

## **Report on the Fulfilment of Foreign Policy Tasks of the Slovak Republic in 2011**

2011 was characterised mainly by the **escalation of the debt crisis in the eurozone and mass movements as part of the so-called ‘Arab Spring’**. In saving the euro, Slovakia promoted consistent and principle-based attitudes supporting **fiscal responsibility, the setting and following of clear rules, and involving the private sector**.

Slovak diplomacy was an **active, self-confident and foreseeable partner and ally** when meeting the objectives of the foreign policy promoting **democratic principles and values** in international relations.

**Slovakia’s Presidency in the Visegrad Group during the first half of 2011 focused not only on the strengthening of regional cooperation, but also on enforcing the key priorities of foreign policy, mainly on supporting the integration of countries of the Western Balkans into the European Union and promoting the European perspective of the Eastern European countries.**

**The realisation of a transparent value-based foreign policy contributed to increased the prestige, respect and promotion of Slovakia in the world.** Belarus can serve as an example where Slovakia promoted increased pressure on the regime and supported **targeted sanctions against the undemocratic leadership**. Slovak diplomacy supported Belarusian civil society and helped independent civic activists persecuted by the regime. Slovakia helped significantly to form the EU policy towards Belarus and managed to keep the topic of political processes and prisoners in Belarus in the focus of attention of the international community.

Slovakia responded actively to changes in North Africa resulting from the so-called **‘Arab Spring’**. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic visited Egypt and expressed support for the transformation of the country and the early holding of democratic elections. Slovakia joined the Netherlands in co-chairing the Working Group of the Community of Democracies for Tunisia focusing on helping this country with its transition to democracy.

In 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic took over the management of economic diplomacy, created the Centre for Experience Transfer in Integration and Reform and succeeded in promoting important Slovak candidates in international organisations.

### **European Policy**

When overcoming the debt crisis of the euro area, Slovakia promoted a comprehensible policy in all areas focusing on the **following of rules, consolidating public finance, the strengthening of fiscal discipline and automatic enforcement of sanctions** for its violation. The Slovak republic supported systemic tightening of the Stability Pact and the establishment of the Euro Plus Pact. With regards to national interests, Slovakia enforced keeping direct taxes under national jurisdiction and determining the retirement age according to demographic criteria.

In line with the principle-based attitudes, Slovakia agreed with the **increased credit capacity of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and strengthening of its powers**. The Slovak Republic also achieved the approval of **a more objective distribution key for contributions to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM)** and voluntary participation of the public sector in the new aid package for Greece. A clear pro-European

direction and the value of keeping obligations were confirmed also by combining the vote on this issue with expressing the confidence in the government.

During negotiations about the multiannual financial framework within the EU for the period of the years 2014 through 2020, Slovakia supported maintaining the current role and scope of coherence policy and directing resources mainly to the less developed regions and Member States. As part of the common agricultural policy reform, the Slovak Republic promoted mainly a just and balanced distribution of direct payments and elimination of allocation of resources based on the principle of historical data.

The new process of economic management of the EU as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Semester) led in Slovakia to the adoption of the **National Reform Programme of the Slovak Republic by 2014**. In the area of increasing competitiveness of the EU, Slovakia supported the passing of 12 priority measures to improve and restart the internal EU market by the end of 2012 – the Act for a Unified Market, as well as passing the directive on the protection of consumer rights.

In the first half of the year, Slovakia contributed to the approval by the EU of the Roma Community Inclusion Strategy as well as the Danube Strategy symbolically supported also by a joint cycling tour of the foreign affairs ministers of Slovakia, Hungary and Austria.

The Slovak Republic supported the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen area without requiring the fulfilment of additional political criteria. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated interdepartmental consultations with the aim of preparing Slovakia for the EU presidency in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2016.

