

EU2022.CZ



Programme of the Czech
Presidency of the Council of
the European Union



EU2022.CZ

Europe as a Task: Rethink, Rebuild, Repower

Contents

Priorities of the Czech Presidency of the EU Council	3
Managing the refugee crisis and Ukraine's post-war recovery	3
Energy security	4
Strengthening Europe's defence capabilities and cyberspace security	6
Strategic resilience of the European economy	7
Resilience of democratic institutions	9
Programme of the Czech Presidency by EU Council formations	11
General Affairs Council (GAC)	12
Cohesion	14
Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)	16
External relations	17
Development cooperation	19
Common commercial policy	20
Defence	22
Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)	24
Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)	28
Justice	29
Home affairs	31
Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)	35
Competitiveness Council (COMPET)	38
Internal market and industry	39
Space	41
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)	44
Transport	45
Telecommunications	46
Energy	49
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)	51
Employment and social policy	52
Health	53
Environmental Council (ENVI)	56
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)	60
Education, youth and sport	61
Culture and audiovisual media	62

Europe as a Task:

Rethink, Rebuild, Repower



When in 1996 Czech President Václav Havel considered the future of our continent in his speech at the Charlemagne Prize ceremonial, entitled Europe as a Task, he stressed that the tasks ahead of Europe deserve careful and thorough reflection. In the then international context, particularly favourable to Western democracies, Havel called on Europeans to rediscover their conscience and to take responsibility for global environmental, social and economic challenges. He did not want Europe to reclaim the position of a “global Head of orchestra” and to impose its cultural values on the rest of the world. What he had in mind was rather inspiring and leading by example.

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, which has completely overhauled the geopolitical situation on our continent this year, has demonstrated at the same time that Europeans in a crisis triggered by an external threat are able to act very quickly, effectively and in a united way. Yet European unity is not one of an authoritarian unanimity, but a unity in diversity of a multi-voice debate, which, however, is driven, by our common values, towards consensus. Our culture of political dialogue and consensus-building that we have been forging for decades proves to be a strength rather than a weakness of the European project.

Nevertheless, the brutal war aggression beyond the Eastern borders of our community has also clearly shown us that we will have to find the courage to reevaluate many of our current approaches and premises. We therefore perceive the Havel-like slogan “Europe as a Task”, chosen by the Czech Republic as the motto of its Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2022 not only as an

opportunity to reflect together, but above all as a call for accountability and determined action based on the values that our conscience requires us to pursue. If we want to live up to the expectations of this historical moment, our triple challenge is to: rethink, rebuild and repower Europe.

We believe that a common reflection on European tasks must, in the current situation, first and foremost find the right recipe as quickly as possible for a policy mix that will ensure security and peace on our continent, lead the EU towards reaching the long-term goals of the green and digital transitions, while at the same time making it possible to deal effectively with the present security, energy and humanitarian crisis, as well as with acute economic and social challenges that are partly due to the COVID pandemic and which are exacerbated by Russia's aggression.

The overall objective of the Czech Presidency is to contribute as much as possible to creating the conditions for the security and prosperity of the EU in the context of the European values of freedom, social justice, democracy and the rule of law and environmental responsibility. The EU must focus on ensuring security together with NATO and affirming the strategic resilience and competitiveness of the European economy. The EU, together with the United States and other democratic states outside the EU, should become a strong foundation for a strategic community defending fundamental values, human rights, a free way of life and liberal democracy. In order to achieve this objective, the Czech Republic has determined the following priority areas for its Presidency of the Council of the EU.

1

Managing the refugee crisis and Ukraine's post-war recovery

Following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the Czech Presidency will support the EU's efforts to defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by using all instruments and programmes offered by the EU, including the strengthening of sanctions. The EU's and its Member States' political and military support for Ukraine is in our vital interest in order to ensure security in Europe. The Czech Presidency welcomes the consensus reached on granting candidate status to Ukraine and will support its further integration efforts.

Russian aggression has caused the most massive refugee crisis since World War II. The EU must take all steps to help best deal with the unprecedented refugee wave, in particular of women and children from war-affected Ukraine. This will require the mobilisation of all available resources and expertise as well as their coordinated use.

The Czech Presidency will build on the principles of solidarity, efficiency and flexibility in this area. In cooperation with the European Commission, it will work on flexible transfers of funds and the creation of the necessary structures to assist the most affected Member States, organisations and the civil sector. Protecting children and ensuring their access to education will be a priority. For women's participation in the labour market, sufficient pre-school and extracurricular capacity will need to be guaranteed. Coordination in ensuring healthcare will also be an important priority. The Czech Presidency will pay attention to effective European cooperation and solidarity so that the long-term integration of refugees into the societies of the Member States is successful.

Another important task of the Czech Presidency will be the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, focusing on restoring critical infrastructure, ensuring basic services, strengthening resilience and economic recovery and stability in Ukraine. Strong EU cooperation with Ukraine and securing the necessary financial resources across the free world will be crucial.

2 Energy security

The EU cannot be vitally dependent on countries that directly threaten its security and must therefore break its dependence on Russian gas, oil and coal. The Czech Presidency will put emphasis on the EU's energy security issues, which are currently more pressing than the energy transition, and on the accelerated implementation of REPowerEU, an important part of which is diversification of sources including logistics, energy savings and acceleration of the transition to low-emission and renewable energy sources. The Czech Presidency is ready to work on the implementation of the regulation of gas reserves, i.e. filling storages in the run-up to winter, and the promotion of voluntary joint purchases, so that the EU uses its weight in a way similar to the purchase of vaccines.

The decarbonisation of the EU industry and the transition from natural gas to hydrogen represents an important goal requiring the implementation of an ambitious plan for the development of hydrogen infrastructure, storage and terminals. Fit for 55 creates the basis for decarbonisation. However, the Czech Presidency will focus especially on thorough implementation of the main short-term objective, i.e. remove dependence on Russian fossil fuels. The Czech Presidency will also deal with energy efficiency (EED) and the use of renewable energy. At the same time, the development of energy infrastructure is crucial, as it will strengthen the energy resilience of the EU as a whole. Finally, the Czech Presidency will deal with the role of nuclear energy in ensuring the EU's energy security and meeting the EU's climate goals.

In the field of transport, the Presidency will concentrate on reducing emissions, promoting environmentally friendly modes of transport and infrastructure for alternative fuels, as a key prerequisite for the development of clean mobility. At the same time, it will focus on the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) in order to facilitate transport flows across Member States, while supporting the decarbonisation of transport.

At the same time, the Czech Presidency will work on implementing an appropriate mix of instruments that will reduce the negative social and economic

impact of high energy prices. The transition towards carbon neutrality must be accompanied by efficient social measures, for example by supporting energy savings in households. Energy savings are becoming increasingly important in view of inflationary pressures and rising energy prices.

3

Strengthening Europe's defence capabilities and cyberspace security

Given the growing global instability, the Czech Presidency will focus on reinforcing security and defence capabilities, in particular in partnership with NATO. It will work specifically on supporting the implementation of key topics within the Strategic Compass. The development of long-term cooperation on strategic military systems is essential. In addition to ensuring the necessary capacities, including supporting capacities based on existing technologies, the Czech Presidency will pay attention to cooperation and investment in reducing technological dependence, in particular with regard to new and disruptive technologies, and to ensuring the resilience of critical value chains needed for these technologies. Strengthening related industrial capacities in the EU is also key.

At the same time, the Czech Presidency will address cyber threats and the geopolitical context of new technologies (and space). It will also focus on the rapid development of the so-called Hybrid toolbox, the fight against disinformation and the security of cyberspace. The Czech Presidency will pay particular attention to the cybersecurity of EU institutions, bodies and agencies and to the EU space-based secure communication system. We will stress that the EU, together with democratic partners, actively shapes the international debate in international organisations to improve the security and stability of cyberspace.

4 Strategic resilience of the European economy

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russian aggression vis-à-vis Ukraine have led to an inflation shock, increased market uncertainty and have exposed the fragility of global supply chains. The Russian invasion has caused the greatest disruption of commodity markets in the last half-century. The EU must drastically reduce its dependence on hostile or unstable regimes. Striving for full self-sufficiency does not seem to be an immediately viable option for the EU. In order to strengthen strategic resilience, targeted support for technological competitiveness based on own production capacities, together with the deepening of free trade with democratic nations in the world, is essential.

From food, medicines to semiconductor chips, supply chains and their vulnerability need to be understood in detail and their resilience must consequently be strengthened. The availability of strategic raw materials and components must be secured for European firms. Particular emphasis will be placed on the security of IT supply chains. The Czech Presidency will work on accelerating the process of concluding trade agreements with democratic states and on deepening transatlantic cooperation in the framework of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC) with a focus on strategic cooperation, including joint measures for supply chain resilience.

Accelerating the digitalisation and automation of European industry is also essential, enabling the expansion of competitive production in the EU, with a particular emphasis on strategic sectors. A more efficient circular economy will contribute to reducing the need for imports of primary materials.

Green and digital transitions must be implemented in such a way as to promote convergence towards the most advanced regions. At the same time, there is a need to support the development of the skills of Europeans to adapt to changing circumstances, which is a prerequisite for the global competitiveness of the EU. Support through EU investment policies, in particular cohesion policy, will play a crucial role in all these areas.

Finally, the internal market needs to be further deepened, especially in services and the digital economy, while improving the business environment, including support for science, research and innovation, which will lead to increased competitiveness of European firms. With a view of qualitatively deepening the digital internal market, the Czech Presidency will strive for the adoption of a pan-European tool for the secure and trustworthy proving of a citizen's identity, the so-called European Digital Identity Wallet, and the creation of an efficient and fair data market.

