



**YEARBOOK  
OF SLOVAKIA'S  
FOREIGN POLICY  
2009**

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**RESEARCH CENTER  
OF THE SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION**

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# EDITORIAL

If the foreign policy of any state is to be successful it must have its own form, its own language and be part of public – institutionally framed – discourse. There is, however, no such ‘institutional umbrella’ covering all those responsible for the formulation and implementation of our foreign policy as well as those in Slovakia who are not indifferent to it. Moreover, there is often little will to open such an umbrella ‘over’ our foreign policy. Even the political parties do not pay much attention to foreign policy and thus issues of foreign policy are only occasionally part of the general public discourse. It is, however, the open, coherent and constant exchange of views, opinions, know-how, arguments from experience and/or long-term plans among the groups mentioned that play a crucial role in planning foreign policy. All of these reasons keep convincing us that we need to regularly evaluate where Slovak foreign policy currently is, which important events occurred in the preceding year and what challenges lie ahead of Slovakia in the near future.

The Yearbook is in this regard a unique forum primarily focused on Slovakia’s foreign policy. The book provides space for those who make decisions and practically implement them as well as to those who care a lot about the future of foreign policy, such as researchers active in academic circles, think-tanks or non-governmental organizations.

The Yearbook is a unique project entering another decade of its existence. It has been contributing for eleven years – and successfully, we are convinced – to the development of a tradition of regular evaluation and analysis of Slovak foreign policy and supporting the cultivation of foreign policy thinking in Slovakia. The publication represents an important, yet at the same time, solitary, and indeed limited, printed book resource keeping record of the development of Slovakia’s foreign policy and the discussion on its further orientation.

The Yearbook assesses 2009 as a year rich in events. In 2009, Slovakia celebrated the fifth anniversary of her EU and NATO membership as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. At the same time it was the very first year of entering the Euro Zone. 2009 will also be remembered as a year of important institutional changes within the EU as well as in its practical operation; a year in which we once again elected our representatives to the European Parliament or one in which the Union got its new President and Foreign Minister. Implementation of the Eastern Partnership program was commenced and the integration project in the Balkans continued. In 2009 discussion on NATO's new *Strategic Concept* started, while that on Afghanistan still continued. Within the OSCE Slovakia was very actively participating in the organization's revitalization. It was also a year when debate on mitigation of the impacts of the economic and energy crisis and their associated challenges predominated. A year, then, of another stage in the improvement of the institutional framework of Slovak foreign policy.

In the context of all of these events and their impacts on our foreign policy, the second decade of the Yearbook opens with an assessment of our line of action and a presentation of our objectives and interests in the international environment, continues with an analysis of the realization of the priority areas of our foreign policy and is concluded with an assessment of the efficacy of the instruments required for its implementation. The analytical assessment is again supplemented by an evaluation/presentation of the Foreign Ministry's representatives. The Yearbook offers all this to the somewhat limited degree characteristic of such publications.

The Yearbook opens for the third time with a survey presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. His text evaluates and presents the problems and aspects of Slovakia's foreign policy that are analyzed in depth by other authors in the Yearbook. Thus the reader is given a unique opportunity to examine the 'same issue' from different angles in one publication.

The expert section of the Yearbook starts with a text analyzing Slovakia's performance in an international environment. The first contribution, which by tradition is that of Vladimír Bilčík of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SPFA), covers the crucial events of Slovakia's performance in the EU – the issue of representation and operation of the key EU institutions as well as a reflection on the first five years of Slovakia's EU membership. It analyzes the positions and tasks of the Slovak Republic before and during the European Parliament elections, and in the creation of the European Commission as well as those connected with the process of adoption of the *Treaty of Lisbon*. It also offers a brief summary of the key issues important for Slovakia's successful performance within the EU in the upcoming period. The security aspects of our foreign policy are assessed by Matúš Korba from the Center for Security Studies. In his text he analyzes the growing disproportion between the political ambitions of Slovakia within NATO and our real military capabilities that is connected with the internal crisis of the reform process within the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, which was even further exacerbated in 2009. The OSCE revitalization, the future of the European security debate and Slovakia's role in it are all evaluated by Marcel Peško, the Permanent Representative and Head of the Permanent Mission to International Organizations in Vienna. The section on Slovakia's performance in an

international environment is concluded by a contribution by Milan Lapin, a prominent Slovak climatologist. In his article attention is mostly paid to the assessment of knowledge and activities that were carried out in 2009 and relate to climate changes and variability, including the Fifth National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change.

The second part of the book, devoted to the priorities of our foreign policy, opens with a text by the Director-General for Economic Cooperation and ODA at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic Radomír Boháč. In his analysis, he focuses on the fulfillment of a re-established priority of our foreign policy – the economic dimension of Slovak diplomacy – in the context of the global financial and economic crisis and the challenges stemming from it. Urban Rusnák, Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic's project on the External Energy Security of the Slovak Republic, reflects on the gas crisis of January 2009 as well as measures taken in the field of Slovak legislation and infrastructure on the level of national government as well as on the EU level. The analysis of Slovakia's Central European activities was, as always, written by Tomáš Strážay, an RC SPFA analyst, who reassesses the cooperation principles and mechanisms aimed at rendering cooperation more intensive and more efficient. He also identifies and evaluates the most important challenges faced by the V4 presidency taken up by Slovakia. The key aspects of the Eastern Partnership program, its bilateral and multilateral components, Slovakia's involvement in it as well as our bilateral activities in relation to the Eastern Partnership states are presented by Juraj Marušiak, a researcher at the Institute of Political Science of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

The final expert section devoted to instruments of foreign policy opens with a contribution by Ján Mihálik from Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (PDCS) and Peter Brezáni from the RC SFPFA, who concentrate their attention on the state of one of the most important bilateral instruments in Slovak foreign policy – development cooperation. The authors offer their perspective on practical fulfillment of objectives set within the official ODA documents, attempt to provide a summary of activities relating to Slovak development cooperation in 2009 as well as a set of recommendations intended to increase the quality and efficiency of Slovak ODA. The expert section concludes with a text by Ondrej Gažovič from the Institute of European Studies and International Relations of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at Comenius University in Bratislava, who evaluates the year 2009 as a year that had brought several factors contributing to clarification of this part of the foreign policy concept against the background of conditions in the Slovak Republic as well as to its institutionalization and practical implementation.

The expert chapters are traditionally supplemented by annexes such as a chronology of important foreign policy events, a list of international treaties, information on the structure and representatives of state bodies operating in foreign policy, a list of diplomatic missions and representatives of the Slovak Republic abroad, a list of diplomatic corps in the Slovak Republic, information on military missions abroad etc.

We firmly believe that the first issue of the Yearbook in the second decade of its existence will once again find a readership and serve all those who are interested

in the past, present and future of Slovakia and her foreign policy. In conclusion, we would kindly like to express our gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic for its cooperation on this project and its support as well as for the fact that thanks to this support we are able to continue building on this much needed tradition.

Peter Brezáni

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Brezáni', with a stylized flourish at the end.



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# SLOVAK FOREIGN POLICY IN 2009 THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER

MIROSLAV LAJČÁK

The year 2009 could be, without much exaggeration, labeled a year of extraordinary challenges and important issues. On January 1, 2009 Slovakia joined the Euro Zone, but since immediately afterwards we faced an unprecedented energy crisis, there was hardly any time left to celebrate this economically and politically significant step.

Three organizations we regard as exceptionally important decided to substantially change their way of operating or to prepare such changes. Although it was not easy, the European Union finally completed the process of ratification of the *Treaty of Lisbon* successfully. The North Atlantic Alliance came to terms regarding the elaboration of a new Strategic Concept. Discussion on the future of European security within the framework of the Corfu Process was also launched by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

All three large-scale processes were going on against the background of an issue that last year was possibly the most important challenge of all – the global financial and economic crisis. It forced us to partly reassess our original priorities for 2009. All available capabilities including those of the Slovak Foreign Service were directed at mitigating the impact of the crisis and at searching for efficient solutions. As the global financial and economic crisis will probably redraw not only the economic, but also the world's map of political influence and power, besides operative tasks we also needed to raise several strategic and conceptual issues.

Besides the issues and challenges just mentioned some other topics could also be listed that directly influenced the interests of the Slovak Republic. The crises of the previous year were changing our view of the Central European region as well as of Europe's position in the world. The Eastern Partnership project was commenced, discussion on the Danube strategy was intensified, NATO was further enlarged and some 'old new' and completely new EU institutions were created. As well as that the

world and Slovakia were at the same time discussing the impacts of climate change, the Iranian nuclear program and the stabilization of Afghanistan.

Last but not least, the general improvement in the international atmosphere that followed when the new American administration came into office and the emphasis that it puts on rendering the tools of multilateralism more efficient should not be disregarded.

## ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

If ever historians come to assess last year, the global financial and economic crisis will certainly take one of the top positions, as in 2009 it influenced events over a wide range of activities and had an impact on the area of foreign policy as well.

To counteract the negative impact of the crisis we preferentially paid attention to making use of the possibilities offered through a common course of action by Union member states. Unemployment, deepening social polarization and the drop in exports became the most serious issues. Within the framework of anti-crisis activities our government had to come to terms with the delayed and insufficiently elaborated response of the EU to the global economic crisis.

The crisis in global terms led to reassessment of foreign policy priorities and this reassessment also concerned the Slovak Foreign Service. Slovakia adapted her

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*The crisis in global terms led to reassessment of foreign policy priorities and it also concerned the Slovak Foreign Service. Slovakia adapted her foreign policy activities to her new key priority – the economic dimension of the Foreign Service.*

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foreign policy activities to her new key priority – the economic dimension of the Foreign Service. In cooperation with the other relevant players of domestic economic life efforts were made to safeguard the economic security of the country, export opportunities were supported, the inflow of foreign investments was stimulated and steps taken by Slovakia were coordinated with the joint international actions. The fact that membership in the United Nations Economic and Social Com-

mission (ECOSOC) for 2010-2012 was achieved at this very period in time means both a challenge and a commitment.

We must not forget that the global crisis brought more question than answers. Despite certain positive signals present in late 2009 it was not possible to refer to the crisis in the past tense. Although it is known that there will certainly be some rewriting, the extent of its consequences on plotting the new power and political vectors in the world cannot at present be precisely estimated. Also, it is not possible to precisely establish the proportion between the negative impact of the crisis on the global efforts to increase prosperity and achieve sustainable development on the one hand and its positive contribution to deepening international dialogue and cooperation aimed at finding solutions to the crisis on the other one. In other words, the question as to

whether the destructive impact of the crisis will prevail over its stabilizing effects or vice versa remains unanswered.

What we know for sure is that in the next stage we need to be prepared for new challenges and new realities arising from the crisis. Taking our possibilities and capabilities into consideration it is extremely important that these efforts be closely coordinated with our partners and allies in the Union and the Alliance and that these institutions themselves be so transformed that they shall be able to respond to future challenges in an efficient and flexible fashion.

## ENERGY SECURITY

Another crisis that Slovakia and her European partners had to deal with in 2009 was the so-called gas crisis. Due to the crisis a wide range of questions regarding our energy security was raised. A diplomatic offensive aimed at its solution was not limited just to averting the immediate consequences of the situation, it also included measures to avoid repetition of similar crises in the future, in particular identification of alternative energy sources and routes.

During the gas crisis we were able to see with our own eyes the meaning of cooperation and solidarity as the key elements of European integration. We managed the crisis thanks to solidarity among the EU member states, especially solidarity shown by Germany, France and the Czech Republic. In the summer of 2009 an agreement on interconnection of gas pipelines between Slovakia and Hungary was concluded. A *Memorandum of Understanding* with Austria concerning the interconnection of crude oil and gas pipeline systems was signed. At the same time the gas crisis underlined the urgency of this challenge for the EU in general. The very essence of the challenge consists in the necessity to search for ways to safeguard the energy security of the EU in a more consistent, sophisticated and intensive way.

Within the EU we therefore actively participated in formulating the Union's energy policy and advocated a more efficient EU external energy policy based on security of supplies, transit and consumer. Our Foreign Service advocated intensification of the energy dialogue of the EU with partners aimed at creating a network of such nations around the EU that will negotiate on the basis of common rules and principles of predictability, transparency and stability.

Security of supplies of energy raw materials became a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platform of the Eastern Partnership, which is aimed at energy security. We also joined efforts to build up a network of interconnections of energy routes in Central and Eastern Europe. The Visegrad Group could become the core of such a network.

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## THE INTEREST IN AN EFFICIENT EU

Several topics need to be highlighted in the area of the Slovak Republic's relations with the European Union.

As of January 1, 2009 Slovakia, as the first V4 country, joined the Euro Zone and thus her internal integration in the EU structures was completed a year after her joining the Schengen area. The significance of this step was shown more or less immediately when just like the other countries Slovakia faced the turbulence of the world financial sector and the impact of the global financial crisis. Unlike the other countries Slovakia was, however, saved from the volatility of developments in the field of exchange rates that smaller countries usually face during economic and financial crises. The fact that the concerns about the introduction of the new currency, especially as regards price developments, did not come true and that the transition to the new currency was smooth and 'painless' could be perceived positively.

Another striking structural change was completion of the ratification of the *Treaty of Lisbon*. In relation to the adoption and ratification of the *Treaty* Slovakia was consistently presenting constructive approaches starting from negotiations on its wording, through its ratification as early as 2008, up to the responsible course of actions taken in the final stages of the *Treaty's* ratification.

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*The appointment of the Slovak nominee as the Vice-President of the European Commission Responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Administration within the new European Commission could in this context be understood as an appreciation of our positions and an acknowledgement of the Slovak Foreign Service.*

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Slovakia thus confirmed that it was one of the supporters of the *Treaty* that establishes a new foundation for European integration, creates room for more efficient functioning of the EU and opens the door to the Union's further enlargement that ranks among Slovakia's top priorities within the Union. It may be in the future before we fully appreciate the fact that it was the *Treaty of Lisbon*, just in this hugely significant

moment of international relations, affected as it was by the global crisis, that provided the European Union with a tool to strengthen its position on the international scene. The appointment of the Slovak nominee as the Vice-President of the European Commission Responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Administration within the new European Commission could in this context be understood as an appreciation of our positions and an acknowledgement of the Slovak Foreign Service. The fact that he was appointed at the very moment when the new interinstitutional relations would be crystallized under the *Treaty of Lisbon* underlines the significance and prestige of the appointment.

In accordance with the Union's priorities special attention was paid to its Eastern dimension within the framework of implementation of Slovak foreign policy. It was reflected in the intensification of dialogue with Russia, Belarus and Georgia. Slovakia actively participated in starting the European project of Eastern Partnership, which is a part of the European Neighborhood Policy and in the field of foreign policy represents one of Slovakia's priorities.

We supported Croatia's and Turkey's joining the Union and the integration of other nations of the Western Balkans has formed part of the priority activities of Slovak foreign policy. We actively contributed to solving the Cyprus issue, in which Slovakia acts as a mediator of negotiations in the so-called bi-communal dialogue between the Greek and the Turkish Cypriots. The dialogue's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary was last year commemorated by a conference held in Bratislava.

## SLOVAKIA AND GLOBAL SECURITY

The Slovak Republic also in 2009 started from the premise that the fundamental security pillar of her foreign policy was active membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. Slovakia advocated continued enlargement of the Alliance, strengthening of transatlantic relations, strategic partnerships and cooperation of NATO with international organizations and regional groupings. Slovakia holds the view that these processes constitute the optimal way to strengthen European and global security and stability. It is, however, necessary to emphasize that Slovakia is an active member with an ever-increasing share in the provision of security and this fact is proved by her growing involvement in military missions.

The concrete contributions of the Slovak Republic to the effective operation of the Alliance last year included reinforcement of the contingent of Slovak Armed Forces in Afghanistan and the adoption of a decision on its further reinforcement in the upcoming period. The total number of Slovak troops deployed within this operational priority of NATO was increased from 121 in late 2008 to 245 in the second half of 2009. During the October meeting of Alliance defense ministers held in Bratislava, Slovakia declared her preparedness to further increase the existing number of troops.

The Slovak Republic continued her activities in the military mission in Kosovo and there were 139 Slovak troops deployed there. KFOR is being gradually transformed into a level of so-called 'deterrent presence' and the Slovak contingent will gradually be decreased accordingly.

The year 2009 saw a decision on major reassessment of the North Atlantic Alliance's orientation and on revision of the Strategic Concept, now more than ten years old. Slovakia supported a decision adopted during the Strasbourg and Kehl summit of the Alliance on elaboration of a new Strategic Concept to respond to new challenges in a more effective fashion. As we for the very first time joined in defining the strategic orientation of the most successful politico-military alliance in the world as a fully-fledged member, the ongoing process is even more significant from our point of view.

The Slovak Republic's position was vindicated and appreciated by the fact that the North Atlantic Council meeting on the level of defense ministers was held in Bratislava on October 22-23, 2009 as well as by the bilateral talks of Anders F. Rasmussen, the NATO Secretary-General, and Admiral James G. Stavridis, the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, with Slovak officials.

As a principled advocate of the open door policy we welcomed further enlargement of the Alliance. We see Albania's and Croatia's joining the Alliance as well as the return

of France to the military structures of the Alliance as a natural and logical strengthening of its internal consolidation. By contrast, we were sorry to learn that due to disagreement over the name of the country NATO was not enlarged by the entry of Macedonia. We on the other hand advocated deepening the cooperation of the Alliance with Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. To cultivate mutual political dialogue we also advocated development of cooperation of the Alliance with Russia.

A complex issue of European security may not be comprehended as a whole without the role played by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Just like NATO the OSCE also posed several essential questions regarding its further operations. Although Slovakia sees all existing European institutions as functional components of a complex nexus of European security, it does not inhibit any discussion on rendering them more efficient. We therefore actively joined the discussions on the future of European security that resulted in the so-called Corfu Process. At the very start of the Corfu Process we succeeded in pushing through energy security as one of its priorities.

## ACTIVE IN THE REGION OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Besides strengthening the economic dimension, solving security issues and strengthening relations with our allies and the main players in international political and economic life, relations with our neighbors formed the most important complex of our foreign relations. As regards these relations there were mostly no problems and in some cases an above-standard or even strategic level of relations was achieved. Relations with neighbors were in the first place determined by affiliation to the European or Euro-Atlantic civilization, geopolitical and economic area. High intensity of contacts corresponded to the intersection of common interests.

Our relations with Hungary, which in 2009 could hardly be labeled otherwise than as problematic, were the only relations with a neighbor not to fit into what has been mentioned above, even though in most areas of our relations there were positive developments. What lay behind this was the fact that the complex of relations was overshadowed by certain open historical issues, and, in the first place, different understandings of the position of national minorities in society, the very core of which consists in different approaches based on the individual or collective rights of minorities. Due to these discrepancies the Slovak Foreign Service had to deal with a massive campaign that not only went beyond the limits of bilateral relations but also crossed the frontiers of Europe. In content the campaign was especially focused on the Slovak language law, but was not however limited to this issue alone. Under the circumstances the Slovak Foreign Service did not wish to respond in the same coin, and endeavored to reduce the tension. At the same time the most serious misinterpretations and misrepresentations of the situation in Slovakia were rebutted. The disputes harmed both countries, caused stagnation in bilateral cooperation, a deterioration in the images of both countries within the wider international community and reduced possibilities of joint action in advocating common interests. In the near future solutions to this situ-



ation will need to be found by separating ethnic issues from the bilateral agenda, by identifying long-term joint strategic interests and through patient bilateral dialogue.

Our relations with Ukraine, the only EU non-member among our neighbors, were adversely affected by the gas crisis in early 2009. We, however, consider relations with this country as our foreign policy priority. We actively supported her integration ambitions, which we see as an opportunity to further deepen our bilateral relations.

From the point of view of the Slovak Foreign Service the complex of relations in central Europe may hardly be fully comprehended without the Visegrad Group, which for nearly 20 years now has formed an integral part of dialogue and cooperation in Central Europe. The V4 developed into a platform for intensive dialogue and cooperation among its four parties and through the V4+ format the participating countries were provided with an important and effective instrument for communication with countries or regions of their priority interests. The fulfillment of tasks was considerably supported by the International Visegrad Fund, chaired in 2009 by Slovakia.

The Visegrad Group proved its potential not just as a 'trademark' of our region, but as an efficient instrument of multiplication of the influence of its individual parties on the European scene in cases where the V4 countries decided upon joint action. Slovakia therefore advocated strengthening the internal cohesion of the V4 and despite the fact that some 'competitors' on the macro-regional level appeared in the region in 2009 it still attaches great

importance to the V4 in future formation of relationships in Central Europe. Poland joined the so-called Baltic Strategy, while Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic actively joined in preparation of the so-called Danube strategy. We do not wish to see any of the two EU macro-regional strategies as challengers to the V4. They should rather be seen as a new opportunity for the V4 to anchor in this area as a link between the two macro-regions, as a bridge between North and South and a kind of tried and tested core of cooperation in this part of Europe.

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*What lay behind problematic relations with Hungary was the fact that they were overshadowed by certain open historical issues, and, in the first place, different understandings of the position of national minorities in society, the very core of which consists in different approaches based on the individual or collective rights of minorities.*

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## THE EASTERN DIMENSION

Going through our foreign policy activities, an important place belongs to the region of Eastern Europe that was also in 2009 one of the key priorities of Slovak foreign policy. A lot of opportunities as well as challenges for our foreign policy in relation to this region follow from our geographical location. Leaving aside relations in the field of culture, economy and business or social relations, we, and in a wider context the Union as a whole, were through the above-mentioned January gas crisis reminded of the strategic importance of the region of Eastern Europe. Our country has been in

the long term imminently interested in the stability of the region of Eastern Europe and therefore considers the region's approximation to the Euro-Atlantic area, its values and principles as the most natural ways of safeguarding this.

These are the grounds on which Slovakia in 2009 also actively supported the EU and the NATO integration ambitions of the East European countries. It participated in the preparation and inauguration of the EU Eastern Partnership project and supported its orientation on implementation of particular practical projects of importance to both the EU and to partner countries or mutually important to partner countries. Special attention was paid to Ukraine as the Slovak Embassy in Kiev continued to operate as the NATO Contact Point Embassy for Ukraine.

Slovakia's Eastern policy may not be reduced just to the six countries of the Eastern Partnership. An integral part of it was consistently formed by efforts to establish pragmatic partner dialogue with the Russian Federation, which should support mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the Union and Russia. This approach was actively advocated by Slovakia in both bilateral and multilateral contexts.

## **THE WESTERN BALKANS: OUR REGIONAL PRIORITY**

Just like the region of Eastern Europe, the Balkans is of strategic importance for us as well for the Union as a whole. It was above all the Western part of the Balkan Peninsula that in 2009 still required special attention. There are still many reasons to be concerned about the fragile stability of this part of Europe that was fully in evidence in the 90s. In particular, what is extremely unstable is the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in Kosovo. Slovakia actively participated in the stabilization of the region through its involvement in the EUFOR/Althea and EUPM missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the KFOR and EULEX missions in Kosovo, but at the same time did not amend its interpretation of the principles of international law regarding recognition of the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence.

We understand the gradual integration of countries of the Western Balkans in the EU and their approximation to the Union's standards, principles and values to be a way to solve the problems of this region in a consistent fashion. An added value of our foreign policy in relation to this region was, once it was identified, put into practice as passing on our transformation and integration experience in coordination with the activities of the international community, and as our provision of development assistance.

It is necessary to mention that besides the problems of this region Slovakia is also aware of its potential. Although unlike Eastern Europe this region is not one of our immediate neighbors, from the point of view of the ties existing in the field of culture as well as from the point of view of social ties and possibilities to cooperate in the area of the economy and business, the region is equally important. There is a special and possibly not fully appreciated importance of the Balkans for Slovakia that follows from existing and in particular from potential traffic and energy corridors. As regards the



energy industry area the energy corridors of the Balkans may become a prospective space available for diversification.

## SLOVAKAID 2009

Our activities in the area of foreign policy would not be complete without mentioning development assistance. Slovakia forms, thanks to her EU membership, an integral part of the largest collective donor in the world. It was not merely formally that OECD membership placed us among the most developed nations of the world. In the very first years of the millennium Slovakia left the group of recipients of development assistance and joined the community of donors. Despite the economic crisis and limited resources all of these facts obliged Slovakia to comply with her commitments in the area of development assistance also in 2009. The fact that we managed to do so is just another proof of Slovakia's advance and her inclusion among the advanced nations of the present world. Within the framework of bilateral assistance there was 5.5 million euro earmarked for approximately 40 projects. Other financial resources intended for humanitarian assistance and multilateral donor activities are provided to the UN development fund (UNDP) or to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Slovakia's reliability in this field was proved by the fact that in 2009 the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the *Medium-Term Strategy of Development Assistance for 2009-2013*. The document is the key instrument for planning Slovak development assistance in the following five year period, including multilateral development cooperation and provision of humanitarian assistance. The strategy takes into account the interests of the Slovak Republic in the area of foreign policy as well as the obligations that follow from EU membership, and is based on the status of a new donor that the Slovak Republic acquired after 2003. In the context of the economic crisis Slovakia made especially sure that the development assistance be provided in an efficient and balanced way and that the distribution be purposeful.

## SERVICE TO CITIZENS

Last but not least one of the Foreign Ministry's central priorities was further improvement of the services provided to citizens and protection of the interests of those citizens who found themselves in distress abroad or needed consular assistance. One of the measures taken by the Ministry in 2009 was the establishment of a registration system for citizens traveling abroad at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. The efforts also included the operative and updated publishing of the information database and advice for travelers abroad, improvement made in the process of issuing of passports through the new *IS PASY* electronic system as well as the operative activities of the Citizens Assistance and Services Center.

The Slovak Foreign Service also placed special emphasis upon maintaining contacts with Slovaks living abroad. In cooperation with the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad the service actively participated in launching the *Concept of Care of the Slovak Republic for Slovaks Living Abroad until 2015*.

## CONCLUSION

The year 2009 was full of challenges, extraordinary events and major changes. At the same time many questions remained unanswered or unfinished. It is still expected that the world will be making major efforts to ward off the impact of the economic crisis and that Slovakia will need to pay the same attention to avoid future energy crises as well as to safeguarding energy security in national, regional and Union contexts.

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*Whatever the circumstances, Slovakia will, however, first and foremost endeavor to remain a predictable player in international political life, a responsible partner within the EU and a reliable ally within NATO.*

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The Slovak Foreign Service will in the upcoming period be facing many other challenges that will be brought by the results of the 2010 elections held in three Central European nations including Slovakia. The Slovak Foreign Service will be, besides establishing contacts, requested to identify intersections of interests of the new governments. The region's dynamism will undoubtedly also be influenced by

preparation of the Danube strategy. The V4 Chairmanship that is to be taken over in mid-2010 will be a great challenge for Slovakia.

A system of relations based on *Treaty of Lisbon* will be crystallized on the European level. Forming the European External Action Service will be of great importance to the Slovak Foreign Service.

Our immediate involvement will also be requested in the formulation of the new Strategic Concept of NATO that is to be finished next year as well as the continued discussions within the framework of the Corfu Process. Preserving openness in relation to new members will be important for the future of the North Atlantic Alliance. If candidates share the Alliance's values and prove that they are able to contribute to increasing its defense capacities, if they are stabilizing factors in their regions, then there are no obstacles preventing them from joining the Alliance. Slovakia will be helpful and will support their ambitions.

Slovakia will continue her involvement in the integration processes eastward of our borders and in the Balkans and will be contributing to solving crisis situations of the present-day world, either through her direct participation in peace missions or through provision of development and humanitarian assistance.

Whatever the circumstances, Slovakia will, however, first and foremost endeavor to remain a predictable player in international political life, a responsible partner within the EU and a reliable ally within NATO.

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**I.** THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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# SLOVAKIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE YEAR OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

VLADIMÍR BILČÍK

In 2009 Slovakia's performance in the European Union was dominated by two themes: the changing structure and functioning of key EU institutions and a broader reflection of the first five years of the country's EU membership in the context of new political and economic crises. This study provides a brief analysis of Slovakia's preferences and roles during and after the European Parliament elections, in the formation of the European Commission and in the approval of the *Lisbon Treaty*. The study also offers a reflection of policy priorities of the Slovak Republic (SR) and its agenda resulting from the energy and economic crises. The study concludes with a summary of themes that are important for Slovakia's successful performance within the EU in the near future.

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

Preparations for the European Parliament (EP) elections in Slovakia were overshadowed by presidential elections. In 2004 Slovakia recorded the lowest voter turnout (16.9% of eligible voters) in the history of direct elections to the European Parliament. Unlike other new EU Member States, such as Estonia or Poland, Slovakia sent lesser-known politicians to the EP.<sup>1</sup> In 2009 public opinion polls suggested a low voter turnout

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<sup>1</sup> In 2004, Estonia's representative in the EP was the country's current president Ilves. Poland's MEPs included former Prime Minister Buzek or the well-known intellectual Geremek.

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again. According to a Eurobarometer survey conducted in the fall of 2008, only 15% of Slovak voters were set to take part in the EP elections compared with the EU average of 28%.<sup>2</sup>

16 political parties in Slovakia competed for 13 seats in the EP. Lists of candidates of political parties represented in the National Council of the SR and in the EP included most of the current MEPs, their assistants and politicians active in the field of international relations. Only two out of the 14 previous MEPs from Slovakia did not stand for a seat in the EP again. The Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK) did not nominate Árpád Duka-Zólyomy due to his record in the list of the Communist State Security Service and the ruling Smer-Social Democracy (Smer-SD) party did not nominate Miloš Koterec. Boris Zala, then Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic became the leading candidate of Smer-SD for the EP elections and the former Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan was the leader of the strongest opposition party, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS).

For political parties in Slovakia the EP vote represents a second-order election. Like in 2004, the 2009 EP elections campaign in Slovakia was indistinctive and lacked any imagination. Political parties tried to make their candidates visible only during the

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final weeks before the election. The campaign was dominated by vague slogans and did not deal with any particular issues of European policy. The largest ruling party tried to attract voters with a slogan 'Smer against the Crisis', while the SDKÚ-DS offered people like Eduard Kukan using a slogan 'Experience for Slovakia'. The Main topics of discussions before the EP elections became the low voter turnout predicted by public opinion polls and the level of responsibility of political parties, media and current MEPs for the weak interest of voters in the EP.

The results of the European elections confirmed expectations of public opinion polls that indicated the success of parliamentary political parties and the victory of Smer-SD. With 32.01% of votes Smer-SD as the winner of EP elections sent five representatives to the EP. The three opposition parties – SDKÚ-DS (16.98%), SMK (11.33%) and KDH (10.87%) – are each represented by two MEPs in the new EP, while the two parties of ruling coalition – LS-HZDS (8.97%) and SNS (5.55%) – each sent one MEP to the EP. The non-parliamentary party with the best election result was the new political party Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) with 4.71% of votes. Six SDKÚ-DS, SMK and KDH MEPs joined the strongest fraction of the European People's Party (EPP), five Smer-SD MEPs became a part of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the SNS

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<sup>2</sup> See "Special Eurobarometer 303: Europeans and the 2009 European Elections. Results for Slovakia, January 2008", The European Commission (2008); [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_303\\_fiche\\_sk.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_303_fiche_sk.pdf).

MEP joined the political group Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN) and the ĽS-HZDS MEP joined the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE).

From the perspective of Slovak representatives in the new EP we can make two relevant observations. The first concerns their membership in political groups. While in the previous term of office many Slovak representatives did not belong to any European political party, in the current European Parliament all MEPs create part of a political group. Six SDKÚ-DS, SMK and KDH MEPs joined the strongest fraction of the European People's Party (EPP), and five Smer-SD MEPs are part of a new left-wing group in the EP, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), with Monika Flašíková-Beňová being appointed its vice-chairman. The SNS MEP Jaroslav Baška is a member of newly created radical fraction of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) that associates many nationalistic and anti-integration political parties, including the British United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), or Danish Dansk Folkeparti.

The biggest surprise has been the membership of the ĽS-HZDS MEP Sergej Kozlík in the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). The People's Party-Movement for Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS) led by Vladimír Mečiar has tried for years to overcome its international isolation and join some group of European political parties. After being repeatedly rejected by the EPP, Mečiar's movement became an observer to the European Democratic Party (EDP) in 2008 and in September 2009 it became a regular member.<sup>3</sup> Sergej Kozlík is a member of the parliamentary group of ALDE because members of the EDP formed a common political group with liberals in the European Parliament. There are several explanations for the fact that ĽS-HZDS has finally become a part of the European political party. The EDP is rather small group that is represented only by four MEPs, including Kozlík, in the new EP.<sup>4</sup> The acceptance of ĽS-HZDS thus significantly strengthened the representation of the EDP in the EP. Problematic perception of the policy pursued by V. Mečiar and his movement in the mid-1990s has waned recently. The ĽS-HZDS, once the strongest domestic political party is the smallest party of ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Robert Fico and its further political destiny remains open. Moreover, the EDP does not include any Slovak political parties that would block the membership of ĽS-HZDS.

The second notable observation concerns the appointment to leadership positions in the new EP. While in the previous term of office Anna Záborská chaired the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, in the current term of office the representatives of Slovakia did not get any position of a chairman or a vice-chairman of the 22 EP committees. This relates for instance to the weakening position of Slovak right-wing parties in the EPP compared with the period 2004-2009. Only Eduard Kukan from SDKÚ-DS was appointed a head of EP Delegation for relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. Yet, even Kukan's appointment was not unanimous due to his disapproving attitude to the independence of Kosovo.

<sup>3</sup> "HZDS: Mečiar od septembra podpredsedom Európskej demokratickej strany", SITA (July 13, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.pde-edp.net/main/\\_pde/index.jsp](http://www.pde-edp.net/main/_pde/index.jsp).

Compared to 2004, the voter turnout in Slovakia slightly increased (19.64%), however, Slovakia still recorded the lowest voter turnout in the EU-27 once again. The average voter turnout in the EP elections across the EU shows a declining tendency. While the voter turnout in the first direct elections to the EP in 1979 represented 61.99% of eligible voters, in 2009 it was only 43.08%.<sup>5</sup>

In a broader context, the course and the results of EP elections were influenced by the two important factors. First, the elections were affected by the ongoing economic crisis from which profited mainly the right-wing political parties. They managed to persuade the majority of voters in individual member states that they are more competent to cope with the crisis.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the victory of Smer-SD in Slovakia can be considered rather an exception. The current crisis also revealed real possibilities and expectations relating to the EP. The Eurobarometer survey 70 conducted in the fall of 2008 indicated that the trust of citizens in EU institutions, including the EP, is declining.

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*The European Parliament does not deal with fundamental issues of public policy from the perspective of voters afflicted by economic crisis. The Parliament approves the budget of the EU or the European Commission and takes legislative measures necessary for the functioning of the European single market.*

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The citizens also expect that the EU will deal with fundamental issues of economic policy. The fact remains, however, that the EU and the European Parliament as one of the decision-making EU institutions have either limited or non-existing powers in important economic issues. The European Parliament does not deal with fundamental issues of public policy from the perspective of voters afflicted by economic crisis. The Parliament approves the budget of the EU or the European Commission and takes legislative measures necessary for the functioning of the European single market. However, the EP does not decide on economic stimulus, social

or pension costs or monetary policy of the Member States. From this perspective, the declining turnout in EP elections is not a big surprise. It is up to national political parties, media and MEPs to motivate citizens to take part in EP elections. In case of Slovakia, politicians and media focus on the subject of the European elections only marginally and in the specific period of time to which corresponds the citizens' interest in the functioning and structure of the EP.

Second, weak voters' interest in the European election is also related to the unfulfilled logic of direct elections to this institution. The first direct elections to the EP in 1979 symbolized the efforts for the realization of a federal vision of the European integration. Today's Union is far away from a political federation. It is rather a grouping of states where an important role is played by national governments with delimited space for powers of supranational institutions such as the Commission or the Parliament. Voters' interest thus reflects the real position of the institution in power architecture of the

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.elections2009-results.eu/en/index\\_en.html](http://www.elections2009-results.eu/en/index_en.html).

<sup>6</sup> See for instance an interview with Simon Hix from LSE at <http://www.euractiv.com/en/eu-elections/simon-hix-centre-right-won-elections-socialist-ticket/article-183022>.



EU. In principle, the new *Lisbon Treaty* makes the EP equal with member states in EU legislative process. Therefore there is also a chance that the perception of the EP by political parties and voters in individual member states will change. The strengthening of the EP position may therefore arouse stronger interest of Slovak politicians in this Brussels institution.

## NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Apart from the European Parliament election, Slovakia was faced the important process of the formation of a new European Commission (EC). In the conclusions of the European Council (June 18-19, 2008) the Heads of States and Governments agreed unanimously on the name of the existing EC President J. M. Barroso as the person they would nominate as President of the new European Commission. The Commission's term was to expire on October 31, 2009, but it was prolonged by several months, as many member states agreed to form a new Commission in compliance with the *Lisbon Treaty* that entered into force only on December 1, 2009. The EP finally approved the new Commission headed by J.M. Barroso on February 9, 2010.

Prime Minister Robert Fico repeatedly indicated that the SR should be represented in the EC by a professional diplomat who is familiar with EU institutions.<sup>7</sup> Ján Figel', EU-Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth resigned from the post of EU-Commissioner on October 1, 2009 after having been elected as Chairman of the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) party in September 2009. He was replaced with Maroš Šefčovič,<sup>8</sup> former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the EU, nominated by Smer-SD and approved by the government of the SR. Other Member States supported his nomination without reservation.

The reflection of the first 'Barroso Commission' has indicated shifts in the balance of power in the EU. The Commission's position is more fragile than in the past. Its independence from member states is endangered, as its initiatives and decisions are significantly influenced by big member states like Germany and France.<sup>9</sup> The main mission of the EC is to watch over the foundations and rules of the EU and act as an independent arbiter in disputes between member states or companies within the European single market. Therefore a strong and autonomous position of the EC in the institutional architecture of the Union is of a paramount importance for Slovakia. In the time of financial crisis Slovakia needs a respected arbiter in areas such as the economic competition rules or application of four fundamental freedom of the EU. Success of integration project is based on economic, political and civil advantages of

<sup>7</sup> R. Goldírová, "Budúca Európska komisia", *Slovak Radio* (January 30, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> "Črtá sa podoba novej Európskej komisie", *EurActiv.sk* (January 7, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> See "The European Commission 2004-09: A Politically Weakened Institution? Views from the National Capitals", EPIN Working Paper (May 23, 2009).

European single market without internal borders. The second Barroso Commission should be more free, decisive and consistent in defending common rules of European trade and economic policies. Otherwise Slovakia will lose comparative advantages resulting from its full EU membership.

The ratification of the *Treaty of Lisbon* expedited the formation of the new Commission. When the government of Robert Fico nominated Maroš Šefčovič for a member of the new Barroso Commission, the Prime Minister and many other representatives of the Slovak government had an ambition to get the post of EU-Commissioner responsible for energy policy.<sup>10</sup> The distribution of portfolios belongs to the main powers of the EC President who appointed Maroš Šefčovič as the Vice-President of the EC responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Administration. Šefčovič is in charge of relations with national parliaments, co-organizes EU summits, supervises

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*When the government of Robert Fico nominated Maroš Šefčovič for a member of the new Barroso Commission, the Prime Minister had an ambition to get the post of EU-Commissioner responsible for energy policy.*

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the creation of the European External Action Service, and communicates with other EU institutions.

After having been approved by the EP in February 2009, the new Commission took office in the time of ongoing recession and imminent Euro Zone crisis caused by the dire state of Greek public finances. The Commission has limited direct instruments in economic policy, and therefore the fulfillment of the strategy for economic recovery 'Europe 2020', proposed by the EC as a successor of the Lisbon Strategy, depends on Member States. Thus the Commission's success will to small extent also depend on the politics of the Slovak government that will come out of the parliamentary elections in June 2010. In terms of inner functioning of the EU, the focus of the new EC and its Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič will be the practical implementation of innovations introduced by the *Treaty of Lisbon*.

## THE TREATY OF LISBON

In June 2009, the European Council provided Dublin with political guarantees that made possible it to hold the second Irish referendum on the *Lisbon Treaty* in October 2009. The ongoing economic crisis increased a chance of success of the plebiscite, as in hard economic times increasing number of Irishmen realized the importance and advantages of European integration. The Treaty, which supplements and modifies the existing foundations of the EU, finally entered into force on December 1, 2009. This was possible due to the 'yes' vote of Irish voters in the second referendum held on October 2, 2009, and due to the ratification signature of the Czech President Václav

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<sup>10</sup> "Črtá sa podoba novej Európskej komisie", *EurActiv.sk* (January 7, 2009).

Klaus who ratified the Treaty after the European Council approved an additional exception from the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU* for the Czech Republic. The exception will become legally binding on the earliest change in the foundations of the EU (most likely in connection with Croatia's accession to the EU). Klaus argued that the Charter would make it possible to open property or other claims of Sudeten Germans displaced from the former Czechoslovakia after WWII. Despite a number of legal analyses, which characterized Klaus' concerns as groundless, other Member States ultimately agreed to the exception from the Charter for the Czech Republic.

Prime Minister Robert Fico made his claim to the same exception for Slovakia in Václav Moravec's TV show on the Czech Television on October 18, 2009.<sup>11</sup> Prime Minister Fico *de facto* threatened to veto the exception for the Czech Republic, unless the exception applied to Slovakia as well. Unlike our Western neighbor, the Prime Minister talked from the position of the country that ratified the *Treaty of Lisbon* in June 2008. Robert Fico's statement was a big surprise because the Slovak Prime Minister advocated the adoption of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU*. Moreover, Minister Miroslav Lajčák on the same day rejected concerns of the Czech President relating to the *Beneš Decrees* by saying that "after the *Lisbon Treaty* and the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* enter into force, the principle of retroactivity is unacceptable, explicitly ruled out, and thus does not open legal room for re-opening of such issues, and the legal protection of our positions is guaranteed".<sup>12</sup> Robert Fico did not coordinate his

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*According to the common paper of V4 countries it is important that the future EU diplomatic service ensures an adequate geographical balance and a meaningful presence of nationals from all EU Member States.*

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action with other domestic political actors, and his response was rather emotive since at the European Council meeting (October 29-30, 2009) the SR did not demand any exception from the Charter and agreed to the exception for the Czech Republic.

The *Lisbon Treaty* brings important innovations for Slovakia and its external relations, such as the powers and the functioning of a new position of the European Council President (Herman Van Rompuy) and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Catherine Ashton). A special challenge for Slovak foreign policy relates to the creation and functioning of the European External Action Service. C. Ashton presented the proposal for establishment and financing of the service in April 2010.

Ivan Korčok, Head of Slovakia's Permanent Representation to the EU, argues that the nascent EU diplomacy should function as an executive service for the benefit of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, however, it should not become an independent institution or EU political body. According to Korčok, Slovakia wants to preserve the Council, an institution comprising all member states, as the main source of EU foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> In February 2010, Slovakia, together with Poland, Hungary and the

<sup>11</sup> "Ak dostane výnimku Česko, bude ju žiadať aj Fico", TASR (October 18, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> "Pokusy o otvorenie Lisabonu sú absolútne nereálne, tvrdí Lajčák", SITA (October 18, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> "Ivan Korčok: Východná Európa žiada férové zastúpenie v Európskej zahraničnej službe", *EurActiv.sk* (March 25, 2010); <http://www.euractiv.sk/obrana-a-bezpecnost/interview/vychodna-europa-ziada-ferove-zastupenie-v-europskej-zahranicnej-sluzbe-014799>.

Czech Republic, circulated an informal paper in Brussels in which the four Visegrad countries (V4) argued that the eventual lack of member states' involvement in shaping and implementing policies could lead to "the loss of their interest in EU foreign policy and could even result in a widening gap between EU and national policies". According to this paper, V4 countries consider necessary to ensure that the future EU diplomatic service "ensures an adequate geographical balance and a meaningful presence of nationals from all EU Member States".<sup>14</sup>

The adoption of the *Lisbon Treaty* opened the domestic debate on the future of EU policy-making in Slovakia. At an annual conference on Slovak foreign policy, held in April 2010, EC Vice-president Šefčovič suggested that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be renamed as the 'Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs'. He also called for an audit of EU policy-making across individual ministries in order to identify strong and weak points of EU policy-making and coordination of national policy in the EU. Eduard Kukan called for adjustments to stronger powers of the EP in the decision-making on EU legislation as well as to new powers of national parliaments in assessing Commission's legislative proposals.<sup>15</sup> These are some of the tasks for the Slovak executive and legislature in the near future. Also, the preparation for Slovakia's EU Presidency in 2016 should start soon. The experience of older member states shows that administrative and political preparation of a presidency takes an average of five years and apart from fundamental changes to the field of EU foreign policy, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the rotating presidency has still kept all its important functions.

## POLICY PRIORITIES OF SLOVAKIA

The launch of the *Lisbon Treaty* means that in 2010 we can expect new dynamics in the process of EU enlargement. After Slovenia promised to stop blocking the accession talks of Croatia, Zagreb has a real chance to complete the formal negotiations on country's accession to the EU by the end of 2010. During the Spanish and Belgian EU presidency in 2010, the EU should also start accession negotiations with Iceland. Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero repeatedly expressed his support for the ambitions of Turkey as well as his intention to make progress in accession negotiations with Ankara. Slovak diplomacy should be more active with respect to the country's support for further EU enlargement, especially in case of the countries of Western Balkans that will try to approach the opening of official negotiations with the EU in 2010. As for the potential integration of the countries of Western Balkans, the Union has sent a significant signal: on December 19, 2009 the visa regime with Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia was lifted. The nationals of these countries can now enter the Schengen area with a valid

<sup>14</sup> A. Rettman, "New EU States Make Bid for more Diplomatic Clout", *EUObserver* (March 10, 2010); <http://euobserver.com/9/29651>.

<sup>15</sup> "Slovensko bilancuje svoju zahraničnú politiku", *EurActiv.sk* (April 12, 2010); <http://www.euractiv.sk/obrana-a-bezpecnost/clanok/slovensko-bilancuje-svoju-zahranicnu-politiku-014900>.

biometric passport. On the other hand, the visa regime with Turkey, which has negotiated the accession conditions for several years, has not been cancelled. This situation indicates that in case of EU enlargement we can expect more considerable shifts in the area of former Yugoslavia.

In terms of key themes, today's priority of the SR is the use of financial and investment stimulus in the form of EU Structural Funds. In this context, Slovakia has been closely monitored by the Commission as in the case of the so-called notice-board tender at the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, which put into focus the issue of meaningfulness and eligibility of funds drawn from the EU budget. On the other hand, the economic crisis has created conditions for a simpler use of EU assistance. In accelerated proceedings, the National Council moved to the second reading an amendment to the Act on aid and support provided from European Communities funds that is to make possible to include costs of large projects not yet approved by the EC in the cost statement submitted to the EC.<sup>16</sup>

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*In terms of key themes, the current priority of the Slovak Republic is the use of financial and investment stimulus in the form of EU Structural Funds. In this context, Slovakia has been closely monitored by the Commission.*

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In this context, the major theme in 2009 was a dispute between the coalition and opposition over the ability to draw EU Structural funds. In August, the opposition party SDKÚ-DS criticized the government of Robert Fico for insufficient drawing of EU funds.<sup>17</sup> In October 2009, Prime Minister Fico blamed the previous government of Mikuláš Dzurinda for faults as a result of which the SR would lose about 100 million euro, and the current government will have to cover the deficit from a state budget. Faults identified by EU auditors concerned especially the addendums to contracts, i.e. agreements made without a tender.<sup>18</sup> The truth is, however, that also the government of Robert Fico had many problems with the financing of projects from EU Structural Funds, including the open question of 11 million euro used within the cancelled 'notice-board' tender.<sup>19</sup> In the near future, discussion on effective drawing of Structural funds will intensify and the ability of political parties to ensure the proper and transparent use of EU funds remains a crucial political theme for Slovakia's EU membership.

As far as other specific political issues are concerned, Slovakia has recently presented itself as a strong supporter of nuclear energy. Together with the Czech Republic it initiated the founding of the European Nuclear Energy Forum. During the Forum meeting in May 2008 the representatives of Slovak company JAVYS and Czech company ČEZ, a.s. signed an agreement on the construction of new blocks of the nuclear power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice.<sup>20</sup> The European Nuclear Energy Forum has received a potential significant ally. With an election victory of CDU/CSU

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<sup>16</sup> "NR SR: Zjednodušenie čerpania európskej pomoci je v 2. čítaní", TASR (June 17, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> See <http://dnes.atlas.sk/print.php?IdText=583549>, 6.8.2009.

<sup>18</sup> "Fico: Prídeme o milióny eur z eurofondov", SITA (October 2, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> "Rozhlas spochybnil Fica: Štát prišiel o peniaze z EÚ aj za jeho vlády", TASR (October 2, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> "Jadrové fórum spečatilo dostavbu Bohunic", *EurActive.sk* (May 29, 2008).

in September parliamentary elections in Germany it seems possible that Chancellor Angela Merkel will prolong the lifetime of the existing German nuclear reactors, and the coalition of German Christian Democrats and Liberals will make possible bigger openness of the largest EU Member State to the promotion of nuclear energy at the European level.<sup>21</sup>

Slovakia competed with Slovenia for a seat of newly created Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER). In December 2009, Slovenia received the seat by 15 votes to 11 – Sweden as a country presiding over the Council of the EU did not vote.<sup>22</sup> It was already Slovakia's third unsuccessful bid for a seat of an EU agency – in the past the country did not succeed in getting the seat of the Institute for Gender Equality (it went to Lithuania in 2006) and the seat of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, which is based in Budapest.

## CRISES AND SLOVAKIA'S EU POLICY

Political behavior of the SR within the EU in the first months of 2009 was significantly influenced by two external factors. The first was the stoppage of natural gas deliveries from Russia from January 7-18, which represented the most imminent security threat to the country since 1993. The experience with the crisis, which resulted from the Russian-Ukrainian bilateral dispute, had a negative impact on Slovakia's official position on Ukraine's ambitions to achieve ultimately both EU and NATO membership. Most Slovak governing politicians and the Slovak public blamed Kiev for the crisis in deliveries of natural gas.<sup>23</sup> Politicians tried to find a culprit responsible for the crisis rather than seeking ways to avoid a similar crisis in the future. This position has weakened country's ability to play an active role in future EU political and economic projects in Ukraine.

At an international conference entitled 'Ukraine – our European Neighbor', held in Bratislava on September 28, 2009, the chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of the SR Juraj Horváth described negative statements of some Slovak representatives during the gas crisis as a result of 'indignation'. According to Horváth, Ukraine is a 'strategic partner of the SR' that represents a priority of country's foreign policy. Slovakia will assist Ukraine in its Euro-Atlantic integration to the extent required by Ukraine.<sup>24</sup> Yet, Slovakia finds itself in a problematic position in which it should be more active in supporting Ukraine in the context of the European Eastern Partnership. Bilateral relations between Bratislava and Kiev are hampered by problems and the room for a positive agenda in mutual relations is limited. During his official

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<sup>21</sup> "Nemecko sa vráti k jadru", *EurActive.sk* (September 29, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> "Sídlo energetickej agentúry EÚ Slovensko nemá. Bude v Slovinsku", *Czech Television* (December 6, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> "Slováci dávajú krízu za vinu Ukrajine", *SITA* (February 8, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> For more details about the conference see <http://www.sfpa.sk/sk/podujatia/odborne-podujatia/929>.



visit to Ukraine in October the Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák met the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Volodymyr Khandogyi. Lajčák talked about Slovakia's concerns about another possible gas crisis, criticized Ukraine for vehicle and other goods import surcharges, and did not omit the dispute relating to the use of X-ray scanner used for freight trains on the Slovak-Ukrainian border.<sup>25</sup>

Gas crisis also revealed a broader problem of energy supplies. Prime Minister Fico and Economy Minister Jahnátek repeatedly threatened to put into operation the decommissioned blocks of the nuclear power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice, though this would mean breaking the obligations arising out of the *Accession Treaty*. The fact that Robert Fico received support of the representatives of opposition parties SDKÚ-DS and KDH indicated a long-term underestimation of the issues of country's energy security by all Slovak governments. The first step towards the diversification of energy supplies is the interconnection between Slovak and Hungarian gas transmissions systems, approved by the EU summit held in March 2009.

The deepening financial and economic crisis represents the second factor affecting the priorities of the SR in the EU. Slovakia as a small open economy faces protectionist pressures the most apparent expression of which was a statement of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy that French cars

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should only be produced in France. In response to the statement of French President Prime Minister Fico declared that if Sarkozy were to deliver on his threat, he would send Gaz de France, SPP shareholder, home.<sup>26</sup> Foreign Minister Lajčák issued a more diplomatic statement saying that managing the impacts of the economic and financial crisis through national egoism or by taking individual steps is a road to perdition.<sup>27</sup> Slovakia is dependent on foreign trade and fully depends on the European single market and consistent application of the four freedoms of the EU. This fact was finally admitted also by Prime Minister Fico, who stated that foreign workers on Slovak labor market do not represent any threat to Slovaks.<sup>28</sup>

The economic crisis also influenced the debate on the future of the Lisbon Strategy. The Slovak Republic should set realistic goals and define instruments which it is willing to support in connection with a potential successor of the Lisbon Strategy. EU Member States failed to achieve the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy in practice. The European Union does not need another bombastic document that would undermine the credibility of integration project. Rather, it needs a more modest objective than the original goal of

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<sup>25</sup> "Lajčák: Vzťahy s Ukrajinou komplikuje plyn, skener aj clo", ČTK (October 5, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> "Fico: Gaz de France pošleme domov, ak bude Sarkozy zvyhodňovať", SITA (February 9, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> "Lajčák: Riešenie krízy prostredníctvom národného egoizmu je cesta do záhuby", TASR (February 11, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> "Fico: Zahraniční pracovníci neohrozujú našich", TASR (February 10, 2009).

the Lisbon strategy: to build 'the most competitive economy in the world by 2010'. New objectives of the European economic policy must be measurable and achievable.

In the first months of 2010, the Slovak Republic attracted the attention of the Union by its domestic debate on country's position toward anti-crisis measures proposed by the EU. Attitudes of Slovak politicians were influenced by the upcoming parliamentary elections (June 2010) as well as by concerns about the adoption of new financial and political obligations. Prime Minister Fico agreed to the framework decision on the financial package for Greece, but left the final decision on country's bilateral loan to Slovakia's new parliament. Representatives of three opposition parties – the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ-DS), Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) and Bridge (Most-Híd) – have either rejected or been skeptical about the loan to Greece. They argued that eventual loan would undermine the already unhealthy state of public finance in Slovakia and that it is not responsible to lend money to notoriously irresponsible Greece. Only some representatives of KDH (Ján Figel', Anton Marcinič) were willing to support the bilateral loan as a necessary solution to the financial crisis.

Similarly, Prime Minister Fico articulated his support for the creation of the European Financial Stabilization Mechanism, i.e. a financial instrument of Eurozone member states for preserving financial stability in Europe, but Fico's government did not sign the document necessary for the activation of the mechanism. Like in case of the Greek loan, SDKÚ-DS, SaS and Most-Híd rejected to support the European Stabilization Mechanism. Only the representatives of KDH indicated lukewarm support for the new mechanism, though arguing that they would need time to study its implications.

## SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Regardless of the final decision of the SR on the solution to Euro Zone's economic crisis it is necessary to point out that the EU loan to Greece and the European Stabilization Mechanism are *ad hoc* crisis solutions. The priority of the SR must be the emphasis on compliance with existing rules and thus on building of systemic solutions that could curb the existing and help prevent future crises. First of all, Slovakia should advocate the observance of the *Stability and Growth Pact* and the strengthening of the Commission's capacities in connection with any of its new competencies, such as the supervision of national budgets. The attention should focus on measures preventing member states from misinterpreting their actual economic situation, with the Commission applying the same criteria to all Euro Zone members.

After the five years of EU membership, Slovakia's performance in the EU requires more strategic planning and broader systemic measures.<sup>29</sup> In the months to come, the SR should focus on problem areas of its performance in the EU. Slovakia needs to carry out the analysis of fundamental institutional and legislative changes introduced by the

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<sup>29</sup> D. Malová et al. *New Member States in the EU: From Listening to Action?* (Bratislava: Comenius University, 2010).



*Lisbon Treaty* from the point of view of domestic political institutions and actors. The Foreign Ministry can take up an opportunity provided by the *Lisbon Treaty*, as it is the Ministry that represents Slovakia in both the General Affairs Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. The Ministry can act as a strong administrative and political coordinator of Slovakia's policy in the EU and strengthen Slovakia's voice in the EU.

In this context, Slovakia lacks a general list of country's political preferences in the EU that should be created on the basis of inter-ministerial cooperation. The list would represent a basic internal document for the presentation of country's positions in the EU. The voice of Slovakia's politicians and diplomats in the EU should be clear, coordinated and, if possible, united. For the purpose of better coordination of Slovakia's positions in the EU it is also necessary to strengthen the position of the Permanent Representation of the SR to the EU in terms of both capacities and the formal standing. The Permanent Representation has played a key role in daily agenda of the SR in the Union. Slovakia also needs a strategy for filling up positions in EU institutions including the European External Action Service. It is also necessary to strengthen the very limited capacities of the National Council in order to enable the MPs to assess the Commission's legislative proposals. Given the fact that after the adoption of the *Lisbon Treaty* the EP becomes an

equal legislative actor in relation to the Council of the EU, political parties and the representatives of the SR should pursue more intense communication with the country's representatives in the EP. Finally, from a long-term perspective Slovakia needs to prepare for its EU Presidency in 2016. This theme will be very topical mainly in the second half of the new government's term of office and the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs has both the opportunity and the capacity to become a leader in the preparation of country's presidency of the EU.

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# THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND SLOVAKIA IN 2009

MATÚŠ KORBA

In 2009 the North Atlantic Alliance commemorated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment. It celebrated its anniversary as historically the most successful and most efficient intergovernmental military and political organization. The list of NATO's achievements in the four decades of the cold war era and in the two decades that followed round the turn of the century is very impressive. Against this, the realities of the present-day global security environment and the situation within the Euro-Atlantic space do not let the North Atlantic Alliance, already in existence for sixty years, have any rest.

In the area of international relations in 2008 and 2009 there were several important events with direct impact on security and stability in Europe. In February 2008 most NATO Member States recognized Kosovo's independence only then to witness the August 2008 recognition of Abkhazia's and Southern Osetia's independence by the Russian Federation.

The change of Serbia's state borders created a dangerous precedent that was subsequently exploited by the Russian Federation in its conflict with Georgia. The North Atlantic Alliance thus witnessed the first local war going on in its Eastern neighborhood. The violation of Serbia's and Georgia's territorial integrity due to recognition of their separatist regions' independence contributed partly to increasing geo-political tension and became the beginning of a new stage of security relations in the old continent.<sup>1</sup> The European security architecture is, due to this phenomenon, faced with yet another crucible and must in practice demonstrate the reason for its current 'design'. The fundamental institutional element of this architecture is NATO, which in order to preserve

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<sup>1</sup> M. Korba, "Kaukazský šablónový tanec", *Zahraničná politika* Vol. XII, No. 4 (2008), pp. 21-23.

security and stability in Europe, must respond to global influences and regional security threats and adapt as soon as possible to changing conditions. The level of security in Europe depends upon the efficiency of such an adaptation and any delay in doing so makes the old continent come back to a situation as unstable in political and security terms as that of the mid-90s of the previous century.

The supreme political representatives of the Member States are well aware of the necessity to quickly and efficiently adapt the Alliance to the new situation and were throughout 2009 discussing the issues of the next stage of the Alliance's transformation. Developments within NATO pressed individual Member States to join the transformation process and on the military level to continue the reforms of their armed forces. The question of how Slovakia went about the challenges is clarified in the pages below.

## POLITICAL DECLARATIONS: SLOVAK OPTIMISM

There is already a third phase of transformation going on within NATO since the end of the cold war. The first phase of the transformation was carried out in the 90s, when the Alliance was adapting to the new security situation obtaining at the time in Europe and through its enlargement as well as through its military interventions in the Balkans demonstrating its *raison d'être*. The second phase of transformation was launched by the events connected with the terrorist attacks against the USA back in 2001 and with the Alliance's military mission in Afghanistan, which required the implementation of a whole range of reforms. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century NATO Member States were solving a big package of issues connected with NATO's adaptation to a changing global security environment. The events of 2008 and 2009 made even more urgent accelerating and rendering the adaptation process more efficient and thus launched the third phase of the transformation. This fact was also pointed up by the supreme political representatives of the NATO Member States, who began holding their joint summits of the North Atlantic Council with unprecedented regularity (Bucharest 2008, Strasbourg and Kehl 2009, Lisbon planned for 2010).

