

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

2012



Foreign Policy in 2012

Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign
and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic



Leaders of the MFEA SR



MINISTERSTVO ZAHRAŇIČNÝCH VECÍ
A EURÓPSKÝCH ZÁLEŽITOSTÍ
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

SIEŤ ZASTUPITEĽSKÝCH ÚRADOV SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY V ZAHRAŇIČÍ
NETWORK OF SLOVAK DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD



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AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
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"I hope that Slovakia continues to share its own transition experience with the emerging democracies in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and Africa. As the co-chair of a joint task force of the Community of Democracies, Slovakia is making a real difference in helping advance democratic reforms in Tunisia."

Barrack Obama, President of the United States of America, congratulating Prime Minister Robert Fico on his victory in the March parliamentary elections, 26 April 2012

"The Slovak Republic has displayed solidarity towards the European Union and it is now time for the European Union to display solidarity towards Slovakia."



Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament following a meeting with Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič, 18 September 2012

"In Germany, the Slovak Republic is known as a great place to invest. More than 450 German companies doing business in Slovakia proves that."



Philipp Rösler, German Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Minister of Economics and Technology Philipp Rösler during a press conference following a meeting with Slovak finance minister in Bratislava, 24 August 2012



"Slovakia, just like Hungary, is dealing with the crisis, but because Slovakia is a member of the eurozone it has even more problems. However, if I had to name the country and prime minister that are most successful in fighting the crisis, I would have to put Robert Fico and Slovakia first."

Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister of Hungary, at a press conference between the Slovak and Hungarian prime ministers at the opening of the Slovak House in the Hungarian village of Mlyňky, 2 October 2012



“The year 2012 can be seen as a year of searching for outcomes and solutions.”

In describing Slovakia in the year 2012, the word “electoral” seems apt. The key event of the past twelve months was the early parliamentary elections, and this was also the case for the foreign ministry as well. Not only did the elections bring about a reshuffle in the ministry, but they also quite naturally required the ministry to bring communications with its partners up to speed once more, and play an active role in the international arena following the pre-election slow-down in the higher echelons of politics.

The year 2012 can be seen as a year of searching for outcomes and solutions. Being a member of the inner core of the European Union, Slovakia was fully involved in the crucial discussions on the future direction of the European project. In Brussels we clearly presented our position, founded on respecting the balance between two key principles – solidarity and responsibility. We backed all measures aimed at restoring confidence in the common currency and all proposals relating to a further strengthening of cooperation. There is no doubt that Europe and pro-European policy are the priorities of the foreign ministry. This was also confirmed symbolically last year when the ministry was renamed the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

Dear friends,
Not even in these – for us, Europeans, turbulent – times did we forget about our responsibility for

development beyond EU borders, nor about our duty to spread stability and prosperity, particularly (but not exclusively) in our immediate neighbourhood. In 2012 we continued to be one of the strongest advocates for the European prospects of the Western Balkans and for bringing the Eastern Partnership countries closer to Europe. At the same time, however, we were highly critical when our partners did not achieve the required results. We do not intend to compromise on these clear principles in the future either. Our involvement at the negotiating table included offering practical assistance to our partners and sharing our own experiences of transformation, reform and integration. In 2012 our civilian and military experts were also involved in dozens of international crisis management missions in various parts of the world, including the Balkans, Cyprus and Afghanistan. In what follows, you will find several specific examples of how Slovakia, its foreign service and development assistance have helped deal with complicated situations in various regions of the world.

While “traditional” foreign policy represents the first pillar of the foreign ministry and Europe the second pillar, the third and equally valuable pillar is without doubt the economic dimension. In this context 2012 can be seen as a year of strengthening and increasing the effectiveness of the ministry, in part this is also due to the expansion in the powers of the ministry. The steps taken and the results achieved over the past

“We would like the foreign ministry to be an institution that is open, visible and understandable to all.”

months illustrate that we have no wish to, nor do we, adopt a “hands-off” approach to economic diplomacy. We have stepped up cooperation with the business sphere, we actively engage in communication and are open to new ideas. It was on this basis that we revised the network of economic diplomats, returning them to particular EU countries, i.e. those that are destinations for a significant proportion of Slovak exports or those with whom we wish to strengthen economic relations. We need to create links between education and the business sector. We need strong small- and medium-sized enterprises that create the majority of jobs. We need investments that bring added value, new technologies and innovation. Collaboration between universities at home and abroad is also important. This is at the core of the new economic diplomacy that we are developing. Strengthening the ministry’s powers in this area goes hand in hand with greater responsibilities, new duties and the increased expectations our partners have of us. Our long-term aim is to build an effective institutional base and propose suitable means and solutions in line with these expectations.

The same vision also applies to consular assistance and the help we offer our citizens. The events of the previous year indicate that we are not all-powerful,

that we cannot be everywhere and that we cannot perform miracles. However, we want to be as close as we can to the people, to continually improve the standard of our services using modern technologies, and improve the communication, visibility and accessibility of the ministry and its services. Last year, for example, we adopted specific measures in relation to the consular services. For instance, we established “seasonal consulates”, expanded our current network of embassies abroad through cooperation agreements with other EU member states, increased the services provided by honorary consuls and continued to computerise public administration. The fourth and free-standing pillar of the foreign ministry in 2012 was assistance and help for citizens. In taking up the post of foreign minister, I made a personal commitment to do all that I could along with my colleagues so that you might see our work through our motto “We’re here for you, for the people”.

Dear friends,

Just as we portray Slovakia internationally as a country that is open to the world, we would like the foreign ministry to be an institution that is open, visible and understandable to all. I am sure that this publication you hold before you now will help in this respect.



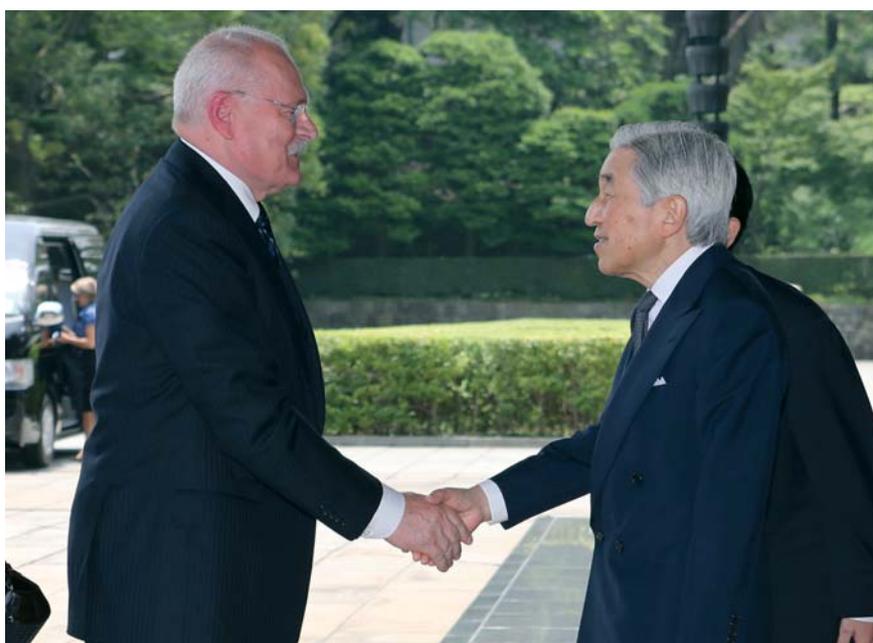
Miroslav LAJČÁK
Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs
of the Slovak Republic



Prime Minister Robert Fico and
Minister of Foreign and European
Affairs Miroslav Lajčák when
assuming office, 13 April 2012
(Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)



Joint press conference between Prime
Minister Robert Fico and President of the
European Commission José Manuel Barroso
during the first working visit of the Slovak
prime minister to Brussels, 24 April 2012
(Photo: TASR/Michal Svitok)



Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič
meets Emperor of Japan Akihito
in Tokyo, 27 June 2012
(Photo: TASR/AP/Itsuo Inouye)



Dear friends,

In the twenty years of its existence, the Slovak Republic has built a strong position for itself on the international stage. This has been achieved through our steady, balanced and value-oriented foreign policy. While conducting my activities last year as state secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and as ambassador in Washington and in the UN, I had the opportunity to see that our partners are inspired and motivated by Slovakia's success. It is what makes us attractive and a "soft power", and it has an extraordinarily important role to play in our pursuit of our foreign policy priorities. In this respect, we are able to make use of and share our experiences of the transformation and integration processes, not simply in terms of bilateral cooperation programmes, but also within international organisations and institutions, mainly the UN.

In this context, Slovakia's position is also growing as a credible partner, active contributor and regional and global security provider. There is much recognition of the work and leadership we have shown in

strengthening the role of the UN and its agencies, and in adopting a comprehensive approach to security sector reform, an important element in peace building in post-conflict countries.

We have also been successful in reinforcing our system and programmes for development cooperation. In this regard, greater collaboration with the non-governmental and business sectors has proved to be exceptionally good. NGOs and civil society are very important partners for us in developing foreign policy and realising foreign policy priorities. We would like to continue to expand and make good use of this working relationship and dialogue with the non-governmental sector.

As was the case last year, we would like to engage in regular dialogue with the business community and exporters, so that our economic diplomacy best reflects their needs and expectations. Briefly, we would like our foreign policy to be as close to the people as possible and for it to accurately reflect our national interests and requirements.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Burian P.".

