

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC THE CONCEPTUAL BASIS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC (AUGUST 12, 1998)

Introduction

The Czech Government formulated its main foreign policy goals in its Policy Statement of August 12, 1998. The Government also pledged to submit to the Czech Parliament a concept of Czech foreign policy which would specify long- and short-term objectives of the Czech Republic based on an analysis of the current situation.

This document was formulated as a systemizing and open document which specifies the bounds of the country's foreign political activities. It will be regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with current developments.

A. Czech Foreign Policy: Points of Departure, Principles, Interests and Objectives

I. The Place of the Czech Republic in International Relations

The Czech Republic is a democratic, politically, economically and socially stable country located in Central Europe. Its size (78 864 sq. km) and population (10.3 million) places the Czech Republic among medium-sized European countries. The international political position and interests of the Czech Republic are determined by its geographic, demographic and economic makeup, by the effectiveness of its foreign and domestic policies, the extent of the integration in international relations and the scope of the international division of labour. As a state with an open economy (exports and services amount to almost 55% of the gross domestic product) which lacks raw material resources, the Czech Republic is dependent on international cooperation.

The Czech Republic supports the common effort of democratic nations to build and strengthen a community of peace, security, cooperation, democracy and prosperity. The Czech Republic aims to create an international community where war is an unacceptable method of resolving disputes between states, where nations jointly identify and overcome threats and risks, and where various forms of political and economic cooperation are promoted.

The Czech Republic supports the European integration process and the vision of a united, democratic, socially just, prosperous, peaceful and tension-free Europe, a continent of independent citizens and cooperating regions. The Czech Republic supports all actions which lead to the creation of a community which fully respects human, civil and social rights of individuals, including the right of a dignified life in a healthy environment. The Czech Republic supports the establishment of a community where citizens make democratic decisions about the administration of public affairs.

II. Czech Foreign Policy: Points of Departure

Foreign policy has an important role as part of the political activities of all states. It promotes a country's interests abroad and creates favourable conditions for domestic development. The foreign policy of a country is realized in a specific international environment and is, to a significant extent, determined by the set of values and principles adopted by that country. No clear boundary exists between foreign and domestic policies,

as foreign relations are influenced, formulated and mediated by external and internal political events and processes. Foreign policy is closely related to security policy, as both focus on similar interests and complement one another.

The current European order and democratic processes provide the Czech Republic with an unprecedented opportunity to advance its interests and values. During the two decades between the First and Second World Wars, Czechoslovakia participated actively in all efforts to create a basis for a secure and democratic Europe. However, relations with neighbouring countries remained mostly lukewarm and the arrival of Nazism put a definitive end to any hopes of improvement. The effort to establish collective security did not have the desired effect, and at the end of the 1930s the European democracies failed in their responsibility to defend the international order they had created. The collapse of the Versailles system meant a temporary loss of sovereignty for the Czechoslovak state and resulted in the Second World War. For the next fifty years Czechoslovakia was subjected to the rule of foreign powers.

The process of democratic renewal did not begin until the fall of the communist government in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Empire. The breakdown of the communist regime and the end of the Cold War provided Czech society with an opportunity to fulfill its desire for freedom and democracy. At the same time, it initiated processes which led to fundamental political changes in Europe. Three states have disintegrated, and in their place twenty-two new countries, including the Czech Republic, have been created. The fact that the division of Czechoslovakia took place in an orderly and peaceful manner is of fundamental importance for the international position of the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic has built on the positive results of Czechoslovak foreign policy during 1989-1992.

The founding of the Czech Republic as an independent state has underscored certain limitations of the country's position in the international community. The open economy of the Czech Republic is to a substantial extent dependent on international economic exchange and reacts sensitively to fluctuations in global economic developments. The Czech Republic has a limited capacity to influence the international situation independently.

III. Main Characteristics of Current International Relations

Current international relations are based on the interaction of a number of factors: sovereign states, groups of states with various degree of integration in international organizations and institutions, and non-state factors. Following the end of the Cold War and bipolar confrontation, the international situation can be characterized by a dispersion of power, authority, risks and threats. International relations are in a state of constant flux. They have reached a degree of multilayered complexity where elements of order and integration co-exist with elements of chaos and fragmentation. The role, importance and influence of individual factors change often over brief time spans. The foreign policy of the Czech Republic is focused on those factors and forces which support peace, stability, order, predictability and continuity.

The sovereign state remains the decisive element of international relations and the most important subject of International Law. At the same time, sovereign states are exposed to pressures from higher and lower levels of societal organization and their privileged position in many areas, including international relations, is gradually being reduced. At the higher level, the globalization process forces individual states to seek solutions to various

problems on international levels which are beyond their powers in international levels. At the lower level, the decision-making autonomy of individual states is limited by the regionalization process as part of which states hand down the governing autonomy to lower administrative and organizational structures. Both these tendencies are reflected in the foreign policy of the Czech Republic.

Following the end of the Cold War, the role of international organizations has increased as a result of intensive globalization processes, liberalization of world economy, growing interdependence of individual countries, and the accelerated advance of science and technology. The number of problems where solutions surpass the capacities of individual states has grown. Hence, there are stronger efforts to regulate the new processes and to stabilize and strengthen order in international relations. In the post-Cold War period many international organizations have not only successfully adapted to the new conditions but have also expanded their activities. At the same time, there is a tendency to respond to new challenges through the creation of flexible international groupings without insisting on traditional institutional structures. For the Czech Republic multilateral cooperation and membership in international organizations or groupings represent an instrument which balances its relative power and economic asymmetry with respect to larger nations.

The current international system includes a growing number of non-state factors which increasingly restrict the foreign policies of sovereign states. For example, activities of transnational and multinational corporations, global media, transnational lobbies, and groups defending ethnic, religious or regional interest - which sometimes use terrorist means to gain greater independence from state authorities - increasingly necessitate cooperation between states in areas which used to be considered to be of a purely domestic nature. At the same time, the establishment of institutions and organizations based on civil society is becoming an important factor in international relations. In many fields (such as protection of human and minority rights, social issues, environmental protection, etc.) these organizations carry out activities which complement traditional instruments of the foreign policy of a state. The formulation and achievement of the objectives of Czech foreign policy depend, inter alia, on the existence and activities of non-state factors.

IV. Principles of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

The foreign policy of the Czech Republic is based on these main principles:

Values

The Czech Republic endorses the heritage and values of European civilization. At the same time, it is aware that the multicultural character of the current world poses the question of global values and ethical standards. The fundamental values observed by the Czech Republic are international law, the rule of law, and the protection of natural and inalienable human rights.