Despite the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO's existence celebrated in the course of summits held in Strasbourg and in Kehl, less attention was paid to reviewing successes and achievements accomplished in the past. The main emphasis was placed on current political and military issues. During the meeting of the North Atlantic Council held on April 3-4, 2009 Heads of States and Governments of the Member States of the Alliance concentrated on solving issues connected with the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, on preparation of the new *Strategic Concept* and on revitalization of relations with Russia. Last but not least the summit also brought France's return into the Alliance's military structures and two new members of the Alliance – Croatia and Albania – joined in the operations of NATO.<sup>2</sup>

The most important item on the agenda was the situation in Afghanistan and the performance of the ISAF operation, the success of which is perceived as the basic

indicator of NATO's ability to preserve, even under present-day conditions, its political and military relevance. The new American president Barack Obama urged the European allies to increase their involvement in Afghanistan and to strengthen their military contingents in that country. The Member States concurred in the politically prioritized importance of the ISAF mission and approved dispatching more troops and military *matériel* to Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> This position was also supported by Slovakia through her president Ivan Gašparovič, who stated Slovakia's awareness of the fact that the operation in Afghanistan is a serious test of her reliability for the Alliance both before the citizens of the Member States and the international public in general. In this connection he declared that "we fully identify ourselves with the view that provision of the necessary degree of stability to Afghanistan and especially the prevention of the country's becoming a haven of terrorists in the future, is NATO's key priority in both the operational and the political sense". President Gašparovič confirmed that the troops of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic will continue their participation in the activities of the Operational Military Training Teams and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.<sup>4</sup>

The change of the Alliance's Secretary-General was also approved during summits held in Strasbourg and in Kehl as in August 2009 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer was replaced by Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The new Secretary-General was charged by the Heads of States and Governments of the Member States of the Alliance with preparing

a draft new Strategic Concept of NATO to replace the document of 1999 that is currently in force. The present concept does not sufficiently accommodate the present security situation in Europe and in the world and the North Atlantic Alliance faces the challenge of updating its fundamental political and military tasks. The basis for the new *Strategic Concept* to be approved during the Lisbon Summit in late 2010 is a general agreement that collective defense of the Member States' territory is to remain NATO's main task. It will, however, be supplemented by other tasks connected with implementation of missions outside the territory of the Alliance.<sup>5</sup> Through Minister of Defense Jaroslav Baška Slovakia expressed its full support for a decision on

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<sup>2</sup> "Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government in Strasbourg/Kehl"; <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2009/0904-summit/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Summit Declaration on Afghanistan"; [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52836.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52836.htm?mode=pressrelease).

<sup>4</sup> "NATO: Prezident Gašparovič aj minister Baška v Štrasburgu" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, April 4, 2009); <http://www.mosr.sk/13761/nato-prezident-gasparovic-aj-minister-baska-v-strasburgu.php?pg=1>.

<sup>5</sup> "Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration"; [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52837.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm?mode=pressrelease).

commencing discussions on the NATO *Strategic Concept* to reflect a continuously changing security environment.<sup>6</sup>

Another important item on the agenda of the summits held in Strasbourg and in Kehl was revitalization of relations between the Alliance and Russia, which were, due to the crisis in the Caucasus and the Russian – Georgian conflict in August 2008, frozen. The supreme political representatives of the NATO Member States urged their Russian counterparts to renew cooperation within the framework of the NATO-Russia Council and to revitalize dialogue on all of the political and security issues.<sup>7</sup> President Ivan Gašparovič expressed himself along the same lines and emphasized that Russia is and must remain the Alliance's strategic partner and that NATO's passivity in this connection was counterproductive. The president conveyed his support for the development of mutually beneficial and pragmatic relations between the Alliance and Russia, which does not, however, mean making concessions on essential issues, nor accepting the renewed creation of exclusive spheres of influence.<sup>8</sup>

Last but not least two new members of the Alliance – Croatia and Albania – joined in the operations of NATO. Heads of States and Governments of Member States of the Alliance representing 28 nations at the time already concurrently confirmed the 'open door policy' of the Alliance, which will in the future be enlarged by other democratic European nations sharing common values with NATO.

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*While on the level of political declarations Slovakia endorses the activities of NATO on all important issues, on the level of practical implementation the country is only able to join in with difficulty.*

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There were, however, no specific conclusions on Georgia's and Ukraine's NATO membership.<sup>9</sup> The open door policy was also supported by Slovakia, with President Ivan Gašparovič welcoming enlargement of the Alliance by two new members. In his opinion the fact "does not only best reflect that there is no fatigue due to the enlargement already achieved within the Alliance, but that by gradual

admission of prepared new nations the Alliance is on the contrary being transformed, and at the same time turning the European continent into a zone of democracy, stability, peace and security."<sup>10</sup>

Besides the NATO summits held in Strasbourg and in Kehl Slovak political representatives were also commenting on Slovakia's relation with the Alliance during the informal meeting of Ministers of Defense of NATO Member States held in Bratislava on October 22-23, 2009. The meeting, an important event with 800 delegates, was focused on updating the *Strategic Concept* of NATO, on crisis management operations with the emphasis

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<sup>6</sup> "Informácia o priebehu a výsledkoch summitu NATO v Štrasburgu a Kehli 3. – 4. apríla 2009" (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, 2009); <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=523>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> "Prezident I.Gašparovič vystúpil na zasadnutí Severoatlantickej rady v Štrasburgu" (Bratislava: Office of the President of the Slovak Republic, 2009); [http://www.prezident.sk/?rok=2009&news\\_id=8766](http://www.prezident.sk/?rok=2009&news_id=8766).

put on the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and the impact of the economic crisis on defense budgets of individual Member States of the Alliance.<sup>11</sup> Immediately before the Bratislava event Defense Minister Jaroslav Baška once again confirmed Slovakia's obligation to lend her assistance towards achieving success in Afghanistan and declared that Slovakia considered the operation to be one of the fundamental priorities.<sup>12</sup> During the informal meeting of Defense Ministers of NATO Member States on October 23, 2009 Minister J. Baška confirmed this declaration of his and on behalf of Slovakia accepted the obligation to strengthen the contingent of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic in Afghanistan and to increase the number of Slovak troops deployed within the framework of the ISAF mission there.<sup>13</sup>

## PRACTICAL STEPS: A PESSIMISTIC PERSPECTIVE

While on the level of political declarations Slovakia endorses the activities of NATO on all important issues, on the level of practical implementation the country is only able to join in with difficulty. The growing disproportion between political ambitions and real military capabilities is connected with the internal crisis of the reform process within the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, which was even further acerbated in 2009. The crisis did not, however, manifest itself in Slovakia's ability to fulfill her obligations since the Slovak Armed Forces concentrated all available resources on preparation of the troops reserved to satisfy Slovakia's obligations towards the Alliance and to keep expeditionary contingents in the missions. The price paid to preserve the image of a trustworthy ally was, however, extemporization in the field of defense planning and disruption of the reform and modernization of the Slovak Armed Forces.

The supreme political representatives of the NATO Member States concur in the view that the trustworthiness and efficiency of NATO is dependent upon the Alliance's military capabilities. Their deliberations are based upon a generally accepted rule under which diplomacy is much more effective if supported by adequate military force.<sup>14</sup> The army therefore remains an important and legitimate instrument of the foreign and security policy of a state and its use is in Slovakia, just like in the case of other allied nations, dependent upon a decision taken by its political representation. Besides the

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<sup>11</sup> "Neformálne stretnutie ministrov obrany na Slovensku" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, 2009); <http://www.mosr.sk/15768/neformalne-stretnutie-ministrov-obrany-na-slovensku.php?pg=1>.

<sup>12</sup> Opening speech by the Minister of Defense delivered during *The New Challenges – Better Capabilities* conference, on October 21, 2009; <http://www.natobratislava.sk/?mnu=0&lang=sk&news=2&id=3>.

<sup>13</sup> Press Conference of the Minister of Defense of the Slovak Republic Jaroslav Baška (October 23, 2010); <http://www.natobratislava.sk/?mnu=0&lang=sk&news=2&id=9>.

<sup>14</sup> J. Shea, "NATO Going Global – or Almost, Transatlantic Security Issues Project"; [http://www.ataedu.org/article\\_new.php?id=109](http://www.ataedu.org/article_new.php?id=109).



political imperative there is, however, also a functional imperative of the use of military force. The essential prerequisite of deployability of any army is that the level of military capabilities and fighting power required be achieved. Unless the prerequisite itself is fulfilled, a political debate on the use of non-functional military force is to no purpose and only turns into vague rhetoric.

On these grounds attention should be focused on analysis of the functionality of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (AF SR) as the key instrument of protection of the state and its citizens from external threats. The military capabilities and capacity for action of the AF SR represent at the same time the key indicator of how and by what means Slovakia may contribute to NATO's common activities and what her trustworthiness by the Allies will be. These are facts that the leadership of the AF SR is fully

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*Progress to be made in the field of the Armed Forces modernization was, due to inability to match ambitions in the area of foreign policy and declarations made by the present government with its domestic priorities in the field of social affairs and economy, disrupted in 2009.*

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aware of. As early as January 2008 the leadership declared that once professionalization of the armed forces and reforms in the field of personnel are accomplished successfully, attention will be focused upon weaponry and the modernization of military equipment. The process should, in the opinion of General Ľubomír Bulík, Head of the General Staff, be connected with supplies of *matériel*, modern weaponry systems and advanced defense technologies to protect the life and health of professional military staff.<sup>15</sup> In 2008 another phase of reforms within the AF connected with technical moderniza-

tion was accordingly *de facto* launched. The AF are not, without such modernization, capable of efficiently and in the long term fulfilling tasks connected with the defense of state interests or Slovakia's international obligations.<sup>16</sup>

The progress to be made in the field of modernization was, due to an inability to match ambitions in the area of foreign policy and declarations made by the present government with its domestic priorities in the field of social affairs and the economy, disrupted in 2009. Slovakia thus ran into a situation in which the Armed Forces were facing a discrepancy between the defense planning approved and its actual funding. Successful continuation of the next stage of reforms within the Armed Forces – modernization of weaponry systems and equipment – requires in the long term defense planning based on stable financial resources. A defense expenditure of not less than 2% of GDP represents an obligation of all NATO Member States, one that was not, however, being fulfilled by either the previous or the present government. The dynamics of developments as regards the amount of funds earmarked within the budget for the Ministry of Defense are negative in the long term and this fact has interfered with the

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<sup>15</sup> "Rok 2007 bol pre armádu doteraz najúspešnejší" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, January 30, 2008); <http://www.mosr.sk/645/rok-2007-bol-pre-armadu-doteraz-najuspesnejsi.php?pg=1>.

<sup>16</sup> M. Korba, "Vonkajšia bezpečnosť a obrana", M. Kollár, G. Mesežnikov, M. Bútora (eds) *Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti 2008*. (Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava 2009).



essential prerequisite of modernization of the Armed Forces. The prerequisite really in question was the stability of financial funds on the basis of which program planning was going on within the defense department.

The *Long-term Development Plan of the Defense Department Covering the Period Until 2015* was elaborated on the basis of an expected volume of funds earmarked for the Ministry of Defense in the period between 2006 and 2010 amounting to 1.85% of GDP and starting from 2011 amounting to 1.86% of GDP, which represented financial resources amounting to 399 billion Slovak Crowns – of which 165 billion were to cover the period from 2006 through 2010, while 234 billion were to cover the period from 2011 through 2015.<sup>17</sup> In reality, however, financial resources amounting only to 119.9 billion Slovak Crowns (4 billion euro) were earmarked in the period between 2006 and 2009 for the budgetary chapter of the Defense Ministry. If the level of 165 billion Slovak Crowns (5.5 billion euro) planned for the first five-year period was to be achieved, defense expenditures would in 2010 have to amount to 1.5 billion euro. This expectation, however, turned out to be unreal and on November 4, 2009 an Act on the National Budget for 2010 earmarking only 0.823 billion euro for the Defense Ministry was approved.<sup>18</sup>

A deficit between the funds approved and those actually earmarked for defense was gradually coming into existence in the period between 2006 and 2009. It was not even made up with the then growth of GDP, as the percentage of defense expenditures in relation to GDP was continuously falling. In 2007 the budget of the defense department amounted to 1.58% of GDP, in 2008 it fell to 1.51% of GDP and in 2009 fell once again even to 1.44% of GDP. The budget of the Ministry of Defense approved for 2010 amounts to only 1.33% of GDP. Slovakia thus fell through the 'average' group of NATO Member States (1.9-1.5% of GDP earmarked for defense) and joined the 'below-average' group spending less than 1.5% of GDP to cover defense.<sup>19</sup> This in practice meant that due to shortage of financial resources the investment and development programs of the Armed Forces were hit in a most appreciable fashion. It was a case of planned deliveries of first-quality military *matériel*, new weaponry systems and advanced defense technologies, which, however, remained unimplemented. Disruption of defense planning in this most important segment rendered the process of modernization of the AF SR impossible as a whole.

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<sup>17</sup> M. Korba, T. Valášek, "Vonkajšia bezpečnosť a obrana", M. Kollár, G. Mesežnikov, M. Bútorá (eds) *Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti 2007*. (Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> "Rozpočet rozpočtovej kapitoly Ministerstva obrany SR na rok 2010"; <http://www.mosr.sk/16779/rozpocet-rozpocetovej-kapitoly-ministerstva-obrany-sr-na-rok-2010.php?mnu=24>.

<sup>19</sup> The 'above-average' group of Member States includes those countries that comply with the common obligation adopted during the NATO Istanbul Summit of 2004 and that spend not less than 2% of GDP on defense. According to data of 2009 the 'above-average' group (i.e. over 2%) included Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Greece, Canada, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, the USA and Great Britain. The 'average' group (1.9-1.5%) included Albania, the Netherlands, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Romania, Slovenia and Italy. The 'below-average' group (less than 1.5%) in 2009 included Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Luxembourg, Hungary, Germany, Slovakia and Spain.

Negative trends connected with the growing internal deficit were well known to the leadership of the Defense Ministry and the command of the Armed Forces, which responded with efforts to adopt the reform and to adjust to decreasing expenditures for defense. On May 25, 2009 the *Order of Head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic on Implementation of Organizational Changes within the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic in 2009* was presented. The order brought a revision of program objectives. As expressed by General Ľubomír Bulík, Head of the General Staff, "the real objective of the reorganizational changes is creation of professional armed forces affordable in economic terms and creation of conditions to enable the functionality of

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6,000 professional military staff and 250 civil staff remained within the ground forces, while the air forces kept their 3,600 professional military staff and 790 civil staff.

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the system as a whole to reach a balance between tasks, resources and structures".<sup>20</sup> Reorganization of the Armed Forces took place on the basis of these decisions and as of July 1, 2009 the armed forces began to fulfill their tasks under the new structure. There was reorganization within the General Staff and within the individual operational commands as well as a reduction in the number of Armed Forces personnel. 6,000 professional military staff

and 250 civil staff remained in the ground forces, while the air forces kept their 3,600 professional military staff and 790 civil staff. The same changes also concerned Training and Support Forces.<sup>21</sup>

The reorganization of the Armed Forces resulted on the one hand in financial savings that enabled continued preparation in the units reserved to satisfy Slovakia's obligations towards the Alliance (NRF) as well as keeping the Slovak expeditionary contingents in the allied missions (ISAF, KFOR). On the other hand, the way applied to implement Slovakia's obligations towards NATO was at the expense of reforms and modernization of the Armed Forces. The most serious drawback of the adaptation of defense planning carried out in this fashion consists in the absence of an interconnection with conceptual papers defining the Slovak Republic's political and military ambitions and objectives. Not only was there no update whatsoever of *The Slovak Republic's Defense Strategy*, but no new *Directive of Defense Policy of the Slovak Republic* was approved either.<sup>22</sup>

In consequence the range of tasks of the Armed Forces was not changed and there was only an adaptation of the Forces' organizational structure to the reduced volume of

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<sup>20</sup> "Nová štruktúra Generálneho štábu OS SR" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, May 25, 2009); <http://www.mosr.sk/14322/nova-struktura-generalneho-stabu-os-sr.php?pg=1>.

<sup>21</sup> "1. júl 2009 – štart v novej štruktúre Ozbrojených síl SR" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, July 1, 2009); <http://www.mosr.sk/14760/1-jul-2009-start-v-novej-strukture-ozbrojenych-sil-sr.php?pg=1>.

<sup>22</sup> The Latest Directive on Defense Policy of the Slovak Republic (for the 2008 – 2013 Period) was adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in 2006 and the upcoming update of the Directive was postponed from 2008, the original term, to as late as 2010. [http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/7526825E5544DA2CC1257471004215B6/\\$FILE/Zdroj.html](http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/7526825E5544DA2CC1257471004215B6/$FILE/Zdroj.html)

defense expenditures. As early as 2009 this fact began to make itself felt by the growing disproportion between political declarations made by Slovakia's political representatives and the real military capabilities of the Armed Forces. This fact is indirectly confirmed by the genesis of statements made by the defense department's representatives in 2008 and 2009. Back in November 2008 General Ľubomír Bulík stated that to make first-rate defense planning possible the Armed Forces needed a stable and fixed budget. He declared that the volume of financial resources reflected not only the priorities established in the area of redesign and modernization of the Armed Forces, but also those established in the field of NATO needs that we take into consideration as well our commitments towards the Alliance. At the same time General Bulík emphasized that "if the line of decreasing budgetary resources were still to be taken, the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic would be forced to re-assess their tasks."<sup>23</sup>

Nothing of the kind happened and throughout 2009 Slovakia not only fulfilled all of her obligations taken on within NATO, but even announced an increase in them. In December 2009 Minister of Defense Jaroslav Baška commented officially on the underfunding issues present in his department. He informed President Ivan Gašparovič of the tasks and priorities of the Defense Ministry for 2010 that follow from international obligations such as preserving the participation of crisis management in missions, increase in the number of troops in Afghanistan and protection of the airspace within NATO. Fulfillment of these obligations will, according to Minister Jaroslav Baška, be achieved in the following way: "training will be reduced to the very minimum and unless there other financial resources available outside the Ministry of Defense, we can forget about the large modernization projects". During his visit to the Defense Ministry held on December 15, 2009 President Ivan Gašparovič responded to these key statements delivered by Minister Jaroslav Baška, stating that due to the shortage of funding the army would not be modernized in as dynamic a way as it should be. He also said the Slovak political elite would have to address the present situation in the future.<sup>24</sup>

## NATO'S POLITICAL AND MILITARY PRIORITY: AFGHANISTAN

The government's domestic social and economic priorities led in the period between 2006 and 2008 to decrease in funding for the Armed Forces and caused an increase in their internal deficit that was deepened even further in 2009 when Slovakia felt the consequences of the world financial and economic crisis. The leadership of the

<sup>23</sup> "BULÍK: Ozbromené sily SR potrebujú stabilný rozpočet" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, November 10, 2008); <http://www.mod.gov.sk/12723/bulik-ozbrojene-sily-sr-potrebuju-stabilny-rozpocet.php?pg=1>.

<sup>24</sup> "Ministerstvo obrany navštívil prezident SR Ivan Gašparovič" (Bratislava: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, December 15, 2009); <http://www.mosr.sk/16339/ministerstvo-obrany-navstivil-prezident-sr-ivan-gasparovic.php?pg=1>.

Defense Ministry and the command of the Armed Forces responded to the decrease of budgetary resources by reorganization of the Armed Forces. Financial resources saved at the expense of modernization and by reduction in the numbers of personnel of the Armed Forces were put together to meet Slovakia's obligations towards NATO. This is, from the long-term point of view, however, just an interim solution, as the disproportion between the real military capabilities of the Armed Forces and the political promises made is growing fast. A typical example in this regard is Slovakia's position on Afghanistan, NATO's political and military priority.

During his visit to Great Britain held on November 17, 2009 Prime Minister Robert Fico officially declared that Slovakia was interested in doubling the number of Slovak troops deployed in Afghanistan and in amending the contingent's mandate so that Slovak units would be allowed to move to other parts of Afghanistan as well. During his meeting with the then British Prime Minister Gordon Brown he stated that Great Britain and Slovakia operated in Afghanistan as part of

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a coalition of 43 nations and that it was necessary that each nation contribute to the establishment of resources – military and civil – needed to achieve the international community's common objective in Afghanistan. According to Prime Minister Fico the current priority was intensification of our common efforts to ensure that the Afghan army and police have capabilities sufficient to guarantee the security of the country.<sup>25</sup> On December 15, 2009 the commitment was also officially confirmed by President I. Gašparovič, who declared that Slovakia planned in the future to send double the

present number of troops to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup>

In early 2009 there was a total of 246 positions within the system of the Slovak expeditionary contingent (ISAF mission) and by its resolution dated June 19, 2009 the National Council granted a mandate to further increase the number to 262 positions. Individual rotations of Armed Forces personnel were deployed within the following units: the multifunctional engineer company, 1<sup>st</sup> guard unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> guard unit and the National Support Element (NSE) deployed in Kandahar air base, a guard unit in a forward operational base in Tarin Kowt, a guard unit in a forward operational base in Deh Rawood, an operational and training team in the Uruzgan Province and the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Tarin Kowt. Last but not least there were 6 Slovak officers operating within ISAF Headquarters.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Robert Fico v Londýne prednášal o novembri 1989" (Bratislava: Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, November 17, 2009); [http://www.opis.gov.sk/index.php?ID=18277&den=2010-03-1&art\\_datum\\_od=&art\\_datum\\_do=](http://www.opis.gov.sk/index.php?ID=18277&den=2010-03-1&art_datum_od=&art_datum_do=).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Operácia ISAF, Afghanistan", Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, Foreign Missions; <http://www.mosr.sk/330/operacia-isaf-Afghanistan.php?mnu=181>.

The highest number of Armed Forces personnel in Afghanistan is deployed in the ISAF Kandahar air base.<sup>28</sup> The multifunctional engineer company is engaged in reconstructing the take-off surfaces and landing areas, repairing and building other airfield surfaces and in clearing mines from surfaces and roads within the ISAF operational space. Both Slovak guard units deployed in Kandahar were entrusted with the direct protection and defense of buildings situated in the air base. They also perform checkups of persons and equipment entering the premises of the airbase. The National Support Element (NSE) was entrusted with provision of national command and management and logistic support as well as with administrative, personnel and financial services for the Armed Forces' staff operating within the ISAF mission. The Slovak contingent in Afghanistan is as a whole under the command of the Commander of the National Support Element (NSE) who at the same time acts as Slovakia's national representative to that country.<sup>29</sup>

The second part of the Armed Forces' personnel is deployed in Uruzgan Province, bordering on the Kandahar region.<sup>30</sup> One of the guard units is deployed in a forward operational base in Tarin Kowt, while the other one is deployed in a forward operational base in Deh Rawood. The role played by the units consists in guard-duty within the camps and in bases as well as protection and defense of the buildings containing weaponry, combat vehicles and ammunition. Personnel of the Slovak guard unit were also entrusted with night and day patrolling performed under all weather conditions as well as with checking persons and equipment entering guarded premises. The Armed Forces' personnel constitute an Operational and Training Team (OTT), a part of the Dutch OTT operating in Uruzgan Province. The task of the unit is to conduct continued training of Afghan troops, schooling, monitoring and supervising day-to-day activities. Besides that, the staff of the OTT operate as military mentors deployed in individual regions with individual Afghan units. They keep day-to-day contacts with their Afghan partner units ranging from planning an operation up to its implementation in the field.<sup>31</sup>

Other personnel of the Armed Forces were deployed to join the Dutch and Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). They participate in developing Uruzgan Province as well as in building local infrastructure and their operations render possible the creation of a safe and stable environment. Carrying out reforms in individual sectors of responsibility and also identifying and carrying out various projects, they contribute to a positive perception of the North Atlantic Alliance troops by the local population. There are 6 Slovak officers operating within ISAF Headquarters entrusted with gathering and analyzing any and all requests for logistic support and responsible for coordination of combat within the deployment area.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> 186 personnel of the Armed Forces were operating there in May 2010.

<sup>29</sup> "Operácia ISAF, Afghanistan", Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, Foreign Missions; <http://www.mosr.sk/330/operacia-isaf-Afghanistan.php?mnu=181>.

<sup>30</sup> 105 personnel of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic were operating there in May 2010.

<sup>31</sup> "Operácia ISAF, Afghanistan", Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, Foreign Missions; <http://www.mosr.sk/330/operacia-isaf-Afghanistan.php?mnu=181>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

In 2009 the Slovak military presence in Afghanistan was strengthened and the number of Slovak troops deployed in that country reached 262. The supreme political representatives of the Slovak Republic officially made a commitment to double the number and to remove the so-called 'national caveats' connected with deployment of troops within the operational space. The government of Prime Minister Robert Fico de facto identified itself with NATO's position that preventing and eliminating current security threats and projecting stability in areas outside the borders of the Member States require above all operational military units that will create conditions for the application of instruments of civil crisis management. The fulfillment of obligations that Slovakia has towards NATO represented the key political signal given by the current government that confirmed continuity of security and defense policy and that maintained Slovakia's trustworthiness with the Allies.

This political success was, however, achieved at the expense of reforms and modernization of the Armed Forces, thus creating for the future a real threat of a reduction in their fighting power. The disproportion between the political declarations and obligations officially taken up on one hand and budgetary resources actually earmarked for defense and the military capabilities of the AF SR on the other hand is as early as 2010 expected to make Slovakia substantially re-assess her attitude towards NATO. There will be only two options available for the future government emerging from the June 2010 parliamentary elections: either to repudiate promises made by the current government and to decrease the extent of Slovak obligations towards NATO or to considerably raise the amount of financial expenditure earmarked for defense and to start the modernization process of the Armed Forces once again.

## THE SLOVAK SEARCH FOR A NEW POLITICAL PRIORITY

The ISAF mission in Afghanistan represents the main political and military priority of the North Atlantic Alliance, Slovakia is fully aware of the fact and supports by her activities the mission's implementation. Besides that Slovakia also has a priority of her own – the Western Balkans. Since there was such progress made in the field of the region's security stabilization and political consolidation that it may now be covered by the European Union itself, NATO's involvement in the region is on the decline in recent years. In June 2009 the Ministers of Defense of the Alliance Member States adopted a decision to gradually reduce the number of personnel within the KFOR mission in Kosovo.<sup>33</sup>

In 2009 there were altogether 140 jobs within the system of the Slovak expeditionary contingent, a part of the KFOR mission that is incorporated within the mechanized company deployed in the joint Czech and Slovak base in Šajkovac. Through patrolling

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<sup>33</sup> "NATO Defence Ministers Announce Gradual Reduction of Troops in Kosovo", *NATO News* (June 11, 2009); [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_55445.htm?](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_55445.htm?)



within the area of responsibility of their mechanized company the individual rotations of the Armed Forces personnel performed on a regular basis monitoring of the buildings of the local population and provided protection for the local infrastructure. Within the operational space of the Czecho-Slovak battalion they also provided continuous guarding for the Serbian minority, assisted humanitarian organizations in performing their activities in Kosovo and tried to create the conditions needed to renew the peaceful coexistence of the Kosovo Serbs and Albanians.<sup>34</sup>

The decision of the NATO Member States of June 2009 was also supported by Slovakia, which declared her intention to considerably reduce the participation of her Armed Forces in the KFOR mission. During his visit to Kosovo on December 14, 2009 Minister of Defense Jaroslav Baška stated that the number of troops deployed within the military contingents in 2010 should, even with regard to developments in the security situation, be decreased, including that of the Slovak unit. On this occasion he officially confirmed that by the end of 2010 Slovakia intended to reduce the Slovak participation in Kosovo to 20 troops.

The Slovak political representation is, due to the reduction of NATO involvement in Western Balkans, confronted with the challenge of finding within the allied agenda a topic to become its new priority in the area of Slovak operation within the framework of NATO. The Western Balkans will naturally remain a long-term priority of our foreign policy, but Slovakia should, however, at the same time concentrate on a political topic such as would to the maximum extent possible represent an intersection of the allied agenda and Slovak interests.

Relations with Russia and Ukraine, one of the Alliance's key priorities, may become such a topic. There is a long term tradition of Slovakia's balanced and constructive relations with both of these Eastern European partners and this potential may be utilized within the allied agenda. Through her own activation within the framework of the Alliance's 'Eastern Policy' Slovakia may attempt to push through her own interests in relation to Ukraine and to present her views of cooperation within the NATO – Russia – Ukraine geostrategic triangle.

It is particularly mutual relations between the Alliance and Russia that for two decades already have represented the neuralgic underbelly of European security. The cyclical ruptures and convergence of the sides became the chronic symptom of the current unbalanced security architecture in Europe. Moscow, as one of the key players feeling subjectively its marginalization, may sooner or later bring about destabilization of security in Eastern Europe in the space between the Alliance and Russia. While ruptures connected with the crisis in Kosovo back in 1999 or with the crisis in the Caucasus in 2008 represent a high-water mark, repeated convergences of NATO and Moscow in 2001 and again at the turn of 2010 demonstrate that the two players are, due to their geostrategic location and the uncompromising logic of security dilemmas, doomed to partnership.

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<sup>34</sup> "Operácia KFOR, Kosovo", Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, Foreign Missions; <http://www.mosr.sk/328/operacia-kfor-kosovo.php?mnu=182>.

Whether the partnership will turn out to be happy or unhappy remains open. Present experiences indicate that neither the Alliance Member States nor Russia are able to overcome the existing differences of discourse and to bring their perception and understanding of each other closer. This reflection paper could therefore be concluded by simply stating that neither of the two players is able to change its own political and historical identity and that cycles of mutual ruptures and convergences will therefore be further continued. The implementation of the scenario is, however, much too likely and at the same time much too negative in terms of Europe's and Slovakia's security to put a full stop here.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century scenarios of a total armed conflict were widely covered and discussed within the debate on security. A conflict of this kind was to arise

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upon escalation of the cold war to its 'hot' form. The discussion was labeled 'Thinking the Unthinkable'. Within the context of NATO – Russia relations the developments of the last two decades show that in the case at hand it is high time to commence 'Thinking the Unthinkable'. A direction for such thinking is shown by a group of distinguished German security experts led by Volker Rühle (former Defense Minister) and Klaus Naumann (former Inspector General of the *Bundeswehr* and former Chairman of NATO's Military Committee). In their open letter published in March 2010 they for the first time ever tabled the possibility of NATO membership for Russia as

well as the terms and conditions under which her integration could take place.<sup>35</sup> The present issue may actually seem as 'unthinkable' and its implementation may seem as 'unimaginable', but the search for an answer embodies a kind of potential to remove many of the current problems. An elegant solution to differences of discourse existing between NATO and the Russian Federation might be just such a change of paradigm of their mutual relations as a whole...

In the years to come the issue will represent one of the key issues to be discussed within the North Atlantic Alliance so within the framework Slovakia will then be offered an opportunity to operate at large politically and diplomatically towards both Moscow and Kiev. Relations with Russia are, from the point of view of NATO, perceived in a complementary fashion to relations with Ukraine and this is the very field in which Slovakia has already gathered a lot of experience. One of the examples to prove this is the fact that from January 2007 our embassy in Kiev operated as the NATO Contact Point Embassy for Ukraine. The North Atlantic Alliance appreciated Slovakia's performance in the position and extended the Embassy's mandate to December 2010.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> V. Rühle, K. Naumann, F. Elbe, U. Weisser, "It's Time to Invite Russia to Join NATO", *Spiegel International* (March 8, 2010); <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,682287,00.html>.

<sup>36</sup> "NATO ocenilo prácu SR na Ukrajine" (Bratislava: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, December 17, 2008); <http://www.foreign.gov.sk/servlet/content?MT=/App/WCM/>



## THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND NATO – FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

When generally assessing Slovakia's operations within NATO in 2009 both positive and negative elements are to be found. The key success was fulfillment of all obligations that Slovakia and her armed forces had towards the Alliance. Within the framework of *The 2008 Objectives of Forces* the preparedness of military forces declared for the NATO Rapid Forces (NRF) and the EU Battle Groups (EU BG) was safeguarded. Rotation within and maintaining the military contingents reserved for international crisis management operations (ISAF, KFOR, Althea, UNFICYP) were also safeguarded. Due to the decrease in numbers of Armed Forces personnel there was even an increase in percentage of deployable land forces, which reached a level of 32% (compared with 29% in 2008). Sustainability of forces within foreign missions remained at the same level of 10 per cent, which means that the Alliance's criterion adopted in 2004 during the Istanbul Summit and updated in 2006 during the Summit of Riga was met.<sup>37</sup>

These successes are also referred to in the *Complex Assessment of the Slovak Republic's Defense in 2009* paper, discussed and taken note of by the government in May 2010. The paper's conclusion states that "the greatest successes in 2009 were achieved in the area of fulfillment of allied and other international obligations with emphasis being put on participation in crisis management operations outside the territory of Slovakia and fulfillment of the preparation and stand-by phase of rotations within the NRF and the EU BG. Substantial rationalization of structures within the Ministry of Defense including its subordinate units, streamlining command bodies and management on both strategic and operational levels as well as rationalization of the structures of the Armed Forces were all successfully accomplished last year".<sup>38</sup> While positive assessment of the fulfillment of Slovak obligations towards NATO is fully justified, a conclusion to this effect is too premature as regards rationalization of the Armed Forces. It is only developments in the period

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<sup>37</sup> The meeting of Ministers of Defense of NATO Member States held in Bratislava in October 2009 launched another stage of discussion on criteria of deployability and sustainability of troops in crisis management missions. NATO spokesman J. Appathurai stated that the Alliance did not as a whole comply with the 50% deployability and 10% sustainability criterion of land forces of its Member States. These requirements need to be complied with not just because of involvement in foreign operations outside NATO borders, but first and foremost with regard to the operations carried out within the framework of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Inability of NATO Member States to deploy and to sustain an adequate part of their land forces in the territory of allied countries is in fact a threat to the principle of collective defense of NATO territory.

<sup>38</sup> "Komplexné hodnotenie obrany Slovenskej republiky za rok 2009" (Bratislava: Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, May 12, 2010); <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=17884>.

between 2010 and 2011 that shall prove whether this was a systemic measure or just another extemporization carried out under political pressure.

The paper quoted states that “the fulfillment rate of *The 2008 Objectives of Forces* was adversely affected due to postponing modernization projects, primarily in consequence of the economic crisis.... More attention will in the upcoming period of time be required in the field of shortcomings within operational preparedness of undeclared units and in the area of accomplishment of the capabilities rate under *The 2008*

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*Slovakia faces a very demanding task of reassessing her approach to the Alliance and of choosing between either decreasing the scope of Slovak obligations and considerably increasing defense expenditures and restarting the modernization process of the Armed Forces.*

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*Objectives of Forces*, which in 2009 was moreover adversely affected by the impacts of the economic crisis”. What, however, follows from an objective analysis of the situation is the fact that there was a decrease in military expenditures and disruption of defense planning already in evidence prior to 2009 and that the economic crisis was just the last straw that caused the critical underfunding of the defense department and arresting of the modernization process of the Armed Forces.

In 2009 the negative phenomena could be made up for by reducing the number of Armed Forces personnel and spending the funds saved in the field of fulfillment of Slovak obligations towards NATO. This solution to systemic problems is not sustainable in the long term as it presents a threat to military capabilities and the overall fighting power of the AF SR. Slovakia faces a very demanding task in reassessing her approach to the Alliance and in choosing between either reducing the extent of Slovak obligations or considerably increasing defense expenditures and restarting the modernization process of the Armed Forces.

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# THE CORFU PROCESS – AN OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH A NEW SECURITY ARRANGEMENT IN EUROPE OR JUST ANOTHER STALEMATE?

MARCEL PEŠKO

It is generally agreed that the discussion on the new security arrangement in the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian space was launched by the speech of President Medvedev delivered in Berlin in June 2008.<sup>1</sup> In the speech he proposed that a European summit be called to approve a mandate for talks on a legally binding European Security Treaty (EST). The objective of such an agreement would be to guarantee a real unification of Europe without any dividing lines. Medvedev's initiative needs to be seen in a larger sense as another form of security concept the ultimate goal of which is to achieve 'equal interaction between Russia, the EU and the US' in the new era of security developments in Europe. Moscow's strategic objective is to minimize NATO's influence and at the same time to legitimize Russia's dominant position within the post-Soviet space. This strategy also includes the weakening of the OSCE and its ability to respond to what is referred to as 'interference in internal affairs' in the context of the frozen conflicts, violation of commitments in the field of human rights and other deficits of democracy in Russia herself.

In the 90s of the last century Russia sincerely believed that the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization would be followed by the break-up of NATO. According to Russia's concept the OSCE was to become a fully-fledged organization of collective security within the meaning of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Although this idea was also flirted with by many capitals west of Vienna, a material difference in perception of a further orientation of the political discussion on security arrangements in the new era was obvious even then. While Moscow was not abandoning her foreign policy

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<sup>1</sup> "Speech at Meeting with German Political, Parliamentary and Civic Leaders", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (June 5, 2008); [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/06/05/2203\\_type82912type82914type84779\\_202153.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/06/05/2203_type82912type82914type84779_202153.shtml).

philosophy based on theses such as military balance, mutual deterrence, collective security guarantees, buffer zones, spheres of interest, non-interference in internal affairs and consistently emphasized so-called hard security issues, politicians and experts in the West oriented their deliberations on the necessity to build up a system of common cooperative security with the emphasis on compliance with obligations agreed in the field of politico-military, economic and environmental and human dimensions. Since Russia allowed the concept to be embodied in the OSCE founding documents, it seemed to share it in the very beginning.<sup>2</sup> No speculations on what led Russia to do so make sense at present, but it is true that 20 years after the adoption of such breakthrough documents as the Charter of Paris for a New Europe or the Copenhagen Document there are, as regards these documents, material problems on the part of the current Russian political elites.

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its efficiency as a forum for political consultations is fully dependent on the willingness of the participating states to comply with the obligations agreed upon and on the level of mutual trust among them. And it was precisely Russia and other nations of the post-Soviet space that gradually lost such a will and that, instead of advocating the concept of cooperative security, began to restore bloc philosophy and terminology dating back to the cold war era.

Due to differing perceptions of the orientation of security relations the trust between Russia and the West, not too strong to begin with, was gradually further impaired. This trend was certainly strengthened by a change of political elites in Russia and the dynamic growth of the Russian economy.

Developments following the Istanbul Summit of 1999 and the take-over by the Putin team confirmed that the level of identification of multidimensional security concept of the OSCE by Moscow is directly proportional to the adoption of democratic rules in Russia herself. The country has chosen a civilization model of its own and, at present, its conduct is once again 'normal'. There is a geopolitical perception of security on the side of Russia limited to just the politico-military dimension characterized by the *zero sum game* policy, which regards the post-Soviet space as its natural sphere of

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<sup>2</sup> The innovation and comparative benefit of the OSCE consisted in the fact that compared with the existing security institutions the Organization also had at its disposal mechanisms focused on monitoring and influencing the security situation inside the participating states, not just among them. A new, literally revolutionary concept of security was successfully put through within the OSCE as the only regional-type security organization. Security is not, within the meaning of the concept dependent, only on arrangement and balance among participating states, but also on the individual security of citizens and the way that governments treat them.

influence and Central Europe as a kind of 'no man's land' without any space available for potential threats to the country's security such as the anti-missile system. While it is an objective fact that the Alliance strives to achieve strategic partnership with Russia, under the Russian security strategy NATO once again represents the most serious security threat.

It is also the OSCE that Moscow cannot stomach. But the reasons are different. Russia's status within the Organization is the same as that of the other 55 participating states, the country must respond to criticism of faults in democracy, non-transparent and biased elections, targeted restrictions of human rights and suppression of freedom of speech. Besides that it must deal with OSCE activities in countries it regards as its sphere of influence. As Moscow failed to put across her concept of the OSCE as a kind of centre of European and transatlantic security organizations, late in the last century Russia began to turn her back on the organization. Since then Russia's voicing the necessity of a new security arrangement in Europe is constantly increasing in intensity. In her criticism of the OSCE Russia laid emphasis upon its inability to prevent the bombing of the former Yugoslavia and later upon the recognition of Kosovo in defiance of international law. Following the colored revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia Russia's criticism turned into targeted destruction in the spirit of the well-known address by President Putin to the Munich conference held in February 2007. The then Russian president accused the West of "efforts to upset the balance in favor of the human dimension of the OSCE and to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument of support of their interests in the field of foreign policy. This is, however, what Moscow will by all means try to prevent"<sup>3</sup>. The war in Georgia, the arrogant disregard of the Helsinki principles and international law only confirmed a strategic decision by Moscow to secure at any cost its interests in neighboring foreign countries and to do so regardless of the possible loss of international trustworthiness and considerably chilled relations with the West.

## WHAT IN FACT IS MOSCOW AFTER?

In this context the initiative by president Medvedev is essentially more of a reflection of continued Russian political thinking than a sincere effort to find a response to the changes that we have been witnessing in the last twenty years. The original motives of the current authoritarian and autocratic regime, which in Russia has a centuries-long tradition, were aptly characterized by president Medvedev during the annual meeting of Russian ambassadors held in July 2008 when, just a few days before the war in Georgia, he remarked that "the proposed EST is an invitation to formalize and legitimize the new understanding of the Russian concept of security which is

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<sup>3</sup> "Speech of the Russian President Vladimir Putin at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Munich Security Conference" (February 9-11, 2007); <http://www.securityconference.de>.



based upon balance of forces and recognition of zones of privileged interest in the post-Soviet area”<sup>4</sup>.

The starting point of the proposed EST is a critical assessment of the situation in the field of European security. Moscow holds the view that 20 years after the cold war and 35 years after Helsinki there is still no reliable, complex and integrated security architecture in Europe. On the contrary the European security space is according to Moscow fragmented into blocs on various levels of security. In December 2009 president Medvedev sent the text of the EST to his partners within the OSCE as well as to heads of other security organizations in the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian space. He once again proposed that a summit be held to start negotiations. Responses by EU and NATO member countries were initially relatively cold and reserved. Although the Western partners generally welcomed the initiative presented by president Medvedev as a manifestation of willingness

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to start a dialogue on security based upon new foundations, they at the same time also questioned whether any *European Security Treaty* was needed at all and expressed their view that the dialogue on the future of European Security should continue within the OSCE and within the framework of the Corfu Process.

In parallel with this minister Lavrov in early December 2009 sent a draft agreement on basic principles to modify relations between members

of the NATO-Russia Council in the field of security<sup>5</sup> to the NATO Secretary-General. The document states that the parties to the agreement should govern their relations in the spirit of the principles of cooperation and equal, indivisible security. There is, just as in the draft EST, the impermissibility of the use of force or threat of the use of force and the creation of a mechanism for the prevention and settlement of conflicts referred to in the document. Unlike the EST obligation to exchange views, an assessment of modern security threats and the necessity of achieving agreement on measures to be taken to neutralize them is also included in the draft agreement. Under the draft text signatory states should not mutually be considered as enemies and should only have such military capabilities as correspond to their justifiable needs. Russia on the one hand and NATO members on the other should abstain from permanent deployment of their substantial military forces in the territories of other nations. The Alliance has not yet adopted any position on the proposal, but has informally let Moscow know that NATO was not prepared to hold discussions on it and considered the OSCE to be the central platform for debate on European security. It is understandable that as long as there is intense internal discussion on the future of the strategic orientation of the NATO it is unreal to expect the Alliance to adopt specific positions on the Russian

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<sup>4</sup> “Statement by President Medvedev at the Annual Meeting of Ambassadors of the Russian Federation” (July 15, 2008); <http://www.mid.ru>.

<sup>5</sup> “Paper received from Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov”, NATO Unclassified SG(2009)0995 (December 4, 2009).

proposals. Besides that, the allies do not wish to discuss relations with Russia in the politico-military context only and therefore repeatedly emphasize that the EST falls within the OSCE. It is on the other hand obvious that NATO will sooner or later need to consider the Russian proposals from the strategic and politico-military point of view.

Although Moscow claims that her proposals were not designed to become an alternative to the existing international security organizations and are rather aimed at stabilizing relations in Europe, from the specific wording of both proposals it seems that this is exactly what Moscow is after. At the same time Russia concurrently rejects any ties between discussion on the EST and withdrawal of unilateral recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. A request tabled by the West that a discussion on the EST be held on the basis of the existing security architecture in Europe is also rejected by Russia. The unclear and often antagonistic approach justifiably provokes questions about the sincerity of Russia's intentions. The West came, however, to realize that above-mentioned 'conspiracy' should not discourage its efforts and that any opportunity to involve Russia, Belarus and the nations of Central Asia in material dialogue should be used without, however, making any artificial compromises in criticism of the situation in the field of human rights and democracy in those countries.

## COMMON FEELING OF THREATS: DIFFERENT VIEWS OF DEALING WITH THEM

It is obvious that 'resetting' relations or building a strategic partnership with Russia is out of the question unless her proposals and interests are taken note of by the West and unless the West takes a stand on them, either from the point of view of the EU or that of NATO. There are serious gaps in Moscow's reasoning on dividing lines being restored within the OSCE and on strategic uncertainty being strengthened. European and transatlantic security institutions have undergone a thorough transformation. Most European countries underwent a demanding and yet successful transformation period and succeeded in building up solid foundations of democracy, rule of law and market economy. Achieving a unified and free Europe without any dividing lines and wars, the original and essential idea of the Helsinki Process, still remains an unaccomplished vision. While through some nations' joining NATO and the EU the space of security and stability was successfully enhanced, the other nations of the post-Soviet space have remained outside the integration processes. The political map of Europe is for the time being not firmly determined and the process of creation or disintegration of states that materially influenced development in Europe is not finished yet. Due to these developments states west of Vienna came to believe that in the democratization processes that started in 1990 no progress was being made and that these processes had begun to be reversed. On the other hand some nations east of Vienna led by Russia criticize the restoration of the old dividing lines occurring due to 'double standards' and the absence of an effective European instrument to help overcome differences in

the level of security caused by the enlargement of NATO and the EU. Moreover, unlike the 90s individual nations perceive security in considerably different terms. While some of them understand agreement on the European level as a guarantee of their security, others perceive security in a regional context, feel threats following from conflicts that are not being settled but also from the dynamism of developments outside the OSCE area including the unstable situation in Afghanistan and the Near East or because of the threats of international terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons and last but not least threats to supplies of energy raw materials. A different perception of security is not absolute, but has impact on the priorities of individual states within the OSCE. Reasoning that a *European Security Treaty* based on principles of interstate cooperation in the field of so-called hard security and on principles of solving conflict situations would become a magic wand to solve any and all security issues in Europe is either naive or deliberately misleading.

One of the characteristic symptoms of growing disharmony in European security relations was the decision taken by Russia to suspend “implementation of the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* in December 2007”.<sup>6</sup> It is natural that the present situation adversely influences trust between Russia and the other signatories of the Treaty as well as trust of nations in its viability and in disarmament regimes in Europe as such. We are all well aware that the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* is extremely important for maintaining stability and trust in Europe even under changed political conditions. There is no effective security system in Europe without a functioning regime of conventional arms control and disarmament. What is, however, notoriously missing for the time being is the political will to overcome material disagreements. Yet a completely new treaty is not needed at present. Some of the obsolete provisions of the original treaty may effortlessly be removed or replaced by updated wording. Rather, we need a new political approach the objective of which would be preserving the fundamental principles of a cooperative and transparent regime of arms control and disarmament in Europe. The key issue is how to reinstate Russia in the Treaty and at the same time to preserve a regime of limitations in flank areas that Moscow fundamentally disagrees with. There are great hopes of the successful conclusion of the talks between the US and Russia on the regime of nuclear arsenal control START, which may also become an important impulse to reinvigorate discussion on the future of the *Treaty on the CFE*. The West faces such dilemmas as how to update the original

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<sup>6</sup> In practice it means that Russia discontinued provision of data on her conventional forces and stopped accepting military inspections. The instrument, which is considered a fundamental cornerstone of European security, was thus hit by serious crisis. NATO member countries comply for the time being with their obligations following from the Treaty on a voluntary basis, but have already announced that in late 2010 their approach would be reassessed.

regime to address the justified and legitimate worries of Russia, but at the same time to take the interests of NATO and those of Russia's neighbors, especially Moldova and Georgia, into consideration as well. The criticism and worries of Russia should be carefully listened to, but Moscow may not be given unlimited *carte blanche* to decide on the destiny of neighboring countries and nations. Realistically, Moscow cannot likewise expect NATO and the EU to be indifferent towards the post-Soviet space. Success in negotiations with Russia may only be based on maintaining the necessary level of solidarity within the framework of the Alliance and resisting the temptation to conclude separate agreements. It is necessary to realize that real renewal of mutual trust and political dialogue is not possible without restoration of the *CFE Treaty* in its adapted form, which to a great extent reflects Russia's worries, as well as those of her neighbours. At the same time it is also vital to really assess whether keeping a strict link between the Istanbul commitments and ratification of the Adapted *CFE Treaty* is still justifiable in strategic terms. Should the Corfu Process go in the right direction, invigorating the *CFE Treaty* regime – or about elaboration of a completely new system of arms control and disarmament with all the OSCE participating states to join such system (there are only 30 signatories of the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe*) –, could form part of a larger package to include settlement of conflicts in Moldova and Georgia, too. A lot of patience and readiness for compromises is, however, needed.

## THE CORFU PROCESS

At first the Russian proposals met with open mistrust west of Vienna and were perceived as a diplomatic maneuver to stop enlargement of NATO and the EU and to distract attention from the military adventure in Georgia. The positions of most nations gradually began to change. The war in Georgia and the gas crisis in Ukraine, which also hit Slovakia painfully, paradoxically catalyzed assertion of the view that security relations had gone in the wrong direction and that a new phase of dialogue to restore trust and a feeling of common responsibility should be started. After some hesitation the West arrived at the conclusion that despite material reservations about the domestic and foreign policy of the Russian government it was necessary to keep Russia within the OSCE, to limit her tendency to self-isolation and to objectively assess whether some of her reservations were not essentially rational. The initiative was taken by France, the EU President in the second half of 2008. During the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council held in Vienna on July 17, 2008 the French Foreign Minister B. Kouchner welcomed the proposal by the Russian President and recommended that the OSCE become a platform for its further elaboration.<sup>7</sup> Two months

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<sup>7</sup> "Statement by Mr. Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, to the OSCE Permanent Council", PC.DEL. 628/08 (July 17, 2008); <http://www.osce.org>.

after the war in Georgia the President N. Sarkozy emphasized that anything connected with security in Europe needed to be reassessed from every possible angle and that prejudices and stereotypes dating back to the cold war era needed to be removed through dialogue. He also said that the discussion should take place unambiguously within the OSCE, which is the only forum including all the players in European security on an equal basis. At the same time the French President proposed that a special OSCE summit be organized to discuss the suggestions of Russia and those of the EU regarding concepts of development of European security.<sup>8</sup> In early December 2008 NATO foreign ministers also supported the beginning of dialogue on European security. The initiative was taken over by the then OSCE Chairman-in Office, the Finnish Foreign Minister A. Stubb, who during the Helsinki Ministerial Council on December 4, 2008 held an informal lunch on the issue. The ministers taking part in the lunch welcomed the idea of renewal of discussion on European security. At the same time they emphasized that, taking the complex concept of security into consideration, the discussion must be held within the OSCE. A majority of ministers insisted upon these discussions' being focused on reconfirmation of the existing obligations, not on creation of new institutions. The prevailing view was that there was no sense in considering organizing an OSCE summit before its contents were clearly defined. The baton was subsequently taken over by the Greek OSCE Chairmanship, which threw itself heart and soul into directing an informal discussion on the issues within the framework of OSCE, the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation in Vienna. The breakthrough in this regard was the informal meeting of ministers of foreign affairs held on June 27-29, 2009 on the Greek island of Corfu that meant transformation of the ad hoc discussion into a targeted and politically oriented dialogue. If before Corfu some ministers were doubtful about the practical benefits of such a dialogue, a consensus on its necessity and its transformation into a more specific and permanent shape prevailed afterwards. The OSCE Chair, the then Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora Bakoyannis, officially announced the start of the Corfu Process to be guided according to the following principles:

- the dialogue will be anchored within the OSCE with contributions of the other security institutions also to be taken into consideration;
- dialogue will focus on the issues of crisis management, arms control and disarmament and in particular on the Treaty on the CFE;
- there will also be a discussion on new threats, including environmental security and reliability of energy sources supplies; and
- last but not least on how to strengthen compliance with human rights, democracy and rule of law.

The declared objective of the Corfu Process was renewal of trust among participating states, rendering mechanisms for better implementation of valid obligations more efficient and the creation of a platform to enable specific progress to

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<sup>8</sup> "Speech by Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France", World Policy Conference, Evian (October 8, 2008); <http://eng.kremlin.ru>.

be made in solving new security challenges. From Slovakia's point of view it was important that Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák succeeded in bringing in reference to energy security as a new topic to be discussed within the framework of the Corfu Process. In the autumn of 2009 the Greek OSCE Chairmanship in Vienna organized 10 discussion rounds on the level of permanent representatives to the OSCE during which there was sincere and, except for some cases, non-confrontational dialogue on the issues. All participating states, i.e. Russia and her close partners as well, once again reconfirmed the valid commitments of the OSCE and the concept of complex, cooperative and indivisible security. Despite its relaxed atmosphere and high degree of creativity, the discussion clearly revealed lack of trust and differing perceptions of the present security challenges.

From the very start of the Corfu Process Slovakia was actively involved in the dialogue. Of the representations of EU member countries the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic was in the forefront of those missions supporting efforts to renew objective and pragmatic dialogue on European security and invigoration of the OSCE. The EU gradually elaborated a system of internal coordination on the basis of which the Presidency delivers an EU framework position during the Corfu meetings and at the same time the individual member states may on an individual basis present their proposals and emphasize their national priorities. The EU did not and does not wish to hold a dialogue based on a principle of blocs and therefore does not prevent its members from presenting their specific suggestions and initiatives, or from presenting them with nations outside the EU. On the contrary, the EU regards the Corfu Process as just another opportunity to overcome bloc thinking in the form

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of creation of ad hoc coalitions, also including the nations of the post-Soviet space. The Corfu Process is inter alia a test for the EU itself and its new approach to the implementation of common security and foreign policy in the spirit of the *Treaty of Lisbon*. It is quite natural that the EU agreed upon the following guiding principles that frame its positions and from which the EU does not, under any circumstances, intend to withdraw:

- dialogue must focus on real, not virtual threats and challenges; it is the content that is of importance, not the form;
- the present security architecture has served us well, but it needs to be reinforced and rendered more efficient;
- the OSCE has, in a complex and balanced way, an irreplaceable role to play in solving security threats and challenges in all dimensions;
- European security dialogue must be anchored within the OSCE, with the interests of the other security institutions to be taken into consideration, too;
- the EU is open to discussion on any proposal to strengthen European security, but the OSCE must at the same time remain the primary forum for discussion on the EST and on other initiatives;



- the dialogue must not go on in a vacuum, to restore trust tangible progress is needed in solving the security issues of our region including renewal of the arms control regime and disarmament and positive development as regards so-called frozen conflicts;
- the dialogue must be open in character and should not prejudge any of the possible outcomes;
- to achieve our common objectives the EU will be constructive, will present specific proposals and will cooperate with others;
- the fundamental objective is *Helsinki plus*, not *Helsinki a la carte*; no new obligations are needed, what we need is better implementation of the existing ones.

As regards contents, the EU's priority is to orientate the dialogue on the issues of strengthening OSCE response capability in the case of a potential crisis. Taking the experience of the war in Georgia into consideration it is apparent that the mechanisms of early warning and mobilization of the OSCE conflict prevention instruments need to be rendered more efficient. To achieve better implementation of obligations the EU also wishes to focus on a more conceptual elaboration of the OSCE's activities in the post-conflict period and on reassessment and more efficient application of the OSCE mechanisms. Last but not least the EU emphasizes the necessity to modernize the system of confidence- and security-building measures and is in this regard prepared to launch negotiations on strengthening the Vienna Document 1999 and at the same time to check the possibilities of application of this instrument to non-military areas of security. The EU also wishes to strengthen the OSCE instruments for a more efficient fight against so-called transnational threats and to achieve greater synergy with other international organizations on the basis of the OSCE Platform for Cooperative Security. The Slovak mission to the international organizations in Vienna succeeded in persuading the EU to embrace the issue of energy security as one of its priorities in the field of the economic and environmental dimension aimed at a more

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detailed elaboration of the tasks the OSCE has in strengthening itself. The permanent mission patiently drew attention to the need to use the OSCE as a proper platform to hold an expert and political dialogue on issues concerning energy security. It was notably emphasized that the OSCE, as an organization combining origin, transit and consumption of energy sources countries as well as an organization based on principles of cooperative dialogue, has offered to process rules of good conduct in this field as well as a mechanism of early warning to be applied to prevent a threatening energy crisis. Partners have gradually come to understand the added value of the OSCE as a platform which might appropriately supplement, not replace other international structures dealing with the energy industry. Despite initial distrust and worries on the part of certain EU member countries or the European Commission, the issue of energy

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security was firmly established in discussions within the OSCE. Not only does Slovakia enjoy great support from the US, which wishes to strengthen the role of the OSCE in protection of the critical energy infrastructure, but there is also support by the V4 partners and states such as Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan. This is of course just the beginning of the road and to acquire more specific features the topic will need to be further advocated.

Last but not least the EU is also active in advocating the issue of more efficient implementation of OSCE obligations in the area of human rights with the emphasis on freedom of media and speech. Should there be any violation of obligations emerging from the analysis of the human rights situation in individual countries leading to the formulation of recommendations and their subsequent monitoring, including better possibilities to initiate a political dialogue within the framework of the OSCE Permanent Council by the OSCE institutions operating in the area of human rights, and should there be failure to comply with the recommendations of these institutions, the EU will strive to advocate a greater degree of autonomy. Together with the US, the EU also manifestly wishes to render more efficient and functional those existing mechanisms aimed at support for the implementation of obligations or for early indication of their violation. This is certainly an extremely confrontational issue for Russia and for others that have problems with democratic institutions and human rights and their intentions are more antagonistic than otherwise. They wish to make use of the Corfu Process to restrict the autonomous conduct and action of OSCE institutions and to minimize room for political discussion on human rights issues.

Russia's approach to the Corfu Process has always remained ambivalent. Although Russian ambassador in Vienna A. Azimov actively joined the discussion, he at the same time made it quite clear that Moscow considers the Corfu Process as an activity separate from the elaboration of the EST. During the Athens OSCE Ministerial Council held in early December 2009 the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov originally, according to the available information, intended to block adoption of the decision on continuation of the Corfu Process, but Moscow at the last moment changed its mind and the decision on its continuation in a structured form was finally adopted by the ministers. Kazakhstan as the upcoming OSCE Chairman-in-Office was entrusted with the elaboration by the end of June 2010 of an interim report for a joint session of the OSCE Permanent Council and the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation. The report should sum up specific proposals and initiatives tabled by participating states within the framework of the Corfu Process. The contents of the report should determine the future orientation of the process. At the same time it was decided that the process would be continued in the form of informal sessions of permanent representatives to the OSCE in Vienna that would be focused on discussing specific proposals in the following areas:

- implementation of all standards, principles and obligations of the OSCE;
- role of the OSCE in the area of early warning, prevention and settlement of conflicts, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- role of arms control and disarmament regimes and those aimed at strengthening trust and security in developing the security environment;

- transnational and multidimensional threats and challenges;
- economic and environmental challenges;
- human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as democracy and rule of law;
- strengthening the OSCE's efficiency;
- cooperation with the other organizations and institutions on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Cooperative Security.

Ministers in Athens also adopted a political declaration on the Corfu Process in which *inter alia* a proposal to hold an OSCE summit in 2010 was taken into consideration, with such a high level meeting requiring the adequate preparation of agenda and modalities. Although due to Russia's interest in keeping the EST away from the Corfu Process neither of the two decisions cleared up ambivalence and confusion, they offered an opportunity to continue the structured debate on specific proposals and initiatives, to endeavor to gradually reduce accumulated mistrust and suspicion and to reduce differences in conceptual approaches.

In order to present and discuss specific proposals within the areas of the issues mentioned above permanent representatives to the OSCE in Vienna nowadays hold regular biweekly meetings. The key issue of the current discussion is prevention, settlement of conflicts and post-conflict rehabilitation. There were several proposals of varying quality and various levels of elaboration presented on the issue. The common objective of all, except for Russian proposal, is finding a way of speeding up the OSCE response capability i.e. how to shorten the time between the indication of a possible conflict and subsequent intervention by the organization. The only solution possible is to strengthen the powers of the OSCE chairmanship, Secretariat and those of the individual institutions. In this connection, however, Russia presents her worries about threatening the consensual principle. Necessity to better elaborate on these processes aimed at achieving higher ability of action and synergy of the international players was once again shown during the recent unrest in Kyrgyzstan. The role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and his interest in transposing the so-called Recommendations of Bolzano is also discussed in the context of conflict prevention. The recommendations establish rules of conduct for states in relation to national minorities living outside their territories in a politically obligatory form and are based on the following principle: "yes to support for minorities by the mother country conditioned by a prior agreement with the state in the territory of which they live". As substantial differences of opinions in relation to fundamentals of European security, including terms such as the indivisibility or the multidimensional character of security, emerge, the discussion is often of an esoteric nature. EU member countries and the US are well aware of the fact that there is no other alternative to making use of the possibilities offered by the Corfu Process to involve Russia in dialogue aimed at a gradual transformation of the country's perception of the world, based as it is on balance of powers, in 'the right direction'. The alternative scenario would have to allow for continuing degradation of relations, confrontational rhetoric, stagnation in the settlement of frozen conflicts, militarization, final breakdown of disarmament regimes and the deterioration of democracy and the situation in the field of human rights in Russia and other post-Soviet nations. As the influence of nations and regions outside the OSCE is at present growing globally, this is not in our interest, nor is it in that of Russia.

