



**OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum  
2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Meeting**

Promoting economic progress and security in the OSCE area through energy co-operation, new technologies, good governance and connectivity in the digital era

**Deputy Minister of Economy of the Slovak Republic Vojtech Ferenc**

*Bratislava, 27 May 2019*

*Dear distinguished guests, dear ladies and gentlemen,*

*To begin with, I would like to thank you for inviting the Slovak Ministry of Economy to this important event, which is held under the auspices of the Slovak Presidency of the OSCE. I would like to highlight the Presidency's agenda, which aims at promoting security and economic progress, cooperation in the energy sector, including development of new technologies. The topic is very up to date and undoubtedly requires an intensive dialogue and synergy at international level. As a representative of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, which is responsible for the energy and energy security agenda, I am using this unique opportunity to express few essential insights arising from the competences of our Ministry.*

*In a time of dynamically changing global energy markets, it is essential to seek solutions to increase energy security, competitiveness and growth of standard of living in world's regions. Energy security is a key pillar of all energy policies. In the context of economic prosperity, I am convinced that the topic is highly relevant despite diversity of OSCE participating States from the point of view of energy production, transit and consumption.*

*Slovakia, as a country dependent on the supply of energy commodities from the third countries, has always considered and considers the aspect of energy security as a fundamental element of our energy policy. We have always emphasized the need to respect principles of sovereignty, subsidiarity and proportionality in international negotiations within this policy. In emergency situations, there is also a need to take into account the aspect of solidarity.*

*We all remember the year 2009 and the gas crisis caused by the disruption of supplies through Ukraine from the Russian Federation. The crisis highlighted both strengths and weaknesses of the energy system. The necessity to take various essential measures in times of crisis has been recognized, as well as preventive steps to avoid emergency situations, respectively to minimize negative impacts. New legislative measures have been adopted and the process of diversification of resources and routes has intensified. Today, I can tell that most of the EU Member States, including Slovakia, are much better prepared for energy emergencies than before. New energy infrastructure projects in Europe's regions contribute not only to the integration of energy systems and a creation of a healthy and competitive energy environment, but are also the key aspect in diversification processes and ensuring energy security.*

*In this respect, I would like to emphasize the importance of establishing various regional communication platforms initiated in narrower or broader international contexts. Examples include CESEC, the Three Seas Initiative, the Eastern Partnership, the Visegrad Group and of course the multilateral dialogue within the OSCE. Topics that governments address within these fora are usually “tailor-made” and take into account specificities of these areas.*

*Allow me to remind you that climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy are at the forefront today, besides the energy security agenda. Finding optimal solutions is more challenging because these two topics need to be addressed in synergy with each other. Today we need to talk not only about secure, but also clean energy.*

*The international commitment agreed under the Paris Convention to keep the global average temperature increase below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels is a huge challenge in the upcoming period. This challenge is linked with searching solutions for deploying low-carbon technologies and new sources of energy mix, integrating variable resources into power systems while maintaining system stability and security of supply, with energy saving measures and sustainable development.*

*Therefore, modern energy will not exist without investing in the development of science, research and innovation. Innovations, intelligent technologies, optimization and automatization represent a chance to streamline production and improve services, not only in the energy sector, but also in industry, transport and other sectors of national economy. A precondition for creating a sound and innovative environment is building a functional infrastructure for timeless solutions, their emergence and growth. The basis for developing the philosophy of so-called smart solutions such as "smart energy, smart industry, smart cities and smart economy" is the interlinkage of relevant actors in the innovation ecosystem, not only at national level but also at international level.*

*Dear ladies and gentlemen,*

*Constructive dialogue on sensitive issues within the OSCE is crucial as it will create a space for joint intersections in draft solutions among countries with different priorities and interests.*

*I believe that today's forum, which takes place during our OSCE Presidency, will provide space for such fruitful debate and will result in closer cooperation in selected areas. Finally, let me wish the forum a success.*

*Thank you for your attention.*