

ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
H.E. MR. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK
TO THE 17TH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE, ATHENS 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement of Minister Carl Bildt on behalf of the EU and I shall confine myself to sharing with you a few additional thoughts reflecting on our specific national perspective.

Primarily allow me to express our sincere gratitude to our host the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. George Papandreou, and to the Greek Chairmanship for its vision, determination and intensive work done during this (for the OSCE) exceptional year.

Five months ago on the Corfu Island we agreed that the discussion about future of European security was urgently needed and that it should be anchored in the OSCE. The Corfu Process is not there to rescue the OSCE, but the OSCE is here to ensure a comprehensive, transparent and open discussion about the future of European security.

Ten rounds of genuine discussions in Vienna this autumn ought to be crowned by adoption of a forward-looking declaration and decision, both of strategic and structural nature. They have to confirm the central role of the OSCE for a broad dialogue on European security and should serve as a platform for addressing all relevant proposals. We need to carry on the process with pragmatism and constructivism. If we miss the momentum now, we may risk paying a high price at the later stage. It is time to move forward! It is time to set up a political framework with tasking for the next year dialogue, that is to define *what, when, with whom and how* the Corfu Process should continue. What do we suggest in this regard?

1. To launch a structured discussion within the Corfu Process aiming at restoring mutual confidence. Headlines for this dialogue should be – honesty, patience, ability to listen to each others concerns and readiness to gradually build blocs of trust,
2. To take on board all proposals addressing real threats to our common security,
3. To recommit ourselves to the OSCE values, standards and principles and their full fledged implementation reflecting their cross-dimensional nature,
4. To adapt an OSCE tool-box and OSCE structures to the new international environment and the new security landscape in order to enable it to address better all aspects of the conflict cycle and protracted conflicts. They should be at the heart of the Corfu dialogue. War in Georgia must not be replicated in the OSCE area again,
5. To further improve the concept of OSCE Field Operations, being flexible in downsizing or closing missions with significant progress, for instance in Croatia, and support those where its stronger involvement is still needed, like in Kosovo or Bosnia and Herzegovina,
6. To make better use of OSCE comparative advantages in addressing new security threats,

7. To respond to cross dimensional challenges, including energy security, in and outside the OSCE area, including in Afghanistan.

Let me elaborate on the last one.

It is obvious that security and reliability of energy supplies has a direct impact on overall security in Europe, it is therefore considered an integral part of the Corfu Process. The conference “*Strengthening Energy Security in the OSCE Area*”, held in Bratislava last July confirmed the will and demand of participating States to address this issue within the OSCE. Now, few months later I am delighted to observe an increasing support for this topic. I would therefore suggest explore how we could use existing OSCE mechanisms in restoring confidence and predictability of energy supplies. We are ready to discuss norms of behavior in this area. A point for departure for this task could be the substantive Ministerial Council decision on energy security. I believe that ongoing negotiations on this document strongly supported by my Government will lead to a successful outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

Corfu Process is a historical opportunity to launch a genuine dialogue on security issues both for the transatlantic region as well as for the organization itself. A high level event in 2010 could give significant boost to it if filled with real substance. Let me wish the incoming Kazakh Chairmanship every success in moving this process forward and let me assure you that Slovakia is prepared to continue working with you by putting every effort needed to make the OSCE a more effective security organization.

Thank you for your attention.