The decision adopted by the Athens Ministerial Council mobilized EU member countries, which started to work on specific proposals aimed at rendering the mechanisms and institutions of the OSCE more efficient. The dual approach of the EU based on uncompromising defense of principles applied in parallel with openness to concrete initiatives, including some useful ideas presented by Moscow, is beginning to yield fruits. Issues of conflict prevention and implementation of commitments together with the search for opportunities to invigorate arms control and disarmament regimes thanks to the activities of the EU gradually come to the forefront of the dialogue within the Corfu Process and represent a specific response to the draft EST.

Slovakia participated in the elaboration of a proposal to strengthen the role of the OSCE in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation within the framework of which the country wishes to make use of the experience gained in elaborating the security sector reform within the UN. At the same time Slovakia worked out and tabled a proposal of a five-degree early warning mechanism to prevent potential crises in the field of energy security. The substance of the proposal consists in the fact that the OSCE is, as an organization bringing together supplier, transit and consumer countries, a proper platform for the modified application of its traditional mechanisms of early warning in this field, too, as the area has recently become an important security factor. Slovakia suggests that each participating state have the right to ask any other state to provide information on the causes of a potential crisis situation. Should there be no satisfactory response received within a certain time limit, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office should be authorized to send a team of experts to acquaint itself with the situation and propose further measures to be discussed by the OSCE Permanent Council.

The other states are now bringing and in the future are still to bring in many other proposals and initiatives and Kazakhstan is, as the current Chairman-in-Office, to decide how to handle them and to what extent they will be taken into consideration in the June report. The expectation is justified that the report will have to reflect the specific proposals tabled by the EU and the US. The EU and NATO will, according to the concise character of the report and according to Russia's responsiveness as regards solutions to other key issues, decide whether to support holding an OSCE summit in late 2010. Kazakhstan, the current Chairman-in-Office, is doing its best to convince the key players to support a summit and for the time being seems to be being successful in this attempt. As during the recent meeting on nuclear security meeting presidents Obama and Nazarbayev agreed upon an OSCE summit, no further speculations as to whether there will summit held or not make sense now. What is needed now is that everybody does his best to fill the summit with contents. Kazakhstan has already announced that in July 2010 an informal meeting of OSCE ministers would be held. The meeting is to assess the course and current outcomes of the Corfu dialogue and to define the main topics of the summit. The issue is still open and will also depend on current developments in the global

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security situation. The summit's contents and added value from the point of view of the Corfu Process and from the point of view of the other security processes in our continent, including developments of the frozen conflicts and the regime of the *Treaty on CFE*, are of key importance to the EU. Preparation for the summit seem, on the other hand to have obtained their own dynamism and there is a growing number of states that realize that holding such a summit could become a unique opportunity to break distrust and to start up another and, in terms of quality, higher level of the Corfu Process. From the point of view of the Slovak Republic an agreement reached by leaders on mandate for specific negotiations on the issues of the Corfu Process mentioned and entrusting the Vienna ambassadors to conduct the talks with the outcomes being expected within 2-3 years would undoubtedly be a success.

## THE RUSSIAN DILEMMA

The question naturally arises of whether the Corfu Process is sufficient to satisfy Moscow's ambitions as regards the draft EST. Most states including Slovakia have rejected and still reject discussing the treaty as such, but have nothing against a discussion on some of the Treaty's elements within the framework of the individual Corfu dialogue topics for discussion. Russia herself persistently claims that the draft EST does fall within the OSCE and that it should be discussed by another, for the time being unspecified forum. The fact that the OSCE really, also thanks to the unity of NATO and EU members, became the main forum for renewed European dialogue and the Corfu process is a concrete response to Medvedev's initiative and represents a complex dilemma for Russia. Medvedev's proposal never concerned the OSCE as such. It was on the contrary to replace the OSCE with a new system of balance of power with the politico-military basket emphasized. Although within this construction the OSCE was perceived as an important factor, it was not the most important one. Despite that Russian diplomacy let itself be drawn into the Finnish and Greek activities and decided to actively participate in the Corfu Process. It probably came to understand that Corfu was offering a proper platform to advocate Russian views and initiatives. Russia for example made use of the current negotiations to invigorate her original proposal for elaboration of the OSCE Charter thanks to which it would inter alia be able to try to weaken commitments in the field of human rights, to strengthen control of individual states over the independent activities of institutions and missions and, to the detriment of political dialogue, to drag the OSCE into a futile legalistic discussion. At the same time Moscow did not miss out on any opportunity to emphasize the necessity to start discussion on a politically binding EST outside the OSCE. Moscow did not, however, yet define her position on the Corfu Process and it is presumable that there will be further tacking about and playing the field on the part of Russia, which still hopes to see her interests through.

It is therefore very important that the EU members act proactively and present concrete initiatives that take their coordinated activities into consideration and that, in order to avoid useless bloc confrontation, at the same time even get non-member states to sponsor them.

It is gratifying that the individual members of the EU mastered this tactics and elaborated a wide range of remarkable proposals. The Corfu Process is in this regard a test of the EU's ability to coordinate its activities and to act jointly in the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon.

## WHAT ARE WE IN FOR NEXT?

The fact that progress was made in the Corfu dialogue, which has already reached the stage of presenting specific proposals, is in the first place the result of a wide interpretation of conditions defined by states west of Vienna and the efforts of all participating states including Russia to respect them, despite material differences in opinions.

At the time of writing this paper Russian diplomats announced the possibility of a reassessment of the present double-track policy of Moscow. There is still darkness persisting as regards Russia's tactics and for the time being no signs of a possible change in strategy are visible. The Corfu Process is of a multilayered and multidimensional character. It is an aggregate of several equations with many unknowns that may, but need not be clarified in the process of the dialogue itself. It is, however, important that the process is of an inclusive character and that it advances with all players taking part, with none of the proposals presented, including the draft

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*Although the future of the Corfu Process is uncertain, its contribution is even now visible thanks to the process, a better atmosphere of trust, openness and solidarity has been introduced in the OSCE.*

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EST, being expressly rejected. What results are expected from the Corfu Process is not so important in the present stage. Focusing on conciseness and maintaining the dynamism of the process is what is most needed now. The main added value of the OSCE consists in a willingness of the states to discuss, listen to each other and possibly even modify their home and foreign policies. Although the future of the Corfu Process is uncertain, its contribution is even now visible thanks to the process, a better atmosphere of trust, openness and solidarity has been introduced in the OSCE. The OSCE was in 2007 about to break down, while at present the states perceive the organizations in a more optimistic fashion, although for the time being the Corfu Process is more an opportunity than a real negotiation process. It turned out that if there were political will, the OSCE might once again play the role of a forum for inclusive dialogue on European security. Many participating states forgot about this unique role of the OSCE and the Corfu Process helped them rediscover it. There is a chance for the OSCE to become a place for discussion on the fundamental principles of coexistence of states and building new trust, and this is possible despite different approaches to values. The organization may become a forum to generate a willingness for common action against new, more complex security challenges and threats. This is the main added value of the Corfu Process. The process needs to be given a chance to develop further. It is also necessary to continue patiently to mediate differences of opinion in the spirit of a cooperative approach.

We need, however, to deal with the fact that in the near future we shall most probably not succeed in building a stable and clear security architecture such as was in

place in the period of bipolar division between East and West. With the unclear and diverse character of the new security threats it will not perhaps be possible to count on a possible stable and institutionalized security system. Apart from that, a major turn towards strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law in Russia or in the other problematic states of the post-Soviet space can hardly be expected. Therefore it is rather necessary to prepare for a period of cohabitation of several value systems and their gradual convergence or cooperation in the fight against the new security threats. The Corfu Process offers the West and Russia an opportunity for improvement of relations and the gradual building of a new security order based on trust, cooperation, respect for legitimate security interests and compliance with universal values. The way that it has developed so far corresponds to the efforts by NATO to achieve 'strategic partnership' with Russia. From the point of view of the EU the Russian worries of a threat from the West nowadays appear to be absurd, but they are in all likelihood still real for Russia, although it is questionable how much of this is just tactics and political marketing. Corfu may be one of the instruments to gradually alleviate them and to influence Russian thinking in a Euro-Atlantic direction. Within the framework of the Corfu dialogue the EU must therefore be active, not let itself be discouraged and present specific initiatives aimed at influencing its direction and providing it with meaningful contents to which Moscow will also need to respond factually.

For nowadays the main challenge for the EU and NATO is certainly not the draft EST, but finding a method to harmonize the national interests of individual states and, in the first place, the often contradictory ones of Russia which are, with the common values of the community of states of Western civilization. The Corfu Process is an opportunity to search for such a method through common perception and united definition of security threats as well as through an agreement on common measures to eliminate them or through a gradual overcoming of the deep gulf in perceptions of values and a better comprehension of the thinking of the other party. Knowing, however, that there are only worse alternatives we need to be prepared for demanding and long negotiations.

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# CLIMATE CHANGES AND CLIMATE VARIABILITY IN THE WORLD AND IN SLOVAKIA. PRIOR TO, IN AND AFTER 2009

MILAN LAPIN

The terms and facts connected with climate changes and climate variability are often at the center of attention. This is especially the case where various weather anomalies occur. With regard to the fact that the non-professional public (and sometimes even the professional one) is not aware of long-term climatological averages or the characteristics of climate variability, cases of weather that, in relative terms, occur quite frequently are sometimes regarded as significant anomalies. The following text is first and foremost devoted to climate changes and climate variability dependent on time. The variability of climate elements may be dependent on space as well, but in that case climate changes and variability are never referred to. In this paper attention is mostly paid to the assessment of knowledge and activities that were performed in 2009 and relate to climate changes and variability, including the *Fifth National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change*.<sup>1</sup>

## SEVERAL DEFINITIONS TO BEGIN WITH

*Climate Changes*: The term was in the past used to cover all changes connected with climate (according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and ac-

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<sup>1</sup> "The 5<sup>th</sup> National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol" (Bratislava: Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, 2009); [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk\\_nc5.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk_nc5.pdf); M. Lapin, J. Szemešová, "Review of Climate Change and GHGs Inventory in Slovakia", *Slovak Meteorological Journal* Vol. 12 (2009), pp. 151-155.



According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) the term nowadays only covers climate changes of natural character).

*Climate Variability:* Climatic conditions are characterized by averages, extremes and variability as well as by trend and cyclic characteristics. Climate variability may for example be expressed by a standard deviation and sometimes even by frequency of occurrence of extremes.

*Climatic Cycles:* The natural cycles of climatic characteristics follow first and foremost from the solar climate (which has a yearly course and an eleven-year solar cycle). Other cycles are connected with the cyclicity of certain processes (such as El Niño, Southern Oscillation, North-Atlantic Oscillation, Arctic Oscillation and a whole range of others). Apart from the yearly course and El Niño, all the others are expressed in a very weak way. The periodicity of ice age cycles amounts to up to 100,000 years and is considerably influenced by the so-called Milankovitch Cycles<sup>2</sup>, which are connected with a change in the orbital parameters of the Earth's circumnavigation of the Sun. Fluctuation with a periodicity exceeding eleven years is considered a low-frequency cycle.<sup>3</sup>

## CLIMATE CHANGE ACCORDING TO THE WMO AND IPCC AND THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT ON THE ATMOSPHERE

The term *change of climate* or *climate change* should only be understood as those changes in climatic conditions that are connected with humanly conditioned growth of the atmospheric greenhouse effect since the beginning of the industrial revolution. From the end of the last ice age until 1750 the concentration of greenhouse gases in

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*In past geological periods the concentration of the decisive greenhouse gases in the atmosphere was both much higher and a little lower than present values.*

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the atmosphere has changed only slightly, since then the growth of all greenhouse gases except for water vapor has been accelerating. The volume of water vapor in the atmosphere is dependent on the temperature of the oceans, temperature of the atmosphere and the water balance of the continents (from 1950 its volume in the atmosphere has increased by approximately 3%). Halocarbons are

completely new greenhouse gases (occurring only after 1930). In 2009 as compared with period before 1750 the concentration of carbon dioxide was higher by 38.5%, while that of methane was higher by about 150%. Climate change is also shown by global warming, which at present represents about 0.15 °C in ten years.

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<sup>2</sup> An easily comprehensible interpretation of Milankovitch Cycles in the English language is available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milankovitch\\_cycles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milankovitch_cycles).

<sup>3</sup> M. Lapin, J. Tomlain *Všeobecná a regionálna klimatológia*. A University Textbook (in Slovak) (Bratislava: Comenius University of Bratislava, 2001); for further information see also publications of the IPCC available at [http://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/publications\\_and\\_data.htm](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_and_data.htm).

The term *greenhouse effect of the atmosphere* should be understood as the sum of consequences of radiative active gases in the atmosphere that absorb heat radiation from the Earth, warm up the part of the atmosphere in which they are situated and, due to a stronger backward reradiation of the atmosphere, change the balance of long-wave radiation alongside the Earth's surface. Due to a stronger greenhouse effect there is then a higher temperature being stabilized than is the case with a weaker greenhouse effect. Within the warming of the surface layer of the atmosphere the overall natural greenhouse effect amounts to around 33 °C, so should there be no greenhouse effect of the atmosphere and long wave radiation were to leak directly into space, the temperature of the ground layer of the atmosphere would, on a global average, be only around eighteen degrees below zero. This is, compared with the present average (nearly 15 °C) 33 °C less. In past geological periods the concentration of the decisive greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and others) was both much higher and a little lower than present values. To objectively assess ongoing climate change we need to be familiar with the history of climate changes on the Earth in recent centuries as well as the physical theory of climate change and climate changes.<sup>4</sup>

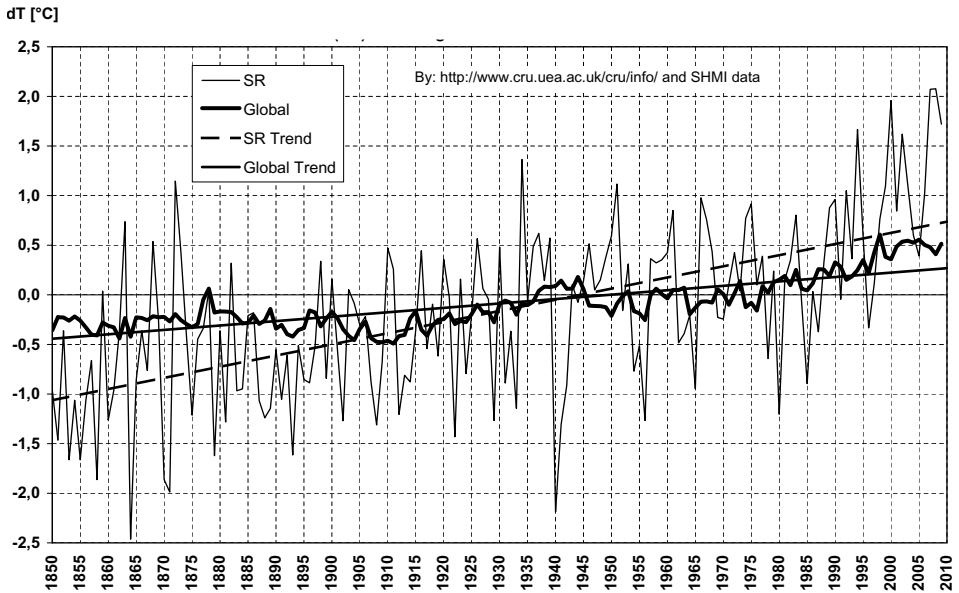
## CLIMATE CHANGES AND CLIMATE FLUCTUATIONS FROM THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century there have been several weather stations providing relatively reliable air temperature and air pressure measurements. From 1780 there were thirty-nine weather stations established in Europe and North America and most of them still exist. Significant from the point of view of climate changes in Slovakia are the observations made in Vienna (from 1775), Prague-Klementinum (from 1775), in Kremsmünster (from 1796), in Cracow (from 1792), in Zagreb (from 1862), but also those made from 1851 until 1881 in several Slovak stations (Bratislava, Banská Štiavnica, Liptovský Hrádok, Oravský Podzámok, Košice) and above all in Hurbanovo from 1871. Precipitation totals are available on a continuous basis in Slovakia from about 25 stations from 1881 and from 203 stations from 1901 (the situation is similar to that in neighboring countries). A relatively dense network of observations of air temperature around the world from the mid-19th century enabled the calculation of reliable series of global averages from 1850 or 1880 (the CRU center in England, GISS and NOAA in the USA) and in this way to follow changes of the global temperature of the ground layer of the atmosphere over continents and oceans. See Figure 1 for an example of yearly temperature averages in the world and in Slovakia according to CRU.

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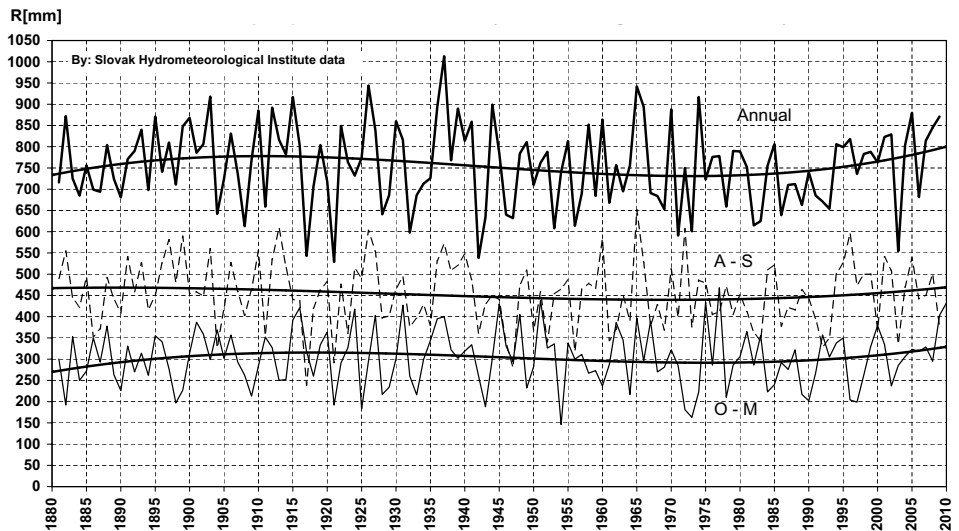
<sup>4</sup> Ibid

**Figure 1.** Deviations of Annual Air Temperature Averages (dT) from Averages of the period 1951-1980 in Slovakia (the thinner line) and Globally (on the whole Earth, the thicker line) in 1881-2009



Source: Data of the Climate Research Unit (2010); <http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/cru/data/temperature/>;  
Data of the network of the weather station of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute of Bratislava.

**Figure 2.** Territorial Averages of Precipitation Totals in Slovakia in the period between 1881 and 2009 as calculated from monthly precipitation totals of 203 stations (Annual – yearly, A-S – April-September, O-M – October-March).



Source: Data of the network of weather stations of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute of Bratislava.

Figure 2 shows territorial averages of precipitation totals, which well reflect the precipitation conditions of Slovakia as a whole. There were lower precipitation sums in Central Europe in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century followed by a humid and cold period, while until the mid-40s there was a humid and warm period followed by a period of generally low precipitation culminating in a dry and very warm period between 1988 and 1994. Later the temperatures were even higher, but the period was richer in precipitation and there were great deviations. A general trend of a drop in yearly precipitation totals is obvious in Central Europe as a whole and is most obvious in Hungary, the eastern part of Austria and in south-western Slovakia. Compared with the situation around 1901 precipitation totals dropped sporadically by as much as 30%. Important also were the changes occurring in the yearly regime of monthly precipitation totals as the maximum is shifting from July to June and sporadically to May even. This fact proves a growing impact of the Mediterranean. The autumn maximum is connected with the activity of Mediterranean cyclones. In recent decades an obvious drop in precipitation sums is visible not only in the autumn but in the spring season as well. This may be connected with the shift of the frontal zone northwards, with the growth of the western atmospheric zonal circulation and with changes in the Atlantic and Arctic oscillation of the air pressure, which throughout Europe result in a differing distribution of precipitation totals.

Changes in other climate elements are to a considerable degree connected with a change of temperature and precipitation conditions. This especially concerns air humidity, snow cover, evaporation, but also discharges in rivers. A persistent drop

in relative air humidity is being observed in spring and summer, while such a drop is less striking in autumn and winter. Potential evaporation is growing considerably in spring and summer, and actual evaporation is changing depending on moisture conditions. In general soil humidity is falling, but this is mostly so in the region of southern Slovakia, eastern Austria and in Hungary as a whole. As regards the system of atmospheric circulation and the precipitation regime since 1995 there have been certain changes, precipitation totals have increased, in several regions in Europe and globally extremely high daily and monthly precipitation sums have occurred. In 1998 globally there were many cases of extraordinary weather and the year was, as regards the global average, declared the warmest year of the past millennium (there was an extraordinary strong El Niño). The decade between 2000 and 2009 was by far the warmest both globally and in Central Europe and the period between 2007 and 2009 in Central Europe was markedly the warmest in the history of meteorological measurement.<sup>5</sup>

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*The decade between 2000 and 2009 was by far the warmest both globally and in Central Europe and between 2007 and 2009 in Central Europe was markedly the warmest in the history of meteorological measurement.*

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<sup>5</sup> M. Lapin, M. Gera, J. Hrvol', J. Melo, J. Tomlain, "Possible Impacts of Climate Change on the Hydrologic Cycle in Slovakia and Results of Observations in 1951-2007", *Biologia* 64/3 (2009), pp. 454-459; See also information and papers on the site of the Department of Meteorology and Climatology, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University of Bratislava from 2004 at [http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public\\_html/main9.html](http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public_html/main9.html).

## POSSIBLE CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGES

Views of possible causes of climate changes were historically developing on several levels. There have been several hypotheses, but none of them is, however, generally accepted as absolute accurate. The theories could be divided into several groups:

*Hypotheses based on factors the effect of which is supposed, but has not been proved.* This type of hypotheses first and foremost concerns variation in the solar constant – there was probably a certain impact of its changes present in the pre-Cambrian period. There may also be some impact brought about by changes in the concentration of interplanetary matter. Variations of solar activity – there are regular eleven-year cycles and several low-frequency cycles, but their correlations with climate elements are relatively insignificant. Terrestrial causes, such as intense volcanic activity, may result in a mechanism triggering considerable temperature drop caused by a decrease in the atmosphere's penetrability by solar radiation. Other terrestrial causes are changes in the parameters of the Earth's rotation, movements of the terrestrial crust, shift of continents and changes in the inflow of geothermal energy towards the Earth's surface.

*Hypotheses based on an analysis of really existing factors.* The astronomical hypothesis is based on changes in the orbital parameters of the Earth and was in the most detailed

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*Changes in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in the past have already led to changes in the greenhouse effect of the atmosphere and then to changes exceeding 10°C in the global average of the air temperature in the surface layer of the atmosphere. It is important that all the processes just mentioned went on relatively slowly for more than several thousand years.*

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way elaborated by Milankovich (a change in the axial tilt of the Earth's rotational axis to its orbital plane from 22°04' to 24°34' with a period of forty one thousand years; variation in the eccentricity of the Earth's orbit within a range of between 0.0007 up to 0.0658 with a period of about a hundred thousand years). The simultaneous impact of these factors may result in the occurrence of complicated climate fluctuations in various parts of the Earth and may provide an explanation for the emergence and the variations of the ice ages in the Quaternary. The orographic hypothesis is based first and foremost on tectonic movements of the terrestrial crust. Warm periods are distinguished by gradual relief, while cold periods follow the upheaval of continents, i.e. are connected with the creation of

high and vast mountain ranges (glaciations always began on high mountain ranges in higher latitudes with sufficient precipitation during the cold periods of the year). Changes in the orography of the undersea bed may considerably influence the character of sea circulation, which is of extraordinary significance in the climate system of the Earth.

*Hypotheses based on research into processes under way with feedback being taken into account.* There is a theory of spontaneous growth of glaciers according to which a slight temperature drop in high latitudes is sufficient to make glaciation begin to increase spontaneously. What is, however, important is the fact that the creation of glaciation requires a sufficient volume of solid phase atmospheric precipitation. The distribution of heat from tropical areas to high latitudes is predominantly established by the regulating

function of the world's oceans in high latitudes through surface and pelagic currents. Changes in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (but changes in other greenhouse gases as well) in the past had already led to changes in the greenhouse effect of the atmosphere and then to changes exceeding 10°C in the global average of the air temperature in the surface layer of the atmosphere. It is important that all the processes just mentioned went on relatively slowly (in the majority of cases for more than several thousand years).<sup>6</sup>

## NEW KNOWLEDGE

As early as 2008 the forecasts of a part of the scientific community of a possible long-term weakening of solar radiation were intensified. Some of the authors published papers<sup>7</sup> on the possible occurrence of a new Maunder minimum of solar activity that was the main cause of the so-called Little Ice Age in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Until 2010 solar activity remained at a really very low level and at the same time the cold phase of La Niña persisted until as late as June 2009. The scientists of the climate skeptics bloc<sup>8</sup> competed with each other in forecasting a considerable temperature drop in the global climate. Nothing like that followed and as soon as the La Niña phenomenon disappeared, the average temperature of the oceans began to grow rapidly and in late 2009 the figures exceeded 1998, the warmest year so far. 2009 was on average one of the warmest years on the Earth from the beginning of systematic observations. The global temperature in the period between January and March 2010 rose to the limits of the maxima found so far.<sup>9</sup> When more attention is paid to Figure 1, one can see that in the past there were several fluctuations similar to those occurring in the period between 2006 and 2008. They were mostly connected with alternation of the El Niño and La Niña phenomena and possibly with volcanic eruptions as well, but not with variations of solar activity. What climatologists had been expecting for a long time now came true – i.e. that a drop in direct solar radiation on the perpendicular area on the upper limit of the atmosphere by 1 to 2 W.m<sup>-2</sup> may not cause any sudden change in global temperature. Once recalculated to the horizontal area of the Earth and when 30% of albedo is subtracted this only represents a drop of 0.2 to 0.4 Wm<sup>-2</sup>,

<sup>6</sup> M. Lapin, J. Tomlain *Všeobecná a regionálna klimatológia (General and Regional Climatology)*. A University Textbook (in Slovak) (Bratislava: Comenius University of Bratislava, 2001); Further information available in publications of the IPCC available at: [http://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/publications\\_and\\_data.htm](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_and_data.htm); See also information and papers on the site of the Department of Meteorology and Climatology, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University of Bratislava from 2004 available at [http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public\\_html/main9.html](http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public_html/main9.html).

<sup>7</sup> Papers by climate skeptics published from 2005 e.g. in the blog at [http://neviditelnyes.lidovky.cz/p\\_veda.asp](http://neviditelnyes.lidovky.cz/p_veda.asp).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Data from the Climate Research Unit (2010); <http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/cru/data/temperature/>.



with the increase of energy in the climate system of the Earth due to the strengthened greenhouse effect of the atmosphere at present approaching  $2 \text{ W.m}^{-2}$ . By 2100 the increase may even exceed  $5 \text{ W.m}^{-2}$ .<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1 shows that in Slovakia, just like in most EU countries, the period between 2007 and 2009 was especially warm. So warm a three-year series had not been recorded from the beginning of meteorological measurements. At the same time Figure 2 shows that scenarios of a change going on in the regime of precipitation sums are beginning to appear. In recent summers there are on the one hand irregular precipitations with frequent dry periods and occasional episodes of very intense downpours on the other. In cold half-years precipitation totals are increased and it was first and foremost the high mountainous places that got a lot of snow in the period between 2007 and 2009, while there was very little snow in the lowlands. Last winter even brought two serious winter floods, which caused great damage. Slovakia was not the only country to be hit by weather extremes, as extreme drought and destructive floods hit many EU countries in recent years.

Scenarios of climate change until 2100 began to be prepared in Slovakia from as early as 1993.<sup>11</sup> In the period between 1995 and 1997 the first complete series of climate change scenarios was published and is still being used in impact studies. In the meantime new scenarios of climate change in the form of time series of daily and monthly data, extremes and extraordinary weather events were prepared. Not only do scenarios dating back to the period between 1995 and 1997 become real, warming and weather extremes are more striking than expected. Figure 3 shows deviations of monthly air temperature averages from the standard of the period between 1951 and 1980 for Hurbanovo from 2002. A great predominance of relatively warm months is obvious. The occurrence of relatively colder months plays an important role in the region as such weather limits the incidence of certain verminous organisms, pathogens and illnesses.<sup>12</sup>

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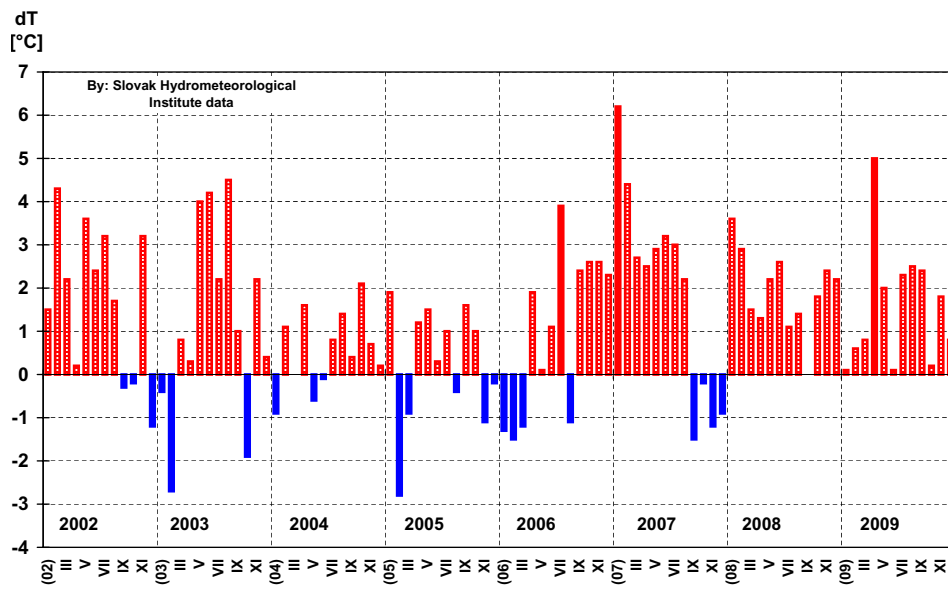
<sup>10</sup> M. Lapin, J. Tomlain *Všeobecná a regionálna klimatológia (General and Regional Climatology)*. A University Textbook (in Slovak) (Bratislava: Comenius University of Bratislava, 2001); for further information see also publications of the IPCC available at [http://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/publications\\_and\\_data.htm](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_and_data.htm); See also information and papers on the site of the Department of Meteorology and Climatology, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University of Bratislava available from 2004 at [http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public\\_html/main9.html](http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public_html/main9.html).

<sup>11</sup> "The 5<sup>th</sup> National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol" (Bratislava: Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, 2009); [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk\\_nc5.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk_nc5.pdf); M. Lapin, M. Gera, J. Hrvol, J. Melo, J. Tomlain, "Possible Impacts of Climate Change on the Hydrologic Cycle in Slovakia and Results of Observations in 1951-2007", *Biologia* 64/3 (2009), pp. 454-459; M. Lapin, J. Zemešová, "Review of Climate Change and GHGs Inventory in Slovakia", *Slovak Meteorological Journal* Vol. 12 (2009), pp. 151- 155.

<sup>12</sup> "The 5<sup>th</sup> National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol" (Bratislava: Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, 2009); [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk\\_nc5.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk_nc5.pdf); for further information see also publications of the IPCC available at [http://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/publications\\_and\\_data.htm](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_and_data.htm).



**Figure 3.** Deviations of Monthly Air Temperature ( $dT$ ) from the average of the period between 1951 and 1980 in Hurbanovo in the period between 2002 and 2009 (Columns Below Zero Represent relatively Cold Months)



Source: Data of the network of weather stations of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute of Bratislava.

## NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In 1994 the Slovak Republic ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). There is an obligation to prepare national communications on climate change (NC), to get them discussed by the Government of the Slovak Republic and to send them on a regular basis to the relevant UN body. The first NC was worked out in 1995, other NCs followed in 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2009.<sup>13</sup> The NC of 2009 is already available to the public and just like the previous communica-

<sup>13</sup> "The 5<sup>th</sup> National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol" (Bratislava: Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, 2009); [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk\\_nc5.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk_nc5.pdf); M. Lapin, J. Szemešová, "Review of Climate Change and GHGs Inventory in Slovakia", *Slovak Meteorological Journal* Vol. 12, 2009, pp. 151-155; See also information and papers on the site of the Department of Meteorology and Climatology, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University of Bratislava from 2004 available at [http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public\\_html/main9.html](http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public_html/main9.html).

tions includes a whole range of new knowledge received within the framework of inventorization of greenhouse gases (from all sources), working out the overview of changes in land use (especially as regards forest land and in connection with urbanization and water management adaptations), analysis of the changes and variability of the climate in Slovakia, but also new scenarios of climate change, assessment of the vulnerability of social and economic factors due to climate change, draft adaptation measures to mitigate possible negative consequences and to make use of the positive impacts of climate change. An important part of the NC is a proposal of so-called

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*According to the reassessed inventory of emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere dated April 15, 2009 as compared with 1990 Slovakia succeeded, after recalculation to the equivalent of effect of carbon dioxide, in reducing emissions by as much as 36%. This reduction was accomplished despite significant GDP growth achieved in the period between 2006 and 2008.*

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mitigating measures, i.e. measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere in individual economic sectors and an overview of implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Some of the most important information included in the fifth NC<sup>14</sup> follows further below. According to the reassessed inventory of emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere dated April 15, 2009, compared with 1990 Slovakia succeeded, after recalculation to the equivalent of the effect of carbon dioxide, in reducing emissions by as much as 36%. This reduction was accomplished despite the significant GDP growth achieved in the period between 2006 and 2008. The transport sector was the only one to record growth of emissions, up by

as much as 33% from 1990. Significant was the decrease in emissions in the sector of agriculture, which amounted in total to as much as 54%. The share of carbon dioxide in total aggregated greenhouse gases emissions amounted to as much as 81.2%, while that of methane amounted to as much as 9.7%. The Communication also includes proposed measures to reduce emission of greenhouse gases in Slovakia by as much as 25% by 2020 compared with 1990 (with the considerable GDP growth of 66% to be achieved in the period after 2010), while reduction by 18% is expected in the scenario without any measures. There are also scenarios of possible climate change in Slovakia and related consequences in individual social and economic sectors expected in the communication. Proposed adaptation measures to mitigate the possible negative consequences of climate change and to exploit certain positive impacts were elaborated separately for each sector. The rest of the data published and the full wording of the fifth NC is available at: [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk\\_nc5.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk_nc5.pdf).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "The 5<sup>th</sup> National Communication of the Slovak Republic on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol" (Bratislava: Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, 2009); [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk\\_nc5.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/svk_nc5.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid; See also information and papers on the site of the Department of Meteorology and Climatology, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University of Bratislava from 2004 available at [http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public\\_html/main9.html](http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public_html/main9.html).

## THE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT

There were many challenging, but also many useless or politically motivated and biased addresses and information delivered in Copenhagen.<sup>16</sup> It was quite clear from the very beginning that the developed countries realized and admitted their primary contribution to increasing the greenhouse effect of the atmosphere. What was, however, also obvious was the fact that they would use any means to avoid too quick a decrease in emission of greenhouse gases. They all also declared their willingness to provide developing countries with considerable funds to decelerate growth in their emission of greenhouse gases. The reason is easily comprehensible – although reducing emission of greenhouse gases by 50% is possible in the developed countries, the influential concerns for business activities based on the exploitation of cheap sources of fossil fuels as well as those of a major part of the population would be affected, as they would have to change their present costly consumerist lifestyle. In the event of a radically reducing emission of greenhouse gases there would always be too rapid a change in the procedures established in industry, transport and lifestyle, one which is obviously not an idea favored by a majority of the population or the industrial lobby in the developed countries. Politicians in those countries do not wish to uselessly risk possible failure in the next elections just because of not too popular measures aimed at reducing emission of greenhouse gases. During the summit no specific commitment was adopted by the developed or developing nations.

Provision of funds amounting to USD 100 billion a year to developing countries appears to be a better solution for the rich nations. Besides that it is certain that the rich nations are and will be less hit by possible consequences of climate change than the poor countries of the third world. This follows from more favorable climate conditions, better organization of adaptation measures and the generally better organized administration of those countries.

There are two main pieces of knowledge following from the discussions for Slovakia:

1. It is necessary that in 2010 a national strategy of reduction in emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by 2020 and 2050 be prepared in accordance with the EU strategy.
2. We must not be indifferent to the warnings of the scientists on the possible negative consequences of climate change and also need to elaborate a major paper on the strategy of adaptation measures, including a specific schedule.

## IN CONCLUSION

Climate changes and climate change are sometimes incorrectly used interchangeably with variability of weather or with variability of climate. Weather anomalies found are

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<sup>16</sup> See also information and papers on the site of the of Department of Meteorology and Climatology, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University of Bratislava from 2004 available at [http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public\\_html/main9.html](http://www.dmc.fmph.uniba.sk/public_html/main9.html).

frequently biased and exaggerated. All activities going on in the society should be sized to a certain climatic security that can only be established on the basis of a statistical analysis of reliable, long-term and homogeneous meteorological observations. Complete investment units of importance are sized to provide protection against harmful weather occurring less than once in fifty years on average, less important activities

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*There are only two options available – to try to slow down climate change through reducing the emission of greenhouse gases globally or to adapt to climate change through adaptation measures.*

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are sized to resist weather occurring once in ten years on average. To be able to rapidly assess any extraordinary weather event from the point of view of the average probability of its occurrence meteorologists and climatologists always have reliable climatic characteristics at their disposal. Another important quality of the climate is its long-term stationarity (relative stability). Most characteristics of climate variability may only be extrapolated for

the following decades if the climate is not substantially changing (i.e. it is behaving in a nearly stationary fashion), so that not just long-term averages, but also the long-term characteristics of dispersion of the climate elements (variability, extremes) are not substantially changed. In doing so we are helped by a more detailed analysis of climate changes.

Should there be any significant and rapid climate changes expected or going on, they also need to be taken into consideration in the provision of information on climatic security for practical use. By the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the climate is expected to be changing in a way exceeding all the findings made in the last thousand years (global warming by no less than 2°C and in Slovakia by no less than 3°C). It is certain that climate warming will not be supported by changing solar radiation, as this is expected to have lessened by 0.1% on average.

So there are only two options available – to try to slow down climate change through reducing the emission of greenhouse gases globally or to adapt to climate change through adaptation measures. While reduction of greenhouse gases emission in Slovakia helps global amelioration of climate change, the adaptation measures mostly address only Slovakia's national concerns connected with the possible negative consequences of climate change. Neither of the solutions just mentioned is wholly supported by the conclusions following from the scientific analysis, but both of them have been formulated to improve the conditions of the living and natural environment in the long term. In certain cases national governments also need to adopt such solutions in cases where the prospects of return on the investment exceeds a period of twenty years even. At the same time the probable risk of negative consequences occurring should the measures be ignored is less than 100% and in certain regions even less than 75%.

## AN OVERVIEW OF EXPERT, PROMOTIONAL AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The ratification of the FCCC in 1994 and the establishment of the National Climate Program (NCP) in 1991 in Slovakia required increased promotion, research and education in the field of theory, monitoring and consequences of climate change. In the period between 1994 and 2008 twelve NCP monographs including detailed scientific papers were published. Monographs summing up research and research activities as well as practical measures represented contributions from experts from twenty three institutions in Slovakia. In November 2008 the *Climate Changes – A Challenge for Europe* working seminar, organized by the Representation of the European Commission (the EC) in Slovakia and the Embassy of the French Republic in Slovakia was held. Proceedings of the seminar lectures and posters were also published.

Several interesting expert events were, to begin with as a preparation

for the Copenhagen summit on climate change, held in 2009, too. Experts events were principally organized by the ministries of foreign affairs and the environment of the Slovak Republic, the Representation of the EC, the British Council, the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute of Bratislava, the Environment Agency of the Slovak Republic, the Platform of the Non-Governmental Development Organizations, the Slovak Climate Coalition within the framework of the *Za matku Zem* (For Mother Earth) civic association and a whole range of other subjects. Two major international conferences were held in Slovakia and the greater part of the papers delivered there were aimed at climate change – CO2NET EAST held in March (organized ŠGÚDŠ) and Biohydrology held in September 2009 (organized by the Institute of Hydrology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences).

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**II.**

**PRIORITIES OF SLOVAKIA'S  
FOREIGN POLICY**

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# MITIGATION OF IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS ON SLOVAKIA – A PRIORITY OF THE SLOVAK FOREIGN SERVICE

RADOMÍR BOHÁČ

A historically new situation testing economic theories, political, economic and financial models as well as the international institutions is coming into existence due to the financial and economic crisis. It is therefore logical that in general the Slovak government continues to shift its attention in the field of implementation of foreign policy towards the current issues of economic diplomacy. Nowadays the role of state foreign policy does not only consist in creation of the favorable i.e. first and foremost safe external environment needed to achieve the national interests of state. An increase in the importance and in many cases even dominance of economic issues in the area of international relations is now actually present. In 2009, too, the basic framework of the Foreign Ministry's activities, besides the external factors determined in the first place by the crisis, was also based upon the general characteristics and given facts of Slovakia's economic environment.

In 2009 the struggle to mitigate the impacts of the crisis on Slovakia became a priority activity of the Foreign Ministry. Internal, organizational and conceptual modifications were all introduced to address the objective mentioned. The changes helped us concentrate upon several major areas of our activities, namely:

- activities within the European Union;
- increase in the cooperation and coordination of all players active in the area of external economic relations;
- support for pro-investment and pro-export promotional activities abroad;
- the search for best experience and practice of other nations;
- intensified operation and activities within international organizations aimed at achieving greater increase in economic value thanks to the advantages of our membership;
- proactive dialogue with businesses; and
- creation of Slovakia's modern image abroad.

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has only limited powers (representation of Slovakia's interests abroad or representation in international organizations) to engage in processes going on in the field of economics, our activities in the field of economic diplomacy in 2009 undoubtedly contributed to the elimination of negative impacts of the crisis. Unlike the other partners we have no direct instruments at our disposal (such as state assistance, operational programs, taxes, levies, incentives, contributions etc.) which could be employed to support the activities of businesses and the instruments of development assistance can only be exploited indirectly.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE UMBRELLA OF EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Powers in the field of external economic relations are at present divided into two levels. The first one consists of the government departments, while the other includes the implementation agencies and organizations (the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency, Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, Eximbanka, Slovak Guarantee and Development Bank etc.).

In a period of crisis and pressure for efficiency and high performance in state administration there is a new dimension appearing about the issue of unified management of the foreign service, a frequently discussed question. Nowadays the role of state foreign policy does not only consist in creation of the favorable i.e. above all safe external environment needed to implement national interests of state. Dominance of economic issues in the area of international relations is now actually present. Economic diplomacy therefore becomes an instrument of government and all economic government departments (not just of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy). This is what the management of the foreign service, too, needs to be modified to in changed internal and external

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*It is necessary to emphasize that economic diplomacy may not make up for the lack of interest, managerial skills or expertise of businesses. Scope of its activities is limited by compatibility between offer and demand dependent upon the economic profile and production range of the Slovak economy.*

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conditions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is therefore prepared for precise and expert discussion on an optimal model of unified management of the foreign service aimed at making maximum use of the capabilities available within the network of Slovak embassies abroad as well as those available within the commercial sections operating in them. There are currently 53 commercial sections operating in our embassies in 45 countries.

It is necessary to emphasize that economic diplomacy may not make up for a lack of interest, managerial skills or expertise of businesses. The scope of its activities is limited by compatibility between offer and demand dependent upon the economic profile and production range of the Slovak economy. The potential of economic diplomacy as a service provided by the state to businesses is being used in a highly competitive

environment and is, from the point of view of financial, material and human resources, limited. Economic diplomacy may not fulfill its role in a fully-fledged fashion without the coordination of support mechanisms within the system as a whole, including a unified management of the foreign service.

## SLOVAKIA'S ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Slovakia's economy is exceptionally open and export oriented with considerably limited sources of raw materials, a small internal market and a comparative advantage consisting in its membership in the Euro Zone. Slovakia is distinguished by the absence of its own development resources and its long-term prosperity is strongly dependent upon international economic cooperation.

Almost 60% of its exports are created by 35 supranational companies, supplemented by more than 84,000 small and medium-sized enterprises. The share of exports in GDP in 2009 amounted to 85% and its momentary drop results especially from the economic retardation of Slovakia's major business partners within the EU. Prognoses of GDP growth for our major customers (Germany 1.5%, France 1.4%, the Czech Republic 1.3%, Austria 0.5% and Italy 1% represent more than 70% of the Slovak exports) in 2010 are good news.

Taking the parameters mentioned above as well as the vulnerability of the Slovak economy into consideration there will be an increasing importance in creating conditions to expedite the transition towards a knowledge economy on an intellectual foundation, science, research, education and the use of the knowledge potential of the Slovak economy.

## A NEW STAGE OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Despite the gradual fading away of the global recession, a revival of economies and a slight increase in GDP, it is obvious that recovery from the crisis will be slow. The expected growth of the EU in 2010 as a whole amounts to 0.7-1%, in the case of the USA the figure is 1.4%, while in that of the Russian Federation it is 3.4%. A dynamic growth of nearly 10% is on the other hand expected in the cases of China and India (7.7%) and Brasil (5.5%). Even Slovakia is already bouncing back from the bottom and the average growth of GDP predicted for 2010 is achieving a level of 3%, the highest figure within the Euro Zone. Besides positive growth signals a growing indebtedness of states and possible loss of certain governments' ability to repay their obligations have come into focus. The financial crisis of 2009 is beginning in 2010 to change into budget concerns, especially present in the Euro Zone nations. Greece is not the only sinner as there also is, from the point of view of rescue of government financial deficit, a complicated situation in Ireland and Spain, and partly in Italy and Portugal as well. When it comes to solving financial

and economic crisis there is a considerable degree of polarization of views, there is still a lack of any global concept of necessary reforms to be implemented within the framework of the financial sector, while deformations and imbalances within the world economy are continuing.

## THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

In defining and implementing its tasks in the area of external economic relations the deliberations of the Foreign Ministry are based on the objective fact that globalization is gradually removing the differences between what is domestic and what is international. The economy is to an ever-increasing degree creating the form and intensity of

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*The Foreign Ministry's added value is represented in particular by its ability to gather relevant information of a major economic and investment character, to provide it to the other players, to analyze it, to follow it up and in the long term to keep necessary contacts, access to structures and processes in international environment vital for the interests of Slovakia.*

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political relations and changes the stereotypes of diplomacy that are in use. Players are not only governments and their agencies, but non-governmental organizations as well. Pure business diplomacy has been transformed into economic diplomacy. Business, investments, development assistance and new technologies represent its four pillars. Together with tourism they create a country's image and contribute to building its goodwill.

Compared with the other players of economic diplomacy, the Foreign Ministry's added value is represented in particular by its ability to gather relevant information of a major economic and investment character, to provide it to the other

players, to analyze it, to follow it up and in the long term to keep necessary contacts, access to structures and processes in the international environment vital to the interests of Slovakia. These traditional means of diplomacy were, however, enhanced by new approaches enabling the Foreign Ministry to participate in the analysis of global economic issues, trends and risks as well as to actively contribute to adoption of decisions on economic issues on the level of government, to make full use of the Slovak Republic's membership in the international organizations, to consistently pay attention to the economy as the component gradually becoming the most important of all activities going on within the network of Slovakia's diplomatic missions abroad (consisting at present of 62 embassies, 9 consulates general, 7 permanent missions and 42 honorary consulates).

## THE UNION AS SLOVAKIA'S KEY PARTNER

Decisive for the character of the activities performed by all government departments active in the field of economic diplomacy is Slovakia's membership in the EU. This is not

only demonstrated by the predominance of the single market within the framework of Slovakia's foreign trade (Slovakia's exports to EU countries in 2009 formed 85.9% of Slovakia's overall exports), but by the intensity of capital interconnection with the economies of the other member countries. Netherlands-, Germany-, Italy-, Austria-, Czech Republic- or France-based companies are the biggest investors in Slovakia. While Slovakia's integration into the European integration structures was in political terms finalized by her formal entry into the EU back in 2004, Slovakia's entry into the EMU on January 1, 2009 was such reversal in economic terms. The step resulted logically from the efforts to finalize Slovakia's integration in the European economic area as well her embedment in it.

In 2009 attention in relation to the EU on the part of Ministry of Foreign Affairs acting in close cooperation with other government departments was therefore preferentially paid to the removal of consequences of the crisis and to making full use of the possibilities available in this regard through joint actions by the EU member countries. Slovakia made sufficient use of the *European Economic Recovery Plan*<sup>1</sup> amounting in total to 5 billion euro especially set aside to increase demand, to preserve jobs and to restore trust in the European economy. The implementation of large investment units financed by the Cohesion Fund and European Regional Development Fund undoubtedly contributed to strengthening Slovakia's energy security. The Slovak Republic succeeded in pushing Slovakia's, Hungary's, Poland's, the Czech Republic's and Austria's projects of interconnection of the gas distribution systems exceeding 50 million euro in value<sup>2</sup> and also obtained approximately 8 million euro from the EU to strengthen the infrastructure of gas flow in the event of short term failures – the reverse interconnection with Austria and the Czech Republic.

Publishing the European Commission's paper defining possible responses to the crisis in the area of the car industry was of special significance for Slovakia as this was precisely a Slovak initiative and the car industry's share in employment in Slovakia is relatively high. Political support on the part of the Commission for introducing public support measures for the car industry enabled the so called 'scrappage allowance' scheme in Slovakia.

From the point of view of a complex analysis of the situation within the Union we also regard *Information on Cooperation of the Slovak Republic with EU Member Countries in the Common Solving of Impacts of the Financial and Economic Crisis*<sup>3</sup> as an important joint paper of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Economy adopted by the government in June 2009. The paper is focused on tasks aimed at individual sectors of the Slovak economy. The paper presented the fundamental framework of the Ministries' activities in developing cooperation with EU member countries in the period of crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> "European Parliament Resolution of 11 March 2009 on a European Economic Recovery Plan (2008/2334(INI))", European Parliament (2009); <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2009-0123&language=EN>.

<sup>2</sup> "Economic Recovery: Second Batch of 4-billion-euro Package Goes to 43 Pipeline and Electricity Projects", Brussels (March 4, 2010); <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/231>.

<sup>3</sup> "Informácia o spolupráci SR s členskými štátmi EÚ pri spoločnom riešení dopadov finančnej a hospodárskej krízy" (Bratislava: Government of the Slovak Republic, 2009); [http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/8274CBFFE52FB06CC12575D0003BBC1E/\\$FILE/vlastnymat.doc](http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/8274CBFFE52FB06CC12575D0003BBC1E/$FILE/vlastnymat.doc) (in Slovak only).

## A HIGHER DEGREE OF COORDINATION AMONG ALL PLAYERS

The Ministry is searching for possible use of the room available for further and substantially closer coordination of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economy as well as other economic ministries, associations of businesses, economic associations and research institutions.

In 2009 the Foreign Ministry's position and real added value in the area of economic diplomacy was defined. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not duplicate what is being done by the Ministry of Economy (support provided to small and medium businesses, pro-export policies, energy industry etc.) or the Ministry of Finance (operational programs), or other government departments, but provides the government departments just mentioned with maximum assistance to do so.

The gas crisis of early 2009 or the dramatic (price) developments in world financial and commodity markets confirm the need for participation of the Foreign Ministry in assessing issues connected with the economic and financial stability of the country and its energy and food security. An extension of so-called risk topics may also be expected. The Ministry is therefore also prepared to actively participate in cross-dimensional and relatively new topics connected with supranational and cross-border projects and investments, protection of the environment, availability of drinking water sources, support for cooperation in the field of science and technology, transfer of modern technologies or issues connected with migration.

In March 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the *Increase of Coordination in the Area of External Economic Relations in Overcoming Consequences of the Economic and Financial Crisis in Slovakia* conference<sup>4</sup> in which supreme representatives participated and that considerably contributed to better coordinating actions by all players in the field of Slovakia's external economic relations.

## SUPPORT FOR PRO-INVESTMENT AND PRO-EXPORT ACTIVITIES

The objective of the Foreign Ministry within the context of the support provided to pro-export and pro-investment activities performed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and other partners which was not just set for 2009 is to prevent our exports from falling, to provide Slovak exporters on a consistent basis with support as regards the possible setting up of their products in foreign markets as well as diversification of exports focused strongly (86%) for the time being on EU markets.

From the point of view of support for exports and attracting investments there is a great opportunity to bring to bear a somewhat exceptional characteristic of the

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<sup>4</sup> "Informácia o konferencii „Zvýšenie súčinnosti v oblasti vonkajších ekonomických vzťahov pri prekonávaní dôsledkov hospodárskej a finančnej krízy na Slovensku“" (Bratislava: Federation of Employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic, 2009); <http://www.azzz.sk/doc/aktualinf/Material.doc>.



**SELECTED IMPORTANT PRO-INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES WITH MAJOR PARTICIPATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRINGING CONCRETE RESULTS**

**Embassy in Berlin:** enhancing Volkswagen's production in Bratislava by the new Up car model range, construction of a gas steam cycle in Malženice by E.ON, possible participation by E.ON in the construction of the Jaslovské Bohunice nuclear power plant;

**Embassy in Buenos Aires:** The Kremnica mint concluded a contract in 2009 for the production of Argentinian coins; establishment of ESET, a Slovak company, in the Argentine market;

**Embassy in Delhi:** exports of military equipment focused on the ZUZANA 155mm Self-propelled Gun Howitzer, implementation of a contract for delivery of 10 BOŽENA de-mining tools to Sri Lanka;

**Embassy in the Hague:** the 'Vtáčie údolie' (Birds Valley) investment project in the area of tourism in Eastern Slovakia;

**Embassy in London:** targeted development of contacts with representatives of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development aimed at maintaining support and participation by the Bank in funding infrastructural projects in the Slovak Republic; extension of cooperation between Slovak and British scientific and university institutions in the areas of introduction of green technologies and alternative energy sources;

**Embassy in Madrid:** joint venture with Arcelor SSC Eslovaquia in Senica;

**Embassy in Mexico:** attracting the only important Mexican investor in the Slovak Republic – Namac (one of world leaders in aluminum car components – cylinder heads and blocks) with a production facility situated in Žiar nad Hronom;

**Embassy in Moscow:** establishment of a working group for the development of the gas industry, implementation of a long-term contract for delivery of nuclear fuel for the Bohunice and Mochovcce Nuclear Power Plants, issues connected with implementation of the broad-gauge railway project to Bratislava or even to Vienna, and other projects;

**Embassy in Kuala Lumpur:** helps local activities of Konštrukta Industry (assembly of technologies from the Slovak Republic for the production of gunpowder in Malaysia on a contract basis);

**Embassy in Prague:** conclusion of a contract between JAVYS and ČEZ on construction of new blocks of the Jaslovské Bohunice nuclear power plant;

**Embassy in Rome:** key economic projects between the Slovak Republic and Italy in the area of energy industry (Enel), car industry (the Magneti Marelli plant in the Kechnec Industrial Park), investment of Maccaferri in Senica amounting to 15 million euro – production of nettings and moulded wires (90 jobs);

**Embassy in Seoul:** negotiations with established and potential investors (KIA Motors, Samsung Electronics LCD, Mecen Co, Korean Air);

**Embassy in Stockholm:** construction of tunnels project within the framework of the largest Swedish investment project Stokholm baban (Skanska Banské stavby Prievidza), investment by Lindab in Levoča through enhancing production of metal roof covering and wall paneling;

An investment contract with the Slovak Republic was also signed by AU Optronics thanks to active support by the Slovak Economic and Cultural Office in Taiwan;

**Embassy in Tokyo:** implementation of an investment project of Mitsubishi Plastics. Dia Moulding Slovakia, its subsidiary and one of the important subcontractors of plastic frames for the production of LCD TV sets produced by Sony, has been operating in the Nitra - Sever industrial park from October 2009;

**Embassy in Tripolis:** implementation of a contract for repairs of L39, L410 aircraft in cooperation with LOT Trenčín;

**Embassy in Vienna:** interconnection of transit crude oil systems and cooperation between Slovak and Austrian companies. The Embassy was actively involved in preparation and support for the implementation of reverse gas flow from Austria to the territory of Slovakia.

Foreign Ministry consisting inter alia in the fact that ambassadors are still, from the point of view of their access and outreach to political and economic leaders in the countries where they operate, the first contact points. The activities of our embassies were therefore and still remain focused on an active search for potential investors whose entry into our economy would result in a contribution to diversification of sectors within Slovakia's economy, especially to branches producing high added value and introducing advanced technologies etc.

The examples of selected investment activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the embassies just mentioned above form part of the *Concept of Management of Direct Foreign Investments Inflow within the Context of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis* paper (adopted by the Government in June 2009)<sup>5</sup>, in the preparation of which the Foreign Ministry was actively involved. The objective of the paper in question is to introduce an integrated system of management of all state bodies active in the field of attracting and maintaining foreign investments. The paper also underlines the necessity of a change to be carried out within the structure of investments and the innovation environment aimed at increasing Slovakia's research and development capabilities.

In 2009 the Foreign Ministry in cooperation with other government departments helped activities of Slovak businesses (see above) aimed at the necessary diversification of our exports and the strengthening of our position in countries and regions outside the EU that are attractive in terms of investments. Important in this regard are Russia (this fact is also due to Slovakia's continued energy dependence upon the territory), South Korea, the USA, China, Japan, Taiwan, India, the Near and Middle East region and selected countries of Latin America and Africa.

Despite the size and possibilities offered by markets outside Europe the volume of Slovak exports placed there represents only a disproportionately low 10%<sup>6</sup>, although the absorption potential of those markets is still growing. Slovakia's success in those markets will, however, besides the measures taken by the government, depend upon the capabilities to modify Slovak production facilities to new specific demands.

## COOPERATION WITH BUSINESSES

An important challenge for the operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is represented by intensified dialogue with the Slovak business community and its interest

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<sup>5</sup> "Konceptia riadenia prílevu zahraničných investícií v kontexte globálnej finančnej a hospodárskej krízy" (Bratislava: Ministry of Economy, 2009); [www.economy.gov.sk/koncepcia-riadenia-prilevu.../132121s](http://www.economy.gov.sk/koncepcia-riadenia-prilevu.../132121s).

<sup>6</sup> "Celkový dovoz a celkový vývoz podľa kontinentov a ekonomických zoskupení krajín v roku 2009" (Bratislava: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2010); <http://portal.statistics.sk/showdoc.do?docid=16910><http://portal.statistics.sk/showdoc.do?docid=16910>.

associations aimed at transforming their expectations into real department policies. Through active interaction the Ministry of Foreign Affairs endeavors to gather knowledge on what the businesses really expect from the Ministry and what their areas of interest in this connection are. The maximum possible helpfulness and responsiveness towards the requests of our businesses in relation to their activities abroad, one reaching even beyond the framework of our operation in the situation of the world economic crisis, became our credo last year.

New impulses for the operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were brought by the *Increase of Coordination in the Area of External Economic Relations in Overcoming Consequences of the Economic and Financial Crisis in Slovakia* conference mentioned above. In their addresses, representatives of the business sector clearly expressed that the priorities of cooperation were support for Slovak exports and their diversification, efforts to attract investment in sectors with high added value, care for existing investors, exploitation of our membership in international organizations to implement our economic interests in a more efficient manner as well as a maximum drawing of all the development funds available to ensure sustainable economic growth.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs tries to create room for direct contacts between businesses and Slovakia's supreme representatives abroad – the Heads of Diplomatic Missions. The first contact exchange of business and investment opportunities in history of Slovakia was organized during the meeting of Heads of Mission held between June 30 and July 3, 2009. The Heads of Mission were in this form provided with an opportunity to directly respond to the requests and queries of Slovak enterprise. The objective of the contact exchange was to identify new opportunities for further expansion in existing markets by Slovak producers and service providers. The diplomatic missions play an important role in this relation as they are expected to provide, so to speak first-hand information on possibilities of economic cooperation. Representatives of more than seventy businesses participated in the event and this resulted in intense talks between them and the ambassadors. Entrepreneurs responded in an exceptionally positive manner to the format of the event and also supported the future holding of such events. On top of that, public acknowledgement were expressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the considerable change in the Ministry's approach in the field of assistance provided to our businesses and the active dialogue and search for conceptual solutions in the area of external economic relations in last two years through the chairman of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the chairman of the 'Klub500', the president of the Federation of Employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic (FEASR) and others during the Annual Conference on Foreign Policy held on April 12, 2010.

We try to see that the representations and cooperation already commenced do not remain at the level of declarations only, but we also endeavor to prepare further concrete opportunities and to help Slovakia's foreign trade exchange. In 2009 the Ministry of

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We try to see that the representations and cooperation already commenced do not remain at the level of declarations only, but we also endeavor to prepare further concrete opportunities and to help Slovakia's foreign trade exchange. In 2009 the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, the National Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other partners prepared or co-prepared a series of seminars, conferences or training, the target group of which was formed by entrepreneurs. Such events included e.g. *the Chinese – Slovak Business Forum* (held in March); *Prospects of Doing Business in India – Assistance to Slovak Entrepreneurs to Enter the Indian market – the 1<sup>st</sup> International Scientist and Research Conference* (held in March); *Italy and Slovakia – Partners for a New Europe* (held in July), the *Slovak – Byelorussian Business Forum* (held in September); *Prospects of Doing Business in the Western Balkans* international conference (held in September); *the Summit of Foreign Investors* (held in September – American Chamber of Commerce); *Euro-Arabian Exports Forum* (held in October). In cooperation with the US Embassy, the Embassy of Canada and the Embassy of Mexico the Foreign Ministry on October 14, 2009 prepared a panel discussion held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coming into being of NAFTA, a business bloc concluded among Canada, the USA and Mexico.