The Slovak republic tried to **maintain the dynamics of the EU enlargement process** as an effective means of stabilisation and transformation of the aspiring countries. Slovakia supported their progress based on own merits and without exceptions from the obligation to fulfil the criteria. Specifically, Slovakia was involved in the finalisation of the EU accession negotiations of Croatia. The joint visit of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Slovakia and Austria to this country in May 2011 was an important mobilisation moment at the end of the whole accession process. The Slovak Republic also promoted the opening of accession negotiations with Montenegro and it helped to improve the cooperation of the governmental and non-governmental sectors of the country through the National Convent Project being one of the conditions for progressing in the integration efforts. The Slovak republic supported the granting of the status of a candidate country to Serbia and stimulated its reform efforts during several bilateral meetings. Slovakia supported stabilisation of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the Slovak Foreign Affairs Minister encouraged the country's political leaders to reach a compromise when forming the government at the governmental level during his September visit of this country. The Slovak Republic continued in its efforts in the Eufor/Althea operation. While maintaining its position on the issue of Kosovo independence, Slovakia supported continued dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina as the only way that can lead to a sustainable solution of the Kosovo problem in line with the European perspective of the whole region. Slovakia also supported continued accession negotiations with Turkey and Iceland.

As part of the Eastern Partnership policy, Slovakia focused mainly on supporting the European direction of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. It participated in the **revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** that would more consequently apply the principle of "more aid for more democracy and reforms" than in the past. The Slovak Republic supported the strengthening of the Eastern Dimension of ENP – **The Eastern Partnership (EaP)** also during the March Meeting of Ministers of the Visegrad Group in Bratislava.

An important instrument of specific aid for these countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the Centre for Experience Transfer in Integration and Reform (CETIR) for the western Balkan countries and for the partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The National Convent on the EU, another form of Slovak Aid, was active in the

Ukraine, Moldova and Montenegro. As part of the Instrument of the EU Pre-Accession Aid, the Slovak twinning project “Capacity Building for an Energy Regulator in Serbia” succeeded in the value of 1.5 million Euros. The Ministry of Finance, in cooperation with the UN Development Programme, provided aid for Montenegro and Moldova focusing on the reform of public finance management.

## **Regional Cooperation and Neighbour Relationships**

During **Slovakia’s Presidency over the Visegrad Group (V4)**, the dynamics and visibility of cooperation between countries, as well as their international credibility, increased. The strengthening of consultation mechanisms on the level of Prime Ministers and Foreign Affairs Ministers contributed to a more effective enforcement of common European interests. Cooperation in the area of defence and energy security was enhanced. Slovakia actively supported the Hungarian and Polish Presidency of the EU.

The Visegrad Group demonstrated its vitality and growing international prestige as an active supporter of EU enlargement to the countries of the Western Balkans and the strengthening of cooperation among Eastern EU partners as well as within the V4 Plus format. An important event organised under the Slovak V4 Presidency was the March Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Visegrad Group and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in Bratislava, attended by the Foreign Minister of Germany Guido Westerwelle, European Commissioner Štefan Füle and the High Representative for foreign policy, Catherine Ashton. Based on the Slovak initiative, a new International Visegrad Fund “V4EaP” was established with the aim of supporting democratisation and transformation processes and strengthening civil society in countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood. A symbolic appreciation of the growing importance of the V4 was the participation of the German Chancellor, Austrian Chancellor and Ukrainian Prime Minister at the Summit organised at the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Group in Bratislava.

Relationships with the **Czech Republic** continued to improve due to an intensive dialogue on all levels as well as to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Slovak - Czech Discussion forum which brought also specific recommendations about helping the countries of the Western Balkans on their way to the EU. In Prague, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Slovakia and the Czech Republic signed agreements on mutual representation in consular and visa areas. Cooperation within the Nuclear Forum focusing on strengthened energy security continued. The Fight against Corruption reached a new inter-governmental dimension as well.

Measures concerning the finishing of the construction of the Slovak part of the direct fast-way connection between Slovakia and Poland were taken in terms of relationships with **Poland**. The signing of the intention to cooperate on the project of a gas pipe connection between Poland and Slovakia led to a positive shift in the area of energy security assurance. Bilateral political dialogue culminated with the official visit of the Polish President to Slovakia.