5 Resilience of democratic institutions

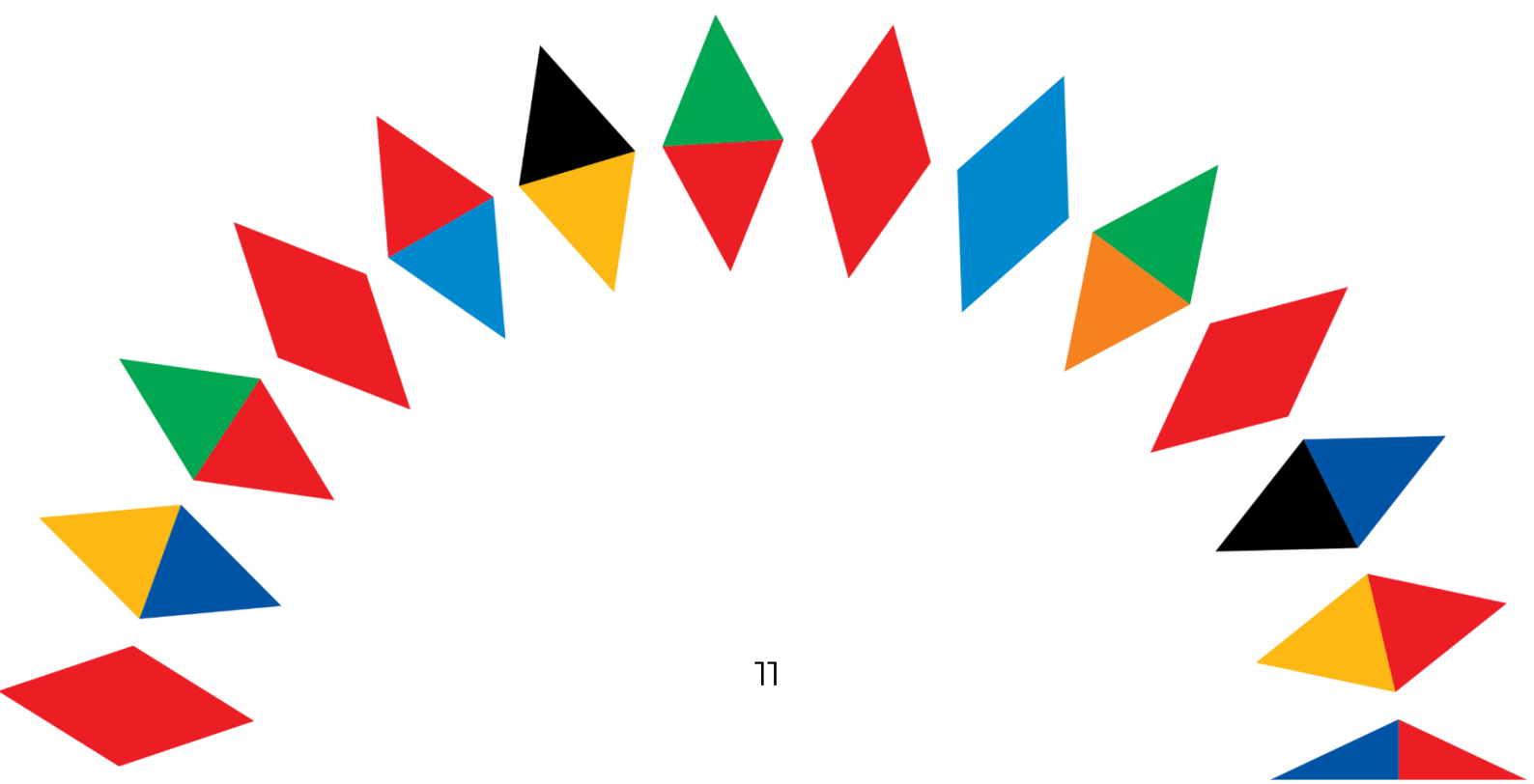
Russian aggression once again reminded us strongly that Europe's long-term prosperity and stability are based on functioning democratic mechanisms. The Czech Presidency will therefore focus on strengthening the resilience of institutions that have a major influence on maintaining and developing values of democracy and the rule of law in the EU. These include, for example, transparent financing of political parties, the independence of mass media and an open dialogue with citizens.

The Conference on the Future of Europe has created a unique space for citizens and especially for young people to debate the future of Europe and provide input for future EU policies. The Czech Presidency will work on making use of these ideas and the creation of a space for the continuation of the debate. While implementing the European Year of Youth 2022, the Presidency will put emphasis on improving dialogue with young people and promoting their participation in political/policy processes.

In addition, the Czech Presidency will also focus on respecting and strengthening freedoms and European values in both offline and online environments. Levelling the playing field for European and non-European firms, in particular in the field of environmental and climate impacts and respect for human rights, will create the conditions for the further development of trade in open markets. Together with other democratic states, the Presidency will work to ensure that fundamental rights and freedoms are respected in the digital environment and will push for global standards to build on the so-called human-centric approach. In a number of areas related to new technologies such as artificial intelligence, the EU has the opportunity to take advantage of being the 'first mover', which has the possibility to lay down the rules of the global game. The Czech Presidency also wants to contribute to strengthening the transparency of cryptocurrencies and reducing the risk of their misuse.

In the international context, it will implement the European Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, using relevant instruments, including potential sanction mechanisms. It will strengthen capacities to support civil society and independent media, as well as support partner countries' resilience against cyber and hybrid threats.

Programme of the Czech Presidency by EU Council formations





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General Affairs Council (GAC)

CZ PRES will ensure that the GAC plays a key role in the preparation of the European Council meetings, including the preparation of the European Council conclusions. Depending on the developments regarding the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the possible next wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will support the coordination of EU Member States in key areas including mitigating the impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the socio-economic recovery of Europe or the global response to COVID-19. This Council formation will also address the issue of enlargement, discussions on respect for the rule of law and implementation of the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

CZ PRES considers EU enlargement to be a crucial strategic instrument of the European Union for maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in Europe. In light of the Russian aggression and following the granting of candidate status to Ukraine and to Moldova and following the confirmation of the European perspective of Georgia, CZ PRES will support their further EU integration as well as the European perspective of the Eastern Partnership countries. CZ PRES will strive to make tangible progress in the EU enlargement negotiations and support the Western Balkan countries in their integration. The aspirants' progress will be

determined both in the key principles related to the rule of law and sharing of European values, as well as in the adoption of relevant EU sectoral acquis.

CZ PRES will focus on strengthening the EU's resilience to hybrid and cyber threats. It will coordinate Member States' positions, stimulate further discussions on cyber diplomacy, continue discussions on the Joint Cyber Unit and the implementation of the EU Cybersecurity Strategy. In the area of countering hybrid threats, the operationalisation of the EU Hybrid Toolbox will be prioritised, which defines measures for a common response of EU countries to hybrid actions. As regards cybersecurity, CZ PRES will focus on achieving a general approach of the Council to the proposal for the Regulation laying down measures for a high common level of cybersecurity at the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union.

The agenda of increasing the resilience of democracy has become crucially important in the wake of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the deteriorating security in the EU's immediate neighbourhood. Therefore, CZ PRES will support the implementation of the European Democracy Action Plan and work to advance the legislative proposals in the package for protecting

election integrity and promoting democratic participation, as well as in the discussions on EU electoral law reform initiated by the European Parliament. It will also focus on ensuring independence of the media.

CZ PRES will moderate a discussion on the implementation of the rule of law. Using the EC's annual Rule of Law Report, the Presidency is ready to continue discussions on the situation in the EU and in individual Member States, while continuing to maintain the principle of objectivity and equal treatment of all Member States. In the current proceedings under Article 7 of the TEU against Poland and Hungary, CZ PRES will ensure that all parties involved take a constructive approach to the situation.

The Conference on the Future of Europe is a platform for debate with the participation of EU citizens and a wide range of other stakeholders, which resulted on 9 May 2022 in the publication of 49 proposals and a series of actions setting out the possible direction of the Union's future. CZ PRES is aware of the importance of this Conference and, following its conclusion during the FR PRES, it will continue the discussion in the Council of the EU on the implementation of its results, in full compliance with the division of

competences of the EU institutions, as well as in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

During the CZ PRES, the GAC will continue to focus on the relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom (UK), which remains an important partner of the EU in trade, foreign and security relations.

COHESION

The cohesion format allows for a formal debate on cohesion policy at ministerial level. CZ PRES wants to focus on a formal political discussion regarding the role of cohesion policy after 2027 with a view to adopting Council conclusions. Given current developments (the impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine), the European Commission has presented a legislative proposal to help Member States deal with the impact of the crisis at hand. Its negotiations will take place during the CZ PRES.

Cohesion policy is key to strengthening the EU's economic and social convergence. To this end, CZ PRES will lead political discussions at various levels, which will culminate in the adoption of Council conclusions on cohesion policy. The intention will be to highlight the opportunities brought by this policy in terms of recovery and

resilience building in the context of the crisis triggered by the Russian aggression in Ukraine or the COVID-19 pandemic, and its contribution to, among others, the Union's objectives in digitisation and just transition. It is essential to maintain continuity and support for all regions while emphasising best practices. It is the only policy that focuses on regions and promotes their convergence. It is also a major source of funds to boost two major European transitions – digital and green.

While the main objective of the CZ PRES is the political discussion on the

cohesion policy after 2027, due to the planned legislation and based on a call from the European Commission Member states, it will be necessary to focus on its discussion to the mobilization of EU funds to address the impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine on the economies of the most affected Member States, including through amendments to existing legislation. The European Commission responded to this call and at the end of June proposed changes to the Regulations for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027. During the CZ PRES, negotiations on these legislative proposals will take place.



