

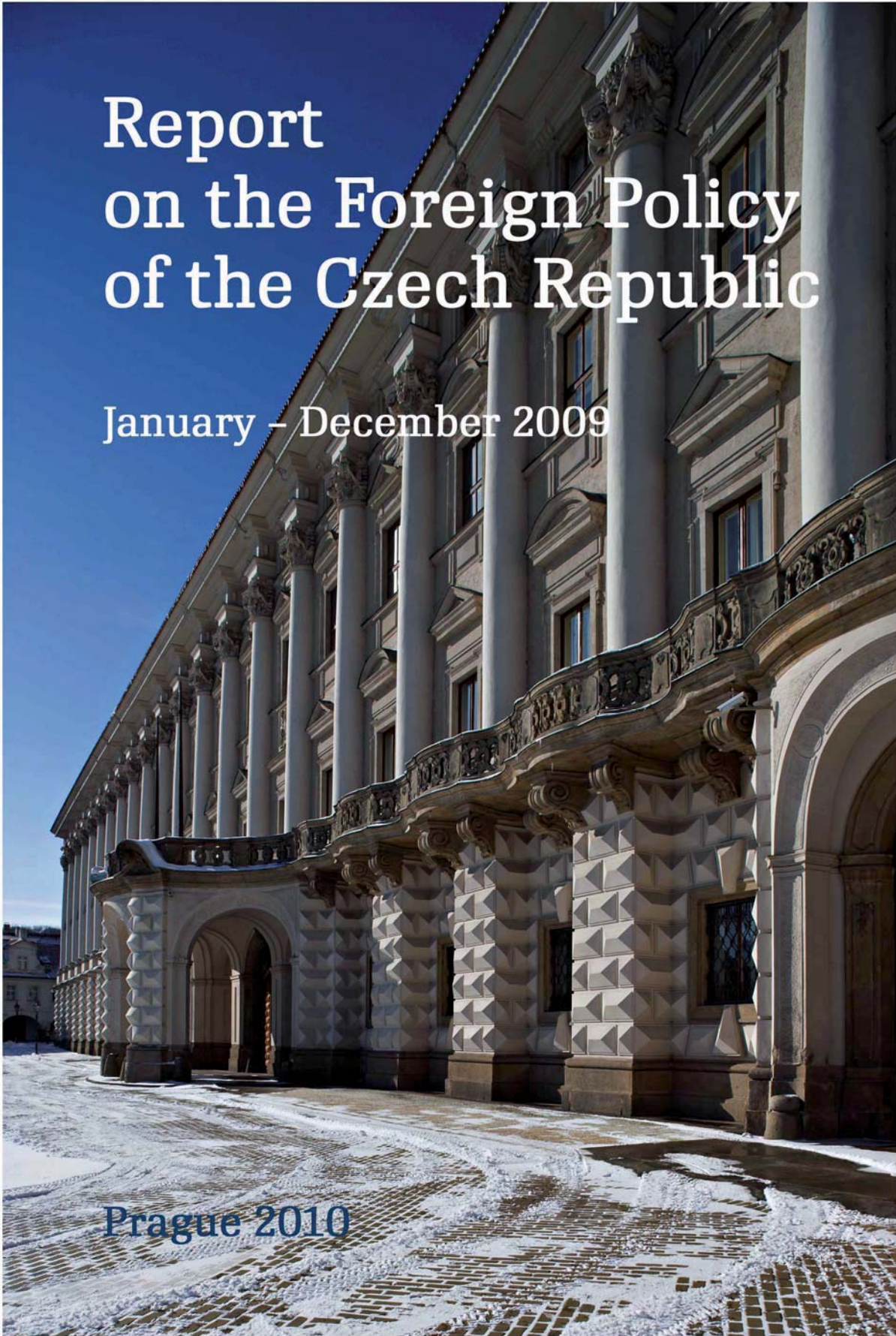


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INTRODUCTION

This is the first year in which you are receiving this publication in electronic form. Leafing through a stack of pages has become unnecessary when you can find the information you need much more quickly by moving the cursor on your computer monitor.

In view of that change, when producing this report we focused even more on the concise and unambiguous language of facts and numbers. Our analytical approach is evident chiefly in our choice of data and its structuring in terms of priorities.

2009 was an unusually busy and demanding year for Czech foreign policy. Before and during the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech executive took on a great quantity of administrative and logistics work. Where it was not possible to draw on practical experience, the staff had to attempt intelligent improvisation. In retrospect it can be said that they did very well, and were able to preserve and maintain even what politicians may have overlooked or left unresolved.

Alongside the European Affairs Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the coordinator for the majority of European Union events held during the Czech Presidency, especially where the European Union's external relations were concerned. Preparations for the Czech Presidency and the start of the presidency itself were criticised in the media abroad, particularly in France and Austria.

In its first few days, the Czech Presidency was tested by the gas crisis, when supplies of Russian natural gas through Ukraine to Europe were halted, and by the sudden worsening of the situation in Gaza. Under its Czech leadership, the European Union immediately opened talks on both those difficult themes, producing appreciable results. In the subsequent weeks and months it demonstrated that it was capable of dealing with complicated situations and steering discussions towards common multilateral interests, as for instance at a summit in March when the European Union's internal market was successfully defended against protectionist attempts by some member states.

The priorities for the Czech Presidency, presented under the motto "Europe Without Barriers" and expressed in the "three E's" (economy, energy and the European Union in the world), were ambitious, but were accepted and understood by the majority of member states.

Let us look more closely at the priorities for European Union enlargement and external relations. The Czech Presidency paid much attention to Eastern Europe, where it invested the most work into launching the *Eastern Partnership* project, as well as continuing the European Union enlargement policy, especially for the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. It placed special emphasis on transatlantic cooperation with the United States and Canada. It was not always possible to reach a consensus: countries involved in the *Union for the Mediterranean* project stuck to their views on maintaining a geographical and factual balance between the focus of the European Union's external activities and their financing. Some member states believe it is necessary to proceed cautiously in European Union enlargement, following thorough apolitical and practical preparations to satisfy all the criteria (Croatia, the most advanced applicant, has encountered opposition from Slovenia, and no resolution appears forthcoming to disputes between Greece and Macedonia/FYROM), and there are increasingly negative views on the accession of Turkey, whose candidacy the Czech Republic has long supported. However, Czech efforts to extend the stabilisation and association process in the Western Balkans, which should result in the accession process for Albania, Montenegro and subsequently Serbia, met with a positive response. In October 2009, under the Swedish Presidency, the European Commission presented a document on the strategy for European Union enlargement, following which the European Council confirmed that the European perspective for those countries still holds. Another success was the liberalisation of the European Union visa regime for citizens of the countries of that region. In response to a proposal presented by the European Commission in July 2009, the Council of the European Union agreed to amend the existing directives, thereby lifting visa requirements for holders of biometric passports from Serbia, Macedonia/ FYROM and Montenegro for stays of up to 90 days in the Schengen Area with effect from 19 December 2009. The Czech Presidency also produced the approval of the Visa Code, which harmonises the legal instruments and procedures of states that have signed the Schengen Agreement.

In line with the priorities of the Czech Presidency, the *Eastern Partnership* was inaugurated at a summit in May 2009 in Prague. It has continued in the bilateral dimension on the assumption that association agreements will be negotiated with the individual states, and in the multilateral dimension in the form of thematic platforms. The Czech Republic ensured that the rules of procedure for those platforms allow participation by representatives of civil society, which is important in satisfying the transformation cooperation priority of supporting

human rights and ensuring democracy in cooperation with the European Union. Another important element of the Eastern Partnership is an instrument to build and strengthen the administrative capacities of partner states, the *Comprehensive Institutional Building Programme (CIB)*, whose concept the European Commission began to develop in the latter half of 2009. During its presidency, the Czech Republic was also involved in talks on the individual platforms and expert forums.

In relations with Russia, political dialogue was resumed during the Czech Presidency. There was a summit for Russia and the European Union and a number of ministerial meetings under the *Permanent Partnership Council*. Czech efforts to coordinate the positions of European Union member states during the January crisis over gas supplies from Russia to European Union countries were also successful.

The priority of transatlantic cooperation featured a number of times on the presidency's programme. Special attention was paid to the relations with the United States as the most important natural partner and strategic ally for European Union and NATO member states. On 5 May 2009, there was an informal European Union – United States summit in Prague covering a broad range of themes that was the first time the new American President Barack Obama met leading European Union representatives. Another May summit in Prague between the European Union and Canada was a great success for the Czech Presidency and marked the start of negotiations on a *Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement*.

The most important event in the European Union relations with Latin America and the Caribbean was the 14th Ministerial Meeting of the European Union and the Rio Group held on 11-14 May 2009 in Prague. On the sidelines of the meeting there were minister-level talks between the European Union and regional groupings from Latin America (VI Joint Council European Union – Mexico and IV European Union – Chile Association Council, and European Union – Central America and European Union – Mercosur ministerial talks). During the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the political dialogue with Cuba continued, having been resumed in October 2008. Ministerial talks focused on human rights and development cooperation. Subsequently, at the June meeting of the European Union's General Affairs and External Relations Council, foreign ministers decided to continue that political dialogue.

During its presidency, the Czech Republic was also active in relations with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to planned events (a European Union Ministerial Troika meeting with South Africa, which was the first foreign affairs negotiations for the presidency, as well as European Union Ministerial Troika – African Union, European Union – IGAD and European Union – Nigeria), the Czech Presidency had to respond to new developments, e.g. the resumption of political dialogue between the European Union and Zimbabwe (attended by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai). Another important event was a visit to Prague by Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. In its agenda for Africa, the Czech Republic can now draw on its successful work during the Czech Presidency.

The situation is similar for the countries of Asia. In addition to a number of ministerial meetings (European Union – ASEAN, ASEM, European Union – Central Asia, European Union Ministerial Troika – India, after which there was a highly significant official bilateral visit to Prague by the Indian Minister of External Affairs), the Czech Republic, as the presiding country, organised summits with Japan and South Korea and the first ever summit with Pakistan. 2009 also saw greater activity by China as it became increasingly assertive on the international stage. Friction between France and China over President Sarkozy's meeting with the Dalai Lama meant that a European Union – China summit planned for the French Presidency was moved to March 2009, under the Czech Presidency.

Developments in the first half of 2009 confirmed that the choice of energy as a priority for the Czech Presidency had been timely and correct. The need to adopt a common position on energy security issues as soon as possible was confirmed in January 2009 by the Russian gas crisis. The situation was discussed at an extraordinary meeting of the Energy Council on 12 January 2009, where European Union ministers decided to immediately adopt solidarity measures, and initiated the implementation of connections and the diversification of gas transport routes to reduce some member states' dependence on a single supplier. At the April meeting of the European Union – Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Energy in Moscow, a joint initiative to introduce early warning mechanisms was discussed, and an agreement was retained on a monitoring mission for gas flows from Russia to the European Union through Ukraine.

Energy security was also the subject of a meeting of the Energy Council in February, where a document was approved that covers the strategy for external energy relations, the joint resolution of crises, the diversification of supplies, changes to the infrastructure, energy efficiency and the optimal use of indigenous energy resources. The document, the 2nd *Strategic Energy Review*, presents six infrastructure projects: a Baltic interconnection plan, the Southern Gas Corridor, the building of terminals for liquefied natural gas, a Mediterranean energy ring, the development of North-South gas and electricity interconnections, and the construction of offshore wind generators

The Czech Presidency focused on all aspects of energy security. The *European Economic Recovery Plan* includes essential investments into energy projects, and there were negotiations on extending international cooperation with energy producers and the organisations responsible for transit. At the *Southern Corridor – New Silk Road* summit at the beginning of May 2009, a joint declaration was signed by the European Union, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Egypt. Representatives of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also expressed their support for the Southern Corridor.

In nuclear energy, during the Czech Presidency the nuclear safety directive was adopted, which should contribute to maintaining high safety levels at nuclear facilities operating in European Union member states. At the end of May, the *European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF)*, set up as a platform to discuss the opportunities and risks of nuclear energy, met in Prague.

The Czech Presidency managed to negotiate an agreement on a third liberalisation package containing directives and regulations to liberalise the electricity and gas markets. Ways of separating transit/transport from energy companies' other operations in electricity and gas were discussed. The package includes the founding of the *Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)*, which will be based in Ljubljana.

The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union began in a difficult time when the initial consequences of the world financial crisis and economic recession were already apparent, and a particular emphasis on the economy was therefore essential. The *Lisbon Strategy* became increasingly important as a set of instruments to stabilise the internal market and improve the European economy's competitiveness and resilience. In April 2009,

the Czech Republic held a regular meeting of the Lisbon Coordinators in line with the conclusions of the spring meeting of the European Council.

In devising measures to counter the crisis, Czech representatives systematically emphasised the need to respect the rules of economic competition and avoid protectionism. They pointed out that measures adopted at European Union level must be viewed in the context of measures adopted at national level (fiscal measures, tax stimulation and unprecedented state aid to rescue lending institutions) and also at global level, especially the undertakings made by the G20 states. Legislative proposals were therefore approved to introduce a new framework for supervising the European Union's financial markets, and the European Systemic Risk Board was founded as a new independent body for macroeconomic supervision while a number of measures were implemented under the European Economic Recovery Plan.

During the Czech Presidency, a regulation covering rating agencies at European Union level was also approved. The European Union went further in regulation than other parts of the world, due to the fact that rating agencies were accused of contributing substantially to the financial crisis by failing to reflect the worsening situation on capital markets promptly and appropriately in their ratings.

In the context of European Union trade policy, the Czech Republic has been a longtime advocate of the liberalisation of international trade in goods and services and the removal of any tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, as well as compliance with intellectual property rights and the liberalisation of access to public contracts. The Czech administration continued to implement the revised *Market Access Strategy*, which should simplify access for European enterprises to the markets of third countries. It also coordinated activities in the European Economic Area, bringing together the European Union member states, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, and activities developed by the European Union with the countries of the European Free Trade Association. The Czech Republic is well aware of the shortcomings in the functioning of the European Union's internal market.

One of the Czech Presidency's priorities in that area was ensuring maximal labour force mobility during the economic crisis, when all aspects of mobility – professional, geographical and social – are important for ensuring a flexible labour market and social cohesion. The Czech administration completed new documents that significantly modernise

and simplify the existing rules for the social entitlements of European Union citizens who live and work in another member state.

That approach is fully in line with the Czech Presidency's motto "Europe Without Barriers". The conclusions from a number of discussion forums confirmed there was a general recognition that the way out of the crisis involves rejecting protectionism, opening new markets, removing tariff and non-tariff barriers and supporting financing for trade transactions. The Czech Presidency contributed to the launch of monitoring protectionist measures in the WTO and a similar process in the European Union, which was continued under the Swedish Presidency. The Czech strategy won the support of the majority of member states as a response to the global economic recession.

Cooperation between the Czech Republic and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was guided by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Czech priorities, the "three E's", were also discussed at the OECD. In January 2009, the OECD Deputy Secretary-General for the environment attended an informal session of European Union development ministers. At the beginning of March, the Secretary-General of the OECD Angel Gurría himself visited Prague for consultations with the Czech Prime Minister.

It can be concluded that during the Czech Presidency the priorities it had chosen proved to be very pressing and important for the European Union as a whole. They were well regarded by other member states and countries outside the European Union, especially those interested in accession or regional cooperation. The work of Czech experts and officials was rated very positively, especially in connection with the Eastern Partnership project and the resolution of the gas crisis. During the Czech Presidency, contacts were strengthened and intensified, which facilitated the exchange of information, the clarification of positions, the settling of conflicts and improved relations. Although the fall of the government in March 2009 was viewed with trepidation at the very least, the majority of senior European Union officials – in contrast with the media – took a neutral and moderately optimistic line on the situation in the Czech Republic.

Regional cooperation is organically linked with the European Union. The priorities for the Polish Presidency of the *Visegrad Group* in the first half of 2009 were closely tied to the European Neighbourhood Policy, the new Eastern Partnership initiative, energy security and

environmental policy. The Polish Presidency strengthened dialogue with the Baltic states, whose prime ministers and foreign ministers were regularly invited by their Polish partners to V4 summits as guests. The foreign policy priorities for the Hungarian Presidency, which will continue until June 2010, include the Western Balkans, and it held a summit at the beginning of October for the foreign ministers of the V4 countries, Spain, Belgium and the countries of the Western Balkans.

Among the most visible successes of cooperation between the V4 countries is the work of the *International Visegrad Fund (IVF)*, which introduced the new *Visegrad+* strategic programme. Its *flexible projects* are intended to support the processes of transformation and democratisation in selected countries in Eastern and South-East Europe. In 2009 a Czech representative was for the first time appointed Executive Director of the fund.

Ties in regional cooperation are increasingly apparent. European Union enlargement eastwards has been a challenge for the Central European Initiative (CEI), which focuses on enterprise development, tourism, intercultural cooperation, the environment and sustainable energy and agriculture in Central Europe and beyond. The main coordinator for the Czech Republic's cooperation with the CEI is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a representative of which is a member of the CEI Committee of National Coordinators. The Czech Republic was the third-largest donor to the CEI after Italy and Austria.

Many activities in the European Union overlap with the work of military alliances and international organisations. During its Presidency, the Czech Republic decided to concentrate under the *European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)* on developing civilian capabilities and rectifying shortcomings in planning, financing and exchanging experience when dispatching experts for peace and assistance missions, and in the staffing, education and training of participants in those missions. At an informal meeting of European Union foreign ministers (Gymnich) in Hluboká nad Vltavou, the Czech Republic presented proposals that were reflected in a number of European Union documents, including directives for the ESDP.

Although the presiding country of the European Union does not coordinate NATO's European Union allies and does not steer its working or formal meetings, in the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic nevertheless sought to improve communications between the Alliance and European Union institutions on themes relevant to both organisations. During

the Czech Presidency, the Allies discussed an unprecedented number of political statements on key events in third countries.

In the sensitive issue of blocked institutional relations between NATO and the European Union, the Czech Republic continued the work of the preceding French Presidency, holding discussions with key partners on specific steps that could contribute to a gradual improvement of the situation. A qualitative shift was achieved by the Czech Presidency's contribution to the *NATO-EU Capability Group*. A number of meetings were held on the deployment of helicopters, the fight against improvised explosive devices, etc.

During 2009, the workings of the *NATO-Russia Council (NRC)* were gradually normalised after having been severely shaken by the armed conflict in Georgia in August 2008. Political dialogue was initially restored at an informal diplomatic level, and then in April 2009, at the summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, the Alliance then confirmed its willingness to see formal meetings of the NRC. There were ministerial meetings at foreign minister level in June 2009 in Corfu and then more formally in December in Brussels. However, practical cooperation was not extended in the course of the year, and not even a visit by the new NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to Moscow helped to resolve matters. While after the Corfu meeting Russia called off its almost one-year suspension of military cooperation, it did not submit any specific proposals. Rasmussen, who is greatly concerned to improve relations with Russia, then described the current state of the NRC as unsatisfactory, and in September he spoke on his ideas for a new beginning.

Throughout the year, the Czech Republic actively contributed to shaping discussion on NATO-Russia relations, seeking mutually beneficial practical cooperation based on common interests that may concern Afghanistan just as much as missile defence.

During its presidency, the Czech Republic continued to actively support NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia. For Ukraine assistance continued to focus on the sector covered by the *Joint Working Group on Defence Reform*. The "orange" Ukrainian government continued to participate in all major NATO operations and offered to contribute units to the *NATO Response Force (NRF)*. Dialogue between NATO and Georgia in 2009 was devoted to support for Georgia's territorial integrity and security issues related to the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Political consultations also covered internal reforms, including relations between the Saakashvili government and the opposition. The Czech

Republic supported the opening of a NATO liaison office in Tbilisi, but that has not yet been realised owing to a lack of funds. The Czech Republic (with Lithuania and Estonia) headed a project for a trust fund that provides training and equipment for Georgia to handle unexploded ordnance and landmines. A specialised rehabilitation centre will be set up in Georgia for persons injured by unexploded ordnance.

Following the completion of ratification processes in all NATO member states and the parliaments of the newly invited countries, Albania and Croatia attended the NATO summit in April in Strasbourg/Kehl as full members of the Alliance, expanding the “twenty-six” to the “twenty-eight”. Both countries, which were invited to join the Alliance in 2008 at the NATO summit in Bucharest, have continued to implement the timetable for the remaining reforms associated with their membership. The timetable covers the next ten years and focuses mainly on contributions to Alliance operations, public support for NATO, the implementation of defence – and in the case of Albania, democratic – reforms, security cooperation in the Balkans, etc. The decision that Macedonia/FYROM would be invited to join still applies, although a compromise acceptable to both sides in its long dispute with Greece is still being sought.

In 2009, the Alliance focused chiefly on territorial ballistic missile defence. An anticipated turning point was the NATO summit in April in Strasbourg/Kehl, but ultimately an announcement by the United States of a change in its approach to European ballistic missile defence was of crucial significance, with a direct impact on the Czech Republic. The United States abandoned the building of a European pillar for ballistic missile defence with a radar in Brdy in the Czech Republic and a missile defence complex in Poland, and opted for a new concept, the *Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA)*. A meeting of NATO defence ministers in September in Bratislava nevertheless concluded that this change would not – with a few exceptions – be reflected in the individual tasks the Alliance set itself at the Strasbourg summit. The Czech Republic took note of the change in the American position and remains one of the most active participants in the debate on the future of NATO’s ballistic missile defence system.

The same summit in April 2009 defined a key task to be the elaboration of a new version of the *Alliance’s Strategic Concept*. Under the leadership of Anders Fogh Rasmussen the materials for it should be produced by a group of experts headed by Madeleine Albright.

In September 2009, the initial reflection phase began, during which seminars will be held to gather the suggestions and standpoints of the official representatives of all member states, as well as the views of independent experts, including experts from partner countries. As an active participant in these preparations, the Czech Republic has focused on retaining the Alliance's open door policy, maintaining effective deterrents and developing resources to protect against new threats, including the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems. Under the auspices of the *Jagello 2000* association, the Czech Republic held a national seminar on the New Strategic Concept attended by representatives from the NATO group of experts and leading Czech experts on defence and security issues.

During 2009, the Czech Republic continued to be among those countries that have over the long term promoted extending Alliance debate on energy security beyond the mere protection of the energy infrastructure.

What of Czech participation in NATO operations around the world last year? The Alliance is present in Afghanistan as part of the *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)*, which has been deployed with an extended mandate on the basis of a UN Security Council resolution of 2001.

At its April summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, the Alliance decided to review the strategy adopted a year earlier in Bucharest: in view of the serious worsening of the situation in Afghanistan to hasten the building of the Afghan National Security Forces and reinforce peacekeeping units. The new ISAF commander, the American General Stanley A. McChrystal, requested an additional 40 000 troops, most of which were promised to him in December 2009. In an attempt to pin down and block the Taliban the Alliance continued to strengthen relations with Afghanistan's neighbours, above all Pakistan, which has become increasingly problematic. In May 2009, a NATO Contact Point Embassy began operating in Islamabad through the Turkish embassy and should develop a public diplomacy offensive. Political dialogue on Afghanistan continued with the countries of Central Asia, and at the end of the year, agreements were concluded on the overland transit of non-military material for the ISAF. That resulted in the opening of the ISAF northern supply route through Russia, which had offered to facilitate that transit in 2008.

During 2009, the Czech Republic had its largest contingent abroad in Afghanistan (a parliamentary mandate permitted up to 580 persons to be deployed). Under the ISAF

operation Czech units served at the international airport in Kabul, supported a Dutch contingent in Oruzgan Province in the south of the country, and at the end of the year they began making preparations to deploy Czech helicopters in Paktika Province in East Afghanistan.

The Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar Province is the largest Czech foreign development project. In 2009, it had approximately 270 Czech soldiers and ten civilian experts working on education, healthcare, agriculture, water management and projects to support independent media and the rights of women.

The peacekeeping operation in Kosovo is NATO's second largest operation. In contrast with Afghanistan, the situation in Kosovo allowed KFOR to be reduced to 10 200 persons. The Kosovo Security Forces (KSF), whose progress is overseen by the Alliance, achieved initial operational capability. In 2009, the Czech Republic had a military contingent in Kosovo numbering approximately 400 persons, working as part of the *Multinational Task Force – Centre*. Czech units worked mainly on monitoring the Kosovo-Serbia “administrative” border and protecting national minorities and the cultural heritage in independent Kosovo. In April 2009, NATO approved the key document governing the content and process of defence planning, the *NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP)*, whose significance consists in the transition to planning based on capabilities, both military and non-military. In the course of negotiations the Czech Republic stressed that the planning process should be transparent and open to monitoring from the governments and general public of the Alliance's member states. The Czech Republic has also long promoted the harmonisation of NATO defence planning with the process of developing European Union capacities.