Peter BURIAN
State Secretary

Dear friends,



It might seem that 2012 was just another in a series of crisis years that the eurozone is experiencing. In reality, though, it has been a turning point on two levels at least:

1. on the European level – the EU institutions and member states began introducing systemic solutions to the current crisis, and so the process of strengthening the economic and monetary union is underway;
2. on the national level – European affairs now occupies a special position within foreign affairs and is undergoing a new dynamic.

The year 2012 can therefore be seen as a milestone in building a stronger Europe. There is no doubt that a stronger Europe also means a stronger Slovakia.

The process of strengthening the economic and monetary union will lead to a new quality of European integration. Towards the end of the year, we reached agreement in the first key area – the single supervisory mechanism. Seeking optimal ways for the functioning of the EU and the eurozone specifically is, however, a long-term process. Discussions on the other pillars – fiscal, economic and political – are still at the initial stages.

Over the past twelve months the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has invested a lot of energy into negotiations on the next multiannual financial

framework that will determine the volume of public investment and support economic growth and employment in Slovakia until 2020. In an attempt to make best use of European resources in modernising the country, we initiated a parallel discussion on drafting a Partnership Agreement with the European Commission.

In 2012 we began preparations for the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016. It is a prestigious and difficult undertaking. Moreover, this will be the first time Slovakia will hold the post. In addition to the organisational and practical aspects, and securing the financial side of the presidency, we also wish to focus first and foremost on organising the human resources. Taking inspiration from countries that have already presided over the Council of the EU is also an essential part of the preparations for this unique responsibility.

We realise that the success of the European project is closely connected with – or even dependent on – the support of the people. We have therefore begun organising a National Convention on the European Union, which will soon begin functioning again and launch an open public debate on European policies in Slovakia. We would like the EU and our engagement in European affairs to be clearly understood by both the general public and experts.



Peter JAVORČÍK
State Secretary



Meeting of the European Union's Friends of Cohesion group on 5 October 2012 in Bratislava, attesting to Slovakia's active role within the EU (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)



1

Active European policy

European policy is a key element in the Slovak Republic's domestic and foreign policy. In part, that is why when the powers of the ministry were increased in 2012 in order to improve coordination of European policies, the post of state secretary for EU affairs was also reinstated. The ministry consistently carried out its role as European coordinator at the national level. This responsibility relates to the increased powers awarded to the ministry, which are also evident in the new name of the ministry.

The Slovak Republic was a staunch and predictable partner in the EU throughout 2012. Our approach was based on the fundamental, interlinked principles of responsibility and solidarity.

The European Union has just undergone another difficult year, dominated by efforts to reach agreements that would help stabilise the eurozone and by discussions on the future of the EU and debates on the next multiannual financial framework. Membership in the eurozone turned out to be of key importance. Slovakia was able to participate directly in negotiations on key documents concerning the future of the eurozone and the EU. In June 2012 we ratified the Treaty establishing the European Stability Mechanism and in December the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the decision to sign the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary

Union, known as the Fiscal Compact. At the June 2012 meeting of the European Council, we supported the adoption of the Compact for Growth and Jobs, which aims to stimulate the adoption of pro-growth legislation in order to create jobs using both traditional and innovative instruments.

Negotiations on the 2014–2020 financial framework of the European Union were at the top of the EU agenda in 2012. During the negotiations, the Slovak Republic set out its main priorities – maintaining a strong EU cohesion policy and securing sufficient resources for



Prime Minister Robert Fico, Minister of Finance Peter Kažimír and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák at a meeting with the European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič during the first joint working visit to Brussels, 24 April 2012 (Photo: TASR/Michal Svítok)

Active European policy



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša and Prime Minister Robert Fico at the EU summit, 23 May 2012 (Photo: TASR/AP/Yves Logghe)

further regional development in Slovakia; reforming the Common Agricultural Policy so as to reduce the differences in direct payments between member states; and maintaining sufficient EU funding for the closure of two blocks at the nuclear power station in Jaslovské Bohunice. During the negotiations on the financial framework, Slovakia coordinated its position with its partners and negotiated as a member of a group of

countries, specifically, the Visegrad Four and the Friends of Cohesion Policy group.

In 2012, the government took the first important steps in preparing for the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2016. The government approved the following key documents: Preparations for the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2016 – starting points and current priorities; and the Staffing Proposal for the Permanent Representation at the EU in Brussels for preparations for and during the presidency. The aim was to ensure that Slovakia is completely prepared for this challenging and prestigious role.



The three highest EU representatives collect the Nobel Peace Prize in October on behalf of the EU in Oslo (Photo: TASR/AP/Cornelius Poppe)

The Interministerial Coordination Council was created to coordinate the main responsibilities relating to the presidency and to monitor the state of preparations within the ministries. The ministries have therefore commenced preparations for creating the various structures required for the presidency. This includes pinpointing the representatives qualified to join the EU council working groups and committees as well as organising a public



The Slovak Republic was actively involved in creating the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), a new structure created outside the EU, where the aim is to provide fast, direct and flexible financial support to political figures promoting democratic reform in the partner countries. In November 2012 the Slovak candidate, Pavol Demeš, was elected as member of the Board of Directors of the European Endowment for Democracy, from among representatives of civil society.

administration training programme to meet the needs of the presidency.

On this basis, a global framework and timetable for the presidency preparations was drawn up. Throughout the year, a number of consultations were held with international partners in order that experiences of preparing for the EU council presidency could be exchanged.

Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership

Promoting Euro-Atlantic values and principles continues to be one of the main premises underlying Slovakia's foreign policy. Slovak diplomats were keen to point out in Brussels and at bilateral meetings that, despite being faced with difficult internal challenges, Europe should not forget about events occurring beyond its borders nor about its own ambitions about playing an active role in spreading stability and prosperity.

Slovakia continued to dedicate time to helping candidate and potential candidate countries in the



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák in conversation with his counterparts Nikola Poposki of Macedonia and Edmond Haxhinasto of Albania, 13 April 2012 (Photo: Vladimír Benko)



Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák at the bilateral talks with the Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić in Belgrade, 21 September 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR)

Western Balkans with their reform and integration efforts. Slovakia advocated that countries aspiring to EU or NATO membership should consistently meet the established criteria and conditions. When evaluating progress made, Slovakia favoured an individual approach, "each according to merit", and the principle of conditionality. It was also thanks to our efforts that these principles were included in the Council of the EU findings on enlargement in 2012. However, it should be noted that although Slovakia is one of the most active advocates for Western Balkan integration within the EU, it can also be highly critical if the countries fail to achieve satisfactory results in implementing the required measures.

We were the first member state to approve the treaty on Croatia's accession to the EU. In 2012, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign and European Affairs Minister Miroslav Lajčák had meetings with all his partners, and he was also a key speaker at the Belgrade Security Forum. At his public engagements in Europe, America and Asia, he presented Slovakia's perceptions of and outlook on the situation in the Western Balkans, and lent support to the enlargement policy.

One example of the hard work we have carried out in relation to the Western Balkans is the technical assistance we have provided to Montenegro. In 2012, we continued implementing two large projects

Active European policy



During their joint working visit to Macedonia, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák and his Austrian counterpart Michael Spindelegger expressed their political support for Skopje in relation to Macedonia's EU integration efforts, providing that all the criteria will be fulfilled, 10 July 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR)

– the National Convention on the European Union in Montenegro and the NATO Speaking Tour. The national convention project has very successfully engaged not only civil society, but also other sections of society in the process of European integration, creating a broad platform for discussions on issues related to Montenegro's European integration. The convention clearly helped Montenegro meet the conditions for achieving candidate country status and begin accession negotiations. The speaking tour project was designed to increase public awareness in Montenegro on all aspects of the country's NATO membership. Slovakia will continue both successful projects in 2013.

The Eastern Partnership is a long-term project. It does not automatically lead to EU membership, but neither does it preclude such a possibility. The extent to which the countries progress depends solely on their main protagonists. This was the message we conveyed during the discussions we had with our Eastern partners, mainly Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. We assisted them with transformation and entered into discussions with EU partners particularly about the drafting of the Eastern Partnership Roadmap. All in all, we thus confirmed our desire to be amongst those leading discussions on the future direction of this key trajectory in EU foreign policy. Slovakia's contribution to the discussions on the Eastern Partnership led to the creation of the Eastern Partnership platform. The ministry prompted its establishment with the aim of defining Slovakia's role and further opportunities in the Eastern Partnership region. The platform brings together representatives of all sections of society – civil society, the state and the commercial sector as well.

In relations with Ukraine, Slovakia sought in-depth dialogue and the establishment of a framework that would lead to the signing of an association agreement. Slovakia continued to share its experiences of the pre-accession and reform processes and of instituting reforms to harmonise standards and the value-based framework of the European Union. We were also very successful in our continual support for the National Convention on the European Union in Ukraine, which was the only forum in Ukraine to establish a functioning platform for public debate on the fundamental issues of Ukraine–EU relations.



Lubomír Rehák
Political Director
General, MFEA SR

EU membership remains the main motivating factor behind the development and reform processes

How do you assess the development in the Western Balkans in 2012 in relation to their interest in joining the EU?

Despite the current scepticism in the EU, the prospect of membership remains the main motivating factor for development and reform processes in the Western Balkans. In 2012, progress was achieved

in all countries, although differences do naturally exist. The decision on Croatia's accession to the EU was a strong signal of motivation for the entire region. We began accession negotiations with Montenegro, Serbia achieved the status of a candidate country, and an EU-mediated dialogue was launched between Belgrade and Pristina. We believe that the decisions on enlargement adopted by the EU General Affairs Council in December 2012 provide an incentive for further progress in the European integration efforts of our friends in the Western Balkans.

