Slovak Foreign Policy after EU and NATO Accession

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Foreign policy of the Slovak Republic, post-accession priorities, NATO and EU membership, Western Balkans, Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Visegrad cooperation, non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council (2006-2007), peace-keeping and crisis management missions, Official Development Assistance Programme, foreign policy discourse in Slovakia

Change of paradigm
Post-accession priorities
Implementing priorities
Extended agenda and responsibility
Post-accession debate and ongoing search for consensus
Summary instead of conclusion

Becoming a member of the EU and NATO in 2004 fulfilled the Slovak Republic’s foreign policy priorities after gaining independence in 1993. At the same time it was an international acknowledgement of reaching the end of the internal democratic transformation after the fall of the communist regime at the turn of the 80’s and 90’s and the division of Czechoslovakia. But at the same time, membership in EU and NATO brought a number of essential challenges as well as opportunities for Slovak foreign policy. The subject of this paper will be the post-accession framework of the foreign policy and the number of new factors to which Slovak governments since 2004 are trying to find answers. Needless to say, this process is far from being at its end, similarly as in all of the new EU and NATO member states.

Change of paradigm

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1 All Slovak governments since 1993 declared membership in NATO and EU as the priority of Slovakia’s foreign policy in their government programs. Only the third Slovak government of V. Mečiar acted in contravention of the declared priority during the period of 1994 – 1998, which led to Slovakia’s exclusion from the first enlargement wave of NATO at the end of the 90’s and caused a delay – compared to other Visegrad countries – in launching accession negotiations with the EU. For a detailed analysis see – Duleba, Alexander, Vladimír Bilčík, Jozef Klavec, Matúš Korba, "Influence of foreign-policy and security factors on the political regime", in: Szomolányi, Soňa (ed) Society and politics in Slovakia. Roads towards stability 1989-2004. Comenius University, Bratislava, 2005. V. part, pp. 309-337.
NATO and EU have changed from being the goals of foreign policy to being instruments of foreign policy of the Slovak Republic. The key challenge for Slovak diplomacy in the post-accession period lies in its ability to take advantage of membership in NATO and EU and utilize it as tools of Slovak foreign policy in order to advocate the national interests of Slovakia as well as its citizens. Since the accession to NATO and EU it applies that in relation to other non-member countries, Slovak diplomacy can on many occasions achieve more in Brussels than in the respective capital cities of the member states. In case of Slovakia, this is especially true when it comes to issues involving countries of Eastern Europe and Western Balkans, defined as post-accession priorities of Slovak foreign policy.²

However, this ideal is still far from being a reality: after six years of Slovakia’s membership in NATO and EU, a prominent Slovak foreign-policy and security analyst Tomáš Valášek points out: “We knew that we want to become part of the European Union and NATO, but we did not think about what we actually want to do there.” The vision of what kind of EU and what kind of NATO do we want to have and how do we want to take advantage of our membership in these organisation is still missing in Slovak Republic’s foreign policy.

After the accession back in 2004 Slovak Republic and other new member countries are policy-makers of the EU’s agenda only to a little extent. According to a study of the Department of Political Science at the Comenius University, in 2004 – 2009 in more than 90 % of all contested cases that required a qualified majority voting in the European Council, new member states supported the majority decisions. Some of the positions of the new member states, including Slovakia even went against the majority trend in the EU. For example, in 2008 Poland and Lithuania blocked the negotiations on a new agreement between EU and Russia; Slovakia, together with other four EU member states does not recognize the status of an independent Kosovo and as the only country in the Euro zone refused to give Greece a loan. The study of the Department of Political Science at the Comenius University proves that worries of the old member states that the decision-making process would become more problematic, were unconfirmed.

