

## **2. FOSTERING THE POSITION OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IN THE WORLD**

The membership of Slovak Republic in Euro-Atlantic and European structures essentially defines the international position of the state, which offers adequate possibilities to influence, in accordance with state interests, international decisions and processes that directly affect the quality of life of our citizens.

The European union is the main environment that influences the daily life and events in Slovakia. The membership of the Slovak Republic in the European Union makes the citizens feel safe at the political, economic and social level.

The Government of certainty for citizens will actively support and enforce the sustainable development of Europe based on a well/balanced economic growth, price and monetary stability and social and ecological market economy with high competitiveness. Our objective is to improve the quality of life of citizens by high employment, social development, appropriate environment protection and a marked support of research and development.

The base of safety in Slovak Republic is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Maintaining a strong transatlantic bond remains in our vital interest.

The Government will contribute for the fostering of success and utility of the two organizations that ensure the international position of SR.

When defining tasks in foreign areas, the Government also takes into consideration the key development tendencies and challenges of the 21st century.

Thus, the Government will base the foreign policy upon the following priorities:

- trusted and respected Slovakia in Europe;
- stable and reliable partner of NATO as a safety guarantee in SR;
- development of bilateral relations with the member states of EU and NATO, and specially structured and equivalent relationship with the neighbours;
- support the area of stability, democracy and partnership with emphasis on the states of the Western Balkans and the eastern partnership;
- support of economic interests, investment, innovations and energy security;
- responsible approach to global challenges, using the potential of international organizations;
- help and protection of Slovak citizens abroad;
- respect and fostering of law binding force on international level and institutions, its enforcement as the key tool to protect the state's sovereignty.

### **Starting points of SR in the field of foreign policy and relations with the EU**

The European Union represents a primary environment for key interests of SR.

In 2014 it will be the 10th anniversary of the entry of Slovakia into the EU. The Government will prepare an analysis of the history of the membership and define further priorities for the operation of SR in the EU. It will be based on the fact that by the entry into the Schengen area, adopting the single European currency and by the termination of the

transposition period for the free movement of workers, SR on the present reached the maximum possible degree of integration.

The Government will support decisions based on the shared path of member states and European institutions about the rules of operation of the EU. The Government of Slovak Republic will especially focus on the sectional and multi-annual strategic questions of the EU that directly influence the fulfillment of the fundamental tasks in finances, economy, regional and social development, safety and foreign policy of the Slovak Republic. Among other things, it will focus on the elaboration of the Multi-annual Financial Framework for the years 2014-2020, the implementation of the strategy Europe 2020, the stabilization of financial environment and the common currency Euro, support and deepening of the single market, creation of concepts focusing on the increase of energy safety, and the field of external relations EU in the context of foreign policy priorities of SR.

The Government will be a responsible and constructive actor within the Euro area. With reference to the debt crisis in the Euro area, the Government considers necessary to increase the coordination of budgetary policies.

Based on the clear pro-European attitude, the Government will take steps leading to the ratification of three new contractual documents: Treaty establishing the European Stability Mechanism, Treaty on stability, coordination and governance in the economic and monetary union and amending the art. 136 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

On the basis of a thorough analysis of the actual experience of activity of SR in EU, the Government shall revalue the implementation of policies and tool of social and regional integrity, improve the conditions for effective consumption of appropriations from European funds as an important tool of economic and regional development and infrastructure development. The Government shall try to joint all the subjects that absorb structural and cohesion funds into discussion to policy creation in this area.

Discussions on the new financial perspective of EU for the years 2014 - 2020 present a challenge for the effective use of added value that the EU presents on the world scene. In discussion about the Multi-annual financial framework (VFR), the Government will focus on achieving the objectives that help the conversion and development of regions in EU and to support the cohesion policy. It will especially focus on the questions of eliminations of historical inequalities and the modernization of Common agricultural policy. The Government will also enforce the highest possible added value and effectiveness of expenses of the EU budget and focus on the optimal budget position of SR.

In implementing the strategy Europe 2020, for intelligent, sustainable and include growth, the Government will focus on high employment rates and social protection, minimization of social exclusion, high level of education and training, health and support of science, research and innovations in direct connection to negotiations about the VFR.

In the line of sectoral policies, the government will primarily focus on the creation of European legislative environment in the field of energy, transport infrastructures, development of internal market, protection of environment and measures for reducing climate changes as well as the creation of European trade policy towards external partners.

The Government of Slovak Republic will actively contribute to the process of creation of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy especially in fields that reflect interests of

Slovakia: Western Balkans, European neighbourhood policy and Eastern partnership, support of democracy and transformation, energy security, service to citizens and crisis management. The Government will support the EU enlargement for countries that meet the conditions for membership. The Slovak Republic will actively support this process by sharing transformation and integration experience.

