

S T A T E M E N T

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

H.E. Miroslav Lajčák

OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

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

Thanks | Let me **thank the Swiss Chairmanship** for its **hospitality** and excellent **preparation** of the Ministerial Council. We **praise the leadership of President Burkhalter and his team**. Under **your guidance** the **Organization** has **risen to the challenges** of European security and **demonstrated its relevance**.

What we face | We gather here in Basel at the **crossroads between security and instability; between cooperation and new dividing lines**. Our **efforts** should be thus **aimed at deescalating tensions and bridging divisions**.

Things have changed | **Annexation of the territory of neighboring state and violations of key principles such as sovereignty and territorial integrity fundamentally undermine our mutual trust**. The **belief** that our shared space rests on **common adherence to agreed principles** has been **heavily shattered**. The **developments in Ukraine** force us to **rethink how to protect our security, prosperity and values**.

The only way | The **conflict** in and around **Ukraine** has **no military solution**. The **only way towards peace** is to **promote ceasefire and give a chance to the Minsk Accord** to deliver.

Commitments | In that regard, we **support the key role of the OSCE and its Chairmanship**.

Support OSCE | The **OSCE in Ukraine** has **shown its ability to respond to the crisis by using its toolbox**. We **support the deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine** however **it should have safe and free access to fulfill their mandate and tasks in all parts of Ukraine**.

All sides continue to pledge that they want to see Ukraine return to peace. Yet, we **need more**: we need **concrete action confirming the declared commitment to a political solution**.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Unfortunately, the **crisis in Ukraine proves that the vision of a stable Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community has not become a reality**.

Open issues | We need to **seek common response to erosion of the conventional arms control in Europe, decreasing military transparency or shortcomings in observance of the OSCE principles**. In such a way only, we could **replace the culture of confrontation with the one of cooperation and joint action**.

Reality first | We need to **discuss issues openly** and be **ready to make concessions**.

Good idea | In this regard, we **welcome the proposal** of the **Chairman-in-Office** to **create a Panel of Eminent Persons** as a 'booster' for our **reform endeavor**.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

SSR | **Slovakia strongly supports** the efforts of the **Swiss** and also the **incoming Serbian Chairmanships** in the **Security Sector Reform and Governance**.

Slovakia as the **Chair** of the **recently established Group of Friends of SSR/G** is convinced that an **effective security sector** with **full respect** for **human rights** and the **rule of law** is a **cornerstone** of **peace**, and **security**. Allow me to inform you that Slovakia itself and also on behalf of particular participating States will make a statement on SSR/G at the end of the Ministerial Council.

Sound economy = stability | **No security** is **granted without economic stability, environmental and energy security**. Slovakia, chairing the **Economic & Environmental Committee**, has been **promoting topics** as **natural disasters, good governance, corruption, environmental degradation** or **energy disruptions**.

Energy security | However I would like to see more **regional cooperation, expert exchange, and joint training activities** in order to better **protect energy networks**.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Let's discuss openly | **Current events demonstrate** how **important** it is to **continue discussing our differences** and seek **common compromises**.

Let's do our utmost | I hope that our **meeting** will provide a **strong impetus** in **this direction**. It is **our responsibility** to **fulfill expectations** of **our citizens**. We **need to do EVERYTHING possible** to **avoid further confrontation** in the **OSCE area** and to **return back to the path** of **dialogue** and **joint PEACEFUL action**.

With this vision, let me wish the incoming SRB Chairmanship all the best. Thank you Mr. Chairman.