



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic

CONCEPTUAL BASIS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

1. Introduction

Objective The twenty-year journey of our country's return to "Europe" has been successfully completed. Czech foreign policy now faces new challenges. In order to respond to them, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has prepared a medium-term outline of its activities, reformulating its priority targets. This process would have been impossible without an overall self-reflection process.

Building on this Concept, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to evaluate international trends and, where necessary, clarify foreign policy priorities in a working paper (Short-Term Programme).

Balance between ambitions and resources The Concept realistically reflects the opportunities available to the Czech Republic in the international environment. It is based on a balance between resources and ambitions.

The Czech Republic and the world in 2011

Twenty years of prosperity and stability Twenty years after the political upheaval in Central and Eastern Europe, the Czech Republic is a stable, democratic and advanced country that has cast its anchor in a sea of international stability and external security. The current circumstances are historically unprecedented for the country. Besides a number of global and European factors, it can be attributed to all those citizens who helped to restore the state's values after 50 years without freedom or sovereignty. A key role was played by those who were there at the rebirth of democracy in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic and helped it overcome the difficulties posed by this new beginning.

A changing environment In the early 21st century, the Czech Republic, like the world, is facing a completely different situation from the one that existed in 1990. The international status of the Euro-Atlantic community, which the Czech Republic is a part of, is changing rapidly. New global players with growing influence are emerging. We cannot ignore the fact that the importance of Central and Eastern Europe, which increased sharply following the collapse of communism and the restoration of democracy in the region, has waned. The Czech Republic, along with its neighbours in Central Europe, has experienced 20 years of uninterrupted prosperity, during which it has managed to restore true sovereignty and integrate into international organisations. Today it is necessary to ensure the responsiveness of democratic institutions and principles of good governance, both at home and in the organisations of which the Czech Republic is a member, in order to help maintain international stability and security.

Democratic Europe, which the Czech Republic rejoined after emerging from long periods of captivity in the 20th century, now finds itself in a new geopolitical situation. The process of European integration along with the political and economic support of the US, including clear security guarantees, has contributed significantly to maintaining peace and prosperity. Since the end of the Cold War, however, the geopolitical situation in the world has evolved to the detriment of Europe.

A key interest is to preserve the influence of Europe Member States of the European Union have adopted the Lisbon Treaty with a view to strengthening their global influence, to face the current challenges of a globalising world and to play their rightful role in it. European

*and the
Euro-Atlantic
community*

integration cannot be seen as an end in itself but rather as a tool which, in the current international environment, serves the interests of all Member States and their citizens. It is against this backdrop that the Czech Republic will continue its activities in order to develop and promote its goals and priorities. The newly emerging global conditions restrict these ambitions in many ways. Maintaining the influence of Europe and the entire Euro-Atlantic community in shaping the international order and strengthening their economic development and competitiveness is a major objective for the Czech Republic and the whole of Europe. This European interest, reflected in virtually all areas of contemporary world politics, including international organisations, provides a framework for Czech interests. To a significant extent, it affects the formulation and implementation of Czech foreign policy, albeit within the context and limits of the Czech Republic's possibilities.

2. Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

2.1 Objectives of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

*The prime objective:
security and
prosperity of the
Czech Republic and
its citizens*

The basic aim of Czech foreign policy is to ensure the security and prosperity of the Czech Republic and its citizens and to protect the interests of Czech entities abroad. To achieve this, Czech foreign policy is active in three basic areas: political, security, and economic.

Maintaining sovereignty as well as the specific identity of the Czech state, its continued prosperity and welfare of all its citizens are natural interests of the Czech Republic. In a broader sense, Czech policy must promote and defend clearly defined and shared objectives while taking further inalienable values into account: those of human dignity, consciousness of duty towards others, and respect for human rights and civil society. Czech foreign policy is governed by the interests and values of the Czech state in accordance with its constitutional principles.

The Czech Republic pursues its objectives and interests as a member of the European and global family of democracies. It is ready to contribute to the protection and development of the shared natural, cultural, material and spiritual wealth as an integral part of European heritage. It is determined to follow all the time-tested principles of the rule of law in the broader context of a peaceful, unifying, stable, secure and prosperous Europe and the entire international community.

The Czech Republic implements its foreign policy mainly within the context of the European integration process, the solid Euro-Atlantic alliance and through its bilateral relations. The aim of its foreign policy efforts is to foster a level of political and economic cooperation that allows for peaceful and sustainable development. In this respect, Czech foreign policy relies on the traditional values of Czech democratic political thought, which are based on the usefulness of dialogue, integration and the need to understand the complexities of the contemporary world.

2.2 The Czech Republic and the current international environment

*Czech Republic as a
democratic and
politically stable
state*

The Czech Republic approaches international relations as a democratic and politically, economically and socially stable state in Central Europe which pursues not only its own interests, but also assumes joint responsibility for the development of Europe, the Euro-Atlantic area and the entire

international community.

Reliance on the quality of multilateral cooperation

Based on its size and population, the Czech Republic is one of Europe's moderately sized states. A country with an open economy and a high proportion of exports and services in its gross domestic product but lacking important raw materials, it is heavily reliant on external relations and the quality of international cooperation. It promotes its interests both individually and through its membership in larger groupings. The Czech Republic's NATO and EU memberships are crucial to its further development. The fact that it is a member of these organisations shows that it has met its key strategic priorities identified after its establishment as an independent state, and that it has numerous avenues at its disposal for promoting its interests.

Czech Republic – safer but more vulnerable

The security environment in which the Czech Republic implements its foreign policy results from an interaction of numerous factors and is undergoing a process of dynamic change. Security threats, their sources and agents come from certain states, but also have an increasingly nongovernmental and transnational character. Certain trends in the global environment contribute to the growth and potential of asymmetric security threats and allow them to spread from relatively remote areas. Among the trends and factors worth noting are the ambitions of new global and regional players, the phenomenon of failed states, exploitation of globalisation by dubious non-state actors, uneven population growth, scarcity of energy resources, raw materials, food and water, migration pressures and climate change. The swelling ambitions of new global and regional powers have a serious impact on the balance of the international environment. Some states are trying to build spheres of influence through a combination of political, economic and military pressure. These trends increase the risk of erosion of political and legal commitments in the field of European security.

As a member of numerous international organisations, the Czech Republic has made security commitments to its allies. Current threats which the Czech Republic is directly or indirectly facing include terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, cyber attacks, instability and regional conflicts in and around the Euro-Atlantic area, organised crime and corruption, negative aspects of migration, threats to critical infrastructure, disruption of supplies of strategic raw materials and the consequences of natural disasters and industrial accidents. These phenomena are significant in shaping security and foreign policy. A comprehensive approach that combines military and civilian instruments – including diplomatic and economic measures that make use of all international mechanisms – is becoming increasingly important.