Slovak foreign policy towards **Hungary** emphasized maintaining a peaceful atmosphere, partner dialogue and cooperation based on good neighbour relationships and respect for international law. Slovakia was visited by the President, Prime Minister as well as the Foreign Affairs Minister of Hungary. The work of mixed committees as part of a mechanism supporting the fulfilment of the Basic Agreement with Hungary and solving problematic issues was intensified. Several important agreements in the area of energy and traffic infrastructure were signed. A new bridge over the Ipel’ River was opened and the construction and preparation of new bridges over the Ipel’ and Danube Rivers (Komárno) continued. Slovakia continued to depoliticise topics concerning common history. In this

regard, a conference of young historians from both countries took place in Bratislava, funded through a grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Slovakia also proposed dealing with open issues concerning mutual relationships based on partner dialogue and international law. In March, it submitted a proposal of an agreement governing some issues concerning state citizenship which was not accepted by the Hungarian side. However, the process of bilateral consultations on this issue started. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its attitude on the new Hungarian Constitution even prior to its passing in Parliament, and the National Council of the Slovak Republic also provided its position on this issue. The Ministry also suggested dealing with the violation of the Treaty with Hungary in the area of providing financial support to members of the Hungarian national minority in Slovakia by the mixed committee for minority issues.

In terms of relations with **Austria**, increased attention was paid to the **expansion of regional cross-border cooperation**, to further building of infrastructure on the border (placing of the foundation stone of the cycling bridge in Devínska Nová Ves), cooperation of border regions and strengthening of energy security. Slovakia continued to inform transparently about finishing the construction of the nuclear power plant in Mochovce.

Active dialogue at the highest level with **Ukraine** represented by a visit of the Foreign Minister of the Slovak Republic in Ukraine and the Ukrainian President in Slovakia focused mainly on supporting the European integration ambitions of the Ukraine and the development of bilateral cooperation. Slovakia continued to transfer its experience from the pre-accession and reform process, the realisation of necessary reforms leading to the Union and acceptance of its value framework. The Foreign Affairs Minister of the Slovak Republic expressed his concern during his visits with the top representatives of the Ukraine in connection with the development of the case concerning Julia Tymoshenko and the situation with the opposition. We continued to take practical measures in order to simplify the crossing of borders and to liberalise the visa regime. Intergovernmental committees continued in their active work. The new school building with Slovak and Ukrainian language of instruction in Uzhgorod started to be used.

### **Bilateral Relations**

The search for solutions to the global financial and economic crises and intensification of economic cooperation was a part of the high dynamics of the dialogue with Euro-Atlantic partners and allies that is the core of Slovak foreign policy.

The **Slovak – American ally relationships** supported by visits of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to the U.S.A. were based mainly on cooperation in Afghanistan, the realisation of initiatives promoting democracy in the context of events of the so-called 'Arab Spring' (helping Tunisia as part of the Community of Democracies), as well as activities attempting to strengthen business, investment, science and technological exchange. An important part of the dialogue with the U.S.A. was also the issue of cooperation in the area of defence and the interior. The establishment of the Slovak Congress Council enabled the strengthening of the parliamentary division of relationships. The Foreign Affairs Ministers of Slovakia and the U.S.A. signed the action plan for combating the smuggling of nuclear material. Slovakia also joined the American-Brazilian Initiative on Open Government.

From the aspect of intensity of Slovak bilateral contacts, we can label 2011, from the foreign-policy perspective, as the year of **Germany**. The strategic importance of mutual dialogue was confirmed also by visits of the German President, Chancellor and Foreign Minister to Slovakia. The first meeting of the Slovak-German Reflexive Group took place confirming the proximity of Slovak and German perspectives of how to deal with the debt crisis in the eurozone.

In the mutual dialogue with **France**, emphasis was placed mainly on economic cooperation in the area of nuclear energy and ensuring political support primarily within the EU. In cooperation with a French partner, a feasibility study of the project concerning a new nuclear source in Jaslovské Bohunice started to be developed. Slovakia is successfully engaged in the Allegro project, which is an example of the on-going cooperation in the area of power industry among the Visegrad countries and France.

**Slovakia cooperated successfully with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** in Afghanistan on stabilising the security situation there. A pragmatic accent put on business and economic cooperation and mainly on improved use of its potential was confirmed also during the visit of the Slovak Prime Minister to London.

**Italy** is a significant business partner and investor in Slovakia. The core of cooperation is the power industry which has been confirmed also by reciprocal visits of the heads of both countries.

Slovakia continued to organise bi-community dialogues in the **Republic of Cyprus** focusing on approximating both communities in the interest of dealing with the issue of Cyprus.

A new impulse for strengthening relationships with the **Kingdom of the Netherlands** was given by the cooperation within a working group for the democratisation of Tunisia under the auspices of both Foreign Ministers.

