans in Slovenia has not yet been normatively settled for the fourth generation of veterans who had participated in international operations and missions<sup>20</sup>. The data presented in Table 2 show a comparison of the structures between 2015 and 2016 by category, as classified by the competent ministry.

The presented facts face us with the challenge of **identifying and displaying the number of veterans and PVO members**. We emphasize that it is not possible to determine the precise number of veterans in Slovenian PVOs due to the procedure required to access public and personal data. It is clear, however, that the number of war veterans cannot be equated with the number of PVO members, especially if these organizations also enrol persons who have no disability or veteran status, which, on the other hand, is not contrary to the Societies Act. In addition, veterans' members in PVOs intertwine and, consequently, the number even doubles. The growth of members in societies can be represented as the development of societies and associations on the one hand, and the growth of the number of veterans in Slovenia on the other. The increasing number of veterans can be attributed to the fact that the 2006 War Veterans Act introduced 14 new categories of veterans. Moreover, there is a feature that, according to the relevant ministry - Ministry of Labour, since 1996, when the first law on independence war veterans was passed, not one procedure has been introduced to verify the veteran status against fraud. Neither were any of the members deprived of their veteran status. Table 3 presents the number of societies and members of the discussed PVOs in Slovenia, and the collected data on the number of veterans in them.

<sup>20</sup> *In the twenty years of participation of the Republic of Slovenia in international operations and missions, over 11,300 members of the armed forces, about 600 members of the police and over 40 civilian functional experts have been involved.*

**Table 2:**  
Comparison of  
the structure of  
war veterans,  
war disabled and  
victims of war in  
Slovenia between  
2015 and 2016  
**Source:**  
MDDSZEM, 2017.

	Category according to the Ministry of Labour	31 Dec 2015	31 Dec 2016	Index	Structure
					%
1.	<b>NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE WAR VETERANS</b>				
1.1.	National Liberation Struggle (NOB) fighters	6,811	5,643	82.85	70.11
1.2.	Civilian participants younger than 15	1,702	1,587	93.24	19.72
1.3.	NOB fighters from other parts of former Yugoslavia	764	648	84.82	8.05
1.4.	Members of allied armies	30	18	60.00	0.22
1.5.	War prisoners 1941	18	14	77.78	0.17
1.6.	Other beneficiaries	157	139	88.53	1.73
TOTAL		9,482	8,049	84.89	100.00
2.	<b>WAR DISABLED</b>				
2.1.	Military war disabled	590	473	80.17	15.44
2.2.	Military peacetime disabled	893	857	95.97	27.97
2.3.	Civilian war disabled	837	781	93.31	25.49
2.4.	Disabled of the 1991 aggression against Slovenia	93	92	98.92	3.00
2.5.	Family members of the deceased disabled	979	861	87.95	28.10
TOTAL		3,392	3,064	90.33	100.00
3.	<b>1991 WAR VETERANS</b>				
3.1.	Territorial Defence	38,838	38,270	98.54	64.20
3.2.	Police veterans	8,205	8,205	100.00	13.76
3.3.	National protection	6,305	6,075	96.35	10.19
3.4.	Working duty recruits	3,974	4,018	101.10	6.74
3.5.	Other	3,072	3,044	99.09	5.11
TOTAL		60,394	59,612	98.71	100.00
4.	<b>WAR VICTIMS</b>				
4.1.	Camp prisoners	1,119	995	88.92	2.72
4.2.	Prisoners	405	358	88.40	0.98
4.3.	Deportees	10,616	9,875	93.02	26.96
4.4.	Internees	841	738	87.75	2.01
4.5.	Working deportees	452	375	82.96	1.02
4.6.	Refugees and outcasts	11,435	10,817	94.60	29.53
4.7.	Stolen children	314	275	87.58	0.75
4.8.	Forced draftees	1,076	828	76.95	2.26
4.9.	Children of the fallen NOB members	12,199	11,431	93.70	31.21
4.10.	Children of the executed parents in NOB units	730	696	95.34	1.90
4.11.	Former interned Italian soldiers from the Primorska region	16	13	81.25	0.04
4.12.	Refugees due to NOB activities and others	238	227	95.38	0.62
TOTAL		39,441	36,628	92.87	100.00

