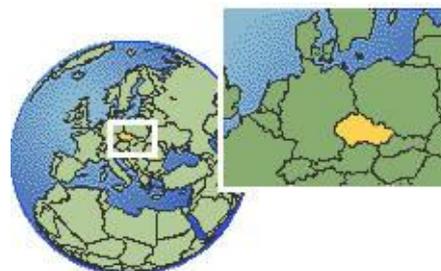


## II-C. Profile of the Czech Republic

Version 1 – 28 April 2006

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### 1. The Czech Republic's Approach to Environmental Security

In December 2003, the Czech Government approved the Security Strategy, one of basic documents regarding both the security policy and the foreign policy of the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic's foreign policy is based on Government Policy Statements of August 2002 and August 2004 and on the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic for 2003-2006 that stressed development of bilateral relations and participation in multilateral activities which would correspond to standards in environmental protection.<sup>2</sup>

In March 2004, the State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic 2004-2010, the framework strategic document for environmental policy, was adopted. One of the 4 priority areas of the environmental policy according to this document is reducing the damage to the environment from human activities and improving environmental standards for the quality of human life setting several individual targets with respect to crisis management procedures in the environment, prevention of occurrence of crisis situations and reduction of their detrimental effect on the environment.

Furthermore, in December 2004 the Czech Republic Strategy for Sustainable Development as a long-term framework document for strategic decision-making was adopted. Cooperation and efforts towards overcoming ethnic, economic, ecological and social conflicts belong to its strategic goals.

The Czech Republic must face global environmental as well as regional and national risks. Threats to environmental security have increased after the Czech Republic's accession to NATO and the EU. International terrorism in connection with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is one of the greatest threats in the present world. Therefore one of strategic goals of the Czech Republic's Security Strategy is aimed at suppressing international terrorism and reducing the risk of proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. At the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly Minister of Foreign Affairs Cyril Svoboda stressed these issues of global threats together with regional conflicts, failing states and organized crime.<sup>3</sup>

Promotion of all strategic goals is necessary for following important interests of the Security Strategy. In this context, regarding environmental security, the Czech Republic takes part in promoting the principles of sustainable development, preventing and preparing for unforeseeable natural and environmental disaster and industrial accidents, and supporting scientific and technological development.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) stressed the need to achieve balance between three fundamental pillars: social development, economic development and environmental protection, as was symbolically proclaimed in its motto: people, planet, prosperity. The importance of sustainability for environmental security lies

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<sup>2</sup> Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004. See [www.mzv.cz](http://www.mzv.cz)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

not only in the efficient protection of the environment and prudent use of natural sources, but also in social development respecting the needs of all and the maintenance of high and stable standards of economic growth and employment. Related to this strategy, the Czech Republic, in terms of the EU, accepted the Lisbon Strategy adopted in 2000 and the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development adopted in 2001 with an emphasis on environmental issues. In this context the Czech Republic is obligated to share global and regional responsibility for sustainable development while respecting its own specificities and interests. Besides its membership in the EU and NATO the Czech Republic is involved in cooperation and activities within international, intergovernmental and regional organizations (OSCE, UNECE, UNEP, WHO, WTO) and it is bound to meet obligations following from its memberships.

One of the foreign policy priorities of the Czech Republic is to support the work of the OSCE. It is the Czech Republic's enduring interest that the OSCE ensures observation of the adopted standards in all participating states and in all dimensions of its work, in particularly in economic/environmental rights. The Czech Republic regularly hosts sessions of the OSCE Economic Forum, which meets every year in Prague at the Senior Council level. Although the OSCE is not an economic organisation, its role in preventing security risks stemming from economic and environmental problems is indispensable.

## **2. How the New Political Landscape of Europe has affected Development of the Czech Republic's Environmental Security Priorities**

The Czech Republic's geopolitical position has changed considerably as a result of the democratisation and integration processes in the Euro-Atlantic area. As a NATO member, the Czech Republic formulates its security and defence policy on the basis of the Alliance's Strategic Concept and the Prague Summit conclusions. Under the Prague Capabilities Commitment the Czech Republic assumed fourteen national commitments to support the specialisation of the Czech army in WMD protection, passive monitoring systems and military healthcare. Additionally, the Czech Republic is a leading country in the multinational battalion for protection against WMD. The Czech Republic is also an advocate of NATO's Open Door Policy. For that reason, in 2004 it continued to engage in intensive cooperation and shared its experience of its accession to NATO and work within the organisation with countries seeking to join.