² Relations with Ukraine and countries of the Western Balkans were publicly defined for the first time as priorities of Slovakia’s foreign policy after entering NATO and EU by Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda at the Evaluation conference of Slovak Republic’s foreign policy in March 2004. See: "Appearance of Prime Minister of Slovak Mikuláš Dzurinda", in: Brezáni, Peter (ed) Foreign policy of Slovakia after NATO and EU accession. Starting points and strategies. 2003. Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava 2004, pp. 11-17.
But at the same time it is also true that new member states are more passive participants in the decision-making process in the EU, rather than its policy makers. A small exception is the Eastern Partnership in which creation Poland (together with Sweden) was actively participating, as well as the EU’s energy policy in the nuclear energy segments, due to the fact that both the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic are hosting the European Nuclear Forum, which aims to foster a debate about the future of nuclear energy in the EU and prepare proposals for its further development.  

But this is woefully little. In other words, six years of membership in the EU and NATO points to the fact that the primary quest of Slovakia’s foreign policy remains ’taking advantage’ of our membership in NATO and EU. Even though we are fully-fledged and equal members of the NATO and EU, we are still missing the vision of what kind of NATO and EU we want to have and at the same time, we lack the capacity to be able to actively create policies of both of the organisations, come up with solutions for key problems, which both the EU and NATO are currently facing, and gain the support of our allies.

**Post-accession priorities**

The expert debate on the post-accession priorities of Slovak Republic’s foreign policy took place during the period 2002 - 2004 – at a time when it was already obvious that Slovakia will become a member of the EU as well as NATO (detailed findings and conclusions can be found in the publication *Foreign policy of Slovakia after NATO and EU accession*, which was published by the Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association in 2004).  

The expert debate came to the conclusion that the post-accession priorities should be formulated as a concept of international responsibility of Slovakia, with which a majority of the relevant domestic political actors and Slovak public should identify. Formulation of the post-accession priorities as “defining national interests” was refused as being obsolete, as bearing the responsibility for international stability and prosperity was defined as a defining characteristic of Slovakia’s foreign policy in the post-accession period. The prevailing opinion was that the key national interests of Slovakia in international relations were fulfilled by its accession to NATO and EU. What Slovakia needs to be able to do among its first steps after accession, is to learn how to use them as tools of its foreign policy and in case of EU as


a tool of internal policies. Although NATO and EU put obligations on the new member states, at the same time they also create much more room for interpretation on how member states should contribute to common policies.

The main mission of NATO and EU in international relations can be understood as having responsibility for regional and global stability realized by exporting common models and rules of the Union and Alliance to less stable and less prosperous parts of the world. In light of this aim Slovakia stood in front of a challenge: to formulate its own share of responsibility within the common policies and responsibility of NATO and EU in international relations. In other words, already at the beginning of the post-accession period, it was obvious that Slovakia will need to find its own place in NATO and EU and define its own national responsibility in a way that would allow it to defend its national interests. The bounds of this responsibility should be based on the context of the issue at hand as well as geography, as well as be accepted by a majority of domestic actors and the public. In other words, its identification should basically be a formulation of the post-accession concept of Slovak Republic’s foreign policy.

Western Balkans and Slovakia’s biggest eastern neighbor, Ukraine were evaluated as the first big themes for Slovak foreign policy, and offered themselves as such, as it were by themselves, in the post-accession period. Both in the Western Balkans and Ukraine, two basic characteristics were obvious: 1) they are areas of priority interest both for NATO and EU, and 2) Slovakia has its own vital interests in these areas. In other words, in both, relations with Ukraine and the countries of the Western Balkan, NATO and EU can become instruments of Slovak foreign policy. Conversely, Slovakia can take on a part of NATO’s and EU’s responsibility. There are not that many foreign-policy themes where the interests of Slovakia and the EU and NATO coincide this closely given that relations with Ukraine and the countries of Western Balkans were for the first time promulgated as post-accession priorities of Slovak Republic’s foreign policy in March 2004 by the then Prime Minister, Mikuláš Dzurinda.5

Furthermore, sustaining and developing regional cooperation within the Visegrad Four was defined as a strategic priority for the interests of Slovak Republic after acceding to EU and

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5 See link in note n. 2.
NATO. From a strategic point of view, Slovakia has a bigger significance within the EU and NATO when it acts together with Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary on what can be said is a common interest of V4—in the region of Eastern Europe and Western Balkans. In the same vein, the Slovak Republic was an outright supporter of signing the Kroměříž declaration on the 12th May 2004, which defined the post-accession priorities of regional cooperation within the V4 as "strengthening regional identity and cooperation, coordination of policies within the EU and NATO and a common contribution to create policies for the EU and NATO towards the countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe."

