



STATEMENT

Deputy Prime Minister | Minister of Foreign & European Affairs of the Slovak Republic

H.E. **Miroslav LAJČÁK**

OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting

Serbia 2015 OSCE Chairmanship

December 3, 2015 | Thursday

Serbia | Belgrade

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen...

Slovakia fully subscribes to the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few points in my national capacity...

I join my predecessors in thanking the Serbian Chairmanship for the hospitality and excellent preparation of the Council. I highly praise the leadership of our colleague Ivica Dačić and his team for steering our Organization throughout this year...

We've gathered here after 12 months of intensive negotiations and deliberations. Unfortunately, I am compelled to say that satisfaction or complacency is out of place...

Our council is taking place in a year when we commemorate 40 years since the adoption of the Helsinki final act and 70 years since the end of the World War Two.

Unfortunately, even these important and symbolic anniversaries did not help us to overcome our differences. We were unable to find the political will to do so. And I am afraid we did not even try...

In relation to the Ukraine crisis I want to commend the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and its key role in easing of tensions and re-building of trust. I also want to underline the importance of safe and free access to all parts of Ukraine. It is a prerequisite for proper fulfilling of its mandate and tasks under the Minsk

Agreements. And the situation remains worrying. The society was torn apart, people killed, injured, displaced. It is our moral duty to step up all our efforts to put an end to the violence...

The current crisis is just a tip of the iceberg of deeper divisions. 40 years ago we believed that Europe was liberating itself from the legacy of its violent past. And that the Helsinki Final Act would usher in a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe. The choice between peace and military escalation was made...and it was a right choice

The OSCE is not a hard security provider. But it can create suitable environment for those involved in a dispute and we expect them to get engaged. Legacy of divergent security perceptions must be answered through sincere and fact-based discussions. They are always better than escalation of tensions by unilateral action. Here I would strongly suggest listening more attentively to each other's concerns...as a good first step

New threats have emerged in the most brutal form. I am referring to ALL terrorist attacks that our continent has witnessed throughout the year. Most recently in Paris or by downing of the Russian civilian jet earlier. Let's not forget lost lives and families mourning those who perished...

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Current crisis has shown us weaknesses of existing confidence and security building measures. Slovakia welcomes all activities which will further strengthen them. And we see the upcoming reissuing of the Vienna document in 2016 as a unique occasion we must not miss...

The OSCE's unquestionable potential must be fully used. Just a few years ago, the OSCE was looking for its *raison d'être*. The Corfu process literally struggled to identify a new agenda. But since the Ukraine crisis, the OSCE proved itself to be just a perfect organization to deal with such type of crises...

Good Security Sector Governance and Reform could be one of the prerequisites for a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community. The one without discrimination and with full respect for human rights, the rule of law and fundamental principles of good governance. And such approach is also crucial for the prevention of conflicts and their re-occurrence...

Some issues related to well-being of our citizens cannot be omitted either. We particularly support a strong emphasis on energy security and the protection of energy networks...

Slovakia strongly supports the role of the OSCE and its institutions. Let me praise the work of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights under the leadership of its director. But also the invisible but so important quiet diplomacy of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. And the vocal and prompt reactions by the Representative on Freedom of the Media. Our three OSCE institutions continue to act on behalf of all of us while strictly observing their autonomous mandate...

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Germany is taking over the steering wheel of our Organization in these troubled times. I remain confident that all the strengths of the OSCE will be fully used. To the benefit of both the international security community and the people living in the OSCE area...

Slovakia will assume the EU Council Presidency in the 2nd half of 2016 overlapping with the German OSCE Chairmanship. I am looking forward to our cooperation. And I hope for us to be able to multiply our joint efforts also within the broader European context...

Thank you, Mr Chairman.