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*One of our particular activities in 2009 was preparation of a detailed overview of the rules applied by the international organizations in procurement of goods and services.*

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The objective of the panel discussion was *inter alia* support for mutual bilateral economic relations with the three nations.

The Foreign Ministry understandably participated in the preparation and implementation of business missions held within the framework of visits by Slovakia's supreme representatives abroad and vice versa. A new element present is the participation of entrepreneurs accompanying the Minister

of Foreign Affairs during his visits to selected countries and territories (Belarus in September 2009, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia in March 2010 and Moldova in May 2010), which brought Slovak businesses new contacts, especially in the field of the energy, service, food processing and chemical industries.

## INTENSIFIED ACTIVITIES WITHIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

The deliberations of the Foreign Ministry are based on the fact that the economic crisis has impacted on all areas of the economy without exception and this broad-spectrum character must therefore be responded to. A coordinated approach to preparing Slovakia's positions on meetings of the G20 group or legislative initiatives of EU bodies was consequently initiated. It was also thanks to the introduction of such an approach that their level was highly appreciated by our foreign partners (e.g. Great Britain). All activities, in particular the preparation of positions for multilateral fora in which in 2009 the Slovak Republic either participated or in which Slovakia was called on to cooperate (such as the G20 meeting in London and Pittsburgh), were elaborated in close cooperation with the other partners, the Office of the Government, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finance, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the National Bank of Slovakia and other institutions.

One from among our particular activities in the period in question was preparation of a detailed overview of the rules applied by the international organizations in procurement of goods and services. This complex information was published on the website of the Foreign Ministry.<sup>7</sup>

Besides that there was a seminar held for Slovak businesses at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2010 during which participants acquainted themselves with the public procurement processes obtaining within the system of international organizations. During the event representatives of the procurement departments of the UN, the EU, NATO, the OSCE and the WTO delivered their addresses. Orders for goods and services of a value exceeding 15 billion euro yearly are decided upon within these organizations. The seminar offered a unique opportunity for producers, exporters and potential Slovak service providers to receive complex information on the system, the commodity structure and financial volumes as well as the terms and conditions of participation in public procurement within the organizations mentioned above. With regard to volumes amounting within the framework of the procurement process to billions of euros reflection of their use or successfulness of Slovak businesses is also of certain interest. The volume of orders for goods delivered from the Slovak Republic within the UN system amounted in 2009 to less than 400,000 USD. Slovak companies to an ever-increasing degree strive to get orders within the EU and NATO. No fewer than four Slovak companies in the past participated in the tenders' calls with their supplies published by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Within the framework of our cooperation with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (the OECD) we provided financial support e.g. to preparation of the *Economic Analysis of Instruments to Overcome Consequences of the Financial Crisis in the Slovak Republic* (a small and open economy), a project sponsored by the Ministry of Finance, or the *Competitive Policy in a Period of Economic Crisis*, a project sponsored by the Antimonopoly Office. The key activity in the period under consideration was the visit of the OECD's Secretary-General Angel Gurría to the Slovak Republic. In February 2009 the Secretary-General presented the *Economic Survey of the Slovak Republic*. The favorable results of the *Survey* only confirmed the generally positive perception of Slovakia on the side of the organization.

The activities of the Foreign Ministry in relation to international financial institutions were based on their complementarity to the activities of the Ministry of Finance and those of the National Bank. The dynamism of developments connected with the global financial crisis and the measures taken to overcome its consequences provided us sufficient room to formulate our own positions on issues such as agreement on joint representation of Slovakia and the Czech Republic in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, a general allocation of so-called special drawing rights or the granting of a loan to the IMF aimed at strengthening the Fund's own resources.

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<sup>7</sup> "Verejné obstarávanie pre medzinárodné organizácie"; [http://www.mzv.sk/sk/cinnost\\_ministerstva/mzv\\_a\\_kriza-verejne\\_obstaravanie\\_pre\\_medzinarodne\\_organizacie](http://www.mzv.sk/sk/cinnost_ministerstva/mzv_a_kriza-verejne_obstaravanie_pre_medzinarodne_organizacie).

Last year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also solving delicate issues connected with voting on Kosovo's admission as a member of the World Bank group and as a member of the International Monetary Fund. Slovakia's principled position on Kosovo's recognition was shown in both cases, but this did not mean blocking its chances of drawing financial support from the resources of the two organizations.

In 2009 Slovakia also, through the activities of Slovak experts, succeeded in participating in the operation of the Geneva-based European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN). On November 21, 2009 Slovakia successfully joined the launch of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) repeated after a 14-month break from its breakdown in September 2008. Within CERN Slovakia was also taking part in the Council management as well as in the Financial Committee. At present the possibilities of further cooperation between the Slovak Republic and CERN are, besides on particle physics, also focused on electronics, and the car industry is also being checked.

## **EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICES OF OTHERS**

An important place among the activities of the Ministry connected with the economic crisis belonged to the Ministry's own analysis of developments in the global economy and in the situation of financial markets as well as that of the responses by governments of individual countries of the world. The Ministry has been continually analyzing measures, procedures, strategies etc that other nations have in place in the period of the crisis. Analyses are provided to the management of the Ministry itself as well as to other government departments.

The network of embassies and permanent missions abroad has been actively involved as a whole in the process of evaluating the situation and the trends emerging in connection with the crisis. Thanks to this concept the Ministry was then able to present for meetings of the government papers on cooperation with EU Member States in the area of eliminating harmful effects of the economic crisis, papers that were, in terms of quality, well elaborated. The Ministry also prepared an analysis of actions by the EU and its member countries in the field of solving consequences of the crisis on employment, and several other papers as well. All information papers prepared by the Foreign Ministry are available on its website<sup>8</sup>, to ensure wide awareness of the public on the activities of the Ministry.

## **DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY**

Provision of development assistance is a political and moral obligation for Slovakia. The last seven years saw official development assistance (ODA) become an integral part of Slovak foreign policy. The Ministry's strategic objective in 2009 was to make

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.mzv.sk/sk/aktualne/vsetky\\_sprav](http://www.mzv.sk/sk/aktualne/vsetky_sprav).



the system of ODA provision more efficient. To this end the Ministry worked out the *Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for the years 2009-2013*, adopted by the government in March 2009. Priorities, principles, objectives and partners in terms of ODA are defined under the Strategy. Slovakia's ODA was focused on three program countries – Afghanistan, Kenya, Serbia and 16 project countries in the area of the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa.

In 2009 the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation<sup>9</sup> announced nine public calls for projects, contracted 45 development projects amounting in value to 6.37 million euro, and the total costs for development projects amounted to 7.1 million euro. The volume of assistance provided in 2009 amounted to 54 million euro or 0.086% of GDP (in 2008 the ODA/GDP ratio was 0.102% or in absolute figures 65.4 million euro. Compared with 2008 there is a decrease of 11.4 million euro). For 2010 50.83 million euro were set aside for ODA and it is necessary to underline that Slovakia's ODA is not only being provided through the Foreign Ministry, but also through several other bodies of central state administration.

In 2009 the micro-grant schemes introduced as a new instrument in 2008 were continued. Projects were implemented by the ultimate recipients of the assistance through our embassies in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Nairobi, Minsk, Kiev and Bucharest. In 2009 there were 64 projects of 237,857 euro in value contracted within the framework of the scheme. Slovakia's main priorities in the field of ODA remain strengthening stability and good governance of public affairs in the regions and states prioritized, if only from the point of view of the Slovak Republic's economic interests. Development and humanitarian assistance (and their bilateral and multilateral aspects) represent for Slovakia a significant instrument to create new export and job opportunities not just in cooperation with international organizations and non-governmental organizations, but also in an intensified way with small and medium-sized enterprises. The Ministry supports exports by Slovak producers through this instrument as well, and promotes their projects and products in foreign markets.

Although Slovakia acknowledges the obligations of the EU and the international community to gradually increase their contribution to ODA, the volume of financial funds available to be set aside for ODA was hit by the global financial crisis. Despite the fact that the budget chapter of the Foreign Ministry was in 2010 decreased by nearly 19%, the Ministry is looking for ways to prevent decrease in development assistance in this stage and even to have the prospect of raising it in the direction of a possible fulfillment of our commitments – depending, of course, on developments within the national budget.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Data available at [www.slovakaid.sk](http://www.slovakaid.sk).

<sup>10</sup> "Zákon o štátnom rozpočte na rok 2010 – schválený NR SR" (Bratislava: Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, 2009); <http://www.finance.gov.sk/Default.aspx?CatID=7386>.



## **SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIONS, MODERN TECHNOLOGIES AND CENTERS**

With regard to the key importance of the knowledge economy from the point of view of the economic future and prosperity of the nation the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2009 also strongly emphasized system activities in the field of science, research, cooperation among universities etc. Through its coordinating and analyzing activities the Foreign Ministry tries together with the Office of the Vice-Prime Minister for the Knowledge Economy, the Ministry of Education, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Economy and other institutions to support the potential of the best foreign experience in the area of new technologies applicable in Slovakia.

According to the statistical data of Eurostat Slovakia is the EU's number one as regards people with high school education (91.8%), but at the same time according to percentage of GDP invested by the state in research the country ranks among the last in the EU. A favorable pro-innovative business environment is not fully developed in Slovakia. The problem is the low efficiency of enterprises in the field of research and development and low employment in the high-tech services sectors. Slovakia's education potential, then, does not bring the full increase in value possible.

The coordination of all players involved in achieving these objectives was in 2009 assisted by the first meeting held at the Foreign Ministry on cooperation among ministries and government departments in foreign countries in the area of advanced innovative technologies and the knowledge economy. Representatives of the Office of the Government, the Agency for Support for Research, Science and Development, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education, the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the SARIO agency were all present. It is precisely the diplomatic network that the Foreign Ministry wishes to offer for use and for the implementation of Slovakia's innovation policy towards foreign countries. Another practical contribution by the Foreign Ministry in this field was the adoption of a project aimed at deepening Slovakia's cooperation with the world's largest and most efficient economy in the area of innovation and technology transfer – the United States of America. Although the project is focused on the USA, it should also become a pilot project to be used in other countries with available potential for cooperation in the field of advanced technologies.

Within the framework of the project a conference on innovation policy and technology transfer organized in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Foreign Ministry was held at the Ministry on April 13, 2010. The objective of the conference was to present examples of successful cooperation among scientific and research institutions, universities and the business environment abroad and in Slovakia. The conference was thus far the largest event on the topic held in Slovakia and the 250 guests invited included members of the government, members of the American National Academy, the European Commission, non-governmental organizations, representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economy and other bodies. The Foreign Ministry at the same time wishes by the end of 2010 to initiate, together with nations at the top of the world innovation chart, but with geographic and economic parameters similar to Slovakia (such as Finland, Denmark,

Sweden or the State of Israel) holding other events aimed at innovation policy or the issues of the knowledge economy.

## NEW CHALLENGES

Recovery from the crisis will be slow considering many deformations and imbalances within the world economy. Despite arguments that the crisis has by no means reached the extent of crises of the past, when the utilization of the world economy fell in the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by more than 20%, whereas in 2009 the fall did not even reach 5% on average, it is obvious that there is a turning point in the world economic system. Logically, the question of holding a new Bretton Woods conference to redefine the parameters of financial and economic relations in the present-day world is very often presented in various fora. The request was fully expressed in the speech of the French president N. Sarkozy delivered to the World Economic Forum in Davos. Reform of the banking system and the establishment of new parameters for the functioning of the financial system will in any case be necessary.

The crisis revealed deficiencies from the point of view of the European currency union's functioning and therefore we are only following and evaluating the unsatisfactory developments of public finances and the situation in the Euro Zone as a very hot topic to be implemented in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finances and other government departments in the upcoming months when we consider this to be one of the principal issues in the field of economic diplomacy. We hold the view that prevention of the spread of the crisis from Greece to other countries of the Euro Zone is of key importance. At the same time it is possible to state that the present situation and the

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*Taking the rather slow recovery from the crisis into consideration it will be vital to select a strategy of sustainable and competitive growth appropriate for the heterogeneous grouping undoubtedly represented by the present-day EU.*

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crisis represent a major challenge for European integration that considerably exceeds the framework of a mere reformulation of policy in the field of the financial sector. The main problems are unemployment, deepening social polarization, the extent of poverty i.e. topics often pushed in the background within EU policies in the past. Taking the rather slow recovery from the crisis into consideration it will be vital to select a strategy of sustainable and competitive growth appropriate for the heterogeneous grouping undoubtedly represented by the present-day EU. Slovakia should also deal with the creation and application of the *Europe 2020 Growth Strategy* in the light of these views i.e. define real and achievable objectives and the way to achieve them, and to avoid the exaggerated and unrealistic ambitions and errors connected with the Lisbon Strategy.

We will, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy, concentrate on interesting areas for using the sovereign funds mostly located outside the Euro-Atlantic space, in particular in the crude oil and gas exporting countries – United Arab Emirates, Kuwait,

Saudi Arabia, Libya, Qatar, Norway, Russia and in the countries with surplus financial reserves from active trade balances – China and Singapore. Available capital is just one of the qualities offered by those markets. Other qualities offered there are advanced technologies, innovations, technology transfer, production cooperation, application of our know-how or their mutual exchange and other elements.

In the field of attracting foreign investments a more creative and resolute approach is required in a global recession. Besides our traditional European partners we are also interested in investment capital from Asia and the Gulf countries, which in the next 10 – 15 years are expected to have the highest volume of surplus capital.

Another challenge in the event of which an important role is, from the point of view of coordination with other government departments and institutions, played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the knowledge economy – i.e. obtaining contacts, attracting partners (research institutes, universities, businesses etc.) from the point of view of advanced technologies, innovations, technology transfer, production cooperation, application of our know-how or their mutual exchange and other elements.

The accomplishment of the above-mentioned objectives is going on under complicated budget conditions. Despite the further savings that are expected within the state administration the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not wish, unless it becomes really necessary, to set about closing Slovak embassies abroad. We shall therefore prefer a decrease in the number of staff of embassies and permanent missions as well as a regrouping of personnel aimed at maintaining as high as possible a number of our politico-economic ‘feelers’ abroad and drawing the foreign service one step nearer to the needs of the business sector, business associations, universities and citizens. It is also necessary to emphasize that there are objective limits to austerity measures and that even at present there are only two or even just one diplomat operating at 49 of the 89 embassies abroad.

In future the Foreign Ministry wishes to share the relevant responsibility for solutions to key issues of Slovakia’s economic growth. Internal capabilities and instruments were modified to accomplish this objective. At the same time we will in the field of economic diplomacy look in future for system solutions and continue an intensive expert, but also informal dialogue with the key Slovak players active in the area of external economic relations – the Ministry of Economy and other government departments, the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Association of Employers, the Federation of Employers’ Associations of the Slovak Republic, the National Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, the ‘Klub 500’, the Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia and other partners.

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# DISCONTINUATION OF RUSSIAN NATURAL GAS SUPPLIES THROUGH UKRAINE TO THE EU IN JANUARY 2009: AN ANCIENT DRAMA OR JUST A MARGINAL EPISODE IN THE NATURAL GAS MARKET?

URBAN RUSNÁK

The key place in the field of energy security belongs to knowledge of the technical capabilities of the existing infrastructure. To better understand the essence of the issue connected with the natural gas disputes between Ukraine and Russia it is useful to familiarize oneself with the infrastructure of the natural gas industry, and with the technical as well as the business procedures of natural gas exports from the Russian Federation.

As seen through the eyes of the Russian natural gas industry, Ukraine has a privileged position. The country is on the one hand one of the largest markets for Russian natural gas, while on the other it is the most important transit nation through which natural gas surges not just westwards (through Slovakia, Poland and Hungary), but southwards as well (through Moldova and Romania). The Ukrainian natural gas distribution system had been built gradually as part of the internal natural gas distribution system within the former Soviet Union, intersected by natural gas export pipelines into friendly neighboring nations and onwards to the West. These export lines are not independent constructions; besides their fundamental (transit) role they were also built to distribute natural gas along their routes. To level out volumes of natural gas consumed and seasonal load variations in transit there is a system of underground storages situated in the regions of Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv in the Western part of Ukraine. Until now the system is integrated as a whole and works in unity with its Russian part. The nerve center of the transit operations through which all information from meter stations, including that from those situated in Ukraine, goes is located in Gazprom in Moscow. Ukrtransgaz, the Ukrainian company, continuously receives

information on pressures and volumes mediated through Gazprom headquarters.<sup>1</sup> It is, in a somewhat simplified way, possible to state that the natural gas that in winter as the period of highest consumption surges to Ukraine is partly being consumed in the large industrial conurbations in the Eastern part of the country with their more than 20 million inhabitants. To accommodate exports volumes are replenished from storages situated in the Western part of Ukraine. With their capacity of 34.5 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas Ukraine's underground storages therefore rank among the largest in the world. The transit capability of the Ukrainian system represents 110 to 120 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas a year, but in 2009, due to the discontinuation of transit and the overall drop in demand caused by the economic crisis, there was 95.8 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas transported through Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> A specifically Ukrainian phenomenon in this regard is the absence of precise meter stations at the 22 entry points of the natural gas pipes from the territory of Russia and Belarus and at some of the 15 exit points. A special problem present in the business relations is the so called technical and technological natural gas used to

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*Throughout the system of the Russian natural gas trade Naftogaz operates specifically as Gazprom's subcontractor that provides transport of natural gas and in the past even provided natural gas storage on the territory of Ukraine.*

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drive compressors (about 8 billion m<sup>3</sup> a year<sup>3</sup>) and as the medium for 38,200 km of natural gas pipe of which 14,000 km has a diameter exceeding 1,020 mm. Without the above-mentioned natural gas exports of natural gas from Russia to the Union is not physically possible.

From the point of view of the business relations of consumers in the EU it is possible to state that in the case of each of them there is a delivery point fixed within the long term contracts concluded with Gazprom to be used for taking off natural gas from

the Russian monopoly exporter. The meter and compressor station in Veľké Kapušany is the delivery point for Slovenský plynárenský priemysel – the Slovak Gas Industry Company (referred to in what follows as the SPP). Other companies usually use delivery points located on the borders of the countries of their operation, although after Slovakia's entry into the Union there is a growing number of contracts tied to takeoff in Veľké Kapušany. What follows from the model mentioned above is the fact that there are no contractual ties between either Slovakia and/or any of the Slovak businesses and Ukraine or the state-owned Naftogaz of Ukraine, the national joint stock company. Throughout the system of the Russian natural gas trade Naftogaz operates specifically as Gazprom's subcontractor that provides transport of natural gas and in

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<sup>1</sup> The information in question was in January 2009 provided to the author by the experts of the EU monitoring group who were deployed in Ukraine during the crisis to find out the real situation in the natural gas distribution system and transit to the EU.

<sup>2</sup> "Volumes of Gas Supplies Passing through the Ukrainian Territory (1991-2009)", Table; <http://www.naftogaz.com>.

<sup>3</sup> According to the statement of the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yekhanurov made at the meeting with the Ambassadors of the EU, USA, Canada and Japan during the Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis in January 2006. (Author's Archive).



the past even provided natural gas storage on the territory of Ukraine. Eustream a.s. (a system operator of natural gas transit through Slovakia and before its demerger back in 2006 a part of SPP) similarly provides such services to Gazprom or with regard to market liberalization recently to subjects from EU countries also. The natural gas trade is based on long term contracts that, besides the relevant price pattern and natural gas quality, also establish overall yearly volumes of natural gas supplies, the agreed scope of fluctuation of the consumption and minimum offtake volume. Upon failure to reach the minimum offtake the *take or pay clause*<sup>4</sup> applies. The price of natural gas for customers within the EU is historically connected to the prices of other fuels that in individual markets were the main energy carriers in the beginning of the Soviet natural gas expansion, with a time-lag of 6 to 9 months. At the time natural gas crowded out consumption of black oil and fuel oils in the first place and consumption of coal to a lesser degree. It is, in a somewhat simplified way, possible to state that developments in the area of natural gas prices replicated developments in the area of crude oil with the established time-lag. Such pricing was, since consumers were even able to adequately respond and to optimize their offtake in periods of seasonal variations as well as create natural gas reserves to offset maximum demand, generally acceptable.

## ON THE MOSCOW – KIEV – BRATISLAVA – BRUSSELS AXIS: EVENTS OF THE TURN OF 2008 AND 2009 IN THE SPIRIT OF ANCIENT DRAMA

### EXPOSITION: INTRODUCTION – SITUATION AS OF LATE 2008

The longest ever disruption of natural gas supplies to the EU in 2009 was preceded by earlier disputes between Russia (Gazprom) and Ukraine (Naftogaz) on the terms and conditions of natural gas supplies to Ukraine and on the natural gas transit to the EU. Although natural gas supplies to Ukraine were only disrupted for four days, instead of resulting in intergovernmental agreements as had happened before there were new contracts concluded on the level of companies and RosUkrEnergo (RUE), a new mediating structure owned, according to available data, by Gazprom and the Ukrainian businessmen D. Firtash and I. Fursin, at the 50:50% ratio established between Gazprom and Naftogaz. RUE acquired the monopoly to import natural gas to Ukraine covering not just Russian natural gas but natural gas from Central Asia, too, which Ukraine used to get at more favorable price and payment terms and conditions. The consequences

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<sup>4</sup> The *take or pay clause* is embodied in the long term contracts as a protection for the producers who usually fund construction of natural gas pipelines and extraction infrastructure so that natural gas offtake is safeguarded and the producers are able to calculate the economic parameters of the necessary investments.

of reducing the natural gas volume supplied by Gazprom in the transit system also hit the Slovak natural gas industry in January 2006. Ukraine was at the time also taking natural gas from the system for its own consumption and Gazprom responded by a further relative reduction in supplies. Technical and technological natural gases were by the end of 2008 in actual fact provided by Gazprom, and the transit fees through Ukraine were therefore established at a minimum level of USD 1.6/1000 m<sup>3</sup> /100 km. The natural gas price in 2008 was USD 179.5 USD/100 m<sup>3</sup>.

Ukraine tried in advance to solve the expected problems connected with supplies of natural gas and therefore initiated a meeting of Yulia Tymoshenko and Vladimir Putin, the Prime Ministers that resulted in a *Memorandum Between the Governments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Area of the Natural Gas Industry* dated October 2, 2008.<sup>5</sup> The principles published raised hopes that the partners would find a mutually acceptable solution to delicate issues of the natural gas industry. The reason why the parties failed to comply with the actions agreed remains unresolved. The fact remains, however, that the Russian side periodically publicly questioned the will and the capabilities of Ukraine to comply with her obligations in the field of gas transit referring to allegedly insufficient maintenance of the transit routes. With regard to the fact that natural gas prices for Ukraine used to be established for a calendar year, there were tense negotiations practically year on year on the price for the next year. In December 2008 besides the price negotiations, Russia asked that a payment for the natural gas supplied to Ukraine together with sanction fees amounting in total to USD 2.4 billion shall be made by the end of 2008. Only with great difficulties did Ukraine on December 30 pay USD 1.5 billion to the RUE Swiss account for the natural gas supplied and challenged the legitimacy and the amount of the penalties at an international court of arbitration.

## **COLLISION: PLOT – NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS ON NATURAL GAS SUPPLIES AND TRANSIT**

During the price negotiations in 2008 Russia suggested USD 418 to Ukraine as a price that was finally brought down to USD 250 with a transit tariff of USD 1.7. As the highest offer by Ukraine amounted to USD 223 USD with a transit tariff of USD 1.8, no agreement was reached by the parties<sup>6</sup>. On the evening of December 31 the Ukrainian delegation was recalled from Moscow. By the night of January 1 a joint declaration by President Victor Yuschenko and Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko was published to explain the Ukrainian position. They declared that Ukraine had, as agreed in the Ukrainian – Russian Memorandum of October 2008, paid all of her debts. At the same time they underlined that natural gas prices were to gradually grow for Ukraine

<sup>5</sup> "Gazovyy memorandum", *Interfax* (October 2, 2008); <http://interfax.ru/print.asp?sec=1447&id=36856>.

<sup>6</sup> According to the statement of Mr Oleg Dubin, Chairman of the Board of NAK Naftogaz Ukrainy: "Gazprom-Ukraina: dozhitj do Rozhdestva", *Interfax* (January 1, 2009); <http://interfax.ru/print.asp?sec=1447G&id=55256>.

within a three-year transition period until they reached the European level. The natural gas supplies were to be direct, without any mediators, and the transit tariffs should also be raised to the European level. The declaration also states that the natural gas price should following Ukrainian calculations amount in 2009 to USD 201, while the transport tariff should be no less than USD 2.0. It was proposed that Gazprom continue supplying and transporting natural gas through Ukraine under the terms and conditions of 2008 with the Ukrainian side paying the accumulated difference once the negotiations were over and the contracts were signed. At the same time they assured the citizens of Ukraine that natural gas and heat supplies would be provided for the public. European customers were guaranteed trouble-free transit of Russian natural gas to the EU.<sup>7</sup>

The situation may ultimately be commented on as follows: Russia offered Ukraine natural gas under price conditions such as the latter was not able to accept. One have to considers that on Gazprom request the country purchased virtually all the natural gas stored in Ukraine and its consumption for the first quarter of 2009 at least was

then already fully covered. There were moreover, according to the data available more than 27 billion m<sup>3</sup> (17 billion m<sup>3</sup> owned by Naftogaz and 11 billion m<sup>3</sup> owned by RUE)<sup>8</sup> of gas stored in underground storages.

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### CRISIS: CLIMAX OF THE CONFLICT – DISCONTINUATION OF SUPPLIES FOR UKRAINE (JANUARY 1-6, 2009)

On January 1, 2009 at 9.00 a.m., Kiev time, *Gazprom* stopped natural gas supplies to Ukraine amounting to 90 million m<sup>3</sup> a day, saying at the same time that supplies needed for transit to the EU amounting to 300 million m<sup>3</sup> a day were continuing.<sup>9</sup> By the letter of President V. Yuschenko addressed to 8 presidents and prime ministers of the nations most affected, including President of the Slovak Republic Ivan Gašparovič and the President of the European Commission, the Ukrainian side on January 2 informed them on the course of the unsuccessful negotiations with the Russian side held in 2008. Victor Yuschenko referred to the intergovernmental memorandum of October

<sup>7</sup> Complete text of the Declaration dated January 1, 2009 is available in the archives of the website: [www.interfax.ru/business](http://www.interfax.ru/business).

<sup>8</sup> As follows from a paper published at Interfax: "Gazovyj spor: RosUkrEnergo protiv vshekh", *Interfax* (January 22, 2010); [www.interfax.ru](http://www.interfax.ru).

<sup>9</sup> "Gazprom zayavlyaye, shcho povnistyu perekryv haz", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 1, 2009); <http://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2009/01/1/176309>.

2008 and assured his partners that negotiations with the Russian Federation would be continued.<sup>10</sup> On January 2, 2009 the Ukrainian delegation led by the Minister of Fuels and Energy Industry Yuriy Prodan began their European tour with a visit to Prague<sup>11</sup>, then continued on to Bratislava and Brussels. The very first signal that the Ukrainians got in Prague was that the Union, unless there were a discontinuation of natural gas supplies to the EU member countries, would not, as a mediator or a plaintiff, interfere in the Russian – Ukrainian dispute. It is true that on the very same day supplies were cut to Poland and Hungary (by 6 and 25%, respectively)<sup>12</sup> to begin with. During the negotiations held in Bratislava on January 3 the Ukrainian delegation led by Minister Prodan repeated to Slovak Minister of Economy Ľubomír Jahátek its position, referred to pressure exerted by Russia, but at the same time underlined that Ukraine would be doing her best to continue transit. During the negotiations no information was provided on possible counter-measures that might, on technical grounds, lead to disruption of transit through Ukraine.

On January 5 Gazprom disrupted, on the instructions of Russia's Federal Customs Service, natural gas supplies into the transit natural gas pipeline in Ukraine amounting to

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*The situation got even more complicated by severe cold weather in Russia (temperatures between 20 and 30°C below zero) which might be one of the reasons for higher natural gas consumption in Russia and for its objective incapacity to cover all the internal and external obligations of Gazprom.*

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65.3 million m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas (the volume received by Ukraine in the period between January 1 and January 4 without any agreement on price) and urged Naftogaz to cover the outage from its own reserves. Should the company not do so, it would bear, according to the Russian side, responsibility for failure to fulfill contracts on natural gas transit to the EU. According to further information Gazprom expressed its readiness to fulfill its obligations vis-a-vis the European consumers by purchasing natural gas from other sources and by recovering the costs from Naftogaz afterwards.

According to the declaration published by Naftogaz<sup>13</sup> transit supplies of natural gas transported through Ukraine for the EU were as of 4.00 p.m. January 6 cut down to 58 million m<sup>3</sup> a day (as compared to the usual volume of 221 million m<sup>3</sup> a day). The situation got even more complicated by severe cold weather in Russia (temperatures between 20 and 30°C below zero) which might be one of the reasons for higher natural gas consumption in Russia and for its objective incapacity to cover all the internal and external obligations of Gazprom. There was similar cold weather in Ukraine, too, and increased consumption was drawing natural gas from the volume in transit more rapidly. On January 6 there was, according to operational information from the management

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<sup>10</sup> "Ukrajinskie raziasnenia", *Interfax* (January 2, 2009); [www.interfax.ru](http://www.interfax.ru).

<sup>11</sup> "Ukrajinskiy hazovyj desant rushiv na Evropu", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 2, 2009); <http://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2009/01/2/176350/>.

<sup>12</sup> "Sokrashchenie postavok", *Interfax* (January 3, 2009); [www.interfax.ru](http://www.interfax.ru).

<sup>13</sup> "Gazprom skorotiv tranzit hazu cherez Ukrajinu do 58 million kub.m.", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 6, 2009); [www.epravda.com.ua](http://www.epravda.com.ua).

of Naftogaz, around 51 million m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas was flowing towards Uzhgorod (the natural gas transit to Slovakia and Hungary) at the cost of Ukraine. The Southern line (towards Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey) was totally off. On that date eustream a.s. recorded in Veľké Kapušany Russian supplies amounting in volume to approximately 30% (5,9 million m<sup>3</sup>) of the Slovak market's daily average. Communication between Naftogaz and Gazprom reached a deadlock.

Now international players became active. To hold negotiations with their partners a delegation of the EU Czech Presidency (referred to in what follows as PRES) and the European Commission visited Ukraine and Russia.<sup>14</sup> The issue was, according to the Czech assessment, transformed from a business to a political level. To find a solution to the issue holding a meeting of Prime Ministers of Russia and Ukraine + PRES was considered that would focus on:

- a. finding a short-term solution and immediate resumption of natural gas supplies to the EU and Ukraine;
- b. creating conditions for a long-term agreement on supplies to the EU and Ukraine.

Throughout the crisis there was no such meeting held and the efforts by the Czech PRES resolved themselves into shuttle diplomacy.

### **PERIPETEIA: A TURNABOUT FOLLOWING DISCONTINUATION OF TRANSIT THROUGH UKRAINE (JANUARY 7-19, 2009)**

Natural gas supplies from Ukraine to the EU and to Slovakia were totally discontinued<sup>15</sup> on the night of January 6/7. A decision on discontinuation of transit was, according to a declaration published by Gazprom, adopted on the evening of January 7 in view of the fact that although natural gas was entering Ukraine through the Suja compressor station, the way out was closed.<sup>16</sup> The Ukrainian Naftogaz on the other hand announced as early as the morning of January 7 that Gazprom had stopped supplying natural gas through the last working point of entry station in Suja.<sup>17</sup> 'The information and media war' raging between Russia and Ukraine was coming to a climax at the time and information published by the parties to the dispute began to be contradictory not just as regards commentaries and intentions attributed to the other side, but as regards the facts as well. The fact remains that the disruption of natural gas supplies to Ukraine was also followed by disruption of transit supplies to the EU.

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<sup>14</sup> From the author's archives (January 6, 2009);

<sup>15</sup> "Dodávky plynu sú už na nule", *hnonline.sk* (January 8, 2009); <http://m.hnonline.sk/c1-32398910>.

<sup>16</sup> "Gazprom dav ostatochnu komandu pripiniti postachania hazu.", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 7, 2009); [www.epravda.com.ua](http://www.epravda.com.ua).

<sup>17</sup> "Rosija povnostju pripinila tranzit cherez Ukrajinu", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 7, 2009); [www.epravda.com.ua](http://www.epravda.com.ua).

It was at this point that EU diplomacy, which until then had urged both parties to the dispute above all not to involve EU member states in the controversy, got fully activated. Both parties to the dispute were turning to the Union trying to put blame on their partner and to receive European support limited not just to political support, but also involving the level of public opinion. The Russian side, however, was much more successful in this struggle, having been able to drive the Ukrainian voices out of European and Slovak media space. In terms of technology, on the other hand, the Ukrainians succeeded at short notice in creating an autonomous system of natural gas distribution based on their own gas sources and storages. Expressed in a somewhat simplified way this means that they rerouted the natural gas physical flows by using the natural gas transit pipeline systems so that a part of the pipelines transported natural gas in a reverse direction from the West (where the main underground storage capacities are located) to the East (where the highest consumption is concentrated). The reverse operation of natural gas pipelines of course rendered transit in the original direction impossible. The Russian side was, according to a diplomatic assessment,<sup>18</sup> unpleasantly surprised by these developments as it had expected that due to extremely low temperatures there would be failures in distribution of natural gas and heating to the population of the Eastern part of Ukraine critical of president Victor Yushenko and his pro-Western course. The Russians supposed that within three or four days Ukraine would 'surrender' and accept Russian terms and conditions, otherwise it would have to face civil unrest. According to these deliberations there was a threat of a serious confrontation between the pro-European populations of the Western part of Ukraine that would be kept warm and the freezing Russian-speaking Eastern part of the country. In terms of technology the Ukrainians succeeded comfortably in stymieing the Russian natural gas embargo, in providing for their vital interests and in preventing a split in the country. It is obvious that in terms of technology the reverse and circuit arrangement of the Ukrainian natural gas distribution system must have been prepared well in advance. This is the field in which the Ukrainian side, unlike the struggle in the media, overcame its Russian partners. Within the framework of a search for a solution to the crisis Ukraine, through burning fuel oils and in particular coal, was transforming itself to use substitute heat sources, while the natural gas consumption of wholesale customers was cut down to a technically feasible minimum.

The Europeans were, on the political level as well as on the level of companies, surprised by the very fact of transit discontinuation. An illusion of total energy security had come into existence during the 40 years of continuous and reliable natural gas supplies and there was simply none of the necessary political and technical expertise on Russian – Ukrainian relations in the area of the natural gas industry. Only some of the Central European nations took the serious heed of the Russian – Ukrainian crisis of 2006 and it was generally expected that any disruption of natural gas supplies could simply not take place.

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<sup>18</sup> Assessment made on the February 17, 2009 at the meeting of NATO Member States Ambassadors at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Kiev. The meeting was chaired by the Slovak Ambassador Urban Rusnák.



There was feverish activity in the new situation. Altogether eleven nations were partly or completely cut off from their natural gas supplies from Russia. As there was no alternative interconnection of natural gas pipeline systems the most seriously hit EU member countries included Slovakia and Bulgaria. The EU was confronted with a situation in which two of the EU's strategic partners were solving their conflict at the expense of some of the EU member states. A task of paramount importance was, in view of the complete lack of facts, to find out the real state of affairs within the natural gas transit system. Diplomatic efforts were therefore focused on achieving an agreement on sending monitors to the Gazprom – Naftogaz gas transit system. At first Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko extended her invitation to European monitors to come to Ukraine in a telephone conversation with Andris Piebalgs, the EU Commissioner for Energy. Another challenge was Russia's involvement in the monitoring process. Despite the optimistic expectations of Saturday January 10, when the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek succeeded in reaching an agreement on the wording of a protocol on sending a group of EU, Russian and Ukrainian monitors to provide monitoring of the natural gas transport through Ukraine, on Sunday, January 11 the situation got seriously complicated. The unilateral declaration by Ukraine attached to

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the text of a declaration promoted by the Russian Federation became a pretext to harden the Russian position. As the Russian Federation refused to sign the previous European draft protocol, it was signed on bilateral basis by the Ukrainian delegation with the European Commission in Brussels on Friday. On the basis of the European Union – Ukraine bilateral protocol monitoring experts arrived in Kiev as early as January 11, but they could not operate in the Russian part also. Besides accusing Ukraine publicly of amending the text of the Russian protocol unilaterally, Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev implicitly blamed the EU as being partly responsible for Russia's withdrawal from the agreed mechanism. He declared that Russia would renew her natural gas supplies upon fulfillment of two conditions: "signing the protocol in conformity with a document prepared, approved and signed by the Russian Federation, by all parties," (Ukraine was then to cancel her declaration) and "actual presence of monitors in places at the Ukrainian borders and underground storages where checks were to be implemented"<sup>19</sup> (thorough monitoring to prevent thefts of the natural gas in transit). While the first of the conditions was widely commented on in media, it was the other condition that was of key importance. The Russian side informed the monitors and the Ukrainian side that the places to be monitored should include not only the points of entry and points of exit of the natural gas transit pipeline, but all of the Ukrainian underground gas storages and sources of technical natural gas (including

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<sup>19</sup> "Medvedev postavil Ukrajinu dvi umovy i poperedyv", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 11, 2009); [www.epravda.com.ua](http://www.epravda.com.ua).



those extracted by Ukraine itself) and the main spots of offtake/consumption situated in Ukraine. Such conditions were unreasonably tough for Naftogaz which would in this manner be forced to 'put its cards on the table' and do so not just as long as the current dispute on prices and terms of delivery for Ukraine remained open, but with an eye to the country's future energy security and its having to give technical details of the circuit of the natural gas pipeline arrangements. At the same time Gazprom asked for conclusion of a technical agreement with Naftogaz on natural gas transit. According to the information available such an agreement never existed before and according to circumstantial evidence taken as a whole throughout the period from the collapse of the USSR the parties were always able 'to come to terms 'properly'.

Within the EU monitoring activity there were two employees of the SPP deployed in the Kiev-based dispatch center of Ukrtransgaz. In relation to the monitors the Ukrainian side was, according to its statements, acting within the mandate established in as forthcoming a way as possible.

Besides the joint activities on the EU level the government of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Foreign Service tried to influence the search for a solution to the situation within the framework of Slovakia's bilateral relations with Russia and Ukraine. Besides the customary protest notes by the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to both parties to the dispute, Prime Minister Robert Fico contacted his partners Vladimir Putin and Yulia Tymoshenko several times by phone. On January 14 a Slovak government delegation led by Prime Minister Robert Fico visited Kiev and Moscow. Negotiations held in Kiev were affected by the Slovak delegation's exceptionally long wait for its meeting with Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Referring to the working schedule of the prime minister, at night before the meeting the Ukrainian side postponed the meeting by one and half hours despite the fact that during a telephone conversation on the eve of the visit both prime ministers had confirmed 8.00 a.m. as the time appointed for the meeting. The appointment was planned so early in the morning because the Slovak delegation was to carry on to Moscow. The negotiations were finally held within a very constricted time framework and lasted a mere 20 minutes. The host invited media representatives to the meeting, so just a short exchange of views in front of television cameras took place instead of confidential negotiations on this sensitive political and economic issue. The Russian media present extracted only critical observations about Kiev from what Prime Minister Robert Fico said, and the main message to the effect that Slovakia regards both countries as the reason for the critical situation in the field of natural gas distribution was suppressed. The Ukrainian side stated that unless it received natural gas from Russia, Slovakia could not be daily supplied with the 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas necessary.<sup>20</sup> The Slovak guests were received in Moscow with the proper honors and it was Ukraine that was roundly blamed for the discontinuation of transit. Moscow was visited by Slovak, Bulgarian and Moldavian government delegations simultaneously. Within

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<sup>20</sup> "Tymoshenko ne dast hazu Slovacchini", *Ekonomichna Pravda* (January 14, 2009); [www.epravda.com.ua](http://www.epravda.com.ua).

the framework of negotiations the Russian side suggested that natural gas supplies could be solved through swap operations. The solution suggested meant that 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas a day would be supplied to the Eastern part of Ukraine and Naftogaz would deliver the same volume to Slovakia from storages situated in the country's Western part. The scheme turned out to be, once discussed in greater detail with the Ukrainian side in the following days, not feasible. According to unofficial comments by experts from the Ukrainian Ukrtranshaz provision of 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas a day through the swaps would in technical terms be possible for Slovakia only, but such a scheme could not cover all three countries (including Bulgaria and Moldova).<sup>21</sup> There was finally a gesture made towards Moldova by Ukraine that began to provide that country with her own natural gas amounting to 2 million m<sup>3</sup> a day. Unofficially there was a similar suggestion made to the Slovak side and President Victor Yuschenko invited President Ivan Gašparovič to pay a working visit to Kiev on January 16. Due to the domestic struggle between President Yuschenko and Prime Minister Tymoshenko the offer was eventually not carried out by Naftogaz.<sup>22</sup> Like that of the prime minister the visit was affected by a whole range of protocol and other problems did not in fact fulfill its purpose and just deepened the distrust on the Slovak side as to the intentions and capabilities of the Ukrainian leadership.

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*Within the framework of negotiations the Russian side suggested that natural gas supplies could be solved through swaps. The solution suggested meant that 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas a day would be supplied to the Eastern part of Ukraine and Naftogaz would deliver the same volume to Slovakia from reservoirs situated in the country's Western part.*

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At this very time efforts to summon a multilateral summit meeting and, at the same time, bilateral Russian – Ukrainian negotiations on solutions to the crisis were coming to a climax. While the Russian organizers of the multilateral natural gas summit were on January 17 solving the issue of non-participation by heads of state (except for the president of Armenia), in Moscow Prime Minister Tymoshenko came to terms with Vladimir Putin as to the principal parameters of the agreement. The signing of the natural gas agreements on supplies to Ukraine and on transit on January 19 became the final chord of the active stage of the crisis.

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<sup>21</sup> From personal talks of the author held on January 15 and 16. It is possible to assume in this connection that the Ukrainian leadership was confronted with two options: enabling swaps in just one direction (westwards to Slovakia or southwards to Bulgaria and Moldova) or not to enable them at all. According to the circumstantial evidence available rejection of swap operations as a whole was preferred to deciding on who would be enabled to have a swap operation. The deep mutual distrust that emerged between Russia and Ukraine on all levels needs to be emphasized in this connection.

<sup>22</sup> The embassy of the Slovak Republic in Kiev had verified information at its disposal to the effect that technical preparations for gas provision to Slovakia (increase of pressure in the export pipeline towards Veľké Kapušany) were finished on January 16 in the morning.

## **DISASTER: SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT: RUSSIAN – UKRAINIAN AGREEMENTS DATED JANUARY 19, 2009**

After twenty days of open confrontation supplies of natural gas from Russia to Ukraine as well as transit of natural gas to the EU were renewed on January 20, 2009. Ukraine, in political and economic terms weaker, resisted a direct conflict with Russia, but paid the price by loss of her trustworthiness with political leaderships and public, especially of those member countries of the EU (NATO) that are immediately dependent on natural gas transit. These coincidentally were the very nations that actively supported reforms and Ukraine's integration into European and transatlantic structures.

Despite the paragraph on confidentiality of agreements concluded between Gazprom and Naftogaz their texts were published at [www.pravda.com.ua](http://www.pravda.com.ua) site. The main parameters of the agreements achieved on natural gas supplies for Ukraine and on transit and those of the amendments to them are as follows:

- The term of Ukraine's transition to European prices was shortened (from 2010 Russia will stop providing Ukraine with a discount, in 2009 Ukraine will only receive 40 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas, in the years to follow it will be 52 billion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas a year). Transit is to amount to approximately 120 billion m<sup>3</sup> a year;
- RosUkrEnergo, the mediator, was removed, but 25% of natural gas needed to cover Ukraine's consumption will be supplied through Gazpromzbut Ukraina (the same clause was also included in the agreement of previous year year, but Gazpromzbut was not able to ensure supplies of gas in Ukraine);
- the natural gas price is calculated on the basis of a 'euro-conforming' formula for each individual quarter (with the establishment both of calculation of natural gas received in excess and that of a fine for natural gas that the supplier has failed to supply at the 'basic' natural gas price according to a formula rising to a maximum of USD 450 which even now makes the price go upward);
- should Ukraine fail to pay on time for natural gas supplies, the partners will change to advance payments and Naftogaz will be obliged to pay penalties amounting to 0.03% of the amount outstanding for each day of delay;
- Russia was to sell Ukraine natural gas (11 billion m<sup>3</sup>) stored by RosUkrEnergo in underground storages situated in Ukraine for a bargain price (USD 153.9) thus making up for 2009's unfavorable transit tariff of USD 1.7/1000 m<sup>3</sup>/km (approximately 7 billion m<sup>3</sup>) while the rest could be re-exported by Naftogaz.

The agreements achieved made Russia – Ukraine relations in the field of natural gas industry traumatic in the long term and Ukraine's domestic policy more transparent. Russia's natural gas policy based on preferential prices with the use of mediating structures 'corrupted' Ukraine in two ways: low prices were on the one hand the reason for the feeling of dependency on Russia among the population, while industry was provided with a competitive advantage compared with European producers. As against that it is claimed by local experts that non-transparent financial flows created a hundred millions USD a year that could be redistributed among a limited group of political elites in both nations.

## CATHARSIS: CLEANSED OF OLD SINS?

Both Russia and Ukraine had been preparing in the long term for such a sharpening of their mutual conflict. At the highest level the Russian side was throughout 2008 waging an intense campaign prejudging 'the stealing by Ukraine of transit natural gas'. The Russians were not just doing so in the media, but in their official contacts with European partners as well, accusing Naftogaz of failure to pay for natural gas supplies to Ukraine. In late 2008 Russia exacted payment for the supplied and stored natural gas as a whole. To face the blockade the Ukrainian side took technological measures to distribute natural gas to the country's Eastern and Southern districts. With the reductions in consumption, the use of reserves increased and the making of her own extraction more active Ukraine was ready to hold out until March/April, depending on the weather. After the collapse of the USSR the natural gas transit system of Ukraine was not divided and has been operating until now, together with the Russian part, as one unit with its command center in Moscow. Even from the territory of Ukraine flows of information on the operation of the meter and compressor stations are directed first to Gazprom, and that is the place from which they, with a certain time-lapse, arrive in the Kiev-based Ukrtranshaz dispatching center.

Both parties to the dispute made tactical errors that affected the development of the conflict. Moscow underestimated Ukraine's ability to pay for the natural gas supplied in 2008 as well as her resolve to resist the blockade. Payment before the end of 2008 for the whole volume of natural gas stored in the storages situated in Ukraine fundamentally strengthened Ukraine's position, as Gazprom could not request that Naftogaz supply Gazprom's natural gas stored in Ukraine to the EU. Storing Russian natural gas in Ukraine had been commonplace in previous years.

Physically turning off the valves for supplies of natural gas to Ukraine and subsequently those for transit was carried out on the Russian side and therefore accusations to the effect that it was Naftogaz that discontinued transit did not convince partners within the EU. Rejection by Russia of the trilateral negotiations to be held in Brussels and her factual dictation of the conditions of the protocol to renew transit and their gradual increase in severity for Ukraine undermined Russia's diplomatic position. Moscow failed to hold its natural gas summit summoned for Saturday January 17 and the level of the event was reduced to that of an international conference. Within the framework of the agreements signed Russia succeeded in pressing asymmetric conditions that Ukraine would not perhaps accept without international pressure for as early a settlement of the dispute.

Wrapped in its domestic political struggles, Kiev failed to respond appropriately to the Russian media and diplomatic push. Ukraine's main trump-card was sealing off the natural gas distribution system within 24 hours 'to the inside' thus saving her own population from freezing to death. The technical arrangement, however, made

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*Ukraine's main trump-card was sealing off the natural gas distribution system within 24 hours 'to the inside' thus saving her own population from freezing to death.*

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transit impossible. The Ukrainians were 'lucky' to see the Russians themselves close the transit completely on January 7, otherwise Naftogaz would have been forced to do it, thus weakening considerably the Ukrainian position. After several days Gazprom therefore began to present such 'solutions' to the European partners including Slovakia as would in the event of implementation make the Ukrainian side proceed to cutting off natural gas supplies to several regions. This concerned for example supplies of small transit volumes (in total less than 100 million m<sup>3</sup> a day) for Bulgaria, Moldova and Slovakia announced at the Suja main line's point of entry at a time when the natural gas pipeline concerned was transporting natural gas in reverse regime. Just another solution proposed was represented by swap operations that would be theoretically feasible in volumes covering the needs of just one customer, although satisfying them all (in particular Slovakia, Moldova and Bulgaria, while there were also Serbia, Romania and Hungary waiting further back in line) would lead to the collapse of Ukraine's emergency natural gas distribution. The proposals just mentioned presented by Russia expected at the same time that Ukraine would from her own sources and at the own expense provide technological natural gas necessary for transport amounting to approximately 8%.

It is, on the basis of the official assessments of the Slovak Government, possible to briefly summarize the impacts of the events on Slovakia's economic subjects and state administration. The announcement of the 8<sup>th</sup> reduction in consumption level (in the period between January 7-18, 2009), had the result that industrial consumers with a contractual volume of natural gas exceeding 60,000 m<sup>3</sup> a year had to reduce their natural gas consumption to the technological minimum level. This basically meant discontinuation of industrial production in Slovakia's major industrial enterprises. The regulation in question hit approximately 770 companies.

To be able to cope with the situation in the event of a renewed discontinuation of natural gas supplies from Russia through Ukraine Slovakia takes measures in the gas industry area on the basis of previous experiences. From the point of view of safeguarding supplies contractually there were, besides the long-term 20-year contract concluded between SPP, a.s. and Gazprom Export, a Russian company that was the main supplier of natural gas, two diversification contracts for supplies of natural gas signed that was to be available in the event of possible crises. These contracts concluded with E.ON Ruhrgas, VNG – Verbundnetz Gas and GDF SUEZ concern auxiliary supplies exceeding 1 billion m<sup>3</sup> a year in total volume. All the contracts mentioned provide for natural gas supplies for SPP and Slovak consumers not dependent upon transit through the territory of Ukraine and would be covered by a reverse flow from the Czech Republic. New standards of security of supplies for natural gas suppliers were defined from the point of view of reserves. Companies will for this purpose store natural gas in storages in the territory of Slovakia and in a storage situated in Dolní Bojanovice (the Czech Republic) totaling approximately 2.17 billion m<sup>3</sup>. Mutual interconnection of reservoirs and increase of their extraction performance were also implemented. In the field of legislation, powers of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic were modified and strengthened. During the state of emergency the Ministry of Economy was provided with new authority to issue a decision based on a proposal by the natural gas industry

dispatching center on reducing extraction of natural gas from reservoirs for consumers outside Slovakia. The regime of accessing the storages was also changed from agreed to regulated, which means a higher degree of control on the part of the regulator that concerns not only prices, but also an extension of the range of information that the operators of the reservoir are obliged to provide the regulator with. These changes follow from an amendment to Act No. 73/2009 Coll. of February 2009 amending the Act on the Energy Industry.

As regards infrastructural interconnections, technical arrangements enabling natural gas reverse flow from the Czech Republic to Slovakia that may provide no less than 15 million m<sup>3</sup> a day (and the volume provided may, in a case of necessity, be increased to even 25 million m<sup>3</sup> a day) were carried out. To further improve technical parameters the Czech Republic at the same time asked for a financial contribution from EU funds within the framework of the European Economic Recovery Plan. To build an interconnection from the Baumgarten natural gas distribution junction in the future Slovakia and Austria asked within the framework of the European Economic Recovery Plan for a financial contribution from EU funds to cover a project of reverse natural gas flow from Austria. From a medium-term point of view the most important project is that of interconnection between Slovakia and Hungary (Veľký Krtíš – Vecsés with a throughput of 10 billion m<sup>3</sup> a year). This interconnection should become a part of the North-South cross-connection linking the Baltic Sea with the Adriatic Sea.

The impacts and consequences of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on Slovakia's energy security and natural gas distribution were assessed in detail in papers of the Slovak Ministry of Economy that were discussed and adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic: *Report on the Causes and Consequences of the Crisis in the Area of Supplies of Natural Gas in the Slovak Republic and Related Measures Proposed* dated January 28, 2009, *Report on Safeguarding Energy Supplies and on the Solution to Possible Emergency Situations including Appointment of Officials Responsible for Solving Such Situations* dated September 9, 2009 and *Report on Implementation of Measures Relating to Natural Gas Distribution in the Slovak Republic* dated November 4, 2009.<sup>23</sup> The papers just mentioned present a comprehensive overview of measures to mitigate the impacts of a possible new decrease in supplies.

## EPILOGUE: A DRAMA OR JUST AN EPISODE?

It depends on the frame of reference. If seen through the eyes of the nations immediately hit by the discontinuation of supplies, the character of the events going on in January and in the months that followed was that of an open-ended drama. Although the immediate threat is gone now, it will take years for the consequences of the conflict to disappear completely from the region of Central Europe. Diversification of intercon-

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<sup>23</sup> All materials from the Sessions of the Government are available in the Slovak language only at: [www.rokovania.sk](http://www.rokovania.sk).



nections in the medium-term and diversification of sources in the longer term became a hot issue and at the same time the necessity of regional cooperation and the need to cooperate in a coordinated manner within the EU came to the fore. For Slovakia this meant the definite end of a conception according to which the country's energy security could in the 21<sup>st</sup> century be based purely upon solutions dating back to the period of Communist Party Bosses Gustáv Husák and Leonid Brezhnev. After the lapse of more than a year it is necessary to state that a social discussion on the costs required to safeguard Slovakia's energy security is only about to begin. There is a challenge to be faced by the country's 'political class' regardless of party affiliations as to how to press on with solutions to safeguard security in the field of raw materials distribution even after the putting into operation of the *Nord Stream*, a natural gas pipeline skirting Slovakia and a potential threat represented by the *South Stream*, which may reduce the

transit gas pipeline's former comparative advantage to the level of a half-empty Druzhba oil pipeline.

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*Seen through the eyes of the EU and the consumers of the largest volumes of Russian natural gas in Germany, France and Italy, the events appear rather as an episode that convinced these nations of the meaningfulness of building alternative routes for natural gas transport to the EU, either from the North or from the South, to avoid by means of the sea bed the traditional route through Ukraine and Slovakia.*

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Seen through the eyes of Ukraine the asymmetry of the January agreements was surfacing throughout 2009 in the form of regular spasms – always around the seventh day of the month – the due date of the invoice to be paid by Naftogaz for the natural gas supplied by Gazprom in the previous month. The decision adopted by Yulia Timoshenko's cabinet not to reform (an irreformable?) natural gas industry in Ukraine could only logically result in the *Kharkiv Agreements*<sup>24</sup> of April 2010, as the then opposition promised a return to preferential prices for natural gas.

Seen through the eyes of the EU and the consumers of the largest volumes of Russian natural gas in Germany, France and Italy, the events appear rather as an episode that convinced these nations of the meaningfulness of building alternative routes for natural gas transport to the EU, either from the North or from the South, to avoid by sea bed the traditional route through Ukraine and Slovakia. New infrastructure interconnections were supported at the EU level and legislative and regulation mechanisms are being created to safeguard the necessary security of supplies for all member countries including Slovakia.

After more than a year it can, according to assessment by independent analysts, be stated that Russia has though with a certain time-lag, achieved her objective of increasing her power in Ukraine. The financial funds paid by Gazprom during the crisis

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<sup>24</sup> The agreements signed in Kharkiv by Presidents of Russia and Ukraine Dmitry Medvedev and Victor Yanukovich on April 21, 2010. The center of the documents is an agreement on provision of a discount of 30% on the price of Russian natural gas compared with the going prices in exchange for an extension of the Russian Black Sea Navy in the Crimea by 25 years. The agreements were ratified on April 27, 2010.



(direct loss of over USD 1.2 billion) together with the huge costs of building alternative natural gas pipelines (approximately tens of billions USD) are even now missed in the shrinking budget earmarked for opening new sites. This leads to adjournment of their opening and may within several years even lead to shortages in natural gas extraction and to jeopardizing Gazprom's ability to fulfill its obligations as a supplier. Should just this be the case, within just one decade an episode of 2009 may for all parties concerned turn into a new ancient drama.

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# VISEGRAD AND ITS 'SOFT POWER': THE V4 DEVELOPMENTS OF 2009 REVIEWED AND PRIORITIES OF THE UPCOMING PERIOD OUTLINED

TOMÁŠ STRÁŽAY

An evaluation of the Visegrad Four's activities in the past months may be condensed into the following three statements: the V4 is becoming an increasingly efficient form of regional cooperation in Central Europe, an increasingly dynamic regional platform within the EU and an increasingly sought after partner for cooperation in neighboring regions of the Eastern Neighborhood and Western Balkans. The common denominator for all three statements is the emphasis on the positive dynamism of V4 development. The intention of the present paper is not just to evaluate the activities performed within the V4 format, but also to analyze the major aspects or areas of cooperation as well as to outline development trends for the upcoming period of time.

Cooperation within the V4 is multilayer and certain abridgements have been, in view of the limited extent of the text, necessary. The first part of the present paper is therefore focused on the most significant activities carried out in the area of foreign and security policy during the latter half of the Polish presidency as well as under the Hungarian one. The second part of the present paper concentrates on reassessment of the cooperation principles and mechanisms aimed at rendering cooperation more intensive and more efficient. The closing part of the present paper identifies and evaluates the most important challenges faced by the V4 presidency taken up by Slovakia on July 1, 2010.

## A BRIEF RECAPITULATION

Just a brief analysis of developments within the framework of Visegrad Group as well as of the things done makes it possible to state that despite the turbulences resulting from the global financial crisis or growing tensions in relations between two neighboring V4

countries – Slovakia and Hungary – no substantial turnaround of developments that would cause a radical change of priorities of the Polish and Hungarian presidencies characterized 2009. Rather, both V4 presidencies gambled on the continuous and gradual chiseling of the cooperation mechanisms and instruments leading to fulfillment of the set objectives.

Strengthened cooperation was in 2009 brought especially into two of the areas that the V4 is active in – energy security and development of relations with nations of the Eastern Neighborhood through the newly established Eastern Partnership concept. Increase in interest announced in another territorial priority – Western Balkans – could be traced under the Hungarian presidency as well. Thanks to the increase in the budget the importance of the International Visegrad Fund as the only institution operating within the V4 was even further strengthened and this also had a direct impact on support for the civil dimension of cooperation. In order to increase the efficiency of the existing instruments of regional cooperation there were discussions as well as particular steps initiated. As one of the key principles of the Visegrad cooperation, the solidarity principle was demonstrated in early 2009 during the so-called gas crisis and Slovakia, the nation most significantly threatened by the crisis, was the major beneficiary of the principle. In the second half of the year lack of this principle was, however, shown specifically by Hungary's failure to support Slovakia's candidature for an important international position.

## **POLISH PRESIDENCY (ALSO) IN THE COLORS OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP**

The second half of the Polish presidency followed the Czech EU presidency and this was, in this context, also the case with the Polish presidency's orientation on a profile initiative – the Eastern Partnership concept. The meeting of the V4 Foreign Ministers and Sweden may therefore be partly regarded as a kind of a 'follow-up' event to the inaugural summit of the Eastern Partnership. The issues connected with the establishment of common consulates were, however, emphasized during the May meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> The initiative is not totally new, but in connection with the impact of the global financial crisis and saving funds it became more relevant. The project implemented in Johannesburg, South Africa, became the pilot project within whose framework a common provision of consular services is to be tested. Establishment of other diplomatic missions represents an asset for all the Visegrad nations and in Slovakia's case, which, on objective grounds, has the smallest volume of budgetary

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<sup>1</sup> "Hungary Takes over the Year-Long Presidency of the Visegrad Group from Poland in July; Péter Balázs Presents the Hungarian Programme at a Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Warsaw"; <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=939&articleID=23254&ctag=articlist&iid=1>.

funds available, this would mean direct contact with countries or even whole regions where no embassies of Slovakia exist at present.

Ukraine's somewhat privileged position among V4 foreign policy priorities may, within the context of the Eastern Partnership, be to a certain degree underlined and the Polish presidency – as Ukraine is not just one of Poland's key long-term territorial priorities, but even a strategic partner – strengthened this feature even further. The Polish presidency made transfer of experience of NATO integration to Ukraine and Georgia, too, one of its objectives. But since the new Ukrainian presidential administration created after this year's presidential elections is no longer interested in joining NATO it is questionable to what extent it is still worth continuing passing on know-how of this kind to Ukraine. Experience of acceding to the Alliance may therefore be replaced by passing on know-how connected with a broadly defined reform of the security sector in which the new Ukrainian government or presidential administration might also be interested.