Since joining the EU, the Czech Republic is also being actively involved in the European Security and Defence policy (ESDP), which is part of the Common Foreign and Security policy (CFSP). However, the Czech Republic's approach is based on the support to building strategic partnership between NATO and EU. In terms of the EU, the Czech Republic adopted new priorities such as non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and the threats of regional conflicts. In this context it took full part in the work of European Union working groups (in particular: disarmament – CODUN, dual use goods – WPDU, non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – CONOP, conventional arms – COARP). Within these forums it was actively involved in preparing and launching the implementation of the European Union Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction for 2004-2008.<sup>4</sup> The coordination mechanisms of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy were strongly reflected in Czech activities within the UN. The Czech Republic supports the UN's duties regarding global security and therefore one of the country's long-term interests is to maintain the effective role of the UN.

As a result of preparatory works for accession to the EU, the Czech Republic adopted new legislation regarding environmental security. Moreover, floods in the year 1997 showed weak points in preparedness of the Civil Emergency Planning system for managing such major disasters. In 2000 the law on the Integrated Rescue System (Law No.239/2000) and the law on Crisis Management (Law No.240/2000) were approved.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

This new legislation package has been valid since 2001 and has been successfully used during the 2002 catastrophic flood in the Czech Republic. Both floods showed a big measure of international solidarity. The Czech Republic has also been active during international rescue operations since 1999 and the law on the Integrated Rescue System sets up conditions for providing humanitarian assistance abroad in a quick way. Industrial disasters needed a new legislation too. In 1999 the law on prevention of major accidents caused by selected dangerous chemical substances and chemical preparation and an amendment of law No.425/1990 (Law No.353/1999) were adopted. This legislation was not only important for the accession to the EU, but also was necessary for implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary effects of industrial accidents in terms of UNECE. In the legislation framework on prevention of major accidents are also included: Government regulation No.452/2004 and three decrees, (Decree No 366/2004, Decree No.367/2004, Decree No.374/2004). Decree 383/2000, laying down the principles for preparing of the zone of emergency planning is also related to the law mentioned above.

With the accession to the EU pressure was placed on the Czech Republic regarding old environmental burdens. Old environmental burdens are still a considerable problem. The latest progress in the legislation in this area was made by government resolution No. 51/2001 about principles of elimination of environmental burdens from the past arising prior to privatisation.

After accession to the EU the Czech Republic has increased its activity in the OECD's cooperation with non-members. In issues related to environmental security, the Czech Republic continued to take part in promoting the implementation of the OECD Environment Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

Another main goal of Czech foreign policy includes promoting of external relations. Since May 2004 the Czech Republic has fully participated in EU foreign development cooperation, in particularly towards Eastern and South Eastern European countries. At the beginning of 2004 the Czech Government adopted Principles of Official Development Assistance after the Accession to the EU and decided to reduce territorial priorities and gradually concentrate development cooperation on 8 priority countries including Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yemen, Moldova, Mongolia, Serbia and Montenegro, Vietnam, and Zambia. The Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic put emphasis on co-operation with Eastern-European and South-Eastern European countries (Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro), as well as countries of sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Cameroon, Burkina Faso) and Asia (Vietnam, Mongolia). The Czech Republic takes part in foreign development co-operation in the form of financial, material, expert and technical assistance as other EU members respecting international commitments, principally the Millennium Declaration. Joining the EU, the Czech Republic has contributed to its budget and since 2008 will also contribute regularly to the European Development Fund (EDF).

Membership in the EU helped the Czech Republic in its long-standing endeavour to strengthen its cooperation with Asia. The Czech Republic acceded to ASEM along with the other new member states in October 2004.