The Czech Republic is aware that human rights are indivisible and must be protected through an active, inventive and dynamic policy. The policy of the Czech Republic is based on international documents which define the relationship of citizens and the state, in particular the General Declaration on Human Rights, the International Agreement on Civil and Political Rights, the International Agreement on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the European Social Charter.

The Czech Republic understands democracy not only as an internal matter of individual countries, but as a precondition for peaceful international relations. Democratic mechanisms are the only means allowing citizens, who suffer most in the end from international conflicts, to express and achieve their desire for peace and prosperity. The sovereignty and security of medium-sized countries, such as the Czech Republic, are therefore closely linked to the international democratic system.

Methods and Means of Securing Peace

In its relations with other countries the Czech Republic applies methods and means of securing peace in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The Czech Republic supports international relations based on the principles of international law, sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of states. In accordance with international law, the Czech Republic is prepared to support actions taken by the international community against violators of these principles.

Cooperativeness

The Czech Republic encourages international cooperation based on mutual advantage. However, the Czech Republic is aware that the principle of shared responsibility and international solidarity is equally important. The Czech Republic understands the importance of cooperative procedures which increase confidence in international relations and is prepared to take part in all activities which support these endeavours.

V. The Interests of the Czech Republic

Like all other sovereign countries, the Czech Republic pursues vital and strategic interests.

The vital interests of the Czech Republic are the survival of the state, securing its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the maintenance of constitutional order and democracy, and the security of citizens. To protect its vital interests the Czech Republic is prepared to employ all available means, including exceptional ones.

The strategic interest of the Czech Republic is to assist in creating and strengthening favourable international conditions and to become integrated in stable international security and economic structures in order to fulfill its foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, the strategic interests of the Czech Republic include the creation of external conditions for economic growth and prosperity, the maintaining and reinforcing of the comparative advantages of the Czech economy, and the strengthening of competitiveness of Czech exporters. The Czech Republic is interested in long-term sustainable and balanced global economic growth and the creation of effective measures against global threats and risks, such as degradation of the environment, drug abuse, transnational crime, and terrorism. The Czech Republic will employ all the means at its disposal to advance its strategic interests.

The vital and strategic interests are the basis for a set of specific interests of the Czech Republic. In the constantly changing international situation these interests cannot be understood only as an objectively unchanging category. The definition of specific interests is a continual process based on a great number of concrete situations and interactions. Some interests are not directly related to the functioning of the state; they concern activities of non-state elements and reflect the values of civil society, as well as the long-term objectives of the international democratic community.

VI. Objectives and Instruments of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

The objectives of Czech foreign policy are based on the country's defined interests. In particular, they ensure the external security of the state, the creation of conditions for peaceful development and prosperity, and the free and multifaceted development of the Czech society. The goal of Czech foreign policy is the incorporation of the Czech Republic into the community of advanced democratic countries where it will be an equal, reliable and trustworthy partner, and will assume an adequate share of responsibility for developments in Europe and in other parts of the world.

The Czech Republic pursues its foreign-policy objectives through the development of amicable relations with neighbouring and other countries and through membership in international organizations which ensure peace, security and stability in Europe and throughout the world, and which create conditions for economic growth and prosperity on a European and global scale.

Czech foreign policy advances the interests of the Czech Republic at all levels of international relations. This applies especially to relations with international institutions, organizations and groupings and diplomatic activities therein (multilateral diplomacy), relations with individual states (bilateral diplomacy), support for external economic relations (economic dimensions of diplomacy), cultural presentation of the Czech Republic abroad (cultural dimensions of diplomacy), and a dialogue with nongovernmental organizations and associations (public and non-state diplomacy) and the public at large. Moreover, Czech foreign policy emphasizes international cooperation on environmental protection (ecological dimensions of diplomacy).

The current international situation requires a comprehensive approach and the overcoming of narrow sector-oriented or territory-based viewpoints. Individual levels and instruments of the foreign policy complement and in many cases overlap one another.

Czech foreign policy uses all possibilities offered by diplomatic activities in multilateral international fora where a growing share of international relations is concentrated. The Czech Republic is a member of fifty-seven international governmental organizations and in 1999 has gained full membership in NATO. In 1998 the country began accession talks with the European Union. The Czech Republic is active in all main international control regimes and in many functional international groupings. Due to the Czech Republic's rather limited resources and means, international organizations are a platform which allows the country to advance its interests. The Czech Republic supports further rational development of international organizations with the aim of creating a functioning framework for effective global control and permanently sustainable growth.

As regards bilateral diplomacy, the Czech Republic benefits from many opportunities for active participation. It maintains diplomatic ties with 176 states. There are over a hundred permanent Czech diplomatic missions throughout the world. The Czech Republic pays special attention to the policy of good neighbourliness. The Czech Republic intends to develop bilateral and regional cooperation in Central Europe in the context of its own incorporation in European and Euro-Atlantic structures. Czech foreign policy is aware of the fact that bilateral relations with EU member countries will gradually assume the character of internal relations within the European Union.

Czech foreign policy supports the economic interests of Czech enterprises within the framework of international economic organizations and through a comprehensive export

policy. The Czech Republic will participate actively in negotiations focused on securing the higher effectiveness of international economic organizations and will support measures limiting negative aspects of the current economic globalization process. The Czech Republic will participate according to its capabilities in activities related to foreign humanitarian and development aid.

The present is characterized by the rising importance of international activities which stem from civil society and are not directly related to activities of the state. These include ties between political parties, expatriate relations, cultural exchange, education, research and development, ecological and humanitarian activities, etc. The role of non-governmental organizations is increasing especially in fields where governmental and intergovernmental institutions are unable to react in a timely and flexible manner (for example the organization of humanitarian aid, stabilization and reconstruction of regions which have undergone conflicts, etc.). The Czech Republic will take these trends into account, will help in making the necessary information, available and will support specific projects.

Environmental protection and the securing of sustainable growth are two current global problems whose solution will require a joint effort by all countries as well as the formulation of both global and national strategies and approaches. The importance of the ecological aspect of current international relations is demonstrated by the increasing number of international accords and bilateral agreements on the elimination of the negative impact of industrial development on the environment. The Czech Republic will pay strict attention to the application of environmental standards in accordance with the requirements of international agreements and national legislation.

Czech foreign policy is based on the assumption that cultural, academic, scientific and non-governmental relations create favourable conditions for developing closer communication among countries, peoples and cultures as well as for establishing commercial and investment-related contacts. Thanks to a genuine and often personal nature, these contacts are independent of momentary fluctuations in the political climate and thus contribute to the stability of international relations. Czech foreign policy will pay attention to the constant cultural presentation of the Czech Republic abroad, an activity which significantly contributes to the creation of a positive image of the Czech Republic. These activities will be carried out wherever possible through Czech Centers abroad and in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.