The initiation of regular dialogue on energy security both on the supreme level as well as on the level of ministries may also be regarded as one of the successes achieved under the Polish presidency. A decision to re-establish the Visegrad expert group on the issues of energy infrastructure and cooperation in common energy projects was adopted. The group consists of government plenipotentiaries. The issue of interconnection of energy networks or that of more intensive coordination of procedures connected with laying out the new projects also became relevant.

Adequate handling of the agenda connected with the climate and energy package may also be regarded as one of the successes achieved under the Polish presidency.<sup>2</sup> The V4 Prime Ministers emphasized the need to address the issue of climate changes and to do so through the common efforts

of all players in the international community. They also expressed the expectation that the EU Council would propose a satisfactory financial solution to the issue.

Another issue frequently discussed during the summits held under the Polish V4 presidency was also the *Treaty of Lisbon*, reservations about which were mainly voiced by the Czech President Václav Klaus and the Polish President Lech Kaczyński. Although the *Treaty of Lisbon* was signed by the Czech and Polish presidents as late as the Hungarian presidency, their concerns were to a certain degree dispelled thanks to the positions adopted by the other Visegrad partners. It is also possible to state

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<sup>2</sup> "Press Release of the Polish V4 presidency after the Official Summit of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries", Wieliczka (June 3, 2009); <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=939&articleID=23250&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

that although the Summit of Presidents held in the town of Sopot, Poland, took place shortly after the failed visit of the Hungarian President László Sólyom to Slovakia, which provoked emotional discussions in both Slovakia and Hungary and which escalated tensions in Slovak – Hungarian bilateral relations, this had no impact on the agenda of the Visegrad presidents.

The fact that historically the first V4 country ever – the Czech Republic – took up the EU presidency made the first half of 2009 significant, too. It was therefore possible to test the practical coordination mechanisms of the EU and V4 Presidencies. The experiences gained will be ready for use as early as the second half of the Slovak presidency (January-June 2011), when Hungary will be holding the EU presidency. The situation of 2009 will be to a certain degree repeated, although in reverse, in the second half of 2011 under the Polish EU presidency and the Czech Visegrad presidency.

## THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY AND BALANCING TERRITORIAL PRIORITIES

As regards the essential priorities Hungary, which took the V4 presidency on July 1, 2009, continued with the main objectives of the previous Polish presidency. This principally concerns dialogue or cooperation with the EU Eastern neighbors as carried out within the framework of the Eastern Partnership<sup>3</sup>, intensification of cooperation in the field of energy industry and energy security, cooperation within the framework of the V4 plus format as well as support for the integration ambitions of the Western Balkans nations.<sup>4</sup>

It is through just this last priority that a kind of novelty has been presented by the Hungarian presidency. Besides the orientation on the Eastern neighbors that dominated the Czech and Polish V4 presidencies, the increased of attention paid to the region of Western Balkans may, in the context of further shaping V4 priorities or applying them to concrete realities, be expressly welcomed. Support for EU and NATO integration prospects formed the main agenda of the October Summit of V4 Foreign Ministers held in Budapest. Besides the promise made to the effect that the upcoming Hungarian and Polish EU presidencies would also deal with accession of the nations of the Western Balkans to the Union, the V4 Ministers also emphasized the significance of regional cooperation in the integration process.<sup>5</sup> Despite the declaration that was made, it is

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<sup>3</sup> See "Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group at their Meeting in Budapest, 2 March 2010"; <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1&articleID=27803&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

<sup>4</sup> "2009/2010 Hungarian Presidency"; <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=942&articleID=23256&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

<sup>5</sup> "The Visegrad Group Stands Ready to Promote the Integration of the Countries of the Western Balkans"; <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=939&articleID=25648&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

possible to conclude that cooperation of the V4 with regional initiatives in the Western Balkans still remains unimplemented and that there have been no intensive contacts between the V4 and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), although this is just the body to become a proper institutional partner of the V4 and it would be the V4 plus format that could be used to develop cooperation. One of the reasons for the present situation may be the persisting orientation of the V4 on long-term regional initiatives, such as Benelux or the Nordic Council.

It was precisely the application of the V4 plus format that played a relatively important role in the program of the Hungarian V4 presidency. It is just this mechanism that enables nations or groups of nations outside the V4 to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with it. Besides the states of the Eastern Neighborhood, such as Ukraine, Belarus or Moldova, the V4 plus instrument is applied in the case of Russia, Japan and Israel, while as regards regional groupings, it is applied in the case of the Nordic Council of Ministers and Benelux. It is noteworthy that the format is not being used more widely in the context of developing cooperation with the Western Balkan states. The wide range of partners and areas that the cooperation is focused on puts the real effectiveness of the instrument in question. Its exploitation, especially within the framework of cooperation with the Visegrad partners' prioritized nations of interest, still remains on a relatively low level. This is in the first place the case with Ukraine, although in cases of this type of nation offering the possibility of intensive cooperation in several areas there could be a modification of the instrument to an advanced form – such as the 'V4 super plus' format – which would take a higher cooperation potential into consideration. The Hungarian presidency continued with the initiatives of the Polish presidency and continued to further intensify and structure the discussion on energy security. The activities under the Hungarian presidency culminated in the energy Summit of Prime Ministers. From the point of view of the course taken towards coordination of procedures in the area of laying out new energy networks planned in European countries with the focus on the V4, the summit may be regarded as a key event.<sup>6</sup> The issue of the North-South interconnection of gas lines and the building of terminals for liquefied gas in Croatia and Poland to reduce the V4 states' raw material dependence on Russia could, in the eyes of the Slovak Republic, be regarded as an extremely important aspect.

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<sup>6</sup> "Declaration of the Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit"; <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=939&articleID=27720&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.



## QUESTION MARKS ABOUT THE SOLIDARITY PRINCIPLE

It is still possible to state that the persisting problems in the bilateral relations between Slovakia and Hungary have not been reflected in the effectiveness of cooperation. There was, however, one exception – Slovakia's candidature for the ACER seat – and here grounds resulting from tension in bilateral relations may, in the case in question, be traced behind the change in Hungary's position.

Slovakia perceived Hungary's position on her candidature for a seat on the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) as a denial of the solidarity principle. During the final vote Slovakia eventually received less votes than Slovenia, her competitor, and it was precisely Hungary's position that was disappointing for the Slovak side. Mutual support of the candidatures of individual Visegrad nations is openly referred to in the Program of the Polish V4 presidency<sup>7</sup> in the paper of the meeting of prime ministers held in Wieliczka, Poland, also including the position of R. Fico, the Slovak Prime Minister, urging other V4 partners to support Slovakia's candidature. As stated in the press release, the Visegrad partners found Slovakia's candidature very well prepared.<sup>8</sup> Since it was that same early summer that was connected with the adoption of the amendment to the Act on the State Language about which Hungary had and still has sharp reservations, Hungary's position was probably changed due to the tensions in Slovak – Hungarian bilateral relations.<sup>9</sup> Just another cause that may possibly have contributed to the change in Hungary's position was the failure to allow the Hungarian president to enter the territory of Slovakia. Reliance on the absolute support or solidarity of a partner relations with whom are exposed to permanent tensions and are in general considered as problematic, may have been too unrealistic. What was, however, confirmed is the assertion that the unsatisfactory character of mutual relations injures both nations *de facto*, although in the case of the ACER seat Slovakia was the injured party.

Although Slovakia's candidature for the ACER seat could not be regarded as a typical Visegrad project and to speak of tensions in bilateral relations filtering into the Visegrad agenda would accordingly not be correct, good relations among the partner nations continue to form the basis for fully-fledged development of regional cooperation. This, however, was frequently not the case as regards Slovak – Hungarian

<sup>7</sup> The program of the Polish presidency states literally: "The Polish Presidency will strive to elaborate a transparent mechanism for the exchange of support for V4 candidates to posts in Union institutions and other international organizations, and for conducting joint lobbying for various specific initiatives of the region's countries. The period of elections demonstrates the need to support each others' candidates and to co-ordinate lobbying efforts", "Programme of the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group", (July 2008 – June 2009); <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=942&articleID=17349&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

<sup>8</sup> "Press Release of the Polish V4 Presidency after the Official Summit of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries", Wieliczka (June 3, 2009); <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=939&articleID=23250&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. "Slovensko neuspelo. Sídlo ACER bude v Slovinsku"; <http://dnes.atlas.sk/ekonomika/statna-sprava/612153/slovensko-neuspelo-sidlo-acer-bude-v-slovinsku>.

relations. There are certain expectations connected with change of government in both countries, but in the light of past experiences probably no immediate reversal in mutual relations may be expected. Increasing trust between partners requires effort or the will to jointly solve problematic aspects and to consult issues of common interest on a regular basis. Unless there are such efforts or will, partners from the Czech Republic and Poland will still take the problematic character of Slovak-Hungarian relations into account and the threat, although just latent, of the problems of bilateral relations spreading to the regional level will in the future still remain within the framework of the V4.

## VISEGRAD TO VISEGRAD

The issue of V4 institutional background change has not been and is still not relevant and the Visegrad partners unanimously agree about the benefits of so-called low institutionalization of the V4, emphasizing the attached benefits, which consist in a higher degree of flexibility and thus a higher ability to quickly respond to current challenges. What, however, remains open is the extent to which the existing form of cooperation is being exploited as well as the exploitation efficiency of the individual cooperation instruments. One may indeed agree that the Visegrad model represents an important form of cooperation for the nations of the region, but certain problems arise in defining particular ways of exploiting it. Although the V4 is focused on strategic issues, such as the Eastern Partnership or energy security, there is a substantial lack of discussion on the part of both official and non-governmental players on cooperation principles and instruments to be employed in fulfilling them.

Compared with previous years efforts were in 2009 increased to initiate discussion on the above-mentioned issues concerning the very functioning of the V4. In this context, the initiative of the Czech Republic following on the Czech V4 presidency may be referred to. On the basis of this initiative several rounds of negotiations within ministries, among ministries and among experts were planned to assess the contribution of the V4 to the Czech Republic to shaping the profile of the Czech Republic within the V4, the model of future V4 functioning or the identification of contents, congruencies and differences among individual V4 states.<sup>10</sup> The proposal may be considered as a solid base for ex-

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*It is necessary to urge a greater degree of self-reflection and reassessment of certain principles on which the Fund's existence is grounded. The question, for example, is whether continuously widening territorial operation of the Fund to the regions of the Eastern and South-Eastern Europe is not being done at the expense of support for projects coming from the V4 countries and serving in particular the V4.*

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<sup>10</sup> See the working document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: "What is the future of the Visegrad Group? Is the Visegrad cooperation still relevant?".

pert discussion on V4 mechanisms functioning on the so-called national level that may also take place within the other V4 countries. It is precisely the approaching twentieth anniversary of the Visegrad Group's establishment that offers an opportunity to reassess the functionality of principles and instruments of V4 functioning, possibly even to initiate the establishment of new instruments and to do so without the necessity of changing the institutional background or basic agreements on which the cooperation is grounded within the framework of the V4.

Discussion on the application of principles and the exploitation of cooperation instruments to a considerable degree concerns the International Visegrad Fund also, which continues to represent the only 'classical' operating institution within the V4. There is no doubt that as the Fund is getting older – the tenth anniversary of the Fund's establishment was marked in May 2010 – its relevance is increasing. This is not only proved by the increasing volume of its budget, but above all by the number of projects supported every year from budgetary funds.<sup>11</sup> It is, however, necessary to urge a greater degree of self-reflection and reassessment of certain principles on which the Fund's existence is grounded. There is, for example, the question of whether continuously widening the territorial operation of the Fund to the regions of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe is not being done at the expense of support for projects coming from V4 countries and serving the V4 in particular. Another issue of importance is represented by the regulations under which applicants are provided with grants. Because of their excessive rigidity, some of these are frequently criticized by grant recipients. Under the current financial policy grant recipients are only refunded financial costs once their projects are finalized as a whole or once some of their parts at least are completed, not in advance. What is, however, disputable is the extent to which the current financial policy is efficient compared with the extent to which mainly small and financially weak organizations applying for grants are handicapped. Besides the leadership of the Fund the issue also concerns the V4 nations themselves, for it is just their representations that create the framework for the operation of the International Visegrad Fund.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SLOVAK V4 PRESIDENCY

When it takes up its presidency on July 1, 2010 Slovakia takes over the V4 in a consolidated position. The Visegrad Four succeeded in strengthening its position within the EU framework and entrenching itself as a regional initiative enjoying a growing reputation in Brussels. Last but not least, ties with the neighboring regions of the Eastern Neighborhood and Western Balkans were successfully strengthened. Continuity is therefore more than desirable in these areas. To increase the efficiency of the principles, mechanisms and instruments of V4 cooperation and if possible to enhance the scope of their application there is, however, room for their reassessment within the context

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<sup>11</sup> "2009 Annual Report, 2010 Guidelines"; [www.visegradfund.org](http://www.visegradfund.org).

of the approaching anniversary of the Visegrad Group's establishment. The Slovak presidency should therefore create the room needed for adequate reflection or for a kind of independent audit of the present functioning of the Visegrad Group on both official and non-governmental levels. Within this context there is also room for creation of new cooperation instruments that requires no changes to be made within the base of documents or within the institutional background of cooperation.

The challenges faced by the Slovak V4 presidency in the field of content priorities may be laid out as follows:

- Cooperation with the nations of the Eastern Neighborhood and Western Balkans: in this regard the Program of the Slovak V4 presidency follow that of the Hungarian presidency and leaves balanced room for both territorial V4 priorities.<sup>12</sup> Cooperation of the V4 with regional initiatives in the two regions in which it is not already deepened still remains a challenge. Another challenge to be faced is an exact definition of the role to be played by the V4 within the framework of the Eastern Partnership concept.
- Energy security: the gas crisis of 2009 may be considered as a trigger of cooperation among the V4 countries in the field of energy industry and energy security. There is the will to deepen cooperation in this field, even despite persisting differences in the so-called energy mixes, although this is an argument that was in the past considered the decisive factor in justifying the lack of an energy dimension in Visegrad cooperation. As a country that, among the V4 nations, was hit most severely by the consequences of the gas crisis, Slovakia should, within the framework of her V4 presidency, underline the need to preserve or possibly even to strengthen coordination mechanisms on the expert level and to promote as rapid as possible an interconnection of energy networks, with the focus on the North-South axis.
- Exploitation of the V4 plus mechanism: just like the Hungarian presidency, the Slovak V4 presidency relies on exploitation of the V4 plus mechanism to develop cooperation with third countries or a group of nations. While cooperation is oriented on just one sector in the case of most partners, in that of other nations – such as Ukraine – the number of areas in which to develop cooperation is substantially higher. Should this be the case, it would be possible to consider raising the existing cooperation to a higher level, such as the 'V4 super plus' format. Cooperation with the nation or group of nations selected could for example be prioritized within the framework of the format. When creating new mechanisms of cooperation within the framework of the V4 plus format it is necessary to pay attention to their efficiency and the overall added value the mechanism in question means for the Group as a whole, otherwise there is a danger that the format as such will lose the importance attached to it.

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<sup>12</sup> One summit of ministers of foreign affairs should, under the program of the Slovak V4 Presidency, be focused on cooperation with nations of Western Balkans, while the other should deal with the Eastern Partnership. See "Efektívny Vyšehrad – kontinuita, súdržnosť, solidarita, informovanosť. Program slovenského predsedníctva Vyšehradskej skupiny – V4" (June 2010).

- Strengthening the civil dimension of the V4: besides the political one, the Visegrad Group should also strengthen the civil or non-governmental dimension of cooperation. An instrument to implement such a strengthening is represented by the International Visegrad Fund or by the system of grants through which activities of the non-governmental sector are supported. There is, however, no mechanism of regular consultations among representatives of governments or individual sectors and representatives or experts of the non-governmental sphere. Creation of the Visegrad Expert Non-Governmental Platform to offer room for regular and structured discussions on prioritized issues of Visegrad cooperation could represent a way to overcome the deficit.
- The International Visegrad Fund: in the field of support for projects to strengthen Visegrad cooperation and also in the area of support for educational projects and internships for students from outside the Visegrad area, the IVF, as the only classical V4 institution, fulfills an irreplaceable task. The need for at least partial change to the current regulations on provision of grants may in this context be highlighted again as the current system handicaps those applicants who do not have adequate funds at their disposal to cover their projects in advance. The Slovak V4 presidency should provide the current leadership of the Fund with the support and proper conditions necessary for the implementation of necessary changes.
- European Danube strategy: the European Danube strategy represents a macro-regional initiative to include all four Visegrad nations or their regions. As launching the European Danube strategy represents one of the priorities of the Hungarian EU presidency, the role to be played by the Visegrad Group within the macro-regional strategy at present coming into existence should be specified under the Slovak V4 presidency. Active participation in the strategy by all four Visegrad nations is in the interests of the V4 and the need to include Poland as quickly as possible in the cooperation mechanisms being created within the framework of the EDS should therefore be emphasized.
- Hungarian EU presidency: creation of consultation and possibly also of coordination mechanisms between the Slovak V4 presidency and the Hungarian EU presidency is in the interests of both the Visegrad countries and the V4 presidency of the Slovak Republic itself. As the priorities of the V4 and the EU are in many areas identical or complementary, creation of such a mechanism could in the long term be beneficial to the EU itself. What should be taken into account is the fact that the Hungarian EU presidency will be replaced by a Polish presidency and that the consultation mechanisms created could also be exploited in that case.

## INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: SOME NOTES ON THE APPROACHING ANNIVERSARY

The Visegrad Four will enter the third decennium of its existence as the most efficient and the most promising form of regional cooperation in Central Europe. Although

its functioning and operation at present, just like in the period of its establishment, takes place within the framework provided by political representatives of individual participating nations, in the V4's two decades of existence its non-governmental or civil dimension of cooperation has been considerably strengthened. This strengthening was rendered possible especially thanks to the creation of the International Visegrad Fund. It is, furthermore, just this dimension that makes the V4 more legitimate and promising. There are therefore grounds to strengthen it further.

The reservations of critics who target Visegrad cooperation are especially connected with the excessive expectations concerning the possibilities of this collaboration. If the low level of institutionalization of cooperation and consequent lack of any central coordination mechanisms e.g. in the form of a permanent secretariat, what comes to the forefront is the flexibility of the Visegrad cooperation model as well as its ability to focus on current issues connected with events in the regions beyond the borders of the Visegrad Group, sectoral policies or on areas in the case of which coordination of positions is achievable relatively quickly and without any extreme efforts. This is precisely the advantage of the V4 – the Visegrad cooperation is in the first place a very pragmatic form of cooperation exploited to fulfill common objectives of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. If the expectations of the cooperation implemented in the V4 format are realistic and if

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they were generated against the background of the current basis of institutions and agreements, one may conclude that the twenty years of V4 existence have been connected with several important successes. The most significant success of all – successful integration of all four countries in NATO and the EU – will be very hard to surpass. This is also proved by a certain groping for priorities in the beginning of the so-called post-entry period.

This does not mean that Visegrad should not set any other objectives of greater significance that may only prove justified over a longer period of time. One such objective could be transfer of experiences and cooperation to neighboring regions of the Eastern Neighborhood and Western Balkans to which a lot may be offered by individual Visegrad nations as well as by the V4 as such. It is in just these regions that the stabilizing 'soft power' of the Visegrad is particularly visible and appreciated in an ever growing manner by the local players.

Another level to enable infiltration by Visegrad's 'soft power' is the European Union, which by itself offers Visegrad nations an important instrument to advocate their own as well as regional priorities or policies. Strengthening coordination mechanisms within the framework of the V4 formula on the European level is a fact, although the V4 countries only achieve general agreement in selected areas. This is another reason why the V4 became a recognized 'trade mark' in Brussels and why the Visegrad Group is not only regarded as a functional unit, but as an efficient regional platform within the framework of the EU, too.



The operation of Visegrad's 'soft power' in neighboring regions and in the EU would, however, be substantially limited if it were not for the strengthening cooperation within the framework of the Visegrad Group. Although there was obvious progress made in the last twenty years within this context, the possibilities of strengthening the existing cooperation mechanisms or even creating new instruments to reinforce cooperation are far from being exhausted. This is the case even if no changes are expected regarding the current level of institution and agreement basis of Visegrad cooperation. It is precisely the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Visegrad Group's establishment that offers a suitable opportunity to review the achievements, but also to think about the future orientation of the V4. Of all the Visegrad States it was Slovakia that probably benefited most from Visegrad cooperation and the current presidency could therefore represent an opportunity to draw clear lines of future V4 orientation as well deepening cooperation and strengthening the individual mechanisms connected to this.

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# SLOVAKIA AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

JURAJ MARUŠIAK

The very first time that the idea of Eastern Partnership came up at all was May 2008. At the time it was a joint initiative presented by Poland and Sweden.<sup>1</sup> The project, which was outlined as the Eastern dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and which also included ambitions to exceed its original scope, was rendered possible thanks to the change in policy of France, which during her EU Presidency in 2008 sought, through the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean, to reinvigorate the so-called Southern dimension of the ENP. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) program also resulted from the pressure exerted by some of the new EU Member States, including in the first place the V4 countries and the Baltic States. These EU Member States referred to the need for a specific approach to the EU's Eastern neighbors i.e. the states situated between the Eastern border of the EU and the Russian Federation.<sup>2</sup> During her EU Presidency in the first half of 2007 Germany, just like the V4 countries, also adverted to the need to differentiate between 'Europe's neighbors' and 'the European neighbors'. This was reflected in the European Commission's report of December 2006 on 'strengthening the European Neighborhood Policy', also referred to as the *ENP Plus*.<sup>3</sup> The developments in Eastern Europe following the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 confirmed that it was necessary to pay more attention to the region and proved right the initiatives by state and non-state

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<sup>1</sup> "Eastern Partnership. Polish-Swedish Proposal", *Euractiv.com* (May 23, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds) *Eastern Partnership: The Opening Report – Warsaw*. (Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Relations, 2009), pp. 47-49.

<sup>3</sup> "Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy COM(2006)726 final" (December 4, 2006); [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com06\\_726\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com06_726_en.pdf).

think tanks in Poland<sup>4</sup> and later also those of the other V4 countries dealing with the need to implement the new so-called Eastern dimension of the EU.<sup>5</sup> This position was also embraced by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in January 2003 presented a non-paper on the idea of 'the EU Eastern dimension'.<sup>6</sup> Developments following the EU enlargement by the Central and South Eastern European nations also confirmed the need to intensify contacts with the European states of the former USSR. Such intensification was not, however, possible under the ENP format adopted back in 2004, which involved a common institutional and agreement framework for the states of North Africa, the Near East and Eastern Europe.

A change in perception by EU Member States of the issues connected with relations with states in the post-Soviet space was also confirmed by the support for the creation of the EaP by those 'old' EU Member States i.e. the EU members before 2004, which in the past rejected the idea of a separate 'EU Eastern policy' towards the successor states

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of the former USSR. An important role in changing the opinion of the original fifteen EU Member States was, however, played in 2007 by Germany during her EU Presidency, which began to promote a new comprehensive approach based upon differentiation between 'the Eastern dimension' and 'the Southern dimension' of the EU ENP. The process begun under the Finnish EU Presidency (in the second half of 2006) as well as under the German EU Presidency

resulted under the Portuguese EU Presidency in the decision adopted by the European Council on December 14, 2007 to take the differentiation principle into consideration within the framework of the EU ENP. Those EU representatives who participated in the actual making of differentiation within the EU ENP, such as Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations, who in November 2007 admitted that the ENP included very different nations, also identified themselves with its necessity.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> P. Kowal (ed.) *"Wymiar wschodni" UE – szansa czy idée fixe polskiej polityki*. (Warsaw: Center of International Relations (Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych), 2002).

<sup>5</sup> K. Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, A. Duleba, L. Póti, V. Votápek *Eastern Policy of the EU: the Visegrad Countries' Perspective. Thinking about an Eastern Dimension*. (Warsaw: Center for Eastern Studies, 2003); [http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/punkt\\_widzenia4.pdf](http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/punkt_widzenia4.pdf). See also: K. Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, A. Duleba, L. Póti, V. Votápek *Eastern Policy of the Enlarged European Union. Developing Relations with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. A Visegrad Perspective. Thinking about an Eastern Dimension*. (Bratislava: Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2003), pp. 251-263.

<sup>6</sup> "Non-paper z polskimi propozycjami w sprawie przyszłego kształtu polityki rozszerzonej UE wobec nowych wschodnich sąsiadów", *Polityka rozszerzonej Unii Europejskiej wobec nowych sąsiadów*. (Volume of conference papers). Conference organized by Stefan Batory Foundation in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland on February 20-21, 2003 in Warsaw. (Warsaw: Stefan Batory Foundation, 2003), pp. 93-107; <http://kamunikat.h2.pl/knihi.html?pubid=1801>.

<sup>7</sup> B. Ferrero-Waldner, "Die EU und ihre östlichen Nachbarn – Sicherheit und Wohlstand durch Vernetzung" (Berlin: Ost-Ausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft, November 15, 2007); <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/07/718&format=HTML&aged=0&language=DE&guiLanguage=en>.

On the basis of the Communication from the European Commission of December 5, 2007 and a conference on the ENP held on September 3, 2007 the European Council urged the following EU Presidencies to continue developing the Eastern and Southern dimensions of the ENP in both bilateral and multilateral formats.<sup>8</sup> There was no major opposition to the EaP project within the EU even despite the worries about possible responses by Bulgaria and Romania referring to the threat of the Black Sea Synergy's marginalization<sup>9</sup>, or worries about possible responses by EU Member States situated on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea (France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and, from 2004, Cyprus and Malta as well) that did not consider the relations of the EU with its neighbors on its Eastern border their priority.<sup>10</sup> During its meeting held on June 19-20, 2008 the European Council charged the European Commission with drafting the EaP concept.<sup>11</sup>

Presentation of the EaP project was, from the point of view of Slovakia as well as that of other new EU Member States situated on the Eastern border of the EU, a new challenge. Forming a separate Eastern policy of the EU permanently ceased be the exclusive domain of 'the new EU Member States', although one must not ignore the fact that the very first steps towards differentiation between the Eastern and Southern dimensions of the ENP were taken under the

Finnish and German EU Presidencies in 2006 and 2007, respectively. The EU as a whole identified itself with this requirement and due to Sweden's participation and thanks to the active support provided by Germany the initiative of a separate Eastern dimension of the EU got into the hands of the 'old' EU members. When it came to drafting and adopting the project the new EU members, and the V4 countries in particular, were acknowledged as legitimate and competent partners of the 'old' EU Member States. The EU finally acknowledged 'the Eastern dimension' of its neighborhood policy as an independent policy different from that applied in the Mediterranean region. As the fundamental principles of the ENP had been, in the period between 2003 and 2004, adopted without the participation of the V4 countries and other 'new' EU members and without any possibility of co-determination on their part, it was after all vital for them all that they were, for the very first

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*As the fundamental principles of the ENP were, in the period between 2003 and 2004, adopted without participation by other 'new' EU Member States it was after all vital for them that they were, for the very first time, provided with an opportunity to actively participate in conceptualization of the EU Eastern policy.*

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<sup>8</sup> "Presidency Conclusions" Council of the European Union, 16616/1/07 REV 1 (December 14, 2007); [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/97669.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/97669.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> A.K. Cianciara, "Eastern Partnership - Opening a New Chapter of Polish Eastern Policy and the European Neighborhood Policy?", *Analysis & Opinions*, No. 4/2008, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> . Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds) *Eastern Partnership: The Opening Report - Warsaw*. (Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Relations, 2009), p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> "Presidency Conclusions", Council of the European Union, nr. 11018/08 (June 19-20, 2008); [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/101346.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/101346.pdf).

time, provided with an opportunity to actively participate in conceptualization of the EU Eastern policy.

## AGREEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Events connected with the war of August 2008 between Russia and Georgia expedited elaboration of the program. On the basis of the joint Polish-Swedish non-paper elaborated on October 3, 2008 supported by the upcoming EU Presidency of the Czech Republic, which further elaborated the initial draft of the EaP project of May 2008<sup>12</sup>, the European Commission published on December 3, 2008 a working version of the EaP offer.<sup>13</sup> The final conceptual framework of the EaP program was adopted during the EaP summit held in Prague on May 7, 2009.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to the original ENP format the EaP program offers six partner states situated in Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) conclusion of the so-called association agreements with the EU to replace the present Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA). The objective of the agreements is to create or to include creation of deep and comprehensive free trade areas (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area – DCFTA) that will on one hand enable liberalization of trade and investments, but that will at the same involve law approximation in the field of regulation leading to convergence with EU legal regulations and standards. Although the areas mentioned will then form part of the association agreements, negotiations on them will be going on separately. This fact may substantially decelerate the process of association agreements conclusion. The declared objective of the DCFTAs is as high a degree of liberalization of mutual trade as possible to cover all areas of mutual trade, including the energy trade, except for certain agricultural commodities excluded from full liberalization in December 2007. The liberalization of mutual trade should at the same time be asymmetrical in favor of the partner states. Although the deep and comprehensive free trade areas planned between the EU and the partner states will be bilateral in nature, since a future creation of a network of such zones and a mutual conclusion of bilateral agreements between the individual partner states is anticipated, in the long term it is expected that the multilateral approach will be applied within the EaP program. The

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<sup>12</sup> “Elaboration of the Eastern Partnership. Polish-Swedish Paper with the Support of the Incoming Czech Presidency” Council of the European Union (October 3, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> “Eastern Partnership. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Commission of the European Communities”, COM(2008) 823 final, {SEC(2008) 2974} (December 3, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> “Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit”, 8435/09 (Presse 78), Council of the European Union (May 7, 2009); [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf).

European Commission does not exclude a subsequent forming of a *Neighborhood Economic Community*. Since membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) of the partner country concerned is expected as a precondition for the creation of bilateral DCFTAs<sup>15</sup>, in the field of implementation of market reforms there is at the same time the conditionality element referred to in the communication from the European Commission of December 2008. Action Plans will be replaced by so-called Association Agendas.<sup>16</sup> The document approved does not on the other hand define the contents of the agreements mentioned, which will be drawn up on a bilateral level. Within the EaP it is, besides the bilateral dimension referred to, expected that the multilateral dimension will also be developed to enable the EU to draw up its strategy towards the region as a whole and to develop closer ties among the partner states themselves, except, naturally, for Russia. This objective should be accomplished through the EaP summit to be called every two years and annual meetings on the level of Foreign Ministers. Besides cooperation on the level of Heads of States and Governments, respective Members of Governments and high representatives of Foreign Ministries, a joint EU – EaP Parliamentary Assembly (Euronest) is expected to be established as well. In December 2008 the European Commission also invited other European institutions to participate in the EaP program. The Commission's invitation addressed the Committee of the Regions (CoR) that is to participate in creating the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Local and Regional Assembly, and the European Economic and Social Committee that participates in the operation of the Civil Society Forum (CSF).

Cooperation with partner countries to support their social and economic reforms to make convergence with the EU possible is envisaged under the program. The strategic objective of the program is primarily defined as building DCFTAs. Just another part of the program is support for liberalization of the visa regime, with full liberalization of the regime being defined as the long-term objective in the field. The very first step to be taken is represented by agreements on simplification of visa procedures and readmissions. A fourth area of intensified cooperation is covering strengthened energy security with the proposal of the European Commission of December 2008 envisaging a rapid completion of negotiations on Ukraine's and Moldova's membership in the European Energy Community Program. For other partners, observer status was considered.

Multilateral dialogue is expected in the area of law and regulation. Cooperation in the field of the four prioritized issues is being implemented through the so-called multilateral thematic platforms covering: 1. Democracy, Good Governance and Stability; 2.

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<sup>15</sup> "Eastern Partnership. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Commission of the European Communities. COM(2008) 823 final, {SEC(2008) 2974" (December 3, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> The first association agenda was adopted by the EU – Ukraine Cooperation Council on November 23, 2009. See: "EU-Ukraine Association Agenda to Prepare and Facilitate the Implementation of the Association Agreement" (November 23, 2009); [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/ukraine/docs/2010\\_eu\\_ukraine\\_association\\_agenda\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/ukraine/docs/2010_eu_ukraine_association_agenda_en.pdf).

Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Sectoral Policies; 3. Energy Security; and 4. People-to-People Contacts.

Assessment of cooperation as implemented in the field of the above-mentioned thematic platforms is carried out biannually on the level of high officials who participate in the implementation of reforms within the relevant policy areas and administration covered by the platforms. The relevant reports are presented to annual meetings of Foreign Ministers. The operation of the platforms may occasionally also be presented to meetings of the ministers concerned.

Introductory meetings within the thematic platforms were held in Brussels in June 2009, while the second round was held in the period between October and November 2009. In autumn 2009 the main objectives to be reassessed periodically were approved within each of the thematic platforms. The EaP project is also open to third parties that may on an individual basis participate in particular projects, activities and meetings of the thematic platforms.

Issues of border management, development of small and medium businesses, regional markets in the field of energy industry as well as energy efficiency, diversification of energy sources (the Southern energy corridor), prevention, readiness for and responsiveness to natural disasters as well as human-caused disasters and finally a model initiative to promote good governance of public affairs in the field of environmental protection were all defined as so-called model initiatives. The objective of these model initiatives is 'making the EaP visible' through specific projects and involving international financial institutions and private investors in the program.

The EaP program's strategic objectives are, under the document resulting from the Prague summit, defined in a much more moderate fashion than was the original proposal of December 2008 tabled by

the European Commission. In the common declaration there is for example no reference to 'goal-directed opening of the EU labor market' to citizens of partner countries or a Partnership for mobility. Similarly, unlike the joint Polish-Swedish-Czech non-paper of October 2008 there is no reference to 'outreach' beyond the ENP's original format. The initiators of the EaP failed to achieve establishment of a special coordinator and creation of a unit within the European Commission for such an official to act in and to form a part of its regular structure.<sup>17</sup> Creation of the position and the unit would symbolically equalize the EaP with the Union for the Mediterranean.

The resulting document represents a combination of the symbolical dimension of cooperation with the EU as expressed by granting the status of associated states to

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<sup>17</sup> "Elaboration of the Eastern Partnership", Polish-Swedish Paper with the Support of the Incoming Czech Presidency. (Brussels: Council of the European Union, October 3, 2008).



partner countries as well as in the form of ambitious objectives such as full liberalization of the visa regime, creation of a free trade zone etc. and a modernization dimension. The program creates an institutional basis and the relevant financial framework for the development of cooperation and modernization of states within the EaP in the prioritized fields. On the other hand, just like previous ENP papers, the document fails to define any EU concept on future relations of the partner countries with the EU. The document is political in nature and therefore does not define any mutual obligations or terms and conditions within whose framework the individual strategic objectives of the EaP (involvement in the free trade zone and the European Energy Community Program or full liberalization of the visa regime) will be implemented. The program does not in this regard provide any explanation as to how the mutual obligations of the EU and partner countries are to be regulated under future association agreements and DCFTA principles. The EaP program also left out strategies that were in the *ENP plus* program under the Finnish and German EU Presidencies in 2007 in the form of sectoral agreements enabling partner states to delegate observers to the European institutions who, upon having fulfilled certain conditions, got advisory votes. The mechanism represented an impulse motivating real progress in individual sectors. The EaP final document reflected Ukraine's ideas on symbolic expression of the progress made on integration into the EU,<sup>18</sup> but there is, however, no real content represented by modernization reforms implemented or by any real schedule of deepening relations with the EU. In its present form the document complied to a great degree with the needs of the then Ukrainian leadership headed by President Victor Yushchenko, which, in the context of the upcoming presidential elections, needed to show some concrete outcomes in the field of integration within the EU, one of the president's priorities while in office.

The new element within the framework of the EaP is the establishment of the Civil Society Forum – the CSF that will enable non-governmental subjects to actively participate in the program. On the basis of a communication from the European Commission there was a process going on in March and April 2009 of consultations aimed at preparing the CSF and defining its tasks. Based on consultations, the tasks involved support for cooperation among organizations of civil society and strengthening their role in East European states, provision of technical support for bilateral and multilateral activities implemented within the framework of the EaP as well as the promotion of EU, ENP and EaP principles in partner countries.

Most of the approximately 40 papers presented within the framework of the consultations were from non-governmental organizations active in East European states, but part of them were from organizations operating in EU Member States.<sup>19</sup> Along with preparation of the CSF, the requirements of involvement by individual

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<sup>18</sup> A. Duleba, "Východné partnerstvo: čo prináša a na čo zabúda", *Zahraničná politika* Vol. XIII, No. 4/2009, pp. 27-28.

<sup>19</sup> "Results of the Consultations with CSOs and NGOs on the Creation of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum"; [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/docs/consult\\_results\\_cs\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/docs/consult_results_cs_en.pdf).



non-governmental organizations were defined, with organizations operating in the partner countries being given preference. On top of that, the organizations are to include a wide range of players active in civil society, ranging from trade unions and employers associations through professional organizations, think tanks and non-profit organizations to other players present in civil society. Experience of operation in the relevant field of European policy or with issues connected with the EaP program was defined as the third requirement. The conceptual document elaborated by the European Commission after the EaP summit of May 2009 defined the main tasks of the CSF as inter alia support for dialogue, building networks and exchange of experiences on the level of civil society, transfer of experiences of European integration processes in the neighboring states, analysis of the possibilities of civil society in the field of support for the multilateral component of the EaP, building and strengthening capabilities of organizations of civil society in the states of the EaP through developing contacts with organizations from EU Members States as well as with international organizations or networks, assistance provided in strengthening civil society and support for dialogue between civil society and authorities in partners states as well as support for institutional development of organizations of civil society. As the document refers to the role of civil society in the implementation of measures aimed at confidence building in the event of regional conflicts, there is also the security dimension of the EaP included. Within the operation of the multilateral structures of the EaP the CSF is to primarily participate as an advisory body operating through exchange of experiences, provision of proposals and expertise to technical platforms, monitoring and evaluating the operation of platforms with mandatory consideration being given to the written reports prepared during negotiations of the platforms and meetings of the relevant ministers. In cases where they were invited to participate, the CSF representatives are also authorized to take part in the negotiation of platforms, the meetings of ministers and in EaP summits. The conceptual document established that the CSF of the EaP would be in session regularly and that its meetings should be held once a year at least. The Commission also defined the relation between the CSF and the regional dialogue of non-governmental organizations taking place within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS NGO forum), which was in 2008 initiated by Romania. In its response to worries about possible intersection between the initiatives in the case of the Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations the European Commission declared for regional and thematic orientation within the framework of the BSS, while the CSF is to enable the participants of the EaP to converge with the EU.<sup>20</sup>

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) positively received the proposal tabled by the European Commission to establish the CSF and its position suggested inter alia which direction the EaP should take once the ENP is established, with the experience of the previous years having been taken into consideration. The

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<sup>20</sup> "Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Concept Paper"; [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/docs/concept\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/docs/concept_en.pdf).

EESC suggested the need to involve civil society in the elaboration of action plans (or association agendas) as well as in other activities implemented within the framework of the existing agreement base regulating relations between the EU and the partner countries and monitoring their implementation. The EESC also declared for clear-cut definition of the terms and conditions of inclusion in community programs and in the activities of individual EU agencies. The step would present a factor encouraging the adoption of relevant parts of the *acquis*. Participation of civil society in selecting issues to form the subject matter for discussion within the thematic platforms was also requested by the Committee. These were first and foremost issues connected with good governance, rule of law, principles of the social market economy and their regulation framework, social and civil dialogue, migration, protection of intellectual property, energy security, the fight against poverty, obstacles to mutual trade, cross-border cooperation, protection of the environment and interpersonal contacts. The sharing of common values with the EU, the respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and the maintaining of social and civil dialogue were all emphasized by the European Economic and Social Committee as a precondition for inclusion of partner states within the EaP program. The significance of the precondition was notably underlined in the case of Belarus.<sup>21</sup>

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In the period between June 29, 2009, when the European Commission invited representatives of the subjects concerned to officially express their interest in participating in the operation of the Civil Society Forum, and September 2009, a total of 439 organizations did so. Of those subjects, approximately 200 were invited to participate in the first CSF meeting held on November 16-17, 2009.<sup>22</sup> The priorities of the CSF conform to the structure of the thematic platforms of the EaP. There were four working groups established within the Forum (WG 1: Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability; WG 2: Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies; WG 3: Environment, Climate Changes and Energy Security; WG 4: Interpersonal Contacts). The above-mentioned groups are coordinated by

<sup>21</sup> "Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Involvement of Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership (Exploratory Opinion)", REX/271 (May 13, 2009); [http://eescopinions.eesc.europa.eu/EESCopinionDocument.aspx?identifier=ces\rex\rex271\ces889-2009\\_ac.doc&language=EN](http://eescopinions.eesc.europa.eu/EESCopinionDocument.aspx?identifier=ces\rex\rex271\ces889-2009_ac.doc&language=EN).

<sup>22</sup> The non-governmental organizations operating in Belarus showed greatest interest (76), while another two positions were taken up by organizations from Azerbaijan and Ukraine (69 and 62, respectively). See "The Results of the Invitation to Submit Expressions of Interest to Participate in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and Next Steps Leading to its First Gathering on 16-17 November 2009 in Brussels"; [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/docs/results\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/docs/results_en.pdf).

representatives of the partner countries and of the EU Member States equally. The group coordinators, the EU representatives and the facilitators from partner states form the so-called Steering Committee led by the Forum spokesman and during a meeting held in November 2009 Sergey Matskievich, a representative of the Assembly of Pro-Democratic Non-Governmental Organizations of Belarus, became the spokesman.<sup>23</sup> The individual working groups that were in session during the first CSF meeting elaborated a set of recommendations<sup>24</sup>. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Commissioner for External Relations and ENP, Carl Bildt, Sweden's Foreign Minister, and Marion Sepi, Chairman of the EESC, participated in the final CSF session. The Forum especially emphasized the need to apply democratic conditionality in inclusion of states of the former USSR in the EaP program. As underlined by Sergey Matskievich, states of the EaP must strive to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria as well as the Council of Europe's and the UN's obligations and recommendations. The CSF sharply denounced detention of prisoners of conscience in certain of the region's states and urged their immediate release. In connection with the existence of politically motivated repression reference was made to the case of Tatsiana Shaputska. Shaputska, Byelorussian journalist and participant in the CSF was, just because of her participation in the CSF meeting held in Brussels, expelled from the State University of Minsk. The Forum *inter alia* urged the EU as a whole and its Member States to elaborate a plan to lead to introduction of a visa-free regime with the states included in the EaP program.<sup>25</sup> To strengthen security within the region the CSF participants also supported deepening cooperation with Russia and Turkey as well as the two countries' involvement in EaP projects. Establishment of an efficient internet platform to enable communication and interaction among CSF players from the EaP states, the EU, Russia, Turkey and other third partners was proposed. Within the framework of the platform the suggested use of Russian as a language of communication was to be enabled. The Forum urged the EU to make a similar offer to Russian civil society as well and thus to enable establishment of an EU – Russia Civil Society Forum.<sup>26</sup> The forum's outcomes were presented during a meeting of EaP Foreign Ministers held on December 8, 2009.

Activities on the level of civil society have turned out to be the most dynamic elements of the EaP program, while activities performed within the CSF contribute in the most active fashion to implementation of the value dimension of the EU's operations in

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<sup>23</sup> "Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Elected during the Meeting on 16-17 November"; [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/forum/members\\_sc\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/forum/members_sc_en.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> "Recommendations of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (16-17 November 2009)"; [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/recommendations\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/recommendations_en.htm).

<sup>25</sup> "Speech Delivered by Mr. S. Mackievic to the Foreign Ministers", Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (November 16-17, 2009); [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/forum/speech\\_mackievic\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/forum/speech_mackievic_en.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> "Working Group 1: Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability", Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (November 16-17, 2009); [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/civil\\_society/forum/working\\_group1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/civil_society/forum/working_group1_en.pdf).

the regions of Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus. The task of civil society was also underlined by Štefan Füle, the new Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy, who did so especially in relation to the assistance provided to East European states in the field of law approximation to EU standards, in the area of exchange of experiences and institution-building as well as in the area of building a new basis for agreement.<sup>27</sup>

Comprehensive Institution Building programs – CIB became a new, but yet important instrument within the framework of the EU's 'Eastern policy'. The programs are aimed at provision of support for reforms to be implemented in partner states in order to enable the building of the institutional capabilities required to achieve the key strategic objectives of the EaP. The objectives mentioned include building the DCFTA and liberalization of the visa regime. Preparation and introductory activities to be performed within the framework of the program will commence in 2010, while full implementation is expected in 2011. Of the 600 million euro in total earmarked for the EaP program in the period between 2010-2013 from the European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument funds, 175 million euro will be spent on the CIB. The key form of CIB program implementation will be 'twinning', while high level consultancy, training and expert exchanges, study stays, personnel secondment to affiliated institutions in EU Member States as well as scholarships for technical schooling are also expected within the implementation of the CIB. The funds earmarked for the CIB will also be available to enable financing the purchase of specialized infrastructure or equipment in compliance with the EU standards required to implement relevant reforms.

Support amounting to approximately 75 million euro for Pilot Regional Development Programs aimed to overcome regional disparities in the states of the EaP is, besides the CIB, also expected under the EaP. The funds are to be earmarked to cover the building of infrastructure and development of human capital as well as that of small and medium businesses. Development programs are to be implemented on the basis of EU cohesion policy and are to meet the needs and territorial arrangement of partner states. Conclusion of the relevant agreements on the development programs is expected in mid-2012. The highest volume of all, amounting to 350 million euro, is to

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<sup>27</sup> "Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy: Strong Civil Society Pillar – Major Objective of the EU Eastern Partnership Policy, 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PERC (Pan-European Regional Council) Executive Committee. Brussels, European Economic and Social Committee, 8. March 2010"; <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPE-ECH/10/78&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

be used to cover implementation of the four thematic platforms and model initiatives i.e. to support the multilateral dimension of the EaP.<sup>28</sup>

On the level of bilateral relations negotiations on preparing and signing the *Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine* were already underway in 2009. The first annual meeting on the level of EU Member States Foreign Ministers and the states of the EaP held on December 8, 2009 resolved to open analogous talks with Moldova in early 2010.<sup>29</sup> The first round of talks with Moldova was held on January 12, 2010, and in spring 2010 there were consultations on the format of negotiations on conclusion of analogous agreements going on with the states of Southern Caucasus as well.<sup>30</sup> The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) adopted the relevant directives on May 10, 2010.<sup>31</sup> What deserves special attention in this connection is the fact that of the states situated in Southern Caucasus Georgia is the only one to successfully finish negotiations on conclusion of a readmission agreement and on simplification of the visa regime.<sup>32</sup> A meeting on the level of Foreign Ministers also decided to commence the Comprehensive Institution Building program in early 2010. To identify what individual states need in order to implement the necessary reforms now there are consultations held at the expert level. Although the summit of Foreign Ministers confirmed the introduction of a visa-free regime as the strategic objective, it was at the same confirmed that the objective would be implemented in the long term. It was decided that the issue of visa dialogue would be resolved on a bilateral level between the EU and individual partner states, depending on the respective individual situation.<sup>33</sup>

As regards the multilateral level, the operation of the EaP parliamentary assembly (*Euronest*) was not launched for the time being. The first meeting expected to take place in Brussels on March 24, 2010, was, due to the failure of negotiations held between Belarus and the European Parliament on the composition of the Byelorussian ten-representative delegation, adjourned. Representatives of the European Parliament urged the inclusion of

<sup>28</sup> "Vademecum on Financing in the Frame of the Eastern Partnership", European Commission (December 16, 2009); [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/eastern/docs/eap\\_vademecum\\_14122009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/eap_vademecum_14122009_en.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> "Eastern Partnership Implementation Well on Track - 1<sup>st</sup> Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers Meeting", European Commission (December 8, 2009); <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1891&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

<sup>30</sup> "Next Talks on Moldova-EU Association Agreement to be held in March", *Moldpress* (January 14, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> "Relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - Association Agreements", 9559/10, Council of the European Union - General Affairs, 3012<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting 1 (Presse 106), (May 10, 2010), p. 8; [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/114364.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/114364.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> "Statement to the Press by Herman van Rompuy, President of the Council of the European Union after his Meeting with Nica Gilauri, Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia", European Council - the President PCE 51/10 (March 16, 2010); [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113399.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113399.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> "Eastern Partnership Implementation Well on Track - 1<sup>st</sup> Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers Meeting", European Commission (December 8, 2009); <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1891&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

representatives of the Byelorussian opposition and representatives of non-governmental organizations as observers.<sup>34</sup> Their demand was justified by a resolution of the European Parliament dated December 17, 2009 conditioning participation by representatives of Belarus in meetings of the Euronest as a fully-fledged and equal partner on holding free and fair parliamentary elections.<sup>35</sup> The position of Belarus was on the other hand supported by all the other East European partner states and also by a part of the Byelorussian opposition, namely by Alexander Milinkevich, leader of the Movement for Freedom.<sup>36</sup>

Although in its response to a communication from the European Commission dated December 3, 2008 the Committee of the Regions – CoR confirmed, in its session of April 21-22, 2009, its intention and short term objective to establish an Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Local and Regional Assembly as an institutional platform for regular dialogue and cooperation, the assembly in question was not really created in 2009 or in the first half of 2010, whereas the inaugural meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) was held on January 21, 2010. This assembly is first and foremost to participate in solving issues of the Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and stability and Interpersonal Contacts thematic platforms including those of economic and social development, regional development, cross-border cooperation, administrative reforms and decentralization within the states of the EaP.<sup>37</sup> The schedule of activities of the planned assembly formed the subject-matter of the Regional and Local Dimension of the EaP meetings of the CoR Forum held in Brussels on June 16, 2009.<sup>38</sup> The establishment of the assembly of regional and local representatives of the EaP is supported by for example the chairman of the CoR Commission for External Relations István Sertő-Radics (mayor of the City of Úszka, Hungary).

More recent positions of the Committee of the Regions do not include any reference to an intention to create the assembly, while its comments of October 2009 on major EU policies refer to participation by the CoR in platforms and initiatives of the EaP and to cooperation with local and regional players. The need to strengthen supranational cooperation within the framework of the EU Northern Dimension policy, in regard to relations between the EU and Russia as well as regional strategies (the Baltic Sea and the Danube Strategy) are on the other hand all mentioned.<sup>39</sup> During the meeting

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<sup>34</sup> "Eastern Parliamentary Assembly Delayed but on Track", *EurActiv.com* (March 26, 2010); <http://www.euractiv.com/en/east-mediterranean/eastern-parliamentary-assembly-delayed-track-news-376713>.

<sup>35</sup> "European Parliament Resolution of 17 December 2009 on Belarus", P7\_TA-PROV(2009)0117, European Parliament; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2009-0117&format=XML&language=EN>.

<sup>36</sup> "Milinkevich: Use EU 'Carrots' Carefully", *EurActiv.com* (March 1, 2010); <http://www.euractiv.com/en/east-mediterranean/belarus-opposition-leader-we-need-step-step-eu-help-interview-290085>.

<sup>37</sup> "The Role of Local and Regional Authorities within the Eastern Partnership. Opinion of the Committee of the Regions", RELEX-IV-024, Committee of the Regions, 79<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session (April 21-22, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> "Regional and Local Dimensions of the Eastern Partnership. Proceedings of the Forum of the Committee of the Regions", Committee of Regions (2009).

<sup>39</sup> "Building Europe in Partnership. The Committee of the Regions' Views on Major EU Policies", Committee of Regions (2009), p. 20.



of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU Member States and of the EaP states held on December 8, 2009 Luc Van den Brande, President of the CoR, declared for conclusion of an international agreement to enable use being made of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) instrument by the six partner states as well.<sup>40</sup> During the visit he paid to the Crimea between November 26 and 28, 2009 he urged Ukraine's representatives to adopt such amendments to legislation as would enable participation by Ukrainian regions in the instrument just mentioned.<sup>41</sup>

In February and in spring of 2010 there was a survey carried out within the Committee of the Regions on implementation of the EaP program and development of cooperation between local and regional representatives of EU Member States and Moldova and Georgia, too. On March 12 the CoR Bureau requested analogous reports on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus.<sup>42</sup>

The adoption of such changes within the framework of the EGTC as well as within the legislation of the EaP states to enable involvement of the partner states' regions in the EGTC would result in substantial deceleration of cooperation on the level of local governments compared with the Mediterranean Union. In December 2009 Luc Van den Brande announced preparation of a second forum on the local and regional dimension of the EaP to be held in autumn 2010, to follow the above-mentioned Forum of June 2009 and to establish conditions for creation of an Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Local and Regional Assembly. What, however, follows from the present activities of the CoR is the fact that the Committee's interest in creating the structure whose establishment was expected in the communication from the European Commission of December 2008 is substantially weaker than it was in the case of ARLEM.

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*Dissatisfaction with the slow accomplishment of major objectives of the Eastern Partnership was expressed by Štefan Füle in his speech delivered at the beginning of an informal meeting of EaP Foreign Ministers. He indicated the necessity of redoubling efforts and intensifying dialogue within the framework of the Eastern Partnership aimed at defining the steps to be taken by the participating states in a more transparent way.*

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Dissatisfaction with the slow accomplishment of major objectives of the EaP – liberalization of visa regime and building free trade zones – was also expressed by Štefan Füle, the EU Commissioner, who did so in his speech delivered at the beginning of an informal meeting of EaP Foreign Ministers held in Sopot, Poland on May

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<sup>40</sup> "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement: How will the Commission Ensure that Local and Regional Authorities in the Countries Concerned are not Sidelined?", Committee of Regions (October 11, 2010); <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DetailTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=6203b657-29e8-4f8e-9fb1-ed6e20f21452>.

<sup>41</sup> "CoR President Luc Van den Brande Set for Talks on Eastern Partnership with Local and Political Leaders during Official Visit to Crimea (Ukraine) – 26-28 November", Committee of Regions (November 25, 2009); <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DetailTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=2494e9e5-66ef-4a07-a465-52ef5e80adfe>.

<sup>42</sup> "Memo for Committee of the Regions Bureau Members" 121st meeting of the Committee of the Regions Bureau. Brussels, Committee of the Regions (March 12, 2010).



24, 2010. In this connection he indicated the necessity of redoubling efforts and intensifying dialogue within the framework of the EaP aimed at defining the steps to be taken by the participating states in a more transparent way. He also touched upon the need to strengthen administrative capabilities within the European External Action Service.<sup>43</sup>

## SLOVAKIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Slovakia belonged, even in the period prior to her entry into the EU, to the states supporting the idea of institutionalizing a separate Eastern dimension of the Union. From 2003 the country officially supported democratization processes in the states of the former USSR, with a preferential orientation on Ukraine and Belarus. Slovakia advocated Ukraine's future EU and NATO membership and also showed her support for the EaP project, one which was welcomed by Slovakia as an opportunity to strengthen cooperation and as a chance to achieve a 'new quality' of relations between the East European nations and the EU. In 2008 the then Foreign Minister Ján Kubiš stated the view that the program was perceived by Slovakia as "a very good preparation for the future unification of all of Europe's parts in one European project". Slovakia's involvement was especially underlined in the field of building a free trade zone and a liberalization of the visa regime.<sup>44</sup> The value and ethical dimension of the EaP program as seen by Slovakia was also emphasized by the present Minister Miroslav Lajčák, who defined the program as "a chance to return the assistance received at the very start of our transformation process through our assistance and transfer of experience". In doing so, he pointed out that the program provided the states of the EaP with assistance in the introduction of 'a proven model of the functioning of society' and a 'culture of cooperation typical of the Union'.<sup>45</sup>

The EaP remains present within Slovakia's foreign policy in the long term. This is also what follows from the *Medium-Term Foreign Policy Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2015* adopted back in 2004, under which support for Ukraine's integration in Euro-Atlantic structures and the democratization of Belarus were included among the key elements of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy for the period between 2004 and 2015.<sup>46</sup> The approach was confirmed by the Government, which included the EaP

<sup>43</sup> Š. Füle, "Opening Address to the Plenary Session", Eastern Partnership Informal Foreign Ministers Meeting (May 24, 2010); <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/259&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

<sup>44</sup> B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds) *Eastern Partnership: The Opening Report – Warsaw*. (Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Relations, 2009), pp. 47- 49.

<sup>45</sup> "Vystúpenie ministra zahraničných vecí SR M. Lajčáka na Univerzite Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici" (November 4, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> "Medium-Term Foreign Policy Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2015", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2004).

program together with support for the integration process of the Balkan states among its long-term priorities.<sup>47</sup>

## SLOVAKIA AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – MULTILATERAL LEVEL AND BILATERAL CONTACTS WITH THE EU MEMBER STATES

The Visegrad Group continues to pay attention to the EaP. Slovakia has also supported the idea of the EaP at the multilateral level, especially within the framework of the V4, which has been backing the program since 2008.<sup>48</sup> In 2009 the issues of the EaP also remained part of the group's agenda. During the official summit of V4 Prime Ministers in Wieliczka, Poland on June 3, 2009 to conclude the Polish V4 Presidency the participants shared the view that it is the EaP itself and the so-called energy and climate package that represent the activities upon which Visegrad cooperation may be further developed. Support for the project was also promised by the Hungarian V4 Presidency<sup>49</sup> that replaced Poland, although Péter Balázs, Hungarian Foreign Minister, underlined that the issues of the Western Balkans and those of the EaP represent priorities of the same importance for Hungary.<sup>50</sup> Slovakia presents itself as an active member of an informal group referred to as the so-called EaP like-minded countries, i.e. those EU Member States actively supporting the EaP program. A meeting of the kind was organized e.g. during the meeting of the V4 Foreign Ministers held in Budapest on March 2, 2010 and followed by a conference in which representatives of the European Commission, Baltic States, Sweden, Belgium and Spain as chairing states holding office in 2010, and representatives of participating countries of the EaP. The V4 representatives welcomed the direct involvement of the European Commission in the program and offered the East European partners their assistance in the field of projects implemented within the framework of the EaP. They also supported creation of an informal Group of Friends of the EaP, consisting of states not members of the

<sup>47</sup> "Program 18-mesačného predsedníctva Španielska, Belgicka a Maďarska v Rade EÚ a priority Slovenskej republiky v kontexte tohto programu", Document 6431/2010, Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, (2010) (Session of the Government, February 25, 2010, No. 194/2010), p. 11; [http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/B2C2506D2A428CB1C12576C60049BF84/\\$FILE/vlastnymat.rtf](http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/B2C2506D2A428CB1C12576C60049BF84/$FILE/vlastnymat.rtf).

<sup>48</sup> "Official Summit of the Prime Ministers of Visegrad Group Countries" (Prague: June 15-16, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> "Press Release of the Polish V4 presidency after the Official Summit of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries" (Wieliczka: June 3, 2009); <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1117&articleID=23250&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

<sup>50</sup> "Hungary Takes over the Year-Long Presidency of the Visegrad Group from Poland in July; Péter Balázs Presents the Hungarian Programme at a Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Warsaw"; <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1117&articleID=23254&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

EU but keen on participation in the EaP. They also agreed to summon an informal meeting of EaP Foreign Ministers to be held in Poland in May 2010.<sup>51</sup>

An *Eastern Partnership – Opportunities and Challenges for Slovak and Hungarian Foreign Policy* international conference organized by the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association and the Hungarian Institute of International Relations was held on a bilateral level within the framework of the Slovak – Hungarian European Forum and the Slovak-Hungarian Visegrad Forum in Budapest on May 19, 2009.

Slovakia's view of the Balkans and the EaP, especially as regards developments in Ukraine and Belarus, were all covered during talks of Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák with representatives of the US State Department, Defense Department and the National Security Council held on September 22, 2009.<sup>52</sup>

The issues of the EaP were also discussed during the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Slovak Parliament and that of the Spanish Congress held on February 18, 2010. The Slovak delegation headed by Juraj Horváth, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, briefed the Spanish MPs on the developments in Ukraine and Belarus

and at the same time supported Spain's intention to locate the seat of the Union for the Mediterranean in Barcelona.<sup>53</sup> The project ranks among Spain's foreign policy priorities. Similar activities are important with regard to the need to communicate on the EaP program even with those EU Member States that do not consider the issue one of their priorities.

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*During the official summit of the V4 Prime Ministers in Wieliczka on June 3, 2009 the participants shared the view that it is the Eastern Partnership itself and the so-called energy and climate package that represent the activities upon which Visegrad cooperation may be further developed.*

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## RUSSIA AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The attention paid by the Slovak Foreign Service to advocacy of the program to Russia must not be forgotten. Russia showed a negative attitude towards the initiative and considered it a threat to her national and state interests. In connection with the implementation of the EaP program Andrey Nesterenko, spokesman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, warned in March 2009 of a possible conflict between Russian structures in the post-Soviet states and interests the EU has in the region.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group at their Meeting in Budapest" (March 2, 2010); <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1154&articleID=27803&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>.

<sup>52</sup> "Záujem americkej administratívy o názory SR na Balkán a Východné partnerstvo", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (September 22, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> "V Madride rokovali zahraničné výbory parlamentov SR a Španielska", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (February 18, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> "Rusko: Moskve sa Východné partnerstvo nepozdáva", SITA (March 26, 2009).