How do you evaluate the work and role of Slovak diplomacy in the Western Balkans?

Slovak diplomacy is firmly established in the region. It is also very positively perceived by our partners in European and Euro-Atlantic organisations. The nearest Western Balkan countries are located only a few hundred kilometres



Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák giving a speech on bilateral relations and on relations between the EU and Ukraine at a conference organised by the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 8 November 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

Moldova made the greatest progress in implementing processes initiated through the Eastern Partnership. The Slovak Republic has long supported Moldova's European prospects and 2012 was no different. We continued with the project of sharing transformation experiences. As part of the Community of Democracies and Task Force Moldova, Slovakia became a co-chairing country of the working group for migration. The year 2012 saw the continuation of a project successfully initiated by Slovakia – the National Convention on the EU in Moldova – which has been much appreciated by the Moldovans, both by the government and the non-governmental sectors, as a forum providing professional solutions. Considering the increasing number of activities relating to Moldova, the Slovak

government has decided to establish an embassy in Kishinev in 2013.

In 2012, Slovakia provided not only political support, but also practical technical assistance through the Centre for Transfer of Integration and Reform Experience (CETIR) established at the ministry and through projects approved as part of official development assistance. Thanks to our experience, expertise and long-established contacts in the Western Balkans and in the Eastern Partnership countries, Slovakia's opinions are met with respect.



Bilateral relations and the European future of Moldova were the topics of discussion between the Moldovan and Slovak foreign ministers Iurie Leanca and Miroslav Lajčák, 8 November 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

from our borders. In some of these countries, there are Slovak minorities and we share historical and cultural ties with them. Our partners value the fact that we share our experiences of our own transformation and integration processes with them, and that we also provide them with development and technical assistance.

The European Commission and the European External Action Service revised the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2012 and produced a series of strategic documents, including the Eastern Partnership Roadmap. How do you perceive the development of the Eastern Partnership in the past year and what are its future prospects?

The Eastern Partnership project continued relatively successfully in 2012, with strong support from Slovakia through political and economic contacts, development and technical assistance and collaboration with the

non-governmental sector. During 2012, several partner countries made significant progress in EU negotiations on association agreements, on agreements on a deep and comprehensive free trade area, and on visa liberalisation. Naturally, we cannot close our eyes to the existence of factors preventing the partnership policy from being implemented, such as frozen conflicts, democratic deficits, a lack of horizontal cooperation among partners or the temptation to build Potemkin villages instead of fulfilling the partnership criteria. Developments in several partner countries indicate how fragile democratic institutions and economic balance can be during transition. Hence, it is all the more important to continue with political association, economic integration and the overall modernisation of the partner countries based on EU values and standards.



Prime Minister Robert Fico and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Volkswagen Slovakia, a.s. Albrecht Reimol lay the foundation stone for the new body shop in Bratislava, 2 July 2012 (Photo: TASR/Martin Baumann)

2

Economic diplomacy



Rapidly developing globalisation on the one hand and the open Slovak economy on the other mean that Slovakia's future and prosperity increasingly depend on its ability to best promote its business and economic interests in the world. In this respect economic diplomacy has a key role to play, which requires close coordination between the state and the commercial sector.

The Competences Act was amended in October 2012, strengthening the powers of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic while ensuring that Slovakia's business and economic interests are pursued in a coordinated fashion and that Slovakia is uniformly presented abroad. Economic diplomacy has been transformed into a service for the business community, and communication between economic diplomats and businesses and organisations in the Slovak Republic has been improved.

Our main responsibility in 2012 was to consolidate the coordination mechanism and ensure effective cooperation between the different entities. To this end, the Government Council for Export and Investment Promotion was established to mediate a coordinated approach between the state and commercial sector in international economic activities and in presenting Slovakia abroad.

In 2012 we succeeded in launching an in-depth dialogue with representatives of the Slovak business community and the findings were reflected in a new proposal for appointing economic diplomats to Slovak embassies. Economic diplomats were again posted to selected EU countries where Slovak foreign trade and investment potential is concentrated as well as to countries where we wish to enhance economic cooperation.

International economic organisations

In line with its foreign policy priorities and economic interests, in 2012 the Slovak Republic backed the expansion of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's activities into the Western Balkans and South Eastern Mediterranean. At the International Monetary Fund, the Slovak Republic was involved in establishing a new constituency for Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. As part of work within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Slovak experts were primarily engaged in drafting the OECD survey on the current state and future development of the Slovak economy, including recommendations, presented by Secretary General of OECD Angel Gurría in Bratislava in early December 2012.

Economic diplomacy



Minister of Economy Tomáš Malatinský and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák sign the Memorandum on Cooperation, 1 August 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

The signing of a Memorandum on Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic on conducting economic diplomacy changed the way in which the two institutions work together so as to make cooperation more effective.

A new type of business mission to countries with innovation and research potential was introduced, known as the Innovation Forum. It is worth mentioning a forum in Switzerland, for example, which was followed up by the Swissness 2012 innovation forum in Bratislava in October 2012. Another innovation forum, Tubitak, held in Gebze near Istanbul in Turkey, resulted in an agreement on joint research and close scientific cooperation between Slovakia and Turkey in seven areas. For the sake of completeness, we can add that innovation forums also took place during official visits of the president of the Slovak Republic to Denmark and the Netherlands.

Work in economic diplomacy was greatly benefited by the creation of a policy on life-long economic learning for diplomatic staff at the ministry, designed to provide them with the knowledge and experience required to promote Slovakia's economic interests abroad.

Energy security

In order to improve the energy security of the Slovak Republic and pursue its energy policy priorities, Slovak foreign policy concentrated on securing steady and predictable energy supplies, while focusing on two basic aspects:

1. securing a steady and reliable supply of natural gas and oil from Russia via Ukraine, and resisting



State Secretary Peter Burian and Bratislava Mayor Milan Ftáčnik officially launch the Spotlight Singapore project, 24 September 2012 (Photo: Rastislav Polák)



Minister of Economy Tomáš Malatinský and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák and gave speeches at the 6th conference on Slovakia's energy security organised by Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 26 November 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

increased pressure to circumvent existing transit routes to Europe through Ukraine and Slovakia;

2. actively supporting regional cooperation and developing bilateral relations with neighbours so that Slovakia is connected to gas and oil pipeline networks in neighbouring countries, providing it with access to new routes and potentially also to new sources of raw material supplies. In negotiating with partners, we lend our continual support to the diversification of routes and energy sources, including the building of cross-border energy infrastructure, and we favour expert discussion on nuclear power, which is an important part of the energy mix of the Slovak Republic.

In 2012, Slovakia chaired the OSCE's Economic and Environmental Committee, thus providing scope for us to participate in further developing energy security within OSCE and in renewed discussion on energy due to the upcoming Ukrainian chairmanship.

The Business Centre at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic has an internet-based information service on foreign trade and getting established on foreign markets for Slovak businesses entitled *Let's do business abroad*. In order to help Slovak businesses penetrate foreign markets, the ministry deals directly with queries from the business community, publishes economic information, and works with Slovak business unions and associations, self-governing regions and governmental agencies. In 2012 a database of Slovak exporters was created at the centre, which is continually expanding and is primarily of assistance to economic diplomats abroad seeking to identify suitable partners for cooperation. The database can also be accessed via the website by foreign companies seeking partners in Slovakia.



Visegrad Four prime ministers during the V4 summit in Prague, where the Czech Republic handed over the V4 Presidency to Poland, 22 June 2012 (Photo: TASR/Michal Svítok)

3

Relations with neighbours, regional and bilateral cooperation



In terms of Central European regional cooperation, relations with neighbouring countries continued to develop in line with the importance that the Slovak Republic has long accorded them.

With the new Slovak government in power, bilateral relations with neighbours demonstrated an exceptionally high level of contact. The emphasis was mainly pragmatic, focusing on strengthening regional cohesion and security, primarily through projects relating to the economy, and energy and transport infrastructure.

For some time now the Slovak Republic has prioritised regional cooperation via the Visegrad Group (V4). Slovakia considers this to be a natural consultation and coordination mechanism for promoting common interests and goals within Europe. It is also important in working together on key regional issues that strengthen the internal cohesion of the region, such as the energy industry and energy security, transport, defence, civil society and mutual activities that support democracy building in Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans. The trust displayed between the Visegrad partners has reached an extraordinarily high level, which is evident in the cooperation over the establishment of a V4 Battlegroup by 2016. It is also thanks to our initiatives and responsible approach that the Visegrad Group is experiencing one of its most productive periods in its twenty-year long history.

Good relations with neighbours

Czech Republic

The high level of contact with the Czech Republic affirmed the special relations between the two countries and brought new momentum that was reflected in the historical first joint meeting between the governments of the Slovak and Czech Republics in October 2012 in Uherské Hradiště and Trenčín. Apart from the symbolism of the meeting held on the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the



During the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group, a meeting of the V4 and Western Balkans foreign ministers was held in Warsaw, 25 October 2012 (Photo: TASR/AP/Alik Kaplicz)

Relations with neighbours, regional and bilateral...



The first joint session of the governments of the Slovak and Czech Republics held in the towns of Uherské Hradiště and Trenčín, where the topics of discussion were the key issues of bilateral cooperation, security policy, energy security and infrastructure projects, 29 October 2012 (Photo: TASR/Radovan Stoklasa)

emergence of the two independent republics, the joint meeting also highlighted the importance of non-governmental contact and cooperation in the energy industry, including nuclear energy, transport, defence and culture.