The dialogue with the Baltic countries – **Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia**, as well as with **Romania and Bulgaria** - was based on several close-to-identical attitudes towards the so-called Eastern EU Policy and several strategic issues concerning further EU and NATO direction.

Slovak foreign policy towards **Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden** was based on active use of their knowledge in the area of science and research, education and culture, “green technologies”, innovations and renewable energy sources. Slovakia placed emphasis on the influx of Nordic investments and effective application of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area.

Slovak interest in broad, pragmatic and mutually beneficial relationships with the **Russian Federation** was facilitated also by visits of the President and the Prime Minister with the Russian Prime Minister. An impulse for the development of business and economic cooperation was the meeting of a mixed intergovernmental committee for economic, scientific and technical cooperation prepared and realised by the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic. Cooperation in the power industry area, mainly the continuous assurance of raw material delivery and transit through the territory of the Slovak Republic remains a strategic part of economic relationships.

The active involvement of Slovakia in the process of the EU enlargement and in dealing with regional challenges deepened the cooperation with the countries of the **Western Balkans**. Visits of the highest constitutional representatives of the Slovak Republic contributed to the intensification of cooperation with **Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina**, also expanding opportunities for the promotion of Slovak companies.

Slovak foreign policy paid adequate attention also to other regions and countries. The official visit of the President of the Slovak Republic to **Indonesia** brought new impulses for deepening business and economic cooperation. Relationships with **Iraq** were revitalised, including the economic area and the defensive and security system. Cooperation with **Israel** in the area of applied research and development received a new impulse during a visit of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport of the Slovak Republic. In terms of the countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, Slovakia focused mainly on improving business and economic dimensions of cooperation.

## Multilateral Cooperation

Within international organisations, Slovakia focused mainly on overcoming the financial and economic crisis, adapting these bodies to new challenges and dealing with emergent global problems, strengthening the central role of the UN and enforcing democratic principles in the world.

Slovakia successfully completed three years of membership in the **UN Human Rights Council** and under its leadership the UN also successfully completed the process of adopting the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on communications procedure. Slovakia actively rejected capital punishment and in the Council of Europe it led the preparation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence and Domestic Violence against Women. 46 women and children – Afghan refugees in Iran - were accepted for temporary relocation to the camp in Humenné. In the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**, Slovakia co-initiated the so-called 'Moscow Mechanism' focusing on the evaluation of the state of human rights observance in Belarus.

As a Member and Vice-Chairman of the **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, Slovakia supported strengthening the relationship of UN and the Bretton-Wood institutions and complement of ECOSOC activities and the G20 group. It also effectively used the possibilities of membership in the international organisations and their governing bodies for expert consultations when preparing the amendment of the Labour Code or when implementing the UN Convention against Corruption.

In the international economic organisations, Slovakia focused mainly on searching for optimal solutions for the realisation of inevitable structural reforms and trustworthy fiscal consolidation. Analyses and recommendations of the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** helped to form and realise crucial strategic documents of the Slovak government: MINERVA 2.0, SINGAPORE and PHOENIX. Defence of the energy policy, environmental performance of the Slovak Republic and the evaluation of the system of providing Slovak development aid took place. As part of the World Trade Organisation, the Slovak Republic continued to support the liberalisation of global trade, fight against protectionism and protective measures in commerce, as well as admission of the Russian Federation and Montenegro to this organisation. Slovakia, being a Member State of the International Monetary Fund, enforced financial stability and reform of the international monetary system, including the provision of resources for the fund.

Slovakia acquired the position of the Deputy Chairman of **ECOSOC**, Deputy Chairman of the **UNESCO Executive Council**, and it also successfully promoted further of its candidates: the repeated election of Peter Tomka for the position of a Judge of the **International Court of Justice** for another term during the period of years between 2012 - 2021, election of Urban Rusnák for the General Secretary of the Secretariat of the **Energy Charter Treaty** (mutual candidate of V4 countries) and Marta Žiaková, vice-chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic to be the vice-chairman of the head of the Controlling Council of the **Nuclear Energy Agency in Paris**.

A sign of the appreciation of the quality of Slovak diplomacy was the appointment of Ján Kubiš as the special representative of the Secretary General of UN for Afghanistan and the head of the UN mission in this country (UNAMA), and of Miroslav Lajčák as the Executive Director for Russia, Eastern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans as part of the European External Action Service.