The Czech Republic is interested in maintaining the *Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)*, in which European Union member states comprise almost half of the countries participating. Supporting the organisation is one of the Czech government's long-term foreign policy priorities, and it is concerned that the OSCE be capable of adapting to developments in the international situation and taking on current tasks. The Czech Republic views that work primarily in conflict prevention, post-conflict renewal and the fight against terrorism. As the presiding country of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic formulated and negotiated the positions of the

European Union as a whole, and in the latter half of the year under the Swedish Presidency it actively contributed to formulating the standpoints of European Union member states.

In 2009, Greece held the OSCE Chairmanship. The largest event was the 17th *OSCE Ministerial Council* in Athens, where the Czech delegation was headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kohout. The main outcome from the council was an agreement on continuing the *Corfu Process*, launched in the summer as a response to current security issues of transatlantic significance. However, no agreement was reached on a number of weighty issues concerning the legal personality of the OSCE, the freedom of the media and the rule of law.

In the OSCE politico-military dimension, there are important talks on the arms control regime that take place in the Joint Consultative Group of the states parties to the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)*. Thirty OSCE participating states are parties to the Treaty which the Czech Republic regards as one of the cornerstones of European security. However, Russia has taken a problematic line, and since December 2007 it has failed to observe its commitments, has not provided the other countries with regular information on its armed forces, and has not facilitated inspections. It is, therefore, impossible to proceed to the ratification of the *Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (Adapted CFE)* designed to eliminate the bloc-based concept of the original treaty and improve the verification system for the structures of the signatory states' armed forces.

The *OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting*, held on 28 September – 9 October 2009 in Warsaw, also deserves attention. The meeting was actively attended by a broad spectrum of non-governmental organisations which criticised some member states, especially Kazakhstan, which was to take the next presidency, for violating the right to freedom of speech and persecuting human rights defenders. The European Union included among its priorities the protection of such activists, as well as strengthening independent national human rights institutions, ensuring freedom of assembly, protecting national minorities, promoting gender equality, the prevention of torture and the abolition of the death penalty.

The consolidation of the system for the protection of human rights was one of the main themes at the 119th session of the *Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers*, held in Madrid on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the organisation. On 11 May 2009, a day

before the session opened, a *quadripartite meeting* was held in Madrid between the Council of Europe and the European Union at the highest level. The Czech Republic, represented by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tomáš Pojar, attended the meeting in its role as the holder of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Another significant event in the field of human rights was a European Union seminar in March devoted to Myanmar/Burma.

The Czech Republic's position as the presiding country of the European Union was also important in terms of formulating and defending European Union standpoints in the United Nations (UN). The holder of the presidency has always taken responsibility for common European Union positions and coordinating approaches in discussion forums. On the initiative of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, on 21 May 2009 a seminar on Security Sector Reform was held in New York with the aim of improving coordination between the European Union and the UN in this field.

Complicated debates at the UN General Assembly resulted in a decision to convene a *High-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development* in June 2009. Following lengthy disputes on the outcome from the conference, in which the Czech delegation promoted the European Union's common position, it proved possible to negotiate a compromise entailing the UN would not challenge the foundations of the international financial system and would act pragmatically.

The chapter devoted to the UN covers the wide range of activities of the individual organisations, commissions and specialised groups of this largest international organisation in the context of the 63rd and 64th sessions of the General Assembly and Czech foreign policy's contribution to elaborating, discussing and resolving global problems.

In the second week of December 2009, the conference of the parties to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15)* was held in Copenhagen, and there was a simultaneous conference for states that have signed the Kyoto Protocol. The Czech delegation was headed by Prime Minister Jan Fischer.

European Union member states, including the Czech Republic, produced a common position for the conference. They announced a commitment to reduce emissions by 20% of 1990 levels by 2020, and in the event of successful agreement in Copenhagen to raise that

target to 30%. During negotiations, the European Union allocated EUR 7.2 billion for measures on climate change for the period 2010-2012. In the European Union's view, developing countries should reduce greenhouse gases by 15-30% and prepare for the transition to low-carbon economic development.

The final document was not ultimately adopted in view of dissent from developing countries, which were dissatisfied mainly with the commitments offered by developed countries and the procedural approach during negotiations. The output, the *Copenhagen Accord* on essential measures and cooperation to reduce emissions, is not a legally binding document and the participants merely "took note" of it.

The Czech Republic's contribution to the work of international organisations is active and scrupulously targeted. In the course of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, considerable attention was devoted to the coordination of the fight against terrorism and international law issues relating to the imposing of sanctions on countries that support terrorism.

The fight against terrorism is one of the priorities of Czech foreign policy. During the Czech Presidency, in the first half of 2009, the European Union continued a number of initiatives already underway and held talks on cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans and Yemen. In October 2009, an expert mission from the European Commission, including Czech experts, visited Yemen, which features in terrorists' strategic plans.

The Czech Presidency was compelled to examine the issue of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. The European Union welcomed the decision by the new American President to close the facility and opened a debate on the possible involvement of its member states in the relocation of detainees cleared for release. The matter was also discussed at an informal summit between the European Union and the United States in April in Prague. The outcome was agreement on a joint coordinated approach to assist the American administration, enshrined in a joint declaration.

The issue of the detention of persons suspected of terrorism or involved in terrorist networks, and the imposing of sanctions on countries that support terrorism, opened up relatively complicated questions of international law. Representatives of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired meetings of the Council of the European Union's Working Party

on Public International Law (COJUR) and worked on preparations for a meeting of international law experts held, as is now traditional, on the sidelines of a meeting of Council of Europe legal advisors in March 2009 in Strasbourg. An informal COJUR meeting in Prague produced suggestions and recommendations for the implementation of the EU Guidelines on compliance with international humanitarian law, which were implemented by the subsequent Swedish Presidency.

Support for international humanitarian law, therefore, became another priority for the Czech Presidency, and in connection with that a conference was held in November at Charles University's Law Faculty under the auspices of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs on *International Humanitarian Law – the 60th Anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions*.

Human rights have traditionally had an important place in Czech foreign policy. During the Czech Presidency the Council of the European Union Working Party on Human Rights completed a review and update of the eight *EU Guidelines on Human Rights*. Analyses were produced on the situation in individual countries concerning the death penalty, the use of torture in interrogations and in police practice, and violence and discrimination against women. A discussion was opened on additional ways of supporting human rights defenders and cooperation by European Union member states in providing sanctuary to activists facing persecution. In March 2009, the Czech Presidency organised a conference on democracy support around the world that recommended consolidating the relevant instruments of external policy to support democracy more effectively.

From the start, the Czech Republic has been prominent in the *Universal Periodic Review (UPR)*, a mechanism established by the UN Human Rights Council. As the presiding country of the European Union it worked with the European Commission to produce overviews of themes that should, in the European Union's view, be discussed with the states under review. In the 3rd Committee of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, the Czech Republic represented the European Union in talks on the inadmissibility of practices contributing to the proliferation of current forms of racism, xenophobia and the discrimination of minorities on the basis of ethnicity and race.

As in previous years, the Czech Republic contributed to the work of the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research*.

Czech foreign policy, of course, covers more general values. The *Transformation Policy Concept* combines individual tools to influence thinking and provide practical motivation that can influence the state of human rights and democracy in the world. The *Transformation Cooperation Programme*, adopted in 2004, is a separately defined component in Czech policy towards countries in transition and undemocratic regimes.

Cooperation is aimed at helping to ensure that the changes underway or potentially forthcoming in those countries will lead to democracy and the rule of law, rather than chaos, conflict and destabilisation. Transformation cooperation focuses on creating and strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil society and good governance. In 2009, the programme was again focused on the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, although there were also some one-off activities for the Middle East. Many projects that Czech organisations contribute to (primarily non-governmental organisations, to whose work the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attaches great importance) are multilateral or international.

The experience of transformation is an important part of *foreign development cooperation (FDC)* realized by the Czech Republic in line with international principles and its own interests on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The main aim of FDC is to contribute to reducing extreme poverty in less-developed parts of the world through sustainable economic and social development. In 2009, the priority countries for bilateral development cooperation were Angola, Zambia, Yemen, Vietnam, Mongolia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. A second group comprises project countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Cambodia, Ethiopia and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories. In 2009 a three-year government-approved programme of development aid for Georgia continued. In terms of sectors a significant part of that aid consisted of education, as is now traditional, above all in the form of government scholarships for various study programmes. Other priority sectors for FDC were industrial development, environmental protection, agriculture, healthcare and transport.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs places great emphasis on involving the non-governmental sector and the public in development cooperation. Last year, under its leadership, the Council for Foreign Development Cooperation began operating, bringing together Czech government donor departments, non-governmental non-profit organisations and the private sector.

In the closely related issue of *humanitarian aid*, Czech foreign policy adhered to international standards and the *Operational Strategy for the Provision of Humanitarian Aid by the Czech Republic in 2009*, which clarified the funding of humanitarian work and made it more targeted and easier to control. The *Operational Strategy* was also used during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, when the Czech Republic was the first country to preside over the new *Council of the European Union Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)*.

In addition to those established activities to promote the common values of Western civilisation, Czech foreign policy also had an economic dimension and a role to play in promoting Czech culture abroad.

Export and investment promotion is an important part of the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Economic diplomacy* plays a large role here, seeking out and creating favourable conditions for the exchange of goods, services, work and investments to and from abroad. It promotes government economic policy abroad at multilateral and bilateral levels, presents proposals for trade agreements, organises contact events and trade missions, and cooperates with chambers of commerce, it helps to identify trade partners and helps to develop a network of contacts to facilitate access to foreign markets for Czech companies.

Economic diplomacy relies on diplomatic missions within the framework of which trade and economic sections and state-run agencies such as *CzechTrade* and *CzechInvest* operate. In addition, it uses the services of more than 150 honorary consuls, who are generally appointed with a view to promoting Czech economic interests.

Promoting Czech culture abroad involves not only selecting contemporary works of culture, but also covers the mentality and creativity of Czech society and the Czech way of life. Comprehensive projects to present Czech culture through the *Czech Centres* are therefore very important: the choice of managers, well-targeted programmes and carefully planned media strategies. Under the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, an informal meeting was held in May in Prague for the culture sections of European Union foreign ministries.

In the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic held the presidency of the *Central European Cultural Platform*, which also involves Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and

Poland. The theme for the joint cultural event was the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain, with two towns selected on either side of the once hermetically-sealed border: Slavonice in the Czech Republic and Weitra in Austria. During the year, a project promoting Czech literature abroad was completed, under which books by Czech authors were dispatched in English, German, French and Spanish translations to a total of 42 diplomatic missions, which gave them to partner cultural missions, libraries, schools and book fairs to make them available to the public. Giving books to individual institutions was usually accompanied with broader information activities, and sometimes with a cycle of literary discussions and seminars about the Czech Republic.

Under a five-year government programme to support the Czech cultural heritage abroad, in 2009 support continued for Czech language studies at universities in other countries (and in addition there is a demand at embassies and consulates for Czech lessons for children). The Czech language is also promoted through subsidies for non-governmental non-profit organisations. The projects approved provided assistance for Czech communities abroad and helped preserve their linguistic identity.

The report published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic each year attempts to cover the breadth of its work in bilateral, regional, European and international relations. It is remarkable how closely linked and complementary those hierarchical activities are. International relations fluctuate, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represents only one of significant actors. Occasionally, there is talk of the lower degree of public awareness of foreign policy in comparison with domestic policy. Is foreign policy merely the government officiating in external relations? Can the Ministry extend its field of view and operate in different ways?

State foreign policy is undoubtedly – and more than other sectors – the domain of the executive. However, the latest developments in our increasingly interconnected world are beginning to move away from the government's monopoly on foreign policy. Other actors are becoming increasingly prominent and parliamentary diplomacy is playing a greater role, while in the age of the internet a critical public is not lacking.

Public diplomacy works, and the Ministry is not opposed to effective cooperation with civil society. It is well aware that its actions shape the image of the Czech Republic at home and abroad, and the media presentation of its work is very important. During the Czech

Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2009, the interest displayed by the media was massive. We are, therefore, working for an interactive relationship with the media and we are perfecting the information system on our website as the scope of the work of the Ministry and its foreign services increases. This document is a contribution to that endeavour.

I. MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

1. The Czech Republic and the European Union; the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Review of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union

For its presidency the Czech Republic chose three priorities, expressed in the three “E’s”: *Economy, Energy and the European Union in the world.*

Circumstances proved those themes to be highly topical, as it is there that the European Union and its member states must make every effort to ensure that the European Union can withstand these times of instability and bring benefits for its citizens. The European Union and its member states should take advantage of the opportunities the integration project presents, and should work together to overcome the obstacles to making use of that potential. In the context of the economic crisis and the consequent threat of protectionism, the motto for the presidency – *Europe Without Barriers* – acquired a new significance and symbolism.

The Czech Presidency achieved tangible results for all three priorities. In the legislative field, thanks to close cooperation with member states and European Union institutions, above all the European Parliament, talks were completed on more than 80 specific pieces of legislation.

The beginning of the Czech Presidency was marked by the armed conflict that broke out in the Gaza Strip at the end of December 2008. The Presidency immediately began negotiating on behalf of the European Union with the aim of establishing a ceasefire as soon as possible. Those efforts significantly contributed to the opening of humanitarian corridors and the subsequent holding of a donors’ conference to support the Palestinian economy at the beginning of March in Sharm el-Sheikh, including a meeting of the *Quartet on the Middle East.*

The European Union has a special responsibility to countries that are its immediate neighbours. The Czech Presidency invested much energy and political capital in the *Eastern*

Partnership project, which was approved at the spring European Council and successfully inaugurated on 7 May 2009 at a summit in Prague. The launch of this project, with EUR 600 million from the European Union's budget, is an important step towards greater European Union commitment to its eastern neighbours.

In the qualitatively distinct process of European Union enlargement and efforts to strengthen the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries, the Presidency had limited room for manoeuvre owing to the situation in the region. However, despite the suspension of accession talks with Croatia, progress was also made in this area, particularly in the process of visa liberalisation with the countries of the region. At the end of the Presidency, some progress in negotiations with Turkey was made with the opening of chapter 16 – Taxation.

Relations with the United States, the European Union's most important natural partner and strategic ally, are at the forefront of the European Union's foreign policy. After the new administration took office, discussions began on further cooperation. A key event was the first meeting between President Obama and all the European Union leaders at an informal summit in Prague, where the main themes were the economy and the financial crisis, energy, climate change and security issues related to developments in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union and European Union external relations

External relations occupy an important position in the European Union, reflecting the European Union's position as a global player on the international state. In addition to the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Union's external relations include external trade policy, development assistance, the European Union enlargement process, visas, migration policy and other external dimensions of the European Union's internal policies. Thanks to its Presidency of the Council the Czech Republic was able to define the main lines for the European Union's external relations agenda in the first half of 2009, where it set the priorities of relations with the countries of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans and transatlantic relations.

During the Czech Presidency a number of tangible results were produced in foreign policy, and the aforementioned priorities for the Presidency were achieved. The Czech Presidency's main progress in those agendas was as follows:

The theme of Eastern Europe dominated the European Union's agenda throughout the first half of 2009. The European Union has a special responsibility to countries that are its immediate neighbours, but lacked a coherent policy for the east. For that reason the Czech Presidency invested much energy and political capital in the Eastern Partnership project, which was approved at the Spring European Council and successfully launched at a summit in Prague. The launch of this project, with a budget of EUR 600 million, is an important step towards greater European Union commitment to its eastern neighbours, with benefits for both sides.

In the qualitatively distinct process of European Union enlargement and efforts to strengthen the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries, the Presidency had limited room for manoeuvre owing to the suspension of accession talks with Croatia, questions that remain open in the region and the economic crisis, and all of those factors influenced the satisfying by those countries of the conditions of the stabilisation and association process. However, despite those restrictions some progress was made, particularly in the process of visa liberalisation. The Czech Presidency also arranged for Montenegro's application to be submitted to the Commission, and accepted an application from Albania for European Union membership. At the end of the Presidency some progress in negotiations with Turkey was made. During the Czech Presidency, the European Union continued to strengthen its role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with preparations to take on additional work after the expected closure of the Office of the High Representative, although that will only take place after Bosnia and Herzegovina have satisfied the stipulated conditions. The Czech Presidency also supported bringing Kosovo into regional cooperation and the European integration process. The Czech Presidency also devoted special attention to extending the grants available to students in the region. The most important event during the Czech Presidency with regard to the Western Balkans was an informal meeting of European Union foreign ministers, Gymnich, in Hluboká nad Vltavou. The meeting confirmed the European perspective of all Western Balkans countries, and resolved that the economic crisis cannot be allowed to interfere with relations between those countries and the European Union, or to weaken that perspective in any way.

Relations with the United States, the European Union's most important natural partner and strategic ally, are at the forefront of the European Union's foreign policy. After the new president entered the White House contacts were established with his administration and discussions began on intensive cooperation to face the most urgent global challenges together. A key event was the first meeting between President Obama and all the European Union leaders at an informal summit in Prague, which laid the foundations for even greater cooperation between both sides of the Atlantic. In transatlantic relations, the Czech Presidency also furthered cooperation with Canada, culminating in the official opening of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement at the European Union – Canada summit in May in Prague.

In addition to the priorities outlined above, attention also had to be devoted to matters such as continuing efforts to diversify supplies of energy raw materials, climate protection and making progress in talks with key partners around the world. Under the Czech Presidency there were ten meetings with those partners at the level of heads of state and prime ministers. The Czech Presidency also dealt successfully with a number of unforeseen events that required action by the European Union. This especially concerned the Russia-Ukraine gas crisis and the crisis in Gaza.

Given the very grave situation in some member states, the *January crisis over the supply of Russian natural gas to Europe* was a true test of the European Union's unity and solidarity. All actors in the European Union consistently spoke with a single voice, and the Czech Presidency's active approach and diplomatic efforts significantly contributed to the restoration of the supply of gas to Europe after Russia and Ukraine had resolved their dispute.

An important step to strengthen European Union energy security was maximum support for all attempts to increase the diversification of energy sources and transit routes via the *Southern Corridor*. The Czech Presidency viewed the Southern Corridor as a band to spread prosperity, stability and security throughout the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East – as a new silk road along which goods, people and technology can flow in both directions. The basic building blocks for establishing this corridor are above all energy cooperation and, as a secondary factor, cooperation for transport. The culmination of these efforts by the Czech Presidency efforts was the *Southern Corridor – New Silk Road* summit in

Prague, where representatives of the EU and some of the producer and transit countries signed a joint declaration expressing support for the concept of the Southern Corridor.

The beginning of the Czech Presidency was marked by the armed *conflict in the Gaza Strip* that broke out at the end of December 2008. The Presidency immediately began negotiating on behalf of the European Union with the aim of establishing a ceasefire as soon as possible. Those efforts significantly contributed to the opening of humanitarian corridors and the subsequent holding of a donors' conference to support the Palestinian economy at the beginning of March in Sharm el-Sheikh, including a meeting of the *Quartet on the Middle East*.

Among the most important and largest events in the Czech Republic in relations with *Latin America* was the 14th Ministerial Meeting of the *European Union and the Rio Group* on 13 May 2009 in Prague. The meeting was attended by 56 delegations from Latin America and the European Union. At the meeting, an ambitious joint declaration was made on renewable energy sources and a sustainable approach to energy security and climate change. Other themes discussed included financial recovery and the growth of the world economy in response to the global financial crisis, and the A/H1N1 flu pandemic.

In the European Union's relations with *Asia and the Pacific*, in the first half of the year the Czech Presidency was very active in the Council of the European Union, holding – in addition to the planned European Union summit with Japan in May 2009 – other European Union summits with Pakistan in June 2009 (the first ever such summit) and China and South Korea in May 2009. In May 2009, there were also meetings for foreign ministers: ASEM in Vietnam and ASEAN in Cambodia.

Treaty of Lisbon

In 2009, after preparatory negotiations in the spring and after the completion of ratification in European Union member states in the autumn, the *Treaty of Lisbon* came into force on 1 December 2009.

On 18 and 19 June 2009 at the *European Council*, the Czech Presidency as mediator hosted political negotiations that resulted in an agreement to increase the number of members of the European Parliament in line with the relevant provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. The number of members of the European Parliament will increase from 736 to 754. The additional

MEPs will receive their statute, with all rights including voting rights, after the amendment has been confirmed in the appropriate legal form.

On 2 October 2009, Ireland held its second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. 59% of voters cast their votes, and 67.13% of them were in favour of adopting the Lisbon Treaty, while 32.87% were against. Towards the close of the Czech Presidency, the Czech Republic ensured the negotiating of the four key “Irish guarantees”, which established the preconditions for a positive outcome from the referendum.

The political atmosphere surrounding the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was shaped in 2009 by an opinion issued by the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany on 30 June 2009 and the ratification signatures of the Polish President Lech Kaczyński on 10 October 2009 and the Czech President Václav Klaus on 3 November 2009. The Czech President signed for ratification after an exemption had been negotiated for the Czech Republic from the future application of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, appended to the Lisbon Treaty, at the European Council on 29 and 30 October 2009. The political agreement reached at the European Council in October means that the validity of the Czech exemption from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union will subsequently be confirmed by the Czech Republic joining the protocol already negotiated by Poland and the United Kingdom. This legal grounding of the Czech opt-out will be facilitated by the extended application of the protocol, which will be incorporated into the accession treaty of a future member state, e.g. Croatia. The Czech opt-out does not undermine Czech citizens’ ability to claim the rights contained in the Charter, but guarantees that the European Court of Justice will not be able to rule on Czech legislation. The content and the form of the opt-out were designed so that in the event of unforeseen circumstances it will reinforce the property rights of Czech citizens which may be contested in actions for the return of property by parties questioning certain legal acts related to World War II.

On the instigation of a group of senators in the Czech Parliament, the Czech Constitutional Court twice examined the conformity of the Lisbon Treaty with the constitutional order of the Czech Republic. In both its rulings (26 November 2008 and 27 October 2009) the Constitutional Court declared that the Lisbon Treaty was not inconsistent with the constitutional order of the Czech Republic, and there was no need to amend the Constitution of the Czech Republic.

The Lisbon Treaty primarily introduces new elements in the institutional and legal architecture of the European Union. It also extends the sources and methods from which the European Union draws legitimacy for its political decisions. The Lisbon Treaty simultaneously focuses on greater effectiveness in decision making, especially in the European Union's common foreign policy.

In institutional aspects the Lisbon Treaty has established the posts of President of the European Council and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who also serves as Vice President of the European Commission and as a "coordinating commissioner" for other members of the European Commission whose work covers various aspects of foreign policy (development assistance, climate change, European Union enlargement and European Union neighbourhood policy). The President of the European Council will organise meetings of the European Council and inform the European Parliament of their results, replacing the prime minister of the presiding country in those functions, although the prime minister of the presiding country will remain responsible for informing the European Parliament of the presidency's programme priorities and, at the end of the presidency, for submitting a report to the European Parliament on the results of the half-year presidency. The General Affairs Council (GAC) will be a council of ministers that prepares materials for meetings of the European Council that have previously been discussed by sector-specific councils such as the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council or the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council. Under the Lisbon Treaty all sector councils of ministers (ECOFIN, JHA, etc.) will continue to be headed by the European Union member state that holds the rotating presidency.

The Lisbon Treaty envisages that from 2014, or at the latest 2017, onwards majority voting in the Council of Ministers will be a double majority system based on the prescribed quorum of member states (55%) and the proportion of the total population of the European Union (65%). The double majority system will replace the system of weighted votes.

In the legal architecture of the European Union, the Lisbon Treaty is tied to the abolition of the three pillars on the basis of which legal regulations were formulated and which frequently implied duplication. In truth, however, the Lisbon Treaty does not abolish the pillar structure of the legal architecture, but merely reduces it from three pillars to two. The former third pillar – police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters – has been

transferred to the first pillar. It follows that for those policies majority decision making in the Council of Ministers and co-decision making in the European Parliament will replace unanimity. Special provisions and procedures will continue to apply in foreign policy, including the greatest extent of unanimous decision making, and it will remain the second pillar.