During a meeting of the European Nuclear Energy Forum in Bratislava, both prime ministers expressed mutual support for developing the nuclear energy industry. At the roundtable meeting with businesses in Prague, the prime ministers backed further economic and commercial cooperation.

The third session of the Czech–Slovak Discussion Forum at the end of 2012 in Brno affirmed that both sides

were ready and willing to mutually coordinate activities and exchange information on foreign policy and EU affairs. The 15th meeting of the intergovernmental commission for cross-border cooperation brought new initiatives as well. The fact that the two countries have excellent relations and no unresolved issues was affirmed at the end of the year with President Ivan Gašparovič's official visit to the Czech Republic, his last during President Václav Klaus' term.

Poland

There was also a significant degree of cooperation and dynamism in relations with the Republic of Poland. Meetings were held between the presidents, prime ministers and foreign affairs ministers. The first session of the Slovak–Polish Discussion Forum was a new contribution to the strategic dialogue. Emphasis was again on cooperating in strategic areas such as energy security, defence and cross-border and regional cooperation. Poland's significance as a business and investment partner has continued to grow. One step that may enhance the international appeal of both countries, benefit tourism and the building of infrastructure in the border regions was the signing of a memorandum on whether Cracow and the Tatras should submit a joint bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Hungary

In relations with Hungary, we focused on achieving a positive outcome in economic cooperation, transport infrastructure and energy security. The prime minister paid two working visits to Hungary during which the Slovak House in Mlynyky funded by the governments of



Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico at the Friends of Cohesion group meeting in Bratislava, 5 October 2012 (Photo: TASR/Pavel Neubauer)



The Slovak and Hungarian prime ministers, Robert Fico and Viktor Orbán, open a centre for the local Slovak minority in the Hungarian village of Mlynky, 2 October 2012 (Photo: TASR/MTI/Attila Kovács)

both countries was opened, an agreement on building a new road bridge over the Danube at Komárno was signed, a joint economic forum was held, and plans were laid for a Slovak–Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. Visits by the deputy prime minister and minister of foreign and European affairs to Budapest also contributed to the pragmatic development of bilateral relations.

Joint commissions resumed their work as a means of helping implement the basic treaty between the two countries and of resolving problematic issues. A Slovak–Hungarian expert dialogue was initiated between teams of lawyers on the international aspects of the citizenship issue. Slovakia brought up the issue of Hungary's failure to comply with the 2003 bilateral agreement on joint support for national minorities in education and culture at the joint commission for minority affairs. The year 2012 also saw closure of the incident in which former Hungarian President László Sólyom was prevented from entering Slovakia. The EU Court of Justice confirmed that the Slovak Republic had not violated Community law by preventing László Sólyom from entering its territory.

Austria

Frequent contact between the highest constitutional representatives led to a further strengthening in bilateral relationships with Austria. Both the president of the Republic of Austria and the speaker of the Austrian Parliament paid visits to Slovakia, and the numerous meetings between foreign affairs ministers and other ministers were important in developing bilateral contacts. The bilateral dialogue between the two countries was bolstered by regular consultations between the foreign affairs ministries.

Given the sensitive nature of the nuclear energy issue in Slovak–Austrian relations, Slovakia continued to pursue an open approach and transparent communication on this issue, including nuclear energy security. Attention was also regularly paid to expanding regional cross-border cooperation and building cross-border infrastructure, including the opening up the Cycle Bridge of Freedom between Devínska Nová Ves and Schlosshof to public access in Austria and Slovakia.

Ukraine

Relations with Ukraine were affected by the 2012 parliamentary elections in both countries; nonetheless, political dialogue continued. The 11th session of the Slovak–Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission for National Minorities, Education and Culture took place. We also continued to adopt practical measures leading to the simplification and liberalisation of the visa regime.



Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák meets his Austrian counterpart Michael Spindelegger at the opening of the cycle bridge between Devínska Nová Ves and Schlosshof, 22 September 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

Relations with neighbours, regional and bilateral...

Bilateral cooperation

The subject matter of bilateral meetings with representatives of European Union countries was significantly affected by developments within the EU. Several high level visits took place in 2012 as a result of intense bilateral relations at the working level. Pressing issues included finding solutions to deal with the eurozone crisis, strengthening bilateral cooperation, and supporting the growth in trade and investment.

Our relations with *Germany* in 2012 were characterised by regular meetings at the highest political and working levels. Following his appointment as minister, Miroslav Lajčák made Germany his second destination following his visit to the Czech Republic. Prime Minister Robert Fico visited Germany in July. The visit by German Vice-Chancellor and Economy Minister Philipp Rösler attested to Germany's special position in Slovak European and economic policy.

Activities in several federal states helped develop cooperation and strengthen Slovakia's image as a dynamic, innovative and open country. In 2012 Slovakia received several economic missions led by government members or representatives from states such as Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Baden-Württemberg.



Mutual talks between Slovak Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák and Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle on EU issues including the Fiscal Compact and the situation in the eurozone as well as the multiannual financial framework, 10 May 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR)

The culmination of bilateral activities with *France* was Prime Minister Robert Fico's working visit to Paris, where he also met President François Hollande. In 2012, both parties began preparing the new Cooperation Action Plan for 2013–2018. There was also greater cooperation over culture in connection with planning for the 2013 European Capitals of Culture – Košice and Marseille.

In 2012, intergovernmental dialogue with the *United States of America* took place at several levels. Minister Miroslav Lajčák's July visit to Washington DC was a



President Ivan Gašparovič being received by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, during his visit to the Netherlands, 20 November 2012 (Photo: TASR/Michal Svítok)



During his visit to France, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák has talks with his counterpart Laurent Fabius on bilateral relations and on EU-related issues, 13 September 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Boris Gandel)

Relation building with *Russia* continues to be framed by the goal of building a strategic partnership between the EU and its largest Eastern neighbour. Slovakia sought open dialogue with Moscow and the building of a partnership that is free of prejudice and based on specific projects and outcomes. In December, Minister Miroslav Lajčák visited Moscow, assessing opportunities for further developing cooperation and stimulating business activities, particularly where the more economically promising regions of Russia are concerned.

reflection of the quality of bilateral relations between the two countries. The parliamentary dimension of cooperation can be viewed as having been extremely successful during this period, as demonstrated by the increasing number of visits by US congressmen to Slovakia. Our partners emphasised the importance of Slovakia being actively involved and fulfilling its NATO commitments, engaging in Afghanistan, and sharing experiences of the transformation process with countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Northern Africa.



In December 2012 Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák pays an official visit to the Russian Federation at the invitation of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov (Photo: MFEA SR/Boris Gandel)



Bilateral relations and key issues in international relations were among the topics discussed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington, 25 July 2012 (Photo: US State Department)



The Chicago NATO summit primarily focused on Afghanistan, military capabilities and partnerships, 20 May 2012 (Photo: TASR/AP)

4

Safe and democratic world



In 2012 Slovakia's external security was determined by overall stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Continued unrest and instability on the periphery of the Euro-Atlantic region, mainly in Northern Africa and the Middle East, did not directly affect Slovakia's external security. Slovakia was involved in solving these issues mainly as a member of the European Union and NATO. In response to increasing cross-border attacks from conflict ridden Syria directed at Turkey, Slovakia supported the resolution of its NATO allies to deploy Patriot anti-missile systems within Turkey to strengthen its defence against potential ballistic missile attacks.

At the May 2012 Chicago NATO summit, Slovakia announced its intention to participate in five multinational projects aimed at building up the alliance's defence capacities so that defence resources could be most effectively employed (the Smart Defence initiative). In this regard, Slovakia also pushed for NATO and the EU to work as closely together as possible. In support of NATO's open door policy, the Slovak Republic and other allies pushed for a meeting in Chicago between foreign affairs ministers with the four countries aspiring to NATO membership. The final declaration from the Chicago summit sent a positive signal to the aspiring countries designed to encourage them in implementing further reforms.

The Slovak Republic put great emphasis on expanding the stability and security zone and thus on NATO

cooperation with partner countries. It successfully applied to run the NATO Contact Point Embassy in Belgrade during 2013 and 2014.

In 2012 members of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic and civilian experts participated in several international crisis management operations and missions – operations led by NATO and the EU – and also in two UN missions. The diplomatic efforts of the Slovak Republic resulted in the mandate being once

Security Sector Reform

Slovakia continued in its work aimed at supporting Security Sector Reform (SSR). In October, the Slovak Republic co-organised a high-level meeting in Nairobi to discuss SSR challenges in East Africa. As chairing country, it organised a meeting of the Group of Friends of SSR at the UN in New York in December, where technical guidelines for SSR stemming from work conducted by an interagency working group on SSR were officially presented. As co-chair of Task Force Tunisia as part of the Community of Democracies, Slovakia also backed SSR-related activities in Tunisia.

Safe and democratic world



NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, President Ivan Gašparovič and US President Barack Obama during the NATO summit in Chicago, 20 May 2012 (Photo: TASR/AP/Carolyn Kaster)



GLOBSEC international conference, organised annually with the kind support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, is a significant contribution to the international debate on foreign and security policy (Photo: Vladimír Benko)

again extended for the EUFOR ALTHEA operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Slovak Republic took over the leading role at the mission coordination centre in Sarajevo in September 2012.