Implementing priorities

Slovak diplomacy has earned its international recognition by contributing to solving the situation in the Western Balkan. In this case we do not mean the already mentioned controversial stance of Slovakia on the question of Kosovo, but primarily the following realities: 1) The Bratislava process, which was a remarkable contribution of the Slovak Republic to forming the democratic coalition of the Serbian political parties that were able to form a government after the fall of the regime of Slobodan Milošević in 1992;

2) The successful diplomatic mission of Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovak Republic as a special representative of the UN Secretary General for the Balkans in the post-war years 1999-2001; 3) Successful role of Miroslav Lajčák as the special representative of the EU High Representative of CFSP Javier Solana for the referenda in Montenegro, which took place in March 2006 and led to a peaceful division of Montenegro from Serbia; 4) Internationally highly appraised performance of Miroslav Lajčák at the post of the Special Representative of EU and International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007–2009; 5) A decisive support of the Slovak government led by Mikuláš Dzurinda of the start of accession negotiations between the EU and Croatia in 2004; 6) Designating Serbia as the program country within the Official Development Aid of Slovak Republic.

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7 Declaration of Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on Cooperation of the Visegrád Countries after their accession to the European Union. http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=940&amp;articleID=3939&amp;ctag=articletlist&amp;iid=1

As can be seen from above activities, the results of the Slovak diplomacy in the Western Balkans so far represents the most notable chapter of the Slovak foreign policy since 1999, part of which coincides with the country’s post-accession period.

However, the same cannot be said about the second post-accession priority of Slovak foreign policy – Ukraine and countries of the western CIS. Indeed,

Even though the Embassy of Slovak Republic in Kiev is acting as a contact embassy for NATO in Ukraine since 2007, the results are not exactly convincing if the growth of a positive public opinion in Ukraine towards the accession of their country into NATO is any indicator. At the same time Slovak Republic has made strides by offering Ukraine in 2005 a plan of bilateral support in fulfilling the goals of the Action plan with the EU, which the then Ukrainian Prime Minister Jurij Jechanurov dubbed the best plan which Ukraine has received from an EU member country.⁹

Yet despite these efforts, the policy of Slovak Republic towards Ukraine and Eastern Europe lacks a long-term strategic vision and most importantly, continuity.

This remains so despite the fact that successive governments of Mikulas Dzurinda (1998-2006) were trying to support a convergence between Ukraine, NATO and the EU. The government of Fico that followed in 2006-2010 and ruled for the most part after the gas crisis of January 2009 has returned these efforts to square one. The then Slovak Prime Minister uncritically, and mainly without providing any reasons, unilaterally supported Russia in the Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute and accused Ukraine of being the one responsible for the disruption of supplies to the Slovak Republic. Moreover, he stated that as retaliation, Slovakia should re-evaluate its support for Ukraine in its European aspirations. If relations with Ukraine were not only a declared, but also a strategic priority of Slovak foreign policy, a Slovak Prime Minister would never utter such words something like this.

Belarus has found itself more intensively on the foreign-policy map of Slovakia only after 2004, when the country was added to the list of countries of the Slovak ODA. The aid concerned project of Slovak NGO-s with the aim of promoting civil society.

Moldova has earned its place on the foreign-policy map of Slovakia only during the past two years; and countries from the South Caucasus region are still not very visible on it.

**Extended agenda and responsibility**

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After entering EU and NATO, Slovakia’s global engagement received new impulses as world’s regions and international topics, previously, beyond the reach of state interest became more visible as Slovak Republic’s foreign policy became exposed to foreign policy agenda of EU and NATO and its constituent members.

Armed forces of the Slovak Republic have since 1993 been engaged in 41 operations of international crisis management, 18 of which are still ongoing (22 have been ended – based on The Ministry of Defense data to August 2010). The oldest mission with Slovakia’s participation (since 1998) is the observer mission UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Operation) in Golan Heights.