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Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

CZ PRES will promote a united and effective Union in external relations and actively contribute to reaching consensus among Member States. One of the key priorities will be to further deepen the transatlantic link in order to improve strategic unity. CZ PRES will also seek to improve relations with countries sharing common values in order to address systemic challenges in external relations. Geographically, CZ PRES will focus on the EU's relations with Eastern Europe, with an emphasis on Ukraine, the Western Balkans, the Indo-Pacific and the Sahel. CZ PRES will strive for maximum coordination of the EU's activities in external relations, especially those of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service and the Commission.

In the wake of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, CZ PRES will support the EU's efforts to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. CZ PRES will support further EU integration of Ukraine in connection with the granted candidate status to. It will also support the continued immediate EU humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, as well as stabilisation and longer-term reconstruction efforts. CZ PRES will support the further use of EU

instruments for arms supplies to Ukraine. CZ PRES will initiate a new reflection on the EU's policy towards the Eastern Partnership and support the interests of the "Associated Trio" (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) with the aim of deepening their integration with the Union. CZ PRES will also pay attention to Russia, including ensuring the application and enforcement of the sanction regimes and their further extension, and ensuring accountability for crimes against international law committed during the war in Ukraine. CZ PRES will contribute to setting a new EU strategy towards Russia.

CZ PRES will support political dialogue between the EU and the Western Balkans and it will focus on the impact of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine on the region. Special attention will be paid to developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. CZ PRES will continue to focus on the development of the EU's relations with the countries of the European Economic Area (EFTA), as well as the future adjustments of the EU's relations with Switzerland and the negotiation of the Association Agreement with Andorra, Monaco and San Marino.

CZ PRES will strive to deepen transatlantic ties and promote cooperation between the EU and the USA on

foreign policy. It will address defence and security issues, including energy security and the fight against terrorism, as well as economic issues, in particular the cooperation in the EU-US Trade and Technology Council. In this context, CZ PRES will also seek to organise

a high-level EU-US meeting. CZ PRES will also support the deepening of the EU-Canada strategic partnership and the effective use of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Cooperation with Asian countries (with emphasis on the EU-ASEAN format) and the Indo-Pacific region as a whole will be important for CZ PRES, especially in the context of the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. In its implementation, CZ PRES will focus not only on economic cooperation, but also on security and political cooperation and on specific activities in the Indo-Pacific. Emphasis will also be placed on practical cooperation under the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy. CZ PRES will build on the High-Level Dialogue on the Indo-Pacific organised in Prague in June 2022. It will also be involved in the preparation of the EU-ASEAN Summit to be held in Brussels in December.

CZ PRES will continue to support the Union's comprehensive efforts to stabilise the Sahel within the

implementation of the European Strategy for the Sahel. It will also address issues arising from the European Union – African Union Summit held in February 2022. CZ PRES will continue the process of finalising the Post-Cotonou negotiations with countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In Latin America and the Caribbean, it will work to develop reciprocal trade, protect human rights and strengthen democracy and the rule of law.

CZ PRES will support the practical implementation of the Global EU Connectivity Strategy, which aims to raise the Union's profile and strengthen its role as a global player.

CZ PRES will strive to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy in the context of the implementation of the Strategic Compass and it will promote effective multilateralism based on respect for international law and rules. The priority of CZ PRES will be to strengthen resilience as a fundamental concept of the EU's approach to external and internal threats, in particular resilience against disinformation and strategic communication at the Union level. In this context, CZ PRES will strive to actively embrace the geopolitics of new technology. The external aspects of the fight against terrorism will be another important topic, with an

emphasis on the current challenges arising from the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the implementation of the Strategic Compass and the Council Conclusions on the external dimension of the fight against terrorism.

CZ PRES will focus on the external aspects of EU energy security, in particular the identification of alternative sources and suppliers to replace Russia. CZ PRES will also support green diplomacy and EU cooperation with third countries on cross-cutting climate and environmental issues, including preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), as part of the ecological transition. The external dimension of the EU migration policy is also gaining importance in the context of the current refugee crisis. CZ PRES will focus on building mutually beneficial partnerships with third countries of origin and transit. CZ PRES will focus on managing the impact of the refugees from Ukraine on the EU's external relations and on protecting those most vulnerable, especially children.

CZ PRES will focus on the implementation of existing instruments for the promotion of human rights and democracy and the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

In the context of the response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the ongoing COVID-19 effects, CZ PRES will promote the linking of humanitarian, development and security activities within the framework of humanitarian and development cooperation, especially in connection with resilience building, disaster risk reduction and improving food security.

CZ PRES will support the continuation of EU humanitarian and stabilisation assistance to Ukraine. It is ready to support the elaboration of the presented proposals for the reconstruction of Ukraine (Rebuild Ukraine tool and platform), initiate the preparation of a comprehensive reconstruction and resilience programme with a regional overlap and organise a related reconstruction conference. Mobilising resources from EU instruments, other major donors and the private sector will be crucial in designing comprehensive support for the reconstruction of Ukraine. In response to the reform of the European development financial architecture, CZ PRES will promote private sector involvement, emphasise blended finance and guarantees and seek to effectively involve national de-

development banks in EU financial instruments.

The Council agenda will also include the steps necessary to implement the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe), in particular to improve the interaction between the European institutions and Member States and implementing partners in line with the “working better together” commitment. CZ PRES will support the implementation of the “Team Europe” initiatives, including their interconnection with geopolitical initiatives such as the Global Gateway Strategy, the outcomes of the European Union–African Union Summit, and measures supporting Ukraine.

CZ PRES will aim its thematic focus on disaster risk reduction and resilience building (DRR), particularly in the context of climate change, the COVID-19 response and global food security. It will seek greater coherence between the Union’s humanitarian, development and stabilisation activities, with an emphasis on stability, prosperity, health and education, including awareness raising and digital literacy. The development will also focus on the supply of drinking water and the protection of water resources, the development of waste management and the overall sustainable use of

natural resources. In the context of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, CZ PRES will strive to implement DRR and resilience also into the area of conflict and its impact on food security, energy resilience and capacity building in the area of cybersecurity in partner countries.

In the humanitarian field, it will implement the priorities contained in the EC Communication on the EU’s humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles of March 2021. CZ PRES will strive for full involvement of Member States in implementation, within the concept of better cooperation between the EU and Member States, financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders, while respecting the principles of inclusiveness and transparency.

Good governance and democratic institutions are a traditional priority of the Czech Republic even outside the CZ PRES. CZ PRES is committed to promoting this topic as a cross-cutting issue.

COMMON COMMERCIAL POLICY

In commercial policy, CZ PRES will support cooperation with like-minded third countries in the framework of free trade agreements, in line with its

long-standing priorities. It is important for spreading European values around the world, as well as for securing the necessary raw materials and products for the European market to strengthen the open strategic autonomy and resilience of the EU economy. CZ PRES will focus on WTO reform, deepening EU-US relations and on trade and security issues such as foreign investment, particularly in the context of Russia's aggression in Ukraine and China's ambitions.

Efforts to diversify trade flows through trade agreements are based on the EU's long-term interests as well as on current efforts to strengthen the resilience of the EU economy, to secure the supply of strategic raw materials and products and to support its post-pandemic recovery. CZ PRES will strive to advance the negotiations, or even achieve finalisation and ratification, of EU agreements with third countries, particularly in Latin America and the Indo-Pacific. Finding a consensus among Member States on the EC Communication on trade and sustainable development, which CZ PRES wants to facilitate, could contribute to the negotiation or conclusion of these agreements. Facilitation of digital trade, both bilaterally and in the WTO, is another important sectoral priority of CZ PRES.

A functioning rules-based multilateral trading system is the basis for international trade. Therefore, priorities of CZ PRES include WTO reform, i.e. the implementation of the conclusions of the June 2022 Ministerial Conference.

Strengthening strategic partnerships with like-minded countries is a crucial topic for CZ PRES. The development of transatlantic relations, currently institutionalised mainly in the EU-US Trade and Technology Council, will be a key priority. Transatlantic cooperation will remain crucial in the future, among other things, in terms of finding a response to China's non-market and trade-restrictive activities and the de facto suspension of trade relations with the Russian Federation following Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

In terms of trade legislation, CZ PRES will strive to negotiate the position of the Council and possible launch of a trilogue on the revision of the GSP regulation, which aims to eliminate or reduce tariffs for selected developing countries. It will also be possible to launch a trilogue on the Regulation on protection against economic coercion, which is intended to discourage third countries from influencing the decision making of the EU and its Member States by restricting mutual trade and investment. Furthermore, CZ PRES will focus on reforming the

investment dispute resolution system with the aim of establishing the Multilateral Investment Court.

DEFENCE

The priorities of CZ PRES in the area of defence will be the support for Ukraine, strengthening EU-NATO cooperation and implementing the key themes of the Strategic Compass as an outcome of the strategic discussion on the future direction of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). These priorities will be translated into specific thematic areas to improve the EU's ability to actively participate on the world stage, to strengthen European defence cooperation and to develop the capabilities to counter hybrid action.

In the area of defence, CZ PRES will support the implementation of the key themes of the Strategic Compass. In the area of crisis management, the main focus will be on strengthening the EU's ability to actively participate on the world stage, which requires, inter alia, developing rapid response capabilities and streamlining CSDP missions and operations. CZ PRES will also pay attention to the possibilities of developing instruments essential for the support the Union is providing to Ukraine in countering the Russian aggression. These include in particular assistance measures under the

European Peace Facility (EPF) and Military Mobility. In the context of the issue of military mobility, CZ PRES will focus on the unification of national procedures within the EU for the movement of troops across Member States' territory and the further development of cooperation between the EU and NATO in this area.

CZ PRES considers the development of capabilities and the strengthening of European defence capacities to be a crucial task for improving EU security in the context of growing global instability and the impact of Russian aggression against Ukraine. One of the priorities will be to promote cooperation with NATO so that there is no fragmentation of efforts or duplication of processes in defence planning, but rather greater coherence between the initiatives of individual organisations. CZ PRES will also look to achieve more effective and coherent prioritisation of capability development (CDP), identify opportunities for multinational cooperation (CARD) and support for their implementation (PESCO, EDF). CZ PRES will focus on the effective implementation of the EDF and the development of joint defence research and development to support an innovative and competitive defence industrial base, as well as to reduce technological dependence.

