

A D D R E S S

ENGLISH only

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

AT THE 14TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

(Brussels, 4 - 5 December 2006)

Dear Mr. Chairman,
Colleagues,
Secretary General,
President of the OSCE PA,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me join others in thanking the Belgian Chairmanship for its excellent work in 2006, the effective preparations of the Ministerial Council and for its hospitality afforded us here in Brussels. In particular I would like to thank the Chairman-in-Office, Minister Karl de Gucht, for his active approach to the demanding Chairmanship's functions.

It is a good feeling to be back if only for one or two days, having spent so many years in the OSCE, six of them as a Secretary General.

First of all, I am pleased to see that the reform process launched last year has brought results. The adoption of the Rules of Procedure is one of the concrete accomplishments. I also applaud the Chairmanship for putting the structure of three committees in a form of Working Groups experimentally in place already this year. Slovakia gladly chaired one of them, the Working Group on Non-Military Aspects of Security.

Last year in Ljubljana we tasked the ODIHR with a specific job. And we can be satisfied with comprehensiveness and detail of the presented report. It is up to us to transform its recommendations into practice, while preserving the autonomy of our institutions.

A personal comment – I see that also in the OSCE some things are eternal, like the dispute between the ODIHR and OSCE PA on election observation related issues and I wonder why.

The reform process of any organisation might never end. However, the reform is not the aim but a tool. Our attention should remain on the substance – to implement commitments we adopted and to protect common values we share. And perhaps to focus and streamline our work better, than is the current practice. Mission creep is not only a military terminology.

One of the main challenges within the OSCE is revitalization of the security dialogue. That is why I, i. a., appreciate the Military Doctrine Seminar. Another important event of this year – the Third Review Conference to the CFE Treaty – unfortunately failed to bring a desirable progress, especially in efforts aimed at fulfilment of the Istanbul commitments. We regret that seven years after signing the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty it still has not yet entered into force. While welcoming the progress achieved in Georgia, we expect advancement also in Moldova, so that we can proceed to the ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty.

Slovakia came with a proposal to task the Permanent Council to prepare an OSCE Review on Security Sector Governance. The OSCE is an organization conducting security sector related activities that are complementary to the work of the UN on daily basis. Over the years it has accumulated enormous experience that might be relevant to other regions. Despite this fact, the OSCE has not yet summarized the work done in the security sector. I am convinced such an document would excellently reflect the organization's holistic approach to security. We are particularly grateful to the Belgian Chairmanship for its strong support. We will continue to work on this document for SSG next year.

For your information, Slovakia has made the topic of Security Sector Reform our thematic priority during our membership in the Security Council in 2006 – 2007. We have organised several roundtables, the next one with regional organisation later this week in New York hopefully with OSCE/CPC presence. We intend to convene a special meeting of the UN SC on the topic during our presidency of the UN SC next February.

Mr. Chairman,

Field Missions should remain a key OSCE instrument for co-operation with host countries in assisting them to implement OSCE commitments in all dimensions. At the same time, the OSCE should be ready to downsize or close missions in countries when the time is ripe, like in Croatia hopefully next year, and support those where its stronger involvement is needed, like in the Caucasus or Central Asia, based perhaps on focused and long-term country strategy approach when appropriate. A particular case is the future role of the OSCE in Kosovo. It should be considerably increased next year, ideally as a result of joint planning with notably the UN, EU and NATO.

I would like to commend efforts of the Chairman in Office concerning the frozen conflicts. The OSCE donor conference for Georgia-South Ossetia is an example to be mentioned. There is also positive news from the parties and the co-chairs of the Minsk-Group regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We encourage both sides to continue the dialogue. Regrettably, the overall atmosphere and developments in conflict areas are in general not encouraging. We must again question the effectiveness of the existing OSCE mechanisms and approaches. Perhaps we should further strengthen the role and engagements of the EU.

I strongly believe in active involvement of all OSCE participating States in the daily work of the organization, in the benefits of shared ownership. All OSCE participating States should be given opportunities and responsibilities also in leading positions. While engaging, for example, in and with the Central Asian countries, we shall also recognise the value of contribution the Central Asia states are bringing to the work of the OSCE. Therefore we continue to support Kazakhstan in its bid for the OSCE Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me wish the incoming Spanish Chairmanship every success in this challenging role and pledge our support and co-operation.

Thank you.