To facilitate implementation of the program in the post-Soviet partner states, the Slovak foreign service tried through its activities to temper Russia's negative view. Minister Lajčák touched upon the topic of the EaP during the visit he paid to Russia in September 2009. He labeled it 'a pragmatic project' and did not even exclude the possibility of Russia's involvement in concrete projects implemented within the framework of the Partnership. In this connection he referred to objectives of the EaP identical to those of Russia's new security strategy defining development of democracy and civil society as Russia's primary interests.<sup>55</sup> Similar in spirit was the Minister's speech delivered at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica on November 3, 2009.<sup>56</sup> Lajčák underlined his dissenting position as regards perception of the EaP as a sign of competition between the EU and Russia for influence within the post-Soviet space. Views of this kind were labeled by the Minister as part of a 'black and white cold war logic'. Here efforts to have stable and 'amiable' states in the region in question are to build a bridge between Russia and the EU, not to divide them. The possibility that Lajčák's statements may have influenced the position of Sergey Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister, is not out of the question, as after his meeting with Byelorussian Foreign Minister Sergey Martynov the latter expressed the hope that 'the EU's endeavor towards the East' would not impair Russia's interests. Lavrov did not even exclude the possibility of participation by Russia in certain projects of the EaP.<sup>57</sup>

## SLOVAKIA'S BILATERAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

In 2009 and in the first months of 2010 the adoption of the EaP program represented a stimulus to strengthening the bilateral dimension of Slovak foreign policy within the region of the former USSR. As Slovakia had expressly supported Russia in its dispute with Ukraine over gas supplies and in connection with the so-called gas crisis of early January, Slovakia's relations with Ukraine were complicated in 2009. From autumn 2009 the Slovak foreign service got involved in contacts with states with which no closer ties had been maintained in the past. Slovakia elaborated special non-papers containing its offer of cooperation within the EU for each of the countries involved in the EaP program. Of all the partner states it was for the time being only Ukraine that responded to the Slovak offer.

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<sup>55</sup> "Vystúpenie M. Lajčáka na Moskovskom štátnom inštitúte medzinárodných vzťahov", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (September 8, 2009).

<sup>56</sup> "Vystúpenie ministra zahraničných vecí SR M. Lajčáka na Univerzite Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (November 4, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> "Lavrov: Rusko by sa mohlo zapojiť do Východného partnerstva EU", SITA (November 25, 2009).

<sup>58</sup> "J. Kubiš prijal veľvyslancov štátov GUAM", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (March 2, 2007).

It is, however, necessary to remind the reader that Slovakia has in the past tried to establish closer contacts with several states of the EaP, e.g. in the form of meetings with the GUAM (Organization for Democracy and Economic Development) ambassadors.<sup>58</sup> While implementing her activities within the EaP states, Slovakia also followed her economic interests and the Minister of Foreign Affairs' visits were connected with business missions.

## UKRAINE

Impaired bilateral relations between Slovakia and Ukraine characterized 2009. The first factor producing a negative atmosphere in mutual contacts was the discontinuation of natural gas supplies from Russia, which, to get to Slovakia, cross the territory of Ukraine. Responding to this crisis Prime Minister Robert Fico stated that it was Ukraine that bore responsibility for it and that that country's credibility in Europe<sup>59</sup> had accordingly been undermined. In this connection he also implied a possible re-assessment of the existing relations with Ukraine, including Slovakia's support for the country's integration into the EU.<sup>60</sup> In the case of the Russian – Ukrainian dispute Slovakia became the only country to support Russia in such an express way, even though accusing Ukraine solely was not justified as e.g. it was technically not possible to carry out so-called swap operations of natural gas transit between Ukraine and Russia.<sup>61</sup>

In the summer months (July – September 2009) bilateral relations were impaired by Ukraine's decision to impose an import levy of 13% on cars and refrigerators, an act labeled by Slovakia's Foreign Ministry as conduct in conflict with WTO regulations and a discriminatory measure. At the same time even the imposition of an import levy on all goods was discussed in Ukraine's Supreme Council.<sup>62</sup> A third matter at issue was in August and September to be the case of the scanner. This appliance was, in connection with Slovakia's entry into the Schengen system, installed at the Maľovce broad gauge railroad border crossing. The Ukrainian side claimed that radiation emitted by the scanner was a threat to the health of locomotive engineers. Freight transport through the border crossing concerned was discontinued by the Ukrainian

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*Impaired bilateral relations between Slovakia and Ukraine characterized 2009. The first factor producing a negative atmosphere within mutual contacts was the discontinuation of natural gas supplies from Russia, followed by Ukraine's decision to impose an import levy of 13% on cars and refrigerators and the scanner case.*

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<sup>59</sup> "Fico: Za krízu je zodpovedná Ukrajina, stráca dôveryhodnosť", SITA (January 14, 2009)..

<sup>60</sup> "Fico: Skorú obnovu dodávok plynu na Slovensko nemožno očakávať; ČTK (January 14, 2009); "Briefing transcript on the Outcomes of the Meeting with Gazprom representatives", Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic (January 23, 2009); <http://www.vlada.gov.sk/13364/prepis-brifingu-o-vysledkoch-rokovania-s-predstaviteľmi-gazpromu.php>.

<sup>61</sup> J. Klepáč, "Kríza sa môže zopakovať", *Zahraničná politika* Vol. XIII, No. 1 (2009), pp. 22-24.

<sup>62</sup> "SR – UKRAJINA: Vláda žiada zrušenie ukrajinskej dovoznej prirážky", SITA (July 30, 2009).

side and the situation may have in fact put e.g. raw material supplies at risk for U. S. Steel, a Košice-based steel works.<sup>63</sup>

The tension in mutual relations that may have reached the lowest level ever from independence of both countries was relieved after the visit of Volodymyr Khandogiy, Ukraine's acting Foreign Minister, made on October 5, 2009. A subsequent meeting with the Foreign Minister of Ukraine Peter Poroshenko initiated by the Ukrainian side and held in Brussels in December 2009 covered the issues of natural gas transit and the upcoming presidential elections. In this connection minister Lajčák confirmed Slovakia's willingness to defend Ukraine's interests within the EU. He also brought up an offer of assistance in the field of expert knowledge exchange and that of various support projects to be implemented within the framework of the EU EaP.<sup>64</sup> Another meeting was held during session of the V4 Foreign Ministers in Budapest. During the meeting support for the continuation of reforms was conveyed to P. Poroshenko by M. Lajčák, who also provided the latter with the Slovak non-paper on cooperation offered to implement the EaP program. At the same time Lajčák informed Poroshenko of Slovakia's decision to abolish fees for long term visas in relation to Ukraine's citizens.<sup>65</sup>

Relations stabilized once the newly elected President Victor Yanukovych took office. On March 19, 2010 he invited Ivan Gašparovič to pay a visit to Ukraine. The visit, to be preceded by M. Lajčák's visit to Kiev on April 15, 2010, was to take place by the end of June 2010<sup>66</sup>. The Minister's negotiations covered inter alia the EaP program, and at the same time President Victor Yanukovych and Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko assured Minister Lajčák that there would not be any new gas crisis.<sup>67</sup>

## BELARUS

In September 2009 Foreign Minister M. Lajčák paid a visit to Belarus, which was made possible thanks to the discontinuation of personal sanctions imposed by the EU on the representatives of the Alexander Lukashenka regime and the involvement of Belarus in the EaP program. In Belarus Minister Lajčák met the Byelorussian head of state, Foreign Minister Sergey Martynov and representatives of the Byelorussian opposition and of civil society. The objects of the Minister's interest included sustainability of changes and concepts of dialogue with the EU as well as the possibilities of trade exchange between Slovakia and Belarus.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>63</sup> V. Foltentová, "Skener na hraniciach nahradili tyče", *Sme* (August 21, 2009).

<sup>64</sup> "M. Lajčák: Ukrajinu bude Európa posudzovať podľa plynu a volieb", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (December 8, 2009).

<sup>65</sup> "Slovensko zruší poplatky pre Ukrajincoov za dlhodobé víza", TASR (March 3, 2010).

<sup>66</sup> "Prezident: Janukovyč pozval Gašparoviča na návštevu Ukrajiny", SITA (March 19, 2010).

<sup>67</sup> "Lajčák: Janukovyč ubezpečil, že plynová kríza sa už nezopakuje", SITA (April 15, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> "Minister M. Lajčák rokoval v Bielorusku", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (September 7, 2009).



## MOLDOVA

Early parliamentary elections, which in the summer of 2009 brought a pro-European coalition into power in Moldova, became a new impulse for Moldova's EU integration efforts. During a meeting with his counterpart Iurie Leancă held on December 1, 2009 on the margins of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák expressed Slovakia's support for Moldova's efforts to approximate to European structures. He also informed his partner about Slovakia's readiness to earmark development assistance funds and, in connection with the unresolved Transnistrian conflict, declared support for Moldova's territorial integrity.<sup>69</sup> The meeting was followed by the visit of Iurie Leancă, Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Bratislava that took place on February 9, 2010. M. Lajčák conveyed support for the country's pro-European orientation and handed over to the Moldovan side the Slovak non-paper on assistance offered to implement objectives of the EaP program. To identify possible areas of cooperation, Slovak assistance also includes a visit now being prepared by Slovak non-governmental organizations. Moldova was defined as a target country for development assistance. The Moldovan side on the other hand defined several concrete areas in which the country would like to cooperate with Slovakia. More specifically, the areas defined include reform of the economy, state structures and administrative capabilities.<sup>70</sup> Of all the EaP states it is precisely cooperation with Moldova that may nowadays be labeled as the most dynamically developing.

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*Of all the Eastern Partnership states it is precisely cooperation with Moldova that may nowadays be labeled as the most dynamically developing.*

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## SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

Georgia is Slovakia's prioritized partner in the region. As early as 2006 the country was the only one from the region to open its embassy in Bratislava. A similar orientation in the field of foreign policy and progress made in the area of economic reforms are also connections between Georgia and Slovakia. Georgia is the only country of the Southern Caucasus to strive to become a fully-fledged NATO and EU member. On October 19, 2009 Georgia's Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze paid a visit to Slovakia.<sup>71</sup> A reciprocal visit paid by M. Lajčák to Tbilisi on March 16, 2010 was dominated by an interest in strengthening bilateral economic cooperation. The *Agreement on Support and Protection of Investments* was concluded during the visit. The Georgian side showed interest in cooperating with Slovak partners in the area of building hydroelectric power stations.

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<sup>69</sup> "Slovensko ponúka Moldavsku pomoc pri európskych ambíciách", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (December 1, 2009).

<sup>70</sup> "M. Lajčák: Začínáme kvalitatívne nový dialóg s Moldavskom", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (February 9, 2010).

<sup>71</sup> "Na Slovensko pricestuje gruzínsky minister zahraničných vecí", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (September 24, 2009).



Slovakia offered Georgia her assistance in transforming as well as introducing European legislation. During his meetings with Minister Vashadze and President Mikheil Saakashvili Minister Lajčák declared continued support for NATO's open door policy.<sup>72</sup>

Issues connected with the EaP as well as issues of bilateral cooperation were covered during Minister Lajčák's visit to *Armenia*, too. During his meetings with Minister Edward Nalbandian Minister Lajčák expressed support for the settlement process between Armenia and Turkey. During his negotiations with President Serzh A. Sargsyan and Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan he showed interest in a solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and in possible cooperation between Armenia and the EU. The *Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Air Services* was concluded on the level of heads of diplomacy.<sup>73</sup>

During his meeting with M. Lajčák held on December 2, 2009 on the margins of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens *Azerbaijan's* Foreign Minister Elmar Maharram Mammadayarov showed his interest in Slovak experience in the field of implementation of EU standards. The visit paid by M. Lajčák to Baku on March 15, 2010, which inter alia included meeting with Azerbaijan's president Ilham Aliyev was dominated by economic issues, including implementation of the Nabucco project. Specific cooperation is being carried out by the Network Industries Regulatory Office, providing Azerbaijani partners with its assistance in the field of harmonization of domestic legislation with the EU standards in place in the field of energy industry.<sup>74</sup>

## THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP DOMESTICALLY

The issues of the EaP became the subject of increasing interest in the analytical community. Within this topic interests of non-governmental organizations and those of state institutions come closer and this is a fact enabling a dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the non-governmental and expert community. Several meetings were organized by the Ministry in which partners from these circles covered issues of the EaP. Events of this kind included e.g. a roundtable aimed at the future of the V4 grouping and preparations for the Slovak Presidency of the grouping in 2010.<sup>75</sup> Issues of the EaP not just in states with a longstanding tradition of a non-governmental sector, but also in those situated in Southern Caucasus, were specifically

<sup>72</sup> "SR – Gruzínsko: M. Lajčák rokuje v Tbilisi o ekonomickej spolupráci i politickej podpore", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (March 17, 2010).

<sup>73</sup> "M. Lajčák: SR bude Arménsku pomáhať bilaterálne a aj cez Východné partnerstvo" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (March 18, 2010).

<sup>74</sup> "SR – Azerbajdžan: záujem o uzatvorenie základných ekonomických dohôd", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (March 15, 2010).

<sup>75</sup> "Okrúhly stôl MZV SR s predstaviteľmi think tankov a akademických kruhov na témy V4 – ako ďalej? a Príprava slovenského predsedníctva vo V4", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (September 10, 2009).

covered by negotiations held between the Foreign Ministry and representatives of the NGOs on December 18, 2009 and January 14, 2010.<sup>76</sup>

The issues of Slovak – Ukrainian bilateral cooperation are in the long term covered by the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA), which has organized several expert events on the topic (such as the *Ukraine – Our European Neighbor* conference (Bratislava, September 28, 2009), *Ukrainian-Slovak Relations in the Context of the Eastern Partnership: Opportunities and Prospects* (Uzhgorod, October 21, 2009) and *Partnerships for Slovak – Ukrainian Cross-border Cooperation: Collaboration of Self-Governments* (Košice, October 7, 2009). The *Priorities of Cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine for 2010 – 2015* expert seminar organized in Bratislava on March 24, 2010 by the RC SFPA contributed considerably to discussion on the contents of bilateral cooperation between Slovakia and the EaP. The seminar also included recommendations covering the period until 2015.<sup>77</sup> Of Slovak non-governmental organizations the Pontis Foundation, too, is, as well as the RC SFPA, active within the Civil Society Forum. The foundation has long-term experiences in the field of provision of transformation know-how to states such as Belarus and Ukraine.

The priority importance of the EaP was also confirmed by a decision adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a reduction in the number of project countries receiving Slovak official development assistance from 16 to 7. The group of project countries still includes states that the Slovak Republic considers its priorities within the framework of the EaP, i.e. Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In 2010 a program of micro-grants provided through embassies of the Slovak Republic concerned will be implemented in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSION

A major problem of the EaP program is its different perception by the parties involved. While the EU strives to outline it as a modernization program and to exploit positive experience of the former post-Communist states, EU integration models, including the application of instruments such as support for civil society, support for reforms, ‘twinning’ projects etc., the expectations of partner states, are different. The Union is, besides the financial assistance provided, perceived as an instrument or a partner to implement the partner states’ own national and state interests. While Ukraine, for

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<sup>76</sup> “MZV SR s mimovládny sektorom o spolupráci pri Východnom partnerstve”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (December 18, 2009); “M. Lajčák: MZV je otvorené spolupráci s mimovládny sektorom”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (January 14, 2010).

<sup>77</sup> A. Duleba, V. Bilčík, “Východné partnerstvo: Odporúčania pre rozvoj spolupráce medzi Slovenskou republikou a Ukrajinou na roky 2010 – 2015. Priority spolupráce Slovenska a Ukrajiny na roky 2010 – 2015”, Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (2010). <http://www.sfpa.sk/documenty/pozvanky/427>.

<sup>78</sup> “SlovakAid: Pre menej krajín bude menej projektov, budú komplexnejšie”, SITA (April 3, 2010).

instance, prefers symbolic expression of her EU affiliation or as close a partnership as possible, it is through the EaP that Belarus tries to achieve full recognition of the governing regime and its institutions by the international community. Through the EaP Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova also seek to directly or indirectly solve the issue of separatist regions within their territories, while this possibility is rejected by e.g. Armenia in the case of Nagorno Karabakh. The EaP then remains straddled between a modernization program as planned under the previous ENP documents and a program of EU enlargement prospects. On top of that, several partner states of the former USSR expect the EU to present itself through the EaP as a geopolitical player in the region of Eastern Europe, although neither the EaP documents themselves nor speeches of EU representatives mention any such ambition. Not only the unclear character of the EaP, but the lack of clarity prevailing about the ENP as a whole are also confirmed by inclusion of the agenda within the portfolio of the members of the European Commission. While in the 'first Barroso Commission' the agenda fell within the cognizance of Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Commissioner for External Relations, nowadays it is covered by Štefan Füle, the European Commissioner responsible *inter alia* for enlargement. A priority of all the states is the issue of visa regime liberalization, but there is no schedule of steps leading to introduction of a visa free regime planned on the side of the EU. Having abandoned the possibility of concluding sectoral agreements with the EU there is no other necessary motivation offered by the EU to the EaP countries besides free trade to implement the reforms required on their part. Although in the period between 2008 and 2009 the EU dropped its isolation policy in relation to Belarus, yet since material reservations on the side of the EU against the repressive character of the regime of president Alexander Lukashenka still persist, the country's position remains problematic. The problem connected with the need to apply a 'double' approach including not just contacts with state representatives, but also with those of civil society, a substantial part of which is, however, in conflict with the representatives of the government is not only present in the case of Belarus, but also in that of some of the states of Southern Caucasus.<sup>79</sup>

Last but not least partner states are considerably different from each other as regards their own concepts on the future character of their relations with the EU. While Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia still, even despite the current negative position of most EU Member States, prefer fully-fledged EU memberships, Belarus does not wish to join the Union. Least clear from this point of view are the positions presented by Armenia and Azerbaijan. In spite of sporadic statements delivered by representatives of the two nations confirming their wish to join the EU, their foreign policy priority still remains of a declaratory nature. Although both countries desire to intensify their cooperation with

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<sup>79</sup> K. Böttger, A. Schmidt, "Potentials and Challenges for the ENP's Eastern Dimension - Which Added-Value from Recent Developments?", *Remarks for Discussion for the Conference: How to Improve the European Neighborhood Policy? Concepts, Perceptions and Policy Recommendations for its Eastern Dimension*. Brussels, Fondation Universitaire (November 4-5, 2009); [http://www.europaeische-politik.de/fileadmin/website/03\\_Forschung/oestliche\\_Nachbarn/pdf/Boettger\\_Schmidt1.pdf](http://www.europaeische-politik.de/fileadmin/website/03_Forschung/oestliche_Nachbarn/pdf/Boettger_Schmidt1.pdf).

the EU, entry itself into the Union is not the subject-matter of purposeful efforts made in the field of the foreign policy of the two countries, nor a part of any foreign policy concept officially adopted. Therefore even with regard to differing interests the bilateral dimension turns out to be, instead of the multilateral one, a priority of the partner states. With a lack of any motivating elements the possibility for the EaP to repeat the positive effect stimulated by the gradual europeanization process of the former post-Communist states of Central Europe achieved in the form of their democratic stabilization, modernization and more recent integration in the EU, is, however, minimal. For several of the partner states, especially for Ukraine and Moldova (or even for Georgia, too) which, from the point of view of democratic and market reforms already made, rank among the most advanced countries of Eastern Europe, the EaP may on the other hand be disappointing as it offers no solution to the issue of their future EU membership, nor does it guarantee the progress that they have succeeded in making by symbolically emphasizing their privileged position as compared with that of the other states of the region.

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# III.

## SLOVAKIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOOLS

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# DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND SLOVAKIA IN 2009

JÁN MIHÁLIK, PETER BREZÁNI

The year 2009 was, from the point of view of Slovak official development assistance (ODA or SlovakAid hereafter), the first year of implementing the new *Medium-Term Strategy for Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for the years 2009-2013*. It was also significant for the efforts to take steps in the desired strategic direction. On the other hand, it also bore the consequences of the hectic transformations made in the previous years as well as of continual personnel changes.<sup>1</sup> Ostensibly it could even be labeled a year of search for a sure footing for the very first step in the direction set by the *Medium-Term Strategy*. What is, however, left out of this orientation are important pillars such as properly determined systems, a personnel base, evaluations and expert discussion to enable the specific practical implementation of plans.

It was at the same time the last year before the expected milestone represented by a commitment to be achieved by Slovakia and other new EU Member States adopted by the Council of the European Union, i.e. to earmark 0.17% of their GDP for development assistance in 2010. All indicators show quite unambiguously that the obligation (just as with the other countries) will not be met on our part.

The year 2009 was, inter alia, a year when the winds of the global economic and financial crisis were seen for the very first time within the ODA budget. This was distinctly in evidence as the national budget for 2010 was being drafted: the volume of funds earmarked in the draft budget for the project part of development cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> In 2009 the Director of the Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid Department of the Foreign Ministry, the Director of the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (SAIDC) and some project managers of the Agency as well as the Foreign Minister himself were replaced.

was, compared with 2009, reduced by 60%, while several ministries did not plan any financial means at all for development cooperation of their own.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the issue of climate change impacts on our ODA was fully broached in 2009. Although not visible at the moment, a new priority broke into Slovak development assistance that will in an important way influence Slovakia's thinking in the area of development assistance in the coming years.

## THE 2009 NATIONAL PROGRAM – PLANS VS. REALITY

The *National Program of Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for 2009*<sup>3</sup> was approved by the Government on May 20, 2009 (Resolution Nr. 374/2009) and thus became another national program that appeared late, during the programming period, and that kept the subjects concerned in uncertainty. Its structure and contents basically 'copies' the structure of the new Medium-Term Strategy. Defining concrete tasks and indicators including deadlines for their implementation at the end of each of the chapters is, compared with the past, an important progress made. A National Program set out in this fashion forms a proper basis for its future assessment. Part of the tasks have been proposed with an ambitious vigor that, however, proved during the year to be exaggerated.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the indicators remained minimal in some cases (e.g. 'a meeting summoned', 'a paper submitted', 'issues considered', without any indication as to actual implementation and/or outcomes of these efforts) or vague (e.g. 'finalized preparatory tasks' without any specification as to what this term covers and what was to be achieved once they were completed).<sup>5</sup>

Tasks and indicators may only become an important element of management if they are not formulated to be easily fulfilled. It looks as if proper appointment of the responsible staff, bodies and institutions in charge of the task in question is of vital importance for its fulfillment; this is, however, what the present National Program has failed to define.

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<sup>2</sup> Within the framework of its own budget chapter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs eventually shifted some of its financial resources and increased the amount for projects to the level of 2009.

<sup>3</sup> "National Program of Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for 2009", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2009); <http://www.slovakaid.mfa.sk/index.php/article/view/388/1/1>.

<sup>4</sup> This mainly concerns the field of creation of a system to monitor and evaluate projects or to prepare background papers for strategy papers for program countries. In late 2009 no specific outcomes in this field were known nor was there any clearly titled and open process of works to complete this ongoing task.

<sup>5</sup> "National Program of Official Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic for 2009", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2009). See e.g. Chart on p. 7 or 'finalized preparatory works' as referred to in chart on p. 13.

## ORIENTATION AND FINANCING OF BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Medium-Term Strategy presented a relatively wide spectrum of territorial and sectoral priorities<sup>6</sup> that, especially in the context of limited funds, needed to be specified and reduced.<sup>7</sup>

The National Program brought no significant modification in the field either and the list of 19 prioritized countries was taken over in full from the Medium-Term Strategy. In the field of sectoral priorities it meant one step further as individual target countries were assigned proper sectoral priorities. In the case of the program countries they were elaborated even further. The program thus replaced (no matter how deficiently) – for an unspecified transition period – the non-existing Country Strategy Papers for the program countries of Slovak ODA.

A limited ability to define the orientation of the assistance in a more specific fashion emerged even in the case of efforts to create strategies of assistance for individual countries. Although the National Program included tasks leading to their creation, no major steps were taken in this regard in 2009 and the tasks were then deferred until 2010.

In 2009 the share of bilateral assistance in ODA as a whole was again low. Despite the fact that this is the most direct instrument not just of ODA, but of our foreign policy as well, its volume is not being substantially changed. On top of that it was, compared with 2008, reduced from 47% to approximately 25%.<sup>8</sup> In 2009 the overall volume of bilateral assistance amounted to 13,133,979.37 euro<sup>9</sup> with more than 8.7 million euro having been used on implementation of projects administratively covered and managed by SAIDC, the UNDP Trust Fund and the Bratislava – Belgrade Fund or those projects directly carried out by the subjects of state administration<sup>10</sup>. The rest of the ODA resources were used to fund

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<sup>6</sup> SlovakAid has 3 program countries, 16 project countries and 4 broad spheres of sectoral priorities.

<sup>7</sup> The need for specific definition was discussed by policy-makers, non-governmental organizations and the expert public as early as at the creation of the Medium-Term Strategy, but the process of defining priorities involves a relatively large number of subjects with various interests. The classical commenting process model does not seem to be the proper mechanism to reduce the list of prioritized countries and sectoral priorities. It is basically an additive process and does not provide sufficient room and time for a discussion on which to base an agreement as to the requirements under which the reduction is to be implemented.

<sup>8</sup> It is, however, necessary to remark that the increase was considerably strengthened by debt relief to Liberia, which amounted to 55% of overall bilateral assistance. It means that the share of 'the real' assistance was roughly the same.

<sup>9</sup> Data elaborated on the basis of the paper: "Informácia o oficiálnej rozvojovej pomoci poskytnutej Slovenskou republikou v roku 2009", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2010).

<sup>10</sup> The Education, Finance, Health Care, Culture and the Interior (Migration Office, International Police Cooperation Office, the Bratislava Police Headquarters, Border and Alien Police Office) Ministries and/or the National Bank of Slovakia.

scholarships, trainers, teachers, educational programs, increasing awareness of the development countries, the police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the civil mission in Kosovo, the border support mission in Ukraine, but also to cover costs connected with refugees detained after illegal border crossings. Costs for humanitarian assistance amounted to 938,463.69 euro.

The highest amount of financial resources was provided for projects implemented through SAIDC. The budget of the Agency approved for 2009 amounted to 7,561,541 euro, adjusted to 5,833,114 during the year. The funds really drawn, however, amounted to 5,832,270 euro.

95 projects approved in 2007 and 2008 were in 2009 implemented in 13 development countries and in Slovakia<sup>11</sup> and some of them were even completed. Most of them (62) were implemented by non-governmental organizations, 22 projects were carried out by private subjects, 2 projects were executed by self-governments, while 9 projects were realized by institutions of state administration. The highest number of projects (38) was implemented within the sectoral priority of development education, capacity building and public awareness in Slovakia. The program countries were, as is traditional, dominated by Serbia with 24 projects. 8 projects co-financed by the European Commission were also implemented. Distribution of our assistance was, as has already been mentioned, quite wide (and this fact is also visible in the brief territorial overview of projects ongoing in 2009). The situation was not changed by the challenges of 2009.

Within the framework of the 9 challenges the project commission approved 68 projects (1 project was cancelled) amounting to 7,153,423.47 euro, of which 20 projects amounting to 2,969,018.98 euro were approved for program countries<sup>12</sup>, 25 projects for project countries (3,403,862.52 euro)<sup>13</sup>, 16 projects (446,437.97 euro) were approved within the framework of the sectoral priority of development education, capacities building and public awareness, 2 projects co-financed by the European Commission were supported by SAIDC with a provision of 22,670 euro, while another 4 projects totaling 311,434 euro were approved by the Foreign Minister within the framework of the National Program instrument *Current Development Challenges*.<sup>14</sup> In the field of

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<sup>11</sup> Data on the projects approved and implemented have been elaborated on the basis of the document: "Výročná správa rozpočtovej organizácie. Slovenská agentúra pre medzinárodnú rozvojovú spoluprácu (SAMRS) za rok 2009", Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (2010). [http://www.foreign.gov.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw\\_ByID/ID\\_401082E6E1179-CE8C12576FE004415BA\\_SK/\\$File/VS\\_SAMRS\\_2009.pdf](http://www.foreign.gov.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_401082E6E1179-CE8C12576FE004415BA_SK/$File/VS_SAMRS_2009.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> The greatest number of projects (11) were approved for Serbia. Another 5 were approved for Kenya and 4 for Afghanistan.

<sup>13</sup> 5 projects were approved in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As regards Georgia, Sudan and Ukraine, there were 3 projects approved for each, while Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mongolia and Vietnam had 2 projects each and Belarus, Ethiopia and Moldova got 1 project each.

<sup>14</sup> Projects approved within the framework of the development education, capacity building and public awareness priority, within the framework of *Current Development Challenges*, a National Program of Official Development Assistance instrument, as well as those co-funded by the European Commission and implemented in the Slovak Republic.

humanitarian assistance there were 8 projects approved to the amount of 206,996.69 euro.<sup>15</sup> 64% of all successful projects were submitted by non-governmental organizations, 24% by businesses, 8% by the state sector and 2% by self-governments (another 2 % group of successful applicants was referred to as 'unspecified' by SAIDC).

Regarding sectoral priorities, projects of infrastructure renewal predominated with a share of 39% followed by a 10% share of infrastructure projects. 10% of the projects are aimed at education, 9% at assistance in the field of integration in international organizations and 6% at building a market environment. Three sectoral priorities – civil society, social infrastructure and support for new business activities – amounted to 5% of all 'newly approved' projects. The share of the health sector, agriculture and building of democratic institutions was 3%. A negligible 1% share of all projects was represented by the sectoral priorities of food security and protection of the environment.

The microgrant program implemented through embassies in Belgrade (projects for subjects in Serbia), Sarajevo (for Bosnia and Herzegovina), Nairobi (for Kenya), Minsk (for Belarus), Kiev (for Ukraine), Bucharest (for Moldova) and through the branch embassy in Prishtina (Kosovo) is becoming an ever more active element of our bilateral development assistance. There were 55 projects approved to the amount of 222,642.37 euro. Twenty of them were approved for Serbia, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Kenya and Ukraine had eight projects each. Moldova got three projects. The sectoral range was also quite wide as the support was distributed among 12 various sectors.

One can only repeat what was already mentioned in last year's issue of the Yearbook. Slovak ODA should, with regard to its capabilities, facilities and so frequently mentioned efficiency, be much more concentrated as well as territorially and sectorally focused on the long term to ensure that Slovaks not only travel and work all over the world, but that their development work should bring far more successful results in both developing and partner countries. Developments in late 2009 showed that a 'significant help' in reducing the number of Slovak ODA territorial and sectoral priorities may be the threat of considerable reduction in funds allocated for programs and projects. Reduction made within budgetary item Nr. 05T0A for the subprogram of the development assistance already mentioned above from 7.5 million euro in 2009 to 3.2 million euro in 2010 became one of the key issues discussed in preparing and drafting the National Program as well as the State Budget for 2010. It seems that similar possible radical threats in the future will be accompanied with a decision to reduce the territorial orientation of assistance in the near future.

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<sup>15</sup> Of the number of projects approved in 2009 implementation of 39 began in 15 countries (3 in Afghanistan, 4 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1 in Ethiopia, 3 in Kenya, 2 in Kyrgyzstan, 2 in Macedonia, 1 in Moldova, 2 in Mongolia, 11 in Serbia, 1 in Sudan, 2 in Ukraine, 2 in Vietnam and 3 aimed at capacity building, development education and public awareness implemented in Slovakia).



## TRILATERAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

On January 21, 2009 a *Memorandum of Understanding* was signed between the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (SAIDC) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) under which the ADA undertook to co-fund projects implemented by Slovak subjects in the period between 2009 and 2011 to a total of 1.5 million euro. In 2009 cooperation was specified in two main fields. The first one is a joint project proposal to be realized in Southern Serbia, while the second one is a joint project in Ethiopia. According to the original plan cooperation was mainly to serve SAIDC capacity building in the area of specification and calling for tenders and management of its own particular project plans. This was met with criticism voiced by non-governmental organizations that was repeatedly expressed during meetings with representatives of the Foreign Ministry and SAIDC.<sup>16</sup> Non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) agreed on the one hand that it was necessary for SAIDC to build up their expert capabilities, but on the other hand warned of forcing NGDOs out of the cooperation. In the last five years capabilities for cooperation were systematically built up by Slovak NGDOs with their Austrian partners through the jointly funded Regional Partnership Project (RPP). The trilateral cooperation with the ADA was expected to follow up with these activities and to support joint projects of Slovak and Austrian organizations. In 2009 the expectations did not come true and the final destination of funds was not concluded before the end of 2009.

From the point of view of capacity building within the other subjects the national program in particular mentioned several significant requirements that were met to different extents during the year:

- *Good operating conditions need to be established at diplomatic missions for diplomatic staff who are to be responsible inter alia for development assistance.* This is, however, only true to a limited extent on the level of personnel shifts among diplomatic staff who have dealt and who deal with development assistance, for there is no systematic embodiment of the process as a whole.
- *The capabilities that Slovak NGDOs require to join in implementation of EU projects need to be supported.* The need is being met, especially through the co-funding of those NGDO projects that are supported by the European Commission. There is, however, no final fine-tuning and framework for a system of such support.
- *The Slovak business sector needs in a major and systematic way to be engaged in development assistance.* Efforts to involve business subjects have existed practically from the very start of Slovak development cooperation, of critical importance is, however, the question of the proper form of involvement and support. At the moment there is no appropriate forum for expert discussion and clarification of this form of development cooperation.

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<sup>16</sup> Personal conversation with Marián Čaučík, Chairman of the NGDO Platform at the time of interview.

- *The central bodies of state administration need to improve their expert capabilities in the field of statistical reporting of development assistance. So far the ODA Reporting according to OECD/DAC seminar has been held and DAC OECD experts participated in the event.*

Without being referred to at all in the narrative part of the National Program the tasks were concluded by a statement on support for 'participation of NGO volunteers in development projects in the Slovak Republic's prioritized countries'. The task was implemented in cooperation with the UNDP, with funds being drawn from the Slovak and UNDP Trust Fund for the period 2008-2011. The main part of the funds was to be directed through the United Nations Volunteers scheme (UNV) to deployment of particular individuals. This step was criticized by the NGOs, which at the same time referred to the need to build up the capacity of Slovak organizations to deploy volunteers within programs of their own. Finally, besides the support provided within the framework of the UNV a joint project of four NGOs working with volunteers was created under the Slovak NGO Platform, the form of and support for which was being discussed until the very end of 2009.

A system of volunteer deployment should rank among the other major components of Slovak development assistance and its creation will require that special attention be paid to the issue in the National Programs to follow. To make the system really work its creation and implementation will require the involvement of all subjects active in the field of volunteer deployment.

## MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE

In 2009, there was, as has traditionally been the case, no major response and/or no efforts to influence the orientation of multilateral assistance and no obvious endeavors to create a 'mechanism of internationalization' of our sectoral and territorial priorities within the multilateral part of ODA. A rather passive approach to and perception of multilateral assistance as 'an obligatory club membership fee' still persist. One possible reason is also a substantial personnel downsizing and the demanding nature and complexity of the issue as seen from the point of view of specialization and expertise.

Most of Slovakia's ODA has been realized on the basis of her contract commitments relating to her membership in international organizations. In 2009 nearly 75% of the funds as a whole i.e. 39,803,302.15 euro, were provided in this way. The highest contributor was traditionally the Ministry of Finance, which paid 38,294,065.62 euro in total to the international organizations. Payments were in particular made into the EU budget (35,482,039 euro), the Slovak Republic – EBRD Technical Cooperation Fund (1,000,000 euro), UNDP Trust Fund (749,575.42 euro), the World Bank Group (735,128 euro), the EBRD Western Balkans Fund (200,000 euro), the European Investment Bank (97,323.20) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (30,000 euro). The Finance Ministry's administrative costs amounted to 35,800 euro. In the form of contributions to international organizations the Foreign Ministry provided 669,446.91

euro and the funds were in fact received by the UN and the UN System of Organizations (UNDPKO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, WFP, UNIFEM, UNOCHA, OHCHR), the OECD, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Fund (ITF Fund) Holocaust, International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

The Ministry of Agriculture participated in the preparation of international events and through contributions provided to the FAO, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification (UNCCD), the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) through contributions to Biodiversity International/ IPGRI: the European Cooperative Program for Plant

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Genetic Resources (ECPGR) and European Forest Genetic Resources Program (EUFORGEN) regional programs paid 221,551.65 euro in total. The Ministry of the Environment paid fees for membership in international organizations and environmental funds to the amount of 152,983 euro. The Ministry of the Interior covered the UNHCR Liaison Office rent for its premises and costs connected with services as well as those connected with the operation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) totaling 22,603.28 euro or 65,438.88 euro respectively. The Ministry of Healthcare paid the WHO membership fee and provided technical assistance amounting to 209,879.10 euro. Through

the contributions and activities connected with membership in the Universal Postal Union the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunication participated in recorded ODA amounting to 13,855 euro in total. The Ministry of Defense's share in ODA amounted to 96,692 euro, provided to ensure the capability of CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation). The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family reported 15% of its contribution to the International Labor Organization – ILO (24,245.96 euro) as ODA. The Nuclear Regulatory Authority was, through contributions provided to the Technical Cooperation Fund of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the percentage of membership fees paid to the IAEA totaling 85,144 euro, also included in ODA statistics.

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The year 2009 was spent in the spirit of the continuing discussions on a more effective and flexible system of humanitarian assistance provision that were taking place within interdepartmental working group also involving non-governmental organizations. Thanks to the People in Peril association a series of educational seminars was held to present the system of assistance applied by the European Commission and to refer to other

major aspects of similar systems in other countries. The discussion was not, however, concluded in 2009. To considerably improve the quality of humanitarian assistance provision and to render it more flexible it needs to be reformed in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the State Material Reserves of the Slovak Republic, with more active involvement by SlovakAid and non-state players.

The Slovak Republic in 2009 provided humanitarian assistance to Macedonia, Cambodia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Taiwan, the Palestinian Autonomy, Ukraine, Laos and Ethiopia to the amount of 938,463.69 euro, of which direct material assistance provided from the reserves of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic amounted to 731,467 euro, while the rest of the assistance was implemented by bank transfers from SAIDC.<sup>17</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The field of development education has been hit in the long term by the limited level of communication among the main players involved. As the issue of development education is marginal within the Ministry of Education the involvement of this Education Ministry is particularly limited.

There is a working group on development education involving an SAIDC representative operating within the NDGO Platform. In 2009 the activities of the group were aimed at development education performed within the framework of universities and colleges through involvement of their representatives. Throughout 2009 there were four meetings of the WG; its operation was supported by SlovakAid through the project of the People in Peril association, which coordinates the WG. The WG members surveyed the possibilities and limits of the establishment of various types of development education at universities and colleges, enabled exchange of experiences and, through the [www.developmentovevzdelavanie.sk](http://www.developmentovevzdelavanie.sk) portal, mutual access to publications and working materials, too.

The National Program relied upon creation on the state level of an interdepartmental and intersectoral working group aimed at defining a strategy of introduction of development education into the educational system. This task was, however, deferred until 2010.

Within the framework of its subsidy system the Foreign Ministry called for elaboration of a communication strategy for SlovakAid. As until then there had been no comprehensive communication on Slovak development assistance, elaboration of a communication strategy was a logical step to take. Several levels were being combined in discussions and deliberations on the strategy:

- *Promotional level.* This level incorporates communication with the general public within the framework of which the subjects involved (the Foreign Ministry and SAIDC) provide information on development and humanitarian assistance provided

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<sup>17</sup> Elaborated based on "Informácia o oficiálnej rozvojovej pomoci poskytnutej Slovenskou republikou v roku 2009", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2010).

by Slovakia and offer positive examples of such assistance. The objective is the creation of a positive image of Slovak ODA among the public.

- *Expert level.* The very nature of this level results in a partial tension existing between the promotional and the expert level. Its purpose consists in creation of conditions for critical discussion on Slovak ODA. The target groups are subjects of the closely associated public and experts.
- *Educational level* includes development education in the strict sense of the word, either within the framework of formal education or through a broad spectrum of informal education activities (seminars, study groups, discussions). The target groups are specific segments of the general public (pupils of elementary schools, students of high schools, university and college undergraduates, teachers, young leaders, but also decision-makers and policy makers etc.).
- *Coordinating level.* The main target groups on this level are subjects carrying out activities in the field of development and humanitarian assistance or development education. The purpose of this level is the provision of a smooth exchange of information and a mutually beneficial adaptation and cooperation accompanying the performance of activities.

Besides levels that remained unclear, the general confusion also had an impact on the process of strategy creation. Subjects that wished to comment on the strategy (e.g. certain NGOs) were not quite aware at which stage their contribution was expected and who was leading the process (i.e. who they should turn to). The confusion of the ongoing processes belongs to frequent teething troubles of strategy creation. Framing the complete paper and its adoption took beyond 2009.<sup>18</sup>

## EVALUATION

Another component that Slovak ODA lacks was and still is a monitoring and evaluating system. Within the National Program, monitoring and evaluating were presented on two levels. On one hand the task was to create a plan for monitoring and evaluating projects within the bilateral component of assistance, while on the other it was a general evaluation of the fulfillment of the National Program as a whole that was to take place by November 30, 2009 on which the framing of a National Program for another year could be based.

Both levels are applied on an ad hoc basis in the long term. If something is done that leads to evaluation of performance, this is in most cases an isolated act without any clear connections. There is no system to define what information is (on a continuous basis) to be gathered and how. It is not quite clear who is to deal with the information-process and evaluate it and finally make decisions on the basis of this information. From the point of view of the possible creation of such a system in 2009 there was no progress made within Slovak ODA.

<sup>18</sup> The communication strategy was finally considerably re-worked. It was adopted in March 2010.

The official presentation of *Coherence of SlovakAid Activities on the National Level*<sup>19</sup>, a study by Zuzana Fialová, became a meaningful contribution in the area of evaluation. The study was inspired and financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, came into existence in 2008 and in the form of recommendations offered specific measures to substantially improve the system of ODA.

The study met with very positive responses among the experts. One single meeting to discuss the study's conclusions held at the Foreign Ministry may not, however, be considered as processing the paper sufficiently and fully exploiting its potential. The Ministry as well as other subjects (for example the NGOs) should have made better use of the

momentum created by the express reflection on shortcomings and solutions and developed a wider discussion that could result in specific changes. As time went by, the discussion unfortunately reached a vanishing point. The study thus remains on the level of an internal memo of the Foreign Ministry, which may, but also may not (as usual) be applied to the framing of policies.

An important element that may in future help establish a system of evaluation, is the experience of informal evaluation of Slovak ODA within the DAC OECD framework of so called peer review that is at present being discussed.<sup>20</sup>

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## SYSTEM CHANGES

### THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Once SAIDC was established in 2007 a project commission enlarged by representatives of several ministries came into existence. The previous activities of the intradepartmental Coordination Committee, which operated as an advisory body to the Foreign Minister,

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<sup>19</sup> Z. Fialová, "Koherencia aktivít SlovakAid na národnej úrovni", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2008). Measures recommended by the author included: change of a system and structure of decision-making and coordination of development and humanitarian assistance (e.g. introduction of an intradepartmental coordination body) and their better embodiment within the legislation; inclusion of an expert element in decision-making on support for projects within the framework of ODA; elaboration of a methodology on the national level and provision of evaluation of projects and programs supported; provision of diplomatic support for implementation of development programs, increase of embassies' capabilities to participate in ODA planning and implementation, conclusion of bilateral agreements on provision of the ODA not only with ODA program countries, but with ODA project countries as well etc.

<sup>20</sup> Slovakia is not at the moment a member of the DAC OECD, therefore there will be no standard 'large' peer review like those performed on a regular basis among DAC members and only the so called 'small' one is planned. A similar process already took place in the past e.g. in the Czech Republic.



were reduced. As has been shown in practice, the project commission did not prove to be a sufficient replacement and the Coordination Committee turned out to have major importance for the ODA system as a whole. Its operations were once more resumed and two meetings of the committee were held in 2009. To make it more than just one-sided provision of information by the Foreign Ministry possibly followed up by once-off discussions, continued intensification of coordination efforts will be required on its part (e.g. through holding regular intradepartmental coordination meetings).

The revitalization of the Coordination Committee draws attention to the need to further arrange tasks and powers within the system of ODA. It is on the one hand necessary to create a working mechanism to stimulate and to coordinate development and humanitarian assistance within the framework of the subjects concerned with non-state subjects. Although this is the ambition of the Coordination Committee, by itself the body may not provide coordination without follow-up activities. On the other hand it is important to clarify the project commission's position within the process of decision-making on the specific part of bilateral development assistance. This is just another area in which the project commission is not able to manage the functioning of the subsidy provision system. In the years to come it will be desirable to supplement the general system with the elements now missing.

## **RULES OF BILATERAL ASSISTANCE**

An important part of bilateral development assistance is formed by projects implemented by non-state subjects (non-governmental organizations, businesses, self-governments). In 2009 the process of searching for meaningful rules for their cooperation with SAIDC as donor was continued. The most widely discussed part has traditionally been formed by the rules for budgeting and settling accounts of projects referred to as the financial handbook. As the specific conditions of operation in development countries are not taken into account in the rules, according to the feedback mainly provided by non-governmental organizations on the basis of their experiences with the use of the financial handbook and with communication with SAIDC it appears on the one hand that the rules set represent in many regards an obstacle to meaningful development assistance. Non-governmental organizations several times complained that SAIDC staff were going beyond the rules valid at the time and were requiring modifications not supported by the financial handbook or by law.<sup>21</sup> As regards the arrangements within the system on the other hand, the subsidies are subject to rules set for handling national budget funds. This makes SAIDC comply with restraints that were never contemplated for this specific type of project. A long-known example is represented by problems with or the impossibility of us-

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<sup>21</sup> For example, the problems in the case of changes of unit prices where the budget is complied with in general, of the status of local staff - the requirement for a direct employment contract with the applicant (not just with the local partner of the project), of rigidity (impossibility of raising pay in the second year if a lower salary was paid in the first year...) etc.



ing subsidies for programs of micro loans, which rank among the key instruments of development assistance.

In late 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to solve the situation by drafting an act on subsidies provided from its budgetary chapter. This act would specify certain differences in handling subsidies, but the discussion with other ministries and subjects that followed showed that this solution may not be the best one. The final solution will only be known next year.

The financial handbook is, no matter how important, just part of the subsidy provision system. Efforts by the SAIDC leadership to standardize and to organize processes of providing and managing grants led in the latter part of the year to discussions on preparation of an internal system of rules and regulations. The only existing framework was anyway the statute of the project commission, which consisted of representatives of various ministries with representation of businesses and non-governmental organizations and which decided on granting subsidies. The statute described the position and powers of the commission, but paid no attention to procedures or evaluation of the impact of decisions made. There was for example no standardization at all of procedures and powers in publishing specific grant invitations.

No particular proposals as to a system of procedures were published so far, nor was there any wide-ranging discussion on them. One way or another, efforts in this regard are very important and necessary. A meaningful framework may contribute to making the system better organized and may also provide instruments for better content orientation of development assistance.

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*As the specific conditions of operation in development countries are not taken into account, the rules set in the field of bilateral developments assistance represent in many regards an obstacle to meaningful development assistance.*

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## ATTEMPT TO AMEND THE ACT ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

In the first half of 2009 a draft to make wide-ranging amendments to Act Nr. 617/2007 on Official Development Assistance came into existence on the initiative of Zdenka Kramplová, a member of parliament at that time. Z. Kramplová discussed the matter with the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Finance and the NGDO Platform. The draft amendment was to a considerable degree inspired by the above-mentioned study by Zuzana Fialová. The discussions resulted in a proposal amending specification of basic terms, targets and instruments of official development assistance. The major part of the amendment was a proposal for better embodiment of the ODA provision system within the act. Besides SAIDC the amendment supplemented the establishment of a coordination committee with a monitoring commission within the structure of bodies already existing. The draft amendment contained a list of systems to be expressly framed (e.g. management system, financial management system, monitoring and evaluating system, audit system or subsequent financial control) and expected the details to be regulated by a general statute of the Foreign Ministry. The 40<sup>th</sup> meeting of parliament

discussed the draft act, and resolution Nr. 1615 dated September 10, 2009 was adopted to the effect that parliament would continue discussing the draft act. The resolution was adopted without major discussion and of the 134 members of parliament present 87 even abstained from the vote.<sup>22</sup> To undertake a responsible analysis of why this was the case would be a demanding task. The distribution of votes may imply a political instruction given on the vote. The minimal discussion on the amendment and the high number of abstentions may also suggest that for most of our lawmakers development assistance is still a marginal and unimportant issue.

## ODA FINANCING AND 2009

As has already been implied, despite the extensive and continuous changes within the system of development assistance provision, Slovak ODA faces practically constant problems. One of the most technically demanding problems is the stagnant volume of financial resources allocated for ODA, especially for its project component. And all this despite the still growing requirements for either actual implementation of individual development activities or their administration and/or evaluation.

In 2009 Slovakia, on the basis of the previously-mentioned report presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provided official development assistance of 54,040,144.80 euro in total. Expressed as a percentage, the amount came to 0.086% of GNI. In relation to GDP/GNI the volume of assistance reached the level of the early 'real' development cooperation of the Slovak Republic. In its report the Ministry sees the reason in the global financial and economic crisis. What has, however, been left out of the report is a fact that indeed forms part of reporting in any other country, but that in the case of Slovakia will as added value of the ODA statistics belong purely to the past. The share of debt relief in our ODA has until now been very high. If the numbers are regarded net of debts, the real situation in the area of Slovak ODA then emerges – i.e. the situation with which our volumes should from now on be compared. Proportion of debts relieved to ODA as a whole was in the period from 2005 until 2008 30% a year on average. The figure makes quite clear that the decrease in ODA in 2009 is due not only to the crisis, but also to the 'disappearance' of debtors from reporting. Should the differences in ODA caused by debt relief be deducted, one may conclude that except for the turn of 2005 and 2006 our ODA was slowly growing and that it was especially its multilateral component that was increasing. The trend was also confirmed in 2009 as multilateral ODA was in absolute values increased by approximately 5 million euro and bilateral assistance (excluding debt relief) was roughly on the same level as in

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<sup>22</sup> 47 mostly opposition members of parliament voted in favor of the proposal, while it was mainly deputies for parties of the government coalition that abstained from the vote. None of the members of parliament voted against the proposal. See "National Council of the Slovak Republic – Voting by Members of Parliament", Meeting No. 40, Vote 99, (September 10, 2009); <http://www.nrsr.sk/Default.aspx?sid=schodne/hlasovanie/hlasklub&ID=25572>.

**Chart 1: ODA Financing 2002-2009**

Year	thousands of euro	% ODA/ GDP /GNI
2002	8,551	0.024
2003	18,374	0.046
2004	30,223	0.072
2005	57,743	0.120
2006	54,376	0.103
2007	54,849	0.093
2008	65,447	0.02
2009	54,040	0.086

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic (2009); data for each year were converted according to the exchange rate of SKK 30,126 / EUR 1. From 2006 the indicator of ODA is expressed in proportion to GNI

2008. The absolute and proportional stagnation of the share of bilateral assistance in overall ODA was also one of the reasons why the share of ODA in GNI was growing slowly. This is what the situation was like before the crisis and as the following part of the present paper implies, the trend will be continued in the upcoming period of time, too.

## DRAFTING THE 2010 NATIONAL BUDGET AND THE TORNADO OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Late 2009 was connected with the intense preparation of the 2010 National Program. It was intended to draw up the draft program as soon as possible to enable its adoption no later than early 2010, but efforts in this regard finally failed. The major foundations for elaboration of a National Program are assessment of the fulfillment of its 'predecessor' and the national budget adopted for the following year.

As there is no continuous system of gathering and assessing information, it is quite demanding before the end of a year to carry out an extensive assessment of activities performed throughout the year concerned. Besides this challenge the authors of the draft national program also faced another challenge from the national budget: the proportion of bilateral assistance for development projects was, compared with 2009, reduced by nearly 60%.

The proposal met with sharp criticism not just from non-governmental organizations, which closely monitor developments in the area; there was also criticism expressed by the members of the parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs. It faced criticism across the political spectrum and discussion on this particular part of the draft national budget took up a major part of deliberations in the Committee on Foreign Affairs on

the national budget. Finally there was a promise made by Minister Miroslav Lajčák to solve the situation through an increase of this budgetary item up to the level of 2009 within the framework of Foreign Ministry resources.

In the context of these tensions the proposal by the Foreign Ministry to draw the remaining funds of the 2009 budget through the adoption of 30 projects that when decisions were first being made by the project commission originally remained below the line. The adoption of the projects would not just result in drawing all the funds of the 2009 budget (i.e. a step perceived as desirable), but would also mean an obligation to make further payments in the years to come (the threat to grant rounds in 2010 would then even be increased). Finally eight projects were adopted that ranked among the first ones left below the line.

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*Prime Minister Robert Fico promised a contribution on the part of Slovakia amounting to 9 million euro. The discussions that followed showed that every year 1 million euro should be available within the funds earmarked for development assistance.*

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The exchange emphasized two facts. First, the system of budgeting and monitoring of SAIDC expenses and liabilities is disorganized and there are difficulties in decision-making. A direct consequence of the situation was a proposal for a new system better corresponding to the requirements of rules on the national budget and at the same time addressing the issue of discrepancies between items

budgeted for those projects that are implemented over several years and pressure to draw funds budgeted in the year concerned. The proposal was received very positively by non-governmental organizations, too.

Second, the dispute showed that it was necessary to modify decision-making processes within the project commission to be more explicit so that in the future misunderstandings caused by different interpretation of the rules and decisions made by the project commission itself could be avoided.

Uncertainty regarding 2010 was increased in the last days of 2009 due to the intensified discussion on the impact of climate change connected with the global climate conference held in Copenhagen (December 6-18, 2009). During the European Council summit held on December 10-11, 2009 the EU Member States concluded that in the period from 2010 through 2012 they were prepared to contribute 2.4 billion euro yearly to fight the impacts of climate change<sup>23</sup>. Prime Minister Robert Fico promised a contribution on the part of Slovakia amounting to 9 million euro. The discussions that followed showed that every year 1 million euro should be available within the funds earmarked for development assistance.

The promise made brings a new important sectoral priority into Slovak ODA that has so far not been distinctly reflected in the policies or supported projects. As early as 2010 the issue of how to cope with the challenge will be there for all the players concerned: whether they will be forced to look for administrative solutions without

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<sup>23</sup> "The EU and its Member States are Ready to Contribute with Fast-Start Funding of EUR 2.4 billion Annually for the years 2010 to 2012", European Council (December 11, 2009); [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/1118](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/1118).

any factual positive contents or whether they will very soon be able to call the new sectoral priority into action.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Slovak ODA still faces lots of system and technical problems connected either with frequent changes in foreign policy priorities and our interests in development countries, their broad focus, de facto non-existing harmonization and coordination with other donors (at least on a regional level), an inconsistently built project cycles within the framework of SlovakAid, insufficient publicity on the issues of development cooperation in Slovakia as well as partner countries and lack of sufficient resources. All of these factors suggest that Slovakia should continue the qualitative and quantitative transformation of the ODA system. There are still, however, many obstacles that Slovak ODA should overcome, and the changes are necessary.<sup>24</sup> To improve the quality of ODA and to render the assistance more effective the authors present the following proposals.

### 1. Territorial Priorities:

- a) to reduce the number of recipient countries of Slovak ODA;
- b) to ensure continuity: in the long term to entrench our development assistance territorially (and sectorally, too) using present experience; in this context to ensure the accordance of ODA with the Millennium Development Goals and our objectives in the field of foreign policy;
- c) to enable implementation of regional projects (e.g. Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership states etc).

### 2. Sectoral Priorities:

- a) to elaborate long-term program donor plans for all countries/regions with specific sectoral priorities;
- b) to gradually reduce the share of the sectoral priority of infrastructure – to build the programs on Slovakia's transformation and integration experience in countries of the Western Balkans and those of the EU Eastern Partnership. Orientation mainly on sectoral priorities which are of long-term sustainability – education, social and economic development and building democratic institutions – is efficient in poor countries.

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<sup>24</sup> Recommendations and proposals were elaborated by the authors on the basis of the conclusions of their analysis, consultations with other experts and ODA performers (Nora Beňáková, Marián Čaučík, Vladimír Benč) as well as on the basis of conclusions (recommendations) of the Platform's Chairmanship (of which both authors are members) published in the "Vytvárajme dobrý obraz Slovenska cez program oficiálnej rozvojovej pomoci" leaflet, NGDO Platform (2010).

3. *Conceptual, Legislative and Technical Changes (Project Cycle):*
  - a) to better entrench the system of official development assistance provision in legislation through amendment of the Act on Development Assistance;
  - b) to improve the quality of the system of humanitarian assistance provision and to make it more flexible;
  - c) to include issues of global development education in the cross-dimensional topics within the framework of school curricula;
  - d) to create a national system of volunteer and expert deployment to development countries and thus build capacities and human resources in the field of development assistance;
  - e) to create an internal evaluation and monitoring system;
  - f) to build capabilities, especially in the area of institutions and human resources, on all levels and in all sectors, to safeguard continuity through inter alia more stability in the field of personnel of the Development Cooperation Department of the Foreign Ministry. To ensure at the same time that there be, on a continuous basis, development cooperation experts or a representative of administration and contracts working at embassies;
  - g) to create a system of clear regulations on support for co-funding international development cooperation projects and on Slovakia's involvement in such projects;
  - h) to change the system of subsidies provided by SAIDC towards a higher degree of flexibility in the use of national budget funds, taking specifics of operation in development countries into account;
  - i) to make the system of ODA implementation simpler, better arranged and more effective, the introduction of new instruments such as "twinning" – deployment of Slovak experts, internship of experts from partner countries, loan schemes for projects implemented by businesses;
  - j) creation of simplified procedures for projects preparation (in the first place demand-oriented projects of partner countries);
  - k) to maintain ODA micro-project schemes at embassies in partner countries with each of the embassies having expert personnel to cover development assistance; the schemes should be clear, while there should also be transparent rules of use as well as strictly specified purpose and sectoral orientation (mainly to publicize Slovak ODA, to support local NGOs, capacity building etc., having in the first place a flexible response to the situations in partner countries in mind).
4. *Financial changes*
  - a) to establish the long-term obligatory financial prospects of the funds to be allocated to SlovakAid to enable Slovakia's approach to fulfillment of her international obligations within the EU/OECD;
  - b) to considerably increase the volume of bilateral and regionally provided assistance (to at least 50% of ODA);

- c) the SlovakAid program needs to be enhanced by the Slovak Republic's new commitments in the fight against climate change in poor countries (9 million euro in the period between 2010-2012).
5. *Cooperation with other donors:*
- a) to find one or two key partners of Slovak ODA to implement projects either within the framework of V4 regional cooperation in the field of ODA, or to confirm and enhance cooperation with the ADA or possibly CIDA or donors from Nordic countries on the basis of an agreement to accumulate resources, to enable funding long-term projects (implemented for 5 up to 7 years), to make implementation mechanisms/institutions more effective, to share them and to get a partner with whom to build our capabilities within ODA and for perspective change or modification of territorial priorities.

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# PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN 2009

ONDREJ GAŽOVIČ

The year 2009 could be, from the point of view of Slovak public diplomacy, labeled a breakthrough year. It was precisely the previous year that had brought several factors contributing to clarification of this part of the foreign policy concept in the conditions of the Slovak Republic as well as to its institutionalization and practical implementation. The concept of public diplomacy was consistently included in Slovak foreign policy discourse in 2009. The other side of this statement consists in the fact that many related issues still remain unsettled. Regular reviews published annually in the Yearbooks of Slovak Foreign Policy represent a good opportunity to survey the first steps taken in the field of Slovak public diplomacy and also provide room to consider the challenges and opportunities it faces.

## CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Just like any other frequently used term, that of public diplomacy, too, faces, as regards its meaning, the risk of a certain dilution. What then does the term in fact mean, what are the present trends in comprehension of the term and why is the relevance of public diplomacy within the foreign policy activities of individual states always increasing?

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. G.R. Berridge *Diplomacy – Theory and Practice*. (London: Palgrave, 2002).

The first part of the question may partly be answered by just looking at the phrase in question. While the main tasks of *diplomacy* traditionally include enabling a state to achieve its objectives in the area of foreign policy without violence<sup>1</sup>, the contribution of public diplomacy consists in realizing the potential of *the public* in implementation of this task. Achieving positive perception and possible support by the foreign as well as by the domestic public becomes an ever more important precondition for the successful operations of individual states in the area of foreign policy.

Hence the first reason for the increasing importance of public diplomacy has a pragmatic background – involvement of the public in the processes of foreign policy enables a nation to advocate and implement its own interests in a more efficient fashion.

The perceptions of the public have always played a role in reflections of foreign policy,

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*Public diplomacy is at present focused on communication and on creation of partnerships with the domestic and foreign public. A positive consequence of such efforts is the creation of environment enabling implementation of foreign policy.*

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but the present phenomena connected with globalization and the boom in information technologies have caused a major change of the environment in which foreign policy is going on. Individuals and various types of non-governmental players have obtained means thanks to which they can in real time and independently of their governments receive information on events in the world. These phenomena also enable them, regardless of physical distance, to communicate with each other, to express their views, obtain the support of the public

and coordinate their activities. As expressed by Jan Melissen, citizens become to an ever increasing degree critical observers and active participants in foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

Many foreign policy issues are, in this changed environment, immediately confronted with the effects and influences of domestic and foreign public opinion. The disfavor of the public is capable of making any policy of a government at least more expensive or even doom it directly to failure. Favorable perception of a country on the other hand considerably facilitates the implementation of its interests.

