



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT

OF THE STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL JANEZ JANŠA

Ljubljana, 24 January 2008

PRIME MINISTER JANEZ JANŠA: Let me begin with some matters relating to the Presidency of the European Union. As you know, the European Commission yesterday presented the environmental and energy package, which is one of the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union Council. As we noted in the communication, we welcome this proposal. We are certain that this is one of the most important legislative packages of the European Union in the early 21st century. This proposal elaborates the goals generally determined for the whole European Union in March 2007 so as to suggest the ways to achieve them as well as recommend the concrete commitments of the Member States.

The presentation of the package is not the end of the road but the beginning of its concretisation. What follows now is a rather demanding phase of coordination and procedural actions. Slovenia is involved in this process as the presiding state of the Council in this most difficult phase. We are pleased that the European Commission has achieved a considerable consensus among the Member States already during the preparations to formulate this proposal. However, this consensus is not unanimous, which no one even expected, so this discussion will last for some time with the cooperation of the European Parliament. We are certain that the commitment of all institutions of the European Union and the activities of the Member States – which will not focus only on a narrow national interest but on the common interest of Europe and the planet in general – may bring the entire procedure to an end by the end of this term of the European Commission and the European Parliament, therefore by the spring of 2009 when this productive work of European institutions will have been completed. Namely, the elections will probably take place in June 2009.

You all know about the national commitments of Slovenia. These are tasks faced by all European Union Member States. Slovenia accepts this challenge. We already started to prepare for them upon the adoption of the Slovenia's Development Strategy, where the sustainable development principle was made one of the objectives. The Resolution and the national development projects foresaw some projects aimed at making Slovenia's industry greener, at reducing emissions in some key sectors and at investments to raise the share of renewable energy sources in the national energy balance. Slovenia is aware that the discussions will bring up the issue of the use or inclusion of nuclear energy in the process of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Such discussion is difficult in Europe due to the different positions of the Member States. However, these – let us say introductory – discussions and hints reveal that a great majority of the European Union Member States will not give up the use of nuclear energy. There are strong voices – and in my personal opinion quite justified too – in favour of the belief that these or even more ambitious commitments, should we achieve also some global agreement with other partners in the world regarding the reduction of emissions, are targets that cannot be achieved without considering a realistic share of nuclear energy. That the discussion will take this course is also evident from the decision of some countries as regards investments in new capacities for nuclear energy production or the production of energy in nuclear plants. However, these formulas do not include this dilemma, since it is not expected that the European Union would soon achieve a common position regarding this matter.

This would require consensus. However, the discussion that has now been started deals with concrete topics, and we are ready for it.

The second topic associated with the current role of Slovenia in the European Union is the European perspective of Serbia. Slovenia welcomed Serbia's presidential elections. The first ballot went according to all democratic conventions. In the second ballot, the citizens of Serbia will choose between the programmes of two candidates who received the most votes. This is at the same time a choice between different options that both candidates offer for the future of the country. In our belief, the European option is the only positive alternative. This orientation in Serbia has a very important impact on similar objectives of other Western Balkans countries. From this point of view, these elections are not only important for the citizens of Serbia, but also for the whole Western Balkan region, i.e. for its perspective and stability.

Slovenia is making every effort to convince other Member States within the European Union that even now certain steps taken to reinforce the European expectations of the citizens of Serbia should be continued. Signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement would be the most important step taken in this direction. Full consensus has not been reached about that yet. We are in the course of seeking it. The key obstacle is the question of whether Serbia is fully cooperating with the Hague Tribunal. Slovenia agrees that this should be a condition for Serbia's approaching the European Union; however, we believe that this requires fair play, which means that equal phases or an equal approach to the assessment of whether a certain country cooperates with the Hague Tribunal or not should be used for all Candidate Countries uniformly. Therefore, even if the Agreement were signed, this would not mean that Serbia has thus been relieved of its commitment to cooperate fully with the Tribunal. On the contrary, this condition is important not only for Serbia, but for stability, peace and reconciliation in the whole region of the Western Balkans.