

***Ministry of Environment  
of the Slovak Republic***



***STATE OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT REPORT  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
2010***



***Slovak Environmental Agency***

## FOREWORD

Each person living in Slovakia is guaranteed his or her constitutional right to a suitable environment that, besides other factors, has a direct influence on that person's quality of life. Slovak Government considers **environmental protection and formation** one of its significant activities, as witnessed by the government program resolution. Re-creation of the Ministry of Environment on November 1, 2010 testified to a responsible approach of the Slovak Government and its understanding of the importance of environmental care.

Many times, amid the duties and obligations of our everyday life, we tend to take certain facts for granted and fail to appreciate the significance of having also a high-quality environment and its existence necessary for us as well as the whole of humanity. Many times we also fail to perceive **nature's beauty** and the still-present **richness of biodiversity** which have long been the typical characteristics of Slovakia. Only few countries can pride themselves with such diversity and variability of landscape. Because the Slovak Republic has stayed true to these values, it now forms part of the growing European network of NATURA 2000 protected areas. The need for their protection is ever more important in light of the fact that up to date the European Union has not been able to achieve its benchmark goal set for the year 2010 - halting the loss of biodiversity.

**Sources of drinking water** constitute one of the largest natural resources. The fact that it costs something (not the economic cost) remains unnoticed most of the time when turning the faucet. We realize very well that not everywhere in the world exist places that have water in abundance and of excellent quality. We must do everything to protect these sources also for the future. This relates to taking steps to **connect municipalities to public water supplies and sewerage systems**. We are well aware of the fact that in the area of **building waste water treatment plants** we are still lagging behind, as declared by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) at its environmental performance review of Slovakia.

In terms of assessing the progress achieved in the protection of the environment we can say that we have achieved a **considerable improvement** in a number of sectors and regions. As an example let me use the **long-term reduction in the emissions** of air pollutants, reducing the **volumes of waste water** and contamination discharged into watercourses, as well as reduction in surface and ground water abstractions. In total, the updated environmental regional classification of 2010 shows that we are achieving the objective to **decrease the size of territories with damaged and heavily damaged environment**.

Despite the accelerated industrial growth in Slovakia, the **greenhouse gases emissions** in the years 2000-2008 stabilized themselves. This is a very significant fact and we believe it is necessary to maintain this trend and to adopt measures leading to a further drop in these emissions. Nevertheless, the objective to limit climate change so much that the global temperature rise in this century will not exceed 2°C will most likely remain unmet. Almost all **impacts of climate change** such as weather

changes, climatic changes, changes to water regime, ecosystems, air quality, etc., may ultimately influence human health as well as other values. Last but not least, these are interlinked with considerable financial burdens of eliminating threats and negative phenomena. Also, the year 2010 was a typical example of these visible impacts. Slovakia was afflicted with **floods** that caused damage amounting to almost 500 mil. EUR. These floods were devastating to many people. Therefore, fighting the floods has been one of the priorities within the implementation of our new environmental strategy. This resulted in passing a new legislation - Act No. 7/2010 Coll. on flood protection, as well as in adopting documents related to landscape revitalisation and integrated management of watersheds. Exceptionally extreme rainfalls not only directly resulted in floods, but also in a system of newly-formed **landslides** that besides causing a serious damage to buildings and infrastructure also destroyed the existing state of the environment.

The **existing environmental loads** are also a major negative environmental element. A big initiative to tackle these problems is seen in the adoption of the National Programme of Sanation of environmental loads in March of 2010 and in the preparation of a law concerning the identification of environmental loads, as well as in adopting certain measures connected to their elimination and funding. This is a result of 8 years of initiative of the Ministry (Act No. 409/2011 Coll. on selected measures in the area of environmental load as amended).

Slovakia is a rather small country in the heart of Europe. For us, this fact leads to the necessity of seeking cooperation at the European or global levels, since "**the environment knows no borders**". It is our actions that directly influence our environment not only in our country, but also in the neighbouring states. And this principle works both ways. This can be illustrated by the **ground ozone** load on Slovakia where despite a significant reduction in the ozone precursors emissions over the recent years there has not been a reduction in ground ozone concentration and the valid limit values are continually exceeded.

In the years 2010-2011, Slovak Republic succeeded in the second **environmental performance review** by the OECD. The review showed a success that had been achieved at the implementation of the objectives at the national and international levels; however, at the same time it also articulated the areas and measures that require more attention and increased efforts. Just like shown at numerous international platforms, the economic recession and the lack of funding are not legitimate reasons for lessening our effort to improve the quality of the environment. The solution lies in the change to a **greener economy**. However, such solution calls for a change in a number of attitudes and approaches, but, most of all, for a common integrated approach of all affected ministries, local governments, businesses, academic institutions, non-government organisations and groups of citizens in order to continue reducing the pressures and impacts on the environment.

It is the duty of us all to **protect the environment** either through our attitude toward exploiting natural resources or, for example, our attitude to waste generation and handling and by taking an active part in the approach to the issues related to environmental protection. We cannot and must not remain indifferent to the question of what will remain of our planet when future generations come.

In order to be able to give a competent answer to the question of the course of our environment, we have to have access to high-quality and timely information. This State of the Environment Report of the Slovak Republic in 2010 serves the above-mentioned purpose. Specifically, its objective has been to show key findings and answer key questions about the state and development of the environmental situation in our country - the factors that impact this development. At the same time, the Report undertakes to assess the efficacy of selected environmental protection tools.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'József Nagy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ing. József Nagy  
Minister of Environment of the Slovak Republic