Priority was also given to the ISAF operation in Afghanistan where Slovakia planned and is gradually adjusting its contribution in connection with the on-going process of handing over responsibility to

Slovak participation in international crisis management operations and missions as of 31 December 2012

Mission	Country	Number of personnel (Armed Forces, the Police, civilians)
NATO		
ISAF (International Security Assistance Force)	Afghanistan	253
NATO Headquarters, Sarajevo	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
EU		
ALTHEA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	34
EUMM	Georgia	6 (1 + 4 + 1)
EULEX	Kosovo	4
EUBAM	Moldova/Ukraine	4
EUPOL	Afghanistan	2
EUPOL COPPS	Palestine	1
UN		
UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus)	Cyprus	159
UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization)	Syria and Israel	2



Kabul press conference by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Afghanistan, Ján Kubiš, 25 January 2012 (Photo: UN Photo)

the Afghan authorities. Over the year, the number of Slovak soldiers in operations was reduced from 343 to 253. Slovakia contributed 1 million euros to developing the Afghan National Solidarity Programme. This commitment stemmed from the international conference on Afghanistan which took place in Tokyo in July. Slovakia also announced its decision to contribute 1.5 million US dollars during 2015–2017 to ensure the sustainability of Afghan national security forces.

To assist in developing the crisis management capacities of the European Union, the Slovak Republic promoted close cooperation between the EU and NATO, and supported the search for the financially most effective solutions for building defence capacities within the Pooling and Sharing initiative. It also tried to make best use of regional cooperation, mainly the V4 countries. In 2012, work continued on creating the EU Battlegroup of V4 countries, which will be ready in the first half of 2016.



On an official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, President Ivan Gašparovič visits members of the Slovak military contingent operating within the ALTHEA mission, 28 November 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

Safe and democratic world



President of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, UN Secretary General Pan Ki-mun and President of the UN Economic and Social Council Miloš Koterec during the July session, 2 July 2012 (Photo: UN Photo/Evan Schneider)

Engaging in international organisations

In 2012, Slovakia used its membership in international organisations to push for decisions and solutions made on the basis of respecting the principles and standards of international law. We backed the idea of strengthening multilateral mechanisms within international relationships, advocated consolidating the current system of global standards and institutions, and carrying out internal reform of international organisations to improve their ability to respond flexibly to the growing number of challenges and to make effective use of financial resources.

Our work in the UN in 2012 was dominated by our first presidency of one of its principal bodies – the Economic and Social Council. The one-year presidency was the

culmination of three years of successful membership in the UN Economic and Social Council and provided Slovakia with the unique opportunity of actively engaging in multilateral aspects of the UN's economic and social responsibilities.

In terms of the OSCE, Slovakia supported autonomy of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and rejected attempts by some countries to weaken the election monitoring methodology. Slovakia was actively involved in the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission. We sent eight short-term and one long-term election observers to the Russian Federation, Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine. In 2012, contact between Slovakia and the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities continued to provide inspiration.



Roman Bužek
Director General for
International Organisations,
Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid, MFEA SR

Slovakia has been promoting a staunch, predictable and value-oriented policy

In what way did the Slovak Republic succeed in strengthening its position in international relations?

In terms of its relations with the different countries and its work in international organisations,

the Slovak Republic has long been promoting a staunch, predictable and value-oriented policy rooted in the positions adopted by EU member states. We have consistently coordinated our steps with EU member states and the Eastern European Regional Group. As a consequence, since 1993 we have built our reputation as a reliable partner promoting principles and respecting agreements. The results achieved, including having fielded a successful number of applicants, testify to the appropriateness of this position.

Can you provide further examples demonstrating that the Slovak Republic has strengthened its position in international organisations?



President Ivan Gašparovič and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák at a meeting between the UN Secretary General Pan Ki-mun, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Afghanistan Ján Kubiš and the Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia Miroslav Jenča, 24 September 2012 (Photo: UN Photo/Jeniffer S. Altman)

In connection to the commitments arising from our membership in the Council of Europe, the Slovak Republic was involved in strengthening the three fundamental pillars of this international organisation – human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and our involvement in the process of reforming the European Court of Human Rights reflected this.

We ensured that candidates were fielded to international organisations. This was one of the ways

in which the Slovak Republic tried to strengthen its position in international relations. In 2012, Slovak Ambassador Ľubomír Kopaj was successfully nominated for the post of Head of the OSCE mission to Montenegro, and Peter Guráň was re-elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In 2012, Ambassador Miloš Koterec chaired the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main UN bodies. In addition, Slovakia was elected as a member of the UN Security Council in 2006–2007, the UN Human Rights Committee from 2008 to 2011, the UN Economic and Social Council for three years from 2010 to 2012, and subsequently chaired the latter in 2012, which all points to the high professionalism of the Slovak foreign service and is recognition of Slovakia's work within the UN. It represents the successful culmination of the Slovak Republic's twenty-year membership of this organisation.

From 2012 to 2015 Judge Peter Tomka is to preside over the International Court of Justice in the Hague . The professionalism and competence of our diplomats is further demonstrated by other representatives of the Slovak Republic who hold important positions within the UN – Ján Kubiš has been Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Afghanistan and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) since January 2012. Miroslav Jenča has managed the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) in Ashgabad, in addition to being Special Representative of the UN Secretary General since June 2008.



State Secretary Peter Burian at the Slovak Development Forum in Nairobi, 18–21 November 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Michal Komada)

5 Development cooperation



Slovak official development assistance (ODA) in 2012 was primarily focused on improving the inclusiveness of partner countries. The capacities of the national system of development cooperation were strengthened in line with the recommendations made in the peer review by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and in keeping with the belief that ODA should be effective.

In 2012 development assistance was aimed primarily at programme countries (Afghanistan, South Sudan and Kenya) and the project countries where projects on sharing experiences were implemented – the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia), the EU's Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine), and the Southern neighbourhood (Egypt, Tunisia).

The fundamental sectoral priorities of Slovak ODA in 2012 were democracy building, infrastructure (healthcare, education) and agriculture development, environmental protection and climate change prevention. The intersectoral priorities focused on gender equality and good public governance.

In 2012, we approved a new course of action entitled Strategy for Engaging Businesses in Slovak Development Cooperation, where the aim is to improve the sustainability of development projects and support the development activities of Slovak businesses.

In November 2012, Slovak businesses and NGOs participated in a Slovak Development Forum organised by the ministry in Kenya. The Forum helped strengthen cooperation between NGOs and the private sector.

In 2012, the ministry implemented twenty three projects as part of the programme for sharing transformation and integration experiences with countries undergoing transformation (CETIR).

In 2012 projects worth 128,600 euros were realised as part of the CETIR programme, mainly in the form of study trips to Slovakia for state administration representatives in partner countries.

As part of the micro-grant scheme 56 projects were approved and 308,676 euros was allocated. Most of the micro-grants (18) were awarded by the embassy in Belgrade, followed by the embassy in Nairobi (14) and the embassies in Sarajevo and Bucharest for Moldova (5). Thirteen embassies participated in the programme.

The Programme for Sending Volunteers was launched and through it the ministry provided grants worth 79,500 euros to send 15 volunteers to countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, South Sudan, Lesotho, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia.

Development cooperation



Slovak Scholarship holders from developing countries being received by Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák. Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport Dušan Čaplovič also attended the meeting (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

CETIR promptly responds to the partner country's specific requirements using the experiences of Slovak ministries and other participating institutions. In collaboration with the embassies, the ministry continued to provide micro-grants in 2012, i.e. funding for small projects up to 5,000 euros.

We provided 138,500 euros worth of financial aid for humanitarian assistance aimed at resolving the acute crisis affecting refugees from Syria, eliminating long-term problems experienced by victims of earlier crises, such as grants for the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, and the programme for refugees and displaced persons in the Balkans (the Sarajevo Process). In terms of crisis situations, we also provided material humanitarian assistance to Syria and Montenegro totalling 170,000 euros.

The Platform of Non-Governmental Development Organisations has long been an important partner in planning and implementing development cooperation. In 2012 we worked together in organising development events and drawing up conceptual documents aimed at the wider public and experts

Good practice

Encouraging people to think about the future

Global education helps people to understand the connections between them and more distant parts of the world. It not only helps them to understand, but

also helps them to think critically and respond. The Slovak Republic is implementing the National Strategy for Global Education for 2012–2016 adopted by the government in January 2012. Many Slovak NGOs are involved in this. The eRko – Christian Children Communities' Movement implemented a project in 2012 aimed at improving primary school pupils' knowledge about the developing world through a magazine entitled *Rebrik* [Ladder]. By developing educational materials during the academic year

Grant scheme

In 2012 the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic approved 29 development projects worth 3,444,882 euros for the following countries:

Kenya	5
South Sudan	3
Afghanistan	4
Serbia	2
Ukraine	2
Moldova	1
Georgia	1
Belarus	1
Montenegro	1
Tunisia	3
Burma	1
Slovakia (global education, capacity building)	5



2011/2012, the magazine contributed to school educational programmes and extracurricular activities. At least 120 primary school teachers and approximately 15,000 young readers gained a basic knowledge of global education on both a practical and a theoretical level from *Rebrik*.

Helping preserve natural resources

A project by the People in Peril civic association was targeted at communities living near Mau forest, whose survival is closely bound up with the natural resources of the Mau forest. The project's strategy is based on Kenyan forest policy, which sees local communities as having an important role to play in protecting ecosystems.

In working with the communities the project seeks to achieve three main aims. The first is to eradicate the behaviour patterns that make these communities dependent on the resources provided by the Mau forest. The second is to introduce the communities to alternative sources of food (sheep and goat farming, beekeeping), more effective sources of fuel (biofuels and energy saving burners) and new sources of wood (forest nurseries). This project also focuses on renewing forested areas and water sources through community associations and by improving the capacities of the community for managing and protecting natural resources.