The Lisbon Treaty seeks to counter frequent criticism of the European Union on the grounds of insufficient legitimacy for the political and legal decisions it adopts in three ways. Firstly, it will extend the European Parliament's jurisdiction in approving European Union legislation to decide in collaboration with the Council of Ministers. Following the amendments contained in the Lisbon Treaty the degree of cooperation between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in decision making will be 90% of all cases decided at European Union level. The new process will be most powerfully felt in police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. Secondly, the Lisbon Treaty, far more than any previous Treaty on European Union, will involve member states' national parliaments in the formation of European Union legislation. In some contexts it allows them to use "orange" and "red" cards, meaning they can object to or request the withdrawal of proposed European Union legislation provided national parliaments assemble the required number of votes (55%) and object to compliance with the principle of subsidiarity (taking decisions as closely as possible to the citizen) by the party proposing European Union legislation, which in the majority of cases is the European Commission. National parliaments will be able to safeguard subsidiarity – in other words member states' institutional autonomy – chiefly for police and judicial cooperation, European Union family policy, etc. The third innovation relating to the enlarging of the procedural platform for political legitimacy under the Lisbon Treaty is the European Citizens' Initiative, enabling one million citizens from a significant number of member states to petition the European Commission to propose legislation on the matter addressed by the petition. The parameter of a "significant" number of member states of which the petitioners are nationals, and the subjects for which it will not be permitted to draw up petitions, will have to be covered by some appropriate secondary legislation.

Expectations for greater effectiveness in decision making are not only related to the new voting mechanism (see above), but also to concentrated coordination in foreign policy. That will be apparent along a number of lines, creating a new form for the European Union's political dialogue with third states. The internal coordination of foreign policy should be

reinforced by provisions of the Lisbon Treaty entrusting the leadership of the *Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)*, where foreign ministers meet, to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The High Representative will conduct political dialogue at ministerial level with third states on behalf of the European Union. So, for instance, ministerial meetings between the European Union and Russia will no longer be attended by the European Union Troika, comprising the head of diplomacy of the presiding country, the Commissioner for External Relations and the High Representative, but by the High Representative alone. In the *Quartet on the Middle East* too, a grouping comprising the European Union, the United States, Russia and the United Nations that works to mediate the peace process in the Middle East, the European Union will now be represented by the High Representative alone. Nevertheless, the number of politicians from the European Union at summits with third states will not be reduced under the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, and will comprise the President of the European Council (replacing the prime minister of the presiding country), the President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Unlike early agreements, the Lisbon Treaty explicitly classifies the competences of the European Union and its member states. Those competences are defined as exclusive, shared, supporting and coordinating. Where the Treaty does not explicitly assign competences to the European Union, those competences pertain to member states.

In some policies, the Lisbon Treaty has changed existing practice more radically. For instance, it has eliminated the earlier distinction between obligatory expenditure (price support and direct payments to farmers) and voluntary expenditure (rural support) under the Common Agricultural Policy. The European Parliament was previously excluded from decisions on obligatory expenditure but could contribute to decisions on voluntary expenditure, but now it will have the power to co-decide on both expenditure categories. The Lisbon Treaty introduces new articles on energy policy (previously articles of the Agreement covering environmental protection were used) and outer space policy. It is also worth noting a change introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, under which the Financial Perspective (the European Union's budget) will now be agreed not by inter-institutional agreement, but on the basis of provisions contained in the Lisbon Treaty.

European Union enlargement

The enlargement process, which continued in 2009, was one of the most important themes in the programme for the presidencies of the trio of France, the Czech Republic and Sweden. On 14 October 2009, the European Commission published its enlargement package comprising *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010* and Progress Reports for the individual candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey and Macedonia/FYROM) and the potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo).

The package, containing recommendations for the progress of enlargement, was discussed in detail at working level by the European Union member states, and subsequently on 8 December 2009 the General Affairs Council (GAC) adopted conclusions on enlargement which were then confirmed by the European Council on 10-11 December 2009.

It follows from the conclusions that the enlargement process will continue on the basis of the renewed consensus achieved at a meeting of the European Council in December 2006. Each country is rated according to its merits and the progress it has made. The countries in the enlargement process must primarily resolve issues concerning the rule of law, the fight against corruption and organised crime and strengthening administrative capacities. The Council also welcomed financial assistance from the *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)*, and emphasised the relation between financial assistance and the priorities for the enlargement policy.

Croatia

The Czech Presidency attempted to make the greatest degree of progress in accession negotiations with Croatia. The expansion strategy approved by the European Council envisaged that accession talks with Croatia would proceed in line with the road map such that the technical part of those talks would be completed by the end of 2009. It was not possible to adhere to that plan due to the blocking of talks on account of a border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia. During the Swedish Presidency, an arbitration agreement between Slovenia and Croatia was signed. Talks were resumed and during intergovernmental conferences in the latter half of 2009 a further six chapters were opened and ten more were provisionally closed. Croatia embarked on the final phase of the accession talks and continued

to harmonise its law with the law of the European Union. 17 chapters have now been provisionally closed and 28 chapters have been opened. A financial package was elaborated for Croatia's accession process and work began on a draft accession treaty between the European Union and Croatia.

Turkey

The Czech Republic supports Turkey's full membership of the European Union provided the relevant conditions are satisfied. The progress of negotiations with Turkey depends on how successful the country will be in introducing essential reforms, and how it will proceed in resolving the issue of Cyprus and relations between Turkey and Cyprus.

The tempo of negotiations was maintained during the Czech and Swedish Presidencies, with one chapter opened under each presidency. In its conclusions the Council welcomed Turkey's reform efforts and appreciated the positive progress it had made in the judicial, civilian and military fields and in cultural rights, as well as its democratic initiative for the Kurdish minority. It simultaneously called on Turkey to make greater efforts in other areas with the aim of satisfying the Copenhagen criteria. The Council appreciated Turkey's regional significance, its attempts to normalise relations with Armenia and the signing of an intergovernmental agreement on the Nabucco gas pipeline. It emphasised that Turkey needs to pay attention to good relations with its neighbours, including settling disputes in line with the UN Charter. The Council regretfully noted that Turkey had continued to fail to meet its obligations under the *Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement* and that progress had not been made in normalising relations with Cyprus. For that reason the Council will continue to apply the measures taken in 2006 (not opening eight negotiation chapters and not closing any chapters) and will return to the matter next year in accordance with the European Commission's report. The Council expects progress to be made on those issues with no further delays. It also expects Turkey to actively support the ongoing negotiations on the unification of Cyprus.

By the end of 2009, 12 of a total of 35 chapters had been opened, of which one was provisionally closed.

Other countries in the Western Balkans

The Czech and Swedish Presidencies both sought progress in the stabilisation and association process in the Western Balkans and supported a transition to the accession process. Among the main milestones were the completing of the ratification of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania, the relaying of applications from Montenegro and Albania to the European Commission, the launch of the implementation of an Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters with Serbia and the subsequent acceptance of Serbia's application for membership.

A distinct process in integration with the European Union is visa liberalisation. After the stipulated conditions had been met, the short-term visa for Macedonia/FYROM, Serbia and Montenegro was abolished with effect from 19 December 2009.

The Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The Swedish Presidency in the latter half of 2009 followed the Czech Presidency. The Swedish Presidency was dominated by the issue of institutional reform, climate protection and the fight against the economic crisis. Shortly before the start of the Swedish Presidency, there were elections for the European Parliament, opening a process that resulted in the nomination of a new European Commission at the close of the Swedish Presidency. Jerzy Buzek was elected President of the European Parliament at the beginning of the Swedish Presidency.

During the Swedish Presidency, the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was completed. In September 2009, the European Parliament confirmed José Manuel Barroso as President of the European Commission and he commenced his second term of office. After the Lisbon Treaty had come into force on 1 December 2009, the European Union member states presented their candidates for the post of commissioner. The President of the European Commission proposed the members of his new Commission in December 2009, and the Czech Republic was nominated for the prestigious post of Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. A key moment after the Lisbon Treaty had come into force was the appointing of Herman Van Rompuy as President of the European Council and Catherine Ashton as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs by the European Council at an extraordinary meeting on 19 November 2009.

During the Swedish Presidency, there were four European Council meetings and a series of sector meetings that reflected the key themes and main priorities of the Swedish Presidency. The Swedish Presidency met its priorities for the economy and the fight against the economic crisis, and in justice and home affairs (the *Stockholm Programme*). The *COP 15* climate change summit in Copenhagen was something of a disappointment given the expectations it had generated.

The Swedish Presidency managed to find compromise in key enlargement issues. During the Swedish Presidency, talks were resumed after having been blocked by a dispute between Slovenia and Croatia. Negotiations with Turkey continued. Iceland and Albania both filed applications to join the European Union, which were forwarded to the European Commission for its views. Towards the close of the Swedish Presidency Serbia also filed an application to join the European Union and work began to implement the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters.

One of the Swedish Presidency's goals for external relations was to strengthen the European Union's role as a global player, including the more effective handling of international crises. There were a number of high-level summits under the Swedish Presidency: European Union – South Africa, European Union – Brazil, European Union – United States, European Union – China, European Union – Russia and European Union – Ukraine.

In response to the slow progress made in peace talks, under the Swedish Presidency the European Union began negotiating more actively on ways to resume talks and on steps to support Palestinian efforts to found an independent state. In voting in the UN on the *Goldstone Report* on the conflict in Gaza it proved impossible to overcome differences between member states.

In transatlantic relations, a dialogue was opened on energy (the *EU-US Energy Council*). The *Transatlantic Economic Council* was revived and met in October 2009 in Washington. In relations with Canada, talks began on a new economic agreement. Like the European Commission, the Swedish Presidency actively raised the issue of visas (including the reintroduction of visa requirements for Czech citizens) at all relevant talks with Canada.

During the Swedish Presidency, relations with Iran deteriorated owing to the ongoing nuclear issue and the human rights situation. Through the 5+1 Group the European Union took part in reopened dialogue with Iran on its nuclear programme. However, those talks did not yield any results owing to the unwillingness of the Iranians, and the European Union in cooperation with the United States, Russia and China began to examine further options, including the possibility of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council.

Representation of the Czech Republic before the Court of Justice of the European Union and the EFTA Court

Since the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union the Czech Republic's representation before the Court of Justice of the European Union (note: when the Lisbon Treaty came into force there was a change in the structure and naming of the European Union's judicial bodies: instead of the term European Court of Justice, which was never established by any legislation and covered the Court of Justice, the Court of First Instance and the Civil Service Tribunal, there is now the Court of Justice of the European Union, comprising the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service Tribunal) has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within which this task is assigned to a government agent. The post of government agent was established by Czech Government Resolution No. 113 of 4 February 2004 on the Statute of the Government Agent for Representation of the Czech Republic before the Court of Justice of the European Communities and the Court of First Instance (hereinafter Government Agent Statute). The Government Agent Statute defines the powers of the government agent and the essence of the agent's work. Czech Government Resolution No. 435 of 13 April 2005 extended the government agent's powers to include representing the Czech Republic before the European Free Trade Association Court (hereinafter EFTA Court).

The first government agent was Tomáš Boček, appointed by Czech Government Resolution No. 422 of 5 May 2004. Since 2008 the government agent has been Martin Smolek, who was appointed by Czech Government Resolution No. 246 of 10 March 2008.

The Government Agent Statute established the *Committee of the Government Agent* as an interdepartmental advisory and consultation body. The Committee met ten times in 2009. Through the Committee the government agent informs individual departments of

developments in cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union, proceedings on infringements of European Union law, and statements by the Czech Republic on individual cases. At its sessions the Committee also discussed issues concerning difficulties in transposing Community law, the results of meetings of the Council Working Party on the Court of Justice, which the government agent chaired during the Czech Presidency, and issues related to the Lisbon Treaty coming into force, especially the changes the Treaty brings to the designation, operation and powers of the European Union's judicial bodies and the European Commission's powers in proceedings on infringements of European Union law.

In 2009, 45 new European Union law infringement proceedings, through which the European Commission oversees compliance with the *acquis communautaire* by member states, were initiated against the Czech Republic. Compared to 2008 that represented a decrease of roughly one-quarter in the number of new proceedings (61 were initiated in 2008); the total number of proceedings initiated against the Czech Republic from accession to the European Union to the end of 2009 was 450. A considerable number of those cases were stopped before they reached the phase of an action before the Court of Justice – at the end of 2009 there were 58 ongoing proceedings, of which 33 were in the first procedural phase (formal notice), 22 in the second phase (reasoned opinion) and three in the phase of an action before the Court of Justice.

Four actions against the Czech Republic were filed at the Court of Justice in 2009, of which one case was retracted in the course of the year. In total four actions were retracted at the request of the Czech Republic in 2009. One condemnatory judgement was passed against the Czech Republic in 2009 concerning a failure to implement Directive 2007/14/EC on aspects of the financial market. By the end of 2009 three such proceedings were underway before the Court of Justice.

In references for a preliminary ruling, by means of which member states' national courts turn to the European Court of Justice with queries concerning the interpretation of particular provisions of European Union law or their validity, the government agent received approximately 390 submissions in approximately 250 proceedings in 2009. The Czech Republic was active in 47 of those proceedings in 2009, due chiefly to the significance of preliminary rulings in legislation and application in the Czech Republic, and to an interest in promoting the interpretation applied in the Czech Republic. In 35 cases a written statement

was submitted and in 16 cases the Czech Republic took part in oral proceedings. Since the Czech Republic joined the European Union we can trace a gradual increase in the Czech Republic's activity in references for a preliminary ruling (in 2006 the Czech Republic made 18 statements, of which 14 were in writing and 4 oral; in 2007 there were 12 statements, of which nine were in writing and three oral; in 2008 there were 40 statements, of which 32 were in writing and eight oral).

Statements concerned the general principles of European Union law; the free movement of goods, services and persons; the jurisdiction of the courts; consumer protection; economic competition; public procurement; social security; customs issues; the recognition of qualifications and intellectual property rights.

In 2009, there were five references for preliminary rulings commenced on the basis of queries submitted by Czech courts before the Court of Justice (C-223/08 *Kyrian*, C-299/09 *Dar Duale Abfallwirtschaft*, C-339/09 *Skoma – Lux*, C-393/09 *Bezpečnostní softwarová asociace*, C-399/09 *Landtová*). In C-223/08 *Kyrian*, concerning the interpretation of the Directive on mutual assistance for the recovery of claims relating to certain levies, duties, taxes and other measures, the Czech Republic made an oral statement following on from its written statement in 2008. In C-339/09 *Skoma – Lux*, concerning the customs classification of certain goods, the Czech Republic sent a written statement to the Court of Justice in December 2009. Notifications of the opening of proceedings in the other three cases, concerning the copyright protection of computer programmes, waste management and discrimination in the awarding of old-age pension supplements, were received by the government agent at the end of 2009. Written statements on those cases will be sent to the Court of Justice at the beginning of 2010.

Of the queries submitted by other courts that are closely related to the Czech Republic, in 2009 there were judgements in Case C-115/08 *ČEZ*, concerning the authority of an Austrian court to rule on the operation of a nuclear facility in the Czech Republic, and Case C-478/07 *Budějovický Budvar*, concerning the retaining of the national protection of the geographical designation “Bud”. The judgement in the *ČEZ* case was entirely in the Czech Republic's favour, stating that Austrian courts are not entitled to rule on the operation of a nuclear facility that has been approved by the Czech authorities. The Czech Republic also took part in oral proceedings on the case in 2009.

In 2009, the Czech Republic did not file any new action concerning the invalidity of an act by a European Union body. In the most recently opened proceedings from October 2009 on Case T-465/08 *Czech Republic v Commission*, in which the Czech Republic is contesting the validity of a decision by the European Commission on offsetting the Commission's claims against its debts, there were written acts by the parties to the proceedings in 2009. At the end of 2009, three proceedings were therefore underway before the General Court in which the Czech Republic is contesting decisions by the European Commission: T-194/07 (emission allowances), Case T-248/07 (surplus stocks) and T-465/08 (Phare offsetting). The preceding aside, no further action was taken by the parties in those proceedings in 2009.

The Czech Republic also has the option of intervening on one side of a dispute in proceedings before the Court of Justice or the General Court. The Czech Republic has exercised that option in 22 cases, of which proceedings are still underway on nine of them. The most important of them are proceedings on infringements of European Union law brought by the European Commission against six member states, in which the European Commission has contested those states' national legislation stipulating the condition of nationality for the profession of notary. The Czech Republic has intervened through the government agent on behalf of the member states concerned. The Czech Republic also intervened in proceedings on Opinion 1/09, in which it is the role of the Court of Justice to assess whether a proposed agreement on a unified patent litigation system is compatible with European Union law.

In 2009, the Czech Republic took part in proceedings (written and oral) before the EFTA Court for the first time, in Case E-4/09 *Inconsult Anstalt*, which concerned determining whether an internet site may be considered a "durable medium" in the sense of the Directive on insurance mediation.

During the Czech Presidency, the government agent organised two events in the first half of 2009 (a lecture by the Advocate General of the Court of Justice, Pojares Maduro, and a meeting for government agents from all European Union member states). The government agent also chaired the Council Working Party on the Court of Justice, where under the Czech Presidency a compromise was reached on amending the Code of Conduct of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The Lisbon Strategy and European Union competitiveness

In the context of the economic downturn, the *Lisbon Strategy* became increasingly important as a set of instruments to improve the European economy's competitiveness, resilience and resistance and in the latter half of the year, there was discussion of the related *Europe 2020* strategy.

During the Czech Presidency, the conclusions of the spring meeting of the European Council highlighted the need to respect the Strategy's long-term objectives when implementing short-term measures in response to negative developments in the economy. The Presidency also organised a regular meeting of the *Lisbon Coordinators* in April 2009. Priorities were declared in areas where progress should be made, which mainly concerned greater and more effective investments into research and development, education and innovation as part of strengthening the knowledge triangle and improving cooperation between research and development, education and business.

Topical themes at the end of 2009 included the future of the Lisbon Strategy after 2010, overall improvements to the implementation process and discussions on the links between short-term measures and the long-term priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Czech Republic is aware of the need to strengthen the competitiveness of the European Union as a whole, in terms of improving the functioning of the European Union's internal market and enhancing the European Union's external competitiveness. The Czech Republic influences the shaping of the future of the new strategy.

An important precondition for the European Union's competitiveness is compliance with the rules for economic competition. A specific feature of competition policy in the European Union is the relatively strict assessment of state aid in member states, aimed at preventing any distortions to the internal market and the promoting of the economic interests of individual member states, via subsidies for their own corporations, to the detriment of other member states. On the other hand, state aid should also play a very positive role in the future as one of the instruments for the transition to an environmentally-friendly economy.

The Czech Republic has backed the goals of European Union competition policy over the long term. During its Presidency the Czech Republic realised that those goals had perhaps become more pressing than ever before in the history of the European Union. In the recession

that continued in 2009, the Czech Presidency therefore took every opportunity to emphasise the need to respect the rules of economic competition when drawing up measures to combat the crisis, as well as the need to avoid protectionism.

However, the Czech Republic was aware that some sectors of the economy have been hit harder by the crisis, and that there is scope for reasonable measures. Cooperation between the European Commission and the Czech Presidency resulted in a common framework for a scheme to renovate the vehicle stock (the “scrappage programme”). The decision on whether to provide funds for “scrappage” or not remains with member states. For the Czech Republic, a key principle was that the payment of “scrappage” should not be discriminatory. The recovery of some sectors of the economy after the crisis began was facilitated by more flexible temporary rules for state aid. The rescue process proceeded – at least according to an official statement by the European Commission – in a coordinated way thanks to the European Commission and the clear stance of the Czech Presidency.

Despite a variety of pressures, the fundamental principles for the functioning of the internal market were maintained and any tendencies towards uncontrollable interventionism and the weakening of the principles of economic competition were suppressed, which can be regarded as one of the main achievements of the Czech Presidency. However, it cannot be overlooked that the amount of state aid provided in 2008 and 2009 was dramatically greater than in 2007.

The European Union internal market and sector policies

Although the internal market is the basis of the European Union’s integration process, the Czech Republic still perceives substantial shortcomings in its functioning. It is also aware that there are many areas where further progress can be made. That was reflected during the Czech Presidency, in line with its motto – *Europe Without Barriers*. The Presidency’s priorities, therefore, included the process for transposing the Directive on services in the internal market. In collaboration with the European Commission, the Czech Presidency organised two conferences on the internal market: the *European Union Enlargement – 5 Years After* conference confirmed the unambiguously positive economic consequences of “Eastern” enlargement for all member states, and for the global standing of the European Union as a whole; the *Conference on the Future of Services in the Internal Market* covered

the introduction of the aforementioned services directive, a key piece of legislation facilitating the smoother functioning of the internal market for services.

There was also active support for a review of a number of regulations governing technical requirements for products as part of the technical harmonisation process and the finalisation of the *goods package*, which removes a number of barriers on the market for goods. Throughout the year, considerable attention was devoted to *better regulation*, which the Czech Republic has long regarded as a key factor in improving the competitiveness of the Czech Republic and the European Union as a whole.

Labour mobility and employment

One of the Czech Republic's priorities for the internal market is ensuring maximal labour mobility in the European Union. In line with the Czech Presidency's motto *Europe Without Barriers*, the Czech Republic focused on all aspects (professional, geographical and social) of the mobility of member states' citizens on the European Union's labour market. In this time of crisis, each type of mobility is highly important to ensure a flexible labour market, economic growth and social cohesion. The Czech Presidency completed new documents that significantly modernise and simplify the existing rules for the entitlements of European Union citizens who live and work in another member state. The new rules speed up the processing of applications from European Union citizens living in another member state and remove some of the barriers, while modernising the exchange of information between the authorities in the 27 member states.

The Czech Republic promoted the free movement of labour at bilateral level and in European institutions, and actively sought the abolition of transitional periods and the removal of barriers to the free movement of workers in the remaining countries of the EU-15. Since May 2009, when the second transitional period for labour mobility ended, the majority of European Union countries have opened their labour markets to workers from the new member states, and other European Union countries have allowed access to sectors and professions where there are significant shortages of domestic labour. Since May 2009, Austria has partly opened its market for 65 professions and Germany has opened its labour market for qualified workers with university education and graduates from German schools, and for

professions suffering shortages. Now only Austria and Germany are applying the last possible stage for restricting the free movement of workers.

The Czech Presidency achieved agreement on making the operation of the *European Globalisation Adjustment Fund* more flexible, aimed at more effective support for workers who have become redundant owing to globalisation and the worldwide financial and economic crisis. An important change in the revised text is the option of using it for a limited period of time for redundancies due to the economic and financial crisis.

The Czech Presidency also made considerable efforts to achieve a compromise in negotiations with the European Parliament on a review of the working time directive. The review was aimed at amending some provisions of the directive, while the most complicated negotiations concerned the use of an exemption that allows employees to work for more than 48 hours a week. The Czech Republic consistently defended the interests of member states, but the European Parliament was not receptive to the compromises proposed.

At the beginning of 2009, the member states agreed on a common approach to parental childcare, where it is necessary to consider the child's best interests and the quality of care. Measures to improve health and safety at work for pregnant employees, employees who have recently given birth and employees who are breastfeeding were also discussed. There was also emphasis on the importance of investments into social services during the crisis as a source of new jobs.

Company law, intellectual property and consumer protection

During 2009, the European Parliament approved the simplification of the third and sixth company law directives (the directive concerning mergers of public limited liability companies and the directive concerning the division of public limited liability companies), which could bring annual savings of as much as CZK 165 million to companies undergoing mergers or divisions. The new amendments should allow companies' shareholders to decide which reports are truly necessary for them in the event of a merger.

Throughout the year, there were intensive discussions on the proposed *Statute on a European Private Company (SPE)*, a kind of European limited-liability company, intended primarily for small and medium enterprises, which should allow such enterprises, which are crucial for the European Union's economy, to enjoy the benefits of the internal market and to

increase their cross-border business activities (companies would save money on opening branches). Both Presidencies made significant progress on the proposal, and it is expected that agreement will be reached during the Spanish Presidency.

Intellectual property law offers a great opportunity to increase the European Union's competitiveness, reduce costs and introduce new European Union models. The introduction of a European Union patent and a single patent jurisdictional system has been discussed at European Union level for many decades. The aim is to make patent protection in the European Union cheaper and more effective and to reform the present patent system, which is several times more expensive than in the USA and Japan. In the first half of 2009, the Council of the European Union, headed by the Czech Republic, reached agreement on the exceptionally complex and controversial issue of requesting that the European Court of Justice assess the compatibility of the planned *Agreement on an integrated jurisdictional system for patents* with the Treaty establishing the European Community (now the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Court of Justice should decide the matter in 2010. Under the Swedish Presidency, the European Council approved conclusions that represented a breakthrough in improving the functioning of the patent system and the general approach to a regulation on a community patent.

An important event in copyright was the initiative taken by the American corporation Google to digitalise the contents of books (with or without copyright holders' consent) and make them available on the internet. The situation will be settled in court in the United States. The Czech Republic has defended and will continue to defend the interests of Czech authors and publishers and will resolve the situation in the European Union in a way that does not result in any breach of international copyright law.

