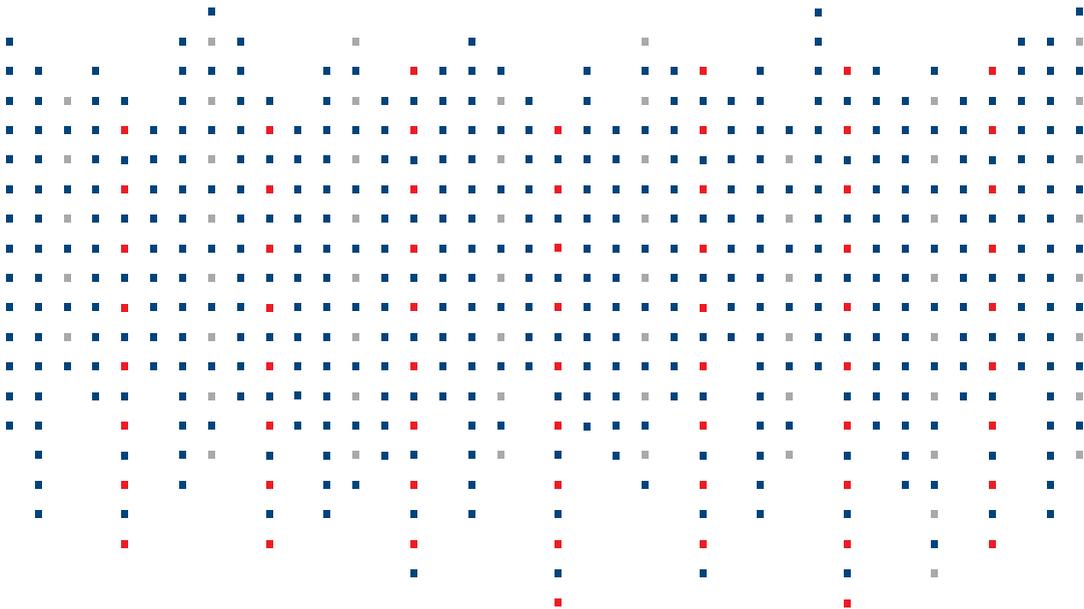




SLOVAKIA 2019 SLOVENSKO

# Programme of the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship 2019





**Miroslav Lajčák**

Minister for Foreign  
and European Affairs  
of the Slovak Republic  
and OSCE  
Chairperson-in-Office 2019

*The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe was created to help participating States move towards a more secure, peaceful and prosperous future – for the benefit of all. It was a response to Cold War rifts between East and West and the risks they posed to humanity. Central to the OSCE's foundation was something very simple: the idea that, when states come together, to talk and to co-operate on the basis of agreed principles and commitments, conflict can be prevented and life can get better for people.*

*Since then, the OSCE has evolved enormously. Similarly, the context in which it is operating has changed. Our current international and regional*

*security situation is grave. Nationalist rhetoric, intolerance and hate speech are getting louder. More and more states are turning inwards – away from co-operation. Away from multilateralism. The most vulnerable people continue to suffer. Today, even the fundamental - and crucial - principles that underpin the OSCE are under increasing threat.*

*We are more in need of dialogue and multilateralism than ever. They are our only chance to resolve ongoing conflicts and prevent new ones from flaring up. They can provide the solutions to rising phenomena such as radicalization and violent extremism, cyber threats and climate change. Moreover, they are the means by which we can bring about real change in people's lives. The OSCE has been an effective tool to this end in the past. Slovakia is committed to using its Chairmanship for such dialogue and multilateral co-operation.*

*It is an honour and a privilege to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE for 2019. My team and I are ready for this unique opportunity. In responding to the challenges of a changing world, we will tirelessly promote the values and principles that have been at the centre of this organization since its creation. They are the key to lasting security and stability in Europe.*

# Slovakia 2019: For people, dialogue and stability

In 2019, the Slovak Chairmanship of the OSCE aims to be ambitious but realistic. Ambitious in promoting dialogue, trust and stability in the OSCE area, and in supporting the good functioning of our organization. But we also have to be realistic: challenges and complexities are rife. Underpinning our aim is the resolve that any further deterioration in the safety and lives of people in our societies is unjustifiable.