The primary role of the foreign service is to achieve the foreign policy objectives of the Czech Republic. The success of the foreign policy of a state depends to a significant extent on the professional qualities of its foreign service, its organization and ability to react rapidly. The foreign service of a democratic country, such as the Czech Republic, must be free from party-political considerations and must implement the foreign policy of the democratically elected government.

VII. The making of Foreign Policy in the Czech Republic

Foreign policy must respect and reflect linkages between international and domestic political, economic and social processes and relations. Non-partisan consensus-building as regards foreign policy is necessary for the mitigation of any destabilizing impact of these linkages. This does not mean that foreign policy is exempt from the process of competition between political parties within a democratic system. Yet, a legitimate dispute about ideology and political strategy must not be allowed to compromise the interests of the state and society. The foreign policy of the Czech Republic is executed on the basis of

consensus on the most important issues. This consensus is based on a dialogue across the political spectrum in the Czech Parliament and elsewhere, and a dialogue between the Government, the Parliament and the President of the Republic.

An important source of ideas for formulating Czech foreign policy is an ongoing dialogue between constitutional representatives and institutions and citizens. The objective of the foreign policy of a country is to serve its citizens and to provide guidance on complicated issues concerning international relations. An open foreign policy is possible only on the basis of mutual communication between the state and a civil society. Insufficient information and closed politics result in a lack of interest on the part of citizens and consequently obstruct the democratic making and control of foreign policy.

The jurisdiction and powers of state authorities concerning the implementation of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic are defined by the Czech Constitution and the Competency Law. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the central governmental authority for the conduct of foreign policy. It manages relations with other states, international organizations and integration groupings, and coordinates all activities arising from bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

B. The Czech Foreign Policy: Agenda and Tasks

The specific tasks of Czech foreign policy are based on priorities stated in the Policy Statement of the Czech Government. The main tasks are incorporation of the Czech Republic into stable Euro-Atlantic structures (NATO and the European Union), development of good relations with neighbouring countries, strengthening regional cooperation in Central Europe, and development of international cooperation on a broad scale.

1. The European Policy of the Czech Republic

Developments on the European continent have a fundamental importance for the Czech Republic. In the past, the political situation in Europe was characterized by the conflictual rivalry of several power centers where smaller countries maneuvered with varying degrees of success. This traditional model of relations between European countries is essentially a matter of the past, in particular due to the integration of the western part of the continent after the Second World War. The Czech Republic wants to participate in this process and play a role in ensuring that this development is expanded to include an increasing number of European countries.

The European Union

Developments in Europe are fundamentally affected by the process of European integration in which the European Union (EU) plays a decisive role. This process, which started by establishing links between individual economic sectors, has rested and rests mainly on a political idea. It is rooted in an effort to replace the past rivalry of European nations with close cooperation and unity, to abolish war as a political instrument, and to solve the differences among states through negotiation and the sharing of the decision-making process. These efforts have been successful thanks fundamentally to the continuing progress of European integration.

Immediately after its foundation, the Czech Republic began participating in the European integration process. The legal basis for relations of the Czech Republic and the European

Union is the European Association Treaty from 1993 which entered into effect on February 1, 1995.

In January 1996 the Czech Republic applied for membership in the European Union. Preliminary technical talks were initiated in March 1998 and ministerial-level accession talks between the Czech Republic and the European Union began in November 1998. The objective of the current Government is to complete internal preparations for membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union by the year 2003. The priority of Czech foreign policy is to complete negotiations on accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union by that date.

The Czech Republic will accept the European Union as it is at the time of accession. It is in the interest of the Czech Republic to join a strong and functioning organization. The European Union is preparing for changes after the accession of new members in order to be able to face the challenges of the new millennium in a European and global context.

The European policy of the Czech Republic is based on the assumption that the objective of European integration is to establish a political union with a strong emphasis on social and environmental issues. Members of the European Union will increasingly share sovereignty and apply the principle of subsidiarity, that is transfer the decision-making process to the lowest possible level of administration.

The Czech Republic wants to participate in the building of a prospering, competitive, open, socially just, environmentally responsible, and democratic European Union of free citizens and cooperating regions. Such a European Union will effectively participate in dealing with global issues as part of its transatlantic partnership with the United States of America.

The Czech Republic wants to contribute its part to a unified Europe, a continent where a European civil society is being created but without infringing the plurality of interests of individual nations. Even though the European integration process, combined with the creation of a single market and economic and monetary union, is drawing European countries closer together and is leading towards a gradual „Europeization“ of the political and economic structures of individual members, national cultural identities are still preserved. Moreover, they are given more room for self-realization. The Czech Republic wants to enrich the European Union with its own cultural identity.

Traditional functions and mechanisms are no longer a sufficient means for defending the interests of a state. EU member countries have therefore decided to join forces and pool their sovereignty in specific contractually determined areas. The Czech Republic is preparing to proceed in a like manner and to defend its legitimate interests through mechanisms which have been created within the European Union.

An essential condition for the functioning of an enlarged European Union are reforms whose objective is to change certain policies (agricultural and regional) and to reinforce the efficiency and democratic character of the decision-making process and main EU institutions in order to bring the European Union closer to its citizens. The final form of these reforms is being discussed. The Czech Republic supports reforms of the European Union which will allow continuation of the integration process, maintain equality among individual members on the basis of solidarity and equitability, and secure the functioning of the entire organization after its enlargement.

The Czech Republic considers creation of the Economic and Monetary Union and introduction of a single currency to be a great success of the European integration process with a worldwide impact. The Czech Republic closely monitors and evaluates the process of introducing the Euro. Prior to joining the European Union, the Czech Republic will adopt measures in order to reach the criteria for joining the Economic and Monetary Union. After joining the European Union, the Czech Republic will make an effort to be incorporated into the Economic and Monetary Union as soon as possible.

The Czech Republic considers the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union to be an important element which strengthens the European integration process and helps formulate and defend European interests. Prior to joining the European Union, the Czech Republic is prepared to take part in implementing the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Czech Republic is of the opinion that the improvement of flexible mechanisms for the formulation and realization of this Policy has to be continued.

The Czech Republic is aware that a single internal European market can function only if it is protected from external destabilizing effects, organized crime and other negative factors. Hence, the Czech Republic is gradually harmonizing its migration, asylum and visa policy with the policy of the European Union in order to adopt principles which apply to this area on the basis of the Schengen Agreements and the Amsterdam Treaty. The Czech Republic will also coordinate its asylum policy with the European Union.