Under the resilience pillar, CZ PRES will focus on the topics of hybrid and cyber threats, space and new technologies. CZ PRES will support the work on a strategy for the security and defence aspects of the use of space.

In terms of partnerships, particular attention will be paid to improving cooperation, particularly with the aforementioned NATO, but also with other traditional EU partners. At the same time, CZ PRES will expand partnerships with other actors, including deepening cooperation on the ground.

In the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the European

Commission has analysed the gaps in defence investment and proposed further initiatives necessary to strengthen Europe's technological and industrial base. The conclusions of the European Council in May 2022 set out the tasks for the way forward, which CZ PRES will be involved in implementing. Its main focus will be on the preparation of a Regulation on a short-term instrument to support the European defence industry through joint procurement, as well as the launch of preparatory work for a Regulation establishing a joint European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP).



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Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

The activities of CZ PRES in the ECOFIN Council will be influenced by many factors, above all the record price increases of the last few decades, the consequences of Russia's aggression in Ukraine and the lingering effects of the pandemic, which are reflected in the unstable economic situation around the world and in the EU. Ongoing debates on measures to support climate and digital transformation will also influence the setting of priorities. Therefore, the ECOFIN, under the leadership of CZ PRES, will lead discussions on economic policy coordination, including the implementation of the instruments adopted to support recovery and resilience and their financing. It will also address both immediate measures to respond to the economic impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the establishment of a long-term framework for the economic recovery of Ukraine. This will be carried out in interaction with the ECOFIN's long-term priority projects on economic governance, banking union, capital markets union and implementation of the OECD Global Tax Agreement. One of the main tasks of CZ PRES will also be to negotiate the EU budget for 2023.

In the area of EU economic policy and recovery, CZ PRES will manage the implementation of the Recovery and

Resilience Facility (RRF), including the negotiation and approval of the remaining draft Council Implementing Decisions (CID) and the update of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRP) in response to the determination of their final allocation and taking into account the REPowerEU initiative. The proposal for a Regulation introducing targeted changes to the RRF Regulation and other Regulations in the context of REPowerEU will also be discussed. The aim of CZ PRES is the rapid conclusion of agreement within the Council and opening trilogues with the European Parliament with the aim of approving the proposal as soon as possible.

In the context of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, CZ PRES will address issues related to the implementation of short-term financial assistance as well as the setting up of a framework for the reconstruction of Ukraine. CZ PRES will also make efforts to quickly establish the Ukraine Reconstruction Facility. The debate on the correct setting of fiscal policies in the medium and long term horizon, including a possible reform of fiscal rules, will be an important priority for CZ PRES. CZ PRES will also focus on the preparation of the European Semester for 2023.

In the area of financial services, CZ PRES will support the stability of the

financial markets at the national and European level. The key task in the banking sector will be the Basel III (CRD VI/CRR III), where CZ PRES will strive to achieve a common approach in the Council. In the capital market area, CZ PRES will support its development and work to advance the revision of the rules for the financial instruments market in MiFIR, which should contribute to better functioning of capital markets, and advance in negotiations on the creation of the Single EU Access Point for Company Information (ESAP), which establishes access to publicly available information on companies and investment products. In the trilogues, CZ PRES will lead negotiations on the proposal for an EU Green Bond Standard (EUGBS), the revision of the European Long-Term Investment Funds Regulation (ELTIF) or the revision of the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD), with the aim of reaching a political agreement in the first two cases. In the insurance sector, CZ PRES will follow up on the progress made by the French Presidency in the negotiations on the Insurance Recovery and Resolution Directive (IRRD).

In the area of anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), CZ PRES will actively support the creation of more effective

and comprehensible rules and institutional settings as part of its work on the current legislative package.

In the area of taxation, CZ PRES will generally strive to simplify the tax system, combat tax evasion and reduce the number of unjustified tax exemptions. In the case of indirect taxes, CZ PRES sees the intensive work on the amendment to the Directive on the taxation of energy products and electricity as key. In the area of direct taxes, CZ PRES intends to address the current legislative proposals, including in relation to the global agreements resulting from the OECD/G20 in response to the challenges in the area of international taxation of multinational corporations related to the digitisation and globalisation of the economy or in the area of strengthening tax transparency. Updating the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions will also be a priority.

CZ PRES will also continue negotiating the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) where it will first try to agree in the Council on the remaining open issues and then will lead negotiations in trilogues and reach a political agreement that reflects the emphasis on compatibility with rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The key task of CZ PRES will be to reach an agreement on the EU budget for 2023 and to negotiate an acceptable compromise between the Council and the European Parliament. The ECOFIN will also discuss the possibilities of introducing new EU own resources from 1 January 2023. CZ PRES will discuss both EC proposals for the revision of the Financial Regulation (the area of fines and the revised text of the whole Regulation) and the continued discussion on financial support to Ukraine.

Last but not least, CZ PRES will pay attention to the protection of invest-

ments of investors from Member States on the EU market. Furthermore, CZ PRES will represent the EU at selected international forums, such as the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the regular meetings of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors.

In the customs area, a proposal for the reform of the Customs Union will be presented during CZ PRES in the form of a legislative package of changes based on the interim evaluation of the implementation of the Union Customs Code.



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Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)

JUSTICE

In the area of justice, CZ PRES will focus in particular on the EU's common approach to judicial cooperation and other aspects of criminal matters in response to the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, including the investigation of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity and the freezing, seizure and possible further disposition of assets of persons on the EU sanctions list. In the area of criminal law, CZ PRES will also focus on the revision of the Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law. In the area of civil law, the priority is to increase the protection of vulnerable people across the EU, both children and vulnerable adults. The discussion of regulations within the Digital Justice Cooperation package will be an important agenda for CZ PRES. CZ PRES will also continue to fully support the process of negotiating the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights

After the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, a number of activities and steps have been initiated so far by the EU and its Member States in response to this move by the Russian Federation and Belarus, which has provided support to the Russian

Federation. Much attention is paid to the need for the most effective cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, whose Prosecutor launched an investigation into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity immediately after the Russian Federation launched its military aggression against Ukraine. Eurojust plays an important role in the cooperation between the ICC and the Member States, which covered the creation of a joint investigation team to coordinate national investigations, including the securing and sharing of evidence. At the same time, an amendment to the Eurojust Regulation was tabled, fast-tracked and adopted, which will create a legal basis for the preservation, analysis and storage of evidence related to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes by the Eurojust. The Freeze and Seize Task Force has been established to coordinate the actions of EU Member States in freezing, seizing and potentially further disposing of assets of persons on the EU sanctions list. CZ PRES is ready to further coordinate and link the individual activities and steps taking place in the area of judicial cooperation and other judicial aspects in criminal matters. In this context, CZ PRES will take steps towards the formal adoption of the proposal for a Council decision on the

extension of the list of “euro crimes” referred to in Article 83(1) TFEU to include violations of EU restrictive measures, and will also discuss the proposal for a Directive on asset recovery and confiscation.

CZ PRES considers protection of the environment through criminal law to be one of its priorities in the JHA. CZ PRES perceives the irreplaceable importance of criminal law for its protection against the consequences of the most serious illegal acts that threaten or damage the environment. Following the adoption of a partial general approach at the end of the FR PRES on the articles of the proposal which provide for criminal offenses (Articles 2-4), the CZ PRES will continue negotiations with a view to reaching a general approach on the whole regulation at the December JHA Council prepared for a trilogue with the EP

CZ PRES will continue to negotiate a package of regulations to simplify the acquisition of electronic evidence

The issue of digitisation of cross-border judicial cooperation is also crucial for CZ PRES. Therefore, it will continue to negotiate a package of four proposals, which includes a proposal for a Horizontal Regulation on the digitisation of cross-border

judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, which should, for example, allow parties to communicate with foreign courts electronically or to electronically transmit cross-border requests, documents and data, and a proposal for a Directive to regulate the existing instruments of cross-border judicial cooperation. The package also includes a proposal for a Regulation amending the Eurojust Regulation and the Council Decision on the exchange of information and cooperation concerning terrorist offences and a proposal for a Regulation establishing a collaboration platform to support joint investigation teams. CZ PRES will conduct trilogues with the European Parliament on the two latter proposals. CZ PRES will negotiate horizontal proposals on the digitisation of justice at Council level and it will work towards a common approach.

Following the recent presentation of the Directive on protection against strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP), which aims to protect journalists and human rights defenders from harassment lawsuits, CZ PRES will continue negotiations and plans to achieve either a partial common approach or to organise a debate on selected aspects of the proposal.

The issue of the protection of vulnerable adults in the EU builds on the 2000 Hague Convention, which covers the protection of adults in international situations who, by reason of an impairment or insufficiency of their personal faculties, are not in a position to protect their interests. CZ PRES will support a thorough discussion at the EU level on a possible new instrument regulating cooperation between the Member States in this area. CZ PRES will launch discussion into a proposal on cross-border family situations and recognition of parenthood between EU Member States at the level of a Council working group.

