



*Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic
To the International Organizations in Vienna*

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ENGLISH only

**Statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the
International Organizations in Vienna
Ambassador Juraj Macháč
at the Permanent Council on 3 July 2008**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Slovakia fully aligns itself with the EU statement. We join the others in welcoming the presence of Miklós Haraszti, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, in today's session of the Permanent Council. We also thank him for the detailed report on his own activities as well as on those of his office since his presentation in March 2008.

At the same time we would like to draw attention of other delegations to an inaccuracy contained in that part of the distributed report which deals with Slovakia's new Press Act. In the report the OSCE Representative stated that two Slovak highest-level politicians, one of them being the Slovak Prime Minister, had used their new right to get their replies to newspaper articles that they disagree with published. **This particular statement of the Representative on Freedom of the Media is not at all correct as since 1 June 2008 when the Act entered into force, no Slovak politician has successfully used its provisions.**

It is, in our view, noteworthy to say that the Slovak Prime Minister has not applied his right under the new Act yet and that he only asked for a correction. This is and was quite a common approach applied by both politicians and citizens even in accordance with the Press Act in force before 1 June 2008 and has in fact nothing to do with the new Press Act. To explain what is referred to in the report further, it is necessary to state that in the case of the interview with the Slovak Prime Minister one answer had been incorrectly transcribed by the editor and the Prime Minister only asked, as already stated above, for correction of the text. Editorial office apologized for the mistake and subsequently published the right transcription.

All in all the right to response based on the new law has successfully been used only once and it has been applied by a Slovak artist.

As regards application filed by the chairman of a coalition party (HZDS), he requested publication of his response to views contained in a daily. As he only responded to views, not factual arguments, the editorial office rejected, within the meaning of the new Press Act, to publish the response and the chairman did not continue his efforts.

It is then beyond doubt that the new act is not a tool of politics, does not restrict freedom of media and that the allegations presented by the Representative on Freedom of the Media are not correct.

Slovakia would therefore very much appreciate if the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media could revise the discrepancies in the report just described.

I request this statement to be attached to the journal of the meeting.

Thank you for your attention.