## Economic Diplomacy

The significance of economic diplomacy in ensuring stability, prosperity and security

of a country is especially visible in the current times of financial crisis accompanied by a global macroeconomic slowdown. Slovak efforts were primarily focused on supporting **economic growth, competitiveness and employment in Slovakia** through increased influx of foreign investments and modern technologies, supporting exports, developing an active tourist industry, innovation policy, knowledge society, supporting science and research and effective use of European funds.

Integration of economic diplomats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic strengthened the performance of economic diplomacy and enabled a more rational use of personal and financial resources. **Fulfilment of the aims of economic diplomacy became the everyday priority of all diplomats** focusing on providing services and effective support for business entities in Slovakia and abroad. Through clear criteria it will be possible to evaluate the specific contribution of a representative office when fulfilling the tasks in this area.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused mainly on new growing economies and moved the positions of economic diplomats from the EU countries, for example, to Argentina, Brazil, Iraq, Indonesia and strengthened economic representation in China, India, U.S.A. and the Ukraine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised several events with the aim of supporting the business sector in Slovakia and commerce, investment and innovation: Work discussion forum “Economic Diplomacy as a Service for the Business Public”, contact fair of business and investment opportunities as part of the regular council of Slovak Ambassadors. Meetings with businessmen in Slovak regions also took place, organised in cooperation with regional chambers of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Higher Regional Units (Nitra, Košice, Trenčín). The Ministry cooperated with the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency in organising the 5th Slovak Matchmaking Fair. In the area of knowledge economy, the **Nordic - Slovak Innovation Forum organised** a seminar of V4 countries and Japan on innovation policy and **Innovation and Technological Forum Slovakia – Turkey**. Together with the Ministry of Finance, a seminar on public procurement took place as part of the World Bank Group for business entities in Slovakia.

A complex pro-export service for Slovak businessmen, apart from consultations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was ensured and created by the information portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic “**Let’s do business abroad**”.

## **Security Policy**

The year 2011 was characterised in terms of security area by mass civic movements in the Arab world, by the successful operation of NATO in Libya and a growth of risk of the spreading of weapons of mass destruction. The negative trend of long-term decrease of defence expenditures of the European members of the Alliance continued. These tried to change the proposals for strengthening regional cooperation and the sharing of national capacities in the defence and security area.

The Slovak Republic actively contributed to the operations and missions of international crisis management. Armed forces of the Slovak Republic and civil experts participated in a total of 10 foreign missions led by NATO, EU and the UN. As part of an increased Slovak presence in Afghanistan in cooperation with the U.S.A., **Slovakia sent a complete training team for the first time and provided a special forces unit**. The main emphasis of Slovak activities will gradually be shifted to the training of Afghan soldiers and supporting developmental projects. In international crisis management, Slovakia enforced a complex approach with the growing task of the civil force. Permanent attention was placed on building capacities for participation in the forces of **NATO fast response force and UN combat forces**. Cooperation between countries when building the V4 contingent in the EU

in 2016 was agreed at the meeting of defence ministers of the Visegrad Group in Levoča. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed to a **Strategic Evaluation of Defence** with the aim of making the fulfilment of international obligations of the Slovak Republic more effective. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared, and the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved, the **Act on Sending of Civil Experts** to perform works in crisis management activities outside of the territory of the Slovak Republic, creating a base for a unified coordinated system for sending a wider range of civil experts to perform works in the activities of crisis management.

In NATO and the EU, Slovakia continued to promote close cooperation in both organisations on building capacities and realisation of operations. It supported intensively the NATO expansion and the development of partnerships mainly with countries of the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership and the Mediterranean dialogue.

Within international organisations, Slovakia actively participated in searching for ways of tackling asymmetric security threats represented by terrorism, uncontrolled arming, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climatic changes, failing countries, migration or cyber attacks. As a coordinator of the **Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform (SSR)** within the UN, it organised several support activities, including an international seminar for experts in the area of SSR in Častá-Papiernička. It contributed to the strengthening of OSCE capacities in the fight against new security threats as well as in the area of prevention and conflict resolution, where it oversaw the part focusing on early warning.