The years-long discussions on the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) are now at an important crossroad, and it is possible that they will be finalised during CZ PRES. CZ PRES will strive to further progress the negotiations and it will also continue to work on the internal rules governing relations between Member States and EU institutions in the context of accession to the ECHR. It will also discuss current fundamental rights issues such as changes in the functioning of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights or the findings of the annual EC reports on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

HOME AFFAIRS

Key topics in the area of home affairs will include reflecting the security and migration implications of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and addressing potential new security risks. In view of the impact of these developments on the external dimension, CZ PRES will focus primarily on cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans. Furthermore, CZ PRES will continue to discuss key proposals in the area of home affairs. One of the priority topics in this area will be to make the fight against child sexual abuse more effective. CZ PRES will also continue its activities aimed at ensuring the proper and secure functioning of the Schengen area; it will also convene the Schengen Council. CZ PRES will also address the issue of the enlargement of the Schengen area to include Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. Migration will be one of the priority areas, where CZ PRES will emphasise cooperation with relevant third countries along all migration routes at key points of interest and build on the work put towards the overall reform of the EU system. The priority in the area of drug policy will be the revision of the Regulation on the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

CZ PRES will reflect the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on the EU's internal security and identify specific medium-term shared security needs of EU members. Developments in Ukraine also have a major impact on cooperation with third countries. Therefore, CZ PRES will focus primarily on the Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans, but also on other third countries affected by the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

In the area of home affairs, CZ PRES will also continue to discuss key legislative proposals and initiatives. In view of the increasingly complex and dynamically evolving threats, CZ PRES will focus on further strengthening internal security by improving operational cooperation between law enforcement agencies, in the context of the EC Communication on the Security Union Strategy and the Council Conclusions on Internal Security and the European Police Partnership adopted in December 2020. One of the key topics will be to make the fight against child sexual abuse and the protection of children on the Internet more effective; in this area, CZ PRES will aim to make as much progress as possible in the discussion of the new legislative proposal of the European Commission. CZ PRES will also continue discussing proposals under

the European Police Cooperation Code in the trilogue phase.

The development of cooperation in the fight against serious and organised crime will be another important topic. CZ PRES will continue to implement the EU Strategy for the fight against organised crime for the period 2021–2025 and the objectives of EMPACT 2022+. It will promote deeper integration of customs authorities into these activities. CZ PRES will also support the implementation of the tasks arising from the EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2021–2025 and the Joint Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, which aims to ensure an adequate EU response to reduce the risk of trafficking in human beings concerning potential victims from Ukraine.

CZ PRES will also focus on the implementation of the tasks arising from the Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU and the exchange of first practical experiences with the application of the Regulation on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has brought new security challenges in this area. Attention will also be paid to the impact of the current situation in Afghanistan on the internal dimension of the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

Furthermore, attention will be paid to civil protection and the protection of critical infrastructure, where CZ PRES will strive to finalise the discussions of the Directive on the resilience of critical entities. In the area of crisis management, CZ PRES will also take over the full triple activation of the IPCR mechanism (migration crisis, COVID-19, Russian aggression in Ukraine). In the event of a sudden crisis, CZ PRES will be ready to activate this instrument immediately.

The Schengen reform will be another key area. CZ PRES will focus primarily on the introduction of interoperability of information systems in the area of justice and home affairs, in particular the operationalisation of the modernised Schengen Information System. CZ PRES will also focus on the implementation of the Strategy towards a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area, in particular by reviewing the rules for the reintroduction of internal border controls and streamlining the management of external borders. The enlargement of the Schengen area to include Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania may be another topic for consideration. In the area of visas, CZ PRES will deal primarily with the discussion of the legislative proposal for the digitisation of the visa process.

The issue of migration, which has been given a new dimension by the Russian aggression in Ukraine, will also be among the priorities of CZ PRES. Particular attention will be paid to the external dimension and cooperation with key countries along the main migration routes, including through the further development of the mechanism for the operational coordination of the external dimension of migration (MOCADDEM) or the implementation of action plans for cooperation with key third countries, focusing on key areas of interest, in particular returns and the prevention of illegal migration. Building on its presidency of the EU Council in 2009, CZ PRES will organise a Prague Process Ministerial Conference in October 2022 with the participation of the Western Balkans, countries from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Turkey, which will aim to confirm and strengthen the commitments of the countries in all areas of cooperation.

CZ PRES will also continue discussions on the future shape of the internal dimension of migration and asylum policy. In line with the gradualist approach initiated by FR PRES, it will continue to discuss selected legislative proposals and initiatives put forward in the framework of earlier efforts to reform asylum and migration policy and then in the framework of the new

EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. In view of their interdependence, CZ PRES will promote the overall integration of the proposals towards an efficient, sustainable and fair system based on consensus. In this context, it will also do its utmost to take into account the impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Addressing the instrumentalisation of migration in response to the unacceptable actions of Belarus and the possible repetition of this scenario will be another important topic. Attention will also be paid to the situation in Afghanistan and its possible impact on migration and asylum.

In the field of drugs policy, CZ PRES will strive to make as much progress as possible in the negotiations with the European Parliament on the revision of the Regulation on the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. CZ PRES will also focus on drug trafficking in the virtual environment, new trends related to metham-

phetamine in Europe and the management of synthetic opioids. One of the objectives of CZ PRES will be the adoption of Council conclusions or Presidency conclusions on the rationalisation of drugs policies and their harmonisation with human rights. CZ PRES will also aim to further strengthen the EU's cooperation with external partners in the field of drugs policy, through meetings of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and other international organisations, or through dialogues with third countries.

CZ PRES will continue the general development of external relations in the area of justice and home affairs, especially in the framework of cooperation with the USA, the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries. Traditional meetings with the USA and Western Balkans will be held during CZ PRES. A ministerial meeting with Ukraine and Moldova is planned on the occasion of the informal meeting of the Ministers of the Interior and Justice.



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Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)

CZ PRES will give priority to the impacts of Russian aggression against Ukraine on food security in the context of the situation on commodity markets. CZ PRES will strive to further enhance sustainability in agriculture, especially in the field of livestock farming, fisheries, food systems, forest management, agricultural and food supply and biodiversity conservation. The AGRIFISH agenda can be divided into five main areas: rules for sustainable agricultural and food production, the common fisheries policy and fishing quotas, nature and soil protection, veterinary issues and trade issues. The AGRIFISH agenda will also be influenced by the discussion of the European Commission's initiatives under the Green Deal for Europe.

CZ PRES will address the gradual transition to a climate-neutral and sustainable economy with minimal negative environmental impacts, while maintaining the competitiveness of European agriculture, food production, forestry, fisheries, with an emphasis on food security. CZ PRES will strive to ensure that the specificities of individual EU Member States are adequately taken into account.

As part of environmental protection, CZ PRES will support steps leading to sustainable agricultural and food production in the EU and in the world, and specific procedures for the

production of a sufficient amount of quality and safe food. One of the key elements for achieving these goals will be the discussion of the draft Regulation on the sustainable use of pesticides.

CZ PRES will also monitor and, where appropriate, discuss progress in the implementation of the New EU Forest Strategy 2030 in order to balance the social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable forest management and the respect for principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. In global forums, CZ PRES wants to contribute to the protection of the world's forests and the building of sustainable consumption chains unencumbered by deforestation and forest degradation. In this context, CZ PRES will follow up on the adopted general approach on the legislative proposal on deforestation and start trilogues with the European Parliament.

Reaching political agreements will be the main objective in the development and revision of EU and international agreements on the fixing of fishing opportunities in EU and third country waters. CZ PRES will emphasise the increasing role of both marine and, above all, freshwater aquaculture products as a full-fledged substitute for marine fisheries products; therefore, it will seek the adoption of Council conclusions on strategic

principles for a more sustainable and competitive aquaculture.

Following the expected EC proposals in the area of labelling of foodstuffs, CZ PRES plans to focus on the labelling of ingredients in alcoholic beverages, harmonisation of the rules for the new labelling of nutritional information on the front of food packaging, revision of the labelling of durability and expiry dates, extension of country of origin labelling and the establishment of nutritional profiles, and to lead the discussion on scientific consultations in this area. CZ PRES will also launch a discussion on the revision of the European Union promotion policy for agricultural products inside and outside the EU. As part of rural development and the empowerment of producers in the food chain, CZ PRES will strive to achieve a common approach to the revision of the rules for the geographical indications for agricultural products. In the field of animal health, attention will be paid to the prevention of

dangerous animal diseases, ways to minimise the risk of their spread, the exchange of information between Member States and a common EU approach towards third countries. In the area of animal welfare, CZ PRES will respond to current developments in connection with the announced extensive revision of existing EU legislation, while also addressing current topics. At the same time, it will support the EC's efforts to ban battery caged hens in the EU by 2030. To reduce the impact of livestock farming on the environment, CZ PRES will discuss the revision of the regulation on additives used in animal nutrition. In addition, it will further support initiatives for the sustainable use of antimicrobials and combating antimicrobial resistance in veterinary medicine. In the event that the European Commission publishes a framework on carbon farming and sustainable carbon cycles, CZ PRES plans to launch a discussion on this key topic for the coming period.



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Competitiveness Council (COMPET)

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

The impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the long-term non-market practices of China and other systemic rivals are damaging EU value chains and exposing long-term vulnerabilities in the EU economy. Therefore, in the COMPET, CZ PRES will focus on strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of the European economy with an emphasis on securing strategic raw materials, parts and products for European companies and customers. Improving the functioning of the single market and removing barriers to business will play a traditionally important role for CZ PRES. CZ PRES will also focus on consumer protection legislation.

In the area of EU industrial policy, the Czech Republic will focus on strengthening open strategic autonomy and increasing the competitiveness of the European economy. As one of the most industrialised economies in the EU, the Czech Republic will emphasise the resilience of EU industry and its supply chains as a key component of the strategic resilience of the European economy. A key legislative proposal in this area is the Chips Act, which aims to achieve supply stability in the semiconductor sector. The

intention is to adopt a general approach on the Act. The implementation of the new European Industrial Strategy and the mapping of strategic dependencies, including in the areas of microelectronics, raw materials, healthcare and artificial intelligence, will continue to be a topical issue during CZ PRES.