Development of public diplomacy should also, however, be based upon normative foundations that consist in developing ideals of democracy and good governance of public affairs. A government indirectly receives its legitimacy from the people and it is precisely the citizens that should be the final addressees of its activities – governments are here for the citizens and not vice versa. From this point of view it is correct that while planning and implementing foreign policy a good level of two-way communication with both the wider and the expert public be safeguarded and that their adequate participation in the processes just mentioned be enabled.

When examining various definitions used in expert literature, one can sum up that public diplomacy is at present focused on communication and on creation of partnerships with the domestic and foreign public. A positive consequence of such

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<sup>2</sup> J. Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice", J. Melissen (ed) *The New Public Diplomacy*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

efforts is the creation of a, so to speak, environment enabling implementation of foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

A part is to a certain degree played in some of these processes is by all the individuals who in various ways get into contact with foreign countries. Recording these mixed and, in particular, numerous 'micro' contacts of public diplomacy is not, of course, possible. The paper presented is therefore devoted to those aspects of Slovakia's public diplomacy that were in 2009 based upon the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and upon those of the Ministry's newly established Public Diplomacy Department.

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN SLOVAKIA

The definition of public diplomacy adopted by the Foreign Ministry basically observes the connections outlined in the previous chapter and is in accordance with the modern concept of the term. As expressed by Elena Mallicková, Director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Public Diplomacy, public diplomacy is understood by the Ministry as "a long-term process of communication with the domestic and foreign public aimed at increasing Slovakia's attractiveness and credibility as well as understanding of its foreign policy objectives."<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the definition includes both dimensions of public diplomacy – domestic and foreign – may be labeled its strikingly positive feature. Forgetting to mention the domestic dimension would for several reasons undermine the possibilities of public diplomacy. Domestic players have plenty of good ties with foreign countries and may provide the international activities of the Slovak Republic with considerable assistance. At the same time, communication with its own citizens would be an obligation of any body of state administration. It is, especially in the case of the Foreign Ministry, the development of relations with the domestic public that represents one of the ways to strengthen the legitimacy of its very existence.<sup>5</sup>

Besides attractiveness, another positive factor of such a concept of public diplomacy consists in emphasizing the importance of credibility – it is precisely credibility that becomes a necessary pre-condition for successful operations in the international scene. An orientation of public diplomacy merely at presenting a certain image of

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g. J. Bátor, "Public Diplomacy between Home and Abroad: Norway and Canada", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* No. 1 (2006); M. Leonard, C. Stead, C. Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*. (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002); J. Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice", J. Melissen (ed) *The New Public Diplomacy*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Address by E. Mallicková delivered during the *Public Diplomacy Conference: the New Strategic Instrument of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic*, Bratislava (December 4, 2009) as well as e-mail communication with the author of this paper presented.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. G.R. Berridge *Diplomacy – Theory and Practice*. (London: Palgrave, 2002).

Slovakia would be erroneous. As is written by Joseph S. Nye, doyen of the 'soft power theories' and public diplomacy, actions speak louder than words, so no matter how positively presented a country's image may be, it may be immediately, due to the country's untrustworthy behavior, debased.<sup>6</sup>

A properly selected definition of public diplomacy is just a small piece of the mosaic of its overall form. When mapping Slovak public diplomacy it is appropriate to fix attention on the form of the institutional framework selected, on the condition of its academic and analytical background and first and foremost on the concrete activities presented last year.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

One of the steps taken on the way to a new level of the Slovak Republic's operations in the area of public diplomacy was the institutional reform of the Foreign Ministry based on a complex process of evaluations and reforms generally known as TREFA.<sup>7</sup> Within the framework of the changes brought about by the reform, the Public Diplomacy and Public Services Directorate (PDPS) was as of September 1, 2008 formed within the Foreign Ministry. Ambassador Vasil Grivna, an experienced career diplomat, became Director-General of this Directorate. The organizational units of the PDPS are as follows: Archives and Library Department (ALD), Consular Department (CoD), Honorary Consulates Unit (HCU), Cultural Diplomacy Department (CuD), Public Diplomacy Department (PDD), Citizens Assistance and Services Center (CASC) and Press Department (PreD).

As regards public diplomacy, the key role should naturally be played by the Public Diplomacy Department. The first stage of the Department's operations in the period between September 2008 and June 2009 was to a certain degree marked by a lack of conceptual clarity in its activities as well by shortcomings in the area of the Department's personnel, financial and competence resources. In the period just mentioned, which could also be referred to as "a period of official existence and actual stagnation" the department was headed by the former ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Republic of South Africa Pavol Ivan. More visible developments of the Department took place from June 1, 2009 when Elena Mallicková, an expert active in the media

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<sup>6</sup> J.S. Nye, "Smart Power Needs Smart Public Diplomacy" (February 15, 2010); [http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/19934/smart\\_power\\_needs\\_smart\\_public\\_diplomacy.html?breadcrumb=/experts/3/joseph\\_s\\_nye](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/19934/smart_power_needs_smart_public_diplomacy.html?breadcrumb=/experts/3/joseph_s_nye).

<sup>7</sup> TREFA is an abbreviation of the phrase 'TRvalá Efektivita riadenia' (Permanent Efficiency of Management). For further information on the process see e.g.: M. Peško, "Modernization of the Slovak Foreign Service", P. Brezáni (ed) *Yearbook of Slovakia's Foreign Policy 2007*. (Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2008), pp. 91-118; as well as M. Peško, "Modernization of the Slovak Foreign Service - From Analysis to Implementation", P. Brezáni (ed) *Yearbook of Slovakia's Foreign Policy 2007*. (Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 2009), pp 125-142.

environment, took up the position of Director. Under her leadership the Department intensified its activities and was strengthened in content and personnel. Such developments resulted in enhancement of the department's activities in the second half of 2009.<sup>8</sup> In early 2010 there were eight people including director Mallicková working at the Department.

The following tasks are, under the Organizational Rules of the Foreign Ministry, chiefly assigned to the Public Diplomacy Department: coordination of the public diplomacy activities of the Ministry and those of Slovakia's diplomatic missions abroad, presentation of the activities and objectives of the Foreign Ministry and their promotion through a variety of events, the creation and coordination of online presentation of the publications, communication and visual framework of the Ministry, coordination of the use of new electronic communication channels and coordination of cooperation with the non-governmental sector, including the grant scheme.<sup>9</sup>

This brief summary of the Public Diplomacy Department's main tasks makes it quite clear that the principal part of its operations should be based upon coordination and information activities with the emphasis put on cooperation with other players (diplomatic missions abroad, non-governmental organizations, etc).

The implementation of this orientation is also visible in particular activities of the Public Diplomacy Department, the presentation of which follows. It is therefore possible to conclude that the role and endeavor of the Department is not taking over a kind of centralized and, in terms of hierarchy, superior function, but rather that there is an ambition to play the role of a helping element that in processes of mutual interactions with other players develops the potential of Slovak Public Diplomacy. Such concept is close to the so-called network model of public diplomacy assessed as progressive and recommended by several experts.<sup>10</sup>

It will undoubtedly be interesting to follow to what degree the planned *Concept of Public Diplomacy of the Slovak Republic* will address the form of public diplomacy in Slovakia and the role to be played by the Public Diplomacy Department. The Concept should also define the specific priorities of Slovak public diplomacy as well elaborate its territorial orientation and specifics. It is of course a pity that this document of essential

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<sup>8</sup> The role of Minister Lajčák who, following his appointment, began to support the development of Slovak public diplomacy, was also positively evaluated in personal conversations with the staff of the PDPS.

<sup>9</sup> "Hlavné činnosti útvarov of the MZV SR. Príloha č. 2 k Smernici č. 33/2010 Zb. MZV", MFA Organizational Rules.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. B. Hocking, "Rethinking the New Public Diplomacy", J. Melissen (ed) *The New Public Diplomacy*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); J. Bátor, "Prvé kroky slovenskej verejnej diplomacie", *Zahraničná politika* Vol. XIII, No. 2/2009, pp. 8-9

significance is not yet available and that its presentation is not expected until the second half of 2010. It is on the other hand possible to expect that if ample time is set aside, this will contribute to a better quality of this conceptual document, one that will, from the point of view of Slovak public diplomacy, ultimately result in a solution that will be better and more effective than would have been the case had one been obliged to operate within the framework of a hastily and inconsistently prepared concept. It will be the pages of future editions of the Yearbook that will show how successful the staff of the Foreign Ministry were in their efforts.

Another part of Slovak public diplomacy's institutional structure is the so-called Council of the Government for the Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic established by Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 177 of March 7, 2009. Its composition and activities will be introduced in more detail in the sub-chapters below.

## ANALYTICAL AND ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Increased attention paid by the Slovak foreign policy experts active outside the Foreign Ministry framework inter alia to this field of foreign policy in recent years was followed by the gradual institutionalization of Slovak public diplomacy. Expert publications by Jozef Bátora somehow stick out from among the theoreticians and analysts who work on public diplomacy. Through his works and research Bátora broke into the pages of prestigious foreign journals and his works belong to those frequently quoted in present world discourse on diplomacy and its changes.<sup>11</sup> Jozef Bátora also directs a part of his work at a domestic audience. He also participates in consultations connected with forming Slovak public diplomacy and with creation of its concept. Among the positive effects of this academic's return to Slovakia is the fact that a group of scientists interested in consistent development of research in the field of public diplomacy began to be formed in the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at Comenius University.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See e.g. J. Bátora "Does the European Union Transform the Institution of Diplomacy?", *Journal of European Public Policy* Vol. 12, No. 1 (2005); J. Bátora, "Public Diplomacy between Home and Abroad: Norway and Canada", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* No. 1 (2006); J. Bátora *Foreign Ministries and the Information Revolution: Going Virtual?* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> An example of the process is e.g. the first Slovak conference on public diplomacy – *Public Diplomacy Conference: the New Strategic Instrument of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic* organized by the Institute of European Studies and International Relations of the Faculty of the Social and Economic Sciences of Comenius University in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry. Besides J. Bátora there were other Institute experts, such as Silvia Miháliková, Oľga Gyárfášová, Zuzana Hozlárová, Juraj Buzalka, Peter Kopecký, Dušan Leška and Ondrej Gažovič. See volume of conference speeches J. Bátora, Z. Hozlárová (eds) *Verejná diplomacia: nový strategický nástroj MZV SR?* (Bratislava: Institute of European Studies and International Relations, 2010).



A number of other authors have also made an important input into discussion on Slovak PD. At the turn of 2008 and 2009 Eliška Sláviková, Vladimír Bilčík and Alexander Duleba of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association worked out a detailed report analyzing solutions and suggesting further steps to be taken in the field of Slovak public diplomacy.<sup>13</sup> The Slovak discourse on public diplomacy is being enriched by the deliberations of Martin Bútora on (but also on other matters) Joseph S. Nye's concept of 'soft power',<sup>14</sup> there is also an important view by Milan Nič together with his concept of 'civic diplomacy' as well as his practical activities.<sup>15</sup> The approaches to and the interest of Slovak citizens in foreign policy topics is in the long term reflected by Oľga Gyárfášová<sup>16</sup>, and issues of public diplomacy have also found their way into texts by Erik Pajtinka<sup>17</sup> and other authors.

Productions of academics and analytical work assessed critically by the staff of the Foreign Ministry and mutual dialogue between these players may represent a valuable background to give a real form to and to implement the public diplomacy of the Slovak Republic. A willingness on the part of the Ministry to listen to the views and suggestions of the expert public was repeatedly voiced. A good contribution by the expert public could in future be a presentation of the outcomes of the original empirical research, which, internationally too, is rather puny.

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*A critical reflection of the productions of academics and analytical work by the staff of the Foreign Ministry and mutual dialogue between these players may represent a valuable background for giving real form and implementation to the public diplomacy of the Slovak Republic.*

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## ACTIVITIES OF THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The form of Slovak public diplomacy is of course to a high degree reflected in specific activities presented by the Foreign Ministry last year. An important dimension of the Public Diplomacy Department's activities in 2009 was the preparation and coordination of several meetings, discussions and conferences the common objective of which was the gradual creation of the form and content of Slovakia's public diplomacy. Taking part in these activities were a variety of social players who, besides the staff of the Foreign Ministry headquarters and that of individual diplomatic missions abroad, also included

<sup>13</sup> E. Sláviková, V. Bilčík, A. Duleba, "Strednodobá koncepcia rozvoja verejnej diplomacie v podmienkach Ministerstva zahraničných vecí SR. Analýza skúseností a návrh odporúčaní" (2009); [www.sfpa.sk/dokumenty/publikacie/222](http://www.sfpa.sk/dokumenty/publikacie/222).

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. M. Bútora "Prestáva Slovensko vyžarovať „soft power“?", *Zahraničná politika* Vol. XI, No. 6 (2007), pp. 3-5.

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. Milan Nič blog at <http://blog.aktualne.centrum.sk/blogy/milan-nic.php>.

<sup>16</sup> From among the most recent papers see e.g. O. Gyárfášová, "Zahraničná politika - popoluška volebnej súťaže?", *Zahraničná politika* Vol. XIV, No. 1 (2010), pp. 3-5.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. E. Pajtinka, "Verejná diplomacia", B. Mattoš (ed) *Diplomatická služba členského štátu EÚ v procese európskej integrácie*. Conference Volume. (Bratislava: Ekonóm, 2008).

experts from academic backgrounds, analysts of non-governmental organizations, civil activists, staff of the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) and the Slovak Tourism Agency (SACR), representatives of the regions and business circles, including consultancies and advertising agencies as well as other parties interested in the issues in question.

Public diplomacy was also discussed in the Ministry within the panel held within the framework of the meeting of the heads of diplomatic missions on June 30, 2009. Other working meetings specifically concerned the so-called *Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic*. As the principal coordinator of the process the Ministry prepared the first session of the Council of the Government for Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic, a meeting of the coordinators of the process held on September 22, 2009 as well as a wider discussion forum held on October 15, 2009 with the participation of a variety of players interested in and capable of joining the uniform presentation. On November 19, 2009 there was another meeting held of the so-called expert forum of the Council of the Government for Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic. On December 4, 2009 a *Public Diplomacy – the New Strategic Instrument of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs* conference organized by the Foreign Ministry together with the Institute of European Studies and International Sciences of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at Comenius University was held at the Ministry.

What the form of the meetings just mentioned makes quite clear is that the Foreign Ministry is interested in communication with players representing several sections of society. As the endeavor helps create a public diplomacy such that most players are able to identify themselves with and that on the other hand is in itself a relevant project of a public and diplomatic nature, it is possible to make a positive assessment of it. Through the activities presented the Ministry communicates and develops in a consistent way relations with domestic social players.

Another dimension of the Public Diplomacy Department's operations in 2009 was developing opportunities offered to the Foreign Ministry by modern information technologies. An important contribution was preparing and launching the new Ministry's website, which is, compared with the previous site, not only better arranged and offers multi-media content in the form of e.g. audio and video recordings, but also new ways of mutual communication between the Foreign Ministry and citizens. A good public diplomacy should not only be focused on a one way transfer of information from the Ministry to the citizens, but should be searching for ways to provide the public with an opportunity to express their opinions on issues that they see as important. On its new internet site the Ministry took just this way and through an internet chat offered the public an opportunity to participate in an interactive discussion with the Ministry's top representatives.<sup>18</sup> The first such chat session with Minister M. Lajčák was held in December 2009 and was in early 2010 followed by a chat session with the Director-General of the Ministry's Political Directorate Igor Slobodník. This idea

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<sup>18</sup> To access the archives of chats and to join the present chat go to: <https://www.MFA.sk/Chat>.

could undoubtedly be assessed positively, but a higher degree of regularity would beyond question be good.

Another step taken in this regard was the establishment of a blog through which minister Lajčák began to communicate with the public.<sup>19</sup> The first paper by the minister was published on October 12, 2009 and there followed other contributions by the minister on a regular basis (once or twice a month). Greater frequency would surely be welcome as well. The minister's articles are read relatively frequently (an article is accessed from approximately 1,000 to 5,000 times) and there is an open discussion below each of the articles. Positive feature of such activity is the fact that wide public is provided with an opportunity to get insight of activities performed by a minister in office. At the same time it is a symbolic sign of the Foreign Ministry's philosophy as well as of its efforts to communicate with the public through modern information technologies, too.

A part of the coordination and communication activities of the Public Diplomacy Department is also covered by the Foreign Ministry's subsidy mechanism. Through this mechanism the Ministry

particularly supports the elaboration of independent studies and analyses, publishing expert publications and preparation of expert conferences. Such a mechanism enables the Ministry to make use of capabilities and expertise of independent experts while at the same time providing the Ministry with an opportunity to motivate them to carry out research in priority fields and also representing a way to support them and to build mutual relationships.

The public diplomacy activities also include the operation of the Citizens' Assistance and Services Center which offers citizens opportunities to consult and to receive answers to their questions. The Slovak public showed considerable interest in this form of communication and this fact is proven by the 7,217 phone answers to questions and requests for information handled by the Center's staff in 2009.<sup>20</sup>

In sketching in the efforts of the Ministry to communicate well with the public one could also mention the outcomes of the survey performed among Slovak journalists by the well-known blog Slovak Press Watch.<sup>21</sup> The survey was performed with the participation of 65 journalists and their task was to assess individual spokesmen who work/who worked at the ministries, for the cabinet, for the President of the Slovak Republic and for the Speaker of the Parliament during the term of Robert Fico's Government. From among the 29 spokesmen in total who were assessed the first place went in a relatively decisive way to none other than Peter Stano, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson who received the best assessment, while even the second place (!) was taken by Ján Škoda, another representative of the Foreign Ministry and Stano's predecessor.

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*On its new internet site the Ministry offered the public an opportunity to participate in an interactive discussion with the Ministry's top representatives.*

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<sup>19</sup> The blog is available at <http://moje.hnonline.sk/blog/120>.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with the Director-General of the SPDS Vasil Grivna.

<sup>21</sup> <http://spw.blog.sme.sk/c/223267/Novinari-Najlepsim-hovorcom-PStano-najhorsim-LKarasek.html>

Such an outcome may be construed as a result of the interaction of two factors. The first of them is of course the expert and human qualities of the spokesperson concerned and the Ministry's ability to find and to engage such a competent professional. The other factor then consists in the Ministry's ability to set itself apart from the other ministries of R. Fico's government as well as in the fact that it was not connected with any scandals and suspicions of corruption like e.g. the ministries of the environment or social affairs, labor and family. The absence of similar negative advertisement 'facilitates' a spokesperson's work and in general contributes to a positive perception of the Foreign Ministry by the public.

## UNIFORM PRESENTATION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC ABROAD

Most of the activities as presented under the previous sub-chapter were aimed first and foremost at communication and development of relationships with the domestic public. Foreign activities of the Slovak PD included e.g. an exhibition sent by the Foreign Ministry in November 2009 on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Velvet Revolution to the diplomatic missions abroad. The further operations of Slovak public diplomacy abroad were then principally organized by individual diplomatic missions, so their success also varied, depending on the enterprise and abilities of the staff working at the individual diplomatic missions. When talking to the staff of the SPDS the public diplomacy activities of embassies in Rome, Warsaw and Berlin were mentioned as positive examples, while some other diplomatic missions are on the contrary relatively passive in the field of public diplomacy. The Public Diplomacy Department is not for the time being directly responsible for the form of the public diplomacy activities of individual diplomatic missions and in general it seems that Slovak foreign public diplomacy is, when compared with its domestic vector, less developed at the moment.

The foreign vector of Slovak public diplomacy is, then, for the time being mostly represented by the so-called Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic process. The *Draft Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic* was adopted by the Government by its Resolution No. 177 dated March 4, 2009. At the same time the Government also established the Council of the Government for the Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic Abroad as well as the Council's statute. This activity may be interpreted as a somewhat delayed initiative to implement the Government's resolution made in its Manifesto back in August 2006.

The objective of the Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic is building up goodwill for Slovakia, which under the draft Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic is a precondition for "an increase in inflow of direct foreign investments, improved trade balance, increase in income from active tourism, increase in interest of foreign students in studies at high schools and universities or colleges in Slovakia and increase in and improved quality of Slovak cultural exports".<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> "Návrh jednotnej prezentácie SR v zahraničí", Government of the Slovak Republic No. UV-5829/2009; <http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/84009FCAC12873B4C125756A002A37A-F?OpenDocument>.

In order to implement these objectives the Council of the Government for the Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic Abroad chaired by the Prime Minister was established. The ministers of foreign affairs and culture became the Council's Vice-Chairs, while the ministers of education, agriculture and the economy, the Secretary-General of the Office of the Government and the directors-general of SARIO and SACR became members of the Council. Lubomír Ščasný, who was assigned to work at the Foreign Ministry's SPDS, became the Council's Secretary-General. The main coordinating role in relation to the Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic abroad is played by the Foreign Ministry, which in order to develop the process organized several expert meetings and discussions presented in the previous sub-chapter.

What may be concluded from the draft Uniform Presentation of Slovakia as well from related discussions is that this is a process aimed at the creation of a certain image on the basis of which the Slovak Republic could be presented abroad as well as at the subsequent spreading of such an image with the participation of various state and non-state organizations. Creation of a country's trade-mark, so-called *branding*, belongs to the standard public diplomacy instruments of the advanced nations. What is puzzling on the other hand is the emphasis placed upon the terms 'uniform' and 'presentation'. It is not just the lack of any idea of what the image presented should be like that matters, but the very term of 'uniform presentation' is relatively unsuitable as it evokes centralism and one-way communication rather than supporting a variety of civic and public activities with outreach abroad that are to develop mutual and equal dialogue and building long-term relationships with the foreign public.

## A CRITICAL REFLECTION AND AREAS OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several facts to be appreciated about the Foreign Ministry's operations in the field of public diplomacy. They include efforts to achieve active cooperation and consultations with other players, commendable developments of public diplomacy's domestic vector or good and helpful communication with the public, including the gradual inclusion of modern information technologies in these processes.

Besides these and other positive features mentioned throughout the text of the paper it is quite clear from the declarations of the Foreign Ministry's top representatives that the form of Slovak public diplomacy is just being created, that its concept is not fixed yet and that new suggestions are welcome. A partial response to the situation is the expression of several critical comments and the proposing of the fields of further potential development of Slovak public diplomacy as presented in the paper's following part.

Criticism is not, however, always directed at the Foreign Ministry itself, as it only coordinates certain processes or roofs them in formal terms and frequently has not sufficient competence and financial impact on their final form. Even in the case of these processes the Ministry may anyhow lend a hand to improve the situation and therefore it is also the Ministry that the criticism and suggestions concern.

The first critical observation concerns the foreign vector of public diplomacy. While Slovak public diplomacy's domestic vector is characterized by the efforts to involve a great variety of players and to develop communication and partnerships with such players, its foreign vector coincides to a high degree with the Uniform Presentation of Slovakia process. There are even several weak points about such an approach. First, there is no agreement yet on what Slovakia should present, in what manner and for what purpose. It is at the same time clear that achieving such agreement will be a long-term, demanding and confrontational process. An exclusive orientation on presentation would, even if such agreement were achieved, still make understanding of public diplomacy too simple. It would be to the detriment of public diplomacy were various forms of dialogue and partnership relationships that, due to their very essence,

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may not be *uniform* and do not even consist in *presentation*, not to be used within Slovak public diplomacy abroad.

In advocating the complex understanding of public diplomacy's foreign vector valuable experience may be obtained from individual diplomatic missions. There are active and inventive diplomats working at many of them who themselves organize and develop its activities. The Public Diplomacy Department may, by consulting them, receive important inspiration and may on this basis subsequently motivate and coordinate activities at less

active diplomatic missions. Cooperation with successful Slovak diplomats, harvesting their experiences and subsequent elaboration of recommendations and ideas for the network of diplomatic missions as a whole should in the future be one of the Public Diplomacy Department's prioritized activities. It is positive that the Department has already taken this way and this fact was proved by a meeting with heads of diplomatic missions held on June 30, 2009 as well as by the participation of experienced ambassadors in the conference held on December 4, 2009.

The involvement of Slovak public diplomacy in coping with specific opportunities and threats concerning the Slovak Republic's image abroad may also be critically regarded. The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, the Vancouver 2010 Winter Paralympics, the 2010 Shanghai World Expo and the 2010 South Africa Football World Cup could all be enumerated as examples of opportunities. The domestic and foreign media pay great attention to the events just mentioned, which therefore represent a great potential to make Slovakia visible. Despite this there is no policy on how to make use of them for this purpose and the involvement of the Public Diplomacy Department in the preparation of Slovakia's participation in the events is minimal. The Foreign Ministry should exert more effort and pressure to involve its experts in the field of public diplomacy in preparation for Slovakia's participation. It is true that there may be a range of factors preventing the Foreign Ministry from doing so – from insufficient competence, financial and personnel coverage up to insufficient will on the part of the other partners. Increased efforts in this regard could in any case be beneficial.



The case of the 'Irish explosive' could be referred to as an example of jeopardizing Slovakia's image abroad. Only exceptionally is Slovakia covered abroad in such an intense way and in such a high number of renowned media as in the very first days of 2010. During an exercise held on Saturday January 2, 2010 the Slovak police 'by mistake' sent an explosive to Ireland in the luggage of a Slovak citizen traveling by air. The person was not just consequently arrested by the Irish police, there was also a great international scandal. In the following days Slovakia was, thanks to the case, discussed in dozens of international media including e.g. BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, Le Monde, Le Figaro or The Wall Street Journal as well as in hundreds of users' comments and contributions to blogs and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

The official responses on the Slovak side were, from the point of view of repairing Slovakia's image, very feeble. Instead of there being an immediate apology, a determination of responsibility and a reference to the harmlessness of the component that was 'sent' communicated to foreign media in every possible way, possibly together with a reference to the facts proving the long-term responsible approach and successfulness of Slovakia, there were only questionable excuses and accusations by the Ministry of the Interior directed at their Irish colleagues who were allegedly informed by fax about the explosive sent.<sup>23</sup>

Taking also this case into account, it is apparent that there exists no mechanism in Slovakia to monitor possible threats to the perception of the Slovak Republic abroad and afterwards to promptly respond to such threats. It is questionable to what extent preparation of such a mechanism should fall within the purview of the Public Diplomacy Department, the job description of which includes, in a manner of speaking, the development of goodwill for Slovakia.

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## DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

It is by various means possible to achieve a positive perception of Slovakia abroad. The presentation of the image desired is not sufficient, unless accompanied by real facts – which are, that is to say, to be made visible through public diplomacy. One of the actual activities on the basis of which Slovakia has been building its goodwill in recent years was the official development assistance program (ODA or SlovakAid).

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<sup>23</sup> See e.g. M. Minka, "Imidž Slovenska explodoval" (January 13, 2010); <http://komentare.sme.sk/c/5189182/imidz-slovenska-explodoval.html>; or M. Kováčová, "Spravili sme si hanbu pred celým svetom" (January 8, 2010); <http://www.sme.sk/c/5182244/spravili-sme-si-hanbu-pred-celym-svetom.html>.



Assisting less developed nations is a valuable and proper objective in itself and it is, moreover, the bilateral component of the ODA in particular implemented through Slovak subjects that carries the potential to operate as a first-rate medium of Slovakia's public diplomacy.<sup>24</sup>

The Government may through increased financial support for the activities of SlovakAid consistently develop the domestic and foreign vectors of Slovak public diplomacy. There are expert capabilities created through SlovakAid within the framework of the domestic vector of public diplomacy. Even at present people from the non-governmental sector who developed their contacts, capabilities and knowledge on regions also concerned within the framework of development projects rank among the important Slovak experts on individual countries and regions. They often include experts on regions that are, from the point of the Slovak Republic's interests, priorities. Among them we may mention e.g. Alexander Duleba (the Ukraine) or Milan Nič (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina). Moreover the Slovak subjects covering development assistance are also well prepared to communicate with a wider domestic public and they thus increase support for and the legitimacy of the Slovak Republic's operations in the field of foreign policy.

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*Should the Government wish to improve perception of Slovakia abroad, the logical step to be taken should be to increase the support and funding for SlovakAid, as development assistance is one of the good media of public diplomacy.*

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Development assistance may at the same time improve the Slovak Republic's image abroad on several levels. The fact that Slovakia provides the

country concerned with assistance may on the symbolic level be positively perceived in such a recipient country. The international community may as well perceive and appreciate that the Slovak Republic conducts itself as a responsible international player that fulfills its commitments and provides less developed nations with assistance. On the specific level the outcomes of the assistance itself are beneficial for a particular community in the recipient country as well as a mutual introduction, and creation of ties between the Slovak organizations and their local partners are important.

Besides that, these positive outcomes may be achieved through cooperation with domestic partners at a lower cost than if they were performed by the staff of the Foreign Ministry, not to mention that the public usually regards the activities of non-state players with a higher degree of trust than those of the state.<sup>25</sup>

With regard to the arguments mentioned above it is apparent that should the Government wish to improve perception of Slovakia abroad, the logical step to be

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<sup>24</sup> Development assistance is, besides its altruistic level of helping other nations, usually perceived as an instrumental project through which the Slovak Republic implements its interests. As a probe into the motivation of individual players in the Slovak Republic's development assistance see e.g. O. Gažovič *SlovakAid: oficiálna rozvojová spolupráca ako nástroj konštituovania identity SR?* Thesis (Brno: Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. O. Gažovič, "SlovakAid ako nositeľ verejnej diplomacie SR", J. Bátor, Z. Hozlárová (eds) *Verejná diplomacia: nový strategický nástroj MZV SR?* (Bratislava: Institute of European Studies and International Relations, 2010).

taken should be to increase the support and funding for SlovakAid, as development assistance is one of the good media of public diplomacy. In 2009, however, Slovak development assistance had unfortunately to face a relatively dramatic decrease in the funds assigned for this purpose.

The Foreign Ministry should therefore within the political discussion on development assistance, public diplomacy and the Uniform Presentation of Slovakia refer to the mutual interconnection of these areas and use this argument to justify an increase in the funds assigned to bilateral ODA. By consistent development assistance Slovakia helps solve other nations' problems and at the same time improves its international position.

## EXCHANGE STUDY STAYS

Another area that is important in itself and at the same also carries a significant potential to positively influence the Slovak Republic's relations with foreign countries is that of exchange study stays. Some analysts and interns even regard them as one the most efficient instruments of public diplomacy in general.<sup>26</sup>

Foreign study stays actually bring any country that actively supports them several benefits at the same time. Foreign students who arrive in Slovakia are provided with a unique opportunity to get to know our country and to establish both professional and private relations there. The objective of such stays should not be presentation of an untrue, idealized image of Slovakia. Both the positive and negative experience of foreign students will help them better understand our country. Against this background they will, while working in various positions in their countries, be better able to understand the positions of the Slovak Republic and to comprehensibly interpret the conduct of our country to their fellow citizens.

The more people there are in other countries who know anything at all about Slovakia to begin with, who subsequently understand Slovakia and who possibly, thanks to their own personal experience, feel a sort of positive emotion towards the country, the better will be the starting conditions for implementation of Slovakia's political and economic objectives and in general for any future international operations of the Slovak Republic

At least equally important is another dimension of exchange study stays – actively sending students from Slovakia abroad. While staying abroad they already operate as representatives of Slovakia, spread information about the country and in many cases create goodwill for Slovakia through their successful activities. Through these study stays Slovak students at the same time receive valuable experiences and establish relations that may in various regards be useful in the future not just for them personally, but in a wider sense for Slovak society, too. Educated people with knowledge of foreign languages and knowledge of a specific region/country abroad may be priceless for the

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<sup>26</sup> See e.g. S. Mueller, "The Nexus of U.S. Public Diplomacy and Citizen Diplomacy", N. Snow, P.M. Taylor (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. (New York: Routledge, 2009); or M. Leonard, C. Stead, C. Smewing *Public Diplomacy*. (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002).

activities of any ministry (in particular for those of the Foreign Ministry), the operations of a private company or a university institution.

It is obvious that increased support for exchange study stays has the potential to positively influence Slovakia's activities in the field of public diplomacy. The Ministry should therefore search for ways to achieve an increase in the number of foreign students arriving in Slovakia as well as that of Slovak students studying abroad, ranging from symbolic verbal support expressed during formal and informal negotiations (the government, various working groups ...) to seeking and creating mechanisms of cooperation with other relevant players (ministry of education, universities, foreign embassies in Slovakia...), within the framework of which the existing schemes of exchange stays would be supported or even completely new schemes established.

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*Unlike a one-way process the objective of which is just 'a uniform presentation' of Slovakia's image abroad, the exchange study trips and development assistance bring, in the values that they contain, an obvious contribution.*

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Development assistance and exchange study stays represent mechanisms through which the Slovak Republic successfully communicates and develops relationships with both a foreign and domestic public. Unlike a one-way process the objective of which is just 'a uniform presentation' of Slovakia's

image abroad, these activities bring, in the values that they contain, an obvious contribution consisting in assistance to less developed countries and in support for study efforts and mutual introduction of people from different countries. These, then, are authentic and, in terms of content, real mechanisms of public diplomacy that deserve increased attention and support on the part of the Foreign Ministry.

## CONCLUSION

Figuratively speaking, Slovak public diplomacy, hitherto fast asleep, began in 2009 to search for its real form. The second half of 2009 was especially notable for a commendable increase in the activities of the Department of Public Diplomacy. Besides its regular editorial and information activities the Department initiated several expert meetings, discussions and conferences on the basis of which future results of Slovak public diplomacy are gradually being crystallized.

It is the domestic vector of Slovak public diplomacy, characterized by an emphasis on the involvement of a wide spectrum of social partners, active cooperation with non-governmental organizations, efforts to helpfully communicate with a domestic public through several channels and developments in the use of modern information technologies, that deserves positive assessment.

By contrast, the foreign vector of Slovak public diplomacy, which in 2009 considerably coincided with the Uniform Presentation of the Slovak Republic Abroad process, looks rather embarrassing. Searching for social agreement on what should be presented abroad and in what manner is a long-term and potentially controversial

process and Slovakia is still just launching the process. Besides that, Slovak public diplomacy should within the framework of its foreign vector expend considerably more efforts on gathering, analyzing and enhancing successful procedures of public diplomacy that are already in place at individual diplomatic missions as well as to develop communications and to build relationships with the foreign public. Areas that Slovak public diplomacy might, should there be increased support, benefit more from include exchange study stays or the bilateral component of Slovak ODA. Both cases are authentic projects aimed at values and their positive side effect may be improved perception of Slovakia abroad.

In the years to come it will be interesting to follow what form of public diplomacy will be selected by the Foreign Ministry in the *Concept of Public Diplomacy of the Slovak Republic* which is now under preparation as well as how successful the Ministry will be in real implementation of this concept. To be successful in its efforts the Ministry will need adequate political support. Development of communication with the domestic and foreign public should be a non-party and long-term process. As experienced by other nations of Central and Eastern Europe, public diplomacy projects are in our region especially susceptible to discontinuous development – there are repeated cases of canceling the existing form of public diplomacy after a change of government and of its subsequent rebuilding from scratch after a certain lapse of time.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, such

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somersaults in development undermine the credibility of a country as the very basic precondition of its successful operations in the field of public diplomacy.

It is this very credibility that the final remark of the paper concerns. No matter how good communication and presentation are, in the long term they are not capable of selling a product, should such a product be basically of inferior quality. The fate of Slovak public diplomacy is then to a great degree in the hands of Slovak politicians. As long as the Slovak Republic acts as a responsible player in international relations, develops transatlantic cooperation, maintains good neighborhood relations, complies with its commitments and as long as it acts, in relation to all of its citizens, as a guarantor of their rights and freedoms, the pre-conditions for improvement of Slovakia's international position will be advanced. Should, however, in the long term some of the negative tendencies witnessed by the domestic and foreign public under the coalition government of SMER – SNS – HZDS prevail, the operations of the Foreign Ministry, no matter how professionally managed, will be considerably complicated.

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<sup>27</sup> See G. Szondi, "Central and Eastern European Public Diplomacy", N. Snow, P.M. Taylor (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. (New York: Routledge, 2009).

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## ANNEXES

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## A CHRONOLOGY OF THE IMPORTANT EVENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY IN 2009

*January 8* On January 1, 2009 the common currency of the Euro Zone became the official currency in Slovakia. On the occasion of officially greeting the Euro, the event *Goodbye Koruna, Welcome Euro* was held at the premises of the Slovak National Theatre. The three supreme representative of Slovakia, the MPs and ministers were all present. A number of foreign representatives also took part in the event – President of the European Commission J.M. Barroso, Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Policy J. Almunia, President of the European Central Bank J.C. Tricher, representatives of states which entered the Euro Zone in 2007 and 2008 – Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus as well as representatives of governments from neighboring EU member states – Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. Representatives from the Luxembourg and Latvian governments were also present, as well as governors of national banks of the Euro Zone Member States and ambassadors of EU member states accredited in Slovakia.

*January 9* President Ivan Gašparovič received the President of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Christofias. President Gašparovič appreciated the active support from the Cypriot side by passing their know-how and experience in joining the Euro Zone. D. Christofias positively evaluated the help of Slovak diplomacy in mediating the dialogue between the northern and southern part of Cyprus and the functioning of the Slovak Armed Forces in the UN peace mission on Cyprus (UNFICYP).

*January 14* Prime Minister Robert Fico together with Foreign Minister Ján Kubiš and Minister of the Economy Ľubomír Jahnátek paid a working visit to Kiev and Moscow. The main aim of their visit was to discuss the situation related to the gas crisis and possible date of renewal of

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*Prepared by Rebecca Murray (murray@sfp.sk) based on the website data of the President of the Slovak Republic, the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, National Council of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic.*

natural gas supplies to Slovakia after they were stopped on January 6, 2009. In Moscow, the Slovak representatives met the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and representatives of Gazprom. In Ukraine they discussed the issue with Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

*January 14-23* During the second half of January members of the Slovak Armed Forces carried out a rotation within the KFOR operation in Kosovo and ALTHEA mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 137 members of the AF were sent to the base Šajkovac in Kosovo and 35 members of the AF SR should serve within the ALTHEA mission in the patrol unit. Four officers should serve in EUFOR Headquarters and one commander is supposed to carry out his tasks at NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo.

*January 26* Miroslav Lajčák became the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. He replaced Ján Kubiš, who assumed the office as the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

*February 6* Slovak judge Peter Tomka, who works as one of the 15 judges at the International Court of Justice in The Hague was elected for the Vice-President position. P. Tomka has been a judge at the ICJ since 2003 and his mandate is valid for 9 years. He was elected to the position of the Vice-President for the period 2009-2011.

*February 6* The 45<sup>th</sup> *Munich Security Conference* took place in Germany. Slovakia was represented by the Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák. Main topics of the conference were relations of Russia with the USA and the EU, future of the NATO mission in Afghanistan, issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the situation in the Middle East and the Balkans.

*February 9* President Ivan Gašparovič was received by the President of the Czech Republic Václav Klaus during his official visit to the Czech Republic. I. Gašparovič commenced the assistance by the Czech Republic provided to Slovakia during the energy crisis in January 2009 through the very first historical reverse motion of the gas pipeline. Both presidents discussed EU-Russia relations, as well. The presidents traditionally assessed the mutual relations between Slovakia and the Czech Republic as highly positive.

*February 11* Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ENCE) Ján Kubiš took a vow in New York on the Charter of the UN Organization. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia replaced Marek Belka from Poland on the post.

*February 19* Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák received the delegation of the US Helsinki Commission led by Benjamin Cardin. Minister Lajčák presented the main priorities of the Slovak foreign policy and discussed the status of minorities in Slovakia, combating extremism, anti-Semitism and corruption. Furthermore both sides discussed the concrete steps for prevention of these negative social phenomena.

*February 20* The Polish town of Krakow held the informal meeting of the NATO Member States Defense Ministers. Slovakia was represented by the Defense Minister Jaroslav Baška. The meeting also focused on the ISAF operation in Afghanistan and KFOR mission in Kosovo.

*March 1* Prime Minister Robert Fico attended the extraordinary informal summit of the European Council in Brussels. The summit was summoned by the Czech Presidency. European leaders

dealt with the financial crisis and its impact on the financial and bank sector, provisions for the automobile industry and stimulation of employment. Before the summit, R. Fico also attended the meeting of V4 countries on energy security.

*March 9* Starting on March 9, rotation of the Slovak contingent within the NATO ISAF operation in Afghanistan was initiated. Two patrol units of the Armed Forces were carrying out tasks related to protection of two camps in the province of Uruzgan during the last six months. After this rotation, Slovakia deployed 200 soldiers in Afghanistan.

*March 12* Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák received the Vice-Prime Minister and the State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia Giorgi Baramidze. M. Lajčák expressed the support of Slovakia for Georgian efforts to integrate the country into NATO and positively assessed the creation of the NATO-Georgia Commission as an instrument for closer cooperation between the two sides.

*March 19* Vice-Prime Minister Dušan Čaplovič received the Executive Director of UN Population Fund and Director of the Regional Bureau of the UN Development Program for Europe and CIS Kori Udovički. The talks focused on the planned establishment of the Regional Office of the UN Population Fund for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Bratislava as well as possibilities of extending cooperation between the Fund and Slovakia.

*April 2* The Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić paid an official visit to Slovakia. Together with political representatives from Slovakia he discussed further possibilities of intensifying mutual cooperation, ambitions of Serbia to integrate their country into the EU and the need to settle relations between Serbia and Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia. At the same time he expressed his acknowledgements for intensive support from Slovakia for integration efforts of Serbia.

*April 3-4* Slovak delegation led by President Ivan Gašparovič attended the NATO Summit in the German cities of Baden-Baden and Kehl and the French city of Strasbourg. The summit was accompanied by celebrations of the French return to the military command of NATO, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing the Washington agreement and accession of Albania and Croatia into the Alliance. Participants also discussed issues related to a more intense involvement of France in NATO military structures, relations of NATO and Russia and the new NATO strategic concept.

*April 7* King of Jordan Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein paid his historically first official visit to Slovakia. The Jordanian delegation was mainly interested in a possible development of relations in the field of tourism. On the other hand Slovakia was interested in the position of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and its activities within the NATO Mediterranean dialogue and its efforts to deepen the dialogue between Israel and Palestine together with Syria and other countries.

*April 20* Prime Minister Robert Fico received Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor. The main topic of their mutual talks were mainly related to economic cooperation, energy security, the world financial crisis and its influence on economies of both countries.

*April 20* Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák negotiated in London with the British Foreign Minister David Miliband and chairman of the Foreign Committee of the House of Commons Michael John Gapes about possibilities of strengthening cooperation in the field of commerce, investments and tourism, but they also talked about more substantial issues like the peace

process in the Middle East, the Cyprus issue and the situation in Iraq. During the visit, M. Lajčák gave a speech at the international conference on the topic of self determination and territorial integrity.

*April 30* The Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Syrian Enterprise and Business Center arranged the first Slovak- Syrian economic forum. On this occasion President of the Syrian Arab Republic Bashar al-Assad visited Slovakia with his delegation. Together with Slovak politicians he predominantly talked on the topic of Syrian-Slovak cooperation in fields like trade, economy, education, culture, science and tourism.

*May 6* In the German town of Ulm, the meeting of high representatives from the Danubian Basin states was held. Slovakia was represented by Vice-Prime minister Dušan Čaplovič. The aim of the meeting was to create a space for cooperation between Danubian Basin countries and regions within the EU. The leaders were also supportive for approving an individual EU strategy in relation to the Danubian Basin region.

*May 6-8* Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák paid an official visit to the United States of America. During the meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in New York he, discussed effective cooperation of Slovakia with the UN in the field of reforming the security sector. With his resort colleague Hilary Clinton, he talked in Washington about questions of bilateral cooperation, transatlantic partnership, stabilization of the Balkans and the ISAF operation in Afghanistan. Together with the National Security Advisor James Jones they discussed the future of Afghanistan, energy security and the new NATO Strategic Concept.

*May 7* At the EU Summit – Eastern Partnership held in Prague, Slovakia was represented by the delegation led by Prime Minister Robert Fico. The aim of the summit was to strengthen bilateral relations with Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

*May 11* The Slovak Republic concluded its annual presidency of the Executive Council of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

*May 14-17* Slovak diplomacy in Bratislava mediated a meeting of the bi-communal dialogue between the Turkish- and the Greek- Cypriot leaders and representatives of their political parties. Slovakia holds the function of an independent mediator in the rapprochement dialogue.

*May 20* The Board for Integrated Presentation of Slovakia abroad held its first meeting in Bratislava. The main aim of the Board is to create an environment for building a positive and good name for Slovakia abroad. The Council should also help Slovakia to be more competitive, enhance its trade balance, and raise income from an active tourist business and exchange of students.

*May 29* The Slovak delegation led by Prime Minister Robert Fico signed the *Czech-Slovak Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the field of Nuclear Energy* during the 4<sup>th</sup> European forum on nuclear energy which took place in Prague. The Memorandum deals with Jaslovské Bohunice power plant and finishing of the construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> block of the nuclear power plant in Mochovce. Slovak Nuclear Decommissioning Company signed with the Czech company ČEZ a stock-holding agreement on creating a common concern. The newly established concern will build a new nuclear power plant in the locality of Jaslovské Bohunice.

June 6 The European Parliament elections took place in Slovakia. Turn out at the elections was 19.4%. SMER SD received 5 chairs, SDKÚ-DS, SMK and KDH two and ĽS HZDS and SNS received one chair each.

June 18-19 President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao paid his first official visit to Slovakia together with his delegation. Negotiations in Slovakia primarily focused on issues of business cooperation, a possible common approach of dealing with the world economic crisis and possibilities of further enhancing diplomatic relations also in fields such as education, culture and sport. The visit was accompanied by a number of protests against human rights abuses in China.

June 19 President Ivan Gašparovič attended the 16<sup>th</sup> Summit of Central European Presidents in Novi Sad. The talks focused mainly on the *Three E* challenge – economy, energy and EU enlargement. President Gašparovič also met his Slovenian counterpart Danilo Türk.

June 23 Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák discussed with the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Valery Voronetsky on topics of bilateral relations, cooperation between Belarus and EU as well as about reforms and observance of human rights in Belarus.

June 24-25 During the working visit to Macedonia, Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák discussed with Macedonian political representatives issues of bilateral relations and the integration process of the Republic of Macedonia into EU and NATO structures.

June 25-26 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the international conference on development aid entitled *Sharing Know-How from the Transformation Process between Member States of the EU, Balkan Countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. The main aim of the conference was to foster a common dialogue primarily in the field of substantial reforms between EU Member States which act as donors with countries which receive development aid. From the receiving countries representatives from Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Ukraine attended the conference. On the side of donors Germany, Austria, Sweden and eight new EU member states were present.

June 29 The EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana arrived for a visit to Slovakia. He attended the meeting of Heads of Missions of the Slovak Republic. In his speech he focused mainly on the common foreign and security policy which should serve as an instrument for promoting EU as a global player.

July 10 A ceremonial formation of the Czech-Slovak EU Battle Group was the final act of the three year's preparation phase of the Group. Slovakia will contribute with 422 persons and a number of technical equipment for individual units. The commander of the Slovak contingent is Brigadier General Pavel Macko, Deputy of Chief of Ground Forces of the AF SR, who is also the designated Deputy EU Operational Commander. Since July 1, 2009 the CZE/SVK BG EU was included in combat readiness, the so called stand by phase, which lasted until 31 December 2009.

July 17 NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer paid an official visit to Slovakia. He was received by Defense Ministry representatives. The discussions focused on the global financial crisis and its impact on the possible establishment of cooperation within NATO. J.H. Scheffer highly appraised the Slovak contribution to NATO operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. He was also received by Prime Minister Robert Fico and President Ivan Gašparovič.

*August 26-27* Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák paid an official visit to the three Baltic states. With his counterparts in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia he discussed the EU Eastern Partnership, global financial and economic crisis and possibilities of intensifying bilateral relations between Slovakia and individual countries.

*September 3* Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense of the People's Republic of China General Guanglie Liang paid an official visit to Slovakia. The talks with highest political representatives from Slovakia focused on issues of bilateral cooperation, the possibility of mutual military cooperation and the global security situation. The Chinese Minister was informed about products of the Slovak armament industry.

*September 8* Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák negotiated with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. Both partners talked about issues of energy security, economic cooperation, global questions and issues as well as cooperation between Russia and NATO or EU.

*September 11-12* Poland hosted the Summit of V4 countries. Slovakia was represented by the President Ivan Gašparovič. The main theme of the summit was evaluation of the Polish presidency, plans for cooperation between V4 and EU and issues of energy security and financial and economic crisis. The summit was attended also by Slovenian President Danilo Türk.

*September 17* Within the context of the upcoming G 20 Summit, Prime Minister Robert Fico left for the extraordinary session of the European Council in Brussels. The main aim of the meeting was to prepare a unified position of the EU for the summit where issues of global crisis were debated as well as the financial and economic situation was evaluated. The issue of strengthening control and regulation of market was discussed too.

*September 21-26* Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák represented Slovakia on the grounds of the United Nations in New York. His address to the General Assembly's 64<sup>th</sup> Session focused on climate change issues, economic crisis and development aid. Minister Lajčák also attended the ministerial meeting EU – Russia where various issues were discussed. M. Lajčák signed the *Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. The Minister also talked with his counterpart from Georgia and Hungary.

*September 25* Slovak political representatives initiated a meeting of an expert forum of the Slovak-Hungarian Joint Commission on Issues of National Minorities. The meeting was also attended by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek.

*October 1* The Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the EU in Brussels Maroš Šefčovič became the new Member of the European Commission for Education, Training, Culture and Youth. He replaced Ján Figel' on the post.

*October 2* Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Miroslav Lajčák and Serbia, Vuk Jeremić signed the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both Countries on Mutual Cooperation within the Program Partnership for Peace*.

*October 13* Prime Minister Robert Fico paid a working visit to Turkey. The main goal of the trip was strengthening of mutual relations between the countries. Prime Minister Fico signed with his colleague Recep Tayyip Erdogan the *Agreement on Support and Mutual Protection of Investments* and opened the Slovak-Turkish business forum.



*October 14* During the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, Slovakia was elected a member of UNESCO Executive Council for 2009-2013.

*October 16* Minister of Economy Ľubomír Jahnátek signed the *Memorandum on Cooperation between Slovakia and Austria in the Energy Sector*. On the occasion, the Minister stated that in 2012 the works on building an oil pipeline connection between Bratislava and Austrian Swechat could begin.

*October 21-22* The designated NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen arrived for a visit to Slovakia on the occasion of the informal meeting of ministers of defense of NATO Member States, which took place in Bratislava. Slovak political leaders discussed with Rasmussen preparations of the New Strategic Concept of NATO and Alliance policy towards the Balkans.

*November 2-5* Slovakia was visited by the Turkish President Abdullah Gül. The central topic of his negotiations were issues of Turkish EU integration, strengthening quality of bilateral relations of the two countries and functioning of both countries within NATO and the UN. During his visit the *Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on War Graves* was signed.

*November 16* Slovak delegation led by Prime Minister Robert Fico travelled to Moscow to meet with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Gazprom CEO Aleksey Miller. Political leaders talked about Russian-Slovak bilateral relations, cooperation in the economic sphere, but also nuclear energy. Important were also debates on the issue of supply – consumption relations.

*November 17* The President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek paid an official visit to Slovakia. The Act on the State Language was one of the topics discussed with the Slovak partners.

*November 23* Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs of the United States of America Pamela Quanrud discussed in Bratislava with Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense the plan of Slovakia to raise its military presence in Afghanistan. The American side highly commended the Slovak decision and stated that it is important for the overall success of NATO in Afghanistan. According to her words the decision also confirmed and strengthened the alliance of Slovakia and USA.

*December 2-4* President Ivan Gašparovič paid an official visit to the Republic of Serbia. With President Boris Tadić he discussed issues as support for Serbia in its EU integration process, the issue of Kosovo and bilateral relations. I. Gašparovič also addressed the Serbian-Slovak business forum and talked with President of the National Assembly of Serbia Slavica Djukić-Dejanović.

*December 10-11* Prime Minister Robert Fico represented Slovakia at the regular meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the process of implementing the *Lisbon Treaty*, the new Strategy of the EU after 2010 for enhancing growth and jobs, as well as the revised Sustainable Development Strategy.

*December 16* Drahošlav Štefánek became chairperson of the Working Group of the United Nations Council for Human Rights. As chairman he will be responsible for preparation of the new *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The protocol should allow the Council to submit complaints in case of violation of rights set by the protocol. The Convention did not permit this possibility.



*December 18* President Ivan Gašparovič attended the final negotiations at the Copenhagen Summit on climate change. Slovakia was also represented by Minister of Environment Jozef Medved'. The Slovak delegation supported the general aims and commitments agreed by EU political leaders.

*December 17* During the official visit of the President of the Vietnamese Socialist Republic Bguyen Minh Triet the *Agreement on the Support and Mutual Protection of Investments between the Government of the Slovak Republic and Socialist Republic of Vietnam* was signed. Furthermore, the *Agreement on Cooperation between the State Office of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and The Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic* was signed. The *Memorandum of Understanding between the MFA of SR and the MFA of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam* was signed by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the SR Miroslav Lajčák and Vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs VSR Pham Gia Kheim.

*December 18* The nearly three year lasting preparations of the common Polish, German, Latvian, Lithuanian and Slovak EU Battle group (POL-DEU-LAT-LIT-SVK BG EU) were finished. The ceremonial formation of the battle group took place in the area of the 22<sup>nd</sup> mechanical battalion in Michalovce. The battle group under the Polish command will be in position from January 1, 2010 until June 30, 2010.

*December 21* Slovakia and Lichtenstein established mutual diplomatic relations by signing a common *Memorandum on establishing Diplomatic Contacts between the two Countries*. The Memorandum was signed in Bratislava by Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák and his Lichtenstein counterpart Aurelia Frick.

## TREATIES, AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS PUBLISHED IN 2009

### BILATERAL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

#### INTERSTATES TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

1. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the United Mexican States on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Mexico, October 26, 2007, published under the No. 41/2009 Coll.)
2. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and The United States of America on Enhancing Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Crime  
(Washington, October 8, 2008, published under the No. 161/2009 Coll.)
3. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Kiev, February 26, 2007, published under the No. 271/2009 Coll.)
4. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the Prevention of Double Taxation and Tax Evasion in the Area of Income Tax  
(Hanoi, October 27, 2008, published under the No. 296/2009 Coll.)
5. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Moldova on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Chişinău, April 7, 2008, published under the No. 398/2009 Coll.)

6. Additional protocol between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the Amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Bratislava, July 1, 2008, published under the No. 453/2009 Coll.)
7. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Sarajevo, June 2, 2008, published under the No. 455/2009 Coll.)
8. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the United Nations on the Trans-European Railway Project Central Office  
(Bratislava, July 27, 2009, published under the No. 454/2009 Coll.)
9. Additional Protocol between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Bratislava, January 27, 2009, published under the No. 502/2009 Coll.)
10. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments  
(Damask, February 18, 2009, published under the No. 512/2009 Coll.)
11. Agreement between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Mongolian Peoples' Republic on Dual Citizenship  
(Ulaanbaatar, July 9, 1984, published under the No. 96/1985 Zb.) will be abolished on the November 20, 2010, published under the No. 543/2009 Coll.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

1. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on the Temporary Use of Part of the State Territory of the Slovak Republic for the Construction and Operation of a Fish Ladder on the Border Water Course of the Ipel' on the Territory of the Municipalities Malé Kosihy and Ipolytölgyes  
(exchange of notes on February 4, 2008 and December 23, 2008, published under the No. 48/2009 Coll.)
2. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters  
(Brussels, June 27, 2008, published under the No. 65/2009 Coll.)
3. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on International Road Transport of Passengers and Goods  
(Bratislava, March 11, 2008, published under the No. 14/2009 Coll.)
4. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Mutual Protection of Classified Information  
(Bratislava, June 10, 2008, published under the No. 90/2009 Coll.)

5. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on Mutual Protection of Classified Information (Skopje, November 6, 2008, published under the No. 106/2009 Coll.)
6. Program of Cooperation between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the State of Israel in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science for 2008-2012 (Bratislava, November 6, 2008, published under the No. 128/2009 Coll.)
7. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Co-Operation in Detecting, Investigating and Preventing Criminal Offences (Bratislava, June 10, 2008, published under the No. 129/2009 Coll.)
8. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Cooperation in Fight against Crime, in Particular Terrorism, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime (Sarajevo, June 5, 2006, published under the No. 178/2009 Coll.)
9. Expiration of the Validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Field of Veterinary Medicine (validity expired on May 30, 2008, published under the No. 175/2009 Coll.)
10. Expiration of the Validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Field of Plant Quarantine and Plant Protection (validity expired on November 30, 2008, published under the No. 176/2009 Coll.)
11. Expiration of the Validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Ukraine on Cooperation in the Field of Veterinary Medicine (validity expired on May 1, 2004, published under the No. 174/2009 Coll.)
12. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the United States of America for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Washington, November 8, 2007, published under the No. 198/2009 Coll.)
13. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Budapest, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2002, published under the No. 190/2009 Coll.)
14. Agreement between the Slovak Republic to the Amendment of the Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine on Social Security (Bratislava, October 11, 2007, published under the No. 211/2009 Coll.)
15. Expiration of the Validity of the Agreement on Reciprocal Health Service to the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Diplomatic and Consular Staff (validity expired on January 16, 2010, published under the No. 229/2009 Coll.)

16. Expiration of the Validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and Government of the Czech Republic on Mutual Recognition of Test Results in the Field of Agricultural and Food Products  
(validity expired on May 1, 2004, published under the No. 761/2009 Coll.)
17. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Mutual Protection of Classified Information  
(Sarajevo, May 28, 2008, published under the No. 268/2009 Coll.)
18. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on War Graves  
(Bratislava, October 13, 2008, published under the No. 302/2009 Coll.)
19. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration concerning Humanitarian Transfer of Refugees in Need of International Protection through the Slovak Republic  
(Bratislava, June 20, 2009, published under the No. 301/2009 Coll.)
20. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on Cooperation in Combating Crime and Executive Protocol on the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on Cooperation in Combating Crime  
(Bratislava, November 16, 2007, published under the No. 295/2009 Coll.)
21. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration concerning Humanitarian Transfer of Refugees in Need of International Protection through the Slovak Republic  
(Bratislava, July 20, 2009, published under the No. 301/2009 Coll.)
22. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the International Organization for Migration on Coordination of the Activities of the European Migration Network  
(Bratislava, July 20, 2009, published under the No. 321/2009 Coll.)
23. Executive Protocol to the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Czech Republic on Exchange of Information from Criminal Records  
(published under the No. 356/2009 Coll.)
24. Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government on the Development of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy  
(Paris, September 17, 2008, published under the No. 359/2009 Coll.)
25. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Czech Republic on the Amendment of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic on Mutual Protection of Classified Information  
(Brunovce, June 25, 2008, published under the No. 361/2009 Coll.)

26. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the Readmission of Persons with Unauthorized Residence (Bratislava, June 23, 2008, published under the No. 393/2009 Coll.)
27. Expiration of Validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Crossing the State Border for the Tourism Purpose on Tourist Paths Crossing the State Border (Budapest, May 10, 2006, published under the No. 399/2009 Coll.)
28. Expiration of the Validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Amendment of Annex No. 1 of the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Crossing the State Border for the Purpose of Hiking on Tourist Paths which Cross the State Border signed on May 10, 2006 in Budapest (notes from August 8, 2007 and August 30, 2007, published under the No. 399/2009 Coll.)
29. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Portuguese Republic on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Lisbon, February 17, 2003, published under the No. 421/2009 Coll.)
30. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the State of Israel on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture (Jerusalem, February 8, 2000, published under the No. 510/2009 Coll.)
31. Amendments to the Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the Framework Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Swiss Federal Council concerning the Implementation of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Program to Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the Enlarged European Union, signed on December 20, 2007 (exchange of letters, published under the No. 515/2009 Coll.)
32. Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Kingdom of Spain on the Mutual Protection of Classified Information (Bratislava, January 20, 2009, published under the No. 542/2009 Coll.)
33. Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Federal Government of the Republic of Austria on Mutual Representation by Diplomatic and Consular Missions of their States in the Visa Application Procedure (Bratislava, October 23, 2009, published under the No. 544/2009 Coll.)

## MINISTERIAL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

1. Agreement between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and the General Commissariat for International Relations of the French Community of Belgium (Walloon – Brussels) on Development of a Slovak-French Section and its Activities at the Bilingual Lycee in town of Žilina (exchange of charters on January 23, 2009, published under the No. 105/2009 Coll.)

2. Results of the negotiations between the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the Federal Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Austria on Further Enforcement of Bilateral International Agreements in view of the State Border between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Austria after the Complete Enforcement of Schengen Acquis by the Slovak Republic (exchange of notes on November 3, 2006 and December 16, 2008, published under the No. 281/2009 Coll.)
3. Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture (Minsk, December 13, 2007, published under the No. 431/2009 Coll.)
4. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia on Technical Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture (Bratislava, January 18, 2009, published under the No. 432/2009 Coll.)
5. Memorandum between the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Cooperation in the Field of Education (Astana, November 3, 2009, published under the No. 501/2009 Coll.)
6. Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus on Cooperation in the Field of Forest Management (Minsk, December 15, 2000, published under the No. 509/2009 Coll.)
7. Bi-Annual Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Healthcare of the Slovak Republic and the Regional Office of the World Health Organization for Europe 2010-2011 (published under the No. 592/2009 Coll.)