The table shows that the nine PVOs in Slovenia have a total of nearly 90,500 members. According to our estimates, a third of them enjoy a disability or veteran status. The comparison of data on the status of war veterans, war disabled and victims of war shows that at the end of 2016, there were 70,725 persons with status in Slovenia and an additional 36,628 people with the status of victims of war<sup>21</sup>. One third of the latter were members of a PVO.

**Table 1:**  
Overview of the number of associations, PVO members and veterans with status on 31 December 2016.

No	PVO	No of societies	No of members	Veterans with status <sup>21</sup>	War disabled with status	Note–double count
1.	ZDGM	25	1,489	6 %		94
2.	TIGR	1	1,137	47 %		536
3.	ZZB	82	42,000	9,667		
4.	ZDVIS	14	2,973		2,160	
5.	ZDCIVS	6	1,005		904	
6.	ZVVS	57	24,500	13,600		
7.	ZPVDS	12	6,268	5,103		
8.	MORIS <sup>22</sup>	30	3,350	730		
9.	ZSČ	52	7,740	60 %		4,650
TOTAL		279	90,462	29,100	3,064	6,010

Let us conclude our discussion by answering the question whether or not veteran organizations are needed. As part of an affirmative answer in the studied case, it is a fact that the war veterans in Slovenia have more than a 140-year tradition and a historical dynamics from both world wars and the end of the Cold War, as well as at least a fourfold change of government regulation and the transition of veterans and the care for their rights, health and social protection from one institution to another. With regard to the discussion, it could be concluded that veteran organizations are needed, especially since they are also patriotic, and represent an important link between the civil society and the national security system of the Republic of Slovenia.

<sup>21</sup> Total number on 31 December 2016 consist 107,353 persons or 5.2 percentage of Slovenian population.

<sup>22</sup> Data percentages are given in order to avoid duplication of the number of enrolled veterans, which is presented in the note.

<sup>23</sup> Number of members refers to the date of 7 April 2017 (Vaš, 2017, p.6).

## Conclusion

The presentation of the findings of the survey and study of PVOs in the case of Slovenia lists a string of characteristics, which fall within the exercise of both functional as well as social imperative of generations of Slovenian veterans. Two ministries are responsible for the funding of PVOs from the state, while these organisations realise the public interest in seven public areas under the jurisdiction of five ministerial sectors. According to our estimation, about a third of just over 90 thousand members in 279 societies incorporated within the discussed associations, are veterans, war disabled and civilian victims of war. Slovenian PVOs are strongly focused on patriotism and our research shows that by reducing the number of veterans this feature reinforces to the benefit of other society members. This is referred to as a shift from veteran elements of the functional imperative to the patriotic ones. In the case of Slovenia, all of the above is together with other factors demonstrated through the fact that it is not possible to set a clear dividing line between the veteran and patriot organizations, although the veteran status granted by the state and the public interest in this field are a publically recognised category.

The discussion also presented other characteristics of the case of Slovenia, confirming the hypothesis that the structure and functioning of Slovenian organizations in the field of war veterans and war disabled are specific and historically conditioned with distinct transition characteristics. We drew special attention to the problem of politicization, attempts of breaking the organizations, falsifying the historical memory to which veterans are very sensitive. We have also pointed to the fact that in the case of Slovenia, one cannot talk about the positive cases related to the reconciliation. We draw attention to the phenomena that contribute to the erosion of patriotism. Therefore, the public's and PVOs' expectations towards the representatives of the government and institutions as protectors of the values are increasingly coming to the forefront and serve as a starting point for further successful operation of the PVOs.

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