In the single market, the Czech Republic considers it crucial to implement measures based on the EC Communication on better implementation of single market rules. In particular, the functioning of the free movement of services needs to be improved. CZ PRES will focus on the work of the EC's Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET). In terms of single market legislation, CZ PRES will start negotiations on the expected Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI) and it will try to proceed the negotiations as far as possible. CZ PRES will also start discussion of the Ecodesign Regulation.

As regards technical harmonisation, CZ PRES will also try to move forward with all the legislative proposals submitted and expected, i.e. proposals concerning construction products and, in the field of motor vehicles, it applies to the non-road mobile machinery. Furthermore, CZ PRES will focus on proposals that FR PRES will manage to

conclude in time, with the aim of reaching a political agreement. These include proposals on machinery and the revision of the European Standardisation Regulation.

In the area of company law, CZ PRES will try to achieve a common approach for the initiative on sustainable corporate governance, where the priority will be to strike a balance between achieving the intended objectives and the administrative burden on businesses. CZ PRES will also look into the proposal to revise the Non-Financial Reporting Directive with a view to reaching a political agreement.

In the area of competition, negotiations on the Regulation to address distortions caused by foreign subsidies in the Single Market can be expected to continue in the trilogues during CZ PRES. CZ PRES will also focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises during its Presidency. It will pay particular attention to developing activities to overcome the challenges SMEs are currently facing in the context of post-pandemic recovery, high inflation, rising energy prices and supply chain challenges.

In the area of consumer protection, CZ PRES will make it a priority to make maximum progress in the discussion

of the proposals for a Regulation on General Product Safety and a Consumer Credit Directive, where it will try to reach a political agreement with the European Parliament. In the case of revisions of Directives that should increase consumer protection in the context of the green transition, the goal of CZ PRES will be to achieve a general approach. CZ PRES will also look into other possible legislative proposals that the EC will put forward later this year.

In terms of intellectual property legislation, CZ PRES will focus on the modernisation of the system of protection of industrial designs in the EU with the aim of taking the discussion as far as possible and introducing protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products, where CZ PRES has the ambition to achieve a common approach.

In terms of tourism, CZ PRES will focus on preparing a long-term strategy for the sector with a focus on its sustainable development and post-pandemic recovery. Crucial issue in this context will be the preparation of the European Agenda for Tourism 2030, building on the progress made by FR PRES and in particular the launch of the discussion on the Regulation on short-term rentals.

One of the priorities of CZ PRES will be better regulation, which will contribute to improving the business environment in the EU and attracting private investors, something the EU has long sought to do. CZ PRES will focus on meeting its long-term objectives, which are to focus on reducing the regulatory burden and improving the quality of impact assessments and retrospective reviews of regulation.

SPACE

CZ PRES will focus on space and space activities at a time when the space sector is undergoing a significant transformation, which is based on the extensive entry of the private sector and the rapid increase in the application of space activities in various economic sectors. In response to this trend, the EU has established the EU Space Programme and a new EU Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) based in Prague. The primary focus of CZ PRES is on the creation of a Union programme for secure connectivity, which is a key part of the Space Package.

CZ PRES will follow these trends and respond to the current developments in the sector. The main legislative proposal discussed during CZ PRES will be the proposal for a Regulation on the creation of a Union programme for secure connectivity, the aim of which is

to create a system of hundreds of telecommunications satellites, mainly in low orbits. The draft regulation was issued as part of the Space Package of February 2022, together with the EC Communication on Space Traffic Management, with CZ PRES likely to lead the negotiations with the EP.

As part of its Presidency, the Czech Republic will also focus support area for the use of data from EU satellite systems in practice, which could serve as a topic for the Council conclusions or a ministerial political discussion at the COMPET.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

CZ PRES will emphasise the contribution of research and development in improving the preparedness and strengthening the resilience of European society to socio-economic crises and the related role of research infrastructures as a central component of the European research and innovation ecosystem and part of the Union's critical infrastructure. In this context, CZ PRES will also seek to highlight the role of research infrastructures in the implementation of the European Open Science Policy and the open access to scientific facilities, data and research results. The formation of the Research Council will also address the topic of

synergies in research and innovation, especially synergistic and cumulative funding of projects from EU, national or regional sources.

In the field of research, CZ PRES will focus on the role of research infrastructures as a facilitator of unique data collections, cutting-edge knowledge and advanced technologies, thus creating the knowledge base for finding solutions to major societal challenges and long-term sustainable economic growth in the EU. CZ PRES intends to highlight that research infrastructures are also a tool for improving the preparedness or resilience of European society to socio-economic crises. The ambition of CZ PRES is also to emphasise the key role of research infrastructures in the implementation of the European Open Science Policy and the accessibility of scientific facilities, data and research results. In the area of research infrastructures, CZ PRES will make it a priority to adopt Council conclusions calling on EU Member States to prioritise investment in research infrastructures as part of their public spending on research and innovation.

CZ PRES will focus on the topic of synergies in research and innovation funding in Europe, specifically on synergistic and cumulative funding of projects from EU, national, regional and private sources, which constitute

a significant share of investment in research. CZ PRES will prepare Council conclusions on synergies, reflecting the European Court of Auditors' report, which will focus on the implementation of synergies between Horizon 2020 and other instruments, including the European Structural and Investment Funds. CZ PRES will also facilitate a debate on the Prague Declaration, which will be the outcome of the Presidency Conference on this topic.

CZ PRES will support the discussion on the instrument of a widening of the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, whose main objective is to support Member States with lower results in the field of research and innovation, which include the Czech Republic. The European Court of Auditors will issue a report on whether this instrument has helped reduce the innovation gap between Member States. CZ PRES will also prepare draft conclusions on this topic.

CZ PRES will support the discussion and negotiation of the EC Communication on innovation, which is expected to be published in July 2022 and will focus on access to finance and support for business growth, framework conditions including legislation, better connecting European innovation ecosystems, innovation performance across the EU,

including reducing the innovation gap, and identifying and supporting entrepreneurial talent.

CZ PRES will strive to make progress in the negotiations on the proposal to modify the Single European Act in

partnership under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme, which envisages the reorientation of the current joint undertaking in the field of semiconductors and the creation of the Chips JU (Joint Undertaking).



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Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)

TRANSPORT

In TTE, CZ PRES will focus on the current challenges in the transport sector, which are primarily the reduction of emissions in all modes of transport and the digitisation of the sector. In this case, the framework is formed by the transport part of the Fit for 55 package, where CZ PRES will specifically focus, among other things, on legislation for the introduction of infrastructure for alternative fuels. In order to complete the single market, CZ PRES will prioritise the development of transport infrastructure, with an emphasis on high-speed railways, led by the revision of the Trans-European Transport Network policy currently under discussion. CZ PRES will also focus on the Single European Sky rules in air transport, improving connectivity in inland waterway transport and promoting smart and safe mobility.

CZ PRES will take over the agreement of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, which was presented during FR PRES. CZ PRES is awaiting trilateral negotiations with the European Parliament and the European Commission with the aim of reaching an agreement and signing at the highest political level.

The first priority of CZ PRES in achieving a general approach is the revision of the Regulation on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). This issue focuses in particular on facilitating transport flows across Member States and promoting territorial, economic and social cohesion. The revision the Regulation represents an opportunity to further develop road, but also rail and water infrastructure, which are necessary for decarbonising transport, and to further connect them to other transport modes.

The proposal on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) is also a top priority of CZ PRES, as it is a key legislation for the development of clean mobility. The revision sets targets for Member States to build public charging and refuelling stations for cars and trucks. The focus is on promoting clean mobility and emission-free fuels to meet climate targets in transport. It also addresses the interoperability of charging and payment systems across the EU and the provision of electricity at airports and ports.

Intelligent Transport Mobility Systems will also be one of the areas that CZ PRES will address as part of the Efficient and Green Mobility package,

by discussing the revision of the Directive on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport. This review aims to assess the availability of infrastructure and traffic/travel data across the EU transport network. It also focuses on connected and autonomous mobility and multimodal ticketing.

Air transport is also an important topic for CZ PRES, both inside and outside the EU. The role of CZ PRES will be to coordinate and present the EU's common position for meetings of the International Civil Aviation Organization (especially the Assembly in autumn 2022). Furthermore, the Presidency will also focus on the trilogues with the European Parliament on the proposal for a Regulation on a level playing field for sustainable aviation (ReFuelEU Aviation) or on the revision of the Single European Sky framework, i.e. the setting up of a European air traffic management system in response to recent developments in the sector, the need for digitisation and the objectives of reducing emissions from air transport.

CZ PRES will also focus on water transport. In maritime transport, the proposal for a Regulation on the use of renewable and low-carbon fuels in

maritime transport (FuelEU Maritime) will be discussed, i.e. the introduction of low-carbon fuels and limits on the greenhouse gas intensity of the energy used on-board by ships. In the field of inland navigation, the Czech Republic will discuss the Council conclusions on NAIADES III. This is a communication on promoting inland waterway transport in Europe, with a particular focus on increasing the share of multimodal transport in inland navigation and its conversion to a zero-emission transport mode and increasing digitisation.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

During CZ PRES, the Telecommunications Council will remain a key player for major initiatives in the digital agenda and digital transition. In the Council discussions, CZ PRES will fully support the development and building of telecommunications resilience and the creation of a long-term sustainable digital ecosystem based on open strategic autonomy and cooperation with third countries (especially through the EU-US Trade and Technology Council and the Indo-Pacific Digital Partnership). CZ PRES will support the development of the digital single market, the building of an innovation ecosystem of artificial intelligence in the EU and the development of new digital

technologies (e.g. blockchain, quantum). This Council formation will also focus on the security of ICT supply chains and strengthening the digitisation of public services, not only because of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. CZ PRES will prepare Council conclusions on supply chain security in the context of cybersecurity.

CZ PRES will take over the agreement of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, which was presented during FR PRES. CZ PRES is awaiting trilateral negotiations with the European Parliament and the European Commission with the aim of reaching an agreement.