In consumer protection, an area that affects nearly all of the almost 500 million consumers in the European Union, the Czech Republic joined in work on a planned directive on consumer rights that should extensively revise present consumer rights with the aim of simplifying and harmonising them and preventing the fragmentation of the internal market while promoting cross-border trade and purchasing within the European Union. The fragmented nature of those regulations is particularly apparent in the age of internet shopping, and in many cases prevents European consumers from on-line shopping abroad. On the basis of discussions in the Council of the European Union, the Czech Presidency produced the first

consolidated draft of the Consumer Rights Directive, and intensive discussions continued under the Swedish Presidency.

Science and research

In research and development, under the Czech Presidency emphasis was placed on the further development of the *European Research Area (ERA)*. The Czech Presidency submitted a document for the further implementation of the *ERA Vision 2020*, which included a report on the current situation. It particularly concerned two important aspects for the development of ERA: the European research infrastructure and removing barriers to the mobility of research workers. The Czech Presidency focused on implementing the knowledge triangle and the transfer of knowledge and technologies. Above all it promoted better cooperation between universities, research and business, stressing universities' role in research, new technologies and innovations. Linking education to the needs of business will promote the competitiveness of the European Union.

During the Czech Presidency, the legal framework was approved for the *European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)*, which will have a direct influence on the future of building large research infrastructures in Europe. The proposal's objective is for new research infrastructures to be automatically awarded the status of international organisations, which would exempt them from value added tax. There was also discussion of the establishing of large infrastructures in the context of regional development and the uneven distribution of such facilities in Europe.

During the Presidency, there was also a meeting of the *Space Council*, aimed at improving innovation and research for activities in space.

Education and culture

During both the Czech and Swedish Presidencies, great attention was devoted to the discussion on actively developing human capital in the European Union and the influence of demographic and technological developments on education systems and institutions, which resulted in the adoption of a new *Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training after 2010*. The new strategic framework outlines the long-term objectives for cooperation at European Union level in the next decade, the main principles and methods for cooperation, and five European reference levels for adult education, early

leavers from education, the acquisition of basic skills, preschool education and tertiary education attainment. Alongside the strategic framework, medium-term priorities were adopted for European cooperation in 2009-2011. The Czech Presidency contributed significantly to making 2011 the *European Year of Volunteering*. Initially, the support of the European Parliament was won for non-governmental non-profit organisations, and the Presidency subsequently won the support of the Commission too.

In 2009, the Czech Presidency opened the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation*, during which the Council adopted conclusions on culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation. Those conclusions reflect long-term efforts by member states' culture ministers for culture to be given an appropriate status in European policies and be linked with member states' education systems.

In May 2009, the European Parliament accepted a compromise wording for a text produced by the Czech Presidency on the launch of a new programme, *MEDIA Mundus*, aimed at cooperation between audiovisual professionals from Europe and third countries. During the Swedish Presidency, that new type of programme was finalised in a decision. The *MEDIA Mundus* programme is open for cooperation in the audiovisual field, alongside the existing *Media 2007* programme.

Transport and telecommunications

In transport, the Czech Presidency achieved the approval of a road package that will simplify enterprise in the international transport sector. The greatest success is the clarification of the rules for *cabotage*, i.e. the option for freight carriers to provide services in European Union member states outside the states where they are registered. A process to open a review of policy on trans-European transport networks was also opened. During its Presidency, the Czech Republic paid great attention to the opening of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) for road transport, which is important primarily for road safety.

During the Swedish Presidency, the member states reached an agreement on a draft regulation on the rights of passengers at sea and on inland waterways, and a regulation on the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport. That marked significant progress towards uniform passenger protection among individual member states for various kinds of transport.

The Czech Presidency contributed significantly to the completion of the legislative process for the review of the regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services. Ultimately, agreement was reached with the European Parliament in the latter half of 2009 on a *telecommunications package* to strengthen the rights of telecommunications technology users and create a single telecommunications market in the European Union.

The Galileo project

In the spring, the Czech Presidency opened discussion on a review of Regulation 1321/2004 on the *GSA (Galileo Supervisory Authority)*, which governs the functioning of the agency responsible for the operation of the European navigation system *Galileo*. By the end of the year, the Swedish Presidency had managed to achieve accord among member states, and the Council will discuss the matter with the European Parliament in the first half of 2010. During the Czech Presidency, the *GIP (Galileo Interinstitutional Panel)*, a platform for relaying information between the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council on the progress of the Galileo project, began operating. In the first half of the year, when the Czech Republic represented the Council accompanied by representatives of the preceding and subsequent Presidencies, the GIP met twice and the European Commission presented information on the latest developments. The GIP met in October 2009 under the Swedish Presidency, with a new European Parliament.

Agriculture

Among the priorities of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009 was a debate on the future of the *Common Agricultural Policy* after 2013, initiated by the Czech Presidency with the aim of focusing on the perspective for direct payment models. The Presidency hosted an informal meeting of agriculture and fisheries ministers at the turn of May and June in Brno to examine the future of direct payments. On the basis of those discussions the Presidency then submitted the conclusions to the June meeting of the *Agriculture and Fisheries Council*, winning the backing of 21 states. During those debates, the Presidency sought to identify a model that would be simple, effective, just and capable of being defended among a broad public. Member states also reinforced the commitment that came out of talks on the *Health Check* of the Common Agricultural Policy concerning the necessity of equalising the level of direct payments for farmers in the various member states.

Improving the regulatory environment and reviewing the existing regulations were among the priorities for the Czech Presidency. At the May meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, unanimous political agreement was reached on a draft of the Council's conclusions on the simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy. The main outcome is that the Council recognised both the process of simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy as a sustained priority for all present and future deliberations on the Common Agricultural Policy, and the commitment to reduce the administrative load by 25% by 2012.

At the June meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, the Czech Presidency won unanimous support from member states on the future form of European policy on the quality of agricultural and food products, in response to the May 2009 Commission Communication on that issue. The Presidency held a high-level ministerial conference on the issue in March 2009 in Prague, and its results were an important contribution for future work in the Council and for reaching political conclusions.

The Czech Presidency also made a significant contribution to a future definition of areas affected by natural disadvantages in the European Union, in the light of a Commission Communication presented at the April meeting of the Council that approved conclusions on that issue.

In the *Common Fisheries Policy*, ten pieces of legislation were adopted during the Czech Presidency. They include four Council Regulations on a multiyear plan to preserve bluefin tuna, an agreement between the European Union and Russia on preserving fish stocks in the Baltic, a regulation on protection and enforcement measures for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation, and finally a regulation annulling 14 outdated regulations.

The prices of dried skimmed milk and butter continued to fall in 2009. In response the period for intervention buying was extended and legislative exemptions from Regulation No. 1234/2007 were approved. The option for the European Commission to act alone in a crisis situation was exercised (the theme was discussed during the Czech and Swedish Presidencies.) While the situation on the milk market gradually stabilised, it remains complicated. To support the sector, finances were used under the European Economic Recovery Plan, and the level of state aid *de minimis* from the member states' budgets was temporarily increased from EUR 7 500 to EUR 15 000 up to the end of 2010. In that context, the position of enterprises in the agro-food chain was discussed. EUR 300 million was

allocated from the budget to resolve crisis situations in agriculture, and those funds can also be used during 2010. EUR 5.4 million should go to the Czech Republic.

Healthcare

The Czech Presidency responded swiftly to the threat of the spread of the A/H1N1 flu virus, producing a plan in which it called on member states to take united action and called for close cooperation with pharmaceutical companies in developing a vaccine against the new virus. In the latter half of the year, cooperation at European Union level proved important. Significant areas that will require further attention are communication with the public and the availability of vaccines.

The Czech Republic also made progress in negotiations on the *pharmaceutical package*, which the Swedish Presidency also worked on. The issue of counterfeit medicines, which is part of the package, has become increasingly pressing, as some of them could jeopardise the health of European citizens.

In the latter half of 2009, Sweden worked on effective antibiotics and non-smoking environments, as well as alcohol and health, especially reducing alcohol consumption among young people.

Responses to the financial and economic crisis

In connection with the financial and economic crisis, a number of legislative and other measures were initiated at European Union level in 2009, primarily aimed at prevention. The objective is to set up a regulatory environment that will in future prevent or at least minimise the possibility of a crisis occurring to the same extent as in 2008-2009. The fact that the financial crisis, which subsequently became a global economic crisis, was due primarily to lenders in the United States rather than the European Union is irrelevant now. The main lesson from these developments is that measures must be adopted on a global scale in view of the great degree of interconnectedness between the world's financial markets and economies.

The measures adopted at European Union level must be viewed in the context of measures adopted at national level in member states (fiscal measures, tax stimulation and unprecedented state aid in connection with rescuing financial institutions in European Union

member states) and at global level, above all the undertakings made at G20 level and by the *Basel Committee on Banking Supervision*.

The most important instruments or proposals at European Union level in 2009 were:

- The implementation of measures under the *European Economic Recovery Plan* adopted in December 2008.
- The approval of legislative proposals to introduce a new framework for the supervision of the European Union financial market (the general approach). The Council of the European Union agreed on the establishment of a new independent body for macro-prudential supervision of the European Union financial market, the *European Systemic Risk Board*, whose main role will be to monitor and assess potential risks to financial stability resulting from macroeconomic developments and developments in the financial system as a whole. It will be assisted by three new European supervisory agencies for banking, insurance and the capital market (i.e. micro-prudential supervision).
- A regulation covering rating agencies at European Union level was approved during the Czech Presidency, with European and global impact. Rating agencies were accused of contributing substantially to the financial crisis by failing to reflect the worsening situation on capital markets promptly and appropriately in their ratings. The regulation covers the requirements for registering rating agencies in the European Union, the rules for publishing ratings, the avoidance of conflicts of interest and the transparency of rating agencies. A new element consists of rules for agencies outside Europe that publish ratings used by financial institutions within the European Union, and better coordination of the supervision of rating agencies in the form of a collegium of supervisory bodies. The agreement reached on a compromised wording of the regulation is a significant step towards improving the transparency of the financial markets.
- The amendment of the Capital Adequacy Directive is the fundamental regulation governing the operations of lending institutions in the European Union, and represents the first significant contribution to a thorough revision of the banking regulation system and the eliminating of its principal shortcomings, which became apparent in

the course of the financial crisis. The amendment introduces stricter rules for greater commitments, and the greater harmonisation of hybrid capital instruments. It also fundamentally revises the securitisation aspects of the regulatory framework.

- The European Commission also presented a draft regulation covering the managers of alternative investments funds (private equity funds, hedge funds).

In addition to the above measures adopted in response to the crisis, the *European Central Bank* responded by reducing the basic interest rate to a historical minimum of 1%. By the end of 2009, some signs of stabilisation could be observed and there were positive signals from some member states indicating a recovery in economic activity.

Energy and climate change

Energy security was one of the central themes of the Czech Presidency in the first half of 2009. The gas crisis in January confirmed the importance of a common approach by the European Union. On 12 January 2009, the Czech Presidency convened an extraordinary meeting of the Energy Council where the gas crisis was the sole item on the agenda. At the meeting, ministers agreed on the need to adopt regional and bilateral solidarity measures and improve storage, connections and the diversification of gas transport routes and sources. The trade dispute between Russia and Ukraine was resolved with the assistance of the Czech Presidency, and gas supplies to Europe were resumed.

Energy security also dominated the February meeting of the *Energy Council*, where the 2nd *Strategic Energy Review* was approved. The review defines the main challenges and priorities for energy in the European Union for the medium and long terms. The emphasis is mainly on the following areas: the diversification of supplies and infrastructure needs; external energy relations; oil and gas stocks; crisis response mechanisms; energy efficiency and the optimal use of the European Union's indigenous energy resources. The review defined six priority infrastructure projects: a Baltic interconnection plan; the Southern Gas Corridor; the building of terminals for liquefied natural gas (LNG); a Mediterranean energy ring; the development of North-South gas and electricity interconnections; the construction of offshore wind generators.

The Czech Presidency worked on multiple aspects of energy security, covering both the issue of securing investments for energy projects and creating room for negotiations on further options for international cooperation with third countries, i.e. producer and transit countries for energy and energy raw materials.

A crucial development for investments was the adoption of the *European Economic Recovery Plan*, which includes funds to reinforce the European Union's energy security: of total funds of EUR 5 billion, EUR 3.98 billion will be invested in energy projects, specifically for the energy infrastructure (gas storage facilities; connecting energy grids; the Nabucco project), offshore wind-generated energy and capturing and storing carbon. At the end of 2009, the European Commission decided to allocate funds to specific projects, including a number of investments planned for the Czech Republic's gas transport infrastructure.

Thanks to work by the Czech Presidency, on 12 June 2009 the Energy Council agreed on a directive on maintaining minimal stocks of oil and oil products.

At the end of April 2009, the fourth *European Union – Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Energy* was held in Moscow, attended by the Czech Presidency, the Commission and the future Swedish Presidency, where negotiations also covered strengthening the European Union – Russia energy dialogue and improving energy relations and mutual understanding in the near future. Progress was also made on a joint initiative for an early warning mechanism, and an agreement was retained on a monitoring mission for gas flows from Russia to the European Union through Ukraine.

An important step to strengthen European Union energy security by diversifying energy suppliers and transit routes was the holding of the *Southern Corridor – New Silk Road* summit on 8 May 2009, where a joint declaration was signed by the European Union, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Egypt, which should form the basis for more intensive cooperation between regions and individual states. Representatives of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan expressed their support for the Southern Corridor and agreed to the inclusion of their countries in the declaration.

At the end of May, the fourth plenary meeting of the *European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF)* was held in Prague. ENEF was set up as a platform to discuss the opportunities and risks of nuclear energy. The talks covered reports and proposals from working groups

concerning transparency and risks and opportunities in nuclear energy. At the close of the meeting the role of science and research was emphasised in ensuring the further development of nuclear energy.

During the Czech Presidency, the nuclear safety directive was adopted, establishing the Community framework for nuclear safety. The adoption of that directive will contribute to maintaining high safety levels at nuclear facilities operating in member states, and to increasing the number of such facilities.

In autumn 2009, under the Swedish Presidency, member states began discussing a draft regulation to secure natural gas supplies, aimed at strengthening their stability. The Spanish Presidency intends to complete the discussion of the proposal, including agreement with the European Parliament, by mid-2010. Another piece of related legislation is a review of the Council regulation on the obligation to notify the Commission of investment projects for the energy infrastructure. The European Commission's proposal anticipates extending the notification duty to include plans for investments in bio fuels and the capturing and storing of carbon.

In external relations, the European Union decided to strengthen energy cooperation with the United States. The first *European Union – US Energy Council* was held on 4 November 2009 in Washington. Among the main themes discussed by the Council and its working groups are cooperation on energy security, energy policies, science and research, and cooperation with third states.

In relation to increasing energy efficiency and economy, the Czech Presidency continued discussions of measures aimed at reducing consumption. Negotiations were concluded on a revised eco design directive, which member states had agreed during the French Presidency.

An integrated and fully liberalised internal market is an essential precondition for a future common energy policy, and also an instrument to increase energy security in Europe. In that field the Czech Presidency managed to negotiate an agreement on a third liberalisation package containing two directives and three regulations on electricity and gas. The Czech Presidency negotiated the option of three ways of separating transit/transport from energy companies' other operations in electricity and gas. The package includes the founding of the

Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), and a compromise was reached on the issue of the division of powers between ACER and national regulatory bodies. That agreement will contribute to a greater degree of integration, liberalisation and regional cooperation on the energy market. Following the failure of negotiations at the June and July meetings of the Energy Council, in December member states decided that ACER would be based in Ljubljana.

Energy was also on the agenda at many other summits and ministerial meetings with third countries, namely Pakistan (Prague, 13 March 2009), Japan (Prague, 4 May 2009), Canada (Prague, 6 May 2009), the Rio Group (Prague, 13 May 2009), China (Prague, 20 May 2009), Russia (Khabarovsk, 21-22 May 2009), South Korea (Seoul, 23 May 2009), ASEM (Hanoi, 23-24 May 2009), the countries of Central Asia (Dushanbe, 29-30 May 2009), Nigeria (Prague, 9 June 2009), West African states (Luxembourg, 16 June 2009) and OPEC (Vienna, 23 June 2009). In the latter half of the year, energy was discussed at a ministerial meeting for the European Union and Central Asia (Brussels, 15 September 2009), the European Union – Brazil summit (Stockholm, 6 October 2009), a conference on renewable energy sources with Mediterranean and Gulf states (Brussels, 9 October 2009) and at summits in India (New Delhi, 6 November 2009), Russia (Stockholm, 18 November 2009), China (Nanjing, 30 November 2009) and Ukraine (Kiev, 4 December 2009).

In climate change, the Czech and Swedish Presidencies of the Council of the European Union in 2009 were dominated by preparations for European Union negotiations during the *15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the *5th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol*, which was held on 7-18 December 2009 in Copenhagen.

During the Czech Presidency, on 6 April 2009 the European Union Council of Ministers formally approved the climate and energy package, which was passed by the European Parliament on 17 December 2008. That concluded the process of negotiating a set of legislative measures to combat climate change. Specifically that concerns (1) a revision of the directive on improving and extending the system for trading allowances for greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the commitment to reduce emissions to 20% of 1990 levels by 2020; (2) a decision to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% in order to meet the Communities' commitments to reduce emissions by 2020, which divides the total reduction

target between member states in sectors not covered by the system for trading allowances for greenhouse gas emissions such as transport, housing, agriculture and waste; (3) a directive on capturing and storing carbon in underground geological formations, which established the legal framework to develop that technology and should help achieve the long-term global target of reducing emissions to 50% of 1990 levels by 2050; (4) a directive to support the production of energy from renewable sources, which sets out the rules for such support and divides between member states the commitment to raise the renewable energy share to 20% by 2020. The approval and introduction of the climate and energy package and its ambitious targets unquestionably strengthened the European Union's negotiating position in the international fight against climate change.

As part of the European Union's preparations for international negotiations on a new global climate architecture, under the Czech and Swedish Presidencies in 2009 conclusions by sector councils were adopted on key issues and principles of the fight against climate change (measures to reduce the impacts of climate change, measures to adapt to climate change, capacity building, technology transfer and financing such measures). That particularly concerns the conclusions of the Environment Council (2 March 2009, 25 June 2009, 21 October 2009 and 23 November 2009), the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (10 March 2009, 9 June 2009 and 20 October 2009) and the General Affairs Council (16-17 November 2009). The issue of climate change and preparations for the Copenhagen Summit were also the subject of talks in the European Council (19-20 March 2009, 18-19 June 2009, 29-30 October 2009 and 10-11 December 2009).

Throughout 2009, the Czech and Swedish Presidencies held numerous talks with key third countries (e.g. Japan, the United States, Canada, China, India, and Russia) aimed at retaining the European Union's leading position in the fight against climate change and achieving the desired outcome from the Copenhagen Summit. In order to promote the European Union's position and ascertain the positions of third countries, the Czech and Swedish Presidencies organised official demarches under the *Green Diplomacy Network*. The first was dispatched to 18 third countries and two regional groupings on 7 May 2009 and covered measures to reduce the impacts of climate change as well as international financing. The second demarche was sent to 57 third countries on 9 November 2009 and was aimed at the comparability of reduction commitments by developed countries, measures to reduce the

impacts of climate change in developing countries, and international financing. The results of both demarches were used in the European Union's preparations for the Copenhagen Summit.

The Copenhagen Summit opened on 7 December 2009. During the conference, the positions of important regional groupings (*G-77, Africa Group, Umbrella Group*, small island states, the least developed countries, etc.) and individual countries were presented. The European Union's position was presented by the Swedish Presidency. The dispute between developed and developing countries over the continuation of the *Kyoto Protocol* was not resolved during the conference. The most important negotiations were those between the United States, China and India. On 18 December 2009, high-level representatives of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change took note of the *Copenhagen Accord*, a political declaration that is not legally binding. It contains no new reduction commitments from developed and the more advanced developing countries, while affirming that climate change is a global threat, and calls for global warming to be kept below 2°C. For financing, developed countries should generate USD 30 billion in 2010-2012, which will be available to developing countries for adaptation and mitigation measures. Adaptation measures in the least developed countries, small island states and Africa remain a priority. By 2020 developed countries should mobilise annual funds of USD 100 million for the needs of developing countries. Those funds will come from private and public sources and the greater part of them should be distributed via the *Copenhagen Green Climate Fund*. The Copenhagen Accord also highlights the importance of adaptation measures and reducing emissions from deforestation, and establishes a new mechanism to transfer new technologies. The Copenhagen Accord should be reviewed in 2015.

Following the outcome of the final preparatory talks on 2-6 November 2009 in Barcelona, the European Union no longer expected that a legally binding instrument would be adopted to replace the Kyoto Protocol. It did however expect there would be greater ambitions among developed and the more advanced developing countries, especially the United States, China and India. Nevertheless, the political will embodied by the Copenhagen Accord can be viewed as a foundation for a future global climate architecture whose adoption will be sought by the European Union at the forthcoming climate change conference in 2010 in Mexico.

In the environmental field, progress was made under the Czech Presidency in negotiating a draft *directive on industrial emissions*. The draft directive extends the scope of the existing *directive on integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC)* to additional industrial activities, namely waste, waste water treatment and the manufacture of wood-based composites.

The Czech Presidency also held intensive negotiations on a review of the regulation on substances that deplete the ozone layer (i.e. chlorofluorocarbons, which contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer in the stratosphere that protects the Earth from hazardous ultraviolet radiation), which resulted in agreement between the Council and the European Parliament at the first reading.

A great success for the Czech Presidency was coordinating the work of member states at the 25th Session of the *Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme*, held in February 2009 in Nairobi. The Czech Presidency managed to negotiate 17 decisions on environmental protection, the most important of which was a decision on chemical substances.

The European Union's external relations with third countries in trade and economics

Under European Union trade policy, in 2009 the Czech Republic continued to promote its trade policy interests, which are in line with its membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The Czech Republic advocates a policy of liberalising the international trade in goods and services and the removal of any tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, as well as compliance with intellectual property rights, the liberalisation of access to public contracts and support for access to world markets.

The financial crisis and the global recession presented challenges for the European Union's foreign trade policy. Conclusions from a number of discussion forums confirmed there was a general recognition that the way out of the crisis involves rejecting protectionism, opening new markets, removing tariff and non-tariff barriers and supporting financing for trade transactions. The Czech Presidency contributed to the launch of monitoring protectionist measures in the WTO and a similar process in the European Union, which was continued under the Swedish Presidency. The aforementioned priorities such as the monitoring process

and allocating funds to finance trade were confirmed at the G20 summits in April in London and in September 2009 in Pittsburgh. Again, the commitment to work for an ambitious and balanced agreement under the *Doha Development Agenda (DDA)* in the WTO was confirmed. However, despite that declared commitment, negotiations on the DDA made no progress. The commitment was reconfirmed at the *WTO Ministerial Conference* at the turn of November and December 2009 in Geneva, which, with the active contribution of the European Union, further confirmed the necessity of preserving and strengthening the international trade system.

During its Presidency, the Czech Republic sought – in line with the *Global Europe* strategy – to make maximum progress in bilateral negotiations, and to liberalise trade between the European Union and third countries. Among the Czech Presidency's greatest achievements were the opening of talks on a *Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement* with Canada at the European Union – Canada summit in May 2009 in Prague, and significant progress in talks on the signing of a *Free Trade Agreement* with South Korea. At the close of the Swedish Presidency, there was also progress in talks between the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where the European Union decided to open negotiations on individual free trade agreements with the ASEAN countries, starting with Singapore.

In line with the *European Neighbourhood Policy*, relations with eastern and southern neighbours were strengthened under the Czech and Swedish Presidencies. Progress was made in talks with the Mediterranean countries, where one of the outputs from the ministerial conference in December 2009 was the *Euromed Trade Roadmap beyond 2010*. Directives were also adopted for talks on future Association Agreements with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, part of which will be an agreement on free trade.

Both Presidencies also sought to continue talks on economic and trade cooperation with the European Union's main trading partners – the United States (where a positive outcome was the resolving of a dispute on hormone treated meat), China and Russia. Talks on the possibility of Russia joining the WTO, which would crucially influence trade relations, made no progress owing to a change of position by Russia, which is now working to enter the WTO in a customs union with Kazakhstan and Belarus.

An important moment in the European Union's relations with third countries was the signing of an agreement on bananas with certain Latin American countries at the end of 2009,

which should mark the end of a long dispute in the WTO and significantly enhance the European Union's credibility within the WTO system.