A special role of the Government in the following election period will be the preparation of the Slovak Republic for EU presidency in the second half of the year 2016 that is considered in the context of fostering the position of SR in the Union, support of presentation and larger participation on the formation of EU key policies. The Government will focus on the provision of the content, budget, personnel, logistical and organizational preparation of the presidency.

The Government will actively communicate the current themes of European union to the Slovak public to bring the Union closer to the citizens for a better understanding of deepening of integration processes after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. The Government wants to support wide discussion in domestic environment on important issues of European policies. It will ensure greater involvement of citizens in decision-taking processes at the EU level, enforce the European Union into curriculums and support the education, preparation and sending the citizens of Slovak Republic to EU institutions.

To foster the integrated and consistent European policy, the SR Government will emphasize the strengthening of national coordination for the creation and implementation of EU strategies and policies with the central role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of SR. For this purpose, the SR Government will unify the national mechanism of action for infringement of the EU Treaties. The strengthening of euroagenda in all the departments remains a long term priority including the personal representation of SR in EU institutions.

In the context of ensuring the continuity and creation of a wide political support, especially in strategic European policies in accordance to the Lisbon Treaty that fostered the participation of the European parliament and national parliaments on the decision-making processes, the Government will act in cooperation with the National council of the Slovak Republic, the relevant committees and the European Parliament. The Government will ensure the dignified conduct of elections to the European Parliament in 2014.

The Government will seek to effectively engage social partners into the preparation of EU legislation, discussion about key concepts and Union strategies. It will seek to support business, professional, regional and other associations to the European institutions in Brussels.

### **Strengthening of security of the Slovak Republic**

Slovak Republic as a reliable partner and ally will actively make use of the membership in EU and NATTO to strengthen the peace and stability in Europe and in the world, to prevent crisis and security threats including operation and active participation on peacekeeping missions.

In line with the interests and commitments of the Slovak Republic in security field, the necessity to strengthen the transatlantic bond, the main allies and guarantees of our security are the United States of America and other NATO members.

In the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Government will focus on:

- active participation in the transformation process of the Alliance;
- increase of effectiveness of using the resources and capacities of NATO;
- fostering the commitment of common defence;
- development of strategic concepts with particular regard to the ability of the Alliance to react to asymmetrical threats and the issue of cybernetic security;
- enforcement and support of deepening of the partnership and cooperation of EU and NATO in crisis management.

The Government will support the participation of Slovakia on multinational projects within the smart defence

The Government will actively promote the open door policy as an instrument of enlargement of the area of security and stability.

### **Bilateral relations and neighbourhood cooperation**

The Government will develop bilateral relations based on the principles of democracy, rule of law, universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms while respecting human dignity, equality and solidarity, international law and the United Nations Charter.

The basic line of the foreign policy of SR in its regional dimension will be the policy of good neighbourly relations based on partnership, equality of states and dialogue with Czech Republic, Republic of Poland, Republic of Austria, Hungary and Ukraine and focusing on the support of economic and social dimension, territorial integrity and solidarity.

The Slovak Republic will remain active in the V4 group, where it will focus on themes that can be commonly promoted by V4 countries in the European Union and other relevant forums.

The Slovak Republic will foster the pointed, assertive and thematically defined cooperation with all the EU and NATO member states. In contact with them, it will actively present their own views with the aim to effectively create European Union policies.

The EU Common Foreign and Security Policy provides space for active and passive strengthening of Slovakia in international relations. Within this policy, the Government will specially focus on the development of bilateral cooperation with countries in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU - especially the countries of Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership.

With respect to economic, foreign and political interests of SR, objective possibilities, objectives and needs, the government will develop bilateral cooperation with other partners in the international community. It will especially focus on the relation with the Russian Federation, as well as with other BRICS countries, the emerging economies (China, India, Brazil, South Africa), Turkey, but also with Japan, South Korea, Australia and our traditional partners in Arab world, Asia, Africa, Latin America and other world regions.

## **World policy and multilateral relations**

The global development in the 21st century markedly changes the political, security and economic map of the world. For the Slovak Republic, these changes can mean new opportunities. The Government will support the development of the international order based on multipolarism, with the aim to strengthen the functioning of international institutions.

The Slovak Republic will broadly use the membership in international institutions with emphasis to UN, OSCE, CoE, OECD, WTO, FAO, ILO and other institutions to enforce solutions based on the principles of the international law and effective multilateralism. Together with other states, it will endeavour to strengthen the mechanisms of international organisations to address global threats and challenges that threaten the socio/-economic stability, peace and security.