CZ PRES will first and foremost support the development of the data economy in the EU; therefore, it will deepen the debate on the relationship between private companies, consumers and the public sector in the area of data holding and sharing (Data Act), including with regard to the free cross-border movement of data between the EU and third countries. The draft regulation aims to set the environment for maximising the economic potential of data. CZ PRES will focus on moving the discussions in the Council towards a common approach.

In the area of digitisation of public services, CZ PRES will aim to reach a consensus among Member States (general

approach) on the introduction of the European Digital Identity, which attempts to fundamentally increase the availability of secure and trustworthy electronic identification through the European Digital Identity Wallet. CZ PRES also foresees the launch of discussions on a legislative proposal to anchor the common management of interoperability of public administrations of EU Member States. This initiative will seek to evaluate the current European Interoperability Framework and assess its support for the creation of interoperable digital public services.

In the discussion on the rules for artificial intelligence systems (AI Act), CZ PRES will seek to find approximation or consensus among EU Member States in the form of a general approach. Finding the appropriate balance between protecting human rights, citizen safety and promoting the competitiveness and innovation of European companies remains key, as does the sensitive issue of assessing the risk of certain AI systems and banning them. Depending on the actual possibilities and the readiness of the European Parliament (EP), CZ PRES could then open negotiations in trilogue and hold an initial meeting with the EP.

In relation to digital education, digital infrastructure, digital entrepreneurship and the digitisation of the public

sector, CZ PRES plans to conclude an agreement on the Digital Goals for 2030 and the establishment of a cooperation mechanism between the Member States and the European Commission for a successful digital transition process (Digital Decade Policy Programme). CZ PRES expects the draft decision to be adopted in the trilogues phase. The DDPP should be the first successfully concluded digital legislative act of CZ PRES. The aim will be to move forward relatively quickly in the negotiations at both political and technical level in order to reach a final agreement of the co-legislators.

In the field of telecommunications, CZ PRES will focus on new proposals and initiatives to support the development and financial sustainability of telecommunications networks. It will initiate a discussion in the Council on the revision of the Directive on measures to reduce the cost of deploying high-speed electronic communications networks (BB cost reduction) and, where appropriate, on the revision of the decision to establish a multiannual Radio Spectrum Policy Programme (RSPP). Last but not least, CZ PRES will be involved in the preparation of the International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference, which will take place during the Presidency, and it will ensure EU coordination during the conference.

In the area of cybersecurity, CZ PRES expects the introduction of a horizontal legislative regulation on the security of ICT products and related services (Cyber Resilience Act). CZ PRES has chosen the topic of supply chain security in the context of cybersecurity as its own and highly topical issue, on which it will prepare Council conclusions. In this area, achieving greater resilience of information networks and systems across the Union, while respecting the exclusive competence of Member States in the field of national security, remains a priority. An important proposal on which CZ PRES will try to achieve a general approach will be the regulation on ensuring a high level of cybersecurity in the institutions, bodies and agencies of the Union.

Last but not least, CZ PRES will support the EC's activities leading to the development of international cooperation between the EU and digitally advanced countries that recognise democratic values and respect human rights. The aim will be to assist the EC in further negotiations within the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) with the US and also the newly announced TTC with India. In addition, CZ PRES will actively promote the conclusion of further agreements within the Indo-Pacific Digital Partnership, namely with South Korea and Singapore, which will

build on the EU-Japan Digital Partnership. These initiatives will strengthen the EU's voice in international forums on digitisation issues and promote Europe's open strategic autonomy.

ENERGY

The energy sector is one of the areas most affected by the Russian aggression in Ukraine. In the face of Russia's unilateral moves to restrict gas supplies, the European Union is committed to strengthening its energy security and ending its dependence on Russian fossil fuel imports by the end of the decade. To this end, the Commission has issued a REPowerEU Action Plan proposing concrete steps to achieve this objective. In addition, the pressure for change in the energy sector is increased by the EU's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The level of ambition in climate policy is reflected in the legislative proposals published by the European Commission under the Fit for 55 package and its complementary REPowerEU plan. In this geopolitical and legislative context, priorities of CZ PRES will include energy security, ensuring stable and accessible energy supplies and cost-effective decarbonisation.

Following its efforts to end import dependence on fossil fuels from Russia,

the European Commission presented the REPowerEU Communication, which was followed by the REPowerEU Action Plan, which aims to increase the EU's energy security as a priority and to ensure diversification of resources ahead of the upcoming winter. The plan aims to achieve this objective through specific projects and their financing. Member States will update their National Recovery Plans based on the REPowerEU Action Plan, which includes proposals to increase ambition in the current legislation under discussion as part of the Fit for 55 package, draft Recommendations to speed up the permitting process for RES projects or draft Recommendations on energy savings. The REPowerEU plan will be one of the key topics of CZ PRES.

In terms of security of energy supply and decarbonisation, CZ PRES will give priority to negotiating legislative proposals in the area of the so-called gas decarbonisation package (Regulation on the internal market in renewable gases, natural gas and hydrogen and Directive on common rules for the internal market in renewable gases, natural gas and hydrogen). CZ PRES aims to achieve a general approach towards these proposals.

Given the commitment to reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports from Russia, CZ PRES will also highlight the role of nuclear energy and low-emis-

sion hydrogen as effective tools for decarbonisation, including in its Presidency events.

Science, research and innovation play an essential role in fulfilling this commitment, not only in terms of basic research but also in the implementation of results into practice.

From the point of view of energy savings and the development of renewable energy sources, the importance of which has increased in the current geopolitical crisis, the key legislative proposals from the Fit for 55 package, namely the Directives on energy efficiency and on the use of energy from renewable sources on which CZ PRES, following the agreed general ap-

proaches, will open negotiations in trilogues. In the case of the directive on the energy performance of buildings, and the Regulation on the reduction of methane emissions in the energy sector, the Czech presidency will aim to achieve general approaches.

The non-legislative priorities of CZ PRES in the energy sector will include the negotiation of the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty, under which the EU aims, among other things, to bring it into line with current trends in international investment law and climate protection ambitions, and the revision of the Energy Community Treaty, where the current objective is to achieve progress in the integration of electricity markets in the region.



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Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

In the Council of the EU, CZ PRES will support the policies and actions of the European Union and its Member States aimed at implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which are aimed at ensuring continued upward convergence, social justice, intergenerational solidarity and cohesion in the EU in the future, as the Union comes to terms on its labour markets and in social protection systems with the impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the related refugee wave into the EU, with rising energy prices associated with the risk of increased energy poverty, with the impact of digital and green transitions and with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rising energy prices linked to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, global economic developments, the transition to a carbon neutral economy and the search for new sources of energy as the EU reduces its energy dependence on the Russian Federation are significantly complicating the social situation of many EU residents and households, especially among the elderly and single parent households. The issue of energy poverty is one of the key challenges of social cohesion in the EU and

CZ PRES wants to contribute to finding effective solutions to this challenge.

Coping with the unprecedented refugee wave resulting from Russia's aggression against Ukraine requires European cooperation and solidarity. CZ PRES will support the swift and effective integration of refugees, especially women and children from war-affected Ukraine, into the labour markets and societies of EU Member States, including ensuring the access of children to pre-school education and childcare services.

The ageing of European society, the introduction of new technologies, the digitisation of industry and services and the transition to a carbon neutral economy will require activating all available human resources, adapting workers and improving their skills to be able to compete on the rapidly changing labour market. CZ PRES will support the implementation of effective tools for the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market, lifelong learning policies and career guidance through quality education and public employment services, the implementation of the Package of Measures for Disability and Labour Market Integration, the Action Plan to Support the Social Economy and the Commission's Recommendations on effective active labour market

measures, including increasing labour market flexibility.

CZ PRES will also strive to ensure quality working conditions and the protection of workers in all types of gainful employment. As part of this effort, CZ PRES will make it a priority to achieve a general approach of the Council on the Directive on working conditions of workers on online platforms and to make progress in the negotiation of the Directive on the protection of workers exposed to asbestos at work.

CZ PRES will underline the EU's commitment to reducing child poverty by 2030, in particular by promoting their access to education at all levels and supporting steps to implement the European Child Guarantee. In this context, CZ PRES is also ready to start discussing the draft Council Recommendation on the revision of the Barcelona targets with a view to its early adoption. CZ PRES will focus on the new EU Care Strategy aimed at reforms to develop accessible, quality and financially sustainable long-term care services and will seek to discuss and approve the Council Recommendation on long-term care. CZ PRES will also focus on ways to support informal care to ensure a dignified life for people dependent on care. CZ PRES will start discussing a proposal for a Council Recommendation on setting minimum

income standards, which it considers to be one of the possible instruments for combating poverty; it will take care to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

CZ PRES will support the development of the EU as a union of equality, taking into account the situation of particularly disadvantaged groups such as the Roma. In line with the Council's 18-month programme and the Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality, gender equality will also be a priority in the EPSCO. Therefore, CZ PRES will continue to discuss the proposal for a Directive on ensuring transparency in the remuneration of men and women and it will launch a discussion on a proposal to strengthen the role and independence of equality bodies, which play a key role in ensuring individuals' rights to equal treatment.

HEALTH

CZ PRES will continue the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in the health section of the EPSCO and it will work to improve the EU's preparedness for further health crises. Moreover, CZ PRES priorities will be significantly affected by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian crisis related to the arrival of large numbers of refugees to the EU. Beyond these current priorities, CZ PRES considers it important to address the EU's long-term priorities in the

field of health, such as oncology, the European Public Health Data Space, pharmaceuticals, rare diseases and vaccination.

One of the priority agendas of CZ PRES in the area of health is cancer, which is also one of the key priorities of the EC, which in February last year published the strategic document Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. In addition, a draft Council Recommendation on cancer screening will be presented during CZ PRES, which CZ PRES will discuss and seek to have approved at the EPSCO in December. CZ PRES will also organise a conference on oncology, the outcomes of which, in the form of a call to action, will be discussed at an informal meeting of Ministers of Health in September.