The international conference GLOBSEC 2011, the Slovak Security Forum and other professional events organised in cooperation with the non-governmental sector, contributed to the discussion on Slovak approaches and possibilities in the area of security policy.

## **Energy Security**

Slovakia increased the dynamics of its efforts to ensure its own energy security on bilateral level as well as within the EU, V4, Energy Charter, OSCE and UN. It signed an agreement with Hungary and a memorandum with Poland on **gas interconnections**. It also enforced the declaration of the V4 countries to support north-south gas connections and the coupling of electricity networks. Slovak activities in the EU working group at high levels for north-south energy connections focused on building regional energy infrastructure. Following the nuclear emergency in Japan, Slovakia joined complex burden security tests and actively promoted Slovak interests in the area of the **nuclear power industry** and its share in the energy mix within the EU and at the 6<sup>th</sup> European Nuclear Conference in Prague.

As part of the project entitled “**External Energy Security**”, the Ministry of Foreign affairs regularly monitored and evaluated the situation and made prognoses about developments in the world power industry. It developed a strategy to promote the interests of Slovakia in the area of power industry security in international organisations. Slovakia continued in its initiatives in the area of energy security in OSCE. From the position of a leader, it enforced the elaboration of the outcomes from the Summit in Astana into specific proposals for resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of OSCE in Vilnius, including a set of OSCE principles in energy security and the establishment of a special expert group for this issue. The evaluation of the energy policy of the Slovak Republic by the International Energy Agency was presented at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference entitled “Common EU Energy Policy and the Energy Security of Slovakia.”



## **Official Development Aid (ODA) and Humanitarian Aid**

Further elimination of poverty and the increased effectiveness of ODA as well as new strategic topics, such as **capacity building, development education or experience transfer in transformation**, were among the main ambitions and aims of the Slovak development aid. Intensive dialogue with non-governmental and private sectors contributed to their fulfilment. As part of the development aid, the Centre for Experience Transfer in Integration and Reform started its activities.

Funded from Slovak development aid, 84 projects and 118 micro-projects were implemented in 2011, while 29 new projects were approved, representing a total of 5 million Euros, for example in the area of healthcare for Southern Sudan and Afghanistan and in the area of supporting university education in Kenya.

In 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs started to implement the recommendations of the Developmental Cooperation Directorate (DCD) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to increase the effectiveness of Slovak development aid. The number of priority countries and sector focuses was reduced in order to reduce the fractioning of finance provision.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expanded the contractual legal base with the priority countries. During the visit of the Foreign Minister to Kenya and Southern Sudan, the agreement on intergovernmental developmental cooperation was signed with Kenya, and a similar agreement is going to be offered also to Southern Sudan. The resort prepared an open call for projects co-financed with the U.S. government to support the development of civil society as part of increasing the effectiveness of cooperation with further donors. Under the Slovak V4 Presidency, a common Visegrad project was realised in Moldova – Modernisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of this country.

The Slovak Republic was actively engaged in the development policy of the EU and, for the first time, it contributed to the European Developmental Fund with an amount of 5.123 million Euros. It thus got the possibility to be actively involved in the decision-making process of financing EU development aid for the individual countries. It joined the **Common EU programming in Southern Sudan** where it has an ambition to coordinate provision of aid with other donors in the sector of healthcare and education. As part of the common EU programming in Moldavia, it focused on areas of regional development and decentralisation. In 2011, evaluation of Slovak projects of development aid in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kenya took place.

In cooperation with the sector of education, the **National Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Global Development Education for the years 2012 – 2016** was prepared. Increased attention was paid to the issue of informing the general public about Slovak development aid.

Slovakia responded promptly also to humanitarian crises in the world. Financial and material humanitarian aid in the total value of 525 thousand Euros was provided to Japan, Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Belarus.

## **Services for Citizens**

Improving and expanding services for citizens is a permanent focus of attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the rise of unrest in Egypt, armed conflict in Libya and natural disaster in Japan, the return of Slovak citizens home was successfully managed. Activities of the **Centre of Help and Services for Citizens** contributed to a wider use of the system of registering Slovak citizens when travelling to risky areas of the world. Current information about developments and risks abroad is ensured through the regularly updated

and supplemented **consular information portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused the visa agenda in the Schengen countries to 7 representative offices ensuring a significant saving of financial resources. The remaining 15 offices can thus deal more intensely with the provision of services to Slovak citizens. Slovakia continued to sign agreements on mutual representation when issuing visas with further Schengen member states: the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Lithuania. Citizens of third countries travelling to Slovakia can thus get a Schengen visa at embassies in a further 12 countries. Consular aid and access for Slovak citizens in the United Kingdom improved also thanks to the decision to establish the General Consulate of the Slovak Republic in Manchester which is planned to be opened in 2012.