In implementing the *Global Europe* trade strategy and in line with the priorities set out in resumed discussions on the functioning of the system of instruments to safeguard trade, the Czech Presidency focused on the issue of transparent trade policy measures, where under the Czech Presidency a broad consensus was reached among member states, resulting in a proposal by the European Commission for a range of changes to current practice, leading to greater transparency in trade policy measures. The implementation of those measures began under the Swedish Presidency and will continue in 2010 in line with the timetable.

The Czech Presidency also continued to implement the revised Market Access Strategy, which should simplify access for European enterprises to the markets of third countries. It paid special attention to the rapidly developing markets of *BRIC* (Brazil, Russia, India and China). The Swedish Presidency continued that work and maintained an active stance against protectionism and in favour of removing barriers to international trade at the forefront of the *common commercial policy*.

Both Presidencies also supported efforts to improve the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, which would contribute to establishing equal terms for competition.

Under the Czech Presidency, a prolonged discussion on improving the terms for export credits for equipment to produce renewable energy sources was successfully concluded after several years, and an outdated agreement on the terms for credits for nuclear energy was updated.

Partnerships with the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Region (ACP) under the *Cotonou Agreement* from 2000 (revised in 2005) are an important aspect of the European Union's external relations. In 2009, the process of negotiating *Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)* continued. EPAs should become the basis of broad economic partnerships between the European Union and the ACP countries, aimed at supporting trade as a catalyst for development and regional integration in those countries. Since joining the European Union, the Czech Republic has actively participated in the process of negotiating EPAs, and it supports the European Union's greater economic and development cooperation

with the ACP countries. In 2009, several provisional EPAs were signed: agreements with Cameroon, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Pacific Region states and states in Southern and Eastern Africa joined the full EPA with the Cariforum group and the provisional agreement with Côte d'Ivoire signed in 2008. From the first group of eight EPAs signed in 2007, agreements with Ghana and the East African Community have yet to be signed. Talks are underway in parallel on full regional agreements, which should eventually replace the present provisional agreements.

The European Economic Area

Czech foreign policy coordinated the Czech involvement in the *European Economic Area (EEA)*, bringing together the European Union member states, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as European Union relations with the countries of the *European Free Trade Association (EFTA)*. In 2009, intensive cooperation continued as part of the single internal market, based on four fundamental freedoms – the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital – as well as cooperation in individual sectors (e.g. agriculture, transport and the EFTA countries' participation in European Union community programmes).

Regarding treaties, under the Czech Presidency negotiations continued on a draft agreement on cooperation between the European Union and Liechtenstein against fraud and other crimes harming their financial interests. The agreement is aimed at extending administrative and legal cooperation in criminal cases, and at making the fight against fraud and other financial crime more effective. The agreement covers administrative and legal cooperation for direct and indirect taxes.

In May 2009, the European Commission presented a draft mandate to negotiate an agreement with Andorra, Monaco and San Marino to combat fraud, and an agreement with Switzerland to combat fraud and other illegal activity that harms financial interests, and to ensure administrative cooperation on direct and indirect taxes. That cooperation should cover not only tax fraud and tax evasion, but also the correct assessment of taxes.

With regard to financial contributions from the EEA-EFTA countries (Norway, Liechtenstein and Island), which have a function in offsetting social and economic differences within the European Economic Area, during the Czech Presidency negotiations began on continuing the financial mechanisms of the European Economic Area and Norway. The

contributions from EEA-EFTA countries also work to balance the benefits the countries enjoy from participating in the single internal market within the European Economic Area. The previous five-year financial instrument, from which the Czech Republic drew a total of EUR 110.91 million, ended in April 2009. Negotiations on extending the financial instruments to cover 2009-2014 continued under the Swedish Presidency. At present, there are drafts of both new agreements on continuing the financial mechanisms of the European Economic Area and Norway, which the European Commission and the EEA-EFTA countries endorsed on 18 December 2009. The total financial allocation from those mechanisms for 2009-2014 is EUR 1.789 billion. Under the existing proposal, the Czech Republic would draw a total of EUR 130.4 million. However, given that some member states still have reservations over the distribution principle determining the amounts allocated to member states, negotiations are continuing under the Spanish Presidency.

Among the main topics discussed at the EEA Council, which meets twice a year, alongside the traditional review of the functioning of the EEA Agreement, there was an emphasis on coordinated and comprehensive action to revive global growth and restore confidence in financial markets, as well as energy and climate change, the Lisbon Strategy, marine and Arctic policy and EEA/Norway financial mechanisms. In EEA political dialogue at high and working levels, current issues in external relations, including crisis areas, were discussed.

The European Union's new macro-regional strategies

The concept of macro-regions came out of member states' need to resolve certain problems at multinational but not pan-European level. In preparations for the first strategy – the *Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region* – the concept of a macro-region was defined as an area covering a number of administrative regions but with sufficient issues in common to justify a single strategic approach.

The goals of a macro-regional strategy are derived from the definition of the region's needs, and therefore the content of individual macro-regional strategies will vary. Their common element is adherence to the fundamental principles of budgetary and legislative neutrality (no additional funds are to be claimed under the European Union's current budget and there is no need for any new legislation), subsidiarity and the option of involving countries that are not members of the European Union. Projects must have a truly regional

scope and benefit multiple countries in the region; projects with purely national benefits cannot be included in the strategy.

Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The first macro-regional European Union strategy is the *Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (SBSR)*. The participants are the European Union member states bordering the Baltic Sea, i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. Of non-member states it is anticipated that Russia and Norway will participate. The Czech Republic is not directly involved, but attends negotiations as an observer. The strategy was adopted on 10 June 2009 as the outcome of a process launched in December 2007.

The SBSR is defined as “an integrated framework that allows the European Union and member states to identify needs and allocate the available resources enabling the Baltic Sea Region to enjoy a sustainable environment and optimal economic and social development”. The SBSR focuses on the environment (especially reducing pollution in the Baltic), economic prosperity (supporting innovation in small and medium enterprises), and improving the accessibility and attractiveness of the region by improving transport access and the safety of ports and transport routes.

The SBSR includes an action plan defines 15 priorities, including preserving biodiversity, reducing the content of harmful substances, strengthening the sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fishing, improving access to energy and improving maritime safety. The implementation of the strategy will also involve the Nordic Council, non-governmental organisations, and the European Investment Bank and other financial institutions.

The Danube Strategy

This initiative is a response to internal political expectations from the economic sector, which has long expressed its interest in strengthening cooperation in the Danube region. After Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007, the Danube became one of the European Union’s key transport corridors, which should be appropriately reflected in European policies.

The strategy was initiated by Austria and Romania, whose foreign ministers wrote a letter in June 2008 requesting the President of the European Commission José Manuel

Barroso to consider the new situation and commit to greater action in this respect. In parallel, Germany, especially Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, was also active. In its conclusions from its meeting in June 2009 the European Council invited the European Commission to present a European Union strategy for the Danube region before the end of 2010.

The Danube Strategy will probably be based on the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. It is expected that broader expert consultations will commence in spring 2010. The strategy should be finished by May 2010, followed by formal approval processes in the European Commission, and ultimately it should be discussed and adopted at the European Council's meeting in December 2010. Implementation will begin in 2011 under Hungary's Presidency of the Council of the European Union; Hungary is also actively promoting the Danube Strategy.

The participant countries will be Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. It is also expected that countries that are not European Union members will be brought into the project on the basis of partnership agreements or bilateral treaties (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine).

The main themes for the Danube Strategy will be transport, infrastructure (including energy), transport access, the environment (water management, biodiversity, preventing natural disasters, cooperation for crisis situations) and social and economic aspects (cooperation on economic, educational and cultural matters).

Border protection, Schengen cooperation and visa policy

In visa policy, the Czech Presidency was successful in securing the adoption of a key document that harmonises the fragmentary Community legal instruments: the *Visa Code*. The code will also be the standard legal basis for collecting fingerprints from visa applicants as part of the *Visa Information System (VIS)*. Immediately after the Visa Code was published in September 2009, the *Visa Committee*, guided by the European Commission, began work on a guide to harmonise the application of the Visa Code at the visa departments of the Schengen countries' diplomatic missions. The guide will be published before the Visa Code comes into force on 5 April 2010.

Under the Czech Presidency, as part of preparations to launch the VIS, a mechanism was put in place to monitor the status of preparations for national VIS projects on the basis of regularly updated surveys. The issue of the gradual introduction of the VIS at diplomatic missions in individual regions was also discussed, as were the questions of an information campaign and training for the VIS. By the end of the Swedish Presidency the reference schedule for activating the VIS was December 2010.

In the *SIS II (Schengen Information System, second generation)* project, the Czech Presidency continued from the outcome of negotiations underway since October 2008 that points to the necessity of improving the management of the project and carrying out analyses and tests of SIS II aimed at finding errors in the system and proposing solutions for them. The Czech Presidency worked on preparations for a backup solution to completing SIS II, based on a fundamental renovation of SIS 1+ and its subsequent extended functionality to satisfy SIS II. The June meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council decided to continue SIS II as planned, and defined the conditions under which the project may be cancelled and switched to the backup scenario. The completion date is anticipated to be the end of 2011.

The adoption, in the first half of 2009, of an amendment to the regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents is of crucial significance for the use of biometric data in European travel documents.

In March, the European Commission presented proposals for two regulations covering the free movement of nationals from third countries resident within the Schengen Area on the basis of long-term national visas. The Czech Presidency produced a study on the subject mapping the regulations for long-term visas in individual member states. Under the Swedish Presidency, the Council's position on those proposals was finalised and general agreement was reached with the European Parliament. Both regulations should come into force at the same time as the Visa Code.

Concerning visa policy for third countries, significant progress was made in the process of visa liberalisation for the Western Balkans. Following a report presented in May by the European Commission, in July the Council approved the conclusions, according to which visas should be lifted for the countries concerned that satisfy all the criteria, ideally by the end of 2009. The Council subsequently decided to abolish visa requirements for persons holding

biometric passports from Serbia, Macedonia/FYROM and Montenegro (but not Kosovo). The European Union simultaneously declared its willingness to abolish visa requirements for the citizens of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina once they have satisfied the relevant criteria.

In 2009, agreements were negotiated on abolishing visa requirements between the European Community and the following island states: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Barbados, Mauritius, the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis and the Seychelles. A similar agreement was negotiated with Brazil. The Czech Presidency was also successful in preliminary discussions on the possible abolition of visa requirements for holders of Taiwanese passports.

However, an unprecedented step by Canada, which was the only third country to reintroduce a visa for a Schengen country, the Czech Republic, had a negative impact on European Union visa policy. The Swedish Presidency worked hard on this issue alongside the European Commission. In October 2009, the European Commission presented a special report to the Council whose conclusions stated that if Canada a) does not ease the formalities for processing visas and b) does not present by the end of 2009 a proposal (road map) leading to the abolition of visa requirements for Czech citizens, the European Commission will propose the introduction of visa requirements for certain groups of Canadian citizens (probably holders of diplomatic and official passports). Following the pressure from the Czech Republic and the European Union, Canada opened a visa department at its embassy in Prague at the end of 2009, but the second demand has yet to be met. The Czech Republic is working closely with the European Commission on this problem, and awaits a proposal from the European Commission at the beginning of 2010.

In 2009, significant progress was made in the European Union's agreements with certain third countries on easing visa arrangements (*visa facilitation agreements*). On the basis of a decision by the European Council on 1 September 2008, intensive negotiations continued on an agreement with Georgia. Referring to the conclusions of the Eastern Partnership summit in Prague, in November the Council instructed the European Commission to produce a mandate for negotiations on visa facilitation with Belarus. Under the Swedish Presidency, work began on renegotiating the present agreements with Russia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Community law and Czech foreign policy

Introduction

Within the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *Community Law Department (CLD)* monitors and analyses developments in European Union law. It produces standpoints on matters concerning Community law for the purposes of the Czech Republic's foreign policy. As in previous years, in 2009 its work included assessing the compliance of proposed Czech legislation and international treaties coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Community law and interpreting the relevant provisions of Community law. In 2009, the majority of expert opinions on the interpretation of Community legislation concerned the implementation of the *Lisbon Treaty*, the European Union's external relations and the Common Foreign and Security Policy. As in the previous year, in 2009 the CLD reviewed the legal and linguistic aspects of a range of agreements, wherein documents comprising European Union primary law – especially the *Lisbon Treaty* and the *Euratom Treaty* – were subjected to a detailed legal and linguistic analysis.

2009 was a very intensive year for the CLD, due partly to the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and partly to the completion of the ratification of the *Lisbon Treaty* and the start of its implementation.

The work of the CLD during the Czech Presidency

At the turn of 2008/2009, the Czech Presidency took over from the French Presidency the embryonic debate on reviewing the expediency of inserting *political clauses* (HR – Human Rights, WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction, ICC – International Criminal Court, CT – Counter Terrorism, SALW – Small Arms and Light Weapons) into agreements with third states. European Union member states agreed that the practice contributes to promoting the European Union's political and security objectives and should be retained, albeit in a more rational and systematic form. After several months of tough negotiating in the Antici group, which was moderated by the CLD for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, agreement was reached on the uniform rules, which were incorporated into a document called the *Common approach on the use of political clauses*. The rules primarily cover the types of agreements that should be included in the various political clauses and what their scope should be; which of them are considered essential elements of an agreement (HR and part 1 of WMD); which of them are

tied to a suspensive clause; when it is possible to defer the suspension of an agreement by commencing an expedited dialogue leading to the remedying of illegitimacy through agreement between the parties concerned; finally, the rules strengthen the role of COREPER as a horizontal body authorised to decide on the application of the rules. The document was approved by COREPER II on 3 June 2009.

The CLD's role in completing the ratification and beginning the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

It should be recalled that at the close of the preceding year the Constitutional Court ruled in Judgement Pl. ÚS 19/08 of 26 November 2008 that the *Lisbon Treaty*, specifically the articles queried by the Senate, did not contravene the constitutional order. Subsequently at the beginning of 2009, both chambers of the Czech Parliament resumed talks on the treaty. In connection with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the relevant committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate requested the elaboration of a bill concerning the *limited mandate* for the government in certain matters in European Union decision making in the form of an amendment of the rules of procedure for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

(This concerns parliamentary control of the application of the transitional clauses [the general and special passerelle clauses] that permit a change in the method for adopting legal acts from unanimous voting in the Council to qualified majority voting, or from a special legislative procedure to an ordinary legislative procedure, and the flexibility clauses, which under certain conditions allow a legal act without any explicit legal basis in the Treaties to be adopted. It also concerns the procedure for expressing consent to a simplified procedure to amend the Treaties pursuant to Article 48 paragraph 6 of the Treaty on European Union, the procedure for controlling whether draft European Union acts are in accord with the principle of subsidiarity, and the procedure for filing an action with the Court of Justice of the European Union regarding a breach of the principle of subsidiarity by an act of the European Union.)

The Chamber of Deputies passed the bill on 19 March 2009 (Resolution No. 1107) and the Senate on 6 May 2009 (Resolution No. 153). That satisfied the essential precondition for both chambers to proceed to a vote on granting their consent to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

The Chamber of Deputies had discussed the Lisbon Treaty at its second reading on 18 February 2009 and expressed its consent to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in Resolution No. 1072. The Senate discussed the Lisbon Treaty in a plenary session on 6 May 2009, and in Resolution No. 154 of 6 May 2009 it expressed its consent to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. On that day the Parliament of the Czech Republic granted its consent to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in the sense of Article 10a paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Czech Republic.

However, that did not end the discussion of the Lisbon Treaty. Immediately after the Senate had consented to ratification, the President of the Czech Republic announced that he would not yet sign the ratification document as he wished to give a group of senators, who had indicated their intention to have the Lisbon Treaty reviewed once more by the Constitutional Court, sufficient time to prepare and file a petition.

The group of senators made full use of the time allowed, filing their first petition, for a review of the amendments to the rules of procedure of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (Act No. 162/2009 Coll.), on 1 September 2009. That petition did not formally constitute an obstacle to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, but was very closely related to the process of its approval in the Czech Republic. The government was, therefore, requested to present its standpoint. As in the previous year (Judgement Pl. ÚS 19/08; see above), the government's written standpoint was produced by the European Affairs Office and the CLD. The government naturally pleaded in favour of the constitutionality of the contested "Lisbon amendments" to the rules of procedure, and was again successful. On 6 October 2009, the Constitutional Court decided in Judgement Pl. ÚS 26/09 that the senators' petition was clearly unfounded.

Almost one month after filing that petition, on 29 September 2009, the group of senators filed another petition for the Constitutional Court to review the conformity of the Lisbon Treaty with the constitutional order of the Czech Republic. By law the government was a party in the proceedings. The government's written standpoint was produced by the European Affairs Office and the CLD, and in it the government again explained in detail why in its opinion the Lisbon Treaty, as a whole and in the points contested, is in conformity with the Czech Constitution. The Constitutional Court ruled in the government's favour, and in

Judgement Pl. ÚS 29/09 of 3 November 2009 it decided that the Lisbon Treaty was not inconsistent with the constitutional order of the Czech Republic.

That dispelled all lingering doubts, and nothing stood in the way of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, and the President of the Czech Republic could sign the ratification document. (*The judgement of the Constitutional Court was delivered to the parties in the proceedings immediately after it was announced, under an accelerated procedure.*) That same day, just a few hours after the Constitutional Court had announced its judgement, the President signed the ratification document.

The Czech Republic was the last European Union member state to ratify the Lisbon Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009. That marked the start of a new phase in the CLD's work on the treaty, which will extend into 2010 and beyond: the implementation phase. The institutions and mechanisms envisaged by the Lisbon Treaty must now be brought to life. That requires a range of legislation to implement it, as well as political and tacit agreements. At the end of the year, the CLD therefore began to work on issues such as how to put into practice the *new comitology* (see Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union [the former Treaty on European Union as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon] – see below), how the panel that selects judges and advocates-general for the Court of Justice of the European Union should work (see Article 255 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union), and how best to satisfy the European Union's obligation (see Article 6 paragraph 2 of the Treaty on European Union as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon) to accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (*Convention of the Council of Europe [CETS No. 005], Rome, 4 November 1950, published under Notification No. 209/1992 Coll.*). However, it will be necessary to wait until the Report on the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic 2010 is published for the answer to those and other questions.

Comitology in 2009

The term *comitology* refers to the rules by which the Commission adopts implementing regulations for legislation (adopted by the Council or by the European Parliament and the Council), and their main role is to submit the Commission's implementation powers to the scrutiny of member states and institutions.

The Lisbon Treaty split the adoption of implementation regulations by the Commission into two parts: *acts under delegated power* (Article 290 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union) and *implementation acts* (Article 291 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union). Put simply, the first part covers implementation regulations of a general, quasi-legislative nature, while the second part covers implementation regulations of a largely technical nature.

The basis for adopting acts under delegated power is a Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (Com (2009) 673 final) with the title *Implementation of Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*. That communication was adopted following discussion with the European Parliament and the Council and its annex includes models that will be inserted into proposals for legislative acts for the purposes of conferring power on the Commission.

For the implementation of Article 291 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union it is envisaged that a “comitological” Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council will be adopted to replace Council Decision 1999/468/EC. Spain has listed the adoption of that regulation as a priority for its Presidency in the first half of 2010.

The Czech Republic and the European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy

2009 can be regarded as a turning point, not only in view of developments in relations between the Czech Republic and the *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)*, where there was qualitative shift thanks to the work of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, but also in view of developments in the Common Foreign and Security Policy itself in the light of the institutional changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

In the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In that role the Czech Republic coordinated European Union activities, represented European Union standpoints in external relations and conducted negotiations with the European Union’s partners. The Presidency presented an opportunity for the Czech Republic to reinforce its standing in the European Union and extend relations between the Czech Republic and the Common Foreign and Security Policy. In the latter half of 2009, the

Czech Republic continued to be actively involved in the Common Foreign and Security Policy, albeit now as an “ordinary” European Union member state.

The *Lisbon Treaty* came into force on 1 December 2009 and introduced fundamental institutional changes in the Common Foreign and Security Policy. However, the nature of the Common Foreign and Security Policy remains unchanged, and is still based on an intergovernmental principle – i.e. European Union member states have the right of veto. Among the most important changes are the creation of the new post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the creation of a European diplomatic service (the *European External Action Service*), and the facilitating of permanent structured cooperation in the European Security and Defence Policy. Some of the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty will have to be elaborated in more detail, so their impact has not been felt immediately and implementation will take place in 2010. The Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in October 2009 left insufficient time to work on preparations for implementation.

On 1 December 2009, Catherine Ashton from the United Kingdom was appointed *High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. She represents the Common Foreign and Security Policy, chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and is Vice-President of the European Commission. That merging of three posts (high representative, presiding country and commissioner for external relations) should facilitate greater coherence in the European Union’s external relations and better coordination and visibility for the European Union in third countries. Specifically the High Representative manages the Common Foreign and Security Policy and performs it in cooperation with member states, making proposals to shape that policy and implementing it on behalf of the Council. She conducts political dialogue with third states on behalf of the European Union and represents the European Union’s positions in international organisations. She ensures that the European Union’s external activities are consistent. Within the European Commission she is responsible for activities relating to external relations and for coordinating other aspects of the European Union’s external activities.

In addition to the High Representative, the Lisbon Treaty also introduced the new post of permanent *President of the European Council*, who covers the external representation of the European Union in matters concerning the Common Foreign and Security Policy at his

level and in that office. The division of roles between the High Representative and the President of the European Council is unclear at present.

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) has been split into two bodies: the General Affairs Council (GAC) and the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), headed by a President who is the High Representative.

According to the Lisbon Treaty, the Political and Security Committee will have a permanent chairperson who will also be the High Representative's deputy. No one has yet been appointed to the post. With a few exceptions, working groups on external relations will also have a permanent chairperson, although the method for appointment and selection is not known at present. The High Representative should present a proposal in 2010.

The Lisbon Treaty will establish the *European External Action Service (EEAS)*, which will support the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in her work. This is a new department in the European Union's institutional structure. The organisation and functioning of the EEAS should be defined in a decision by the Council which should be adopted unanimously on the basis of a proposal by the High Representative and following consultation in the European Parliament and approval by the European Commission. The *Presidency Report on the EEAS*, approved by the European Council on 29-30 October 2009, presents the input from member states on the draft text of the Council decision, a draft of which should be presented by the High Representative by April 2010.

On 1 December 2009, the Delegations of the European Commission were renamed the Delegations of the European Union, but the Swedish Presidency continued to exercise the presidency in third countries until the end of 2009. Taking over the work of the presidency by European Union delegations will be a great challenge in 2010.

Some of the legal instruments of the Common Foreign and Security Policy will be renamed, although there will be no substantial change to their content. The existing "common strategies" will be terminated. The Common Foreign and Security Policy will continue to exclude the adopting of legislative acts. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the new instruments for the Common Foreign and Security Policy will be common approaches, which are defined by the European Council, decisions (adopted by the Council) on actions to be taken by the Union

(formerly “joint actions”), positions which the Union should take (formerly “joint positions”), and systematic cooperation between member states.

In its foreign policy, the European Union continued to extend cooperation with partner states. In *transatlantic relations* in 2009, the European Union successfully established relations with the new American administration. On 5 April 2009, there was an informal summit between the European Union and the United States, and a lunch for foreign ministers. The talks covered important themes: the global economic and financial situation; energy and climate change; the situation in the Middle East, including Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan; Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. Both meetings confirmed the marked accord between European and American views and a shared interest in close cooperation. Following on from the informal summit, in June 2009 the European Council’s conclusions confirmed the strategic importance of transatlantic relations. On 3 November 2009, there was a formal summit between the European Union and the United States, at which both sides, in addition to the aforementioned regional issues, opened cooperation on new areas such as cyber security and energy (the *EU-US Energy Council*). Both sides also confirmed their commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament.

On 6 May 2009, a *European Union – Canada* summit was held in Prague, where it was announced that talks would begin on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. On 1 October 2009, there were talks at the level of foreign ministers, where Canada confirmed that Afghanistan remains one of its key priorities.

The *Western Balkans* remains at the centre of attention for the European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy. Decisions adopted in the course of the year, with the active contribution of the Czech Republic, proved to the inhabitants of the region that the European perspective on the Western Balkans is not merely a political declaration, but a real process that benefits both sides. In line with its perception of the Western Balkans as one of its foreign policy priorities, the Czech Republic supported all steps taken by the European Union to increase the integration of the region into the European Union, including the visa liberalisation process. The Czech Republic paid special attention to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, where it has long supported the work of missions under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and European Union special representatives.

