



**PRÍHOVOR PREZIDENTA SR
pri príležitosti novoročného prijatia vedúcich
diplomatických misií v SR**

Bratislava, 3. 2. 2026

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

Welcome! Thank you for the work you do - often far from home and often under pressure. So, I wish you a peaceful and successful year ahead.

Slovakia, as part of international and security structures, faces big questions in a fast-changing world.

- How do we see—and how can we help—NATO stay united, based on mutual respect, and ready to defend our shared values?
- And what kind of European Union does Slovakia want, so it can face today's geopolitical challenges—so it is effective, accepted, modern, and strong on the world stage?

These are not academic questions. They are the challenges of our time. They are about our future—because they shape our security, our prosperity, and our freedom. So let me answer very clearly.

Slovakia is part of the European Union. We share common values. We build economic cooperation. And we want a Union that brings stability and modern growth.

We want NATO to prevent aggression—and we do not want NATO to create conflicts among its own members, as we are seeing today. Slovakia is ready to contribute with an active policy that empowers NATO to stay united and secure. This will not work without credibility, respect, and readiness to defend our shared values.

In today's turbulent world, Slovakia needs a European Union that is strong, united, competitive—and able to protect what matters. This will not happen without unity and strength. It also needs strong leaders who turn these goals into real policy. And it needs the ability to admit own mistakes, see weaknesses, and fix them.

We meet after a year that tested many things we used to take for granted. In 2025, war remained on our continent. Global competition sharpened. Trust became harder to protect. And too many people—even in Europe—lived with more tension than calm.

For Slovakia, the answer is not to step back. The answer is to stay actively engaged—in Europe, in NATO, and in the United Nations.

For Slovakia, multilateralism is a core interest. We need international organisations that work—and that people respect. The answer is reform: making existing institutions stronger, more effective, and more credible. These institutions were created many years ago as a response to an unstable world. We trust them because their story and development stood for cooperation and made dialogue possible between nations. Our political energy and resources should go into improving what we already have—not into building parallel international institutions with unclear roles and goals, which may not even outlast their founders.

Today, NATO faces challenges not only at its borders, but also within its own family—including in the High North. We cannot afford to weaken each other. It is unacceptable to replace partnership and dialogue with threats and the language of force. Respect, trust, and shared values are our strength—our best defence in a fast-changing security environment.

In today's international debate, strong words travel fast. But strong words must be replaced by actions that empower stability, peace, and cooperation. Distrust, tariff wars, and power politics toward Allies do not build strong partnership. On the contrary—they weaken it.

So let us restore credibility and respect to international organisations. Let us have the courage for reforms in the European Union that will make us a strong and united actor in the world. And let NATO remain the organisation that provides the security and defence that make this development possible.

In 2026, my foreign policy agenda will follow three clear lines.

These three lines are my answer to the questions I asked at the beginning—about Europe, about NATO, and about the rules that protect us.

1/ The first line is Europe. And our region.

In 2025, I travelled across almost the whole Western Balkans. I did it for one reason: stability in Southeast Europe is not a distant issue. It is a European security interest—and it is also Slovakia's interest.

A stronger Europe needs a more stable neighbourhood. And it needs results, not declarations. In 2026, I want to build on this with practical steps: better connectivity, more trade, more contacts between people, and a credible European perspective for those who choose reforms and cooperation. Central Europe matters too. Regional formats are not a luxury. They are a tool. They help us coordinate. They help prevent misunderstandings. And they help us act faster in any crisis.

That is why Visegrad cooperation matters to me. Slovakia will use its upcoming V4 presidency to host our partners and to focus on what we share: security, infrastructure, competitiveness, and resilience. We may not agree on everything. But we can keep mutual respect—and keep working on what is essential.

2/ The second line is security and defence.

Our security is built on unity in NATO and in the European Union. Slovakia will remain a reliable Ally and partner. Credibility is built before a crisis. We must invest. We must train. We must modernise. Europe's defence industry must be stronger. And cohesion among Allies must be protected—especially when pressure grows.

Security is not only military. It is also the everyday security of our people. And it is resilience: energy security, supply chains, critical infrastructure, and social cohesion. We must protect our societies from polarisation. And we must make the digital space safer for our young people.

3/ The third line is modern diplomacy: technology, especially artificial intelligence. Technology is now part world of power.

If Europe wants to be a power, it must lead in trusted technologies as well. AI is changing economies. It is changing security. It is also changing how people see truth. Slovakia does not want to be only a user of new technologies. We want to help shape trustworthy and useful AI that improves public services, supports productivity, protects citizens from manipulation, and stays under human control and responsibility. And AI must not end up in the hands of a few who decide how it is used.

Excellencies,

I would like to close with something we often underestimate: culture. Culture creates respect. It opens doors. And it keeps dialogue possible even when politics is difficult. That is why I want to invest more in cultural diplomacy—as a tool of trust.

Let me close with a simple promise. Foreign policy is not only about travelling. It is also about hosting—bringing partners to Slovakia and turning meetings into results. It is about making our country a place where dialogue is possible.

Excellencies, you are always welcome here and welcomed are your heads of state. Not only in the capital, but across Slovakia—where you will find our hospitality, our culture, and our sincere interest in partnership.

In 2026, Slovakia will lead key regional cooperation in Central Europe, including S3 and the Visegrad Group. We will be a country that listens. A country that speaks clearly. And a country that remains committed to peace, cooperation, solidarity, and the rules that protect human life.

Thank you very much. And I wish you a safe and successful year ahead.