



**Statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic
to the International Organizations in Vienna
Ambassador Juraj Macháč
at the 712th meeting of the Permanent Council on 8 May 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

As H.E. Ján Kubiš, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, officially handed over the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE) to the Swedish Chairman yesterday I would like to inform you on the achievements of the Slovak Chairmanship shortly as the detailed activity report has already been distributed.

The Slovak Chairmanship was based on the protection and promotion of the core values of the organization which resulted in the three main priorities:

- Promoting a citizens' Europe
- Transparent and Efficient CoE
- Respect for and Promotion of Core Values: human rights, democracy and rule of law.

There were many steps we made within the framework of our first priority, many of them not promoted internationally, as a public call for analysis of the civil society on the co-operation of nongovernmental sector with government and international organizations. In this framework, among the others, we organized two international conferences in Slovakia; the first governmental one focused on the topic of public ethics, and the second one organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exclusively dedicated to the dialogue of the Slovak nongovernmental organizations with their international partners.

Within the second priority "Transparent and Efficient CoE", in order to enhance co-operation and co-ordination between the main international actors, Minister Kubiš, in his capacity as the Chairman of the CoE, not only invited the EU to hold next Quadripartite meeting, but also addressed the OSCE and the UN. In the context of enhancing the co-

operation between the CoE and the OSCE Minister Kubiš addressed the Permanent Council on 28 February 2008.

Thematically, the Slovak Chairmanship covered various issues, including the four areas of co-operation between the CoE and the OSCE. For example, the 10th anniversaries of the entry into force of the two important CoE's legal instruments, namely the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as well as the Roma issues, were marked by the international conferences we organized in co-operation with the CoE as well as other important partners as the Presidency of the EU and the OSCE Chairmanship.

In his capacity as the Chairman of the CoE, Minister Kubiš visited a number of the member states of the CoE and issued several statements on various topical questions. We tried to use a balanced approach in addressing those issues with the aim of being a defender of CoE values and interests of Europeans.

For this and other good reasons, a commitment to continue its efforts and daily sheer hard work instead of routine one might fall in as the days of the greatest importance went by is what Slovakia has assessed as its future direction. That is also why we will particularly support and promote dialogue and interaction with representatives of the government and civil society of Belarus. Aspiring for membership at the UN Human Rights Council, The Slovak Republic is also ready to provide its assistance and support in preparing and adopting the biennial resolution on the cooperation between the UN and the CoE.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, please, on behalf of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, to use this opportunity to thank you for good co-operation, and once again express our support to the Swedish Chairmanship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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