2.3 Principles of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

Continuity and domestic consensus

The Czech Republic is guided by the vital interests of its citizens and the universal values to which Czech statehood adheres and which represent the best tradition of international cooperation. Its foreign policy respects the principle of continuity and the need for broad domestic consensus. It defines its position within the Euro-Atlantic community to which the Czech Republic is fully committed. Among the Czech Republic's top priorities are the protection of external conditions for the autonomous development of democracy and rule of law which are based on freedom,

equality, justice, human dignity, tolerance of diversity and solidarity with the weak, vulnerable and defenceless.

The Czech Republic considers the inalienability of natural human rights, international law and the principle of the rule of law as core values upon which its foreign policy actions are based. Democratic countries' emphasis on these values during the communist era helped to restore democracy in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the Czech Republic feels that it is naturally obliged to follow suit in assisting those who strive for freedom and other values referred to above and welcome Czech assistance.

In conformity with the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Czech Republic mainly uses peaceful means and methods in its relations with other countries. It respects the norms of international law, applies them in its foreign policy and strives for their implementation internationally. Furthermore, it will continue to promote international cooperation based on the principle of mutual benefit. The Czech Republic is keen to be a reliable and predictable partner responsibly honouring all of its commitments.

This entails the need to continually cultivate the internal regulatory environment and political culture of the state. It is only as a trustworthy partner that the Czech Republic can engender respect abroad and increase its authority regarding the security and economic dimensions of its foreign policy.

2.4 Instruments of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

The rapidly, diversely changing international environment is also altering the importance of individual instruments and dimensions of foreign policy. The need for flexibility requires a consistent coordination among all actors involved, i.e. the executive branch (representatives of various ministries), legislature (in particular, the relevant parliamentary committees) and representatives of regional and local authorities.

Main instruments

The main instruments of foreign policy in these new circumstances include:

- bilateral diplomacy by itself and as an integral part of multilateral diplomacy;
- activities stemming from membership in alliance organisations (the EU, NATO) which strengthen security and anchor the Czech Republic in the Euro-Atlantic area;
- activities stemming from membership in other multilateral organisations (the UN, OSCE) which can be a vehicle for implementing the Czech Republic's interests;
- security, military and police cooperation, including crisis management operations and missions;
- instruments for the promotion of economic interests (monitoring, analysing and reporting on market developments in individual countries, promoting Czech businesses abroad, etc.);
- regional cooperation;
- development and transition cooperation;
- consular services.

Public instruments

Public foreign policy tools are becoming increasingly important. These include:

- parliamentary, nongovernmental and public diplomacy (activities of local

- authorities, regions, universities, think-tanks and NGOs);
- business contacts, reciprocal investment and joint ventures, frequently arising independently of state structures but influencing the perception of the Czech Republic;
- cooperation in science, research and education;
- cultural and media contacts;
- targeted presentation of the Czech Republic.

Education

An indirect but important foreign policy tool is supporting awareness and education of the Czech population about security and legal issues related to travel abroad, as well as practical issues connected to international relations. Promoting cooperation between educational and research institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad, including the provision of scholarships for foreign students and exchange programmes for students and researchers, is another important instrument for fostering international relations.

Foreign service

The pursuit of foreign policy objectives of the state is spearheaded by the foreign service, which draws on all of the above instruments in order to improve the coordination of activities by key foreign policy players – the President, Government, Parliament and others – with a view to achieving consistency in the Czech Republic’s activities abroad.

3. Foreign Policy priorities of the Czech Republic

The basic upcoming priorities of Czech foreign policy are:

- *to strengthen the security of the Czech Republic, analyse threats and counter them;*
- *to promote the Czech Republic’s economic and trade interests abroad, including energy security;*
- *to strengthen the Czech Republic’s positive image and perception abroad;*
- *to foster good relations with neighbouring countries and strengthen regional cooperation;*
- *to support an operational, politically and economically strong European Union;*
- *to maintain and strengthen the transatlantic link;*
- *to promote respect for human rights and democracy worldwide (using the transition and development cooperation instruments);*
- *to strengthen the European integration of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.*

4. Issues and challenges of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic

4.1 Multilateral cooperation

Stability of the international order

The Czech Republic has a fundamental interest in promoting the effective functioning and responsiveness of international organisations which contribute to an international order that respects the legitimate interests of all its members.

The Czech Republic’s activities in international organisations

The Czech Republic will politically influence the activities of these organisations with an aim to make their decisions reflect Czech and broader European interests as much as possible.

One of the inherent tasks for Czech foreign policy is to systematically promote the advancement of Czech citizens in international organisations

and to maintain a sound communication with those who are already active in these structures.

The Czech Republic will continuously monitor the candidacies of other states' citizens in international organisations and their working bodies. It will actively negotiate and sign agreements of mutual support with other countries.

Contributions to international organisations

The Czech Republic will meet its financial commitments to key international organisations of which it is a member. However, it will consider the effectiveness of its membership in international organisations and the associated financial contributions on a case-by-case basis with the aim of increasing efficiency.

4.1.1. The Czech Republic within the United Nations

The UN as the backbone of the system of international relations

The Czech Republic considers the UN as the backbone of the system of international relations and international law. The Czech Republic is aware that stability and prosperity on a global and regional scale are unimaginable without an interest in peaceful cooperation, effective collective security, as well as efforts at sustainable development and respect for human rights.

The Czech Republic will make the most of its membership in the UN as a universal international organisation in order to nurture relations with all countries throughout the world.

UN security dimension

The Czech Republic will support UN capacity building in disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combating terrorism, conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery, and crisis management through diplomatic efforts. It will actively participate in the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

UN human rights dimension

Within the UN, and in particular on the Human Rights Council, the Czech Republic will focus on promoting democracy and human rights, especially on issues of freedom of expression, human rights defenders, prohibition of torture and the fight against flagrant human rights violations in individual countries.

The Czech Republic will continue to support an effective system of international law, including international criminal justice, the permanent and main body of which is the International Criminal Court.

UN development dimension

The Czech Republic is aware of the need to support developing countries as they head towards democracy and prosperity. Successful progress in this area is a prerequisite for sustainable security and for maintaining a social contract. Within the UN system, the Czech Republic will promote measures that contribute to the timely, effective and transparent implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and fair access to the benefits of globalisation.

UN responsiveness and efficiency

In response to the changing international environment, the Czech Republic has long supported efforts to reform the UN, including the Security Council, which would lead to a more balanced representation of the world's different regions and countries. Within the UN system, the Czech Republic places an emphasis on sound financial management and budgetary discipline.