Improving the quality of education in Afghanistan

In order to help improve the quality of technical education in Afghanistan by creating partnerships between the Slovak University of Technology and the Polytechnical University in Kabul, a project entitled Human Capacity Building at the Polytechnical University in Kabul was implemented. The result was the transfer of tertiary education knowledge on technical sciences to Afghanistan. Considering the isolated nature of university education in the country and its far more ideal state, this project can be considered to be very positive. Afghan university lecturers had an opportunity to expand their knowledge and as a consequence bring their lectures up to date. New courses were introduced at the Polytechnical University in Kabul, which led to an increase in student interest. A current follow-up project being implemented by the Slovak University of



Community tree plantation in Molo, where a group of women are cultivating tree seedlings for the Mao forest reforestation (Photo: People in Peril)

Technology also testifies to the success of this project. The project aims to build a food microbiology and chemical engineering laboratory at a partner university in Kabul.

Debating the European future

Ukraine is the first Eastern Partnership country to have finalised negotiations with the EU on an association agreement. The EU has, however, made resolving the court cases involving the country's opposition and adhering to the rule of law a condition of signing the agreement. Despite this political crisis in relations, Ukraine's leaders are in agreement that European integration is the only long-term strategy for modernising the country. The Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association therefore continued to implement the National Convention on the European Union project – by institutionalising a platform for debate. The project has shown that open discussion leads to politicians showing greater responsibility for developments in Ukraine. It creates a platform making cooperation between the public sector and NGOs essential and ensures that the voices of experts are heard and that the public receives factual information. This kind of discussion lends importance to questions of a practical and real nature and to the challenges that Ukraine must face. It also creates an environment whereby citizens can become truly involved in public life. More information about the project is available at www.euconvention.org.ua.

https://www.mzv.sk/Register

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EUROPEJSKÉ ZÁLEŽNOSTI
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

NEFUNGUJE VÁM REGISTRÁCIA SPRÁVNE...?

Príhlasovacia stránka :: Osobné informácie :: **Núdzový kontakt** :: Cestovný plán :: Spolucestujúci :: Registračné údaje

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Základné údaje

Meno*: Ján
Priezvisko*: Vzorový
Titul: Ing
Pohlavie*: Muž
Dátum narodenia*: 15.03.1970
Hendikep - zdrav. postihnutie:

Adresa bydliska

Ulica*: Hlboká cesta 2
Mesto*: Bratislava 37
PSČ: 83336
Štát*: Slovensko

Kontakty

Mobil*: 09123456789
E-mail*: meno@email.sk
Telefón: +421 2 59785978

* - hodnota musí byť vyplnená
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Zrušiť Ďalej >>

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Núdzový kontakt

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Kontaktná osoba	Ulica	Mesto	PSČ	Štát	Vzťah	Telefón	Mobil	Email
Ján Vzorový		Bratislava 37	83336	Slovensko		+421 2 59785978	09123456789	meno@email.sk
Kontaktná osoba*	Ulica	Mesto	PSČ	Štát				
Jana Vzorová	Hlboká cesta 2	Bratislava 37	83336	Slovensko				
Príbuzenský vzťah	Telefón	Mobil**	Email**					

* - povinná hodnota, musí byť vyplnená len pre pridanie záznamu do tabuľky
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Registračné údaje

Info
Sumár údajov uvedených vo formulári. Uvedené údaje si prekonrolujte a v prípade potreby vyšlite kliknutím na ikonu "Tlačiť údaje". Pre úspešné ukončenie registrácie je potrebné údaje uložiť kliknutím na ikonu "Uložiť údaje". Po uložení údajov budete vyzvaný na zadanie overovacieho kódu a následne vám bude vygenerovaný jedinečný identifikačný kód. Pomocou identifikačného kódu sa budete môcť k vami zadaným údajom vrátiť a kedykoľvek ich upraviť. Vaše údaje budú uchované v systéme po dobu 30 dní od dátumu uvedenom v položke "Návrat z cesty".

Osobné informácie

Meno: Ján
Priezvisko: Vzorový
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Ján Vzorový		Bratislava 37	83336	Slovensko		+421 2 59785978	09123456789	meno@email.sk
Jana Vzorová	Hlboká cesta 2	Bratislava 37	83336	Slovensko	Manžel-ka		09987654321	meno2@email.sk

Cestovný plán

Cieľová krajina: Albánsko
Miesto pobytu:

Nástup cesty: 01.05.2013
Návrat z cesty: 20.05.2013
Typ návštevy: Turistika

Tranzitné krajiny

Tranzitná krajina: Srbsko
Miesto pobytu:

Spolucestujúci

Meno	Priezvisko	Dátum narodenia	Pohlavie	Príbuzenský vzťah	Hendikep - zdravotné postihnutie
Jozef	Druhý	01.03.1970	Muž	Známy	

<< Späť Uložiť údaje Tlačiť údaje Zrušiť

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Registration form for Slovak citizens travelling abroad

6

Services for the people



In 2012 Slovak embassies also focused on improving the quality and availability of the consular assistance and services that are provided not only to Slovak citizens abroad, but foreign nationals as well. One of the priorities of the ministry is improving the effectiveness and availability of consular services and it therefore pays particular attention to this area.

The improved quality of the consular services is due to the fact that since July 2012 they have been expanded to allow people to renew their driving licenses and obtain replacements. As of January 2013, it will also be possible to issue ID cards. These measures have undoubtedly made life easier for many Slovak citizens who would previously have had to travel from their country of residence to Slovakia. In an effort to improve the accessibility of the services provided to our citizens abroad, some embassies were increasingly able to provide a mobile service.

The ministry takes care to post information, travel recommendations, and advice and warnings on its website in good time. Citizens of the Slovak Republic and foreign nationals made use of this opportunity to obtain information through the Citizen Assistance and Services Centre that cooperates closely with the embassies of the Slovak Republic. Thanks to media publicity, a satisfactory number of registration forms

were completed by those mainly travelling to regions with security issues.

Slovakia is continuing in its attempt to conclude agreements on issuing visas. By the end of 2012, agreements had been concluded with seven EU countries (Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Latvia, the Czech

In 2012, we:

- processed 2,226 applications for proof of Slovak citizenship and 34 applications for granting Slovak citizenship;
- handled 270 applications to renounce Slovak citizenship;
- certified and translated 35,052 documents;
- recorded 478 entries in the Registry (births, marriages and deaths);
- assisted in 187 cases involving the protection of children's rights;
- dealt with 63 cases where children were removed from Slovak citizens;
- provided non-financial consular assistance abroad to 2,150 people and financial assistance to 11 people;
- dealt with the deaths of 558 Slovak citizens;
- assisted 17 victims of human trafficking;
- performed marriages for 42 couples;
- replied to 43,474 e-mail requests;
- issued 11,385 passports and 4,266 replacement documents;
- processed 873 applications for residency permits.

Services for the people



Group photograph of the honorary consuls with Prime Minister Robert Fico and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák, October 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

Republic, Poland and Lithuania) on issuing visas on behalf of Slovakia in 18 countries. Meanwhile, in keeping with existing agreements, Slovakia issues visas on behalf of Hungary, Slovenia, Latvia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania in 9 countries. Efforts in this area have a direct impact, leading to increased levels of tourism and economic and other activities between the Slovak Republic and third countries. Therefore the

Slovak Republic will continue in his attempts to expand the number of countries in which other EU member states can issue visas on its behalf.

Having analysed the consular practices of European countries in issuing visas to citizens of Ukraine and Russia, we decided to simplify visa procedures for citizens of both countries in line with the Schengen visa code of



Barbara Illková
Director General for
Legal and Consular
Affairs, MFEA SR

We can positively assess the work conducted by the consular services this year

What are the challenges facing the consular service?

The greatest challenge is providing a good consular service that protects and assists Slovak citizens abroad, and that can respond to the increasing requirements of the

times. This is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

We need to be aware that the number of citizens travelling abroad for work, study or family reasons, or as tourists is on the increase. Sometimes, however, people travel to other countries without proper knowledge of the local environment, or they travel to unstable regions or crisis areas. In response to this our first concern is to improve the range of consular services, make them more effective and accessible, and engage the public in dialogue. Protecting the interests of minors abroad is a sensitive issue and one that is always at the centre of attention of the consular services.



Prime Minister Robert Fico giving a speech at the 6th meeting of the Slovak honorary consuls held on 29–31 October 2012 in Bratislava, Trnava and Piešťany (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

practice. The rules on issuing visas will be maintained, but greater use will be made of the option of issuing 1–5 year visas to selected categories of applicants, particularly business applicants, students and regular visitors to tourist and recreational facilities in Slovakia.

The ministry continued to expand its network of honorary consulates abroad. At the end of the year,

there were more than 160 honorary consular officers within the network of offices. In 2012, Bratislava hosted the 6th meeting of honorary consuls representing the interests of the Slovak Republic in the world, with the aim of directing and synchronising the activities of the consulates in relation to the key responsibilities of the government of the Slovak Republic.

Slovakia's EU membership has also opened up new dimensions in terms of consular services. Working with other member states enables us to provide assistance to Slovak people in countries where Slovakia has no embassy.

How would you assess the work of the consular services of the Slovak Republic in 2012?