The objective of the Czech Republic is to be prepared for admission to the European Union in 2003. This aim entails a number of important tasks, such as the adopting, implementing and enforcing of a broad range of laws and regulations which constitute the *acquis communautaire*. The Government has created the necessary institutional and organizational conditions and has involved all the relevant sectors of the state administration in these preparations. The Czech Republic has worked out the National Program of Preparation for EU Membership and fulfils the objectives of the Accession Partnership Program, as formulated for the Czech Republic by the European Commission in accordance with „Agenda 2000“. In addition, the Government is working on the „Economic Strategy of Accession to the European Union: Growth - Competitiveness - Employment - Solidarity“.

Moreover, the Czech government is creating effective mechanisms for the efficient use of funds offered by the European Union to applicants for membership during the pre-accession period - especially within the framework of the PHARE program and programs which are to be created after the year 2000 for agricultural and regional development (structural funds): The Czech Republic is also interested in taking advantage of loans offered by the European Investment Bank.

During the accession talks the Czech Republic will try to negotiate conditions which reflect the specific interests of Czech society in process of transformation. The Czech Republic will try to negotiate transitional periods in a limited number of areas where the immediate assuming of all obligations arising from the *acquis communautaire* would cause serious difficulties.

Membership in the European Union is an important political move of historical significance. It will substantially affect the development of the Czech Republic in the next century. The impact of membership in the European Union will concern all Czech citizens. Hence, public support for the Government's European policy is of fundamental importance. The

Government has a communication strategy whose goal is to provide the public and various interest and professional groups with important and balanced information about the European Union and the benefits and consequences of the future EU membership of the Czech Republic. This type of information will allow the Czech population to prepare responsibly for a referendum on accession to the European Union.

During preparations for accession talks with the European Union, the Czech Foreign Ministry cooperates with other candidate countries, especially Poland and Hungary. The Czech Republic will continue to participate in regular meetings of the main negotiators and other experts from candidate countries of the first group in order to exchange information about the negotiation process, preparation and submission of positional documents, etc. One of the objectives of these meetings is an effort to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and to prevent unnecessary competition between the candidate countries.

The Czech Republic is open to cooperation with other candidates for EU memberships with whom it is prepared to share experience from the accession talks (harmonization of legislation, screening, etc.) and preparations for EU membership. It is of the opinion that exchanges of information concerning the European integration process are important. As far as it can, the Czech Republic will also encourage the European Union to initiate talks with other candidate countries which have not yet been invited to accession talks and which have substantially progressed in their preparation for EU membership.

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe plays an irreplaceable role in developing and strengthening Pan-European legal and ethical standards, pluralist democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human and minority rights. It participates in the building of an European civil society. The Czech Republic uses the Council's theoretical and practical resources to strengthen the European dimension of its foreign policy.

Czech foreign policy will pay adequate attention to the Council of Europe. The Czech Republic will adhere to additional agreements of the Council of Europe, especially the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the European Agreement on Human Rights and Biomedicine, and the European Citizenship Agreement. The Czech Republic will create conditions which will facilitate the adoption of new obligations. The signing of additional treaties will substantially ease the cooperation of the Czech Republic with other European nations and will increase opportunities for contacts between Czech citizens and people in other European countries. The Czech Republic will continue its initiative leading towards the creation of a general judicial authority of the Council of Europe whose function could be assumed by the new European Court for Human Rights. Such an authority would ensure a unified interpretation of treaties of the Council of Europe and would help promote deeper European integration in areas where the Council of Europe has been given responsibility.

II. European and International Security

Security is indivisible. In the current environment of international globalization, the security of the Czech Republic cannot be separated from European and global security. In the interdependent world of today even distant events, which have seemingly little in common with life in the Czech Republic, may escalate to an extent that could threaten the security and stability of the state.

The new security environment requires individual countries and international organizations to be able to react promptly. The identification of potential centers of conflict and timely detection and assessment of warning signals require improved communication and coordination between the foreign service and all relevant authorities, especially the Ministries of Defence and the Interior. A specialized centre for strategic analysis and planning is needed.

The Czech Republic is prepared to meet increased demands brought about by the new strategic environment and to participate in international activities aimed at instituting and maintaining peace in critical areas, especially in Europe. The multilateral and expeditionary character of such operations, which will most probably play an important role in the activities of the armed forces in future, calls for close cooperation between the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs.

The current security situation in Europe is characterized by a high degree of institutionalization. The system of political, economic and security organizations includes NATO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the West European Union, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Each organization has a specific purpose. The Czech Republic supports the mutual reinforcing of these organizations and the rational division of labour among them with the aim of achieving a maximum effect of functional synergy and preventing mutual blocking or overlapping of individual elements of the European security system.

The Czech Republic holds that every state has the right freely to choose its security relations and integration priorities. It will promote the extension of the European security and stability zone on the basis of transparency, solidarity and mutual trust.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

In March 1999 the Czech Republic became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and thus achieved one of its fundamental foreign-policy objectives set at the time of foundation of the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic has been incorporated into the most important organization of collective defence. It has ceased to be a potential victim of superpower politics.

NATO safeguards the collective defence of the territory of its members in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. After joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Czech Republic now benefits from the advantages of being a NATO member and at the same time has assumed its obligations arising from the Washington Treaty.

The Czech Republic considers it important that it has joined an organization which anchors the presence of the United States of America in Europe, a presence which significantly contributes to the security and stability of the European continent. This exceptional role of the U.S.A. arises from its position as a global superpower.

The accession of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to NATO is part of a transformation process which the organization has been undergoing since the end of the Cold War. This process has also led to the development of a new strategic concept which reflects the fundamental changes that have taken place in Europe. These changes include the end of bipolar confrontation, new dangers and risks, a reduction of armed forces and armaments, the accentuation of the political aspects of NATO activities, as well as political

and military cooperation with NATO non-members within newly created structures, especially the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

NATO pays increasing attention to issues that go beyond collective defence in accordance with article 5 of the Washington Treaty and fall into the category of collective security. These issues concern threats brought about after the end of Cold War by regional instability, ethnic violence and terrorism in the Balkans and elsewhere in the world, and the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Within NATO the Czech Republic will participate in seeking effective strategies in order to avert such new threats. The Czech Republic deems it desirable that NATO out-of-area missions be carried out under a mandate from the UN Security Council or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The effort of European members of NATO to maintain their own defence and security identity with the support of the USA is part of the emerging European security system. The Czech Republic will cooperate with other European NATO members in the formation of this system. Furthermore, the Czech Republic will focus on activities aimed at overcoming the fragmentation of arms production in Europe and helping European countries overcome their relative technology gap compared to the United States.