The Government of Slovak Republic will:

- at the United Nations, it will pay attention to the questions of democracy and the rule of law, human rights and freedoms. Reject manifestations of extremism, racism, intolerance, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and anti-Semitism. It will focus especially on the issues of international cooperation in the field of the drug problem, trafficking and organized crime.
- actively support the steps of the international community in the fight against global security threats, like the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the accumulation of conventional weapons, or the international terrorism. The basic international tools in this field are the common security policy and the defence policy of EU, NATO and the OSCE platform.
- promote the active involvement of SR in the processes of control of disarmament, liquidation of chemical weapons and the control of export and import in the field of conventional weapons and exports of goods and dual-use technologies;
- effectively use the membership in OECD as a coordinator of economic and socio-political cooperation of the member states, the mediator of new investments and of the liberalisation of the international commerce with the aim to help further economic development, decrease of unemployment, stabilization and development of international financial markets.

Other important priorities of the Government are:

- strengthening the energy security. At all relevant forums, the Government will continue in underlining issues that are vital for Slovakia, especially the security of energy carriers (gas, oil) and promote the fulfillment of the objectives of diversification and innovation
- environment protection and adopting effective international measures to reduce rate and decrease the impact of climate changes. In particular, in our conditions, the Government will focus on other endeavour to reduce the share of energy-

intensive production and strengthening the orientation to green economy and biodiversity protection.

- careful approach to human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. In this regard, the Government will support activities aimed at preserving culture, traditions and language of the Slovaks living abroad. It will adopt necessary system and organization measures and use the potential of social organizations, including churches, as well as the dialogue with foreign partners;
- development and humanitarian aid that will react to international commitments and the range of global challenges that SR, as a member of the donor community, faces. The Government will also focus on the increase of effectiveness, flexibility and transparency of providing development aid (ODA) with the aim to create cooperation in supporting economic activities of SR. Therefore, it will prepare the revision of the Act of development aid.

### **Economic diplomacy**

Economic diplomacy will be one of the main pillars of the Government activities in foreign policy. The primary focus will be on the support of export and tourism, the inflow of foreign investment, stability of currency, equalization of Slovak producers on the internal market of EU and increase of energy safety. The Government shall adopt system and organization measures that will help meeting the objectives in this field and create institutional conditions for a better coordination of all the departments of SR Government to meet the objectives of economic diplomacy. The Government shall cooperate with all the relevant organizations, especially with Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Government shall offer universal and effective support of Slovak business entities. In the pro-export policy, it will focus on the potential of emerging world economies and the research of new possibilities and adapt the priorities of development Aid. The Government will focus on the expansion of pro-export capacities of Eximbanka.

The Government shall integrate the representatives of business circles into the planning processes and organizational preparation of foreign policies that directly influences them. By means of the Pro-export Council, it will ensure a greater interconnection and interoperation of all the actors in economic diplomacy and while promoting of commercial and economic interests abroad.

To support economic development, increase competitiveness of Slovak economy and to create new jobs, the Government will place importance on the foreign inflows especially into areas with higher added value. It will support concepts of development of scientific and technical cooperation with a direct influence on the development of knowledge economy in Slovakia in relation to the education and training system. The Government will continue in the ongoing projects of innovative policy and enforce a more active participation of Slovak Republic on the international transfer of modern technologies.

By means of the foreign policy, the government shall try to maintain the position of Slovakia as an important transit territory. The position and the potential of the country allows for building important international logistic hubs. The Government will support the project of a broad gauge railway from Košice to Bratislava and Vienna if it is economically feasible.

The Government will adopt system and organization measures to ensure unified leadership and management of bilateral intergovernmental commissions on the level of Deputy Prime Minister responsible.

The Government will also focus on the finishing of the system of integral presentation of Slovakia abroad, with an emphasis to the maximum synergy of cultural values, economic interests and support to tourism.

### **Serving the citizens abroad**

The Government shall improve the enhancement of rights, interests and protection of the increasing number of Slovak citizens that travel, live or work abroad, especially by ensuring high quality, effective and accessible consular services and help in common situations and crisis. In countries, where Slovakia is not represented, the Government shall ensure the needs of citizens by cooperating with member states and delegations of EU. It will also continue in negotiations with EU countries about agreements and representation for visa issuing.

### **Modern and professional foreign service**

The foreign service shall flexibly and competently react to the challenges of foreign policy, so the Government shall underline the responsibility and modify the competences of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the central state administration body that is responsible for the realization of single foreign and European policy of Slovak Republic.

In fulfilling the objectives of the foreign policy of the general public, the Government will cooperate with academic and scientific circles, educational institutions, non-governmental sector and other relevant partners.

Based on experience, the Government will assess and provide stable, professional and economically effective foreign services. It will adopt organizational, financial and personnel measures that will increase the effectiveness and transparency of department management. It will reevaluate the network of embassies to increase the protection of interests and rights of Slovak Republic and its citizens. It will pay particular attention to the development of economic diplomacy that is an integral part of the single foreign policy of Slovak Republic in close cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy.

The Government will strengthen legislation and system framework for the foreign services by a revision of the Act on foreign services, which will create conditions for increased professionalism and qualification of employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovak Republic.