Promoting the Czech Republic's goals and interests within the

The Czech Republic will use all available means to promote its goals and interests within the United Nations as well as in a broader context. Within the General Assembly and other UN bodies, the Czech Republic will

UN raise its profile by negotiating the texts of individual documents on behalf of the EU. It will also pursue its goals by actively participating in the preparation of resolutions and other documents in groups of like-minded countries.

4.1.2. The Czech Republic in the European Union

The Czech Republic's shared responsibility for the development of Europe The Czech Republic is conscious of its responsibility for the development of Europe, which it rejoined after 1989. By joining the European Union in 2004, the Czech Republic found its proper place, reflecting its geography, history and interests, and embraced the goal of fully participating in the further development of Europe. Shared responsibility goes hand-in-hand with living together. The Czech Republic is prepared to respect the interests of other EU Member States, and to act in the shared interest of displaying solidarity, while demanding that other EU Member States respect its interests.

A principal interest of the Czech Republic is a strong, democratic and competitive EU that creates ample space for freedom, security and law – an EU that ensures the necessary political and economic stability for the development and prosperity of all Member States and their citizens. For the Czech Republic, which is an open, export-oriented economy in Central Europe, key interests are a functioning European market and energy security. It is in these areas in particular that the EU is the principal instrument with which the Czech Republic can pursue and realise its interests.

EU as an area and instrument The EU is a key area and instrument for promoting the objectives and interests of the Czech Republic. These goals and interests may concern its position within the EU as well as its influence on the EU as a whole with regard to third countries, especially strategic partners or countries and regions representing a priority interest for the Czech Republic. A strong and united EU helps the Czech Republic succeed internationally, particularly by participating in the development of rules for international competition that the Czech Republic, like other Member States, must directly confront.

EU as a pragmatic political project The Czech Republic considers the EU as to be a pragmatic political project which has proven its value in the process of building and maintaining peaceful order in Europe. The EU is an environment to which the Czech Republic contributes, inter alia, with its historical experience. It also draws on the historical experience of other Member States. The Czech Republic fully supports the project of European integration, to which it sees no alternative, while it strives to optimise its political and economic costs. The perspectives for Europe will be determined by developments in the EU, particularly its ability to react to economic development within the Union and to adapt to the changing international environment, most of all with its closest neighbours.

Czech Republic and the Lisbon Treaty The Czech Republic acknowledges that the Lisbon Treaty, through its institutional changes, has created an increasingly sophisticated environment for decision making in the EU. While this opens up new possibilities, it also makes it harder for the Czech Republic to promote its interests.

Concept of the Czech Republic's role in the EU The Czech Republic currently accounts for 2.1 % of the population and 1.2 % of the GDP of the EU. These numbers provide a realistic foundation for the ambitions and potential of the Czech Republic. Its goal is to systematically influence the decision making at the EU level and, through

the effective use of its foreign service, to strengthen its position within the EU as much as possible. The Czech Republic will use all the tools at its disposal to achieve these goals.

The Czech Republic aims to actively influence decision making in the EU, bearing in mind its own core interests and priorities. A necessary condition for this is the effective functioning of all departments of the state administration involved in the promotion of national positions and implementation of EU policies. The role of the Czech Republic in the EU will be clarified in more detail in the Conceptual Basis of the Czech Republic's Role in the European Union.

Systematic monitoring and analysis

The Czech Republic will systematically analyse the processes taking place within the EU. It will fully exploit the options available to its foreign service and strengthen the system used for an active search for and identification of areas of importance and sensitivity to the Czech Republic from their inception. In this way, it will provide sufficient time to prepare and effectively defend its positions in negotiations within the EU structures.

The Czech Republic will actively focus on seeking out potential allies among EU Member States and institutions as it can only effectively exploit the potential of the EU for its own interests by acting in concert with others. The Czech Republic will also actively defend its interests in proceedings before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The Czech Republic will work closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament. The Czech Republic is keen to see strict adherence to agreed rules in the EU, and in this regard it will support the European Commission in its role as a "guardian of treaties".

Strengthening the Czech Republic's voice in EU institutions

The Czech Republic will create a system to prepare its citizens for EU institutions and promote their applications for specific positions. It will maintain contact with those who are already working within EU structures or are on the reserve list.

An excellent knowledge of internal procedures and functioning of EU institutions is a prerequisite for successful policy influence at the EU level.

Priority areas

The Czech Republic will promote a proactive and strategic policy to enhance its influence on decision making in EU institutions. It will focus on increasing transparency and legitimacy in EU decision making and maintaining a balance between the main EU institutions. The Czech Republic also aims to strengthen the global significance of the EU as well as a universal awareness of its functioning among Czech citizens.

Without a capacity for effective, rapid response, it is impossible to succeed in a world of increasing international competition. The Czech Republic will urge the EU to adapt its legislation and policies to the needs of today's world.

The Czech Republic attaches great importance to the negotiation of favourable terms for the EU's post-2013 multiannual financial framework and its effective implementation. Ensuring the economic and financial stability of the EU, strengthening its energy and resource security, improving the functioning of the internal market, ensuring internal security of the Union, dismantling cross-border infrastructure and administrative barriers and developing an area of freedom, security and justice within the EU are among the key priorities.

In the EU framework, the Czech Republic will defend its strategic interests

in the field of energy policy (cf. Chapter 4.3), with a particular focus on rational decision making about various forms of energy production.

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

CFSP as a platform for promoting the interests of the Czech Republic and the EU

The Lisbon Treaty has armed the EU with new means to strengthen the coherence of its external activities and continuity while increasing its comprehensibility for its partners. The Czech Republic will approach its foreign policy objectives strategically, drawing on the appropriate EU as well as bilateral activities.

Nevertheless, the Lisbon Treaty and the new tools and processes it provides will not necessarily change the content of the CFSP. The debate about the EU as a strong global player prompted by the Lisbon Treaty is helpful in identifying common interests under the CFSP. Generally, however, the Czech Republic believes that a strong and persuasive EU common foreign policy should be the product of Member States' intersecting interests.

For the Czech Republic, it is crucial that the CFSP continues to be an intergovernmental platform and an area which all Member States can consider to be their own. If this condition is not met, the Union cannot be expected to maintain its international authority. No Member State should therefore feel excluded from the process of establishment and functioning of the European External Action Service (EEAS). It is equally important to ensure the transparency of EEAS selection procedures, an equitable geographical representation of national diplomacies, transparency in the management of the Service and its control by all Member States.

Alongside the Common Commercial Policy and the EU's thematic and territorial financial instruments, the CFSP is an essential vehicle for strengthening the EU's position in the world, enabling it to influence important processes in the international community, to participate in the handling of global problems and to become a constructive basis for formulating common interests of the EU as a whole. It is important for the Czech Republic to take advantage of this opportunity in order to fulfil its own goals.