The OSCE was founded to ensure security and stability, to facilitate dialogue and co-operation among participating States, and above all, to make life better for their citizens. In defining our objectives and priorities for action during our Chairmanship, we have to focus on protecting and improving the lives of people. Slovakia is committed to leading the way in finding viable, lasting and sustainable ways to overcome our differences, for the good of all.

Our aim, therefore, is to have an active Chairmanship that will come up with innovative, hands-on solutions. We endeavour to be impartial, fair and honest in our role as partners and mediators. In 2019, we want to move the OSCE closer to the

everyday realities of the 21st century. It is for this reason that we, the Slovak Chairmanship, will focus on three areas for 2019:

# 1. Preventing, mediating and mitigating conflict and focusing on the people it affects

Preventing and resolving conflict is at the very core of the OSCE's raison d'être and the primary focus of its expertise. Slovakia will prioritize efforts to prevent new conflicts from breaking out, while mitigating the humanitarian consequences of existing ones. Sustained emphasis will be placed on promoting peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation efforts where necessary.

The ongoing **crisis in and around Ukraine** is one of the most critical issues for our common security, and undermines our shared principles and commitments. Slovakia will actively engage in all efforts to reduce tension, build trust and facilitate dialogue. During our Chairmanship, we will work towards much-needed improvements in the living conditions of the affected population through targeted projects. We will do this in partnership with local and national authorities, agencies and institutions, international organizations and civil society.

ground, the Chairperson-in-Office will visit the conflict-affected areas early in the year.

During Slovakia's Chairmanship, we will concentrate on supporting the full implementation of existing agreements and commitments, including those to fully respect the ceasefire and withdraw heavy weaponry. A main focus will be the provision of political guidance to the OSCE entities and structures working on the ground. Co-operation among multilateral organizations and mechanisms is also crucial, which is why our goal is to ensure a comprehensive and co-ordinated OSCE approach to dealing with

the conflict, in close co-operation with outside actors, including the Normandy format, the European Union and the United Nations.

At the same time, attention must be focused on **conflict resolution efforts** regarding the conflicts on Transdniestria and Nagorno-Karabakh and in Georgia. As with our approach to eastern Ukraine, we will stress measures to prevent escalation and improve the living conditions for the people immediately affected by the conflict. The Chairperson-in-Office will also conduct field missions in order to learn about the realities on the ground, and engage with national and regional stakeholders.

Slovakia will continue to support existing **confidence- and security-building measures** (CSBMs) and arms control regimes. We will actively promote the **Structured Dialogue** as a crucial process for fostering dialogue and building long-term trust among participating States. Slovakia will co-operate with the Chairmanships of the Forum for Security Co-operation and make use of regular OSCE formats and special events, including on the implementation of the CSBMs and military-to-military contacts, to promote common interests and priorities. The 25th anniversary of the Code of Conduct will present an important opportunity to discuss the relevance of this

Credit: OSCE/Evegeniy Maloletka



document for ensuring stability in the OSCE area.

Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R) is an integral part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. An inclusive, accountable and democratically governed security sector promotes trust and confidence and thus contributes to stability in the OSCE area and beyond. Slovakia will seek to build a common understanding of SSG/R among the participating States through mainstreaming SSG/R into the OSCE's existing dialogue forums and regional activities.

The **OSCE has long been a key platform to prevent conflict**, strengthen stability and democratic institutions, promote mutually beneficial co-operation and help participating States overcome negative legacies of the past. Through its institutions, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as its field operations, the OSCE promotes democratic governance and the rule of law to improve resilience to security challenges and promote sustainable policy responses. Slovakia intends to **make best use of this OSCE expertise**.

## 2. Providing for a safer future

Rapid technological change, digitalization and innovation provide us with immense opportunities. However, they could also pose challenges and threats. To provide a secure future for all, we must ramp up our efforts to advance the security and prosperity of our citizens across all dimensions. This includes: engaging with young people in the OSCE region; strengthening tolerance and non-discrimination; using the OSCE toolbox to prevent radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism (VERLT); promoting sustainable development, education and energy co-operation; and managing enhanced connectivity and cyber security.

