

**Statement by the Head of the Slovak Delegation Mr. Drahoslav Štefánek to
The OSCE Ministerial Meeting (Vilnius, 6 – 7 December, 2011)**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me express our gratitude to the Lithuanian Chairmanship for excellent organization of this meeting as well for outstanding professionalism and leadership in advancing OSCE's work throughout 2011. Last year Summit in Astana marked the beginning of the rebirth of OSCE's key purpose - that is to promote building of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, rooted in our shared values and principles. Slovakia is fully committed to the comprehensive concept of security and supports all efforts aimed at enhancement of the OSCE's effectiveness in addressing evolving security threats and challenges. Effective multilateralism and strengthening of sense of common purpose has no alternative if we want to find effective respond to our security needs in the OSCE area and in its neighborhood.

We believe that here in Vilnius we should be able to articulate baseline for the future development of our Organization and operationalize mandate provided by the Summit in order to enhance OSCE's role as one of the key security providers. We expect to adopt a balance set of decisions, which would strengthen our Organization in all three dimensions. The "TNT package" together with the decision on the future engagement of the OSCE with Afghanistan could represent perfect examples of growing consensus on the niche the OSCE should fill in to bring added value. We sincerely hope that we could generate consensus on strengthening core functions of the OSCE, including with respect to the conflict cycle. We should arm the OSCE with the tools, which allow for timely and effective respond to emerging conflicts. We must also react to the developments in Southern Mediterranean and Middle East and seek agreement on improved cooperation with our Partners. OSCE should continue to be a valuable resource of inspiration and expertise for democratization processes in these countries. The efforts to provide adequate response to challenges relating to the energy security should be carried out further with the same intensity and commitment. With the aim to strengthen transparency and predictability, the work on the politico-military agenda should not be stopped, including on further modernization of the Vienna and other relevant

documents and on the future of the conventional arms control regime in Europe. In light of negative trends related to the implementation of the human dimension commitments we need to seek ways on how to further reinforce human dimension *acquis* and respond to the new challenges in this field, including with regard to digital media and safety of journalists.

Mr. Chairman,

Regardless of some positive developments since last year Summit in Kazakhstan we are concerned about the lack of visible advancement regarding the key issues that determine the European and Euro-Asian security landscape. The gap on the meaning of key OSCE norms such as democracy and human rights has not been narrowed. OSCE's co-operative security policy continues to be exposed to a unilateral thinking. The very existence of the OSCE's politico-military dimension is threatened by the impending collapse of the CFE Treaty. The economic and environmental dimension and its potential for confidence and security building remain on the margins of our attention.

We welcome recent good news regarding the restart of the 5+2 talks and genuinely hope that they will soon bring positive results. However, there is an urgent need to intensify efforts in seeking ways for political solution of all protracted conflicts, including with respect to the reinstatement of meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia, as they continue to remain a major obstacle in realization of the Astana vision and undermine efforts aimed at re-building trust and confidence.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to recall that Slovakia with other 13 participating states requested triggering of Moscow Mechanism 1991. We are concerned by the seriousness, duration and scale of systematic violations of human rights in Belarus. Disregard of rights of individual citizens, harassment of opposition leaders and journalists as well as repressions against civil sector in Belarus and other participating States cannot be ignored and should remain high on our agenda. Mr. Chairman, we should never be tempted, to accept false choice between progress and human rights on one side and stability on the other. The main source of instability is not legitimate demand for more human rights, fundamental freedoms, stronger democratic institutions and good governance. Just the opposite, it is the denial of the full-fledged democracy and suppression of people's rights and freedoms that represent the real threat to security.

A lot has been achieved since the Astana Summit. However, a great deal of work on shaping the future role of the OSCE to better utilize its potential lies ahead of us. We must redouble our efforts and demonstrate necessary political will to address root-causes of the underlining difficulties that continue to divide us. Hiding behind the wall of sovereignty and consensus and at the same time playing unconstructive political games has no perspective and could not serve as a base for functioning security community. Let us make sure that the OSCE keeps pace with the speed of new security developments, including as regards taking common action even with respect to the most difficult and dividing issues. We honestly hope that here in Vilnius we can still reach agreement on all key decisions and declarations and send reinforced signal towards realization of the Astana vision.

Let me stress that the time has come to recognize success achieved by the OSCE Office in Zagreb in implementing its mandate. We need to adopt practical decision to recognize the achievements and contribution of the Office and allow for continuation of some activities, such as monitoring of war crime tribunals, by local NGO's supported by the OSCE. We hope that pragmatic approach driven by sincere wish to achieve a concrete result and sent positive message, including to all who currently host or might host an OSCE's field presence in the future, should prevail.

In conclusion, I would like to voice our support to the package application for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2014 and 2015 put forward by Switzerland and Serbia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.