

STATEMENT  
**by the Head of the Slovak Delegation**  
**H. E. Miroslav Lajčák**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs**  
**of the Slovak Republic**  
**at the**  
**OSCE MINISTERIAL MEETING**  
*(Kyiv, 5 – 6 December, 2013)*

*Mr. Chairman,*

*Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. To its addition I would like to share with you a few points from my national perspective.

**First**, let me join my predecessor in thanking the **Ukrainian Chairmanship** for its hospitality and excellent preparation of the Ministerial Council. I would like also express our acknowledgement for its leadership and commitment throughout the whole 2013.

Ukraine is Slovakia's largest neighbour. And we have always supported strengthening of EU-Ukraine relations. We are interested in its peaceful, stable and democratic progress.

Looking at the dynamic developments on the streets of Kyiv I would like to stress that the principles and commitments that represent the very essence of the OSCEs to security, including full respect of fundamental human rights, are not less relevant today than they were forty years ago when the Helsinki Final Act was signed. Right for peaceful assembly and association as well as freedom of expression are indispensable parts of any democratic society and should be respected at all costs. That said I welcome reassurances of the Ukrainian Government that the violent acts against journalist and excessive use of force against demonstrators will be investigated.

**Second**, it has already been three years since in **Astana** heads of our states and governments agreed on creating a “free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community”.

We appreciate the efforts of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to move the process forward. However present distrust combined with diminishing level of political engagement continue to prevent us from making tangible progress.

We need to show commitment and political will, to take concrete steps to avoid the OSCE to lose its relevance. We should continue seeking opportunities for further strengthening of our common space based on dialog, shared values and cooperative security.

We must mobilize our political will to fulfil already agreed commitments and to adapt them to evolving modern world to overcome durable stagnation which negatively influences our mutual trust, confidence and cooperation and thus security.

Frozen conflicts, conventional arms control, lack of full implementation of commitments, but also future of the OSCE Field Missions are among the premium ones.

We can have differing views, but we cannot move forward if we keep adhering to the Cold-War logic. The potential of the OSCE is clear – it is up to us what we make out of it.

**Third**, the **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act** represents unique opportunity to reenergise the concept of comprehensive and inclusive security. The Helsinki+40 process could be used as a platform for a wider strategic dialog on the role of the OSCE in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We should keep focus of the OSCE on our core agenda – conflict cycle, security cooperation promoting democratic societies in the whole OSCE region. A political impetus in a form of adoption of a declaration would be very beneficial.

**Fourth**, we shall not be focused exclusively on the OSCE area. By the end of 2014 the planned ISAF withdrawal will influence not only **Afghanistan**, but our territories as well.

Interest we are paying to stable, peaceful and democratic development of Afghanistan was reflected this year in a number of events. The proposed Draft Declaration on Afghanistan demonstrates this will and represents an appropriate instrument enabling us to engage in cooperation with Afghanistan in all three dimensions.

**Fifth**, this year was a year of **anniversaries**. The High Commissioner on National Minorities celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the institution.

Slovakia values and appreciates its silent diplomacy which strongly contributes to conflict prevention in the OSCE area. I wish the new High Commissioner Astrid Thors every success and express my full support in her demanding task.

In December, we will celebrate 15 years since the establishment of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. We have to admit that OSCE commitments on media freedom are still not fully respected. In this context it is our duty to protect this valuable institution and strengthen our commitments in this area, including the respect of the protection of journalists.

The role of the autonomous and impartial OSCE institutions is irreplaceable. Let me in this context highlight also the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Its election monitoring has become a global benchmark and its contribution to building democratic institutions and vibrant civic society is indisputable.

Ten years ago we adopted the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area. Just recently, the ODIHR organised in Vienna very useful and lively discussion on its implementation. It proved that enhancement of our implementation efforts with a particular focus on Roma women and youth is needed.

*Mr Chairman,*

Despite all our efforts to build lasting peace, security and stability in the OSCE region, it is not possible without properly **addressing existing economic and environmental challenges**.

Current economic and financial difficulties require proper solutions and closer cooperation. The potential and comparative advantages of the OSCE second dimension should be explored further.

On that account I am pleased to acknowledge the progress we have achieved this year, namely the agreement to adopt the *decision on improving the environmental footprint of*

*energy-related activities in the OSCE region as well as the decision on protection of energy networks from natural and manmade disasters.*

*Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,*

Next year **Switzerland** will chair the OSCE. We appreciate new ideas in Swiss priorities and detailed preparations for the Chairmanship.

In particular, we welcome the Swiss intention to focus also on the issue of **Security Sector Reform**. Slovakia is a permanent Co-Chair of the UN Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform.

This group provides a useful forum for reflection on future UN engagement in SSR and to build consensus among the UN Members and their different approaches towards the topic of SSR. Slovakia is a firm promoter of the issue and stands ready to support the Swiss Chairmanship in this endeavour.

In conclusion, let me express my hope in holding a successful Ministerial Council here in Kyiv that will be demonstrated by adoption of decisions in each of the OSCE's dimension.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.