

## Introduction

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## Introduction

### WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE WANT

The Czech Democratic Party is our oldest political party. It is an acknowledged part of the most powerful part of the world and European community formed by social democratic countries. A vast majority of the EU countries which we want to join soon, presently have social democratic governments. This places us in a strong position both in time and space and it allows us to draw on the experience of the developed democratic societies with a modern, social and ecology-oriented market economy.

Throughout its history social democracy has always focused on working people - the ones living on their wages or a pension, on workers, technicians, employees, small and medium entrepreneurs. It has tried to defend their interests based on the rules of social justice and solidarity.

Our country is not prospering. Due to the wrong economic and social strategies of the previous conservative governments our country has the lowest economic growth rate in central Europe. An extensive appropriation and tunnelling of state-owned property has occurred. Our indebtedness increases, the living standard of large social groups decreases or stagnates, inflation and unemployment rates grow. The building of houses has slowed down significantly and difficulties in health care, education, public transport and other areas increase.

If we are to overcome this state of affairs we must in the first place stop the flourishing economic criminality, corruption, tax evasions and other fraud. We cannot allow a situation where small thieves are prosecuted while the big operators continue unpunished and further more become members of the elite. Therefore, we propose a range of specific provisions in our program aimed at suppressing the influence of the economic Mafias and their gradual incorporation into the state administration. At the same time we are aware that our standpoint motivates these people to try to obstruct the victory of social democracy by whatever means and to denigrate it in the eyes of the public by various unethical strategies.

It is not enough however just to criticize the acts of the previous governments and to fight the consequences of these acts. We have a positive program of our own based on the principle of investment in personal development - social investments. We do not want the tax income of the State to be used for the overlarge state bureaucracy or for the salvation of banks going bankrupt but to be used for the development of education and health care, for the support of house-building, public transport, the protection of the environment and social care.

The growth of this income is conditional upon stimulation of the economic growth and active economic and agricultural policy, specifically by more favourable loan conditions to enable businesses to develop. We will fight unemployment by creating new jobs including the development of the system of works for public benefit. Simultaneously we will focus our attention on the two most threatened social groups - young families and pensioners.

To reach these goals an on - going social dialogue and communication between the government, trade unions and other social organizations is needed. We reject the arrogance of power, which does not see politics as a service to the citizens but solely as a means of satisfying individual personal ambitions. We will try to provide as much opportunity as possible for the cooperation of all citizens in the area of public administration matters in the form of civil self-governments or employees interests in the companies they work with. We insist on an effective power control by independent authorities.

We believe that the society of the future will be a society of education, co-participation and solidarity and we want the Czech society to be like this as well. In this way we continue the traditions of our nation seeing the education of people as one of the most precious values. It is a school not a bank that should be the

most important building in the municipality, it is a teacher not a banker who should be seen to occupy most prestigious occupation. We sympathize with the ill, because any one of us can get ill. We sympathize with pensioners, because each of us will grow old one day. You can tell a good government by the way it is able to take care of children and elderly fellow-citizens. Neither the education nor the health care are commodities to be traded on the market. They are a service granted by a sympathetic society to all needy people.

We do not want to live in a country where dog bites dog, where the rule of the jungle counts most, where individual success is based on the failure of others and where the most successful one is the “tunneler”. We want to live in a society where one can get rich only by honest work and where every member can mature in dignified living conditions; in a democratic, humanistic society of equal citizens where humanity beats selfishness.

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