The Czech Republic supports NATO efforts to secure broader and deeper cooperation with Russia and Ukraine. It supports the institutionalization of relations between NATO and the Russian Federation and between NATO and Ukraine through the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the NATO-Ukraine Charter. The Czech Republic is convinced that these efforts are an important contribution to security and cooperation in Europe.

The Czech Republic supports NATO's Open Door Policy. The Government will cooperate with countries interested in NATO membership on a bilateral basis and through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace.

West European Union

After joining NATO, the Czech Republic has become an associated member of the West European Union (WEU), which will allow more effective participation in the activities of this organization. WEU has the potential to become an instrument of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union and a platform for the gradual development of a common European security. The military importance of the West European Union lies in its ability to fulfill, the so-called Petersberg tasks, that is search and rescue, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and the use of armed forces in crisis management. The Czech Republic has declared its interest to become a member of WEU and is prepared to participate in discussing the future of this organization.

The Czech Republic supports efforts aimed at defining the relative responsibilities of WEU and NATO and reinforcing relations between these two organizations. It is of the opinion that relations between EU and WEU should be strengthened, especially as far as the realization of the European security and defense identity is concerned.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) occupies an important place in the system of current European security organizations. It is a Trans-Atlantic, European and Euro-Asian institution. It seeks to strengthen mutual trust and the concept of cooperative security which presupposes voluntary cooperation of all involved countries

without the use of military power. The OSCE has created a unique set of standards which regulate the behaviour and actions of states and reinforce mutual trust on issues regarding security, arms control, and disarmament. The success of the OSCE as a regional organization of the United Nations depends not only on the cooperation of member countries, but also on cooperation with other organizations, especially NATO, the West European Union, and the Council of Europe.

The main task of the OSCE is preventive diplomacy. The organization tries to diffuse tension before it grows into an open conflict and helps restore stability and peace in areas affected by international or domestic conflicts. The OSCE pays special attention to human and minority rights. The Council of Europe and the OSCE are the only European organizations which have political and legally binding standards and mechanisms that could prevent conflicts caused by the domestic political situation within a country.

The Czech Republic aims to strengthen the role of the OSCE, especially with regard to preventive diplomacy. The Czech Republic actively participates in long-term missions in various conflict areas and in the preparation of the European Security Charter which will be the basis for creating of a security model for the twenty-first century. The OSCE is a suitable platform for balancing asymmetries in maintaining security and creating a common security space.

Disarmament and Arms Control

Disarmament and arms control constitute an important aspect of the policies of the international community and its effort to create a world free of war and violence. These processes help prevent potential conflicts and reduce their intensity, create an atmosphere of mutual trust among countries, and help stabilize areas where conflicts occur. The Czech Republic views disarmament and arms control as very important issues and participates actively in these efforts.

One of the most important security challenges after the end of the Cold War is to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and materials for their production as well as means of delivery. The Czech Republic has signed and ratified all the fundamental treaties which ban and prevent the spreading of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. It is interested in compliance with international treaties and in the strengthening of control regimes whose aim is reduction of the number of weapons, control of technologies and production, and the stopping of proliferation and liquidation of weapons of mass destruction.

The objective is a world with no need for the deterring effect of weapons of mass destruction, a world free of nuclear arms. In view of the significant and widely respected achievements of Czech research and development in the field of security and defence against chemical and biological agents, the Czech Republic will intensively participate in activities aimed at the liquidation of weapons of mass destruction through international organizations and NATO defence planning.

The basic multilateral instrument aimed at reducing conventional forces in Europe after the end of the Cold War is the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe of 1990. The Czech Republic has fulfilled all its obligations arising from this Treaty. It supports an adaptation of the Conventional Forces Treaty which will change its present and obsolete bloc character and will create a system in which collective restrictions are replaced by national ones. As regards the process of adaptation of the Conventional Forces Treaty, the Czech Republic

wants to preserve the flexibility of the regime in order to be able to fulfill its obligations to its allies. The Czech Republic participates in the realization of the Open Skies Treaty and in the updating of the Vienna Document 1994 on Negotiations on Confidence and Security-Building Measures. It advocates stricter controls, the expansion of available information, and the transformation of currently non-binding measures into binding ones.

III. Bilateral and Regional Cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic Area

Relations with Euro-Atlantic countries have a special importance for the Czech Republic. This applies first and foremost to relations with neighbouring countries and to countries linked to the Czech Republic through present and future membership in NATO and the European Union. The Czech Republic is aware that its interests coincide with interests of other EU associated countries. It also acknowledges the need to develop relations with all countries which share in the effort of building a community based on stability, security and cooperation.

Relations with Neighbouring Countries

The Czech Republic emphasizes cooperation with neighbouring countries on bilateral, multilateral and regional levels. It cooperates closely with the Visegrad Treaty countries and other Central European groups which are undergoing a similar economic and political transformation and aim to be integrated into Euro-Atlantic and European structures.

The Czech Republic pays special attention to the multifaceted development of relations with Slovakia and wants to ensure that these relations have a special quality. This is based on the reality that the Czech Republic and Slovakia coexisted in a common state for almost seventy years and the fact that Czechs and Slovaks are linked by ties which are unparalleled in the Czech Republic's relations with other countries. This should be reflected in the structure and intensity of relations between these two nations. The Czech Republic supports Slovakia's endeavour to join European and Euro-Atlantic structures as rapidly as possible. It will consider maintaining the customs union with Slovakia even after joining the European Union. The Czech Republic is interested in the quickest possible settlement of outstanding issues concerning the division of the property of the former Czechoslovak Federation.

Poland is the second largest neighbour of the Czech Republic. Relations between these two countries have developed positively over the long term and have recently improved even further. They are based on a long historical experience and common interests. The Czech Republic welcomes this trend and will develop it at bilateral and regional levels. Accession of both countries to NATO and later to the European Union creates conditions for the ongoing deepening of the Czech Republic's relations with Poland.

Relations with Germany are a priority for the Czech Republic. Germany is the Czech Republic's largest neighbour and its most important trading partner and foreign investor. Germany supports the incorporation of the Czech Republic into the European Union and NATO. The Czech Republic rates highly the quality of relations with Germany, especially the progress made since the autumn of 1998. The two countries are becoming allies for the first time in modern history. Czech foreign policy is based on fact that Czech-German relations must be focused on future co-existence in a united Europe, as proclaimed in the Czech-German Declaration. The Czech Republic's policy is proceeds [sic!] from the Potsdam Agreement and other allied treaties. The Decrees of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic from 1940-1945 form a part of the Laws of the Czech Republic although they are now operationally outworn. The Czech Republic seeks to activate

Czech-German relations at all levels, and also to involve the public, especially young people, in this process. Special attention is paid to cross-border cooperation, particularly as far as environmental protection and cultural exchange are concerned.