In April 2009, the Czech Presidency arranged for *Montenegro's* application for membership of the European Union to be submitted to the European Commission for its standpoint (*avis*). At the beginning of April, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with *Albania* came into force, and at the end of the month the Czech Presidency received Albania's application for European Union membership. In view of the election process in Albania, the application was presented to the European Commission in November. At the end of the year, there was significant progress in relations with *Serbia*. Following a positive review of Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) by the ICTY Prosecutor, the Council of the European Union decided at its meeting in December to unblock the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters with Serbia, and undertook to return to the question of unblocking the process to ratify its Stabilisation and Association Agreement within the following six months. Shortly thereafter Serbia filed an application for European Union membership.

On 14 October 2009, the European Commission published its regular progress reports for the countries of the Western Balkans as part of its *enlargement package*. The package included a study *Kosovo – Fulfilling its European Perspective*, in which the European Commission put forward a number of practical recommendations aimed at bringing Kosovo into European integration processes while respecting differences of opinion between member states over Kosovo's status. The European Commission also recommended commencing accession negotiations with the *Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. However, in view of the unresolved issue of the country's name, the Council decided to return to the discussion on setting a timetable for accession negotiations during the first half of 2010.

Complementing the stabilisation and association process throughout 2009 was the *visa liberalisation process*, which resulted in the abolition of short-term visas for persons holding biometric passports from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia with effect from 19 December 2009. There was also dialogue on visa liberalisation with Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but those countries have not yet satisfied all the conditions for visa requirements to be lifted.

Throughout the year, the Czech Republic and the European Union paid special attention to two countries in the region, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. In March, the Czech Republic, as the presiding country of the European Union, arranged for the

appointment of a new European Union Special Representative and High Representative for *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Valentin Inzko. Subsequently, the Council of the European Union considered the question of the transformation of the European Union's presence in the country after the work of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) has ended, and related to that the future of both ESDP missions in the country: the EUPM police mission and especially the EUFOR Althea military operation. While for the civilian aspects the March meeting of the Council of the European Union declared that the European Union was ready for the transformation once all the conditions for the closing of the OHR have been satisfied, the future of EUFOR Althea had not been resolved by the end of 2009. The European Union and the United States made significant efforts to arrange for the satisfying of the conditions to close the OHR, especially during the *Butmir talks* from October to December 2009. In its conclusions of 7 December 2009, the Council of the European Union stated that it would not be able to consider any application by Bosnia and Herzegovina for European Union membership until a decision had been taken on the transformation of the OHR.

In relation to *Kosovo*, the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the use of its instruments remain limited in view of the disunity among member states on Kosovo's independence. Five European Union member states do not recognise Kosovo as an independent state, which makes consensual decisions on important matters impossible. The key factors for common Union policy there remain the European Union mission to support the rule of law (EULEX Kosovo), the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for Kosovo and the European perspective for Kosovo in the context of the perspective for the entire Western Balkans region for European Union membership. On 6 April 2009, the EULEX mission achieved full operational capability and began performing in full its functions in justice, the police and customs. However, the effective performance of its work is hampered by difficulties in communicating with Serbian institutions, following support for the mission from the Kosovo Albanian population, and the situation in the north of Kosovo where parallel Kosovan and Serbian structures have a significant influence.

Due in part to the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of the year and the subsequent Swedish Presidency, the European Union's relations with the countries of *Eastern Europe* made significant progress. For the Czech Republic, the most important event was the inauguration of the *Eastern Partnership* policy with the adoption of a joint declaration at a summit in Prague on 7 May 2009. The Eastern Partnership is based on

the *European Neighbourhood Policy* and is an ambitious framework for greater cooperation between the European Union and six countries in Eastern Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). Under the Eastern Partnership, four multilateral thematic platforms for cooperation were launched in the 27+6 format, covering themes ranging from democratic reforms, the rule of law, economic integration, energy security, contacts between people and cooperation in culture.

The Czech Republic and other member states were successful in ensuring that *Belarus*, which is one of the European Union's eastern neighbours, would be included in the Eastern Partnership from the start. In November 2009, the European Union decided to extend the sanctions it applies to some representatives of the regime in Belarus, but it approved the suspension of visa sanctions against the majority of persons on the relevant list with the aim of continuing dialogue between the European Union and the regime. Sanctions have been suspended until October 2010.

The Eastern Partnership opens a range of new opportunities for the partner countries, including extending relations and cooperation via association agreements, comprehensive agreements on free trade zones and agreements on visa facilitation. The greatest progress has been made in negotiations with Ukraine, where successful talks on an Association Agreement resulted in the European Union concluding an *Association Agenda* in November 2009, replacing the Action Plan as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The European Union also accepted a mandate to negotiate with Moldova on an association agreement, with talks scheduled to commence in January 2010. In September 2009, the European Union confirmed its willingness to extend its relations with the Southern Caucasus countries, and it instructed the European Commission to produce drafts of the appropriate negotiation mandates.

As a guarantor of the agreements ending the *conflict between Georgia and Russia* in April 2008, the European Union held intensive dialogue with both countries to ensure implementation of the agreements. The European Union monitoring mission (EUMM) continued to operate in Georgia, although it was still denied access to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The European Union supported and took part in the Geneva talks, which remain the sole platform for dialogue between all the relevant sides in the conflict. The European Union worked at all levels to promote its principled support for Georgia's sovereignty and

territorial integrity. In the latter half of the year, it adopted internal guidelines for contact with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, designed to mitigate their isolation and support dialogue and cooperation between them and the government of Georgia.

In relations with *Russia* in 2009, political dialogue was successfully revived, and it was dominated by the consequences of the crisis in Georgia in 2008, the January crisis in the supply of gas from Russia to the European Union and the global economic crisis, but also by Russian initiatives in European issues and energy security. Talks also continued on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

Another success in the agenda for Eastern Europe was the opening of dialogue on human rights with Georgia, Armenia and Belarus.

Both the Czech and the Swedish Presidencies were very active in the European Union's relations with *Asia and the Pacific* in 2009. In addition to the planned European Union summit with Japan, the Czech Presidency organised other European Union summits with Pakistan (the first such summit ever held), China and South Korea. In the latter half of the year under the Swedish Presidency, there were further European Union summits with China and India.

The European Union's relations with Asia in 2009 were dominated by *Afghanistan and Pakistan*. Given the worsening situation in the region, the Pakistani government's opening of an offensive against extremist and militant forces, the presidential and local elections in Afghanistan in the autumn and the revising of the United States' strategy for the region, including the decision to significantly increase its presence in Afghanistan, the European Union also significantly increased its commitment. In October 2009, the European Union adopted an Action Plan to strengthen its activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, aimed at supporting their overall development and the building of civilian capacities in both countries to allow them to gradually assume responsibility for their own development and future. There was intensive political dialogue with both countries, including the European Union Ministerial Troika with Afghanistan in January and the European Union Ministerial Troika with Pakistan in March.

Following a cooling in relations at the end of 2008, in 2009 the European Union resumed dialogue with China, including the holding of the deferred 11th European Union –

China summit in May 2009 and the 12th European Union – China summit in November 2009. Under the Czech Presidency there was a meeting between the European Union Troika's foreign ministers and China on the sidelines of the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in May in Hanoi. There were also talks on a new *Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation* between the European Union and China. The lifting of the European Union's arms embargo on China remains conditional on improvements in the human rights situation in the country.

In November 2009, there was a European Union – India summit in Delhi, which was dominated by issues related to climate change, energy and terrorism. However, the summit did not identify any satisfactory solutions to the issue of negotiating a free trade agreement between the European Union and India, which according to the European Union should be conditional on the satisfying of certain political and human rights conditions.

The European Union summits with *Japan* and *South Korea* in May 2009 framed the European Union's relations with island states in the Far East. *North Korea* again came to the centre of international attention in 2009 with tests for its ballistic missile programme, which the European Union condemned outright, calling on North Korea to comply with its international undertakings and return to the six-party talks.

Under the Czech Presidency, the European Union opened talks with *Mongolia* on an *Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation*. Negotiations on an Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation also continued with *Vietnam*, and the European Union Troika foreign ministers were received by the Vietnamese Prime Minister on the sidelines of the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in May 2009 in Hanoi. In November 2009, the European Union Ministerial Troika held talks with *Indonesia* where a *Framework Agreement* was signed. In October 2009, the Swedish Presidency organised a meeting between the European Union Ministerial Troika and *Australia*, and in December 2009 a meeting between the European Union Ministerial Troika and *New Zealand*.

On the sidelines of the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in May 2009 in Hanoi, there was the first ever meeting between the European Union Ministerial Troika and Myanmar/Burma. Discussions between the European Union and Myanmar/Burma were subsequently resumed in connection with more intensive contacts with the Burmese regime by the United States and other countries. An important motivation was a request from Aung San Suu Kyi to which the European Union responded by producing a list of positive steps the

European Union could take with regard to Myanmar/Burma, depending on positive steps taken by the Burmese regime. The most important of them concern releasing all political prisoners and the 2010 elections. The second meeting between the European Union Ministerial Troika and Myanmar/Burma took place during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP 15) in December 2009.

In *Central Asia*, the key priority for 2009 remained the implementation of the *European Union Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia*, with the emphasis on political and human rights dialogue, and on energy issues (see the *Southern Corridor* summit in Prague). The Czech Presidency strengthened political dialogue, including the first ever visit by the President of the European Council to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in February 2009. In May 2009, the regular regional political dialogue between the European Union Troika foreign ministers and the countries of Central Asia took place in Dushanbe, and in September 2009, the *European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Conference* was held in Brussels. An important event was the expiration / termination of European Union sanctions against Uzbekistan in November 2009 imposed four years ago in connection with the events in Andijan.

The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the subsequent Swedish Presidency sought to strengthen relations in the Asia-Pacific region through multilateral formats (ASEM, European Union – ASEAN). In May 2009, a meeting of the *ASEM (Asia – Europe Meeting)* foreign ministers in Hanoi accepted membership applications from Russia and Australia, and instructed coordinators to process the applications so that both candidate countries can become members of the platform at the ASEM 8 summit in 2010.

That was immediately followed, again in May, by the *European Union – ASEAN* ministerial meeting, which approved the European Union's accession to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. The European Union also welcomed the establishing of the *ASEAN Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission* in June 2009, which is an important step in establishing ASEAN as an organisation promoting the universality of human rights in the region.

The complicated situation in the *Middle East* required constant attention from the European Union in 2009. The European agenda there was dominated by three themes: the Middle East peace process, Iran and – in the latter half of the year – Yemen. The European

Union paid special attention to mitigating the negative impacts of the Gaza crisis on the population and on the region as a whole. The European Union continued to provide humanitarian aid and negotiate with both sides in the conflict. In that respect, the new American administration headed by Barack Obama sought to revive the Middle East peace process. As an active member of the *Quartet on the Middle East* the European Union concentrated on supporting American efforts by creating favourable conditions for talks between both sides and emphasising a two-state solution to the conflict and working with both sides in an attempt to find agreement on the key principles of that solution.

The international community was disquieted by the worsening political and human rights situation in *Iran* following the presidential elections in June 2009. The European Union expressed its concern in declarations by heads of state and prime ministers, and foreign ministers discussed the issue at several meetings of the GAERC. No progress was made in negotiations with Iran on its nuclear programme. In response to that lack of progress, in December the European Council adopted a declaration in which it clearly expressed its determination to support restrictive measures by the international community, including the option of supporting those measures through autonomous sanctions by the European Union.

In response to the worsening political, security and economic situation, foreign ministers adopted their first ever conclusions on *Yemen* at their meeting in October. In the conclusions they called on the Yemeni government to continue to make every effort to find a solution, and they expressed the European Union's willingness to continue to support Yemen, including the provision of humanitarian and development assistance.

In *Africa*, the European Union concentrated on current crisis areas and ongoing transformation processes. It also paid substantial attention to implementing the Joint Africa – European Union Strategy. A success was marked by the adoption of the roadmaps for individual aspects of the partnership Action Plan at the European Union – African Union Ministerial Troika meeting in April 2009.

The *African Great Lakes* region remained at the centre of the European Union's attention and activities concentrated on humanitarian aid, illegal mineral extraction and sexual violence. The integrated *EUPOL RD Congo* mission and the *EUSEC RD Congo* mission continued their work to support the Congolese government's reforms of the security sector.

In view of the significance of current developments in *Somalia* for the stability of the entire region, the European Union responded by adopting several conclusions of the Council of the European Union, and in December the Council adopted a key document defining the European Union's policy for the Horn of Africa. In that context, the European Union – IGAD Ministerial Troika meeting in March 2009 played an important role. The European Union's first ever naval mission, EU NAVFOR Atalanta, which began in 2008, proved its importance in the fight against piracy and armed raids off the Somali coast.

The European Union continued its engagement in the *Sudan/Darfur* conflict by supporting UN and African Union mediation efforts. The European Union's Special Representative for Sudan paid regular visits to the region, where he conducted dialogues with all the key actors involved in the Darfur crisis and in the implementation of the peace agreement between the north and south of Sudan (CPA). Given the crucial significance of the elections and referendum planned for 2010 and 2011, the European Union devoted substantial attention to preparations for those events. In March 2009, the European Union was confronted with a situation in which the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, and Sudan responded by expelling key non-governmental organisations providing humanitarian aid.

The European Union responded to human rights violations and violence by the security forces against political demonstrators in *Guinea* in September 2009 by adopting restrictive measures against persons associated with or responsible for the violent suppression, or for the stalemate in the country's political situation. The European Union also activated the consultation mechanism under article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement in connection with the constitutional crisis in *Niger* which led to the dissolving of the Constitutional Court and the holding of elections without the opposition. The crisis areas of Western Africa were also discussed at the European Union – ECOWAS Ministerial Troika meeting in June 2009. The European Union responded to the unconstitutional seizure of power in *Madagascar* in a number of declarations and also joined in activities and negotiations aimed at resolving the situation in the country.

The European Union welcomed the forming of a new government in *Zimbabwe* in which all the main political parties were represented, but it continued to make it clear that the first concrete results of the government's work will be crucial for the line it takes in future. At

the talks between the Ministerial Troika and a delegation from Zimbabwe headed by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai in June 2009, political dialogue was formally reopened, and the European Union expressed its interest in new commitment and the restoration of development assistance provided the General Political Agreement is implemented.

The European Union also paid attention to developing relations with its traditional partners on the African continent, and the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union held a Ministerial Troika meeting with South Africa, Cape Verde and Nigeria.

In relations with *Latin America*, a meeting between European Union foreign ministers and the *Rio Group* was held on 11-14 May 2009 in Prague. The ministerial meeting on 13 May was preceded by a number of lower-level talks at which the wording of the joint declaration was agreed. On 14 May 2009, there were ministerial meetings for the European Union and regional groupings in Latin America (VI Joint Council European Union – Mexico, IV European Union – Chile Association Council, European Union Troika – Central America and European Union Troika – Mercosur).

During the Czech Presidency, political dialogue continued with *Cuba*, having been resumed in October 2008. Ministerial talks covered human rights and development cooperation. In connection with those talks, at the June meeting of the European Union's General Affairs and External Relations Council foreign ministers decided to continue the political dialogue.

During the Swedish Presidency, the Third European Union – *Brazil* Summit was held in Stockholm on 6 October 2009, where the main themes were climate change in the light of the imminent UN conference in Copenhagen and the global economic and financial crisis, while foreign policy issues were dominated by the Middle East and Iran's nuclear programme. The summit confirmed substantial agreement between the European Union and Brazil, and the fact that Brazil had become an important player in the world under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

On 4 November 2009, there was another of the regular meetings with *Mexico* under the strategic partnership, where the key themes were the global economic, financial and food crisis, disarmament, the reform of the UN, the fight against corruption and organised crime, terrorism and a range of other regional and bilateral issues.

Under the Swedish Presidency, the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy turned to attempts to reach a consensus on the issue of the overthrow of the *Honduran* President Manuel Zelaya on 28 June 2009. Throughout the European Union supported attempts to reach a political accord, and in particular the plan from San José/Tegucigalpa initiated by the Costa Rican President Óscar Arias.

The issues of *human rights and democracy* form an important part of foreign policy. In March 2009, a conference called *Building Consensus about EU Policies on Democracy Support* was held in collaboration with non-governmental partners, focusing on the need to consolidate the European Union's external policy instruments to direct them more effectively at one of the key foreign policy goals, supporting democracy around the world. In the Czech Republic's opinion, the political and strategic vision for democracy and the European Union's commitment to it should be formulated in the future in a *Consensus on Democracy*.

During 2009, a review of the eight *Guidelines on Human Rights* was completed and they were republished and presented to the public. Significant progress was made in their implementation, where the emphasis was on human rights defenders, the death penalty and violence against women.

Alongside many other activities, it is also worth mentioning the opening of discussions on the pan-European *Shelter City* initiative, aimed at creating a loose network of European cities and regions that could provide temporary refuge for human rights defenders under threat in the countries where they operate.

The Czech Republic and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

For its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic decided to concentrate under the *European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)* on developing civilian capabilities, where it sees the European Union's greatest added value.

At an informal meeting of European Union foreign ministers (Gymnich) in Hluboká nad Vltavou, the Czech Republic presented two non-papers (*Ways Forward in Developing Meaningful ESDP Civilian Capabilities* and *Case Study: Afghanistan – the Role for ESDP Civilian Expertise*) with the aim of giving a political impulse to the process of developing civilian capabilities and rectifying persistent shortcomings in this field. The Czech document focused mainly on shortcomings in the generation of forces, the training and motivation of

those participating in missions, funding and exchanging experience between individual member states when dispatching experts to missions. On the basis of that impulse, some proposals were worked into the ongoing processes of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. The Czech Presidency's initiative at Gymnich in Hluboká nad Vltavou was reflected in a number of European Union documents, including the conclusions on the ESDP adopted by the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on 18 and 19 May 2009.

Work under the Czech Presidency continued on implementing the *Civilian Headline Goal 2010 (CHG 2010)* as the part of developing civilian capabilities. Under the *Improvement Plan*, work focused on developing software with a range of applications to make the process of selecting experts for missions more efficient, and on developing national strategies in individual member states with the objective that the individual countries should introduce or improve at national level the mechanisms for deploying civilians in ESDP missions.

In military capabilities, the Czech Presidency continued to implement the *Headline Goal 2010*, i.e. long-term projects to develop key capacities (e.g. the helicopter initiative). A project to exchange officers along the lines of a civilian academic exchange programme – the “*military Erasmus*” – continued, with the active participation of the University of Defence in Brno.

In combined civilian and military planning, work continued to establish the *Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD)*.

In cooperation with other global actors, there was continuing cooperation with the UN on crisis management. Under the *European Union – Africa partnership*, the Czech Presidency was involved in the work of the “*Peace and Security*” *Implementation Team*.

The Czech Presidency also worked to improve relations between the European Union and NATO. During the Czech Presidency there was a meeting between NATO and the European Union in the format NAC – PSC. The Czech Presidency continued the French Presidency's attempts to improve communication with European allies, i.e. NATO members that are not members of the European Union (the *NEEA countries*) at meetings held in the format PSC+5 and PSC+7 (i.e. the NEEA countries with the United States and Canada). The Czech Presidency was active in the *EU – NATO Capability Group*, which worked on a range

of technical issues aimed at greater effectiveness for NATO and European Union capabilities under the European Security and Defence Policy (the helicopter initiative, the fight against improvised explosive devices, the coordination of acquisition processes, cooperation with the European defence industry, etc.).

From the perspective of the Czech Presidency, the key missions and operations were EULEX Kosovo, EUPOL Afghanistan, EUMM Georgia and EUFOR Althea.

The Swedish Presidency continued the main lines mapped out by the Czech Presidency and worked to implement the European Security and Defence Policy's long term objectives and plans to develop civilian and military capabilities (the *Civilian Headline Goal* and the *Headline Goal*).

For civilian capabilities, the main issue was the planning and staffing of European Union missions and all related aspects (rapid response, selection, training, using experience in the field, etc.). The Swedish Presidency continued the work begun under the Czech Presidency to develop national strategies to deploy civilians in European Security and Defence Policy missions and operations.

In military capabilities, the Swedish Presidency concentrated on a debate about options for the more flexible use of battle groups, without questioning or changing the existing concept for their deployment.

A broader theme was the Swedish Presidency's attempt to identify options for synergising the civilian and military components of the European Security and Defence Policy, i.e. areas where there is potential to share resources and capabilities. The Swedish Presidency also initiated a debate on the issue of participation by third countries in European Security and Defence Policy missions and operations.

Of those missions and operations, attention was focused mainly on the EUFOR Althea operation and the issue of its future, and that debate was not concluded during the Swedish Presidency. In connection with the antipiracy naval operation NAVFOR Atalanta, the first debates were held on possible European Union activity under the European Security and Defence Policy on land, i.e. in Somalia and its immediate vicinity.

ESDP missions and operations

In the Western Balkans, the EU continued the *Althea military operation* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The operation began on 2 December 2004 and is conducted on the basis of the *Berlin Plus* mechanism, facilitating cooperation between the European Union and NATO, and the chief objective is to ensure stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Althea promotes the formation of a multiethnic police system in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the provision of advice, training and instruction to police officers. Since 2007, it has also focused on the fight against organised crime. In the course of its activities, the numbers involved in the operation have gradually been reduced (it included a Czech unit which has not been withdrawn) as powers in the fight against organised crime have been transferred to the EUPM mission. Overall Althea is part of the European Union's long-term strategy to support democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of preparing the country for possible European Union membership. In May 2009, the European Union approved the start of preliminary planning to transform the operation into a non-executive training mission, with the condition that such planning should not pre-empt a political decision on transformation that will be taken on the basis of political developments in the country. Executive tasks under the operation should continue in their present form throughout the election period in Bosnia and Herzegovina (scheduled for October 2010) in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1895.

The *European Union Police Mission (EUPM)* in Bosnia and Herzegovina began on 1 January 2003 as the European Union's first police mission. Its mandate was originally to expire on 31 December 2005, but has since been successively extended (currently until 31 December 2010). The mission's objective is to support the formation of a multiethnic police system in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the provision of advice, training and instruction to police officers. The revised mandate from 2009 places great emphasis on the fight against corruption and organised crime (in the first half of 2007 the EUPM took over the leading role in that work from the European Security and Defence Policy's military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUFOR Althea). In October 2009, the mission had 126 seconded experts and 234 local and contracted employees. Four Czech police officers worked for the EUPM in 2009.

The *EUJUST LEX* civilian mission continued its work in *Iraq*. The mission began in July 2005. It is an ESDP civilian mission to support the reform of Iraq's criminal justice

system, taking the form of training courses held in European Union member states with a liaison office in Baghdad. The mission's mandate was extended to 30 June 2010.

In the *Palestinian Autonomous Territories*, the *EUPOL COPPS* assistance mission to support the Palestinian police continued. The mission began in January 2006 on the basis of an agreement between the Palestinian National Authority and the European Union. Its main objective is assistance in the implementation of the *Palestinian Civil Police Development Plan* and consultancy for the Palestinian authorities on the rule of law. The Czech Republic has long supported the *EUPOL COPPS* mission at the political, personnel (it directly participates in the mission) and material levels. Recently, the mission has increased its staffing and the issues it covers, and its current mandate extends to the end of December 2010. In the same region, the *EUBAM Rafah* assistance mission continued at the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt. It was decided to launch the mission in November 2005 and its mandate has repeatedly been extended, currently running until May 2010. The mission's objective is to actively monitor, verify and review the work of the Palestinian police and customs officers at the border crossing. The mission is not of an executive nature. Since June 2006, the crossing has been more or less closed, and in July 2007 it was therefore decided to reduce the numbers involved in the mission and wind down its activities. *EUBAM Rafah* police officers who have remained on location provide assistance under the *EUPOL COPPS* mission (e.g. in producing an audit of the Palestinian police and preparing training seminars, including identifying other training needs for the Palestinian police). In November 2009, the Council of the European Union confirmed its willingness to reactivate the mission if the situation permits.

The *EUPOL Afghanistan* police mission continued its work in Afghanistan. Its principal focus is police reform at the central, regional and provincial levels, emphasising close cooperation with other actors working in Afghanistan (e.g. NATO, the UN and bilateral activities by European Union member states and non-members). In 2009, the mission again faced logistical and technical complications, especially with staffing. By the end of the year, 21 countries were involved in *EUPOL Afghanistan*, four of which were not members of the European Union, and they worked in 16 provinces. In total the mission had 272 foreign experts (of the planned number of 400). The Czech Republic had five police experts in the mission.