Moreover, in May 2001, Slovak armed forces have joined the mission of UN UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus), where it maintains status quo in the buffer zone between Greek and Turkish part of the divided island.

From a long term point of view, it is one of the biggest peace-keeping missions of Slovak Republic abroad, with the participation of 196 members of armed forces. In June 2001, Slovak armed forces have taken over the leadership of one of the four sectors of the buffer zone. Also, the Slovak ambassador to Nicosia organizes and moderates regular meetings of the bi-communal dialogue, which has been for many years the only format for regular dialogue between Greek and Turkish political representations of the divided island. The meetings are arranged in Ledra Palace hotel, which is situated in the buffer zone. The Institute of bi-communal dialogue has been established in 1989- originally initialized by the Czechoslovak ambassador of Slovak descent Emil Keblůšek, and has been managed by Slovak ambassadors in Nicosia ever since 1993. The contribution of the Slovak diplomacy to solving the conflict over Cyprus has an important international dimension and belongs to exceptional undertakings of Slovakia’s foreign policy.10

Since June 2004, Slovak armed forces are participating in NATO ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) mission in Afghanistan. In July 2010 the Slovak contingent there was extended to 300, as a result of terminating the engagement in the operation Iraq Freedom. Since March 2002 a Slovak contingent of 140 members is also active in NATO KFOR (The Kosovo Forces) mission in Kosovo. Moreover, since December 2002, officers of Slovak armed forces are engaged in the NATO Headquarters in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Additionally, since 2004, a 35 member guard squad of Slovak armed forces is also present in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the mission EU ALTHEA (European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina); and four officers serve at the headquarters of this organization in Sarajevo. Altogether, there are 676 members of armed forces in mission abroad at the present time.\footnote{Data relevant to 19th August 2010. Source: Ministry of Defense Slovak Republic; http://www.moSlovakRepublic.sk/313/operacie-medzinarodneho-krizoveho-manazmentu.php?mnu=171}

A no less important chapter in Slovakia’s post-accession foreign policy is acting as a non-permanent member of UN Security Council UN in 2006-2007. Amongst priorities of the Slovak chairmanship was the reform of the security sector and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Over the course of Slovakia's chairmanship, 4 resolutions and 2 chairman declarations were approved and 3 discussions took place (about Middle East, reform of the security sector, and international regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction). In recognition for its performance in the UN Security Council chairmanship, Slovak Republic was elected to the position of Vice President of the Executive Board of the United Nation’s Development Programme, United Nations Council for Human Rights and UN Economic and Social Council.\footnote{See – Burian, Peter, „Functioning of Slovak Republic in the Security Council of UN (2006-2007)“, in: Brezáni, Peter (ed) Yearbook of Slovakia’s Foreign Policy 2007. Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava 2008, p. 27-38.}

Slovakia was the first country of the Visegrad group that has launched Official Development assistance programme (ODA) in 2004. In the period 2004-2009 almost 100 million EUR was allocated in the ODA programmes altogether.\footnote{See SAMRS (Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation): ODA in numbers; http://new.slovakaid.sk/?cat=10} Most funds were directed to fund projects in the following countries: Serbia, Montenegro and 16 other priority countries. In 2009, a new mid-term conceptual framework for Slovakia’s ODA for 2009-2013 has been adopted, reducing the number of priority countries to 12 and designating new programme countries of Afghanistan, Kenya and Serbia.\footnote{Priority countries of Slovak Republic ODA in the period 2004-2008: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Priority countries for 2009- 2013 are the following: Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan See - Benč, Vladimir, Peter Brezáni, „The Development Assistance of the Slovak Republic in 2008“, in: Brezáni, Peter (ed) Yearbook of Slovakia’s Foreign Policy 2008. Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava 2009, p. 143-164.} The development assistance has quickly become a new instrument of Slovak Republic’s foreign policy in the post-accession era. ODA together with successful diplomacy (official and public) and the country's know how from the
transformation have become primary components of the "soft power" concept of Slovak Republic in the post-accession era. Its application after 2004 has demonstrated that the Slovak Republic has all the attributes needed to enhance its international status and that the country has become an important contributor to international stability, safety and development.

