

4.3. Foreign policy

[Dokumenty](#) > [English](#) > [Election program](#)

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4.3. Foreign policy

One of the basic tasks of the Czech foreign policy is the defence and protection of the life-style of the citizens of the Czech Republic. In the process of incorporation of the Czech Republic into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures the importance of our foreign policy and its interconnection with the political, economical and social development in our country increases. This brings increased demands on our foreign policy, on the professional expertise in the foreign service and the ensuring of the public awareness.

In the area of international relations ĚSSD will try to correct the mistakes and short-comings of the previous government and will increase the importance of external economic contacts in the foreign policy of the Czech Republic. It will seek to place the Czech Republic amongst the active players within European and world politics based on co-operation, solidarity, human rights and co-operative security. It will focus on stronger support of the foreign policy by the Czech public, especially as far as the incorporation of the Czech Republic into NATO and the European Union is concerned.

ĚSSD sees as absolute priorities of the Czech foreign policy the incorporation of the Czech Republic into the European Union and NATO and the establishment of good and stable relations with neighbouring countries.

ĚSSD shares the vision of the united, democratic, prospering and peaceful Europe without tension and conflict. The Europe of free citizens and co-operating regions is the Europe of solidarity in which the independent identity of separate member states develops. The adjustment to the European Union will bring a greater influence on all the areas of life of the country and on every citizen. The EU membership will offer to the Czech Republic conditions of economic prosperity, security and stability and also the establishment of its international position. The Czech Republic will have the opportunity to participate in creating the policy of one of the world's biggest associations and contribute to the forming of the European Union of the 21st century.

Negotiations concerning our admission to EU are considered by ĚSSD to be one of the most important tasks of the Czech government. ĚSSD will try to ensure that conditions for the admission of the Czech Republic to EU are in harmony with Czech national interests.

As a part of the process of preparation of the Czech Republic for the membership in the European Union ĚSSD will participate in creating a medium-term program for the incorporation of the Czech Republic into EU based on the existing European Agreement on admission between the Czech Republic and the European Union with the Czech Republic taking part in the EU "Agenda 2000" program. This program will cover, inter alia: the legislative area (preparation of the Czech Republic to take over the EU legislation in various areas); preparation of individual departments and newly created regions for the admission to the European Union; the use of loans from the European Investment Bank and European Reconstruction and Development Bank to support economic growth, increase of competitiveness and restructuring of Czech companies and also the incorporation into pan-European projects. Taking into account the demands, complexity and importance of the preparation program of the Czech Republic for the admission to EU, ĚSSD will establish a Ministry for European Affairs to co-ordinate separate departments in their preparation of both the medium-term program and the national one-year programs and ensure a meaningful use of the promised EU aid as a part of the access to partnership (ca. CZK 4 billion a year). It will also ensure the use of the increased help before the admission of the Czech Republic to the Union after 2000 (ca. CZK 12 billion a year). It will plan for the use of the aid from the structural funds until the Czech Republic enters EU (ca. CZK 60 billion a year).

ĚSSD will monitor the policy leading to the incorporation of the Czech Republic into NATO, which should gradually become the defence organization of the European Union.

ĚSSD supports the Czech Republic membership in the evolving NATO which is seen as an important factor for European security with the active participation of the United States. Signing the protocols on acceding to the Washington Treaty is an important provision increasing the security of the Czech Republic. ĚSSD supports the idea that the Czech Republic has in NATO the position comparable to the position of Norway, Denmark or Spain which is in perfect agreement with the current policy of the Alliance not intending to locate nuclear weapons and permanent military bases on the territory of the new member countries in times of peace. ĚSSD fully supports the signing of the Founding Pact between NATO and the Russian confederation and the Charter between NATO and Ukraine as they lead to the establishment of a functional model for European security for the 21st century.

ÈSSD stresses the importance of good relations with all neighbouring countries. First of all it will try to develop the relationship with Slovakia as we have a common history, interests and economic ties. The relations with Germany are of critical importance to the Czech Republic. The agreement on good neighbourliness and co-operation from 1992 and the Czech-German declaration of 1997 give a firm basis for the further development of Czech-German relations. ÈSSD fully agrees with the idea of mutual Czech-German relations oriented towards the future, based on the understanding of mutual agreement within a peaceful, democratic and prospering Europe. Any questions with regard to the repercussions of World War II and the bringing back of conflicts of the past are in conflict with this declaration.

ÈSSD supports the development of general co-operation with the states of the Central Europe reinforcing the security, stability and the democratic development of the whole region. We will also try to facilitate the extension of the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA).

ÈSSD stresses the importance of the bilateral relationships with other countries, both large and small. The bilateral relationships together with the multilateral relationships form the basic structure of the Czech Republic's engagement in the international community. ÈSSD is determined to extent the multilateral dimension of the Czech foreign policy.

ÈSSD is in favour of the extension of the Organization for security and co-operation in Europe in its role as an effective forum for the preventive diplomacy and co-operative security.

As far as the key matters of the foreign policy are concerned ÈSSD supports the democratic principle of referendum.

We support the participation of the Czech Republic's armed forces in peace operations approved by the Security Council of the UN. We also support the plans of enforcement of UN authority and provisions accepted to mitigate the differences between the developed and developing countries.

As far as foreign policy is concerned ÈSSD will try to implement the application of a consensus approach with all major political parties of the country with the most important issues and provide the necessary conditions for this consensus. ÈSSD considers it absolutely imperative to eliminate a cabinet style foreign policy applied by the previous government which has lead to the distrust and apathy of citizens.

In foreign policy ÈSSD will fully respect the control function of Parliament.

In order to increase the level and efficiency of the Czech foreign policy ÈSSD will take care of arranging the necessary co-ordination between constitutional officials and various departments.

According to ÈSSD it is urgent to adopt provisions to raise the professional level and stability in the foreign service which must be able to provide Czech citizens abroad with effective help.

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(c) ÈSSD