The *EUPOL* and *EUSEC Congo* missions continued their work in Africa. The first mission commenced on 1 July 2007 as a follow-up to the *EUPOL Kinshasa* mission (30 April 2005 – 30 June 2007). In 2009, its mandate was again extended for another year and currently runs until the end of June 2010. The mission's main task is to assist in the reform of the police and to participate in the broader reform of the security sector with *EUSEC RD Congo* and *MONUC*. The mission is also assisting in setting up the judicial police, and is promoting interaction between the police and the Ministry of Justice.

The *EUSEC Congo* mission has operated since 8 June 2005. Following agreement with the Congolese President Joseph Kabila its mandate has repeatedly been extended and currently runs until 30 September 2010. The mission works on providing consultancy to the Congolese authorities responsible for security to allow them to promote policy based on human rights and international humanitarian law, and to conduct policy based on democratic norms and the principles of good governance, transparency and respect for the rule of law. With other actors from the international community it has contributed to the integration, reconstruction and restructuring of the Congolese army. Part of the mission is the *chain of payments* project, aimed at reforming the Congolese army's payment system.

In February 2008, the European Union decided to implement an operation to support security sector reform (SSR) in Guinea-Bissau. The *EU SSR Guinea-Bissau mission* began work in June 2008 and comprises military and civilian advisors (and a support team). In November 2009, its mandate was extended until May 2010. The operation's objective is consultancy and support for the local authorities in the reform of the security sector (involving the army, police and judiciary) and assistance in planning restructuring.

The *EULEX Kosovo (EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo)* civilian mission is the largest civilian mission to date under the European Security and Defence Policy. Its main role is to provide assistance and support to the authorities in Kosovo on the rule of law, primarily covering police issues, the judiciary and customs matters. In implementing that role, the mission monitors, instructs and makes recommendations to the appropriate institutions and authorities while retaining some executive responsibility in specific areas. The *EULEX* mission, which continued the work of *UNMIK* (the *United Nations Mission in Kosovo*), was officially launched on 16 February 2008 on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The deployment of *EULEX* members began on 20 September 2008. The mission

achieved initial operational capability at the beginning of December 2008 and full operational capability in April 2009. The mission's mandate currently runs until 14 June 2010, but its full duration will depend on the results achieved and the possible need for further European Union engagement in the region. Over 1 600 international experts and more than 1 000 local staff work for the mission at present. In 2009, the Czech Republic had 28 experts in the mission, mainly from the police.

The *EU BAM Moldova* mission commenced operations in December 2005. In 2007, its mandate, originally for two years, was extended for two more years, i.e. until November 2009, and has since been extended until November 2010. The mission operates under the *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument – Regional East Action Programme 2008*. In December 2009, phase VII of the mission began with a new, revised strategy. Its main tasks include expert assistance and training for border guards and customs officials on border crossings, strengthening an integrated approach to managing the borders, cooperation between the border and customs authorities, support for cooperation and information exchange between the Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities, providing expert advice to the central authorities on implementing administrative and legislative reforms concerning border and customs issues, etc. At the end of 2009, the mission had more than 50 seconded experts and over 100 local staff. The Czech Republic had one expert in the mission in 2009.

The *monitoring mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia)* began operations as planned on 1 October 2008. In July 2009, its mandate was extended to September 2010 with the aim of contributing to the stabilisation of the security situation in Georgia and the surrounding region in line with the *six-point plan*. The mission's main tasks are monitoring and supporting the overall stabilisation of the country, monitoring the departure of Russian forces, and other activities related to the regeneration of the areas affected (including the issue of people who have been displaced in consequence of the conflict). Since the UN and OSCE missions ended their work, the EUMM has been the sole international monitoring mission in the region. The EUMM comprises police experts and experts in legal and humanitarian issues. In October 2009, the mission had 279 seconded experts and 86 contracted employees. The Czech Republic contributed nine specialists to the mission in 2009.

On 15 March 2009, the European Union's military operation in eastern Chad and the north-east Central African Republic, *EUFOR Tchad/RCA*, ended. The operation was launched

in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1778 (2007) and involved approximately 3 700 people. The EUFOR units' role was to contribute to the stabilisation of the situation in the region. On the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1834, the work of the EUFOR Tchad/RCA mission was taken over by UN MINURCAT (the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad).

In response to incidences of piracy and armed raids off the coast of Somalia, a coordination cell (*EU NAVCO*) was established in September 2008 to support the work of European Union member states implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1816. The cell coordinated the activities of European Union member states and any third countries involved. The work of EU NAVCO was then taken over by a new operation, EU NAVFOR – ATALANTA. On 8 December 2008, that operation was launched as part of the European Security and Defence Policy, aimed at preventing, deterring and repressing acts of piracy and armed raids off the coast of Somalia. EU NAVFOR – ATALANTA contributes to implementing UN Security Council Resolutions 1814, 1816, 1838 and 1846, while the overall objective is to protect WFP vessels and vulnerable vessels in the waters off the coast of Somalia, and the prevention, deterring and repression of acts of piracy and armed raids off the coast of Somalia. The operation was originally scheduled to cover 12 months, running until 13 December 2009. In June 2009, the Council of the European Union took an early decision to extend it for another year, until December 2010. EU NAVFOR – ATALANTA is part of internationally coordinated activities against piracy. Alongside European Union ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, there are also ships from states operating independently, such as India, Russia, Malaysia and China, and groups of vessels from the TF 151 (mainly the United States, Turkey and Japan) and the *NATO Maritime Group*.

The European Union's development cooperation and humanitarian aid

Development cooperation

Under its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic took on responsibility for compliance with the European Union's fundamental principles for development policy and humanitarian aid. The agenda covered a wide range of activities concerning the maintaining and defence of the values on which European civilisation is based: freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The Czech Presidency

extended the development agenda to cover selected themes: energy, the eastern dimension of development policy and development aspects of transatlantic relations.

During its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic actively contributed to implementing the European Union's development policy in the face of a global worsening of the economic situation. In response to the world financial and economic crisis, measures were approved to enable developing countries to cope with its consequences.

On 29-30 January 2009, the key event in the Czech Presidency's development agenda was held in Prague, an informal meeting of European Union ministers for development cooperation. The meeting focused on the Czech Presidency's main priorities for development cooperation, which were *sustainable energy sources at local level*, good governance and the eastern dimension of development policy. In view of current events, the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the impacts of the financial crisis on developing countries were also discussed.

The Czech Presidency's work on its priority theme of *sustainable energy sources* resulted in the adoption by the Council of conclusions that stressed the need for sustainable and renewable energy sources as a key precondition to launch economic activities and reduce poverty in developing countries.

On 2 March 2009, a *Donors' Conference for Gaza* was held in Sharm el-Sheikh. Participants expressed their appreciation for Egypt's efforts to maintain the ceasefire and called on Israel to open access roads to the Gaza Strip. International aid pledged came to a total of USD 5.2 billion.

The *17th Session of the Africa Caribbean Pacific – European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly* (Prague, 4-9 April 2009) had the largest number of participants during the Czech Presidency's half-year Presidency. The main theme was the impact of the financial and food crisis on the ACP countries. At the session, resolutions were adopted for economic partnership agreements, climate change, the financial and food crisis, Somalia, and ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.

On 22-23 April 2009, there was an international conference in Brussels to support the Somali security sector and the African Union's mission there (AMISOM). Participants from over 60 countries pledged a total of USD 231 million to that end.

The regular meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council in the format of development ministers was held as usual in Brussels (18-19 May 2009). The main point in the discussions was the adoption of the *Council conclusions on supporting developing countries in coping with the crisis*. Other points discussed included economic partnership agreements, extending cooperation between the European Union and the United States on development, and political dialogue under the principles of good governance.

At a meeting of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers on 28-29 May 2009, another review of the *Cotonou Agreement* was officially commenced. Under the Czech Presidency the Council approved a mandate for the Commission to negotiate a review of the Cotonou Agreement. The Council of Ministers adopted a joint resolution on the global financial crisis, and a joint declaration on climate change, and supported the economic partnership process between the European Union and ACP.

On 10-11 June 2009, ministers for development from the G8 countries met in Rome, with the Czech Presidency attending. Talks focused on the impact of the economic and financial crisis on developing countries and its influence in meeting the *Millennium Development Goals (MDG)*. The ministers called for greater efforts to satisfy international commitments to *official development assistance (ODA)*. They also supported the G20 commitment to increased IMF funds for developing countries and the introduction of innovative sources of financing.

On 16-19 June 2009 in Geneva, there was a session of the *Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction* devoted to the main strategic challenges for developing countries with a high risk of natural disasters. The Czech Presidency contributed a joint declaration on behalf of the European Union on the theme of the *European Union's support for efforts to reduce the risk of natural disasters in developing countries*.

The conclusions of the European Council on 18-19 June 2009 in Brussels again confirmed the European Union's commitment to support developing countries in meeting the

Millennium Development Goals and achieve its objectives for official development assistance.

The final major event on development cooperation under the Czech Presidency was the *UN High-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development*, held on 24-26 June 2009 in New York.

On 22-24 October 2009, the fourth edition of the *European Development Days* was held in Stockholm, in close cooperation with the European Commission. As in previous years, the event was aimed at a dialogue between partner countries, civil society and the development community on the most important issues for development cooperation.

The autumn meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council in the format of development ministers (17 November 2009) resulted in the adoption of the Council's conclusions on the effectiveness of development assistance, climate change and development, and the coherence of development policies. Other points discussed included *official development assistance (ODA)* commitments, support for democracy in the European Union's external relations (the example of Afghanistan) and budget support.

The implementation of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) continued in 2009. The EDF is a fund outside the general budget and should spend a total of EUR 22.682 billion in 2008-2013 to support the ACP (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) countries. The new European Union member states, including the Czech Republic, will contribute for the first time to the 10th EDF (the first payments from the Czech Republic are expected in 2011, and the Czech Republic should contribute a total of EUR 115.678 million to the 10th EDF). Since 2008, private companies and non-governmental organizations in the new member states have had the option of tendering for contracts to implement specific development projects financed by the fund.

Humanitarian aid

In 2009, the European Union further increased its standing as a major world donor for humanitarian aid and an advocate of fundamental humanitarian principles. The European Union used various instruments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy to appeal for universal compliance with international humanitarian law and for improvements in the

humanitarian approach in areas of conflict (which in 2009 were especially Gaza, Somalia, Sudan and Sri Lanka).

In 2009, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) focused on food aid in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and on humanitarian assistance in *forgotten crises* (e.g. refugees from ethnic minorities in South-East Asia or displaced persons in Columbia). The *DIPECHO* humanitarian programs aimed at presenting disasters in particularly vulnerable areas (South-East and Central Asia, Eastern and Western Africa and Central America) continued with enhanced expertise.

In January 2009, a new Council of the European Union *Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFa)* began operating. As its first presiding country, the Czech Republic contributed significantly to shaping its agenda and establishing cooperation with other working parties (territorial working parties and the working parties on civil protection – *PROCIV* – and international public law – *COJUR*). Under the Czech Presidency COHAFa worked on the humanitarian situation and options for assistance in Myanmar/Burma, Gaza, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Under the Czech Presidency, COHAFa reviewed parts of the *Action Plan* to implement the *European Consensus of Humanitarian Aid* relating to disaster risk reduction, combating HIV/AIDS, the responsibility to protect and the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian aid. The Czech Republic also produced a non-paper on building the capacities of new and small-scale donors, which received a positive response and generated new ideas on integrating new donors.

In the latter half of 2009, the Swedish Presidency continued the themes elaborated by the Czech Presidency concerning the application of international humanitarian law (IHL) and advocating a humanitarian approach to people in need in Somalia, Yemen, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Another important theme was harmonising the assessment of humanitarian needs in various phases of humanitarian disasters, where the European Union – under the platform for good humanitarian donorship (GHD) and in other respects – operates as an initiative partner for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

2. The Czech Republic and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

POLITICAL THEMES

Activities linked with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU

Although the presiding country of the European Union does not coordinate NATO's European Union allies and does not steer its working or formal meetings, in the first half of 2009 the Czech Republic nevertheless sought to make the work of the Czech Presidency highly visible among the Allies and took an active approach to themes relevant to both organisations.

In January 2009, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg, discussed the Czech Presidency's priorities with Alliance ambassadors. During the Czech Presidency, the Allies discussed at NATO the unprecedented quantity of political statements by the European Union on key events in third countries. In a number of more important cases, the Alliance took European Union statements into account when drafting its own statements. The Czech Republic regularly informed the North Atlantic Council of developments in the European Union.

The Czech Presidency had realistic ambitions concerning the sensitive issue of blocked institutional relations between NATO and the European Union. At the working level, the Czech Republic continued the work of the preceding French Presidency with informal discussions with key partners on specific steps that could contribute to a gradual improvement in the situation. To that end the Czech Presidency also arranged a number of informal discussions between key representatives of the European Union and Alliance countries on topics of interest to both organisations, including Georgia and the Western Balkans.

The Czech Presidency contributed to a qualitative shift in the *NATO-EU Capability Group (NECG)*. A number of meetings were held on pressing issues (helicopters, the fight

against improvised explosive devices – IED, etc.) and the formal standards of talks were raised through the participation of the political directors of defence ministries.

NATO-Russia relations

During 2009, the workings of the *NATO-Russia Council (NRC)*, the main platform for political dialogue and practical cooperation between NATO and Russia, were gradually normalised after having been severely shaken by the incursion of Russian armed forces into Georgian territory in August 2008. Political dialogue in the NRC was restored, initially at an informal level – embassies – in January 2009. In April 2009 at the NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, the Alliance then confirmed its willingness to see formal meetings of the NRC, including meetings at ministerial level. There were subsequently two ministerial meetings at foreign minister level, initially an informal meeting in June 2009 (Corfu) and then a formal meeting in December 2009 (Brussels). There were a number of formal and informal meetings at ambassadorial level on topics of common interest, including a meeting that brought together experts from the capital cities on the subject of Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition to that, in December 2009 the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen visited Moscow, where he met key Russian politicians. Practical cooperation was not extended in the course of the year, and Russia did not for instance respond to repeated invitations from the Alliance to contribute for a third time a Russian ship to the Alliance's naval antiterrorist *Operation Active Endeavour*. Nor was any progress made in the rail transit to Afghanistan offered by Russia in April 2008. Concerning military cooperation, following the ministerial meeting in June in Corfu, Russia called off its almost one-year suspension, but in real terms there was no specific cooperation as Russia did not submit any specific proposals.

The process to formally normalise relations in the NRC was accompanied by agreement between NATO and Russia that the NRC had not functioned satisfactorily prior to August 2008, and that it must be above all given specific content based on common interests such as Afghanistan and the fight against terrorism. The new NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen actively promoted changes in the NRC; when he took office in August 2009 he publicly referred to NATO-Russian relations as one of his three top priorities, and in September he presented an analysis of those relations and a vision for future developments in his public address *NATO and Russia: A New Beginning*. He identified as part of that new beginning a possible joint assessment of the security challenges that NATO and

Russia face in the 21st century. The discussion on possible changes in the NRC, which lasted several months, was concluded at a meeting of NRC foreign ministers in December, where it was decided that the structure of the NRC's committees would be modified to better support the identifying of practical cooperation that would benefit both sides. The NRC's work plan for 2010, setting out the main areas for cooperation in 2010, was also approved. In addition the ministers also agreed to a joint assessment of security challenges, the results of which should be submitted in December 2010.

NATO's current position on NATO-Russian relations was set out comprehensively in public documents from the NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl. The Alliance stated that there were security interests shared by NATO and Russia and declared its willingness to cooperate with Russia. It emphasised, however, that relations with Russia depend on trust and the discharging of commitments, and stated that the Alliance would continue to review developments in relations with Russia.

There remain a number of key points of discord, whether they concern NATO expansion, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia, or the Russian moratorium on the implementation of the CFE Treaty. Russia also repeatedly and unsuccessfully sought to introduce in the NRC a discussion of the *European Security Treaty* proposed by the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in 2008. The most recent attempt was a proposal by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov for the structuring of relations between NRC members, distributed at the beginning of December during the NRC foreign ministers meeting. The proposal repeats some of the points of the proposals made by President Medvedev, and also attempts to find a definition, long absent, of *considerable combat forces*, which is crucial for the future of control regimes in Europe, including the prospect updating or replacing the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)*, which Russia has not respected. In that context, it should be said that the majority of the Alliance's members, including the Czech Republic, are willing to hold dialogue on a broad and cooperative approach to Euro-Atlantic security, but they consider the appropriate forum to be the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the *Corfu Process* underway there.

The smoothing of relations between NATO and Russia was not aided by insufficient Russian transparency for the *Lagoda 2009* and *Zapad 2009* exercises, held in proximity to

Alliance territory in the latter half of the year. In an extraordinary measure, the two members of the Russian mission to NATO lost their accreditation in May 2009. Russia retaliated by revoking the accreditation of two members of the *NATO Information Office* in Moscow.

Throughout the year, the Czech Republic actively contributed to shaping discussion on NATO-Russia relations, emphasising its interest in mutually beneficial practical cooperation based on common interests, which may concern for instance Afghanistan and missile defence. The Czech Republic has long been one of the most avid advocates of a *two-stream approach* to Russia, i.e. not only discussion with Russia within the NRC and related formats, but also discussion on Russia amongst the Allies.

Ukraine and Georgia

In 2009, Ukraine and Georgia implemented the first ever *Annual National Programmes (ANP)*, which are the main instrument for Alliance assistance in the process of internal reforms that are essential for those countries' Euro-Atlantic ambitions. In 2009, NATO appraised their implementation. Both countries had made progress in many key areas, but a number of shortcomings remained. In December 2009, the status of reforms and broader political themes were discussed by the *NATO – Ukraine Commission (NUC)* and the *NATO – Georgia Commission (NGC)* at the level of foreign ministers. The Czech Republic continued to actively support both countries' possible future membership of the Alliance.

There were no more significant changes in cooperation between NATO and Ukraine in 2009. The focus remained assistance in defence and security, which was covered by the *Joint Working Group on Defence Reform (JWGDR)*. The Czech Republic actively cooperated, primarily by sharing its experience in defence against weapons of mass destruction. In 2009, Ukraine continued to participate in all major NATO operations and offered to contribute units to the *NATO Response Force (NRF)*.

In 2009, dialogue between NATO and Georgia primarily concerned security issues related to the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the issue of internal democratic reforms and relations between the government and the opposition. Both of those topics were the subject of intensive political consultations involving senior Georgian representatives. During the year, NATO continued to support Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to reject all possibility of recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Georgia offered a relatively large military contribution to the ISAF operation. During the year, the Czech Republic supported the opening of a NATO liaison office in Tbilisi, but the office has yet to be opened owing to a lack of funds. The Czech Republic (with Lithuania and Estonia) also headed a project for a trust fund that provides training and equipment for Georgia for the handling of unexploded ordnance and landmines. Part of that fund will be used to open a specialized rehabilitation centre in Georgia for people injured by unexploded ordnance. The Czech Republic sent a representative to Georgia to join a group of experts covering logistics.

Partnership formats

Discussion continued under the *Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)* and the *Partnership for Peace (PfP)* program on options to improve the functioning of EAPC/PfP and identifying new forms for more flexible and effective cooperation. Political dialogue was deepened and new initiatives were created, key among them the issue of implementing UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Western Balkans

Albania and Croatia

Following the completion of ratification processes in all NATO member states and the parliaments of the new member countries, Albania and Croatia attended the NATO summit in April in Strasbourg/Kehl as full members of the Alliance, expanding the “twenty-six” to the “twenty-eight”. Both countries, which were invited to join the Alliance in 2008 at the NATO summit in Bucharest after satisfying the accession criteria, have continued to implement the timetable for the remaining reforms associated with their membership. The timetable covers the next ten years and focuses mainly on contributions to Alliance operations, public support for NATO, the implementation of defence – and in the case of Albania, democratic – reforms, security cooperation in the Balkans, etc.

In the autumn of 2009, the Alliance decided to terminate the work of the *Military Liaison Team* in Tirana by the summer of 2010 in view of Albania’s accession to NATO.

Macedonia/FYROM

Macedonia/FYROM, which was halted before the NATO gates by the lack of consensus at the April 2008 summit in Bucharest, continued to implement its *Membership Action Plan (MAP)* and especially the reaching of an acceptable compromise on the disputed matter of the country's name, which is a precondition for Alliance membership. The decision taken in Bucharest – that Macedonia would be invited to join NATO once that issue is resolved – still applies.

The Alliance also commenced work on the gradual transformation of the NATO regional headquarters in Skopje, where staffing should gradually be reduced as it is transformed into a liaison team.

Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2009, the greatest progress towards Alliance integration was made by Montenegro, which at the December meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels was invited to commence the Membership Action Plan it had requested in November 2008. Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had only requested the MAP in October 2009, has yet to receive an invitation owing to its insufficient progress in reforms. The main obstacle to integrating Bosnia and Herzegovina into Euro Atlantic structures is its problematic internal organization – the disunity between the representatives of its three constituent nations. It will have another opportunity at a meeting of foreign ministers in the Estonian capital Tallinn in April 2010. Both countries continued to implement their *Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAP)* and also continued expert discussions under the *Intensified Dialogue (ID)* with NATO. At the foreign ministers meeting in December 2009, the Czech Republic supported the awarding of the MAP to Montenegro, but in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina it favoured waiting for progress in political and security reforms before awarding the MAP.

The Alliance also considered the future of the NATO regional headquarters in Sarajevo, but a final decision has been deferred in view of the persisting uncertainty in the European Union over the future of the EUFOR ALTHEA operation and the transformation of the *Office of the High Representative (OHR)* into the *Office of the EU Special Representative (EUSR)*.

Serbia

Cooperation between Serbia and the Alliance in 2009 was impeded by the tenth anniversary of the Alliance operation against the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Due to that fact the *Security Agreement on the exchange of confidential information between NATO and Serbia* was not certified, and nor was a Serbian partnership mission opened at the Alliance, although a Serbian ambassador to the Alliance was officially appointed. Serbia expressed its interest in a review of the *Military-Technical Agreement (MT)* from Kumanovo, concluded in 1999 after the end of the airborne campaign against Belgrade. The Alliance made clear its willingness to discuss the issue as soon as Serbia makes an official request that clarifies its demands.

The anniversary also complicated the work of the *NATO Contact Embassy* in Belgrade, a position held by the Czech Republic. The Embassy's work focused on public diplomacy and cooperation with the non-governmental sector on the preparation and financing of projects related to NATO, and in the military field on the relaying of the Czech Republic's experience from the *Partnership for Peace (PfP)* program, primarily through cooperation in training and exercises.

Contacts between NATO and Serbia continued to be also covered by NATO's *Military Liaison Office (MLO)*, headed by a Czech general. The future of the NATO MLO and its potentially broader functioning was discussed as part of Alliance discussions on regional headquarters, but the question remains open and discussions will continue with Serbia.

Ballistic Missile Defence, MD

Activities related to ballistic missile defence in NATO continued to revolve around three projects that have become increasingly linked: *BMD theatre – the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD) programme, NATO territorial BMD and cooperation with Russia on BMD.*

In 2009, the Alliance focused chiefly on NATO Territorial BMD. An anticipated turning point was the April summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, but ultimately an announcement by the United States of a change in its approach to European ballistic missile defence in September was of crucial significance, with a direct impact on the Czech Republic.

The NATO summit in April in Strasbourg/Kehl confirmed the mounting threats related to the proliferation of ballistic missiles, and on that basis it identified specific risks that the Alliance should focus on immediately. It issued instructions to prepare for the possible expanding of the role of ALTBMD to cover territorial defence, which would make ALTBMD the logical backbone of NATO territorial BMD. It also confirmed NATO's openness to cooperation with Russia at the appropriate time. On the basis of the conclusions taken, the summit also issued instructions for further tasks in the political, military and technical fields. The relevant analyses should result in particular in the submitting of new variants of the architecture to be considered at the NATO summit in Lisbon on November 2010, and in an appraisal of the impacts of any expansion of the role of ALTBMD and the incorporation of aspects of the United States' ballistic missile defence.

The United States intervened significantly in further developments when in September 2009 it announced the results of its evaluation of its position on European ballistic missile defence to date. It abandoned the building of a European pillar for ballistic missile defence with a radar in the Czech Republic and a missile defence complex in Poland and announced a new concept for ballistic missile defence, namely the *Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA)*, as the USA's contribution to the Alliance ballistic missile defence architecture, the backbone of which should be ALTBMD. A subsequent meeting of NATO defence ministers in Bratislava in October 2009 nevertheless stated that the change in the USA's position would not have a fundamental impact on individual tasks resulting from the NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl. The only exceptions are tasks concerning the specific architecture of NATO ballistic missile defence, all variants of which envisaged the original European ballistic missile defence, and tasks concerning the elaboration of new variants. The Czech Republic took note of the change in the American position and remains one of the most active participants in the debate on the future of the Alliance ballistic missile defence system.

