

SPEECH OF PRIME MINISTER JANEZ JANŠA AT 13TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL, LJUBLJANA, 5 DECEMBER 2005

Excellencies,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Dear Guests,

I have the pleasure of welcoming you to Ljubljana on behalf of the Government of Slovenia. Slovenia is proud to host the most significant international event in the history of our statehood.

In the initial period of our country's independent foreign policy, we Slovenians set for ourselves two major goals: to establish our young country within the international community and to anchor it within the Euro-Atlantic area. In 1992, we raised Slovenia's flag in front of the UN Headquarters and became members of the then Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It was an affirmation of our conviction that we were going in the right direction. Now, we have also seen our flag flying for over a year and a half among other flags of the member states of NATO and EU. In the meantime, Slovenia has already started intense preparations for the EU Presidency in the first half of 2008.

Slovenia has been closely linked with the development of the OSCE since the very inception of the Helsinki Final Act and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It was precisely on our territory that the then divide between East and West was softened, on the basis of the Helsinki principles of peaceful co-existence. The Helsinki Process also facilitated our path to independence and international recognition. Our main reason in deciding for the OSCE Chairmanship was our wish to contribute to the promotion of democracy and progress in the whole of Europe. As a nation that simultaneously won democracy and independence only fifteen years ago, we can fully understand these processes and deeply appreciate them.

We firmly believe that in the wide area stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe has an important role in ensuring peace and stability even now, after the fall of curtains and walls. The fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, which are in their essence an affirmation of the comprehensive contractual and legal relationships established in Europe after the Second World War, are closely interwoven within the OSCE. These relationships are both sensitive and precious. They survived the period of turbulent change in Europe and continue to remain a healthy foundation on which the Organisation can work effectively. The OSCE is today one of the major international organisations establishing links between its participating states, the majority of which also co-operate within other organisations. The existing international law is still very complicated. Often as member states of different organisations we meet to discuss issues between ourselves. Despite occasional overlapping, which subsequently reduces efficiency, the situation has been improving due to the unfaltering steps taken and is today

from the strategic standpoint more manageable and acceptable than it was, for example, ten years ago.

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Distinguished Heads of Delegations,

During its Chairmanship, Slovenia has made every effort to provide timely answers to challenges posed during this year. We also endeavoured to find some solutions to long-term dilemmas. In this regard, it is of great importance that throughout its mandate Slovenia has enjoyed the wide support and valuable assistance of other OSCE participating states. This year's achievements are therefore our common success. I personally believe that Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Rupel, can proudly look back on what has been accomplished by the OSCE this year. Today, the atmosphere in the Organisation shows promise for rising to meet many a new challenge.

Dear Guests,

Finally, let me wish you all a pleasant stay in Ljubljana. I hope you will successfully round off the dynamic year of the Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship and that this annual Ministerial Council will benefit by finding effective solutions for the further powerful contribution of this Organisation to consolidating peace, stability, democracy and respect for human rights.