



**Statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the
International Organizations in Vienna
Ambassador Juraj Macháč
at the 709th meeting of the Permanent Council on 17 April 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to appreciate the interest of the OSCE Representative of Freedom of the Media as well as that of some participating states in the new Media Act that was approved by the Slovak Parliament last Wednesday. The Act, once signed by the President, will enter into force on July 1, 2008. Slovakia needed the new Act on Periodic Press and News Agencies as the current one has been in force since 1966, already several times amended. This initiative has been welcomed by several Slovak professional organizations.

We highly appreciate the consultations and following recommendations provided by the OSCE Representative of Freedom of the Media. The Slovak Government and Parliament considered them very seriously and the concrete improvements have been introduced to the text.

Adopted changes reflect many recommendations of the OSCE Representative of Freedom of the Media, including the major recommendation that members of the executive should not have the power to impose sanctions on media outlets. This possibility was withdrawn, including restriction on content. The new act increases responsibility of publishers and owners of other media for published information and gives the possibility to the public to request publication of a response and correction without administrative delays. At the same time it offers mechanisms protecting interests of the media. The Right to Reply is a regular mechanism included in media laws of other OSCE participating States. The Act can be amended, if its implementation reveals problems for freedom of the media in practice.

More detailed explanation on the Slovak position will be distributed to the all OSCE participating States in due time.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia is a democratic country fully respecting freedom of expression and honours independence of the media. The Slovak Media Act is in compliance with all international legal obligations Slovakia is committed to. And there should be no concern of its misuse. To support this, allow me to draw your attention to the latest report of the well established NGO *Reporters without borders* where Slovakia gained the 3rd place among 169 countries in the index measuring the level of press freedom.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I request this statement is attached to the Journal of the Day.