

Prohlášení
Statement
Déclaration

Vienna 29 January 2009

Permanent Council No.748
Points of the Address of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Czech Republic, H.E. Karel Schwarzenberg to the OSCE Permanent
Council, 29 January 2009

Key points:

- Four Czech Presidency priorities in foreign and security policy – Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, energy security, transatlantic relations.
- Czech Presidency commends Greek OSCE Chairmanship in Office for its meaningful priorities, we put our emphasis on OSCE field missions, especially Georgia, as well as on OSCE human dimension.
- OSCE is a natural forum for a possible discussion on the future of European security. Czech Presidency sees the two main pillars which we must build upon
 - (i) any debate must include all three OSCE dimensions, not hard security only
 - (ii) any debate must begin with reaffirmation of existing structures, values, principles and commitments.
- Czech Presidency will support Greek efforts to clarify the OSCE legal status as well the organization's privileges and immunities.

Remarks on Czech Presidency:

Intro

- Four basic Czech EU Presidency priorities in foreign and security policy - Eastern partnership, Western Balkans, energy security, transatlantic relations.
- Some have been strengthened (Russian gas-energy), some even added (Gaza crisis) by the development of events in early 2009

Eastern Partnership

- Tremendous potential for co-operation with our Eastern neighbors, closer ties with the West desirable for these countries as well as EU.
- There is a need to speed up desirable processes in the field of good governance, rule of law, economic and political liberalization, human rights, energy co-operation or migration. In these cases bilateral cooperation is sometimes not enough. An institutionalized EU 27 + 6 Eastern partners (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia) format would be more effective.
- Therefore, the Czech Republic will hold an Eastern Partnership Launching Summit on 7 May.

Western Balkans

- The main aspect of Western Balkans policies is integration of the region into the EU.
- We will pay close attention to the situation in Kosovo. The right conditions must be created for EULEX to function. We will work on the improvement of relations of EULEX with Serbia as well as strive for the gradual normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo.

- The EU will be ready to work together with other members of the international community to fulfil the goals defined by the Dayton Agreements. If all conditions and criteria are met, the EU is ready to increase its presence in the Bosnia and Herzegovina and implement the process of the transformation of the OHR (Office of the High Representative) in the EUSR. It must be underlined, however, that the primary responsibility for the successful transition lies with the political representatives of BaH.

Energy Security

- The recent gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine was holding vast parts of Europe hostage to both countries' political interests – not a purely commercial dispute.
- Greater diversification of sources and transit routes is needed. There are alternatives in terms of sources and routes - the most realistic of which being Central Asia as a source region and the so-called Southern Corridor as an alternative transit route.
- Potential co-operation with Central Asian countries has not been pursued vigorously enough on behalf of the EU so far. European governments and companies should pay attention to actually investing political will and money into energy sources' diversification.
- The Czech Republic decided to move things forward by convening a Southern Corridor Summit during her EU Presidency.

Transatlantic Relations

- Strengthening of relations between the United States and Europe is a natural priority of Czech Presidency. It is an ambition of Czech EU Presidency to hold an EU-US summit in Prague shortly before the G20 meeting and the NATO Summit in early April.

- In the next six months the EU will have to address a robust agenda. The current financial and economic crisis certainly belongs to the most daunting ones.

OSCE Agenda

The occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was one of the starters of the Helsinki process. And Helsinki Final Act helped to create an ideological ground for the Czechoslovak freedom fighters against the oppressing regime. We will never forget this historic OSCE's contribution and the fact that this forum has always helped to promote the values of democracy, freedom, transparency, rule of law etc. And, we should not forget, that OSCE has always been a symbol of close transatlantic relations.

The EU and the OSCE share several common aims: securing peace, deepening cooperation among members and if necessary – use its post-conflict reconstruction tools. Czech Presidency will seek and try to extend the close cooperation between the EU and the OSCE.

