

Statement by
Mr. Ivan Korčok,

ENGLISH only

State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Slovak Republic
at the 12th OSCE Ministerial Council
(Sofia, 6-7 December 2004)

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to our host country for the work done during this year, for the leadership of our Organisation as well as for the hospitality extended to us in the city of Sofia.

Let me start with a couple of words about Ukraine, our biggest neighbouring country. It is crucial that democratic standards and rule of law prevail and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine is preserved. We welcome the decision to hold the second round of the Presidential elections on 26 December. We very much hope that their results will bring the current political uncertainty to the end.

One year has passed since our last meeting in Maastricht. Now it is the time to assess our achievements over the year and look into the future.

Implementation of the OSCE commitments, decisions and action plans was one of the priorities of the Bulgarian Chairmanship. We are pleased by the progress achieved throughout 2004, in particular in the field of the fight against intolerance and terrorism. We welcome and support the package of anti-terrorist decisions to be adopted later today. Their implementation by all participating states will represent concrete steps in our common efforts to combat this scourge. In some other areas we have to admit that only a limited if any progress was achieved. Regretfully this assessment relates to the settlement of unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area. Room for improvement is needed also in the economic-

environmental dimension, where a realistic guideline for the implementation of the key parts of the Strategy adopted in Maastricht is crucial. Another issue of concern to us are the scales of contributions for the years 2005-2007. Despite the Chairmanship's efforts we have failed so far to reach an agreement on revised scales - a prerequisite for the continued smooth functioning of our Organisation. Inability of the participating states to reach consensus on such, for the future of this Organisation crucial issue, gives rise to a legitimate question on the scope of common objectives in general.

Mr. Chairman,

OSCE community continues to face a wide range of challenges that have to be further addressed. At the same time however, the OSCE like other international organisations, needs to take a close look at the priorities it should focus on, the role it should play and the tasks it should carry out. In order to maintain its political relevance and ability to act effectively, an OSCE transformation is necessary. We have to engage ourselves in a result-oriented debate and look ahead to the OSCE's place in a transforming Europe and world. The year 2005, in which the OSCE will celebrate important anniversaries, offers a unique opportunity in this regard. Therefore we very much welcome the decision on establishing a Panel of Eminent Persons which, followed by the High-Level OSCE Consultations, could provide a useful instrument for reviewing OSCE activities, lessons learned and define priorities for the years to come. It goes without saying that the incoming debate by no means should diminish the role of the OSCE in the human dimension, which is of key significance as it directly reflects the unique acquis of the OSCE.

The success of this Organisation will very much depend also on the willingness of its participating states to adhere to its values and to implement its commitments. Unfortunately we continue to witness that not all commitments have been honoured. We regret that five years after the signing of the Agreement on Adaptation, the adapted CFE Treaty has not entered into force, due to the fact that

political commitments taken in the context of the 1999 CFE Final Act have not been fulfilled in their entirety. Therefore we encourage the Russian Federation to meet its commitments in order to progress with the ratification process.

In view of the upcoming 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act where main focus is devoted to the respect of human rights, we consider that this idea is still very relevant especially with regard to the recent election processes in some Eastern European countries. We consider very important to support those democratic processes, which are aiming at conducting fair, democratic and transparent elections. Main aim for Slovakia as well as for the EU and other countries in the region is to have stable and prosperous neighbours.

We also support the process of further stabilisation of the situation in South-Eastern Europe as well as continuous steps of the relevant countries towards respect of human rights and development of democracy.

We believe, that the OSCE represents a unique forum for multilateral dialog. Only with joint efforts we can make our Organisation better.

Allow me to use this opportunity to thank our outgoing Secretary General for his active approach in addressing the needs of the Organisation and in particular those aimed at improving the OSCE performance. We find an early appointment of the new Secretary General of utmost importance in order to carry on the management reforms, successfully launched by ambassador Kubis.

Finally, Mr.Chairman,

Let me conclude by wishing you, as the incoming Chairman-in-Office, and your team a lot of success in your important role in 2005.

Thank you for your attention.