Post-accession debate and ongoing search for consensus

One of the key conditions necessary for an effective enforcement and successful fulfillment of a country’s foreign policy objectives is wide political consent on the priorities of foreign policy, which must arise from an agreement of relevant domestic political forces on the national interests and international responsibility of the country. It is absolutely natural that Slovak political parties, just like parties in any other democratic country, differ in their programmes on foreign policy by placing a varied degree of importance on some foreign policy issues, or external actors. In the post-accession era, we can identify the following topics, which were, or still are in the centre of Slovak foreign policy dispute: bilateral relations with Hungary, relations with Russia, decision of EU to begin accession negotiations with Turkey; and the international status of Kosovo.

The dispute about the nature of relations with Hungary has, in contrast with other foreign policy topics, a strong domestic political dimension in Slovak Republic and is almost inextricably linked with the domestic-political fight. Although Slovakia and Hungary share the same interests in NATO, EU and within the Visegrad cooperation, bilateral relations between the two countries are burdened with misunderstandings concerning the status of Hungarian minority in Slovakia and some controversial political decisions with cross-border effects taken by the government in Budapest.

Ultimately, for the Slovak Republic it is unacceptable that legislative measures passed by the Hungarian parliament or government would take effect on the territory of Slovak Republic without previous approval by the Slovak side. In recent history, the most conflicting times for Slovak-Hungarian relations were always accompanied by one-sided moves by Hungary, that had exterritorial effects - on the territory or citizens of the Slovak Republic and were not agreed to by or consulted with the Slovak government, some of which are: 1) formation of

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15 Cooperation with Hungary in the field of foreign policy (including cooperation of Slovak Republic and Hungary in questions of Eastern policy of the EU, Western Balkans etc.) is evaluated highly positively by the representatives of the Slovak MFA.. Source: personal interviews of the author of the article.
Permanent Hungarian Conference (1999), 2) approbation of the so-called compatriotic law by Hungary (2002), 3) creation of Forum of Hungarian congressmen of Carpathian Basin with participation of members of the Slovak parliamentary Party of the Hungarian Coalition (2004), which has become an official institution of the Hungarian parliament in 2008; and most recently 4) approbation of law on double citizenship of Hungarian Republic (2010).\(^{16}\)

Different political parties in Slovakia espouse different approaches on bilateral relations with Hungary (the most radical views are held by the Slovak National Party), but throughout the political spectrum, with the exception of the Party of Hungarian Coalition, there exists a consent that any unilateral act from the Hungarian side, which establishes institutional relationship between Hungary and citizens of Slovak Republic without an international agreement, is unacceptable.\(^{17}\) Resigning this approach would mean resigning the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic. Thus, there is not much leeway left on the Slovak side for any concessions when confronted by such unilateral measures.

Slovakia’s relations with Russia represent yet another important topic, consuming considerable share of the foreign political dispute ever since 1993. However, it has to be said that in the post-accession era, this topic has lost its domestic-political charge, which it had in the 90’s, and especially during the third government of Vladimir. Mečiar (1994-1998). After Slovak Republic was disqualified from the first round of NATO and EU accession, Mečiar’s government has presented relations with Russia as an alternative for Slovakia’s foreign policy – i.e. an alternative to accession to NATO and EU. After the formation of the first Dzurinda government in 1998, standardization and de-polarization of Slovak-Russian relations was reached.\(^{18}\) The government of Robert Fico (2006-2010) yet again contributed to the politization of this issue when in public appearances Prime Minister Fico has identified himself with positions of Russian diplomacy in crucial topics of foreign policy (dispute about placing components of American missile shield in Central Europe, commenting on the causes of the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008 etc.). However, it needs to be stated that on all


\(^{17}\) Ibid.

these occasions, the Prime Minister’s opinions diverged from those presented publicly on international fora by Foreign Minister Ján Kubiš. What’s more, in the case of the missile shield dispute, also with those of President Ivan Gašparovič. The outcome has been ambiguity of Slovakia’s foreign policy.\textsuperscript{19}

