



As delivered by
State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic
Mr. Lukáš Parížek
at the 24th OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Vienna
7 December 2017

Dear Excellencies,

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation for all the work and efforts of the Austrian Chairmanship.

In light of our entry to Troika activities from the beginning of the next year I would like to express my special thanks to Austrian, German and Italian OSCE teams for very open and dedicated cooperation they have offered us during our preparation to enter this responsible task.

As only cooperative security organisation, the OSCE continues to be essential for peace and security in Europe.

In current globalized and interconnected world, we face problems that cannot be addressed individually, but rather through sincere cooperation and dialogue of all of us.

Despite continued lack of ability to reach an agreement on many important issues, agreeing on nominations for the top four OSCE posts in Mauerbach earlier this year created positive momentum that can serve as a stimulus for our further work.

I would like to highly value the role of all three OSCE autonomous institutions and repeat our continued support to executing their mandate impartially for the benefit of all in the OSCE area.

In order to cope with old and new challenges and threats, we must enhance our action and identify ways for pragmatic engagement in order to restore trust and confidence in actions of other participating states.

Sharp increase in number of terrorist attacks in recent years has presented us with new threats. Threats that target the core values of democracy, tolerance, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, the principles embodied by the OSCE and valued by all of us.

Enhanced international co-operation to fight terrorism in all its forms as well as adoption of measures preventing their financing and eliminating sources of manpower is crucial.

Recurrent cyber-attacks advocate for our closer focus on cyber security. In this regard, we support implementation of existing confidence-building measures and we are in favour of further strengthening cooperation in this field, across the OSCE region.

We repeat that peaceful settlement is the only solution to the ongoing conflicts in Europe. Unfortunately, often it is the lack of true dialogue, as well as the lack of political will to cope with these tasks, that hold us back.

Slovakia, as an immediate neighbour, remains to be gravely distressed by situation in Eastern Ukraine. Prevailing violence, regular civilian casualties, concentrations of heavy weapons and armed forces in close proximity across the contact line are of a great concern.

The contributions of the Special Monitoring Mission to de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine and its support to national dialogue and implementation of the Minsk Agreements requires our unconditional support.

The OSCE has a distinguished role in conflicts prevention as much as post conflict rehabilitation. Security Sector Governance and Reform as major OSCE agenda plays a crucial role in overall conflict-cycle and it has Slovakia's continuous and full support.

Dear Mr. Chairman, we have always viewed the OSCE as an irreplaceable international security organization. In light of our Chairmanship in 2019 and as a part of Troika next year Slovakia will strive for respect of the principles and values of the Helsinki Final Act.

Our teams in Vienna and Bratislava are already working hard on our chairmanship preparation. I would hereby like to express my sincere appreciation to the all Secretariat for the amazing job done on behalf of every Chairmanship.

I welcome the narrative and philosophy behind the plan of the Secretary General to achieve the organisation that would fit-for-purpose through series of necessary reforms.

I reaffirm Slovakia's full support to the OSCE and its role as a pillar of the international rule based order, and essential element for continued peace and security in Europe. We invite all for pragmatic engagement on common challenges and sincere dialog between us.

Thank you for your attention.