Relations between the Czech Republic and Austria are based on a long historical tradition, shared cultural experience, and a dynamic development of mutual contacts in recent years. Austria is one of the most important economic partners of the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is determined to improve mutual relations further and appreciates highly Austria's willingness to provide information about her accession and integration into the European Union.

It supports constructive cooperation on environmental protection with the emphasis on building up an atmosphere of mutual trust, especially as far as the use of nuclear energy and nuclear waste disposal are concerned.

Although Hungary does not adjoin the Czech Republic, shared history, traditions and the quality of mutual relations place Hungary on the same level as the Czech Republic's other neighbours. The Czech Republic and Hungary share common interests, based on well developed bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation.

Regional Cooperation in Central Europe

The Czech Republic does not limit regional cooperation to neighbouring countries; it understands the Central European region in a broader historical and political context. The Visegrad Treaty and the Central European Free Trade Agreement represent a specific contribution to the strengthening of Central European stability. Special attention is paid to regular meetings of Presidents of Central European countries (the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia). An important task of countries which are candidates for membership in NATO and the EU is to develop and deepen relations with states which will join these organizations at a later date.

In the second half of 1998 the Czech Republic initiated the renewal of cooperation based on the Visegrad Treaty (the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia). It is prepared to cooperate with the countries of the Visegrad Group in areas of shared interests in order to establish broad civic and cultural cooperation in the region. It therefore supports the development of contacts among Visegrad nations at all levels of state administration and local self-government. Within the Visegrad Group the Czech Republic will support Slovakia's efforts to join European and Euro-Atlantic structures as soon as possible.

Cross-border cooperation and Euro regions are new and effective instruments of bilateral and regional cooperation. Euro regions on the Czech border with Poland, Germany and Austria have already brought positive results. The Czech Republic is prepared to continue this type of cooperation because it not only helps to improve living conditions in border regions, but also contributes in specific ways to European cooperation.

The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) was signed in 1992 with the aim of strengthening economic cooperation among the signatories through creation of a free-trade zone. CEFTA currently includes seven countries which represent a market with almost one hundred million consumers. The organization is facing new conditions since the beginning of accession talks between the European Union and some CEFTA members. The Czech Republic will support a settlement which will allow the maintenance

of the attained level of trade between CEFTA members even after some of them join the European Union.

The Czech Republic supports the enlargement of CEFTA to include other Eastern European countries which fulfill the admission conditions, that is countries that are members of the World Trade Organization and which have signed an European Association Treaty and bilateral free trade agreements with all member nations.

The Czech Republic values the importance of the Central European Initiative (CEI) as a forum for dialogue of sixteen countries whose position with respect to the European Union varies: it ranges from full membership to association while others still aim to become associated countries. Czech foreign policy emphasizes greater effectiveness, dynamism and the informal nature of CEI activities. Moreover, the Czech Republic advocates the realization of specific projects, especially as regards the building of a Central European transport infrastructure, telecommunications, environmental protection and other areas where CEI members cooperate. The Czech Republic will also use the CEI to strengthen democratic structures and internal political stability in member countries affected by conflicts, such as Bosnia. It will encourage the enlargement of CEI to other interested countries in the region with the support of other CEI members. In 1999 the Czech Republic will face a number of demanding tasks as it assumes the presidency of the Central European Initiative. It will concentrate especially on rationalizing the activities of individual committees and on the consolidation of relations between the CEI and the European Union.

Relations with NATO and European Union Members

Accession to NATO and later to the European Union will bring about substantial changes in the bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and individual members of these organizations. Mutual relations are assuming the character of relations between allied countries, are expanded and intensified, and cover new areas. Bilateral relations are supplemented by continual consultations and joint decision-making within common institutions. The Czech Republic will have to view a number of issues not only from the perspective of a medium-sized Central European country, but from the perspective of a member of NATO and the European Union. Hence, its interests are assuming a European and Euro-Atlantic character.

After the Czech Republic joins the European Union, relations with EU members will undergo even more pronounced changes than was the case of accession to NATO. They will be transformed from interstate relations to intra-Union relations where, besides individual states, a significant role will also be played by the institutions of the European Union. The importance of continuous communication on both bilateral and multilateral levels will increase substantially.

In the new international political context, based on membership in NATO and later in the European Union, the Czech Republic will continue to develop and deepen relations with the United States of America and Canada. Both these countries play an important role in strengthening security and stability in Europe and in other part of the world and they are linked to Europe by traditional cultural and civilizational ties. The Czech Republic is interested in expanding the economic involvement of the United States and Canada and the presence of American and Canadian capital in the Czech Republic and in Central Europe.

The Czech Republic will continue to develop close relations with the European members of NATO and members of the European Union. This applies not only to great European powers, such as Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Spain, but also to other nations which the Czech Republic views as its natural partners. Common membership in NATO and the prospective common membership in the European Union help create a comprehensive network of purposeful bilateral relations of a new quality.

The Czech Republic will pay attention to developing relations with members of the European Free Trade Association.

Relations with Countries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe

The Czech Republic shares a number of interests with Eastern and Southeastern European countries which have signed the European Association Agreements and are preparing to join the European Union. It will continue to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation with these states and is prepared to share its experience from the accession talks and preparations for EU membership.

The context of relations with the Russian Federation will change with the Czech Republic's entry into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The Czech Republic will continue developing mutually beneficial cooperation based on existing contacts, the traditionally good reputation of Czech products, and general familiarity with the region. Mutually beneficial cooperation with economically prospering regions of the Russian Federation is especially promising. At the same time, the Czech Republic will make an effort to collect outstanding debts owed by the Russian Federation from the COMECON era. As regards security, the Czech Republic will base its cooperation with Russia on the NATO-Russia Founding Act. The Czech Republic considers incorporation of Russia into the European security architecture to be a necessary condition for securing stability on the European continent.

The Czech Republic regards Ukraine as an important European power crucially important for stability in Central and Eastern Europe. The Czech Republic appreciates Ukraine's constructive foreign policy which is expressed in the Charter on a Distinctive NATO-Ukraine Partnership. The Czech Republic will expand mutually beneficial economic cooperation with Ukraine based on contacts made in the past.

The Czech Republic closely monitors developments in CIS countries and, within the limits of its capability, will try to participate in finding peaceful solutions to conflicts which occur in some of them. The Czech Republic will build on a tradition of close economic ties with these countries. Its interest in this region is reflected in the intention to open a new diplomatic mission in Transcaucasia.

