



DR. DIMITRIJ RUPEL,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# SLOVENIA AS AN ALLY



**Last year Slovenia celebrated ten years as an independent country. One of the main features of our short history as a state is our strong determination to join Euro-Atlantic structures. Slovenia wishes to join NATO because of common security and political interests; Slovenia's statehood is based on the same values as NATO – the rule of law, market economy, democracy and the protection of human rights.**

**A**fter the tragic events of September 11, we have been confronted with serious threats to global peace posed by international terrorism. We are all aware today that a high level of national security can no longer be achieved merely by individual measures; instead, we have to act together within a comprehensive system of collective defence at the international level. Slovenia sees NATO as

the main safeguard of peace, security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO is an Alliance based on the principle of international solidarity, a principle that has also been observed by Slovenia's foreign policy.

Slovenia, as a serious NATO candidate, endeavours to contribute its share to ensuring security and stability in the vicinity and in the wider region. A nation of two million will

never be a superpower, but that does not mean that we are hoping for a "free ride" from NATO. On the contrary, Slovenia is willing to assume its share of responsibility for ensuring security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

In the process of drawing closer to NATO, Slovenia has proved several times as a member of the Partnership for Peace that it will assume its obligations as a partner and ally with responsibility. Slovenia's foreign policy supports all international endeavours to stabilise the situation in the Balkans. Slovenian diplomacy is making efforts to maintain high-level bilateral contacts with the countries of South-Eastern Europe and to take an active part in different regional initiatives (Stability Pact, SECI, etc.). At the initiative of Slovenia and Lithuania, NATO candidate countries established the "Vilnius Group", which acts in the spirit of partnership and supports the efforts invested by NATO in expanding the area of security and stability in Europe.

Within its regional activities, Slovenia devotes special attention to post-conflict rehabilitation. It established "Together" – The Regional Centre for the Psycho-Social Well-being of Children – with the aim of improving the mental health of children affected by the armed conflicts in South-Eastern Europe. The International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance is operating successfully in the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

Slovenes hope to receive an invitation to join NATO at the Prague Summit this year. However, we do not wish to be a member on paper only but an ally on an equal footing – and one whose activities will enhance the international reputation of the North-Atlantic Alliance.



**Minister Rupel  
meeting  
NATO Secretary  
General Lord  
Robertson.**