

OPENING REMARKS

Miroslav Lajčák

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 2018 OSCE MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE

ENERGY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CO-OPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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Dear Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dear Secretaries General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Today's conference is the highlight of Slovak Chairmanship in the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group. So first of all – let me say my thanks to our Spanish hosts and the OSCE Secretariat for taking an active part in organizing this event.

Dear colleagues,

Before I start, I would like to stop. Let's stop for a while and look at the title of this event. Let's dissect it.

There is no coincidence that the first key word in the name of the OSCE is "Security". The single most important priority, concern, dream but also fear for our citizens. There is no coincidence it has recently been the leitmotif of most successful political campaigns. Therefore, it is the first word I want to talk about today.

1. Security

The notion that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean has been enshrined in OSCE documents since the beginnings of the Helsinki Process. But never before has this link manifested itself more vividly. What affects the Mediterranean, affects the OSCE area as well, in one way or another.

Because the challenges we are facing are global. They are greater than Europe. Greater than Mediterranean. Greater than Africa. We must realize - the Mediterranean does not divide us. The Mediterranean unites us. It binds us.

The growing scale of instability and human suffering has caused massive movements of refugees. Transnational terrorism has spread. Climate change does not choose continents. These are realities that we face. And the best way to face them is cooperation. The second key word in the OSCE title and the second point I want to speak about today.

2. Cooperation

Historically, Mediterranean has always been the region with best case scenarios as well as worst case scenarios. Virtually all possible methods of dominance have been tested here. And it is fair to say they all failed in the long-term.

In 2018, I am confident to say that the only successful modus operandi in this region is cooperation. In past centuries or even millennia, wars have not led to sustainable solutions. We can only prosper when we respect each other over the Mediterranean Sea and cooperate.

For that, we need to utilize multilateral platforms.

OSCE offers unique tools and close perspective. But also other organizations are doing their part. UN has recently adopted agenda 2030 – which lists universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services as its Goal 7. And I am coming here straight from Geneva, where I spoke at the UNCTAD World Investment Forum about public-private partnerships and mobilizing investment for development. At the regional level – the Union for the Mediterranean is working to promote dialogue and initiatives. I am pleased to bring to your attention that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Union for Mediterranean and OSCE was signed here in Malaga.

If the security is the desired result and the cooperation the modus operandi, one can only wish it could last forever. In other words – that it would be sustainable. During our MCG Chairmanship, we tried to identify tools how to achieve and maintain the desired state of

security. That is why we have chosen to focus on energy and economic growth during this conference. Because they are drivers of sustainability.

And that is the third word I want to discuss today.

3. Sustainability

It has been 136 years since Thomas Edison opened the first central power plant in the world. But if he could come back today, he would see that most energy is still generated in much the same way he had designed. It has taken a long time to understand how energy use impacts our planet, our security and our economies.

But in 2018, the issue lies at the heart of both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. That's why Slovakia has identified the energy security and connectivity as the first priority in the Economic and Environmental Dimension of our 2019 OSCE Chairmanship, and that's why we chose to focus on energy as the overarching topic of this annual conference.

Because "doing energy right" is fundamental to our security and prosperity.

Security, Cooperation and Sustainability have been the 3 defining words of our MCG Chairmanship and a roadmap for the 5 flagship thematic meetings we organized this year. Many of you here participated.

We used them to speak about security - energy security, cyber security and human security. To speak about cooperation – about using the OSCE platform and means to strengthen our partnership. And to speak about sustainability – about Paris agreement, about water management or education.

And in these meetings as well as here in Malaga - participants represented a global spread of talent and ideas across a range of sectors. Because let me be clear. Governments can provide the structure, the incentives, the framework. But it's the private sector that will need to help to take us past the finish line.

To conclude, let me stop again.

Stop to appreciate the Mediterranean. Home to many world's oldest cities and to many young populations. We are looking at the sea of opportunities everywhere, if we make the right choices.

Thomas Edison once reflected, that there are three great essentials to achieve anything worth while: "Hard work, Stick-to-it-iveness, and Common sense."

If, together, we continue to put in the hard work, if we stick to the spirit of cooperation we are feeling here in Malaga, if we keep the common sense to respond boldly to the urgencies of this moment - we can unlock the enormous potential of these opportunities.

So instead of tilting Don Quijote's windmills, we can start using them for clean energy.

Thank you for your attention.