CFSP as the core of EU external relations and a priority of the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic's CFSP priorities reflect the core objectives and issues of Czech foreign policy. The CFSP is based on defending and promoting common values worldwide. The values and principles named in the Lisbon Treaty – democracy, rule of law, freedom, respect for human rights and human dignity, and others – are a common general backdrop for the Member States' diplomacy. For the Czech Republic, it is essential that these values remain the cornerstone of the EU's external action.

The Czech Republic also intends to continue its concentrated involvement in the EU's activities in the neighbourhood, especially in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and the Middle East. The Czech Republic will continue to promote the European and Euro-Atlantic orientation of countries in these areas insofar as their societies display an interest. The Czech Republic will seek to ensure that the EU's institutional projects – such as EU enlargement, the European Neighbourhood Policy, and, in particular, the Eastern Partnership and related financial instruments – help to promote stability and prosperity in the vicinity of the EU. The EU policy towards its southern and eastern neighbours must be balanced and based on a genuine will of these countries to cooperate and pursue reforms. Middle East stability is crucial for the future and security of Europe.

The Czech Republic will strive to ensure that the EU policy of protecting human rights and promoting democratisation in the world is realistic and reflects historical differences as well as the future potential of the current diverse world. An essential part of this policy is the rational use of financial instruments available to the Union in this field – especially the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, along with instruments for development cooperation and trade, which are often subject to norms and values, as well as sanctions.

Strengthening security and defence is another priority for the Czech Republic. This purpose is served in particular by ties and cooperation with the United States, which is its most important partner in this regard, with an emphasis on building a strategic EU-NATO relationship. Both organisations need to complement each other in civilian and military areas as efficiently as possible and work together to build adequate capabilities. It is in the Czech Republic's interest for the EU to be ready to respond and act separately if necessary. The Czech Republic will support the development of an effective and responsive EU Common Security and Defence Policy while taking into account its NATO commitments. The Czech Republic's involvement in EU missions will be consistent with the territorial priorities of Czech foreign policy (cf. Chapter 4.2.3.–4.2.7.).

4.1.3. The Czech Republic in the field of security and defence

International cooperation in security

In accordance with the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic, Czech foreign policy in the area of security focuses on preventing military as well as non-military threats. In reacting to them, the Czech Republic relies especially on its membership in international organisations.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) collective defence system continues to be the basic pillar of the Czech Republic's security and evidence of strong transatlantic ties. A community based on common values of democracy, solidarity, cohesion and indivisible security, NATO represents a unique commitment by European and North American allies to defend these values together and to jointly react to challenges in the field of security and defence.

NATO's new Strategic Concept

Changes in the international security environment prompted the adoption of a new NATO Strategic Concept in 2010, which outlined a vision of the further development of the North Atlantic Alliance. Along with our allies, we want an Alliance that is ready to react flexibly to security threats, to accommodate its capabilities accordingly and, consequently, to remain an indispensable tool in maintaining peace.

The Czech Republic is pleased that the new Strategic Concept confirms the validity of NATO's basic and long-term mission of preserving the freedom and security of all its members in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and defines the measures to be taken in order to strengthen that mission. The Concept stresses the role of security dialogue and puts an emphasis on building NATO capabilities to respond to current and potential security challenges. In this regard, the Czech Republic supports a NATO defence and deterrence policy based on a balanced mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities that gives the Alliance the ability to face such threats. This is inextricably linked to the building of a NATO missile defence

system protecting the population, territory and NATO forces which the Czech Republic supports on a long-term basis.

The essential tasks of the Alliance also include management of a wide range of crises at all stages, from prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. This process includes development of capabilities necessary to conduct operations in remote areas, strengthening integrated civilian-military planning, strategic cooperation with partners – both states and other international organisations – based on a comprehensive approach to managing crises and conducting operations, as well as participation in regimes for arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Czech Republic supports further development of NATO's capabilities in the area of the "New Threats", particularly preventing and confronting cyber attacks. Likewise, it is keen to help strengthen NATO's capabilities in combating terrorism and will contribute to energy security. The Czech Republic will strive to maintain NATO's capabilities of rapid response and continuous adaptation to a changing security environment.

Due to the mutual benefits of NATO's cooperation with its partners, the Czech Republic will continue to support strengthening the Alliance's partnerships by establishing a political dialogue with an aim of building and strengthening mutual confidence and mutually beneficial practical cooperation. The Czech Republic values the partners' contribution to common efforts in the field of strengthening international security and crisis management.

The Czech Republic's contribution

The Czech Republic is aware that NATO's effectiveness, credibility and ability to fulfil its basic tasks depend on appropriate contributions by all Member States. With regard to the North Atlantic Alliance, the Czech Republic will promote an active, balanced and transparent policy in accordance with its security interests and its goal to be a credible and reliable ally, in conformity with the commitments stemming from the membership in the NATO.

The Czech Government will continue to create conditions for an appropriate representation of the Czech Republic in NATO's permanent structures, as well as for an active military and civilian involvement in the Alliance's missions and operations to manage crises and consolidate stability in post-conflict situations.

In accordance with its capabilities and available resources, the Czech Republic will participate in allied operations and missions. By participating in NATO's allied missions under a UN mandate, the Czech Republic will contribute to the stabilisation of Afghanistan, strengthening its security, building capacities of the central and local government, and promoting the country's economic and social development.

NATO-EU cooperation

The Czech Republic considers the NATO and the EU to be natural partners in managing crises as they are facing common security challenges and risks. Therefore, the Czech Republic is interested in NATO and the EU playing broad complementary roles and engaging in close cooperation in security policy. Along with other NATO and EU Member States, the Czech Republic will contribute to the negotiation of specific agreements to ensure close collaboration and coordination of the activities of both organisations. The Czech Republic is keen for these agreements to become the basis of the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU.

NATO-RF

The Czech Republic will support NATO's cooperation with the Russian

cooperation Federation. The Czech Republic has an interest, in particular, in cooperation on combating terrorism, defence reforms, joint peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and civil emergency planning. Respect for the independence of the decision making processes of the Alliance and its security interests is a prerequisite for good cooperation in all areas.

Expanding NATO The Czech Republic will continue its active support of NATO's open-door policy and will cooperate with all countries seeking NATO membership. It will share its experience with entry preparations and NATO membership with third countries, depending on shared interest and potential.

Further activities in the area of security and defence

Fight against organised crime and terrorism The Czech Republic will be actively involved in combating terrorism, including efforts to eliminate the backdrop from which it emerges. It will seek the broadest possible concept of a counter-terrorism campaign, with an emphasis on international cooperation which focuses over the long term on the fight against international organised crime, including illicit trafficking in drugs and arms, as well as human trafficking, against corruption and all forms of terrorist financing.