### **Presentation of Slovakia Abroad**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed the **Concept for Promoting Slovakia Abroad** which is to serve as a basic theoretical rationale for the whole state administration of this area. When presenting the values of Slovak culture abroad, it cooperated with further EU Member States, V4 countries and Central European Cultural Platform and with the international association of cultural institutes (EUNIC). **Slovak representative offices and institutes**, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Tourist Board (SACR), organised various seminars and presentations from the tourism industry. A successful form of presenting Slovakia abroad, focusing on promotion of the Slovak business environment, was represented, for example, by the Investment road show in Washington, New York, San Francisco and Chicago, led by the Minister of Economy of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of Finance organised a business mission in London focusing on more effective involvement of Slovak entities in international cooperation, including projects of international financial institutions. Among the important topics of Slovak presentation in 2011 was the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Visegrad Group, the 90th anniversary of the birth of Alexander Dubček, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Ján Cikker, support of the preparation of the project Košice – the European Capital of Culture 2013 and the World Ice Hockey Championship.

### **Openness, Public Control and Effectiveness of Foreign Policy Performance**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs put in this area emphasis on **intensive dialogue with the non-governmental sector** and the academic environment, rationalisation of its own operation highlighting a **saving of financial resources**, preparation of state administration staff and Slovak citizens for work in international organisations and improvement of education within the department.

Following the integration of economic diplomats, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered, for the first time, the positions of economic diplomat to specialists from an external environment and an independent personal agency participated in their selection in order to assure greater transparency.

The success of Slovak applicants for working in international organisations was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its new program titled as the 'Preparation for working in international organisations' and a seminar 'Preparing for work in the UN'. The second pilot education program of the Ministry was the intensive course for economic diplomats.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs intensified partner cooperation with the non-governmental sector, which is documented by mutual conferences and seminars, mainly in the area of developing international relations in the 21st century, security, energy and development policies, East Partnership within the EU, transatlantic trends, institutional impact of the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the situation in Belarus. The Ministry of Foreign

Affairs engaged in an active dialogue with non-governmental organisations when developing international and development policies, assessing the development of individual regions and used contacts and professional expertise for the benefit of Slovakia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the publication of journals and publications in the area of foreign policy (e.g. International Issues, Foreign Policy). The implementation of the act on subsidies under the powers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs increased the transparency of the subsidy policy of the resort. Approximately 46,600 Euros were allocated to support 11 projects. A traditional evaluation conference on the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic, attended by top constitutional representatives and the international conference GLOBSEC, which has earned a good reputation in professional and political circles of Europe and America, has secured a place in the calendar of the ministry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created space for active participation of non-governmental organisations in discussion forums with Germany and the Czech Republic.

Activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were introduced to the general public also during the Open House, travelling exhibition "Slovakia helping the world" which is an interesting form of providing access to development aid of the Slovak Republic in the poorest countries of the world, or lectures by top representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at universities and secondary schools. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs began issuing an electronic journal "The World and Us" in order to promote Slovak foreign policy and present services and information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As part of the on-going reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organisational change was carried out, rationalising the operation of the ministry and saving approximately 1 million Euros on payroll costs per year. In order to achieve further savings, gradual restructuring of assets of the Slovak Republic abroad was started and a new system of apartment and residence rental for embassies was introduced. The new system of booking plane tickets services, which are used by a further 15 institutions of state administration, brought a significant saving in travel expenses by approximately 30%. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs re-evaluated contractual relations in the segment of telecommunication services and agreed more advantageous prices, making economic management in this area significantly more effective. Electronic auctions ensured transparency in the procurement of goods and services and at the same time it also reduced the operational costs of the resort by approximately 20 thousand Euros per year.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also adopted new rules for the evaluation of embassies and a new Career Code in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of Slovak diplomacy.