

*Small States in the System of International Relations*

Europe. Our ambitions are commensurate with the existing natural limits. At present the broad consensus among Slovakia's political elite and the general public is that the only strategic option consists in European integration, regional co-operation and strategic relations with the United States of America. This strategy will put both short-term and long-term conditions in place for the stable development and security of a small country in the heart of Europe.

My dear colleagues and distinguished professors, in conclusion let me make a personal point. I have spent my professional life working as a career diplomat and the past ten years as a political leader of a small country. On a daily basis I deal with problems and dilemmas with which life confronts small countries and which make it impossible for us to pursue our ambitions and goals in a straightforward way. On the other hand, I can observe my counterparts in large countries and big powers who are not only grappling with the problems of their own nations but also carrying the burden of responsibility for the entire world community. Therefore, at this place I would be reluctant to argue forcefully that small is beautiful but I can certainly claim that the big is not necessarily something to be jealous of.