The Czech Republic will build on its involvement in counter-terrorism activities developed by the UN, the European Union, NATO, OSCE, the Council of Europe and other organisations. It will continue to strengthen the role of relevant international treaties. Within the UN, it will support the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction The Czech Republic attaches great importance to arms control, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and a long-term policy of international disarmament.

As part of its membership in NATO, the UN and other international organisations, the Czech Republic will seek the adoption of further measures to increase defence capabilities and protection against weapons of mass destruction.

Future of the conventional arms control regime in Europe The Czech Republic believes that an effective conventional arms control regime in Europe is an important pillar of Euro-Atlantic security. The Czech Republic, together with its allies, will seek to strengthen the conventional arms control regime in Europe, based on the principles of reciprocity, transparency and consent of the host country.

4.1.4. The Czech Republic in other international organisations

OSCE The Czech Republic will support changes in the work of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) intended to strengthen its effectiveness and will continue to contribute financial and human resources for its regional activities. The Czech Republic will play an active role in the debate on European security and the development of OSCE activities, with an emphasis on the human dimension, including democratic institutions and the rule of law. The Czech Republic will seek to maintain the OSCE's role in crisis management, particularly in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, building democratic institutions, election monitoring and observer missions. The Czech Republic will also promote the resumption of negotiations on conventional armed forces.

Council of Europe The Czech Republic will continue to be involved in the contractual structure

of the Council of Europe. The Czech Republic will actively participate in the work of the Council of Europe as it seeks to develop and strengthen pluralist democracy, the rule of law, fight against terrorism and corruption, human rights (including the fight against death penalty), minority rights and promotion of gender equality.

OECD

The Czech Republic will deepen its cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and will make use of the organisation's conclusions, with a particular emphasis on managing the consequences of economic crisis and economic reform. Key priorities of cooperation with the OECD will be in the field of stabilising public finances and their long-term sustainability, supporting innovation, developing education and economic adaptation to climate change. The Czech Republic supports closer cooperation between the OECD and major non-member economies.

Other international organisations

The Czech Republic will cooperate with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in its efforts at further liberalisation of global trade as well as preserving and enhancing the international trading system based on predictability, transparency and fixed rules. The Czech Republic will promote its interests under the EU's Common Commercial Policy.

The Czech Republic will be active within the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which it considers to be an important tool for ensuring global financial stability, as well as with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other organisations of the World Bank Group (WB). The Czech Republic will participate in the debate on reforming these institutions so that the IMF and WB better reflect the growing economic power of certain developing countries.

The Czech Republic will work actively in all international organisations of which it is a member, fulfilling the obligations of membership and commitments under existing multilateral agreements. The Czech Republic will also continue to participate in other forms of international cooperation, such as regional cooperation platforms.

4.2 Bilateral and regional cooperation

4.2.1. Global superpowers

United States

In the 20th century, the United States made decisive contributions to the defeat of aggressive totalitarian regimes, to the emergence of a modern Czechoslovak state and to the restoration of its sovereignty. In the next decade, the United States will continue to be a military superpower, one of the world's economic and financial powerhouses and a source of innovation and new technologies. The Czech Republic and the United States share common social and cultural values, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and views on most strategic issues.

The United States continues to be a key ally for the Czech Republic; both countries work together closely on security and military issues and on a development of their alliance within NATO. One of the Czech Republic's important interests in this respect is cooperation in the fight against terrorism and international organised crime. Apart from the strategic dimension of these mutual relations, the Czech Republic will also foster economic and commercial cooperation and promote innovation and investment, scientific and technical cooperation and cultural exchange.

Russia

Czech foreign policy seeks good, mutually beneficial relations with the Russian Federation. The Czech Republic's strategic, security and economic interests, including a solid anchoring of the Czech Republic within the EU and NATO, will form a desirable basis for such relations. The Czech Republic welcomes the strengthening of cooperation in all areas of common interest.

The Czech Republic is particularly interested in developing a balanced economic exchange, energy cooperation and cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The Czech Republic will continue in its dialogue with Russian civil society, in particular on promoting human rights.

China

Czech-Chinese bilateral relations will continue to focus mainly on the economic sphere. The Czech Republic aims to increase mutual trade, with an emphasis on reducing the negative trade balance. The Czech Republic will seek to strengthen cooperation with China in such a way as to contribute to China's deeper and more constructive involvement in international cooperation. The Czech Republic sees the growing role of China in the global economy as an opportunity, without necessarily abandoning those values which it perceives differently from China.

Regarding Taiwan, the Czech Republic advocates one China policy, which does not prevent a pragmatic development of mutual relations. Taiwan will remain a major investor and trading partner for the Czech Republic.

4.2.2. European permanent members of the UN Security Council

The Czech Republic will systematically develop its relations with France and the UK, which are both permanent members of the UN Security Council, nuclear powers and important economic and political partners in the EU.

In keeping with its strategic partnership, the Czech Republic will enhance its cooperation and mutual understanding with France, particularly in the areas of energy, defence and industry. It will also seek to step up political dialogue with the UK, in particular on transatlantic relations, including security issues, on the Middle East, support for human rights in third countries, and energy security.

4.2.3. Neighbours

A stable Central European region

The Czech Republic and its neighbours form a single legal, economic, security and political environment. The Czech Republic considers the development of good relations with neighbouring countries and other Central European partners a diplomatic priority. It wishes to make active contributions to the advancement of this region as a stable, prosperous and respected part of Europe. The Czech Republic attaches special importance to energy and transport infrastructure development and to European cross-border cooperation programmes.

Slovakia

In view of their shared history and the proximity of the two nations, the cooperation between both countries, including their citizens and governments, will remain intensive. The Czech Republic will continue to foster mutual contacts as broadly as possible, especially in cross-border and regional cooperation, economic relations, energy and infrastructure interconnection. Particular attention will be devoted to maintaining mutual

awareness of our neighbour's language and culture among young people.

Germany

The Czech Republic will actively develop relations with Germany, which is not only its neighbour, but also a strategic partner.

In the implementation of Czech foreign policy towards Germany, special attention will be paid to its key role in European politics, European security and the world economy. The Czech Republic will also take into account the extraordinary economic interconnectedness between the two countries. The foreign policy strategy includes broad support for Czech-German contact in European and security policy, as well as for the development of good neighbourly relations based on a dialogue between the civil societies of both countries. The Czech Republic attaches special importance to energy and transport infrastructure development, cross-border cooperation and communication and interaction between young people.

