



*Permanent Representative
of the Slovak Republic to the EU*



Brussels, 28 July 2016

Dear Dr Weingärtner,

Thank for your letter as well as your efforts to engage in dialogue.

As you know, the Permanent Representation to the EU, including myself, is fully aware of the situation described by the International Press Association (API-IPA) and I assure you that I have been paying personal attention to it.

Let me briefly explain the two-step procedure in place and the logic behind it. Given the current circumstances, Slovakia's security authorities have decided to set up a procedure that in their independent assessment, best reflects their obligation to ensure security of respective events organised in Slovakia. In practice, it means that journalists are required to get accredited 21 days before a first event they wish to attend. This is a one-off requirement, which entitles media representatives to a 6-month pass for Presidency events. Afterwards, registration for a specific event is also required in order to know how many journalists will actually attend it. I want to assure you that this procedure has been put in place to guarantee high standard of security for all participants and our intention has never been to prevent the media from attending informal ministerial meetings. On the contrary, we value your work very much and would like to see as many media representatives attending Presidency event in Bratislava as possible.

Aware of possible challenges however, our media team have done its best to communicate full details of the system actively and well in advance. Unfortunately, some difficulties have occurred in spite of our efforts to prevent them – something that the Presidency sincerely regrets.

In recent weeks, we have therefore been exploring ways to improve the comfort of journalists. As a result, we will do our best to reach out to as many media representatives as possible so everyone is aware of the two-step procedure, which we cannot abolish. We would be very grateful if the API-IPA, as a strong base and voice of journalists, could help us encouraging its members not to postpone their accreditation applications. The Presidency will also be responsive to late or last-minute registrations for specific events, given that a reporter has done its accreditation on time. We have already opened registration for the following upcoming events:



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- Ministerial conference on the occasion of the European Day of Remembrance for the victims of totalitarian regimes (22 - 23 August)
- Gymnich (2 - 3 September)
- ECOFIN (9 - 10 September)
- AGRIFISH (11 - 13 September)
- Informal Meeting of Heads of State and Government (16 September).

In the course of August, we intend to open all remaining events for registration, too.

In conclusion, let me stress that I am available to meet after the summer break and discuss the situation in person. In the meantime, I wish you a restful holiday season.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Javorčík
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the EU