Considering relations with Russia, there is a certain dividing line between the parliamentary parties in Slovakia. Ambiguous positions, such as ‘supporting both policies of EU and NATO, as well as espousing good relations with Russia’ were often represented by the ‘Smer’ political party of Robert Fico (2006-2010), as well as the Slovak National Party. The political parties that formed the government of Iveta Radičová after the parliamentary elections in June 2010 have a tendency to sacrifice good relations with Russia for alliance politics of NATO and EU. These parties include the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ), Freedom and Solidarity (SAS), Christian-Democratic Movement (KDH) and Most-Híd. There is one exception though, in which attitudes towards foreign policy, both governing and opposition parties (with the exception of Most-Híd, which is hesitant to come down on either side)\textsuperscript{20} correspond with the Russian position and go counter to the majority consensus in the EU and NATO; the question of status of Kosovo.

Slovakia officially doesn’t recognize the independence of Kosovo, a policy declared back in February 2008, which has not changed even after Iveta Radicova’s accession to Prime Minister’s seat, nor the decision of The International Court of Justice in the Hague on 22 July 2010, according to which the declaration of independence of Kosovo was not in breach of international law. In a reaction to the decision of International Court of Justice, Slovak Foreign Ministry justified its position as follows: “The position of Slovak Republic is based upon the declaration of the Parliament of Slovak Republic from 28 March 2007. Slovak Republic believes that the principle of territorial integrity of the state forms the basic principle of international law, on which international community is built and operates according to”.\textsuperscript{21} Just as the Slovak Republic does not recognize Kosovo, it does not recognize

\textsuperscript{19} See the cited article – Duleba, Alexander, „Relations of Slovakia with its Eastern neighbors in 2008\textsuperscript{8}“, in: Brezáni, Peter (ed) Yearbook of Slovakia’s Foreign Policy 2008. Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. 2009, p. 103-122.

\textsuperscript{20} Party Most-Híd was established by former members of the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK). SMK as the only parliamentary party supported Kosovo’s independence in February 2008. Most-Híd is a parliamentary party since July 2010, but its representatives did not give a statement about the issue of Kosovo’s status at the time when this article was written – end of August 2010.

other similar entities, like South Ossetia and Abkhazia, thus its position exhibits all marks of consistency in foreign policy.

Another major topic of post-accession foreign policy dispute in Slovakia was its position as an EU member country toward the start of accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005. Whilst the majority of parliamentary political parties (2002-2006 election cycle) has adopted a wait-and-see attitude on this issue, a clearly negative stance was adopted only by the Slovak National Party (SNS). A rather negative stance was also supported by the Christian-democratic Movement (KDH), which instead of full membership, preferred the EU offers Turkey a ‘privileged partnership’. The support for launch of talks with Turkey was presented by Smer Party, and in the end also by the governmental center-right party SDKÚ. The outcome was that Slovakia agreed to start the accession negotiations with Turkey, but with no promise of the prospect of accession.

**Summary instead of conclusion**

The main challenge for Slovakia’s foreign policy in the post-accession period remains the continuous search for an answer to the question of what EU and what NATO it wants. Thus far, the Slovak Republic lacks a unified strategy of its role in both of the groupings, as well as a strategy of using the membership in both organizations as a tool of its foreign policy. On the other hand, Slovak diplomacy was able to clearly define its post-accession foreign policy priorities and achieve interesting results, especially in case of the Western Balkans. However, Slovakia’s Eastern policy is still missing a long-term strategy, and as the gas crisis in January 2009 in the context of Slovak-Ukrainian relations shows a lack of continuity as well. Among the successes of Slovakia’s foreign policy in the post-accession period we can add its role in Visegrad cooperation, serving as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2006-2007), and participation in peace-keeping missions. Moreover, on the list of successes on Slovakia’s mantle piece, we can mention the initiation of Official Development Assistance Programme in 2004. However, on the bilateral relations front relations with Hungary still remain a challenge for Slovak Republic’s foreign policy.

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22 “SNS is strictly against the accession of Turkey to EU.” SITA, 21.10.2004.


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