



S L O V A K I A

STATEMENT by

His Excellency

Ambassador Michal Mlynár

**Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to
the United Nations in New York**

**at the Security Council High-Level Open Debate
on “Maintaining international peace and security in cyberspace”**

New York, 29 June 2021

Thank you Madam President.

Slovakia associates itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. We would like to make some additional remarks in national capacity.

Madam President,

I would like to thank you for organizing this timely discussion that provides an opportunity for reflection on the growing risks stemming from malicious activities in cyberspace and their impact on international peace and security as well as to address the global efforts to promote peace and stability in cyberspace.

The COVID-19 crisis has made the need to bolster the security and stability of cyberspace even more topical and pressing. The crisis has shown that digital capabilities have become crucial for the provision of essential services as well as for the continuation of effective governance. The disruption of the functioning of critical infrastructure can cause serious consequences. Malicious cyber activities against vital sectors and services have destabilizing effects and may ultimately threaten international peace and security.

Madam President,

Since cyber threats are largely transnational in nature, it is important to maintain international cooperation and dialogue between States as well as between States and the multistakeholder community. It is through our shared responsibility and joint efforts of the governments, private sector and civil society that we can effectively support the maintenance of international peace and security in cyberspace, and protect human rights.

The United Nations plays an important role in driving international debates to raise awareness of cyber challenges to international peace and security, and to make progress on advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

Madam President,

Slovakia strongly supports multilateralism which helps to manage and tackle current and future challenges in cyberspace. We are convinced that the stability in cyberspace should be based on existing international law, including the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety,

international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. Slovakia fully supports the applicability of existing international law to state conduct in cyberspace as recognized by three consensus reports of Groups of Governmental Experts endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2010, 2013 and 2015. Our best efforts shall go towards holding transparent and constructive discussions, so that we can mutually benefit from each other's experience, good practice and expertise.

Slovakia is also a cosponsor of the Programme of Action to Advance Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace (PoA) within the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG). We believe in an inclusive and constructive institutional dialogue focused on results, regularity and consensus-based approach. In our view, the PoA proposal offers grounds for such dialogue across the whole UN Membership.

Madam President,

When it comes to confidence building measures and capacity building in cyberspace, Slovakia is of the opinion that these two are the most important measures in order to keep stability in cyberspace. Regional organizations such as, for instance the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe OSCE are being very useful tools in conflict prevention and strengthening cooperation between states. Regular communication and interaction between states in cyberspace help to avoid conflict and to deescalate potential rising tensions and, at the same time, they create a platform for dialogue.

The international law is one of the main pillars of stability and predictability in relations between states. Slovakia strongly stands with those reaffirming that existing international law - notably the UN Charter in its entirety and international humanitarian and human rights law - do apply to actions of States in cyberspace. The UN Charter sets out the rules and principles of international law of particular importance for the maintenance of peace and stability. There is no doubt that human rights apply online as they do offline and States must respect and defend those rights.

Thank you, Madam President.