CZ PRES will also discuss the proposal for a Regulation on the European Health Data Space, which aims to harmonise the sharing of health data in digital form for the purposes of cross-border provision of healthcare as well as for research, innovation and policy-making. It is foreseeable that the first reading will be completed during CZ PRES, a compromise text on some chapters of the proposal will be prepared and discussed, and a progress report will be presented to the EPSCO in December.

The topic of vaccination is also a high priority, primarily in the context of improving confidence in vaccination and combating misinformation, which are areas strongly supported by the EC. Similarly, the topic will also reflect the current refugee crisis and its impact on routine immunisation or future challenges, e.g. the expansion of disease areas in the context of climate change. CZ PRES plans to adopt the Council's conclusions on the issue of vaccination and to hold a conference.

CZ PRES will also focus on the negotiation of the Pandemic Convention and amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) in the context of strengthening the EU's role in health at the international level. It will be essential for CZ PRES to propose and discuss the setting up of coordination mechanisms between the groups of health diplomats working at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva and at the EU in Brussels to ensure an effective real-time exchange of information. This is a multi-year initiative started by Finland's Presidency and committed to by several successive Presidencies up to Sweden's. The preparation of the revised EU Strategy for Global Health will also take place during the CZ PRES. Topics related to the revision of the legislation on human blood, tissues and cells will also

be raised and a progress report will be presented.

The conclusion of CZ PRES will concern the legislation on medicinal products. As part of the implementation of the Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe, a complete revision of the European Medicines Agency's (EMA) Fee Regulation is being prepared. CZ PRES will start the discussion of the Regulation and present a progress report. There are also plans to revise the proposal for a Regulation laying down Community procedures for the authorisation

and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency (EMA), the Directive on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use and the Orphan Medicinal Products Regulation and the Regulation on medicinal products for paediatric use. CZ PRES is planning an initial meeting at the Council working level, also in view of the fact that rare diseases have long been a priority topic for the Czech Republic. A conference on rare diseases will also be organised.



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Environmental Council (ENVI)

The agenda of the Environment Council is largely influenced by the discussion of a large number of legislative and non-legislative documents published or to be published by the EC following the Communication on a Green Deal for Europe to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, to move towards zero pollution in selected environmental areas and to move towards a circular economy. In the area of international negotiations, CZ PRES will be involved in a number of multilateral events, including the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), in the preparation and conduct of which the Czech Republic, as the EU Presidency country, will actively participate while also coordinating the EU's position.

Top priority of CZ PRES in the environment and climate area will be to achieve maximum progress in negotiations on the Fit for 55 package of legislative proposals, which aims to ensure that the agreed target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 is met. These include the revision of the EU ETS Emissions Trading Directive and the Market Stabilisation Reserve (MSR) Decision, the revision of the Effort Sharing Regulation

(ESR), the revision of the LULUCF (Land Use and Forestry) Regulation and the revision of the Regulation setting CO₂ limits for new passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. As for the last mentioned regulation, CZ PRES will start negotiations in trilogues and try to negotiate a political agreement as close as possible to the compromise agreed at the Council level, allowing revision in 2026 according to technological developments and social impacts, or selling cars on sustainable alternative fuels after 2035.

The Fit for 55 package also includes a proposal for the Social Climate Fund, linked to a proposal to extend the EU ETS to buildings and road transport. During CZ PRES, the above-mentioned proposals of the FF55 package will be in the trilogue phase and CZ PRES will be responsible for seeking an agreement with the EP. The progress in the negotiations of the Fit for 55 package is important to rapidly reduce the EU's dependence on imports of energy commodities from the Russian Federation in the context of the REPowerEU package. In April 2022, the EC also published a proposal for a revision of the Regulation on fluorinated greenhouse gases and a revision of the Regulation on substances that deplete the

ozone layer, where CZ PRES will actively build on the outputs of FR PRES.

Beyond the discussion of legislative proposals, CZ PRES plans to highlight the topic of climate change adaptation, with activities during CZ PRES building on the new EU Adaptation Strategy of February 2021. CZ PRES intends to link this topic to the new EU Soil Strategy of November 2021.

In the area of international negotiations, the coordination of the preparation of the position of the EU and its Member States at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement and the subsequent coordination and representation of the EU at the preparatory negotiations and during COP27 itself will be crucial.

The transition to a circular economy is another priority of CZ PRES. The proposal for a Regulation on batteries and waste batteries will be at the most advanced stage of negotiations, and CZ PRES will try to advance the negotiations as far as possible towards a political agreement between the EP and the Council. Another proposal already under discussion is the proposal for a Regulation on the shipment of waste, where the Presidency will seek to advance the negotiations in order to help find agreement between Member States.

In the area of biodiversity protection, CZ PRES will start discussing a legislative proposal to enshrine nature restoration objectives and also initiate trilogues with the European Parliament on the proposal on commodities and products contributing to deforestation and forest degradation, both of which are quite important from the perspective of CZ PRES. Coordination of the international agenda for biodiversity conservation and biosafety will also be crucial, especially the preparation and approval of the EU position for the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15), which is to adopt a new global framework for biodiversity conservation.

CZ PRES also considers it crucial to launch the discussion on the upcoming revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directive. CZ PRES will aim to make progress in negotiating a proposal for a revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive and will start discussing other proposals in the area of water protection, packaging waste and chemicals, provided that they are published sufficiently in advance.

During the second half of 2022, in addition to those mentioned above, the decision-making bodies of a number of other international treaties are expected to meet, e.g. the Montreal Pro-

tol, the Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP19), meetings of UNECE regional conventions such as the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the

Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, and others. At the same time, the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference will take place in October at the UNECE. The process of negotiating a new legally binding global agreement on plastics was also launched.



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Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORT

CZ PRES will focus on well-being in digital education and discuss the Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success. In the area of youth, it will address the theme of intergenerational solidarity. Sustainable and accessible sport infrastructures will be the theme of the sport area. The European Year of Youth 2022, the international political situation and the consequences of the pandemic will be reflected horizontally across agendas.

The topic of well-being in digital education will be the priority in the field of education. The intention is to open a discussion on setting the conditions in digital education to promote its positive aspects and to make it safe, effective and sensitive to the needs of students. Council conclusions will be presented for discussion and adoption, in synergy with other Council recommendations in the area of digital learning scheduled for publication in Q4 2022.

The Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success will also be discussed and adopted during CZ PRES and it is expected to be published in June 2022. This will focus on basic skills, on increasing the number of young people completing secondary

education and on reducing early school leaving, which are crucial topics for the further development of the European Education Area.

In the field of youth, the priority topic is intergenerational solidarity and equity in youth policies and youth work, on which Council conclusions will be discussed and agreed. The intention is also to improve intergenerational dialogue and solidarity in response to the pandemic, Russia's aggression in Ukraine and other socio-economic challenges.

These objectives are also the focus of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue, which the Czech Republic is leading together with France and Sweden. CZ PRES will focus mainly on the implementation part of the cycle. Outside the Council of the EU, CZ PRES will also actively support the European Year of Youth 2022 by organising a conference on the legacy of the European Year of Youth in December 2022 together with the EC and the EP.

In the field of sport, CZ PRES will pursue the topic of sustainable and accessible sports infrastructure. Council conclusions in this area will be submitted for discussion and adoption. The topic will also be discussed at a professional conference and a meeting of directors responsible for sport. "Sport as a tool for promoting tolerance, soli-

parity, inclusion and other sport and EU values” is another area for discussion. The aim of CZ PRES is to open the question of the status of athletes and their role in the debate about values in society

CULTURE AND AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

In the area of culture, CZ PRES will draw up a Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 and in the area of audiovisual media it will launch a discussion on the forthcoming legislative proposal to strengthen media freedom and pluralism on the media market (Media Freedom Act).

In the field of culture, the current “Work Plan for Culture 2018–2022” will be finished during CZ PRES. CZ PRES will focus on completing the negotiations and final approval of the new “Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026” (WP), which should build on the previous one, while adding a more strategic dimension and taking into account the added value of culture. The WP should strengthen the link between the different Presidencies and ensure synergies with the Creative Europe 2021–2027 programme. The content itself follows in part from an assessment of the Member States’ existing plans and priorities. CZ PRES will strive to continue to prioritise the status of the artist, taking into account the theme of sus-

tainability (also in relation to the New European Bauhaus initiative) and cultural heritage.

Digitisation and the cultural and creative sectors are important horizontal topical issues. In view of the current developments in Ukraine, it is necessary to reflect this theme in the planned activities, for example in the framework of external relations, and at the same time to offer adequate support to actors from the cultural and creative sectors who have had to leave their homes and workplaces. One of the priorities is the protection of cultural heritage. In the immediate aftermath of the Russian aggression, it is necessary to offer relevant technical and financial assistance to Ukraine. This could be done, for example, through multidisciplinary teams, supplemented by volunteers within the framework of the New European Bauhaus initiative.

Another key theme of CZ PRES within the framework of this Council will be “Creativity: the basis for competitiveness and development of the youth in the field of culture”, which is an important aspect of the future development of this field and is also related to the development of the young generation, its employment, competitiveness and creation of new jobs.

In the field of audiovisual media, a draft legislative initiative, the European Media Freedom Act, is expected to be released during CZ PRES, which will be aimed at strengthening media freedom and pluralism on the media market. CZ PRES will focus on the cooperation of regulatory authorities and the possible use of self-regulatory mecha-

nisms. Effective cross-border cooperation is a key element in promoting the objectives set by harmonised legislation, especially for large global services. This also applies to the introduction and enforcement of self-regulatory measures by service providers themselves, e.g. for the protection of minors.



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