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ÈSSD identifies with the idea of the integration of the states of the European continent and it sees as its priority the admission of the Czech Republic into the European Union which is in accordance with the fulfilled prerequisites and readiness of the country for membership. We stress that we view the European integration process as desirable and beneficial both for the Czech Republic and the member countries of the European Union knowing that the integration itself will enrich the member countries without affecting their national identities. We emphasize the contribution of integration to the strengthening and increasing of material and spiritual values.

EU membership will mean a basic change in the Czech society and in lives of its citizens. Therefore, ÈSSD will enforce an active approach to the development of the concept of incorporation of the Czech Republic into the European structures. We want to proceed with the fulfilling of the pre-entering strategy having its origin in the provisions of the European Agreement and we will actively present the European Commission and other authorities with our proposals and ideas. ÈSSD will constructively contribute to the on-going process of admission negotiations opened in the spring 1998.

Drawing on the White Book, on the document Agenda 2000 and on the National preparation program, ÈSSD will enforce provisions for incorporation of the country into the single European market and for entering the Economic and Monetary Union and in the next stage for transition to the single currency euro.

ÈSSD will make the process of European integration including building common infrastructures, especially in the energy, transport, telecommunications, ecology and information area, easier through its policy of a social market economy based on the solidarity principle. We will take care of the progress of the conforming of the Czech and community legislation and its enforcement and of gradual introduction of various strategies (especially industrial, agricultural, social, transport, ecological, budgetary, monetary, price and tax strategies) but also of the reporting systems, namely statistics. ÈSSD sees as one of the main prerequisites of the realization of these strategies that they generate a faster economic growth making use of the integration benefits and speeding up the consolidation of the financial and banking sector.

ÈSSD will proceed with the state administration reform through the adaptation of the administrative structures of the Czech Republic to Europe. Part of the state administration reform is also the establishment of an independent state administration authority to co-ordinate the Czech subjects active in the incorporation of the Czech Republic into EU and in the matters of the management of the funds provided by the EU for this purpose.

As a part of building a single European market ÈSSD will seek to achieve, through the concept of increasing the competitiveness of the Czech producers, a greater success of the Czech economy on European markets and to increase the material wealth and employment in Europe.

ÈSSD will urge the government to elaborate, in co-operation with the European Commission, a more detailed medium-term economic strategy of the Czech Republic which is absent in present in the country and which will help to solve the basic problems of the country - the economic effectiveness, growth, and companies restructuring, reaching an external and internal balance and completing the creation of the market institutions on the standard level. ÈSSD will also seek to use the PHARE funds more rationally and it will prepare the country for a meaningful use of the structural funds of the European Commission and other sources. As a part of its national economic strategy it will engage in a closer European regional and cross-border co-operation.

ÈSSD will try to provoke a positive reaction to the methods of work and life of the Union in various areas of the competitiveness support, support of the enforcement of comparative advantages of the Czech Republic, innovation activities, support of the small and medium companies, solutions of the problem industries, problems of employment and support of the dialogue between employees and employers etc.

Based on specified analyses of the EU membership impact on the separate industries of the Czech economy and on the demands of EU regarding the transition period especially as far as the access to the common job market is concerned, ÈSSD will enforce during the negotiations with the European Commission the differentiated access concerning for example the application of rules related to the conditions of competitiveness, using community funds and resources, state subventions etc.

ÈSSD will take a part in an information campaign for the general public and also for the business sector showing the contribution, extent and character of rights and obligations of the future membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union.

The Czech Republic is prepared to take an active part in the discussion on the prepared EU reform in connection with intensification of its activity and its extension.

ÈSSD will try to make the government, simultaneously with the integration of the Czech Republic into the single European market, prepare gradually the execution of the second and third pillar of EU - co-ordination of the foreign policy, problems of state and social affairs, justice and other areas. ÈSSD has welcomed the fact that the Social Charter of the European Council has become an universally accepted part of the political concept in Europe and based on this it will enforce a social policy leading to the European standards. It will do so especially in relation to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that are in the first group of candidates for the EU membership. Also, we see the support of Slovakia in its effort to become a member of the European structures including the EU as very important.

In the activities of other international and regional structures and also in bilateral inter-state relationships ÈSSD will act in favour of the faster integration of the countries seeking to become members of EU. In carrying out the pre-admission strategy and fulfilling the obligations and commitments originating from the future EU membership we will enhance the economic and political interests of the Czech Republic.

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(c) ÈSSD