The Czech Republic pays close attention to the conflicts in Southeastern Europe and is prepared to participate as far as it can in finding peaceful solutions. It supports strict military and civilian compliance with the Dayton Agreement. The Czech Republic has sent a peacekeeping mission to SFOR in Bosnia and actively participates in long-term OSCE missions, including the verification mission in Kosovo. The Czech Republic advocates the safe return of refugees to their homes and consolidation of civil society structures as the best guarantee of resolving ethnic conflicts. The Czech Republic has supported the policy of the Atlantic Alliance during the crisis in Kosovo. Its soldiers are in Kosovo as part of KFOR, and the Czech Republic has contributed significantly to the humanitarian relief necessitated by the massive refugee problem in the region. In the past Czechoslovakia

maintained well-developed relations with nations in this region, and the Czech Republic wants to build on these relations in future.

IV. The Czech Republic and Countries in Asia, Africa, South America and Australia

In developing its relations with countries in Asia, Africa, South America and Australia the Czech Republic supports security and stability in all regions of the world, peaceful resolution of regional conflicts, mutually beneficial economic cooperation as a basis for development of bilateral and multilateral relations, and political dialogue with all countries on the protection of fundamental human rights.

The Czech Republic supports all initiatives aimed at maintaining and improving stability and security in individual regions and participates actively as far as possible in these initiatives. The Czech Republic does not pursue its interests at the expense of other countries and respects the policies agreed by the international community. It complies strictly with economic sanctions decided by the United Nations Security Council and conforms to internationally agreed rules in its attitude to local or regional conflicts.

At the same time, Czech foreign policy is based on the principle that the most effective and natural form of cooperation between countries, located at a considerable distance, are trade and economic relations. Considering the fact that, with a few exceptions, economic activities are not carried out by governments but by private corporations which are subject to market economy conditions, the objective of Czech foreign policy is to create favourable conditions for the activities of private enterprises in specific territories and to provide them with the necessary contacts and information. Successful economic ties can be the basis for the development of cultural, scientific and other contacts of common interest. These activities can be successfully mediated by expatriate communities with which the Czech Republic wants to cooperate intensively. The Czech Republic will endeavour to settle its financial relations with individual countries based on past economic activities, such as government loans.

Human rights are often viewed as an excessively idealistic component of foreign policy which stands in the way of pragmatic economic interests. The Czech Republic is convinced that the existence of a political dialogue on human rights is a yardstick of mutual trust and that in the long run it also favours the development of economic relations. In this respect Czech foreign policy is open and transparent. It is based on the assumption that in the multicultural world of today objective dialogue on human rights issues represents the best possible investment for the future.

Asia, the largest continent with a rapidly developing economy, represents a large market for the Czech Republic and its importance is in no way diminished by the current economic crisis in some countries of the Far East and Southeast Asia. The Czech Republic regards regional powers, such as Japan, China and India, as well as countries in Southeast Asia which are members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as important partners. The policy of the Czech Republic will also proceed from the basis of traditionally good relations with Vietnam and Mongolia.

As regards the Middle East and North Africa, Czech foreign policy will maintain an equitable approach to all countries in the region. The Czech Republic supports the peace process in the Middle East based on preserving political, economic and security guarantees of stability in the entire region. It identifies with the policies of the European Union which aim at reinforcing security in the Mediterranean region. With regards to

economic issues, the Czech Republic will focus on mutually beneficial cooperation with traditional partners, such as Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Iran, Kuwait and Tunisia. In addition, the Czech Republic will concentrate on entering new markets, especially in the Persian Gulf (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Yemen).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Czech Republic will focus on stable regional powers, especially the Republic of South Africa, and countries with which it has maintained long-term economic contacts, such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. As far as possible, the Czech Republic will participate in the activities of the international community aimed at localizing conflicts and stabilizing conditions in problematic areas of the African continent.

South America, a continent characterized by the stabilization of democratic systems and the development of integration processes, offers substantial opportunities for Czech economic interests. The Czech Republic will cooperate with traditional partners, such as Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Uruguay and Colombia. It is also interested in cooperation with countries in Central America and the Caribbean, a region which offers opportunities for an increase in trading activities. The Czech Republic wants to develop economic cooperation with Cuba and will do its utmost to promote respect for human and civil rights in that country.

The Czech Republic pays close attention to trading and investment opportunities in countries which maintained well-developed economic ties with Czechoslovakia and whose citizens include a number of experts who have obtained secondary or university education in our country.

Development and Humanitarian Aid

The Czech Republic is prepared to participate in formulating and fulfilling a new international development strategy which includes the struggle against poverty, the provision of general education, the protection of women's rights, the reduction of infant mortality, improving general access to health-care services, and ensuring sustainable growth.

Foreign development and humanitarian aid is an integral part of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic. Its objective is to prevent specific humanitarian disasters and to support long-term stability and prosperity in developing regions. Moreover, the Czech Republic views foreign development aid as an instrument of promoting human rights and democratic values.

The Czech Republic provides foreign aid on bilateral basis and through international organizations (UNDP, OECD). It supports the creation of an effective and flexible basis for distribution of foreign aid.

V. The Czech Republic in International Organizations

Czech foreign policy is based on the increasingly compelling need to create conditions for global management and permanently sustainable development throughout the entire world. Global threats, such as environmental damage, poverty, uncontrolled population explosion and migration waves, the illegal drug trade and organized crime, as well as financial crises necessitate multilateral approaches which can be successfully formulated and coordinated in the framework of international organizations.

The Czech Republic is aware that the importance of international organizations will continue to grow. Hence, the present Government will pay more attention than its predecessors to the multilateral dimension of its foreign policy on a global, European and regional scale.

The Czech Republic and the United Nations

At present the United Nations (UN) and its associated organizations represent a unique universal platform for resolving the most serious problems of the contemporary world. The United Nations is an organization which includes 185 countries and represents almost all the inhabitants of our planet. It is a forum for the coming together of various cultures, ideas and interests. Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations has accomplished many concrete achievements with respect to decolonization, the enforcement of international law, the protection of human rights, help to refugees, humanitarian missions, etc.

The role of the United Nations has increased with the end of the cold war, especially with regard to issues of international security. However, its capacities have not yet been fully utilized. New conditions necessitate reforms within the United Nations. The Czech Republic advocates an increase in the representative character of individual UN bodies (especially the Security Council) and the creation of global governance structures. Furthermore, the Czech Republic supports close cooperation between the United Nations and regional security organizations. As regards the financing of UN activities, the Czech Republic stands for the principles of transparency and purposefulness.