I believe that the work of the consular services this year should be evaluated positively. I think most of those who turned to us with applications for passports and registry documents, with documents to be certified, with visa applications and requests for marriages to be recognised

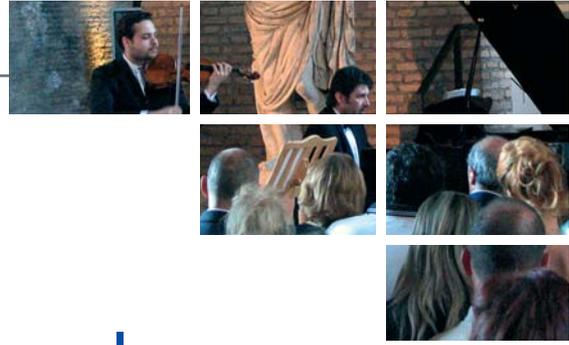
etc would agree with this. I and my fellow consuls are happy that we have been able to help reunite families and friends, and help people return home.

What is the goal of your work with the public?

I would like to express my belief that it is through the combined efforts of all of us who are part of the consular network that we are able to satisfy those in need of our services or assistance. In order to achieve this goal, collaboration and cooperation with the general public is of the essence and I value this enormously.



From the exhibition of Čičmany Wooden Houses by photographer Jaroslav Horečný at the Slovak Embassy in London as part of the cultural events linked to the Olympics in London, July 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR)



7 Public and cultural diplomacy

In 2012 the ministry was significantly more active and more focused in terms of the quality of public and cultural diplomacy. This was evident not simply in the programmes and the ideas behind the performances produced by Slovak institutions but also due to the projects and events put on by Slovak representative bodies abroad. We have started to see more of a focus on “soft diplomacy” in Slovak foreign policy, a more sophisticated means of promoting Slovakia’s interests abroad through cultural projects and representations that transverse a wide range of genres.

There are two main goals we seek to achieve via Slovak foreign policy’s programme of activities and projects on public and cultural diplomacy:

1. to support the promotional programme of its embassies and institutions, while naturally reflecting local cultural and historical conditions;
2. to implement the main projects prepared for 2012. Activities and events organised by the network of Slovak organisations are an integral part of this programme.

A realistic appraisal of the financial and organisational limits of the ministry meant that the 2012 programme concentrated on exhibitions and promotional projects. In addition to guaranteeing that the quality and content would be overseen by specialists, there was also a desire to ensure more effective use and greater

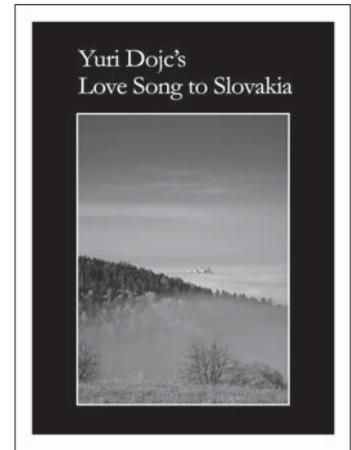
mobility. In order to implement the project we therefore focused on newer and rarely used technologies, particularly different kinds of electronic mediums. With this intention in mind, we organised exhibitions with a focus on the long term:

- *Bratislava in Europe and Europe in Bratislava*. This project is by Pavel Dvořák, a leading Slovak current affairs writer and popular historian, who specialises in uncovering little-known aspects of Slovak history.
- *Yuri Dojc: Love song for Slovakia*. A collection of black and white photographs by one of the most well-known contemporary Slovak photographers, Yuri Dojc, in cooperation with *Spectacular Slovakia* a supplement by *The Slovak Spectator*.
- *European heritage in Slovakia*, in cooperation with the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic.

Similarly, we also organised exhibitions for 2012 and 2013:

- *70th anniversary of Operation Anthropoid – Slovakia’s role in the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich*, in cooperation with the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.
- *Košice 2013 – European capital of culture*, in cooperation with the organisational committee of Košice 2013 – European Capital of Culture.
- *Richness in diversity – Twenty years in one country*. An exhibition for the 20th anniversary of Slovak independence, emphasising the country’s important

Public and cultural diplomacy



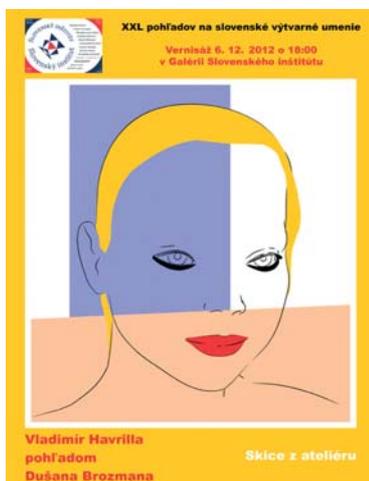
Cultural projects implemented by the Public and Cultural Diplomacy Department in 2012

foreign policy successes, and representing those who have created the good reputation of Slovak diplomacy abroad.

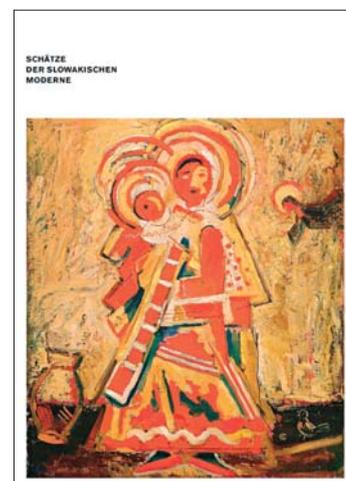
In 2012 the most significant direct multilateral activities were two events organised by the Central European Cultural Platform – V4 plus Austria and Slovenia – with the aim of portraying the Central Europe group and culture within Eastern Partnership countries. For the first six months, Slovak folk culture was performed in modern style at the *Folklore Alive!* festival (National Theatre in Lvov) with Slovakia being represented by the band *Banda*. In the second half of the year, Slovakia chaired the platform and organised the main event – a November Central European documentary film festival entitled *Crossing Borders* (Moldova State University, Kishinev) where we showed *The Border*, a documentary by director Jaro Vojtek.

A long-term project by Miroslav Cipár, Slovak painter and graphic artist, is a travelling exhibition in Asia entitled *Human, Symbol, Letters* (National Gallery in Jakarta, October 2012). Important events that have a strong social and historical dimension include the unveiling of the first memorial to Slovak victims of Stalinism in the former Soviet Union in Spassk near Karaganda in Kazakhstan, the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to Interhelpe, a Czech–Slovak Cooperative Movement, and to Alexander Dubček in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. An important yet non-traditional feature of the cultural and promotional events was the issuing of a triple stamp by the Post Office in Paraguay for the 20th anniversary of the Slovak Republic.

As part of the cultural and social events linked to the Olympic Games in London, important features promoting the Slovak Republic were an exhibition



Poster advertising the exhibition series *Through the perspective of...* realized by the Slovak Cultural Institute in Prague



Invitation to *Treasures of Slovak Modern Art* exhibition installed by the Slovak Cultural Institute in Vienna



entitled the *Wooden Houses of Čičmany* and an exhibition of *Slovak Medal Winners at the Olympics*.

In 2012, Slovak institutes organised a number of important cultural events and projects presenting Slovak art and culture abroad in a number of different genres. The scope and impact of the programme testifies to the importance of the embassies in this sphere of the Slovak Republic's diplomatic activities abroad. The following serve as an example:

- **SI in Rome**
 - Milan Paštéka exhibition, one of the most important figures in Slovak modern art
 - concert by violinists Dalibor Karvay and Daniel Buranovský in Rome, Milan and Forlì
- **SI in Vienna**
 - *Treasures of Slovak Modern Art* exhibition held at the Federal Chancellor's Office – Porcia Palace
 - a display of Slovak design as part of the Vienna Design Week festival
- **SI in Warsaw**
 - European Day of Languages 2012
 - exhibitions: *Night of the museums, Communism in Europe – the 70s and Forgotten corners*
- **SI in Moscow**
 - Slovak Day at the A4 International Animation Festival
 - Bratislava Street Day
- **SI in Berlin**
 - *Continuum* exhibition – Vincent Hložník, Ľubo Zelina, Zuzana Hložníková
 - exhibition by photographer Ľubo Špirka – *Water Emotion*



The solemn unveiling of a memorial to Slovak victims of Stalinism on 31 May 2012 in Spassk near Karaganda in Kazakhstan on the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions. The marble monument is the first of its kind in the former Soviet Union to commemorate Slovak citizens who were illegally sent to Gulag camps in the Soviet Union (Photo: MFEA SR/Igor Otčenáš)

- **SI in Prague**
 - new exhibition series *Through the perspective of...*, where a prominent Slovak art historian creates a collection by prominent Slovak modern artists through his own perspective
- **SI in Budapest**
 - Slovak culture week in Budapest
- **SI in Paris**
 - Slovak opera recital at Toursky Theatre in Marseille (in cooperation with Košice 2013 association) with Pavol Bršlík, Martina Masaryková, Terézia Kružliaková and Róbert Pechanec



Banner advertising the documentary film festival by the Central European Cultural Platform at Moldova State University in Chisinau. Slovakia was the main organiser of the event, November 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Igor Otčenáš)



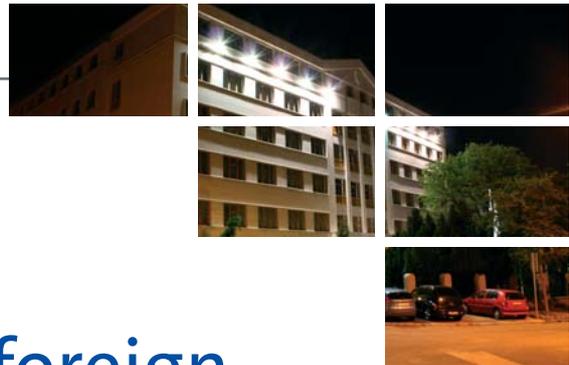
Meeting between directors of the Slovak cultural institutes at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 8 October 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)



Slovak athlete Daniela Barteková being presented with a gold medallion by Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák for her excellent representation of the Slovak Republic in the Olympics and in sport diplomacy, 16 September 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

8

Modern and professional foreign service



In an attempt to consolidate public expenditure, the ministry continued to implement savings measures in finances and in restructuring Slovakia's assets abroad as well as improving transparency in the public procurement of goods, services and construction work. Work continued on implementing a central economic information system for public administration and on amending financial and economic policy at embassies abroad. Of equal importance was the emphasis placed on achieving greater effectiveness in support activities, and on decreasing administrative burdens in the work conducted at embassies abroad. Despite the limited budgetary resources, the ministry was able to fulfil its priorities and strategic foreign policy tasks.

