

W e l c o m i n g A d d r e s s

by His Excellency Mr. Ivan Mikloš

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs

of the Slovak Republic

Conference for High-Level Officials

***„Devolving and Delegating Power to More Autonomous Public Bodies
and Controlling Them:***

The Governance of Public Agencies and Authorities“

Hotel FORUM, Congress Hall, Bratislava November 22-23, 2001
Organised by the Public Management service (PUMA) of the OECD
Hosted by the Government of the Slovak Republic

**Mr. President of the OECD Development Centre,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to represent the Slovak Government on this particular occasion since the Slovak Republic is hosting in Bratislava for the first time as an OECD Member country the unique OECD High-Level Forum on “Governance of Public Agencies and Authorities”.

It is also a great pleasure for me to observe that the event, prepared by the competent Public Management service of the OECD Secretariat (PUMA), drew the attention of the representatives from 25 OECD Member and non-Member countries, representatives of number of interested international organisations, and last but not least a strong participation of the Government officials from respective ministries and newly established regulatory bodies from all sectors of the economy of the hosting Slovak Republic.

I am particularly pleased to esteem the emphasis put by the Organisation to this important outreach activity in favour of the non-Member countries from the Central and Eastern Europe. I appreciate that OECD Secretary General D. Johnston enjoyed as his representative to the conference one of his closest collaborators Mr. Jorge Braga de Macedo, President of the OECD Development Centre. I would like to warmly welcome him in the Slovak capital as well.

Thanks to the capacity and experience of the PUMA, which assumed the leadership in preparation of the current high-level expert event, you will enjoy the outstanding opportunity to exchange views and expertise on *best regulatory practices* applied in the discipline of “devolving and delegating power to more autonomous regulatory bodies” as maintaining Government coherence on policy making and service delivery by wide range of sectorial regulatory bodies from .

The regulatory reform programme, launched by the Organisation in 1998 in response to mandate of OECD Ministers, already brought particular benefits in liberalisation and deregulation of our economies. Lot of gains from these processes may be attributed to the enhancement of “good governance” of our executive institutions.

The regulatory program of the Slovak Government is also aimed at reforming regulations which raise unnecessary obstacles to competitions, innovation and growth, while ensuring that regulations efficiently serve important socio-economic objectives. Our Government considers the efforts to manage the regulatory reform as necessary support to sustain economic development, increase job creation and ensure “good governance”. It fits with other initiatives such as fight against corruption and illegal employment, and enhancement of market openness.

In country like Slovakia which pursue the reforms, we are seeking for comprehensive regulatory reform which serves the Government to meeting its key objectives in performing the economic policies and speeding up the completion of the process of structural changes.

The privatisation of the majority stake in the Slovak Telecom operator, which took place last year, and the envisaged privatisation of the Central European gas transporter giant - Slovak Gas Industry - to be completed early next year, both have served as an extraordinary stimulus to accelerate the process of delegation of the regulatory power from the state, traditionally represented by strong central authorities, to more accountable and at the same time more autonomous newly established regulatory bodies: the Slovak Telecom Office and the Slovak Regulatory Body for Line (Energy) Sectors, respectively.

In Slovakia, like in other transition countries pursuing reforms, sustained and consistent public dialogue on the benefits and costs of reforms is necessary for building and maintaining broad public support for reform. The policy options which participants are going to present at the open and frank discussion in the course of the Conference will surely pose challenges for national policies and advance the analysis of the OECD and all participating countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish you success of your gathering covered by the unique framework of the outreach activities of the Organisation aiming at transferring the best practises in building autonomous regulatory bodies towards OECD non-Member countries. I am sure that the outcome of such a debate you are going to approach at the Forum will enhance not only the quality of regulatory institutions in general, but will finally provide the same benefits gained by targeted economic players: business and consumer groups.

To conclude, let me wish you a very fruitful and pleasant stay in Bratislava. Thank you for your attention!

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