



Statement of the Slovak Republic on support of the Security Sector Governance and Reform Ministerial Council, 9 December, 2016, Hamburg

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Governance and Reform, would like to deliver the following statement, also on behalf of: *Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America.*

Security Sector Governance and Reform lies at the core of the OSCE's work. We believe this topic deserves an important place in the Organization, because only a security sector that is able to deliver effective and efficient security to the people, respects the rule of law and human rights and is under democratic control can substantially contribute to the prevention of the outbreaks and re-occurrence of conflicts. Such an inclusive and accountable security sector also strengthens efforts to address current and emerging security challenges, including terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime, and other security threats of common concern to all participating States. Supporting comprehensive and nationally-led reforms in the security sector, which include civil society, with the aim to strengthen good governance and accountability, through an organization-wide and cross-dimensional approach will assist States in the OSCE region and its neighbouring partners to effectively address such challenges.

Together with other participating States, we commend the German Chairmanship, as well as the previous Serbian and Swiss Chairmanships for their efforts and leadership in keeping the topic of Security Sector Governance and Reform high on the OSCE's agenda. Security Sector Governance and Reform is a topic that is still gaining momentum in international debates on conflict prevention, peace and security. The new OSCE Guidelines in this field highlight the importance of the topic for the OSCE. Therefore, we call on future chairmanships, and in particular the Austrian one, to remain seized of this matter and to continue to lead the discussions on Security Sector Governance and Reform within our organization.

We applaud the efforts of the OSCE executive structures, and in particular of the Secretary General, for finalizing a set of internal Guidelines on Security Sector Governance and Reform, as well as tailored training on their implementation for OSCE staff. They constitute an important tool for the OSCE to pursue a more coherent and co-ordinated approach in supporting nationally-led reforms in this field and in strengthening the effectiveness of the organisation's work. In this regard, we also commend increased co-ordination and co-operation with other international organizations and institutions, including the UN and the

EU. We would like to encourage the OSCE to make further use of its comparative advantages and its existing capacities and tools, especially its field presence, to continue improving the coherence and co-ordination of support provided on Security Sector Governance and Reform in the OSCE area.

Recognizing the added value of the new OSCE Guidelines on Security Sector Governance and Reform for the OSCE's operational activities, we consider it important that the approaches formulated in the guidelines are further promoted by broader political discussions. We have learned that the success of reform efforts depends on comprehensive and sustainable support, as well as on a conducive political environment. We call upon participating States to provide the necessary political support for Security Sector Governance and Reform and to use the various political fora available in the OSCE to strengthen deliberations on this important topic with the aim to formalize the OSCE's approach to supporting national Security Sector Governance and Reform processes. The Group of Friends will continue to serve as a useful and flexible platform to advance discussions on Security Sector Governance and Reform in related areas among participating States and to promote ongoing efforts in this field. We would like to encourage more delegations to engage substantially in these discussions and remain convinced that our continued joint activities will result also in a better understanding of the importance of Security Sector Governance and Reform as a key element of national security of each participating State.