

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY H.E. MR. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

**AT THE OPENING OF THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT OF THE
2018 OSCE MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE**

AT MUSEO PICASSO MÁLAGA

25 October 2018
Malaga, Spain

Dear Minister, Dear Secretaries General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for Slovakia to welcome you at the 2018 OSCE Mediterranean conference.

First of all – many thanks to our Spanish friends for hosting the event in this beautiful city. I was informed about the recent flash floods in Costa del Sol - my sincere sympathies go out to all those affected.

Malaga – with its ancient history and dynamic present – is a testament to the richness of the Mediterranean region and a fitting venue to discuss our continued partnership within the MCG.

We have enjoyed an excellent cooperation with our Mediterranean partners over the past year and today we are here to join one of its highlights.

Standing at the museum of one of Malaga's most famous natives, let me start the evening with a quote by Pablo Picasso: *The world today doesn't make sense, so why should I paint pictures that do?*

Quite striking how fitting this quote is for today. Lately, we do often feel as if the world does not make sense. There are many trends that contradict each other. That do not make sense.

For example, we have never had more tools for communication. But we seem to be talking to each other less. Living standards are on the rise. But so are the inequalities between us. Information has never been more widely available. But confusion and misinformation are spreading.

We are facing serious global challenges - be it terrorism, climate change, hybrid threats or unmanaged migration.

We are seeing - so to say - some of the contours of the world painting redrawn. It is reminiscent rather of the surrealism of Picasso, than clear lines of some of his predecessors.

In uncertain times like these – it is more important than ever to have friends. To build partnerships so that we can address these challenges together. None of our nations will be able to face them alone.

And especially for OSCE countries and the Mediterranean partners – the issue of our security is indivisible. I am therefore very thankful we are meeting in Malaga in this format, discussing how to bring our cooperation even closer.

Dear friends,

Coming to this conference and to this Museum, I couldn't not think about **GUERNICA**. Certainly Picasso's most powerful political statement, painted as an immediate reaction to the Nazi devastating bombing of the Basque town of Guernica during Spanish Civil War.

There is a replica of this painting on the walls of the United Nations in New York, just a few steps from the Security Council. I used to pass by it almost daily, during last year when I served at the UN. It is not only an artistic masterpiece, but a stark reminder of the scourge the wars bring.

And so thanks to Picasso, the politicians today don't have only facts to remind them. They have emotional piece of art. Vital to make us more aware, to inspire us not to react, but to prevent. Prevent. That's the key word here. The horrors so unbearable forced Picasso to react. For politicians, to react is always too late.

And we could absolutely use some of the traits Picasso displayed in his art to also inspire our proceedings during this conference.

We can be inspired by his imagination – to come up with creative solutions.

We can be inspired by his inventiveness - to think outside the box.

We can be inspired by his vision – to see the bigger picture.

To conclude ...

Many thanks to Museo Picasso for having us and congratulations on your 15th anniversary.

I wish you all fruitful discussions during the conference, but for now – *enjoy the evening!*