

*Check against delivery!*

**ADDRESS**  
**BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA JANEZ JANŠA**  
**AT THE MEETING OF PRIME MINISTERS FROM**  
**POLAND, CENTRAL EUROPE AND CHINA**  
*Warsaw, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012*

Dear Prime-ministers, Excellencies!

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in today's meeting. Many thanks to Prime Ministers Donald Tusk and Wen Jiabao for giving us the opportunity to meet here in this beautiful palace in Warsaw.

Slovenia is as well as the other European countries facing the consequences of economic and financial crisis. We are all striving for to overcome the current situation as soon as possible.

However, in a globalized and multipolar world a real progress can only be achieved by dialogue and in cooperation with other partners. What a brilliant Polish scientist Copernicus established centuries ago in astronomy, I believe, has also become relevant in economy. Today's economic and financial reality clearly demonstrates that Europe is far from being the sole centre of the world. Here represented European countries are all challenged by seeking partners outside Europe. Hence, China certainly deserves our great attention.

In this respect let me express my admiration for the economic progress made by China in the last years. For Slovenia, China already represents the most important business partner in Asia. Let me here express our interest for stronger and even more dynamic cooperation. We appreciate the interest of China in current economic and financial situation in Slovenia. We welcome the twelve measures announced by the Prime Minister of China today. Our challenges are not easy. However, by enhancing mutual economic cooperation they could be overcome easier. Towards this aim Slovenia can play its part in two key areas:

First: Slovenia can serve as an important bridge between China and Central-Eastern Europe. Slovenia is developing into a relevant distribution and logistics centre. Well developed infrastructure is our asset. The Port of Koper represents good potential for the Chinese companies, since it is the closest sea gateway to Central Europe and one of the shortest routes for goods from China to Central European countries and vice versa. Our data show that in 2011

already over a million tons of goods were shipped through the Port of Koper from China. Over half a million tons of goods were also shipped from Slovenia to China. In order to further expand its potential, Slovenia is determined to modernize and upgrade its transport facilities by expanding the port, rail and air connection capacities.

Second: Slovenia is open to foreign investments. Our track record clearly shows that foreign investors who have discovered our advantages are keen to stay and expand their operations in Slovenia. They generally appreciate the quality of workforce, the quality of life and our links to regional markets. My Government will also make every effort to further develop friendly and stimulating business environment. Some of the anticipated or already taken measures are: gradual decreasing of corporate income tax from 20% to 15%, tax holidays for investors, and tax exemption for research and development.

Excellencies,

Let me conclude by the observation that the European countries that are present here today represent 90 million people and – as follows from the Chinese data – they import nearly 30 billion EUR of goods from China each year. However, our exports amount less than one third of the before mentioned imports; this clearly indicates a massive trade imbalance that could only be addressed in joint cooperation. The first of the possible ways is to enhance our export to China. In this respect Chinese advice and the proposed 12 measures are more than welcome. We are ready indeed to work together for a promising future.

Thank you.