Poland

The Czech Republic will develop the strategic nature of its relations with Poland, based on an intersection of foreign policy priorities and proximity of interests in the region as well as within the EU and NATO. The Czech Republic will maintain a highly intensive dialogue at all levels, including local government and nongovernmental organisations. From the point of view of the Czech Republic, the key areas of cooperation are security policy, energy security at the regional and European level, policy towards Eastern Europe and development of mutual economic and trade relations.

Austria

The Czech Republic will support and nurture traditional relations with Austria, especially in the political, economic and cultural fields, and will deepen mutual trust. In foreign policy, the Czech Republic will focus on seeking support on issues where both countries, as EU Member States, share the same interests, e.g. stability in the Western Balkans.

Hungary

The Czech Republic considers Hungary a culturally close and economically and politically important partner in the Central European region with whom it shares an intensive development of bilateral relations and, in particular, fruitful cooperation within the Visegrád Group, the EU and NATO. The aim is to maintain the will to keep up close contact and practical cooperation.

Cross-border cooperation without physical boundaries

The Czech Republic will intensively promote cross-border cooperation, which takes place particularly between citizens, municipalities, towns and regions. Commissions on Cross-Border Cooperation remain an important tool for communication between local authorities, Euro-regions and central governments.

Regional cooperation

The Czech Republic considers regional cooperation to be an important part of its foreign policy, allowing the general public to become more involved in international cooperation, and intends to promote it in all its diversity in the future. The Visegrád Group with its International Visegrád Fund continues to be a major grouping in this regard. This group should make a particular effort to strengthen relations between civil societies in the Visegrád countries and implement specific projects. A further task will be to promote the common interests of these countries on the international stage.

4.2.4. Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

Eastern Partnership countries

The Czech Republic considers the Eastern Partnership a useful idea which, in the interest of all of Europe, helps partner countries adopt EU economic

and other standards and cooperate with the Union on the basis of common values.

Sharing common values will be a key condition for the Czech Republic in supporting Eastern Partnership countries bilaterally and within the EU. In its bilateral relations, within the EU and in other international fora, Czech foreign policy will promote respect for the independence and territorial integrity of all Partnership countries. It will further promote political, social and economic stability of Partnership countries, with an emphasis on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, development of the rule of law, political pluralism, civil society and media freedom.

The Czech Republic will insist on tackling persisting conflicts in the region by peaceful means in accordance with the principles of international law and using existing international fora.

Moldova and Georgia are among the priority countries for development cooperation. Both of these states, as well as Ukraine and Belarus, are also priority countries for transition cooperation.

South-Eastern Europe

Security, stability and prosperity in South-Eastern Europe represent a permanent interest for the Czech Republic. This is also a traditional area of its economic interest. The Czech Republic will continue its efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation with individual countries against a backdrop of their specific needs and common priorities.

In this respect, the Western Balkans is a long-term foreign policy priority. The Czech Republic will continue to support the integration efforts of the countries in the region. Accordingly, it will continue in its involvement both bilaterally and within the EU and NATO.

The Czech Republic will actively contribute to development and transition cooperation and will promote the activities of regional organisations.

The Czech Republic will further develop its relations with Turkey, an important partner in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It will support Turkey in further progressing in its accession negotiations with the EU.

4.2.5. Developed democracies

EU Member States

The Czech Republic will seek exceptionally close relations with other EU Member States, with whom it shares much more than a common platform for building foreign policy. Functional bilateral relations are an indispensable element in promoting Czech foreign policy in the EU and worldwide.

Israel, Japan, Australia, Canada and the Republic of Korea

Israel, Japan, Australia, Canada and the Republic of Korea are developed markets, sources of technology and investment, and important poles of stability in the world, with which Czech foreign policy shares a common strategic interest. The Czech Republic wishes to extend the economic activities of these countries in the Czech Republic and Central Europe.

4.2.6. Emerging economies

Growth potential of emerging economies

The Czech Republic will focus on emerging economies which offer a considerable growth potential. The Czech Republic is interested in developing mutual relations with these countries, particularly in trade, investment cooperation and security, bearing in mind the many differences in political systems, economic organisation and cultural habits. It will therefore promote an active EU policy towards these countries and use

it to promote its goals and interests.

India and Brazil The Czech Republic will develop its relations with India and Brazil as international players with significant growth potential and increasing leverage in world politics. The security and military fields also offer significant opportunities for developing mutual relations.

South-Eastern Asia The Czech Republic will seek to strengthen relations and trade with countries of South-Eastern Asia with rapid economic growth. The Czech Republic is ready to exploit its traditional ties and will focus mainly on Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and other countries of the ASEAN regional grouping.

4.2.7. Other partners

Middle East and North Africa For the Czech Republic, the Middle East and North Africa are important from a market point of view and as a source of raw energy materials. However, there are also hotbeds of instability and security risks in the region, extending to the outer limits of the Euro-Atlantic area. The Czech Republic will therefore develop relations with individual countries in this significant region bilaterally, under the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as via NATO's partnership policy. Maintaining the security of Israel as a democratic state with similar values and culture is a strategic interest of the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic will strive to ensure that all countries in the Middle East and North Africa develop in a way that promotes regional stability. The result should be greater prosperity, enhanced economic integration and better functioning political systems in the proximity of the EU.

Latin America The Czech Republic will continue to develop cooperation with countries in Latin America. This is a region with a civilisation akin to ours, sharing the same basic values, which is increasingly gaining ground in global issues and the global economy.

Asia and the Pacific Countries in Asia and the Pacific are important for the Czech Republic from the point of view of trade opportunities and energy resources. However, there are also security risks in this region that require special attention, particularly in Central Asia. The Czech Republic will nurture relations with the countries of the region on a bilateral basis and within the EU. The Czech Republic is interested in an active involvement in the Asian-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

Africa The Czech Republic will explore business and investment opportunities in African countries. In some cases, it may build on historical ties. Partly due to its relative geographic proximity, the Czech Republic is interested in promoting stability in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.3. Energy security

Background Ensuring adequate energy supplies at an affordable cost is one of the fundamental tasks faced by the Czech Government and one of the main conditions of national security.

As the Czech Republic is unable to provide all the energy it needs from its own resources, energy security is largely subject to bilateral or multilateral foreign policy.

Principles The Czech Republic will strive primarily for long-term stability and security

of energy supplies by establishing and maintaining transparent, equal and mutually beneficial relationships with its suppliers. The Czech Republic will also continue to seek a broadest possible diversification of energy sources and transport routes and support the strengthening of west-to-east and north-to-south energy networks.

Within the EU, the Czech Republic will support the creation of a single energy market and strive to build a highly competitive and efficient European energy sector which will be able to use domestic energy sources as efficiently as possible, while introducing new technologies vital for an economically rational low-carbon economy, including support for the development of safe nuclear energy.