Slovakia believes that **young people should have a seat at the table when** addressing current and future security challenges. Building on the work done by previous Chairmanships, as well as the Youth Opportunities Strategy, we will help to make effective use of young people's perspectives throughout the OSCE's work. Slovakia will support further initiatives to engage talented young experts and multipliers from across the OSCE area in an inclusive process to develop ideas and recommendations of how to promote comprehensive security and co-operation.

To do so, we will host a Youth Forum to promote the active participation of young experts in the organization's ongoing dialogue on security in Europe.

In the field of **radicalization and violent extremism**, Slovakia will focus on prevention efforts, emphasizing the need to work with and for young people by ensuring access to quality education and by facilitating the creation of opportunities.

Our organization is built on the understanding that without promotion, protection of and

respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, there can be no comprehensive and co-operative security.

Slovakia will advocate a multipronged approach to fighting **intolerance, racism, xenophobia, violent nationalism, hate speech, and hate crime**. We will emphasize the need to implement agreed action plans and other commitments. A major conference focusing on anti-Semitism will be held in Bratislava in February.

We will promote policies and activities that seek to capitalize on the positive impacts of technology, digitalization and innovation on the development of our societies, economies and the environment, while preventing abuse and mitigating possible negative effects such as increasing inequality and social tensions.

To address the negative consequences of rapid technological change, Slovakia will build on existing commitments by promoting dialogue and exchange of expertise on cyber/ICT security. We will also strive to develop a stronger basis for international co-operation in the field of critical infrastructure protection. Moreover, recognizing the broad scope of **cyber/ICT security** challenges,

Slovakia will initiate discussions on issues such as personal data protection, dissemination of harmful content, protection of democratic values and effective mechanisms for the control of artificial intelligence.



Credit: OSCE/Dejan Vekic

Credit: OSCE/Mihailo Lahtov



# 3. Effective multilateralism

**Effective multilateralism** promotes meaningful and comprehensive dialogue among states, as well as with non-state actors. It ensures an inclusive approach and open dialogue, which, in turn, strengthen trust in institutions and improve security for all. Effective multilateralism encompasses the development of strategic partnerships, co-ordinated work towards common goals, the prioritization and adequate funding of OSCE activities, and the implementation of existing commitments.

Slovakia will support the development of the OSCE's **strategic partnerships** with a range of international organizations, which will lead to better mutual understanding and improved division of labour on the international stage. In particular, Slovakia sees scope for strengthening synergies with the United Nations on conflict cycle issues and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially SDG 16 on promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Slovakia will use its Chairmanship of the OSCE and its position as Chair of the Ministerial Council of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019 to enhance synergies between the two organizations, particularly regarding efforts to

implement the SDGs, and to promote peace and security. Slovakia also intends to continue efforts by previous OSCE Chairmanships to strengthen the partnership between the OSCE and the European Union.

During its Chairmanship, Slovakia will advocate a strategic approach to **prioritizing and ensuring adequate funding for OSCE activities**. With full regard to the comprehensive nature of the organization, we consider it nevertheless necessary to prioritize the OSCE's agenda, focusing on areas of strength and ensuring the effective running of the organization. International co-operation is indispensable in meeting current and future challenges. It is therefore essential to guarantee that the OSCE can function properly.

We must see to it that the OSCE's tools and platforms are commensurate with the changing security environment that we live in today. This requires more substantial co-operation between participating States and a stronger focus on making a difference in the lives of people, as well as a commitment to providing the OSCE with adequate human and financial resources.

Security and stability in Europe are built on **respect for and compliance with all our commonly agreed commitments, norms and principles**. Slovakia will therefore emphasize the need for better implementation of the organization's commitments, norms and principles. Peace and security can only take hold if we see a return to respect for the agreed

rules, to the taking of responsibility for mutual relations and to a demonstrated recognition of the critical importance of complying with existing commitments.

Overall, Slovakia will dedicate its OSCE Chairmanship to **bringing the OSCE closer to the people it is working for**, in terms of both goals and impact. We also intend to demonstrate the organization's relevance to the everyday lives of those living in the OSCE area. Moreover, Slovakia is determined to promote gender mainstreaming throughout all three dimensions of the OSCE's work. This human-centred approach aims to improve people's safety and security, as well as the quality of their lives, and to support the OSCE participating States in implementing their commitments.

Credit: EEAS