## MULTILATERAL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

1. Announcement and Completion of the Complete Actualized List of Authorities eligible according to the Article 6 of the Convention abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents (published under the No. 16/2009 Coll.)
2. Amendments to International Contractual Documents in the Field of Road Transport (published under the No. 38/2009 Coll.)
3. Convention on the Enforcement of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea from the 10th of December 1982 on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (New York, August 4, 1995, published under the No. 44/2009 Coll.)
4. Convention of the Council of Europe on Laundering, Search and Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (Warsaw, May 16, 2005, published under the No. 91/2009 Coll.)



5. Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of Albania (Brussels, July 9, 2008, published under the No. 158/2009 Coll.)
6. Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of Croatia (Brussels, July 9, 2008, published under the No. 157/2009 Coll.)
7. Amendments to the Executive Regulation to Convention on Granting European Patents (published under the No. 125/2009 Coll.)
8. Amendments to the Regulations under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) (published under the No. 127/2009 Coll.)
9. Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Communities and its Member States of the one part and the Republic of Albania on the other part (Luxemburg, June 12, 2006, published under the No. 124/2009 Coll.)
10. European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes (Strasbourg, November 24, 1983, published under the No. 162/2009 Coll.)
11. Amendments of the Rules Related to Fees of the Convention on the Grant of European Patents (European Patent Convention) (published under the No. 163/2009 Coll.)
12. Second Protocol to the Convention on the Protection of the Financial Interests of the European Communities (Brussels, July 26, 1995, published under the No. 164/2009 Coll.)
13. Amendments of Annexes A and B to the European Agreement on International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) (published under the No. 205/2009 Coll.)
14. Convention between the Kingdom of Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, Kingdom of Spain, The French Republic, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Austria on the Stepping up of Cross Border Cooperation particularly in Combating Terrorism, Cross Border Crime and Illegal Migration (Prüm, May 27, 2005, published under the No. 187/2009 Coll.)
15. Convention drawn up on the basis of article K.3 of the European Union's Agreement on the Mutual Assistance and Cooperation between Administrations of Customs (Brussels, December 18, 1997, published under the No. 245/2009 Coll.)
16. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (New York, May 25, 2000, published under the No. 256/2009 Coll.)
17. Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (Paris, November 2, 2001, published under the No. 210/2009 Coll.)

18. European Social Charter (revised)  
(Strasbourg, May 3, 1996, published under the No. 273/2009 Coll.)
19. Common Regulations under the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks and the Protocol Relating to that Agreement  
(Geneva, September 22-30, 2008)  
(published under the No. 337/2009 Coll.)
20. Completion of the Complete Actualized List of Authorities of the Contracting Sides according to the Article 6 of the Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents from 5<sup>th</sup> October 1961  
(status on February 1, 2006, published under the No. 331/2009 Coll.)
21. Completion of the List of Contractual Parties, Statements and Alleged Provisions to the Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children from 19<sup>th</sup> October 1996  
(published under the No. 343/2009 Coll.)
22. Amendments of the Executive Protocol to the Convention on the Grant of European Patents  
(published under the No. 354/2009 Coll., published under the No. 355/2009 Coll.)
23. Agreement relating to the Provision and Operation of Air Traffic Services and Facilities at the Central European Air Traffic Services (CEATS) upper Area Control Centre  
(Brussels, June 27, published under the No. 462/2009 Coll.)
24. Special Agreement on the Application of Article 6 of the Agreement on the Provision and Operation of Air Traffic Services and Facilities at the Central European Air Traffic Services (CEATS) upper Area Control Centre  
(Brussels, June 27, 1997, published under the No. 462/2009 Coll.)
25. Lisbon Treaty amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Communities  
(Lisbon, December 13, 2007, published under the No. 486/2009 Coll.)
26. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a Partnership between the European Communities and their Member States of the one part, and the Republic of Tajikistan on the other part  
(Luxemburg, October 11, 2004, published under the No. 532/2009 Coll.)

## STRUCTURE OF THE STATE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITIES ACTING IN INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN 2009

### **PRESIDENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

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### **Department of Foreign Affairs and Protocol**

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### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

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### **Chairman of the National Council of the SR**

Pavol Paška

#### *Foreign Affairs Committee*

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#### *Committee for European Affairs*

Chairman: Ján Kovarčík, tel. +421 2 5972 2751, [vez@nrsr.sk](mailto:vez@nrsr.sk), [oez@nrsr.sk](mailto:oez@nrsr.sk)

*Committee for Human Rights, Minorities and the Position of Women*

Chairman: József Berényi, tel. +421 2 5972 1699, lpn@nrsr.sk

*Defence and Security Committee*

Chairman: Rudolf Pučík, tel. +421 2 5972 1225, vob@nrsr.sk

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### **Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic**

Robert Fico

### **Deputy Prime Minister for the Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities**

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### **European Affairs and Knowledge-Based Society Section**

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### **Minister**

Ján Kubiš (until January 26, 2009)

Miroslav Lajčák (since January 26, 2009)

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Oľga Algayerová, tel. +421 2 5978 3101, kast1@mzv.sk

### **State Secretary**

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*Central and Northern Europe Department*

Head of the Department: František Dlhopolček, tel. +421 2 5978 3541, Frantisek.Dlhopolcek@mzv.sk

**Global Issues, Human Rights, UN and the International Organizations Directorate**

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Head of the Department: Ján Varšo, tel. +421 2 5978 3611, Jan.Varso@mzv.sk

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Head of the Department: Veronika Lombardini, tel. +421 2 5978 3641, olrp@foreign.gov.sk

**Economic Cooperation and ODA Directorate**

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*Economic Policy Department*

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*Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid Department*

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**Legal Affairs Directorate**

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**Public Diplomacy and Public Directorate**

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**Minister**

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**Section for European Affairs**

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**Minister**

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Richard Raši

**MINISTRY OF LABOR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

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*Department of Foreign Relations and Protocol*

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**State Secretary**

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**State Secretary**

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Štefan Harabin (until June 23, 2009)

Viera Petriková (since July 3, 2009)

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**State Secretary**

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*Department of Private and Procedural International Law*

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**Minister**

Ján Chrbet (until May 5, 2009)

Viliam Turský (May 20, 2009 – August 28, 2009)

Jozef Medved' (since October 29, 2009)

**State Secretary**

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**State Secretary**

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**Minister**

Stanislav Becík (until September 16, 2009)

Vladimír Chovan (since September 16, 2009)

**State Secretary**

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**State Secretary**

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**MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

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**State Secretary**

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**Minister**

Marian Janušek (until April 15, 2009)

Igor Štefanov (since April 15, 2009)

**State Secretary**

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## LIST OF THE EMBASSIES OF THE EU, NATO COUNTRIES AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES

### THE EMBASSIES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND THEIR HEADS AS OF FEBRUARY 2010

State	Start of Diplomatic Relations	Address of Embassy	In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)
The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	-	Komornická1852/25 160 00 Praha 6 - Dejvice Czech Republic	<b>Mohammad Kacem Fazelly</b> <i>Ambassador Designate</i>
The Republic of Albania	1. 1. 1993	Nad Šárkou 1594/59 160 00 Praha 6 Czech Republic	<b>Qazim Tepshi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: May 30, 2007
Democratic People's Republic of Algeria	1. 1. 1993	Rudolfingasse 18 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Taous Feroukhi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 21, 2002
The Principality of Andorra	3. 6. 1996	Kärtnering 2A/13 1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Maria Ubach Font</b> <i>Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Republic of Angola	30. 9. 1993	Jelenia ulica č. 4 811 05 Bratislava	<b>Alberto Correia Neto</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: May 30, 2007
The Argentine Republic	1. 1. 1993	Goldschmiedgasse 2/1 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Eugenio Maria Curia</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 21, 2007
The Republic of Armenia	14. 11. 1993	Hadikgasse 28 A-1140 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Ashot Hovakimian</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 11, 2006
The Commonwealth of Australia	1. 1. 1993	Mattiellistrasse 2 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Michael John Potts</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 02, 2010
The Republic of Austria	1. 1. 1993	Ventúrska 10 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>Helmut Wessely</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 11, 2006
The Republic of Azerbaijan	27. 11. 1993	Hügelgasse 2 A-1130 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Fuad Ismailov</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: Sept 11, 2006
The People's Republic of Bangladesh	3. 3. 1993	Dovestr. 1 105 87 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Tarik Ahsan</b> <i>Minister, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>

Prepared by Martin Firák, RC SFPA intern (firak@sfp.sk).  
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

<b>State</b>	<b>Start of Diplo- matic Relations</b>	<b>Address of Embassy</b>	<b>In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)</b>
The Republic of Belarus	1. 1. 1993	Jančova 5 811 02 Bratislava 1	<b>Vladimir Chekhlov</b> <i>Senior Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Kingdom of Belgium	1. 1. 1993	Fraňa Kráľa 5 811 05 Bratislava 1	<b>Alain Cools</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: October 3, 2006
The Republic of Benin	19. 1. 1993	Englerallee 23 D-14159 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Isidore Bio</b> <i>Ambassador Designate</i>
The Plurinational State of Bolivia	5. 3. 1993	Waaggasse 10/4 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Lazaro Mollinedo Carlos</b> <i>Second Secretary</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1. 1. 1993	Opletalova 27 110 00 Prague Czech Republic	<b>Ivan Orlić</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: October 3, 2006
The Republic of Botswana	29. 11. 2001	High Commission of the Republic of Botswana 6 Stratford Place W1C 1AY, London The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	<b>Roy Blackbeard</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: April 16, 2002
The Federative Republic of Brazil	1. 1. 1993	Palisády 47 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Marília Sardenberg Zelter Gonçalves</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 29, 2008
The Republic of Bulgaria	1. 1. 1993	Kuzmányho 1 811 06 Bratislava 1	<b>Ognjan Garkov</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: June 13, 2006
Burkina Faso	1. 8. 1997	Strohgasse 14c A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Salifou Diallo</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 13, 2010
The Republic of Burundi	29. 6. 1999	Berliner Strasse 36 D-10715 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Barthélemy Mfayokurera</b> <i>First Secretary</i>
The Republic of Cape Verde	-	Schwindgasse 20/2 A-1040 Vienna, Republic of Austria	<b>Hercules do Nascimento Cruz</b> <i>Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Kingdom of Cambodia	-	Benjamin-Vogelsdorf Str. 2 D-13187 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Chem Widhya</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
Canada	1. 1. 1993	Muchova 6 160 00 Prague 6, Czech Republic	<b>Valerie Raymond</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 7, 2009
The Republic of Chile	1. 1. 1993	Lugeck 1/3/10 A-1010 Vienna, Republic of Austria	<b>Milenko Esteban Skoknić Tapia</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 21, 2006
The Peoples Republic of China	1. 1. 1993	Jančova 8b 811 02 Bratislava 1	<b>Jianfu Chen</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: June 4, 2008
The Republic of Colombia	1. 1. 1993	Stadiongasse 6-8/15 A-1010 Vienna, Republic of Austria	<b>Rosso José Serrano Cadena</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 9, 2004

<b>State</b>	<b>Start of Diplomatic Relations</b>	<b>Address of Embassy</b>	<b>In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)</b>
The Republic of the Congo	30. 6. 1998	Grabbeallee 47 D – 13156 Berlin Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Serge Michel Odzocki</b> <i>Chargé d' Affaires a.i., Minister – Counsellor</i>
The Democratic Republic of Congo	18. 2. 1993	Soukenicka 34/1765, 110 00 Prague 1 Czech Republic	<b>Henri Benjamin Ntikala Booto</b> <i>Minister – Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Republic of Costa Rica	06. 10. 1993	Wagramer Strasse 23/1/1/2-3, A-1220 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Ana Teresa Dengo Benavides</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC.: June 4, 2008
The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	28. 10. 2002	Schinkelstrasse 10, D-10785 Berlin, The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Serges Gba</b> <i>First Secretary</i>
The Republic of Croatia	1. 1. 1993	Mišíkova 21 811 06 Bratislava 1	<b>Tomislav Car</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 16, 2007
The Republic of Cuba	1. 1. 1993	Somolickéého 1/A 811 05 Bratislava 1	<b>David Paulovich Escalona</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 11, 2006
The Republic of Cyprus	1. 1. 1993	Parkring 20 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Marios Lyssiotis</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: April 27, 2009
The Czech Republic	1. 1. 1993	Hviezdoslavovo námestie 8 811 02 Bratislava 1	<b>Jakub Karfík</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: October 21, 2009
The Kingdom of Denmark	1. 1. 1993	Panská 27 816 06 Bratislava	<b>Jorgen Munk Rasmussen</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 15, 2005
The Republic of Ecuador	1. 1. 1993	Goldschmiedgasse 10/2/24 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Juan Diego Stacey Moreno</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Arab Republic of Egypt	1. 1. 1993	Dunajská 4 POBox 322 811 08 Bratislava	<b>Hassan Hanafy Mahmoud el-Laithy</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 11, 2007
The Republic of Estonia	1. 1. 1993	Wohlebengasse 9/13 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Eve-Küllil Kala</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 02, 2010
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	10. 5. 1995	Wagramerstrasse 14/1/2 A-1220 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Bethel Belay</b> <i>Second Secretary, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
Delegation of the European Commission		Palisády 29 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Andrea Elscheková-Matisová</b> <i>Ambassador of EC to SR</i>
European Parliament Information Office		Palisády 29 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Robert Hajšel</b> <i>Executive Director</i>
The Republic of Finland	1. 1. 1993	Palisády 29 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Jukka Jalmary Leino</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 29, 2008
The French Republic	1. 1. 1993	Hlavné námestie 7 810 00 Bratislava 1	<b>Henry Cuny</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 16, 2007



State	Start of Diplomatic Relations	Address of Embassy	In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)
The Republic of Gambia	18. 8. 1995	Avenue F. D. Roosevelt 126 1050 Bruxelles The Kingdom of Belgium	<b>Mamour A. Jagne</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	1. 1. 1993	Hviezdoslavovo námestie 10 811 02 Bratislava 1	<b>Axel Hartmann</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 29, 2009
The Republic of Ghana	1. 10. 1993	V Tišine 4 160 00 Praha Czech Republic	<b>Mohammed Nurudeen Ismaila</b> <i>Minister – Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
Georgia	25. 11. 1993	Michalská 9 811 01 Bratislava	<b>Nikoloz Nikolozishvili</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: October 3, 2006
The Republic of Guatemala	15. 4. 1993	Landstrasser Haupt- strasse 21/9 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Carla María Rodríguez Mancia</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 13, 2010
The Republic of Guinea	16. 3. 1993	Jägerstrasse 67-69 D – 10117 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Mohamed Lamine Kaba</b> <i>Counsellor</i>
The Hellenic Republic	1. 1. 1993	Hlavné námestie 4 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>Nicolaos Kanellos</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 15, 2008
The Holy See	1. 1. 1993	Nekrasovova 17 811 04 Bratislava 1	<b>Mario Giordana</b> <i>Apostolic Nuncius</i> LoC: June 4, 2008
The Republic of Hungary	1. 1. 1993	Sedlárska 3 814 25 Bratislava 1	<b>Antal Heizer</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 16, 2007
The Republic of Iceland	1. 1. 1993	Naglergasse 2/8 A-1010 Vienna, Republic of Austria	<b>Jóhanna Bryndís Bjarnadóttir</b> <i>Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Republic of India	1. 1. 1993	Dunajská 4 811 08 Bratislava	<b>Homai Saha</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 11, 2007
The Republic of Indonesia	1. 1. 1993	Brianska 31 811 04 Bratislava 1	<b>Harsha Edwana Joesoef</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Islamic Republic of Iran	1. 1. 1993	Jsuergasse 9 A-1030 Vienna, Republic of Austria	<b>Ebrahim Sheibany</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: April 27, 2009
The Republic of Iraq	1. 1. 1993	Korabinského 3 811 02 Bratislava	<b>Basim Abdulhusain Mutlak Mutlak</b> <i>Third Secretary (Consul)</i>
Ireland	1. 1. 1993	Carlton Savoy Building Mostová 2 811 02 Bratislava	<b>Kathryn Coll</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 29, 2008
The State of Israel	1. 1. 1993	Slávičie údolie 106 P. O. Box 6 811 02 Bratislava	<b>Zeev Boker</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 14, 2006
The Republic of Italy	1. 1. 1993	Palisády 49 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Brunella Borzi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 15, 2008

State	Start of Diplomatic Relations	Address of Embassy	In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)
Jamaica	1. 1. 1993	Schmargendorfer Str. 32 D-12159 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Joy Elfreda Wheeler</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 12, 2009
Japan	1. 1. 1993	Hlavné nám. 2 813 27 Bratislava	<b>Yoshio Nomoto</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 12, 2009
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	3. 3. 1993	Rennweg 17/4 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Makram Mustafa Queisi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 2, 2009
The Republic of Kazakhstan	1. 1. 1993	Romaina Rollanda 12 160 00 Prague 6 Czech Republic	<b>Akmaral Kinzhebayeva</b> <i>Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a. i. for Slovakia</i>
The Republic of Kenya	1. 1. 1993	Neulinggasse 29/8 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>James K. Kihwaga</b> <i>Counsellor</i>
The Republic of Korea	1. 1. 1993	Dunajská 4 811 08 Bratislava	<b>Seok-Soong Seo</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 7, 2009
The Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1. 1. 1993	Na Větru 395/18 162 00 Prague 6 Czech Republic	<b>Pyong Gap Ri</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 4, 2004
The State of Kuwait	1. 1. 1993	Strassergasse 32 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Mohammad Saad al-Sallal</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Kyrgyz Republic	1. 1. 1993	Invalidenstrasse 3/8 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Lidia Adamkalyevna Imanalieva</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Lao People's Democratic Republic	1. 1. 1993	Uspyskova 8 02-386 Warsaw Republic of Poland	<b>Sengphet Houngboungnuang</b> <i>First Secretary, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Republic of Latvia	1. 1. 1993	Stefan Esders Platz 4 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Indulis Berziņš</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Lebanese Republic	1. 1. 1993	Oppolzgasse 6/3 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Ishaya El-Khoury</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: October 21, 2009
The Kingdom of Lesotho	8. 5. 1995	Via Serchio 8 001 98 Rome The Republic of Italy	<b>Jonas Sponkie Malewa</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: July 16, 2007
People's Bureau of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1. 1. 1993	Révova 45 811 02 Bratislava	<b>Khalifa Ahmed</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires</i>
The Republic of Lithuania	1. 1. 1993	Löwengasse 47/4 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Giedrus POUŽI.NAS</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: May 30, 2007
The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	1. 1. 1993	Wallnerstrasse 2/1/2 1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Marc Thill</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: May 9, 2006
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1. 1. 1993	Kinderspitalgasse 5/2 A-1090 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Vesna Borozan</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 21, 2007

<b>State</b>	<b>Start of Diplo- matic Relations</b>	<b>Address of Embassy</b>	<b>In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)</b>
The Republic of Madagascar	16. 2. 1996	Koursovoy Per. 5 119 034 Moscow Russian Federation	<b>Elói A. Maxime Dovo</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: November 26, 2003
Malaysia	1. 1. 1993	24th Floor, Florido Tower Floridsdorfer Haupt- strasse 1-7 A-1210 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Mohd. Arshad Manzoor Hussain</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 16, 2007
The Republic of Malawi	30. 12. 1993	Westfälische strasse 86 D-10709 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Zelia Khumbize Chakale-Chimwele</b> <i>First Secretary</i>
The Republic of Mali	12. 2. 1993	Novokuznetskaya 11 115184 Moscow Russian Federation	<b>Brahima Coulibaly</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Republic of Malta	1. 1. 1993	Opernring 5/1 1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Christopher Grima</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 15, 2008
Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem Of Rhodes and Of Malta	1. 1. 1993	Kapitulská 9 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>Francis Martin O' Donnel</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 7, 2009
The Islamic Republic of Mauritania	1. 1. 1993	Korovy Val 7, kanc. 12 119049 Moscow Russian Federation	<b>Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Dahi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 22, 2005
The Republic of Moldova	1. 1. 1993	Loewengasse 47/10 1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Victor Postolachi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: June 13, 2006
Mongolia	1. 1. 1993	Na Marně 5 160 00 Prague 6 Czech Republic	
Montenegro	1. 1. 1993	Nibelungengasse 13 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Dragana Radulović</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 2, 2010
The Kingdom of Morocco	1. 1. 1993	Opernring 3, 4. Floor. A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Omar Zniber</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: August 26, 2003
The Republic of Namibia	9. 12. 1997	Ungargasse 33/5. Floor A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Selma Ashipala-Musavyi</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 18, 2008
Nepal	4. 3. 1994	Guerickestrasse 27 D-10587 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Madan Kumar Bhattarai</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: June 4, 2008
The Kingdom of the Netherlands	1. 1. 1993	Fraňa Kráľa 5 811 05 Bratislava 1	<b>Daphne Bergsma</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 22, 2009
New Zealand	1. 1. 1993	Atrium Friedrichstrasse 60 D-10117 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Alan Cook</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 21, 2007

<b>State</b>	<b>Start of Diplo- matic Relations</b>	<b>Address of Embassy</b>	<b>In Charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)</b>
The Republic of Nicaragua	5. 1. 1993	Ebendorferstrasse 10/3/12 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Isolda Frixione Miranda</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Minister – Counsellor</i>
The Federal Republic of Nigeria	1. 1. 1993	Rennweg 25 A – 1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Kenjika Linus Ekedede</b> <i>Minister, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Kingdom of Norway	1. 1. 1993	Palisády 29 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Trine Skymoen</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 22, 2009
The Sultanate of Oman	3. 3. 1993	Währinger Strasse 2- 4/24-25 A-1090 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Badr bin Mohammed Zahr al-Hinai</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 5, 2009
The Islamic Republic of Pakistan	1. 1. 1993	Hofzeile 13-A A – 1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Khursid Anwar</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 13, 2010
The State of Palestine	1. 1. 1993	Klemensova 6 810 08 Bratislava	<b>Hafez Fathi Al-Nimer</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: April 26, 2006
The Republic of Panama	15. 2. 1993	Wichmannstrasse 6 107 87 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Lourdes C. Vallarino</b> <i>Counsellor – Minister</i>
The Republic of Paraguay	8. 1. 1993	Prinz Eugen Strasse 18/1/7 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Horacio Norgués Zubizarreta</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Republic of Peru	1. 1. 1993	Mahlerstrasse 7/22 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Antonio García Revilla</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 13, 2010
The Republic of the Philip- pines	1. 1. 1993	Laurenzerberg 2 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Linglingay Fonacier Lacanlale</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 11, 2006
The Republic of Poland	1. 1. 1993	Hummelova 4 811 03 Bratislava 1	<b>Andrzej Krawczyk</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 12, 2009
The Republic of Portugal	1. 1. 1993	Moskovská 10 811 08 Bratislava 1	<b>Francisco António Dias Brabo</b> <i>Attache, Chargé d' Affaires a.i.</i>
The State of Qatar	1. 1. 1993	Cárdonyi Géza 19 1026 Budapest The Republic of Hungary	<b>Mubarak Rashid Al-Boainin</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 21, 2007
Romania	1. 1. 1993	Fraňa Kráľa 11 811 05 Bratislava 1	<b>Florin Vodit</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 5, 2009
The Russian Federation	1. 1. 1993	Godrova 4 811 06 Bratislava 1	<b>Alexander Udaltsov</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: August 23, 2005
The Republic of El Salvador	1. 1. 1993	Prinz Eugen Strasse 72/2/1 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Vanessa Eugenia Interiano Tobar</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 7, 2009

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The Republic of San Marino	1. 1. 1993	Via Eleonora Duse 35 00197 Rome The Republic of Italy	<b>Severino Bollini</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 22, 2007
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	16. 6. 1995	Formanekgasse 38 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Mansour Bin Khalid Al Farhan Al-Saud</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: July 6, 2009
The Republic of Serbia	1. 1. 1993	Búdkova 38 811 04 Bratislava 1	<b>Danko Prokić</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 11, 2007
The Republic of Sierra Leone	1. 1. 1993	26/1 Rublyovskoye Chaussee Apt. 58-59 121615 Moscow The Russian Federation	<b>Salieu Mohamed Turay</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Republic of Singapore	12. 2. 1993	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tanglin 248163 Singapore	<b>Jennie Chua Kheng Yeng</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: July 16, 2007
The Republic of Slovenia	1. 1. 1993	Moyzsova 4 813 15 Bratislava 1	<b>Stanislav Vidovič</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: July 6, 2009
The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	15. 2. 1993	Rainergasse 1/2/5 A – 1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Musthaf Mohammed Jaffer</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 12, 2009
The Somali Democratic Republic	-	Simferopolsky Bulvar 7a – 145 117 556 Moscow Russian Federation	<b>Mohamed Mohamoud Handulle</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires a.i., First Secretary</i>
The Republic of South Africa	1. 1. 1993	Sandgasse 33 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Talent Dumisile Georgina Molaba</b> <i>Counsellor – Minister, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Kingdom of Spain	1. 1. 1993	Prepoštská 10 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>José Ángel López Jorrín</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 15, 2008
The Republic of Sudan	27. 7. 1993	Reisnerstrasse 29/5 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Mahmoud Hassan Elamin</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 2, 2010
The Kingdom of Swaziland	1. 1. 1993	Avenue Winston Churchill 188 1180 Brussels The Kingdom of Belgium	
The Kingdom of Sweden	1. 1. 1993	Palisády 29 811 06 Bratislava 1	<b>Mikael Westerlind</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 11, 2006
Switzerland	1. 1. 1993	Tolstého 9 811 06 Bratislava 1	<b>Josef Aregger</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 14, 2005
The Syrian Arab Republic	1. 1. 1993	Daffingerstrasse 4 A-1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Muhammad Badi Khattab</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 5, 2009
The United Republic of Tanzania	1. 1. 1993	Eschenallee 11 D-14050 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Ahmad Rweyemamu Ngemera</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 17, 2008

<b>State</b>	<b>Start of Diplo- matic Relations</b>	<b>Address of Embassy</b>	<b>In charge of Embassy (LoC – Letter of Credence)</b>
The Kingdom of Thailand	1. 1. 1993	Cottagegasse 48 A-1180 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Nongnuth Phetcharatana</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The Republic of Tunisia	1. 1. 1993	Sieveringerstrasse 187 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Kais Hachani</b> <i>Counsellor</i>
The Republic of Turkey	1. 1. 1993	Holubyho 11 811 03 Bratislava 1	<b>Tunç Ügdül</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: February 22, 2007
Turkmenistan	1. 1. 1993	Argentinierstrasse 22/II/EG A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Yazkuli Mammedov</b> <i>First Secretary</i>
Ukraine	1. 1. 1993	Radvanská 35 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>Inna Ohnivets</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: January 10, 2006
The United Arab Emirates	3. 1. 1993	Peter Jordan Strasse 66 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Mohammed Hamad Omran Alshamsi</b> <i>Ambassador Designated</i>
The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1. 1. 1993	Panská 16 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>Michael John Wyn Roberts</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: September 11, 2007
The United Mexican States	1. 10. 1993	Operngasse 21/10 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Alejandro Díaz y Pérez Durate</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: December 12, 2007
United States of America	1. 1. 1993	Hviezdoslavovo námestie 5 811 02 Bratislava 1	<b>Keith Allan Eddins</b> <i>Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Eastern Republic of Uruguay	1. 1. 1993	Palais Esterhazy Wallnerstrasse 4/Top NA 17 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	
The Republic of Uzbekistan	20. 1. 1993	Pötzleinsdorfer Strasse 49 A-1180 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Ravshanbek Duschanov</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	1. 1. 1993	Prinz Eugen Strasse 72/1 A-1040 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Ali de Jesus Uzcátegui Dugue</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: April 27, 2009
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam	1. 1. 1993	Felix Mottlstrasse 20 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Nguyen Ba Than</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: March 18, 2008
The Republic of Yemen	1. 1. 1993	Reisnerstrasse 18-20 1030 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Ahmed Alwan Mulhi al-Alwani</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: October 18, 2007
The Republic of Zambia	5. 5. 1993	Axel-Springer Strasse 54 A D-10117 Berlin The Federal Republic of Germany	Chalwe Lombe <i>Counsellor</i>
The Republic of Zimbabwe	3. 3. 1993	Strozzigasse 10/15 A-1080 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Grace Tsitsi Mutandiro</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i> LoC: June 13, 2006

## LIST OF CONSULATES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

### THE HEADS OF THE CONSULATES AS OF FEBRUARY 2010

State	Address of the Consulate in the SR	Consul
The Republic of Azerbaijan	Klobučnícka 4 811 01 Bratislava	<b>Džalal Gasymov</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The People's Republic of Bangladesh	Pod záhradami 41 841 01 Bratislava	<b>Štefan Petkanič</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Belarus	Osadská 679/15 028 01 Trstená	<b>Marián Murín</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Belgium	Gelnická 88 040 14 Košice	<b>Dany R. E. Rottiers</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Chile	Laurinská 2 815 08 Bratislava 1	<b>Jaroslav Šoltys</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Colombia	AC Diplomat Palisády 29/A 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Anton Siekel</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	Štefanovičova 12 811 04 Bratislava	<b>Pavol Jánošík</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Costa Rica	Prepoštská 6 811 01 Bratislava	<b>Tomáš Chrenek</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Denmark	Letecká 10 831 03 Bratislava	<b>Michal Lörcincz</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Obchodná 6 Pasáž Zlatý Jeleň 811 08 Bratislava	<b>Štefan Rosina</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Finland	Moyzesova 5 811 05 Bratislava 1	<b>Karol Kállay</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Guatemala	Vajnorská 8/A 831 04 Bratislava 3	
The Republic of Hungary	Hlavná 67 040 01 Košice	<b>János Szerencsés</b> <i>General Consul</i>
The Republic of Iceland	Palisády 39 811 06 Bratislava	<b>Otto Halás</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Čajakova 26 831 03 Bratislava	<b>Štefan Žiak</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Kazakhstan	Obchodná 6 Pasáž Zlatý Jeleň 811 08 Bratislava	<b>Štefan Rosina</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Korea	Hviezdoslavovo nám. 20 811 02 Bratislava 1	<b>Marián Mojžiš</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>

Prepared by Martin Firák, RC SFPA intern (firak@sfp.sk).  
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.



<b>State</b>	<b>Address of the Consulate in the SR</b>	<b>Consul</b>
Kyrgyz Republic	Miletičova 1 821 08 Bratislava	<b>Tibor Podoba</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	Apollo Business Centrum Mlynské Nivy 43 821 09 Bratislava	<b>Peter Kríško</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Malaysia	Jašíkova 2 821 03 Bratislava	<b>Igor Junas</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Morocco	Krajná 86 821 04 Bratislava 2	<b>Lubomír Šídala</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of the Netherlands	Košická 44 POBOX 21 080 01 Prešov	<b>Matúš Murajda</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Nicaragua	Stredný hon 430 900 43 Hamuliakovo	<b>Vladimír Kašťák</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Paraguay	Prepoštská 8 811 01 Bratislava	<b>Martin Šamaj</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Peru	Tuhovská 5 831 07 Bratislava	<b>Andrej Glatz</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Philippines	Cesta na Senec 15725/24 830 06 Bratislava	<b>Pavol Konštiak</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Nám. osloboditeľov 1 031 01 Liptovský Mikuláš	<b>Tadeusz Frackowiak</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Russian Federation	Štúrova 7 040 11 Košice	
The Republic of El Salvador	Zahradnícka 20 900 28 Ivanka pri Dunaji	<b>Igor Moravčík</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Senegal	Na kopci 24 010 01 Žilina Trnové	<b>Souleymane Seck</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Seychelles	Beblavého 4 811 01 Bratislava 1	<b>Andrej Hryc</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Sierra Leone	Partizánska 16 A 811 03 Bratislava	<b>Branislav Hronec</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of South Africa	Fraňa Kráľa 1 851 01 Bratislava	<b>Milan Lopašovský</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Spain	Hutnícka 1 040 01 Košice	<b>Daniel Lučkanič</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Sweden	Lermontovova 15 811 05 Bratislava	<b>Ruben Kemény</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Syrian Arab Republic	Tatranská ulica 1 841 06 Bratislava-Záhorská Bystrica	<b>Mustafa Al Sabouni</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Thailand	Viedenská cesta 7 851 01 Bratislava	<b>Alexander Rozin</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Turkey	Kuzmányho 16 974 01 Banská Bystrica	<b>Vladimír Soták</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Turkey	Mlynská ulica 2 040 01 Košice	<b>Štefan Melník</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Ukraine	Plzeňská 11 080 01 Prešov	<b>Yevgen Perebyinis</b> <i>General Consul</i>
Ukraine	Budovateľská 29 093 01 Vranov nad Topľou	<b>Stanislav Obický</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Ukraine	Donská 12 058 01 Poprad	<b>Petro Tokač</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The United Mexican States	Prepoštská 8 811 01 Bratislava	<b>Václav Míka</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>

## LIST OF THE EMBASSIES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC, PERMANENT MISSIONS, CONSULATES GENERAL, SLOVAK INSTITUTES ABROAD

### EMBASSIES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC, PERMANENT MISSIONS, CONSULATES GENERAL, SLOVAK INSTITUTES AND THEIR HEADS AS OF FEBRUARY 2010

Embassy	Accredited	Address	Head of the Embassy
Abuja	Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Senegal, Gambia, Cameroon, Gabon, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Mali, Liberia, Togo, S o Tomé and Príncipe, Côte d'Ivoire	Plot 187, Lord Lugar Close Asokoro, Abuja Federal Republic of Nigeria	<b>Miroslav Hacek</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Addis Abeba		Bole sub-city, Erer Ber Shola Residential houses, W 17, Kebele 14/15, House No. 408 Addis Abeba The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	<b>Katarína Lelindonová</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>
Ankara	Turkey	Atatürk Bulvarı 245 06692 Ankara Republic of Turkey	<b>Vladimír Jakabčín</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Astana	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan	Sary-Arka, Karaotkef 5 010000 Astana Republic of Kazakhstan	<b>Dušan Podhorský</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Athens	Greece	Georgiou Seferi 4, Paleo Psychiko 154 52 Athens The Hellenic Republic	<b>Ján Voderadský</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Baghdad	Iraq	Hayy Babil (Al Jadriyah), Section 923, Street 37, House 94, Bagdad – Jadriyah Republic of Iraq	<b>Jozef Marhejka</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires</i>
Bangkok	Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar	No. 21/144, South Sathorn Road Bangkok 101 20 The Kingdom of Thailand	<b>Vasil Pytel'</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Beijing	China, Mongolia, North Korea	Ritan Lu, Jian Guo Men Wai 100 600 Beijing The People's Republic of China	<b>Žigmund Bertók</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Belgrade	Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia	Bulevar umetnosti 18 New Belgrade 110 70 Republic of Serbia	<b>Igor Furdík</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Berlin	Germany	Friedrichstrasse 60 101 17 Berlin Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Alexander Micovčín</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires a.i.</i>

Prepared by Martin Firák, RC SFPA intern (firak@sfp.sk).  
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

<b>Embassy</b>	<b>Accredited</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Head of the Embassy</b>
Bern	Switzerland, Lichtenstein	Thunstrasse 63, 3074 Muri b. Bern Switzerland	<b>Štefan Schill</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Bonn	Germany	August-Bier-Straße 31 53129 Bonn Federal Republic of Germany	<b>Dušan Matulay</b> <i>Head of the Branch of the Embassy in Berlin</i>
Brasília	Brazil, Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela, Surinam, Guyana	SES, Avenida das Nações Lote 21 B, Qd. 805, CEP 70 200-902 Brasília Federal Republic of Brazil	<b>Branislav Hitka</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Brussels	Belgium, Luxembourg	Avenue Moliere 195 1050 Brussels Kingdom of Belgium	<b>Peter Sopko</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Budapest	Hungary	Stefánia út. 22-24 1143 Budapest XIV Republic of Hungary	<b>Peter Weiss</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Buenos Aires	Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay	Figuerola Alcorta 1425 Buenos Aires The Argentine Republic	<b>Pavel Šípka</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Bucharest	Romania, Moldova	Strada Otetari 020 977 Bucuresti Romania	<b>Dagmar Repčėková</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Canberra	Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua-New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	47 Culgoa Circuit, O' Malley 2606 Canberra Commonwealth of Australia	<b>Peter Procházka</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Damascus	Syria, Lebanon, Jordan	Al Shafei Str. 33115 Damascus The Syrian Arab Republic	<b>Oldřich Hlaváček</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Delhi	India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan	50-M, Niti Marg, Chanakyapuri 110021 New Dehli Republic of India	<b>Marián Tomášik</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Dublin	Ireland	Clyde Road, Ballsbridge Dublin Ireland	<b>Roman Bužek</b> <i>Ambassador</i>
Haag	the Netherlands	Parkweg 1 2585 Haag Kingdom of the Netherlands	<b>Oksana Tomová</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Hanoi	Vietnam	12 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, Ba Dinh District Hanoi The Socialist Republic of Vietnam	<b>Petr Svítek</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Havana	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Saint Lucia, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago	Calle 66, No. 52, entre 5 - tay7- ma, Miramar Havana Republic of Cuba	<b>Zdenek Rozhold</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Helsinki	Finland	Annankatu 25 00100 Helsinki Republic of Finland	<b>Viera Štupáková</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Jakarta	Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, East Timor	Jalan Profesor Mohammad Yamin 29 1368 Jakarta 103 10 Republic of Indonesia	<b>Štefan Rozkopál</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>

<b>Embassy</b>	<b>Accredited</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Head of the Embassy</b>
Cairo	Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE	3, Adel Hosein Rostom 11794 – Ramses Post Office Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt	<b>Peter Zsoldos</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Copenhagen	Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Faroe Islands, Greenland)	Vesterled 26-28 2100 Copenhagen Kingdom of Denmark	<b>Ľubomír Golian</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia, Brunei	11, Jalan U-Thant 55 000 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia	<b>Milan Lajčiak</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Kuwait	Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar	Block No. 2, Street No. 16, Villa No. 22 131 23 Area Surra State of Kuwait	<b>Ján Lišuch</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Kiev	Ukraine	Jaroslavov val č. 34 019 01 Kiev Ukraine	<b>Pavol Hamžik</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Lisbon	Portugal	Avenida da Liberdade 200, 5 Esq. 1250-147 Lisbon Portuguese Republic	<b>Jaroslav Jarúnek</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
London	The United Kingdom	25, Kensington Palace Gardens W8 4QY London The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	<b>Juraj Zervan</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Ljubljana	Slovenia	Tivoli Road 4, P.P.395 1000 Ljubljana Republic of Slovenia	<b>Marianna Oravcová</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Madrid	Spain, Andorra, Morocco	C/Pinar, 20 28006 Madrid Kingdom of Spain	<b>Ján Škoda</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Mexico City	Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize	México 11 560 Julio Verne 35 United Mexican States	<b>Jozef Adamec</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Minsk	Belarus	Volodarskogo 6 220 034 Minsk Republic of Belarus	<b>Marián Servátka</b> <i>Ambassador</i>
Moscow	Russian Federation, Armenia, Azerbaijan	J. Fučíka 17/19 Moscow The Russian Federation	<b>Jozef Migaš</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Nairobi	Kenya, Tanzania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Djibouti, Somalia, Comoros, Congo, Central African Republic	Milimani Road 30 204 00 100 Nairobi Republic of Kenya	<b>Milan Zachar</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Nicosia	Republic of Cyprus	4,Kalamatas St., Acropolis, Strovolos 2002 1165 Nicosia Republic of Cyprus	<b>Anna Tureníčová</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Oslo	Norway, Iceland	Thomas Heftyes Gate 24 NO-0244 Oslo The Kingdom of Norway	<b>Dušan Rozbora</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Ottawa	Canada	Rideau Terrace K1M 2A1 Ottawa Canada	<b>Stanislav Opiela</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Paris	France, Monaco, Algeria	14 Avenue d'Eylau 75016 Paris Republic of France	<b>Ján Kuderjavý</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>

<b>Embassy</b>	<b>Accredited</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Head of the Embassy</b>
Prague	Czech Republic	Pelléova 12 160 00 Prague Czech Republic	<b>Peter Brño</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Pretoria	South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe	930 Arcadia Street Arcadia 0083 Pretoria The Republic of South Africa	<b>Ladislav Straka</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Prishtina	Serbia	Metush Krasniqi 7, Dragodan 10000 Prishtina The Republic of Serbia	<b>Miroslav Nad'</b> <i>Head of the Branch of the Embassy</i>
Riga	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	Smilšu iela 8 1050 Riga Republic of Latvia	<b>Ivan Špilda</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Roma	Italy, Malta, San Marino, Vatican, Sovereign Military Order of Malta	Via dei Colli della Farnesina 144VI/A 00194 Roma Italian Republic	<b>Stanislav Vallo</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Sarajevo	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Skopljanska br. 7 710 00 Sarajevo Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>Miroslav Mojšita</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Skopje	Macedonia	Budimpeštanska 39 1000 Skopje The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	<b>Róbert Kímág</b> <i>Head of the Embassy</i>
Sofia	Bulgaria, Macedonia	Blv. Janko Sakazov 1504 Sofia Republic of Bulgaria	<b>Karol Mistrík</b> <i>Head of the Embassy</i>
Seoul	South Korea	389-1 Hannam-dong, Yongsam-gu 140-210 Seoul Republic of South Korea	<b>Dušan Bella</b> <i>Head of the Embassy</i>
Stockholm	Sweden	Arsenalsgatan 2/3 TR P.O.Box 7183 10388 Stockholm Kingdom of Sweden	<b>Peter Kmec</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Taipei	Taiwan	333 Keelung Road, Section 1 110 Taipei Republic of China (Taiwan)	<b>Dušan Dacho</b> <i>Head of the Office</i>
Tashkent	Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Kichik Beshjogoch 38 100070 Tashkent Republic of Uzbekistan	<b>Jozef Mačisák</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Tehran	Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan	No. 38, Sarlashgar Fallahi Street POBox 11365-4451 19887 Tehran Islamic Republic of Iran	<b>Anton Hajduk</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Tel Aviv	Israel, Palestinian Autonomy	Jabotinsky 37 POBox 6459 Tel Aviv State of Israel	<b>Ivo Hlaváček</b> <i>Head of the Embassy</i>
Tirana	Albania	Rruga Skenderbeu 8 Tirana Republic of Albania	<b>Ivan Šveda</b> <i>Chargé d'Affaires</i>
Tokyo	Japan, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau	2-11-33, Motoazabu, Minato-ku 106-0046 Tokyo Japan	<b>Drahomír Štos</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>

<b>Embassy</b>	<b>Accredited</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Head of the Embassy</b>
Tripoli	Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania, Chad	Hay Al-Andalus, Gargaresh Street, 3 km P.O. BOX 5721 Tripoli People's Bureau of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	<b>Marian Záhora</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>
Warsaw	Poland	ul. Litewska 6 00-581 Warszawa Republic of Poland	<b>František Ružička</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Vatican (The Holy See)	Vatican, The Holy See	Via dei Colli della Farnesina 144 00 194 Roma Italian Republic	<b>Jozef Dravecký</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Vienna	Austria	Arnbrustergasse 24 A-1190 Wien Republic of Austria	<b>Peter Lizák</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Washington	USA	3523 International Court, NW 20008 Washington D.C. United States of America	<b>Peter Burian</b> <i>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary</i>
Zagreb	Croatia	Prilaz Gjuro Deželica br. 10 10000 Zagreb Republic of Croatia	<b>Roman Supek</b> <i>Head of the Mission</i>

## PERMANENT MISSIONS

<b>Permanent Mission</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Head of the Mission</b>
PM Council of Europe Strasbourg	1, Rue Ehrmann 67000 Strasbourg Republic of France	<b>Emil Kuchár</b>
PM EU Brussels	Avenue de Cortenbergh 79 1110 Brussels Kingdom of Belgium	<b>Ivan Korčok</b>
PM International Organizations Vienna	Blaastraße 34 A-1190 Vienna Republic of Austria	<b>Marcel Peško</b>
PM NATO Brussels	Boulevard Leopold III, NATO HQ 1110 Brussels Kingdom of Belgium	<b>František Kašický</b>
PM OECD Paris	28, Avenue d'Eylau 750 16 Paris Republic of France	<b>Jana Kotová</b>
PM UN Geneva	9, Chemin de l'Ancienne Route 1218 Grand Saconnex Switzerland	<b>Fedor Rosocha</b>
PM UN New York	801 Second Avenue 10017 New York United States of America	<b>Miloš Koterec</b>

## CONSULATES GENERAL

State	Address of the Consulate General of the SR	Consul General
The People's Republic of China	Shanghai, Qi Hua Tower 4B 1375 Huai Hai Yhong Lu 200031 Shanghai	<i>Igor Pacolák</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Vollmannstrasse 25d 819 25 Munich	<i>František Zemanovič</i>
The Republic of Hungary	Derkovits sor 7 5600 Bekescsaba	<i>Štefan Daňo</i>
The Republic of Poland	sw. Tomasza 34 31 027 Cracow	<i>Marek Lisánsky</i>
The Russian Federation	ul. Orbeli č. 21/2 194 223 Sankt Peterburg	<i>Peter Osvald</i>
The Republic of Turkey	Sümbül Sok. / Bambu Sok. 6 3. Levent, Istanbul, 343 30 Istanbul	<i>Jozef Šesták</i>
The United States of America	10 940 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 2030 CA 90024 California, Los Angeles	
The United States of America	801 Second Avenue, 12th Floor New York, N.Y. 10017	<i>Igor Pokojný</i>
Ukraine	Lokoty 4 880 17 Uzhhorod	<i>Marian Sládeček</i>

## SLOVAK INSTITUTES

Name	Address	Head
Slovak Institute Berlin	Zimmerstrasse 27 D-10117 Berlin Federal Republic of Germany	<i>Martin Sarvaš</i>
Slovak Institute Budapest	Rákóczi út. 15 H-1088 Budapest Republic of Hungary	<i>Milan Kurucz</i>
Slovak Institute Paris	14, Avenue d'Eylau F-75016 Paris Republic of France	<i>Božena Krížiková</i>
Slovak Institute Prague	Jilská 450/16 110 00 Prague Czech Republic	<i>Vladimír Valovič</i>
Slovak Institute Moscow	Ul. 2 Brestská 27 125-056 Moscow Russian Federation	<i>Peter Birčák</i>
Slovak Institute Roma	Via dei Colli della Farnesina 144 I-00194 Rome Italian Republic	<i>Peter Krupár</i>
Slovak Institute Vienna	Wipplingerstrasse 24-26 A-1010 Vienna Republic of Austria	<i>Viera Polakovičová</i>
Slovak Institute Warsaw	Krzywe Kolo 12/14a PL-00 270 Warsaw Republic of Poland	<i>Helena Jacošová</i>



# LIST OF THE CONSULATES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC HEADED BY THE HONORARY CONSULS

## THE HEADS OF THE CONSULATES AS OF FEBRUARY 2010

State	Consulate	Consul
The Republic of Albania	Tirana	<b>Faik Dizdarii</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Argentine Republic	La Platta	<b>Eduardo Kabát</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Armenia	Yerevan	<b>Gagik Vladimirovič Martirosian</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Commonwealth of Australia	Brisbane	<b>Michal Horváth</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Commonwealth of Australia	Melbourne	<b>Vojtech Michael Markuš</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The People's Republic of Bangladesh	Dhaka	<b>Reza Ali</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Belgium	Antwerp	<b>Gunar Riebs</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Belgium	Gent	<b>Arnold Vanhaecke</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Belgium	Liège	<b>Raffaele Antonio Apruzzese</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Belgium	Mons	<b>Mario Annaert</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Bolivia	La Paz	<b>Hernán Guido Vera Ruiz</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Medjugorje	<b>Rajko Zelenika</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federative Republic of Brazil	Joinville	<b>Ernesto Heinzelmann</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federative Republic of Brazil	Rio de Janeiro	<b>M. Façal Hammoud</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federative Republic of Brazil	Sao Paulo	<b>Peter Paulíček</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Bulgaria	Varna	<b>Edita Blagoevova</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Costa Rica	San José	<b>Eugénio Gerardo Arraya Chacón</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Cyprus	Limassol	<b>George Vassos Hadjitheodossiou</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>

Prepared by Martin Firák, RC SFPA intern (firak@sfp.sk).  
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

<b>State</b>	<b>Consulate</b>	<b>Consul</b>
The Republic of Chile	Santiago	<b>Paul Nador</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The People's Republic of China	Hong Kong	<b>Willy Sun Mo Lin</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Denmark	Aarhus	<b>Štefan Petö</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Arab Republic of Egypt	Alexandria	<b>Mohamed Moustafa el Naggar</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Addis Abeba	<b>Feleke Bekele Safo</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Croatia	Split	<b>Ante Plančić</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Estonia	Tallinn	<b>Evan Tudeberg</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Finland	Teerijärvi	<b>Mikael Albäck</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Philippines	Cebu City	<b>Antonio N. Chiu</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Philippines	Manila	<b>Robert Chin Siy</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The French Republic	Grenoble	<b>Menyhért Kocsis</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The French Republic	Lille	<b>Alain Bar</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The French Republic	Lyon	<b>Christian Michel-Mestrallet</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The French Republic	Nancy	<b>Jean-Marie Keller</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The French Republic	Toulouse	<b>Kathy Bayoud-Vidal</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Georgia	Tbilisi	<b>Besarion Kvartskhava</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Guatemala	Guatemala	<b>Mario Fernando Montúfara Rodrigues</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Guinea	Conakry	<b>Boubakar Lombonna Diallo</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Haiti	Port-au-Prince	<b>Claude Martin</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Hellenic Republic	Thessaloniki	<b>Konstantinos Mavridis</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of the Netherlands	Eindhoven	<b>Gerardus Hendrik Meulesteen</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of the Netherlands	Meppel	<b>Gerhard Tonnis Poppempa</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of the Netherlands	Rotterdam	<b>Jacob Ten Hoope</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of India	Calcutta	<b>Patra Sadhan Bose</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of India	Mumbai	<b>Amit Choksey</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Indonesia	Denpasar	<b>Jürgen Schreiber</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>

<b>State</b>	<b>Consulate</b>	<b>Consul</b>
The Republic of Indonesia	Surabaya	<b>Sindunata Sambudhi</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Iceland	Reykjavik	<b>Runólfur Oddsson</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The State of Israel	Ha Sharon	<b>Karol Nathan Steiner</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The State of Israel	Jerusalem	<b>Dr. Martin Rodan</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Jamaica	Kingston	<b>Christopher Richard Issa</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Japan	Kirishima	<b>Masahiro Yamamoto</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Yemen	Sana'a	<b>Adel Mohamed Al Huraibi</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Amman	<b>Khaldun A. Abuhassan</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
Republic of South Africa	Cape Town	<b>Geoffrey Leighton Ashmead</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Republic of Cameroon	Yaoundé	<b>Mohamadou Salihou</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Canada	Calgary	<b>Ludovít Zanzotto</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
Canada	Montreal	<b>Dezider Michaletz</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Canada	Toronto	<b>Michael Martinček</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Canada	Vancouver	<b>Stanislav Lišiak</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Canada	Winnipeg	<b>Jozef Kiska</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Canada	Winnipeg	<b>Jozef Kiska</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Kazakhstan	Karaganda	<b>Alexej Petrovich Nefedov</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Kazakhstan	Kurchatov	<b>Kairat Kamalovich Kadyrzhanov</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Kenya	Mombassa	<b>Christoph Modigell</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Kyrgyz Republic	Bishkek	<b>Igor Konstantinovič Gusarov</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Colombia	Medellín	<b>Jenaro Pérez Gutiérrez</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	Luxembourg	<b>Blanche Mourtrier</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Macedonia	Skopje	<b>Vlade Tome Stojanovski</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Malaysia	Kota Kinabalu	<b>Wong Khen Thau</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Malawi	Blantyre	<b>Salim David Babu</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Malta	Valletta	<b>Godwin Edvard Bencini</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>

<b>State</b>	<b>Consulate</b>	<b>Consul</b>
The Kingdom of Morocco	Casablanca	<b>Kamil Ouzzani Touhamy</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Moldova	Kishinev	<b>Iurie Grigore Popovici</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Principality of Monaco	Monaco	<b>Cristine Noghés-Ménio</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Mozambique	Maputo	<b>Ismael Mussá Mangureira</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Federal Republic of Nigeria	Port Harcourt	<b>Eze Clifford Amadi</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Norway	Bergen	<b>Morten I. Gjesdahl</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Norway	Drammen	<b>Zuzana Opavská Wahl</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Norway	Trondheim	<b>Erik Frederiksen</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
New Zealand	Auckland	<b>Peter Kiely</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Bad Homburg	<b>Imrich Donath</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Hamburg	<b>Peter Littmann</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Hannover	<b>Dirk Bettels</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Leipzig	<b>Wolfgang Fritz Eschment</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Stuttgart	<b>Christoph Goeser</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Federal Republic of Germany	Wuppertal	<b>Ivan Koval</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Karachi	<b>Abdula Sikander Ghulamali</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Panama	Panama	<b>Julio César Benedetti</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Paraguay	Cuidad del Este	<b>Charif Mammoud</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Peru	Lima	<b>Teresa Koetzle - Daly</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Gliwice	<b>Marian Czerny</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Poznań	<b>Piotr Stanisław Styczynski</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Rzeszow	<b>Adam Góral</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Sopot	<b>Jerzy Leśniak</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Wroclaw	<b>Maciej Kaczmarski</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Poland	Zakopane	<b>Wiesław Tadeusz Wojas</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Portugal	Porto	<b>Manuel de Sá Bastos</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>

<b>State</b>	<b>Consulate</b>	<b>Consul</b>
The Republic of Austria	Innsbruck	<b>Jurgen Bodenser</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Austria	Linz	<b>Ernst Papesch</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Austria	Salzburg	<b>Gerald Hubner</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Austria	Vienna	<b>Walter Hildebrand</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Romania	Salonta	<b>Miroslav Jabloncsik</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Russian Federation	Astrakhan	<b>Vladimir Stepanovich Sinchenko</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Russian Federation	Chanty-Mansijsk	<b>Eduard Vasiljevič Lebedev</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
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Russian Federation	Krasnoyarsk	<b>Valerij Alexandrovič Gračev</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
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<b>State</b>	<b>Consulate</b>	<b>Consul</b>
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The Republic of Sudan	Khartoum	<b>Nasreldin Ibrahim Shulgami</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Syrian Arab Republic	Lattakia	<b>Anas Dib Joud</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
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The Kingdom of Spain	Santa Cruz de Tenerife	<b>Francisco José Perera Molinero</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Spain	Zaragoza	<b>Jean-Pol Jules Marie Bastiaanas</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Swiss Confederation	Zürich	<b>Michal Čierny</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Sweden	Göteborg	<b>Carl Magnus Richard Kindal</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Kingdom of Sweden	Malmö	<b>Rolf Bjerndell</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Italian Republic	Ascoli Piceno	<b>Carlo Matarazzo</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
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The Italian Republic	Torino	<b>Giuseppe Pellegrino</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
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The Republic of Turkey	Edirne	<b>Coskun Molla</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Republic of Turkey	Izmir	<b>Selçuk Borovali</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Ukraine	Doneck	<b>Tamara Timofejvna Lysenko</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
Ukraine	Uzhhorod	<b>Ivan Julievič Šufrič</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh City	<b>Huy Ho</b> <i>Honorary General Consul</i>
The Republic of Zambia	Lusaka	<b>Jaroslav Kulich</b> <i>Honorary Consul</i>

## NUMBERS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

AS OF FEBRUARY 2010

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of the SR Armed Forces Members</i>
<b>UN</b>		
UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) – UN	Cyprus	<b>196</b>
UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization) – UN	Syria, Israel	<b>2</b>
<b>NATO</b>		
ISAF (International Security Assistance Force)	Afghanistan	<b>242</b>
KFOR (Kosovo Force) – NATO	Kosovo	<b>139</b>
NATO Headquarters (Sarajevo)	Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>1</b>
<b>EU</b>		
ALTHEA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>35 + 4 (Headquarters)</b>

Prepared by Martin Firák, RC SFPA (firak@sfp.sk).

Source: Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic





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AUTHORS

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## AUTHORS

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**Radomír Boháč** studied at the Faculty of Law of Comenius University in Bratislava in 1982-1983. He continued his studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations from 1983-1987. In 1997, he successfully completed his postgraduate studies at the International Institute of Public Administration in Paris and he is also a graduate of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany (2003). He joined the Czechoslovak diplomatic service in 1986 and received his first posting at the CSSR Embassy in London. In 1991-1996, he was deployed to the diplomatic mission in Delhi. Afterwards, he worked as an advisor to the State Secretary of the MFA SR, Deputy Director of the EU/NATO States Department, and Deputy Director General of the Political Affairs Directorate. In 1998, he was appointed Ambassador of the SR to Ethiopia, Kenya, the Seychelles, and Uganda located in Nairobi and, at the same time, occupied the post of the Permanent Representative of Slovakia at the UN Office in Nairobi. From 2002, he worked at the headquarters as Director of the Asia, Africa, Middle East, and the Latin America Department of the MFA SR. He later became the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic in Portugal. As of October 2008, he is the Director General of the Directorate for Economic Cooperation and Official Development Assistance of the MFA. He is the author of numerous analyses, articles, and studies on various issues on international relations. He also lectures at Slovak universities and other institutions. (Radomir.Bohac@mzv.sk)





**Peter Brezáni** graduated from the University of Economics in Bratislava in 2002. In 2001, he studied at Sejong University of Korea in Seoul and in 2009, spent two months as a researcher at the University of Tokyo in Japan. He began his career as a development policy analyst at the Slovak Institute of International Studies in 2002. In 2003, he joined the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association as an editor and foreign policy analyst. He has been responsible, both as editor and co-editor, for the journal *Listy SFP* (2003); the quarterly *International Issues* (2004-2005); the quarterly *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* (2006-present); and the *Yearbook of Slovakia's Foreign Policy* (2003-present). He is a member of the Slovak NGDO Platform Chairmanship. In his research, he focuses on the issues of relations in Northeast Asia and development policy. (brezani@sfp.sk)



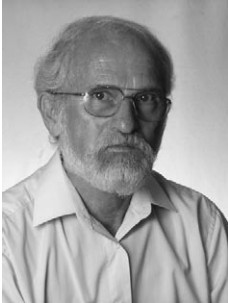
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**Milan Lapin** studied physics, majoring in meteorology and climatology, at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Comenius University in Bratislava from 1966 to 1971. He got his PhD in meteorology and climatology in 1982. In 2005 he became the professor of physics at Comenius University. He spent one month in St. Petersburg at GGO and GCI (1978), had several study and lecturing stays at the ETH University in Zurich (between 1985 and 2003), as well as having two study periods in the USA at the US EPA. He worked in the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute between 1971 and 1996. He has been working at the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics of Comenius University since 1996. He headed the Department of Meteorology and Climatology in 1996-2002 and he has been the Head of the Meteorology and Climatology Unit of the Department of Astronomy, Earth Physics and Meteorology since 2005. He is the author of more than 150 scientific papers. He belongs to the group of experts that initiated the establishment of the National Climate Program of Czechoslovakia; he was its vice-president between 1991 and 1992. From 1993 to 2001 he headed the National Climate Program of Slovakia. He reviewed on behalf of Slovakia two reports of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (1999 and 2007). He has been a member of several committees and working groups of the World Meteorological Organization. He has been a member of the editorial boards of several journals and a member of four scientific boards. He has been promoting issues of meteorology and climatology in various electronic and printed media. His webportals 'klimatické zmeny' (climate change) and 'beh na lyžiach' (cross-country skiing) are popular, and not just in Slovakia.



**Juraj Marušiak** studied history and Slovak language and literature at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava (1994). He has been working at the Institute of Political Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences since 1996. In 2003 he successfully completed his postgraduate studies in policy theories there. In 2003-2010 he headed the independent Slovak NGO *Society for Central and Eastern Europe* and worked in the editorial team of *Euromonitor International* (*DespiteBorders.com* since 2008). In 2006 he was the visiting lecturer at the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts. He has also been a visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at Comenius University in Bratislava since 2007. In his research he focuses on issues of Slovak modern history after 1945 and international relations in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. (juraj.marusiak@savba.sk)



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**Marcel Peško** graduated from the Institute of International Relations and International Law of National Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv in 1990. In 2001, he completed his two-year postgraduate studies at Dublin City University and holds an MBA degree. From January 1992, he worked as Director of Sales and Marketing for Slovakia at the newly founded subsidiary of the Coca-Cola Company. In December 1992, he joined the Slovak diplomatic service and in August 1993, he was appointed Deputy Head of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the OSCE in Vienna. After his return, he worked for the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs as Deputy Director and later as Director. In 1999-2002, he was Head of the Slovak Embassy in Ireland. He was subsequently employed as Director in Transacty Slovakia. In November 2003, he became Executive Secretary for the Office of the Secretary General of the OSCE. In September 2005, he returned to the MFA, where he was charged with preparing and later coordinating the non-permanent membership of the Slovak Republic in the UN SC as Head of the Coordination Unit and Director of the UN Department. From January 2007 to August 2009 he held the post of Secretary General of the MFA. Currently he serves as the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the International Organisations in Vienna. In his previous publications, he has focused on issues of European and transatlantic security as well as on increasing the effectiveness of public administration through the implementation of modern management processes for the MFA SR. (Marcel.Pesko@mzv.sk)





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