



**Statement  
of the Delegation of the Slovak Republic to International Organisations in Vienna  
in response to the statement of the United States of America  
at the OSCE Permanent Council  
(26 July 2012)**

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the United States for drawing the attention of the OSCE Permanent Council to the issue of Roma exclusion in Europe. We share its concern in this theme. Also Slovakia pays high attention to this matter and takes due steps and decisions, let me mention as an example the Strategy of the Slovak Republic on Roma integration to the year 2020 adopted by the Slovak Government in January 2012 that was prepared in a wide discussion throughout the all political spectrum, interdepartmental dialogue, in co-operation with the civil society and consultation with the UNDP. To improve the situation of Roma in Slovakia we are within the OSCE in close contact with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the ODIHR's senior adviser on Roma and Sinti issues Mr. Andrzej Mirga. The current topics of our discussion include for instance possibilities of a release of the Slovak language version of the ODIHR/SPMU publication *Roma and Sinti and Police: Good Practices in Building Trust and Understanding*.

We welcome the interest of the US in a dialogue on these issues. Only through a discussion questions can be answered and misunderstandings cleared. We keep, we believe, a fruitful dialogue with the US at all levels. Yesterday and today Slovak minister for foreign affairs pays a working visit to the US.

Because my country was mentioned in the US statement, let me say following

To the tragic incident that took place in the town of Hurbanovo on 16 June 2012: three people of Roma origin were killed and two other of the same family injured in an attack of a gunman. A metropolitan off-duty policeman is suspected of committing this crime.

This attack is inexcusable and inconceivable. It was strongly condemned by the highest officials of the Slovak Republic and all relevant actors of the society. Following the attack at the same day the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic visited the scene of the crime. His personal involvement in addressing this case was later appreciated by Director of ODIHR Mr. Janez Lenarčič in his recent letter. Since very first hour after the crime an investigation team has been carrying out operational and investigative measures aimed at determining the circumstances of this incident. Police initiated a criminal case against the suspected person for the premeditated murder, premeditated attempt of murder, illegal possession of an arm and unlawful entry. In case of conviction the suspect might face 25 years of prison or a lifelong detention. So far the specific motive of the offender has not been sufficiently identified, but also no racial motivation has been proved. Neither the suspect nor the survivors of the attack, family members of the victims or other witnesses claim racial motivation. We believe it is at least premature to speak about racial motivation in this case.

We regret that the US statement on this issue is based on incomplete and incorrect media information. There was also no widespread public reaction following the shooting blaming Roma victims and calling for repeated attacks against Roma.

To the mentioned election banners and posters of the Slovak National Party the Slovak police and Prosecutor's Office started and lead under all legal conditions the criminal procedure according to the paragraph 423 (denigration of human race, nation and conviction) and 424 (instigation of race intolerance) during election campaign of March 2012. The all necessary and legal steps were done by the Slovak officials.

The investigation process legally terminated because of lack of intensity of the conceptual conditions of those particular crimes. All the Police process was confirmed by the Attorney's General Office of the Slovak Republic. Despite this fact attitude, rhetoric and culture of this previously parliamentarian political party was refused in the elections by the public in Slovakia; support for this party decreased significantly and it failed to exceed the quorum of 5 % required for entry into the parliament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.