The Czech Republic is prepared to participate as far as possible in peacekeeping and monitoring missions organized by the United Nations. It wants to ensure full use of the potential of the United Nations and to strengthen its authority. The Czech Republic will strive for adequate representation in the structures of the United Nations and its associated organizations.

The Czech Republic and International Economic and Financial Institutions

The Czech Republic is significantly dependent on the international division of work. The export of goods and services amounts to approximately 55% of gross domestic product. In addition, the Czech Republic is also dependent on importing raw materials and fuels. As a result of the great reliance on foreign trade, the Czech economy reacts very sensitively to changes in the international economy. Its liberal system makes the Czech Republic very vulnerable to speculative movements of capital.

Hence, membership in international economic organizations is of great importance for the Czech Republic. It facilitates participation in the creation of a framework for the international exchange of goods and services and for the movement of capital. Access to international capital resources in case of a crisis is of equal importance.

The Czech Republic is preparing for another round of talks within the World Trade Organization (WTO) which will begin in 2000. The Czech Republic will advocate the further liberalization of trade, services, and agriculture, which, however, must be accompanied by adequate consumer protection. It will support proposals aimed at environmental and social goals of sustainable growth. It endorses proposals to improve the protection of intellectual property. The Czech Republic considers it necessary that developing countries should participate in world trade more actively.

The Czech Republic is convinced that growth of international trade cannot be separated from compliance with internationally respected labour standards, as specified in the conventions of the International Labour Organization, and from measures of environmental protection. The Czech Republic will protect its market only in response to conditions of unequal competition which are still present in international trade relations despite the increased opening up of national economies.

The Czech Republic participates in the activities of the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and other organizations of the World Bank Group. It uses the information and financial potential of these institutions and assists in their activities in other countries. The Czech Republic is prepared to share in a discussion on reforms of these institutions in order to enable them to cope with the negative manifestations of the globalization process in relation to the financial sector and to capital flows.

The Czech Republic participates in the activities of most committees and task forces of this organization. Within the OECD the Czech Republic pays attention to activities concerning sustainable growth, employment, regulatory reforms, electronic trade and the continuing liberalization of trade.

It will take more advantage of the information potential of the OECD and will pay increased attention to its analyses and recommendations.

VI. Foreign Policy Tasks regarding External Economic Relations, Promotion of the Czech Republic, and Relations with Expatriates

The economic policy of the Czech Republic concentrates on growth based on dynamic exports. A part of this policy is the creation of an effective system of support for Czech exporters. In this regard an important role is played by central authorities, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, as well as the Czech Export Bank and the Export Guarantee and Insurance Company (EGAP). All export-supporting measures implemented by the Czech Republic will conform to EU, WTO and OECD regulations.

An important role in this pro-export policy is played by economic diplomacy. The development of external economic relations must be the priority task of all Czech diplomatic missions. The activities of economically oriented diplomats will focus on the creation of conditions for the development of specific business contacts and encouraging the interest of potential investors in direct investment in the Czech Republic. Economic diplomacy will also include negotiations with governmental authorities and trade delegations on specific issues concerning external economic relations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates closely with the Ministry of Industry and Trade in implementing this policy, securing international trade and supporting exports. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs creates favourable conditions for the development of external economic ties and wherever possible it establishes technical and organizational conditions aimed at supporting the interests of Czech enterprises on foreign markets. The objective of the close cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade is to improve the work of the trade departments of Czech diplomatic missions abroad and to increase the number of diplomats who deal with external economic relations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade will attempt

to improve existing information systems and to create new ones in order to provide Czech enterprises with access to information about business opportunities abroad.

The Promotion of the Czech Republic and Its Culture

The promotion of the Czech Republic abroad is an ongoing task of foreign policy. This activity is carried out by both governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Greater attention will be paid to providing information about the Czech Republic in foreign languages both by traditional means and through modern technologies and media. In this regard an important role is played by Czech Centres abroad which distribute information about the Czech Republic, its culture, trade and tourism.

Relations with Expatriates

As is the case in other European nations, relations with expatriates have a special importance for the Czech Republic. The development of relations with Czech communities abroad is both a means for improving the Czech Republic's reputation and also a contribution to bilateral relations with countries where expatriate communities live.

In consideration of these facts the Czech Republic provides financial backing to the activities and specific projects of Czech associations abroad. The Government will extend the program of expatriate scholarships for study and language courses in the Czech Republic and will continue funding Czech teachers who work in expatriate communities abroad. The Czech Republic will try to create conditions allowing Czech expatriates to take a greater part in the political life of Czech society.

VII. The Czech Foreign Service

One of the necessary conditions for fulfilling the objectives of foreign policy is the stabilization and improvement of the Czech foreign service. The Government will create favourable conditions for its work and will submit a bill on the Czech Foreign Service to Parliament for approval. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already taken some important steps in this direction. The Career Rules for Diplomatic Employees, effective from 1 January 1999, define clear guidelines for the career progress of diplomats and the evaluation of their work; they form a unified system for the improvement of professional qualifications, and set criteria for awarding diplomatic titles. The Diplomatic Academy provides training and certification for diplomats.

Another step will be the completion of Career Rules for Administrative and Technical Employees of the Czech foreign service. This work is a precondition for the drafting and adopting of the Czech Foreign Service Act.

In connection with the increased demands on the Czech foreign service, greater attention will have to be paid to independent research on international relations and European politics and to the availability of relevant academic programmes in universities.

C. Conclusion

This Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic defines a general framework for the foreign political activities of the Czech Republic in the medium term. This document describes the conditions in which the Czech Republic will carry out its plans, the basis on which the foreign policy is conceived, its objectives, the general foreign-policy agenda, and the main priorities on which the Czech Republic will focus in

future. It also pays due attention to the instruments which the Czech Republic intends to use to achieve its objectives.

The Czech Republic is aware that a successful foreign policy must be based on realistic assessments of the current situation, and opportunities and restrictions presented by international and domestic circumstances. Foreign policy must be trustworthy and constant as far as its aims are concerned. It must also be effective, which presupposes selecting suitable instruments and processes as well as the ability to respond flexibly to changes and unexpected developments in the international situation.

The Czech Republic wants to enter the twenty-first century as a stable, valued and active member of the international community which will support its allies reliably and be a trustworthy partner to other countries. The main objective of Czech foreign policy is to create favorable conditions for security, stability and prosperity of the state and all its citizens, and to help create an international community of peace, security, cooperation, democracy and prosperity. The Czech Republic will support the creation of a world order based on the rule of law and the indivisibility of human rights and which will react positively to the demands of social justice and of environmental protection; a world order which would be open to the influences of civil societies.

[Quelle: http://www.mzv.cz/_dokumenty/econception.html]