

**PRESENTATION OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE CZECH PRESIDENCY IN THE EU COUNCIL**

**AS DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR PAVEL VACEK**

**AT THE RECEPTION IN HIS RESIDENCE AT ANKARA ON 1st of JULY 2022**

**The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union** is being assumed today in the most difficult and dangerous international situation in many decades. The aggressive and brutal war launched by Russia against Ukraine has added up to the disruption of the international economy due to Covid-19 and to the existing challenges to the global rules-based order.

That is why the political **priorities of the Czech EU Presidency** address the current key threats and challenges faced by Europe together with our allied and friendly partners like Türkiye, an EU candidate country.

**Managing refugee crisis and post-war recovery of Ukraine** is of TOP PRIORITY and IMPORTANCE together with the need to support the defence of Ukraine given that Russia is killing Ukrainians in order to take away their freedom and territory as well as their European and Atlantic aspirations. The exhibition of photographs taken by 2 renowned Czech reporters in Ukraine in the first days of Putin’s assault demonstrates the brutality of this aggression.

**Energy security,** the second priority**,**  is most topical imperative, primarily and most urgently to reduce and overcome the dependence of Europe on Russian energy supplies.

**Reinforcement of European defence capacities**, incl. cybersecurity, the third priority, has to be based on security and cooperation of the EU with NATO, which is also one other important bond between Europe and Türkiye.

**Strategic resilience of the EU’s economy** requires us to reduce dependence on hostile régimes, strengthen self-sufficiency, deepen the internal market, accelerate digital transformation and adapt market rules accordingly.

Last but not least, **resilience of democratic institutions** entails safeguarding the values of democracy, the rule of law, media freedom, promoting transparency of governance and open dialogue with citizens.

Czechia as the EU Presidency and myself greatly look forward to working with Turkish institutions and other partners in pursuing our common objectives within the framework of the EU - Türkiye relations, on top of the traditional and friendly Czech - Turkish bilateral relations and also in the perspective of the approaching centenary of the Republic of Türkiye.

I believe that in what we will have to do, we will be well guided by the **MOTTO** **of the Czech Presidency**, borrowed from the late **President Václav HAVEL**: **EUROPE AS A TASK - RETHINK, REBUILD, REPOWER**. It reflects the Europe‘s role in the world of disrupted order at a dramatic period of history and calls for responsibility and action based on values and conscience - and Europe for us includes Türkiye!