The Czech Republic views nuclear energy as a legitimate energy source which, in the Czech Republic, will ensure coverage of rising consumption and make a significant contribution to meeting climate protection targets in the future.

4.4 Promotion of economic and commercial interests

Importance of promoting the Czech Republic's economic interests

Promoting the Czech Republic's economic interests in foreign countries is one of the priorities and principal tasks of Czech foreign policy. This is consistent with the export-driven nature of the Czech economy, which is exposed to fierce international competition. In numerous bilateral relations, especially outside Europe, economic and commercial interests serve as a guide for the presence and work of the Czech diplomatic service. However, economic relations cannot be limited to exports, as they also encompass services, investment, and often also the secondary effects of development and transition cooperation as well as interpersonal contact, including tourism. Diplomatic service plays an indispensable role in creating conditions for the development of economic and trade relations. This is also related to the need to keep the Czech business sector informed and to support its interests.

Promoting economic interests in developed countries

Most Czech exports are headed for developed countries (the EU and OECD) and Czech interests are also promoted by the EU. To support exports within this area, it is particularly important to be able to understand the environment of the single EU market and to influence it from the outset of the development of its rules. A focus on the macroeconomic level and the ability to promote the Czech Republic's economic interests and their mutual coordination across the various ministries are priority tasks in this regard. Knowledge of the economic interests of the EU and OECD countries, their comparative export-related advantages and disadvantages and possible synergies that could fuel the growth of our export activities are equally important.

Promoting economic interests in other countries

Territories outside the OECD and EU are also important, although less than 10 % of total Czech exports are destined for these countries. The centre of global economic activities has been gradually shifting towards these countries, which tend to report a high pace of growth. The Czech Republic aims to make use of this trend and to diversify its foreign trade. To this end, the Czech foreign service will monitor market tendencies in these countries and raise awareness of export opportunities.

In bilateral relations with these countries, the Czech Republic will follow two avenues of support: a commercial and an economic policy dimension.

In terms of economic policy, it will help to establish contacts with key government officials abroad, promote the best possible business conditions for Czech entities, engage in diverse forms of networking, assist in organising conferences, fairs etc. and provide political and economic advice to Czech companies seeking to enter specific markets. In bilateral economic policy relations, the EU trade policy instruments play a major role. These instruments form a framework for the activities of Czech entities in different countries, both at the stage of market entrance and once they are present on the markets. The Czech Republic will therefore actively defend its interests in the development and application of specific trade instruments in relation to third countries (trade and investment agreements, sectoral agreements in trade-related areas, etc.).

In the field of commerce, the options for diplomacy are limited. In particular, there is practical support for exports and for the development of specific business opportunities through a systematic direct promotion of trade and services. Relevant assistance is provided by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry for Regional Development, and, especially the foreign offices of the CzechTrade, CzechInvest and CzechTourism agencies. The work of these agencies will reflect global developments and a desire for a more coherent and more cost-effective use of state resources.

The activities of Czech diplomacy in the field of export promotion will be combined with the Czech Republic's 2012 - 2020 International Competitiveness Strategy.

There are a limited number of national markets in the world which offer an important untapped trade potential for the Czech Republic but which are also characterised by barriers to access resulting from specific complex political and legal circumstances. It is important for Czech diplomacy to be aware of these specific circumstances, to actively provide the relevant knowledge to Czech businesses in a timely manner and to assist them in winning a share of these markets.

4.5. Promotion of democracy and human rights

Background

In its policy of promoting human rights and democracy, the Czech Republic is an active and responsible member of the international community. It draws on the specific experience gained in its own process of social transition and nonviolent resistance to a totalitarian regime. Therefore, it also refers to this form of support as transition policy. By pursuing this approach, the Czech Republic is also fulfilling its strategic goal of ensuring that as many democratic, stable and responsible countries as possible exist throughout the world. In helping to improve the quality of life and sustainable development, transition policy is fully consistent with development cooperation and its emphasis on the exercise of economic and social rights.

Principles

Transition policy must ensure that democracy is accompanied by the rule of law and good governance. Democratic processes have a long-term and society-wide character. Therefore, their promotion requires a systematic long-term commitment as well as an ability to respond flexibly to immediate specific needs.

In its advocacy of human rights and democracy, the Czech Republic relies on cooperation with civil society.

Priority countries

The Czech Republic can put its own transition experience to good use,

and areas of cooperation

especially in relation to countries which are culturally, geographically, historically or otherwise close to it. Therefore, it focuses, as a matter of priority, on collaboration with partners in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. The choice of territorial priorities reflects the cross-cutting priorities and emphasis of Czech foreign policy. The transition policy approach is applied based on its relevance to a given relationship or context.

In its transition policy, the Czech Republic concentrates primarily on universal support for civil society and human rights defenders, independent media and free access to information, strengthening the rule of law as well as good and democratic governance.

Instruments

The Czech Republic advocates human rights and democratic values in its bilateral activities as well as at all international fora. Within the EU, the Czech Republic strives to make its support for democracy and human rights universal and specific, facilitating the best possible use of the EU's financial instruments. The Czech Republic itself has set up a Transition Assistance Programme as a basis for an active financial support for NGO projects focusing on promoting democracy and protecting and promoting human rights.

4.6. Development cooperation

Background

International development cooperation is an integral part of Czech foreign policy and contributes to the achievement of its objectives. The Czech Republic uses and will continue to use development cooperation to reduce poverty in less developed parts of the world on the basis of a sustainable socio-economic development, as well as to contribute to global security and stability and preventing regional and local conflicts. The Czech Republic promotes democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and strengthening the rule of law.

Principles

The basic principles governing the Czech Republic's development cooperation include respect for development objectives and the needs of partner countries, long-term commitments and mutual accountability for the success of development efforts. In this regard, the Czech Republic places an emphasis on the strengthening of civil society and the principle of good governance, as well as on building the capacities of partner countries. In doing so, it relies on its own transition experience. The Czech Republic is also involved in international coordination and division of labour among donors.

Czech development cooperation will continue to be transparent and open to an ongoing public debate, which is important in maintaining universal support for development activities.

Priority countries and areas of cooperation

Building on the approved Development Cooperation Strategy for 2010 - 2017, the Czech Republic will concentrate on five priority countries with a cooperation plan ("programme countries") - Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Moldova, and Mongolia - and on five priority countries without a cooperation programme ("project countries"): Georgia, Cambodia, Kosovo, the Palestinian Autonomous Territories and Serbia.

The Czech Republic will continue to focus on the environment, agriculture, social development (including education and health services) and economic development. In all these activities, the Czech Republic will place an emphasis on the protection of human rights, developing democracy

and care for the environment.