In 2012 particular attention was devoted to managing human resources and associated requirements. Priorities included work designed to improve the human potential of the Slovak foreign service and introduce greater stability, motivation and development.

In order to raise professional qualifications, in 2012 the ministry began preparing a training programme – the National Training Programme – for selected employees across the state administration in connection with the upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Work will begin on implementing the programme in the autumn of 2013.

The new strategy for managing and expanding human resources also led to the realisation of a pilot programme entitled “Preparing economic diplomats for their assignments at embassies abroad”. The experiences gained through this programme led to the development of a new proposal for the system of economic training, and for preparing diplomats at the ministry.

The ministry also works closely with Slovak universities through lecturer exchanges. The ministry arranged over 170 short-term internships for university students. One example of the international training activities organised by the ministry in 2012 is a successful training programme for Iraqi diplomats aimed at sharing Slovak experiences with bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

The 2012 budget

The proposed budget for the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic for 2012 to 2014 was drawn up in relation to the initial limits announced by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. Consequently, the foreign ministry submitted to the finance ministry a list of its minimal budgetary obligations, proposals for unbudgeted priority spending areas for 2012 relating to Slovakia's membership of international organisations, for the construction

Modern and professional foreign service



Peter Lizák
Department of Strategic
Planning and Analyses
Director, MFEA SR

Cooperation with NGOs has become a natural part of the work of the ministry

What is the relationship between the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and NGOs?

I view our relationship with the non-profit NGO sector as being very good and one of partnership.

Our work together has become a natural part of the work of the ministry, encouraging dynamism. In many cases, I cannot even imagine working without the cooperation of the non-governmental sector. For many years now we have collaborated in communicating, analysing and addressing current issues in international relations and Slovak foreign policy, and in providing development assistance and from my perspective this has been enriching for both sides – and should continue to be so.

With the approaching Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2016, there is greater scope for cooperation

of the new NATO Headquarters in Brussels, for the commitment to increasing official development assistance, and to securing and making use of new information and communication technologies for the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

In preparing the proposed public administration budget for 2012 to 2014, the income limit for 2012 was set at 2,730,000 euros.

In keeping with the announced limits, it was proposed that initial ministry expenditure in 2012 be limited to 116,834,168 euros. Negotiations between the ministries of foreign affairs and finance resulted in a budget increase to cover areas that had received no allocation (international organisation membership fees and information and communication technologies). The 2012 spending was increased to 122,977,167 euros.

MFEA Expenditure in 2012

simplified summary of overall breakdown (actual expenditure in millions of euros)

Programme:

Fostering foreign relations	103.34
Representing Slovakia abroad	66.62
Diplomatic representation abroad.....	62.47
Cultural representation abroad.....	1.16
Local human resources abroad.....	2.98
Creating and implementing policy	36.72
Programme management	36.53
Gabčíkovo Nagymaros legal dispute.....	0.00
Working with NGOs	0.07
Staff training	0.10

Interministerial programmes:

Official development assistance, MFEA	5.40
Assisting Slovak expats	0.91
Contributions to international organisations, MFEA	14.88

Total



between the ministry and the NGOs. Future cooperation might include domestic discussion of EU issues in terms of the renewed activities of the National Convention on the EU, for example, or analytical input and discussion on the future of the EU in addition to organising international conferences and seminars as sideline events to the presidency.

How does the ministry support the work carried out by NGOs in foreign policy?

The main means by which we lend support to debates on international relations and Slovak foreign policy is through a series of grants provided by the ministry. In 2012, we

provided 61,394 euros in support of twenty NGO projects on studies, analyses and organising professional events on international relations and Slovak foreign policy. Changes to the Competences Act meant that the funding system was bolstered with the addition of new grants in support of human rights.

In addition to providing financial resources, the ministry assists NGOs in approaching and securing key international figures to attend their events via contacts through the network of embassies.

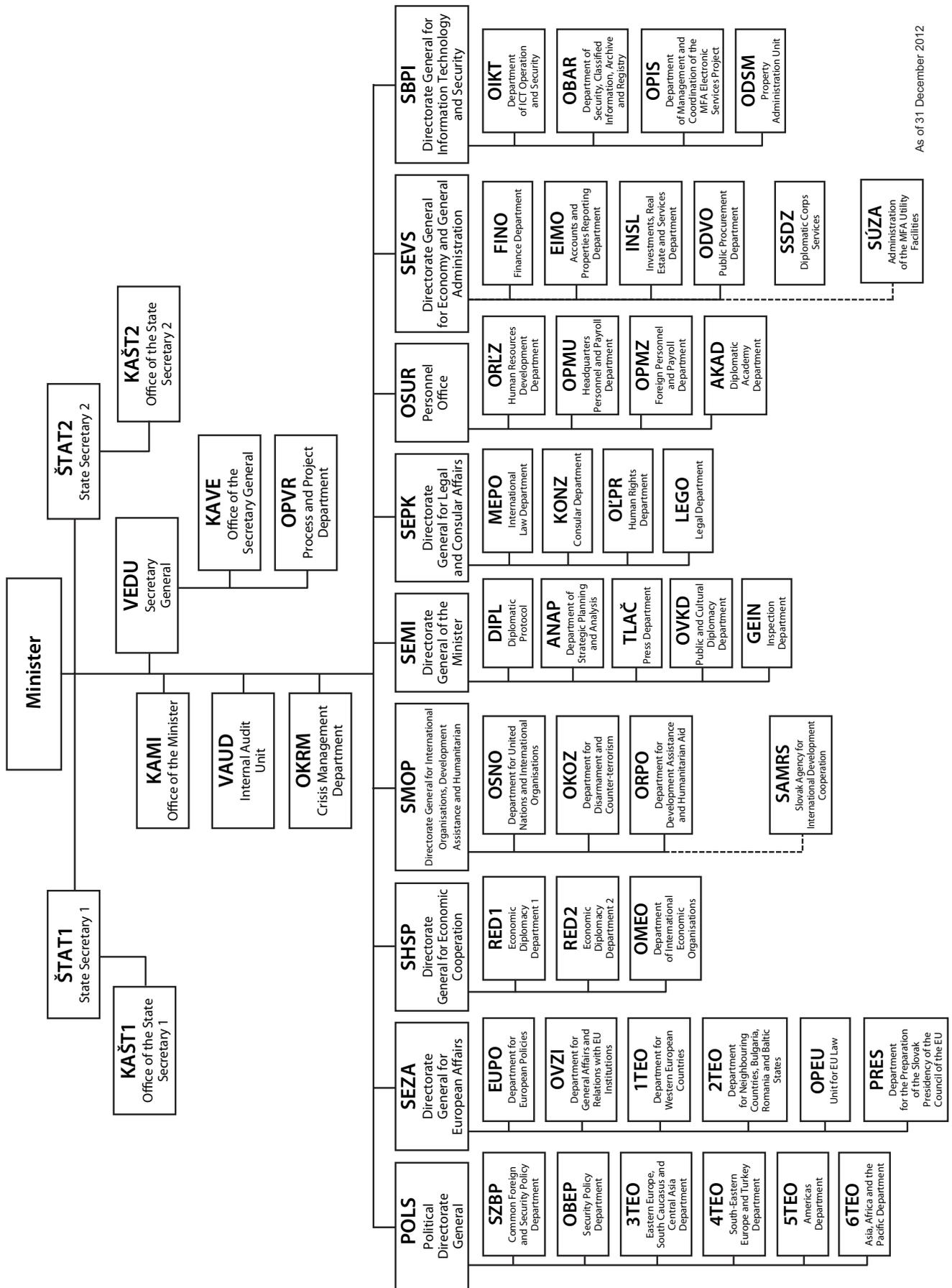


In commemoration of International Human Rights Day, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák presented awards to three people who had contributed to developing human rights in Slovakia. The awards went to Jozef Mikloško for his significant contribution to protecting the rights of the child, Zora Bútorová for her significant contribution to protecting the rights of the elderly, and Viliam Dolník for his significant contribution to human rights education, 13 December 2012 (Photo: MFEA SR/Vladimír Benko)

The revised funding and spending limits for the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs budget were approved as part of the proposed state administration budget for 2012 to 2014 in government resolution No. 651/2011 of 12 October 2011. The proposed budget was consequently discussed and approved by the National Council of the Slovak Republic without further amendment and finally passed as Act No. 511/2011 on the State Budget for 2012 of 7 December 2011.

In 2012 the budget was revised through internal budgetary measures and measures that had to be approved by the Ministry of Finance. The table shows the actual expenditure as of 31 December 2012.

Organisational Chart, MFEA SR



As of 31 December 2012



Group photograph of the ambassadors and heads of missions of the Slovak Republic with the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, July 2012





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