



**The Twelfth Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum
May 31 – June 4, 2004**

**“New Challenges for Building up Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development
and Co-operation”**

**Welcoming Remarks by H.E. Mr. Cyril Svoboda
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

It is an honour for me to welcome you on behalf of the traditional host country at the 12th Economic Forum of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I would especially like to welcome my friend and colleague H.E. Dr. Solomon Passy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, OSCE Chairman-in-Office in 2004. It is also a pleasure to welcome here the OSCE Secretary General Mr. Ján Kubiš, the UNECE Executive Secretary Ms. Brigitta Schmögnerová and all our distinguished guests and representatives of governments, international organisations and business communities.

This year's Economic Forum focuses on Institutional and Human Capacity for Economic Development and Co-operation. The Czech Republic appreciates that the Bulgarian Chairmanship has promoted this theme as we agree that viable market economy institutions and adequate human resources are essential factors for successful economic transition, regional security and co-operation. It is important that national institutions should be strengthened and human capacity further developed across the OSCE region.

The Economic Forum is the major annual event within the OSCE economic and environmental dimension, as was also confirmed in the Strategy Document adopted at the last Ministerial in Maastricht on December 2003. The Czech Republic appreciates that this Strategy not only strengthens the economic and environmental dimension, but also sets priorities and reinforces the framework for policies and activities, which enhance economic performance and co-operation in the OSCE area. I would like to express my hope that the Document will be reflected in the outcome of this Forum. Furthermore, I would like to encourage you in subsequent discussions concerned with promoting good governance, enhancing cooperation with other organisations, development of the private sector and enhancing economic growth leading to prosperity and ensuring sustainable development.

The EED Strategy should also help us in improving the review of implementation of commitments. It is notable that the action was brought forward by the OSCE in cooperation with the UNECE –the OSCE's main partner in the Economic and Environmental Dimension. The Czech Republic is of the opinion that co-operation between the OSCE and UNECE should be further strengthened, which is also included in conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding (currently in draft).

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me thank the OSCE Secretariat and the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat for their work in organising this event and the UNECE and EC for their cooperation in the preparation of documents. My thanks also go to the three host countries of the successful preparatory seminars, which resulted in a highly valuable outcome for this year's Economic Forum.

In conclusion, I wish you all stimulating discussions and much success. Personally, I hope that you have a pleasant stay in Prague.