The Czech Republic will seek to influence the EU's development programmes with an emphasis on a balanced distribution between third countries. It will focus on increasing participation of Czech entities in the preparation and implementation of development cooperation funded by the EU and other multilateral organisations. This will also promote exports and help to create job opportunities. The Czech Republic intends to utilise its comparative advantages, in particular its own transition experience, long-term relationships with many countries and regions, and the high quality of Czech experts.

4.7. Consular service (assistance for citizens)

Czech citizens in the world Over the last 20 years, opportunities for travel and work abroad have opened up to Czech citizens. In view of their high degree of mobility, assistance for the Czech citizens (as well as EU citizens) is one of the main tasks of the consular service provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This service ensures their protection, provides information to the general public about the situation in each country, and helps to solve various problem situations.

Protecting the Czech Republic's security, economic and other interests The consular service is also a part of the system regulating the residence of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic and other EU Member States. In this area, the consular service, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, performs important tasks in protecting the security of the Czech Republic and its labour market. This activity has a number of political, economic and social impacts.

Efficiency While continuously evaluating the network of Czech diplomatic missions abroad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will take the need for optimal performance of the consular service into consideration as a matter of priority. Where limited resources prevent direct consular representation, the Czech foreign service will try to solve this problem by cooperating with other EU Member States. The aim is to ensure comprehensive quality services for Czech citizens while removing barriers to trade and travel to the Czech Republic by foreign nationals who remain subject to visa requirements.

Czech Republic actively participates in integration Within the EU, the Czech Republic will support initiatives aimed at making life easier for its citizens in Europe. This includes improving the conditions for establishing international contact, free movement, trade and access to the labour market. The Czech Republic will continue to operate effectively within the scope of Schengen cooperation, which focuses mainly on the standardisation of visa and residence procedures, without prejudice to the right of each Member State to decide about the composition and extent of migration onto its territory. In this respect, the Czech Republic will participate in the search for viable means of legal migration, bearing in mind that it is not just a question of restrictions as it also requires an elimination of the causes of illegal migration. The interdependence of migration and subsequent integration must be taken into consideration in this regard.

World without barriers An expansion of integration processes and implementation of declarations on the free movement of persons are among the Czech Republic's priorities. The foreign policy will accordingly promote an expansion of the number

of countries with visa waivers, while respecting the Czech Republic's fundamental security and other interests. When the situation in some countries does not yet make this possible, the Czech Republic will help to drive forward positive changes by deploying the development and transition assistance instruments. Fulfilment of visa facilitation conditions remains the strategic objective.

4.8 Public diplomacy

<i>Breadth of coverage, the power of human contact and the role of the media</i>	If foreign policy is to be successful, it is important to strengthen interaction between government authorities and entities in the political and public sphere, i.e. relations with the Parliament of the Czech Republic, political parties, academia, research institutions, NGOs and the general public. The aim is to raise public awareness and, where possible, to reach a consensus on the key aspects of Czech foreign policy and to promote the foreign activities of the abovementioned agents.
<i>Prime objectives of public diplomacy abroad</i>	The Czech Republic is keen to raise awareness of our country and to overcome mutual prejudices, misleading stereotypes, negative attitudes and patterns of thought.
<i>Presentation of the Czech Republic abroad</i>	<p>The aim of public diplomacy is to present the Czech Republic as a developed democratic country with a rich culture, interesting history and a specific identity, a country offering human capital based on knowledge and innovation potential, a reliable partner in political, security and economic relations, a place to make a return on investment, a respected member of international organisations and security and economic structures, and a partner in the global community.</p> <p>Cooperation with towns and regions will play a more important part in the way the Czech Republic presents itself abroad, with a view to achieving a greater thematic variety and proportionality.</p>
<i>Public diplomacy and cultural relations</i>	<p>In an era of globalisation, the importance of culture as a means of self-expression and validation of national identity is rising. In presenting itself abroad, the Czech Republic will continue to draw primarily on traditional instruments such as cultural agreements, cooperation in the protection of the World Cultural Heritage and the dissemination of traditional and established values of our cultural history. This will be combined with greater use of new media and new topics.</p> <p>In pursuit of public diplomacy and its cultural dimension, Czech missions abroad will be active along with the Czech Centres. The aim is to involve civil and nongovernmental organisations and organisations of Czechs abroad.</p>
<i>Relations with Czechs living abroad</i>	Maintaining relations with and providing support to expatriate organisations is a natural interest of the state. In the 20th century, generations of Czechs underwent a painful experience of exile or emigration. The possibility of free movement in the last two decades has enabled thousands of Czech citizens to make use of professional opportunities throughout the world. Czech foreign policy intends to harness their experience to add to its leverage on the international stage.
<i>Support for education, science, research and technology</i>	Support for education, science, research and new technologies is a prerequisite for sustainable economic growth, competitiveness and, ultimately, social stability. For a medium-sized country like the Czech Republic, development in these areas would be unthinkable without effective international cooperation. In concert with the competent

ministries, foreign policy will help to foster multilateral and bilateral cooperation at all levels and to promote the results of Czech science in the global arena.

One of the aims is to give Czech researchers and developers access to advanced knowledge and technologies required in modern research. In addition, assistance will be provided, wherever possible, for the establishment of communication with foreign entities recognised as world leaders in their respective fields. Support for research and development will be provided in accordance with the priorities of Czech development cooperation and, not least, in keeping with the Czech Republic's commercial and economic interests.

The Czech Republic will offer scholarships and exchange programmes to young people, giving them the chance to gain better knowledge of other countries. This may result in a long-term contribution to further scientific, economic and cultural cooperation.

5. Foreign service

The goals of Czech foreign policy are mainly fulfilled by the foreign service. The foreign service implements government policy but is itself non-partisan, while institutional guarantees ensure its continuity, stability and independence. This approach is supported by a corresponding legislative framework.

In response to this Concept, in line with the Government's policy statement and in the framework of standard activities, further reforms will be carried out in order to ensure professional performance by the foreign service. Success requires a high level of expertise and professionalism on the part of individuals guided by professional regulations, the system of diplomatic training and the creation of conditions for reconciling work and family life within the foreign service environment. Only an effective system based on a professional service will be able to perform tasks effectively in a rapidly changing environment.

The Czech Republic will flexibly adapt its network of foreign missions to the interests of the state. In this respect, it will work closely with other countries, especially with its neighbours. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring the security of foreign missions and their personnel, especially in countries posing the greatest risks.

The foreign service will be managed in a way that makes it always take into account international developments and, in cooperation with other ministries, to assist Czech citizens and promote the involvement of Czech entities in other countries.