Relations with neighbour states form a particularly important part of the Czech Republic's foreign policy. All the Czech Republic's neighbours are members of the EU. Besides development of bilateral relations the Czech Republic takes part in regional cooperation, where the Visegrad Group Countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovak Republic) has priority in Central Europe. The Ministers of Environment of the Visegrad Group meet every year in one of the member states to discuss some themes that are common to all these countries. The Visegrad Group Countries have a similar character and after their joining the EU they have strengthened cooperation, in particular in current environmental issues. Between 2002 and 2004 the Visegrad Group Countries' Summer School of Development Aid and Co-operation was organised by the Palacký University in Olomouc and the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic with the aim to

demonstrate the role of integration of environmental and sustainable development aspects of development aid and co-operation as tools for to contribute to establishing and strengthening stable international relations based on partnership, for building peace and security. The cooperation within the Visegrad Group is important not only for the regional and national level. It could also contribute to solutions to global environmental problems.

### **3. Integration of New Environmental Threats into Foreign Policy**

Besides the threats of international terrorism and WMD the Czech Republic's foreign and security policy is aimed at emerging environmental threats such as the growing imbalance between the North and South, which is a factor in breeding radicalization, extremism and terrorism. Therefore the Czech Republic takes part in various programmes of foreign development cooperation and peace building and peace keeping activities.

In 1995, the Czech Republic as the first among post-communist countries re-established its programme of development co-operation. In 1996, the Czech Republic reintroduced in connection with its membership in the OECD its official development assistance (ODA) programme based on principles comparable with policies of developed donor countries. According to the Concept of Official Development Assistance of the Czech Republic for the period of 2002-2007, acknowledged by the Czech Government in January 2002, the Development Assistance Programme is an integral part of the Czech foreign policy. Providing of ODA has an indirect impact on global security, conflict prevention, terrorism prevention and also environmental security.

### **4. How Environmental Security Threats are addressed by Czech Development Cooperation in Partner Countries**

The overall goal of the Official Development Assistance of the Czech Republic is to contribute, in line with efforts of the international community, to poverty alleviation in the less developed countries through the promotion of sustainable development with emphasis on its environmental pillar. Poverty alleviation is a prerequisite of reaching globally sustainable development, which has a positive effect on environmental security.

The Czech Republic endorses a multidimensional approach towards poverty alleviation that cannot be understood only in economical terms but also in its social and environmental aspects. The Czech Republic fully supports International Development Goals, which were adopted by the 1990s UN international conferences and confirmed by the 2000 UN Millennium Summit.

The share of the Czech ODA on gross national income rising since 1999 has achieved 0,11% in 2005, which is the highest share from all new donors in the EU. In the future the Czech Republic is obligated to increase payments for development assistance and adopt the conclusions made at the Barcelona summit in 2002. In 2005 the Czech Government approved Country Strategy Papers that are aimed at 8 priority countries and define the strategy of development co-operation in these countries for the period 2006-2008. Priority topics of co-operation with these countries are based on needs of the countries and capabilities and interests of the Czech Republic.

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) has been participating in the Czech development assistance programme since 1997. In the period 1997-2005 the Ministry has co-ordinated preparation, implementation and evaluation of 63 projects in 34 countries. For the period 2006-2008 the priority countries for the Ministry of Environment are Serbia and Montenegro, Moldova, Mongolia and Vietnam. In total, environmental assistance projects form over 20% of the Czech project-based ODA.

The Ministry of Environment has the most development projects from all Ministries, but environmental development assistance is not limited only to the activities of the Ministry

of Environment. Other line ministries - e.g. the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the Ministry of Agriculture - co-ordinate assistance projects with a clear environmental focus. The projects are aimed at introduction of environmental technologies, supply of drinking water, afforestation and environmental agriculture. Development projects of the Ministry of Environment mostly extend over several years and are focused as follows:

- implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements (protection of the ozone layer of the Earth, combating desertification, protection biodiversity etc.)
- environmental aspects of industrial activities (cleaner production, environmental management systems)
- sustainable use of natural resources
- environmental geology (hydrogeology, natural risks assessment)
- clean up of contaminated sites

The majority of these topics can be counted as a small contribution to the improvement of environmental security in recipient countries.

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