

STATEMENT
OF H.E. Peter L I Z Á K,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO
OSCE
AT THE 15TH OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
(Madrid, 29 - 30 November 2007)

Dear Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first bring you regards from my minister, former OSCE Secretary General, Ján Kubiš, who planned to be with us these two days but circumstances did not allow him to come.

Let me join others and express our sincere gratitude to Spain and Minister Moratinos for leadership throughout the year, for the intensive work culminating now in Madrid as well as for the traditional Spanish hospitality that we all are enjoying here in Madrid.

I would like first attract your attention not to the OSCE but to one of our partner organisation, namely Council of Europe. On November 12, 2007, the Slovak Republic took over Chairmanship of its Committee of Ministers. Holding this responsible post, Slovakia will support the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Council of Europe's Third Summit in 2005, as well as the core values of the Organization: human rights, rule of law and democracy. Among priorities of our Chairmanship is also strengthening of cooperation and coordination of the Council of Europe with its international partners. I must not stress that contact with the OSCE stands in the very focus of our endeavours.

As you might know, cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE is based on common declaration from 2005 which identifies four areas of co-operation: fight against terrorism, protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities, combating trafficking in human beings, promoting tolerance and non discrimination. Let me at this moment stress the sphere of combating trafficking in human beings, as the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings shall enter into force on the 1st of February 2008.

Having in mind the challenging situation of Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Europe, I would like to call for more joint work of the Council of Europe and the OSCE also in this area.

Everybody agrees that free and fair elections form one of the cornerstones of democracy. Therefore we support work and standing of the ODIHR as an autonomous OSCE institution and urge all OSCE participating states to continue cooperation with ODIHR in implementing its mandate according to the OSCE commitments and the established practice.

I would like to use this opportunity and encourage the OSCE Participating States to deploy as many as necessary long- and short-term observers for the forthcoming elections in Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan and Georgia, including experts for monitoring and evaluating the media situation.

With regard to the OSCE itself, we urge that it focuses more on its core agenda – on conflict prevention, post-conflict stabilization and on providing assistance to the participating states in strengthening democracy, rule of law and good governance. This must be based on cooperation of all OSCE participating states as equal partners.

In the several past years we were not able to agree on a Ministerial declaration. We should not get used to such situation. As you know this issue is closely connected with the CFE Treaty. Slovakia remains fully committed to the Treaty and is, under certain circumstances, ready to renew ratification process of the Adapted CFE Treaty. Losing the CFE, we would lose a key basis that our confidence in politico-military area is built on.

We welcome the activities aimed at adoption of the Convention on OSCE Legal Personality under the able Dutch leadership. I also applaud the Chairmanship's devotion to the structure of the three committees work. Slovakia chaired the Security Committee and tried to contribute to this objective, i.a. by promoting work on the OSCE Basic Norms and Principles in the Field of the Security Sector Governance. The main aim of this initiative is to adopt an overview, which would reflect an impressive body of knowledge, that this organization gained over the years of its existence, i.a. through the extensive practical involvement in this area. Slovakia introduced this topic also to the UN being last two years a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. We organized numerous workshops, the last one this month in South Africa, contributed to developing concept papers and the UN Security Council Presidential Statement during our Presidency of the Security Council in February 2007 and soon we expect a special report of UN Secretary General on Security Sector Reform within the UN system. Adoption of an OSCE document in this field would be a good example of conceptual synergy between the UN and the OSCE as a regional organization.

We welcome progressing negotiation on the future Chairmanships and support consensual "package solution" which would reflect also our long-term support for the candidature of Kazakhstan.

We are all aware of limited resources that this organization possesses. For that reason, the OSCE should avoid excessive administrative costs, re-focus its financing according to its priorities and downsize or even terminate some activities in countries, where clear progress has been achieved, like in Croatia. At the same time we support enlarging scope of programs and projects in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Caucasus or in the South East Europe, including Kosovo (Serbia).

Let me finish supporting an idea which is flying around already for longer time. It seems, that time is ripe for serious thoughts about next OSCE summit. The incoming member of Troika should be invited to seriously analyze possible undertakings in this regard and report to the Permanent Council in the spring of the coming year.

In conclusion I wish every success to the incoming Finnish Chairmanship and chairing currently the Council of Europe's Council of Ministers Slovakia pledges our full cooperation.

Thank you, Chairman.