The EU dedication to this organization is undisputable – political, personnel and financial commitment of the EU and its member states to the OSCE has been steadily growing. The EU encompasses almost half of all OSCE participating states, provides more than two thirds of seconded OSCE personnel and almost three quarters of the OSCE budget.

The OSCE is making an invaluable contribution towards security, stability and the rule of law also today, although several developments in recent years have put at stake the basic principles of this Organisation and have created atmosphere of mistrust among us. We will try to contribute to

finding ways how to overcome this situation. Focusing on the future cooperation, however, must not be misunderstood as our resignation on the commitments and respect for values we all espoused in the past.

Czech EU Presidency commends the efforts of the Finnish Chairmanship in Office (CiO) in steering the OSCE agenda in 2008 and welcomes the Greek CiO readiness to engage on the whole range of issues facing the OSCE this year.

Czech EU Presidency will support the Greek Chairmanship in its endeavours to help find a solution to all challenges to stability and security in OSCE area. Our primary attention must be dedicated to Georgia. We deeply regret the lack of consensus on the extension of the OSCE Mission mandate. We welcome the efforts of Greek Chairmanship to preserve OSCE presence in Georgia, including South Ossetia. We need more, not less, OSCE presence in the region. The EU supports the ongoing talks in Geneva and hopes that they will soon bring significant results. We have trust in constructiveness of all sides that will be soon transposed in a vital solution. Such a solution must be based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. The EU intends to continue its engagement in Georgia but this engagement cannot replace the valuable OSCE presence. We see both missions as complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Urgent progress is also needed to overcome the crisis concerning the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. We have repeatedly underscored importance of arms control mechanisms and CFE Treaty in particular. CFE Treaty should be viewed as a key Confidence and Security

Building Measure in the OSCE area. In this regard we regret the persisting unilateral suspension of the implementation of the CFE Treaty by the Russian Federation. We promote the effort of all CFE State Parties to find the balanced way out from the current stalemate.

We value all OSCE field operations. We appreciate their valuable contribution in promotion the OSCE joint commitments, democratisation, institution-building, stability and prosperity. We will try to project our regional priorities into the recommendations for future work of these operations and increase also through this channel the EU-OSCE cooperation. The project of Eastern Partnership could be used for this purpose.

Despite yearlong efforts we were unable to develop and carry out a concept of assistance to Afghanistan as mandated in Madrid. My country stood ready to contribute significantly. We will continue our engagement in this partner country through other organizations.

The respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are on the top of the EU priorities as it is one of corner stones of our shared values and principles. The Czech Republic sees the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGO) essential in this process. Free and open dialogue between NGOs representatives and the participating States of the OSCE, remains of utmost importance as it provides the necessary feedback for our work. In this regard, we will reiterate that primary attention should be paid to supporting human rights defenders and independent national human rights institutions.

From our new position we will support ODIHR in its longstanding impartial and professional work in the field of election observation. We commend this Office for widening its geographic coverage and reinforcing its observation methodology and assistance programs. - Czech Presidency supports the Chairmanship's vision of a more effective and stronger OSCE and fully supports efforts aiming at reaching a consensus in the matters of international legal personality, legal capacity, and privileges and immunities of the OSCE.

OSCE and the future of the European security

- The Russian Federation is our valued partner in the discussions concerning all three dimensions of the OSCE activities on its forums. We sincerely hope that our open dialogue will lead to a positive progress especially in the first OSCE dimension.
- The year 2008 generated some new ideas in the security realm.
- The future of the European security will be discussed in different forums while OSCE is the main and only platform where any outcomes of the preparation talks should be finalized.
- Possible discussions should be based on the existing security architecture and must not weaken current organizations. New proposals must be given tangible and specific contents and should not be limited to "hard security" only. The debate must address the state of democracy, rule of law and human rights in the whole Euro-Atlantic area.
- The debate must evaluate the fulfillment of security commitments in Europe by all actors and outline solutions to frozen conflicts. At the same time it must resolve the question of arms control mechanisms, too.