Cooperation between NATO and Russia on ballistic missile defence continued to make little progress, primarily due to political reasons on the Russian side.

The Alliance's New Strategic Concept

The Alliance's Strategic Concept was adopted in its present form in April 1999 in Washington. The April 2009 NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl ordered the elaboration of a new Strategic Concept, with the basis for its drafting to be produced by a group of experts led

by the NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who appointed the group of twelve experts, headed by Madeleine Albright, in August 2009.

The work of the group of experts covers two of the three phases in the preparation of the new concept. Initially the reflection phase, which commenced in September 2009, will organise four seminars, and subsequently in the consultation phase the group will listen to opinions in the capital cities of Alliance countries. After submitting proposals in April 2010 there will be discussion within NATO in the drafting and final negotiation phase aimed at submitting the new concept for approval at the NATO summit in Lisbon in November 2010. According to the NATO Secretary General, the preparation process for the new concept will be the most transparent process ever organised to produce such a document.

In September 2009, the initial reflection phase began, aimed at gathering the suggestions, opinions and ideas of the Allies' official representatives, independent experts and partner states. This phase takes the form of seminars attended by the group of experts, supplemented with lower-level activities. The first seminar was held in October 2009 in Luxembourg, where discussions concerned the future role of the Alliance, the key tasks facing it, and the Alliance's role in countering new or non-military security challenges. The second seminar was held in November 2009 in Brdo in Slovenia. Discussions concerned the Alliance's current operations, developments in threats, NATO's objectives in the Middle East and South-East Asia, and cooperation with international actors.

The key principle that should apply in this process is inclusivity, i.e. involving all of the Allies in the discussion. For that reason, during the first phase – reflection – the group of experts, specifically its Chair, visited the Alliance on two occasions (in September and November 2009) to inform all Allies of progress in the interests of maintaining transparency.

From the work of the group of experts to date it is clear that the results of their work will focus on 1) the changing nature of the international security environment; 2) military transformation; 3) the Comprehensive Approach; 4) the internal reform of NATO; 5) relations between NATO and other relevant states; 6) public support.

During 2009, the Czech Republic was active in debates in the preparatory group on the Alliance's New Strategic Concept. In discussions it focused on the viability of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the retaining of the open door policy, maintaining NATO's effective

deterrents and resources to protect against new threats, including the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems. Under the auspices of the *Jagello 2000* association, the Czech Republic held a national seminar on the New Strategic Concept attended by representatives from the NATO group of experts and leading experts from the Czech security community and academia.

Mediterranean Dialogue (MeD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)

Cooperation under the *Mediterranean Dialogue (MeD)* and the *Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)* continued to develop in 2009. Selected instruments of the *Partnership for Peace (PfP)* for the MeD and ICI countries continued to be made available, covering *Civil Emergency Planning (CEP)*, an action plan for improving preparations to deal with the consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction against civilians and critical infrastructure.

In January 2009, an *Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP)* was approved for Jordan, and during the year Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania submitted the first drafts of their ICPs. The work of the *Trust Fund (TF)* for Jordan also continued, with the Czech Republic contributing CZK 1.3 million (from the Ministry of Defence) for mine-clearing projects. The Alliance also resumed cooperation with Mauritania, which it had frozen in response to the military coup in August 2008.

Relations within the MeD were affected by Israel's military operations in the Gaza Strip, in consequence of which five Arab partners in the MeD (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt) announced that they would temporarily withdraw from the planned higher-level meeting in the format 28+7 (i.e. including Israel). In consequence of that, the North Atlantic Council's traditional meeting with the MeD partners after the summit in Strasbourg/Kehl did not take place, and a planned meeting at ministerial level was postponed. However, contacts at working level were not affected and in the latter half of 2009 there were two ambassadorial meetings (to mark the departure of the NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in June and the NAC+7 meeting following the foreign ministers meeting in December).

The most important event under the ICI was a conference on NATO and the future prospects for the ICI held in the United Arab Emirates and attended by the NATO Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council

Energy Security

The second Ukraine-Russia gas crisis in January 2009 had a significant impact on Alliance discussions on energy security. Thanks especially to the efforts of the Czech Republic as the presiding country of the European Union, that issue was the subject of two special meetings of the Economic Committee (at working and expert level). Other specialised Alliance committees also produced evaluations of the gas crisis and their conclusions were (albeit to a limited extent) reflected in the report submitted at the NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl on the implementation of work on energy security from Bucharest. NATO continues to pay attention to energy security, especially in connection with the preparation of the Alliance's New Strategic Concept.

During 2009, the Czech Republic continued to be among those countries that have over the long term promoted extending Alliance debate on energy security beyond the mere protection of the energy infrastructure. The long-term objective is to make better use of partner formats to exert pressure on certain supplier and transit countries to increase the transparency of the supply of key energy commodities to the Allies.

Comprehensive Approach

The Comprehensive Approach is a concept for the planning and conduct of NATO stabilisation operations which uses the full range of instruments available (i.e. civilian as well as military) and effectively coordinates Alliance efforts with other actors working on operations. In essence it seeks the closest possible coordination between the Alliance and governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in operations, from the planning phase onwards.

A declaration from the 2006 summit in Riga defined the concept of the Comprehensive Approach and ordered the submitting of concrete practical proposals for its implementation at ministerial meetings in April and June 2007. However, negotiations on those practical proposals continued until April 2008, until the commitment from Riga was satisfied by the adoption of the *Comprehensive Approach Action Plan*. Following the

adopting of that document work began on implementing the individual proposals contained therein. Implementation continued in 2009, with regular appraisal.

The Comprehensive Approach Action Plan includes a commitment to produce a list or database of national experts in politics, reconstruction and stabilisation, and the media, which could then be used when planning and implementing NATO operations. On the basis of that commitment a concept for a database of civilian experts, *COMPASS (Comprehensive Approach Specialist Support)*, was produced in 2009 and the output was presented to the Allies in November 2009. Experts should be nominated for the database at the start of 2010. The use of experts included in the database will remain entirely under national control, and each country will cover the costs of deploying experts from its own funds.

A relatively new field for the Alliance contribution to the Comprehensive Approach is NATO military support for stabilisation and reconstruction work. During 2010, the Alliance, which in 2009 worked intensively on individual aspects of that issue, will hold strategic discussions in the context of preparing its new *Strategic Concept*. The issues to be discussed will include incorporating that dimension from the start into the process of planning and preparing operations, the option of including non-military capacities and expertise in defence planning, and including the Alliance's analytical capacities in that field.

Support for developing the capabilities of the African Union and its operation in Somalia (AMISOM)

In 2009, the Alliance continued to advise the African Union on the creation of the *African Standby Force (ASF)*. In response to a request by the African Union, NATO also assigned two experts who assisted AMISOM in strategic planning and human resources management. African Union staff also attended courses and seminars in Alliance training facilities.

OPERATIONS

Afghanistan/ISAF

The North Atlantic Alliance presence in Afghanistan is realized through the *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)*, which operates on the basis of UNSC Resolution 1386 of 20 December 2001. The ISAF's mandate has been regularly extended: as at 31 December 2009 Resolution 1890 of 8 October 2009 was in force. At the end of 2009, approximately 85 000 troops from 43 countries were involved in the ISAF operation.

In 2009, the ISAF operation in Afghanistan remained NATO's largest and most important operation. Its primary objectives are to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan and to assist in building the Afghan security sector and expand the influence of the central Afghan government in the regions. The ISAF also represents an Alliance contribution to the fight against international terrorism.

At NATO's April summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, the Alliance declared its willingness to support the security of the presidential and provincial elections and to further intensify its efforts in Afghanistan, and it reviewed the strategy adopted at the 2008 summit in Bucharest (*Comprehensive Strategic Political-Military Plan*). To hasten the building of the *Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)* it decided to establish the *NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A)*.

In mid-2009, the new commander of American forces and the ISAF, General Stanley A. McChrystal, was instructed to evaluate the situation in Afghanistan and make proposals for progress. His strategic assessment in September 2009 stated that the situation was grave but success was possible. The ISAF commander recommended focusing on the Afghan population, whose security must be central to ISAF concerns. It is necessary to achieve a balance between civilian and military efforts and better coordination between the individual actors. The development of the Afghan security forces is also of crucial importance. The ISAF commander requested additional units numbering 40 000 troops, most of which were promised to him in December 2009.

NATO's greater emphasis on training the ANSF became evident in the latter half of 2009, when the NTM-A training mission began operating. At their September meeting in

Bratislava, Alliance defence ministers launched the process of ISAF's transition to the fourth phase, under which the Afghan security forces should assume primary responsibility for security in Afghanistan. The capacities and staffing of those forces are expanding rapidly thanks to international support.

In accordance with the strategy it had adopted, the Alliance continued to develop relations with Afghanistan's neighbours, above all Pakistan. In May 2009, a NATO Contact Point Embassy began operating in Islamabad through the Turkish embassy, and its role focuses especially on work concerning public diplomacy. It is the Alliance's only contact point embassy in a country that belongs to none of the Alliance's partner formats. In June 2009, the President of Pakistan made the first ever visit to the NATO HQ in Brussels, where he expressed a clear determination to combat international terrorism. His words were reflected in the latter half of the year in the form of military operations by the Pakistan Army on an unprecedented scale, directed against the Taliban in border tribal areas. Military dialogue was also strengthened, as was cooperation between the ISAF, ANSF and the Pakistan Army under the Tripartite Commission, and the opening of border coordination centres along the two countries' border continued. At the end of the year, the Alliance offered Pakistan a Tailored Cooperation Programme, aimed largely at extending the capabilities of the Pakistani security forces. During 2009, political dialogue on Afghanistan continued with the countries of Central Asia, and at the end of the year agreements were concluded on the overland transit of non-military material for the ISAF. That resulted in the opening of the ISAF northern supply route through Russia, which had offered to facilitate that transit in 2008.

During 2009, the Czech Republic had its largest contingent abroad in Afghanistan (a parliamentary mandate permitted up to 580 persons to be deployed). It was active in the ISAF and in the European Union's police mission and the coalition's antiterrorist Operation Enduring Freedom. Under the ISAF operation, Czech Army units served at the international airport in Kabul. They also supported a Dutch contingent in Oruzgan Province in the south of the country, and at the end of the year they began making preparations to deploy Czech transport helicopters in Paktika Province in East Afghanistan. The largest Czech contingent provided security for the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar Province, also in the east of the country.

PRT Logar, which began operating in 2008, is the largest and most important Czech foreign development project. In 2009, it had approximately 270 staff from the Czech Army and ten civilian experts working on reconstruction in education, healthcare, agriculture, water management, infrastructure, security and support for independent media and the rights of women.

At the end of 2009, the Czech Republic contributed to the following trust funds and initiatives related to the work of the international community in Afghanistan: the NATO Afghan National Army Trust Fund – CZK 2.6 million; the UN Law and Order Trust Fund – Afghanistan (LOTFA) – CZK 2.6 million; the Afghan National Solidarity Programme – CZK 4 million.

Kosovo/KFOR

The Alliance continued to pay great attention to the situation in Kosovo, where it has its second largest operation (after ISAF in Afghanistan). KFOR units continued to ensure security in Kosovo on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. When resolving incidents KFOR is the third in line, after the Kosovo police and the EULEX international police force.

A decision to move to a phased reduction for KFOR's presence in Kosovo (the transition to a *deterrent presence*) marked a milestone in the operation's history. That decision was taken following a political and military assessment of long-term developments in the security situation in Kosovo and the broader region. The first phase of this process, finishing at the end of January 2010, reduced KFOR forces to 10 200 persons.

NATO continued working on the *new tasks in Kosovo* (supervising the formation of the Kosovo security sector). The Kosovo Security Forces (KSF), whose progress is overseen by the Alliance, reached initial operational capability on 15 September 2009. Another task, the dissolving of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), was implemented on 14 June 2009. The Alliance also assisted in the developing of a Kosovan ministry for the KSF and drafting the relevant legislation. In connection with the developing of the KSF and the dissolving of the KPC, two trust funds were set up, with the Czech Republic contributing CZK 5.2 million (CZK 3.9 million for developing the KSF and CZK 1.3 million for dissolving the KPC).

In 2009, the Czech Republic had a contingent numbering approximately 400 persons in Kosovo. The contingent operated under the *Multinational Task Force – Centre (MNTF-C)* at the Sajkovac base, along with contingents from Finland, Latvia, Slovakia, Ireland and Sweden. The contingent worked mainly on tasks related to monitoring the Kosovo-Serbia “administrative” border and protecting national minorities and the cultural heritage; it also assisted in maintaining law and order. The Czech Republic also dispatched a reserve company (106 soldiers) that is normally located in the Czech Republic to temporarily reinforce Allied units operating in MNTF-C, especially in the sensitive time around the Serbian *Vidovdan* national holiday, and it also carried out regular training sessions on handling mass unrest.

Operation Active Endeavour

Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in the Mediterranean was launched in 2001 as NATO’s response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. It is the only NATO operation conducted under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Under this operation, the Alliance’s Mediterranean fleet has been tasked to monitor board and search any ships in the Mediterranean that are suspected of collusion with terrorists. The operation continued in 2009, and as in previous years, Ukrainian capacities were also involved. Negotiations on participation in the operation continued with other countries outside the Alliance, where the greatest progress was made in talks with Israel and Morocco. Russia’s involvement remains an open question.

NATO Training Mission – Iraq

In 2009, the *NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I)* continued to implement education and training programmes, primarily in the form of mentoring the work of the Iraqi side. It continued training the Iraqi police in the style of a gendarmerie, under Italian guidance. On the basis of a request from the Iraqi Government, the Alliance decided to extend the work of NTM-I beyond 2009, and the scope of NTM-I may be gradually extended in line with Iraqi requests (e.g. training for Iraqi border forces).

As the UN Security Council mandate covering the presence of international forces in Iraq was not extended after 2008, the Alliance concluded a bilateral agreement with the Iraqi Government on the legal status of NTM-I personnel. The agreement will come into force following ratification in the Iraqi Parliament. Until such time the same conditions apply to NTM-I personnel

Counter-Piracy Operations

2009 marked a milestone in NATO's commitment to combating piracy. The Alliance launched Operation Ocean Shield, with a broad mandate covering escorting and deterrence, and seizing and boarding ships. The Alliance further extended its counter-piracy operations by offering assistance to African countries to develop their own counter-piracy capabilities.

The Helicopter Initiative

The Czech Republic increased its efforts and commitment under the Alliance's helicopter initiative. It took the leading role in a special working group, the *HIP Helicopter Task Force (HIP HTF)*, aimed at establishing the conditions for the formation of a multinational helicopter unit (NATO and EU countries using MI-type helicopters), concerning training, operational deployment, logistics, technical support and financing. In addition to the Czech Republic, Albania, Italy, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom signed *Declarations of Intent* to participate in the work of HIP HTF.

Among the most important actions outside the Alliance last year was the inclusion of the Czech Republic in a *European Defence Agency* category B project to construct an interim synthetic tactical training system for pilots and the submitting of a proposal under the *Multinational Helicopter Initiative* to establish a similar capacity in the Czech Republic.

NATO Response Force

2009 brought crucial decisions for the *NATO Response Force (NRF)*. As over the long term it has not been possible to implement individual NRF rotations, a new form was approved for the NRF. The NRF now comprises three components that can be supplemented as required: 1) operational headquarters generated from Alliance command structures, 2) the *Immediate Response Force (IRF)*, comprising a tactical headquarters and fighting units, and 3) the *Response Force Pool (RFP)*, which will supply units as needed for specific operational deployment. The new NRF structure has been almost fully implemented.

The revised form of the NRF envisages the use of support mechanisms, which are voluntary national objectives representing the national principle of long-term planning, goals for developing forces and permanent contributions of national forces together with a

mechanism for joint financing of the NRF. The new model for generating forces envisages the greater use of units affiliated to rapid-response forces. This principle has of course run into considerable difficulties due to the limited opportunities to affiliate national units to those forces.

In 2009, the Czech Republic contributed units for passive monitoring systems and protection against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons to the NRF.

Defence Planning

2009 was crucial for defence planning. In April, NATO approved the key document governing the content and process of defence planning, the *NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP)* and in June 2009 it approved the implementation and transition plans, and subsequently the allies discussed the issue of implementing the individual stages.

The essence of the changes to the NDPP consists in the transition to planning based on capabilities, both military and non-military, and other planning domains are more integrated into the process. The planning cycle covers four years.

In negotiations, the Czech Republic stressed that the NATO planning process should be able to provide transparent information for the governments and general public of individual member states. The Czech Republic has also promoted over the long term the harmonisation of NATO defence planning with the process of developing European Union capacities and the need for mutual support in developing capabilities between NATO and the European Union.

Preventing the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction

At its summit in April, the Alliance approved a strategic document concerning the proliferation of and defence against weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which sets out the Alliance's core principles and approaches to this issue. The Czech Republic contributed to the elaboration of that document and is chiefly responsible for ensuring that it covers the protection of troops and civilians in the entire complex of essential measures.

The Alliance also increased cooperation with partner countries, especially Ukraine, which offered to allocate its WMD defence units for the alliance. The Czech Republic took an

active approach to Ukraine in this field, indicated e.g. by the dispatch of a mobile training team.

During the year, the visibility and prestige of the Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Centre of Excellence Vyškov were increased.

3. The Czech Republic and regional cooperation

Visegrad cooperation

The Visegrad Group, comprising the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, is the most important format for regional cooperation in Central Europe. The purpose of this initiative consists primarily in developing specific projects (interdepartmental cooperation, strengthening relations between the citizens of the Visegrad countries, etc.), and in political cooperation wherever the four Visegrad countries are willing to agree on common approaches. Despite minor differences, a considerable intersection of common interests and an interest in strengthening mutual relations can be found in the V4 countries. Since the Visegrad countries joined the European Union, European Union affairs have been an integral part of their common agenda. The programmes of the individual presidencies of the Visegrad Group largely correspond to the priorities of the presidencies of the Council of the European Union – as a rule, prime ministers of European Union presidency countries are guests at the summits of heads of government of the V4 countries. 2009 saw the Polish (*in the first half of the year; the Presidency commenced in mid-2008*) and the Hungarian (*in the second half of the year; the Presidency will continue until mid-2010*) Presidencies of the V4.

The main priorities of the Polish Presidency of the V4 in the first half of 2009 were closely tied to the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership initiative, energy security and climate change. A number of summits, talks and negotiations were held on these topics at various levels. The Polish Presidency strengthened dialogue at the highest level with the Baltic states, whose prime ministers and foreign ministers were regularly invited by their Polish partners to V4 summits as guests. Other guests at high-level Visegrad meetings included representatives from Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden. The Polish Presidency ended with a summit for the prime ministers of the V4 countries in Wieliczka/Krakow on 3-4 June 2009).

The foreign policy priorities for the Hungarian Presidency of the V4 (July 2009 – June 2010) include the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership project, cooperation on development and the extension of cooperation in the V4+ format (more information on the programme can be found on www.visegradgroup.eu). Among the most important events in

the first half of the Hungarian Presidency was a summit for the foreign ministers of the V4 countries, Spain, Belgium and the countries of the Western Balkans on 6 October 2009 in Budapest, where issues related to the greater integration of the Western Balkans into Euro-Atlantic structures were discussed.

In addition to that, the Hungarian Presidency set out a number of sector priorities, the most important of which is a programme for cooperation on a Roma strategy and the issue of energy security. Working groups of experts have been set up for both of these issues.

To better present its priorities and emphasise the most important ones, in the autumn of 2009 the Hungarian Presidency produced a draft *Action Plan for Key Areas*, which are the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership, energy security, cohesion and regional policy and the Central European Roma Strategy. After processing comments made by other countries the plan was approved at the beginning of 2010.

Under interdepartmental cooperation ministers of culture, agriculture, defence, interior, the environment, health and economy/trade and industry met in 2009. Cooperation between Visegrad ministries at the level of expert forums covered culture, education, justice, trade and industry, defence, finance, the environment, transport and tourism. Individual ministries in the V4 countries also work together in European Union Ministerial Councils and Working Groups. Ministries of education and culture also work the most intensively with the *International Visegrad Fund* on projects and grants, and each year ministries of culture award the *International Visegrad Prize* for achievements in art.

Meetings of representatives of Visegrad Group states in 2009

- 1 March 2009 – summit of the V4 prime ministers on the sidelines of the European Council, Brussels;
- 23-25 April 2009 – visit of a delegation from the European Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, Poland;
- 23-25 April 2009 – meeting of V4 chiefs of staff, Gdansk;
- 7-9 May 2009 – meeting of justice ministers, Wroclaw;
- 21 May 2009 – meeting of V4 and Swedish foreign ministers, Warsaw;

- 25 May 2009 – meeting of V4 and Japanese foreign ministers, ASEM summit, Hanoi;
- 28 May 2009 – meeting of V4 defence ministers, Warsaw;
- 28-29 May 2009 – meeting of culture ministers, Warsaw;
- 2-4 June 2009 – meeting of presidents of parliaments, Miroslav Vlček and Přemysl Sobotka from the Czech Republic;
- 3-4 June 2009 – summit of the V4 prime ministers, Wieliczka/Krakow;
- 9-10 July 2009 – meeting of V4 environment ministers, Krakow;
- 9-10 September 2009 – meeting of V4, Bulgarian and Romanian agriculture ministers, Budapest;
- 11-12 September 2009 – summit of V4 presidents in Sopoty;
- 6 October 2009 – meeting of V4, Belgian, Spanish and Western Balkans foreign ministers, Budapest;
- 8 October 2009 – meeting of V4 defence ministers, Budapest;
- 23-24 November 2009 – meeting of V4 health ministers, Budapest;
- 26 November 2009 – meeting of V4 economy ministers, Budapest.

Among the most visible successes of cooperation between the V4 countries is the work of the *International Visegrad Fund (IVF)*. The IVF contributes significantly to extending contacts between citizens of the Visegrad countries; it boosts the prestige of the Visegrad Group in external relations, and it is also an important instrument for promoting certain foreign policy priorities of the V4 countries. 2009 was the first time a Czech representative was appointed Executive Director of the IVF, in line with a three-year rotating cycle. In view of the increasing quality, quantity and variety of projects approved in 2009, the prime ministers of the Visegrad countries raised the national contribution from EUR 1.25 million to EUR 1.5 million, meaning that from 2010 onwards the IVF will have an annual budget of EUR 6 million.

IVF grants awarded in 2009

Programme	Small grants	Standard grants	Strategic programme	Flexible projects	Scholarship programme	Art programmes	University programmes
Applicants	376	479	13	9	474	83	14
Approved	138	244	8	4	220	21	10
Total amount allocated (EUR)	549 977	2 416 464	322 000	493 440	1 677 000	94 500	185 000

In 2009, the IVF introduced the new *Visegrad+* programme to implement *flexible projects* to support the processes of transformation and democratisation in selected countries in Eastern and South-East Europe. During the year two projects were approved for Belarus and two for Serbia. In 2009 the countries of the Visegrad Group decided to include among the fund's priorities projects for the Roma people, primarily in the form of strategic programmes and scholarships. The greatest increase in applicants for funding was recorded for scholarships, where the IVF received the highest number of applications since its founding. More detailed information is available on the IVF website (www.visegradfund.org).

Central European Initiative

The Central European Initiative ([CEI](#)) is an integration group for the countries of Central, Eastern and South-East Europe that currently has 18 member states. On the basis of a decision by the prime ministers of the CEI member states at a summit in Sofia in November 2007, the implementation of the reform of the CEI continued under the Romanian Presidency in 2009, focusing largely on strengthening the CEI's work in the following areas: enterprise development (including tourism), intercultural cooperation, the environment and sustainable energy, human resources development, multimodal transport and sustainable agriculture. The process for the CEI's cooperation with other regional organisations and institutions operating in the CEI region was also enhanced with the aim of making its work towards European integration more effective.

The great majority of CEI activities take place through approved projects that are financed or co-financed by the relevant CEI funds. As the finance required for projects implemented under the *cooperation activities* was greater than the finance available, mechanisms were applied for the preliminary appraisal and selection of those project

proposals. That meant, however, that financial support from the CEI funds only went to the best cooperation projects that were most beneficial in terms of their practical impacts. In the 12-month period from the summit of the prime ministers of the CEI member states in Chişinău in November 2008 to October 2009, a total of 72 projects were approved with a total value of EUR 4.1 million, with 12% (i.e. EUR 545 000) financed by the CEI.

The CEI also provided an additional EUR 599 000 from its trust fund at the *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)* to support six technical cooperation projects in CEI member states, and it also took part in the implementation of five programmes financed by the European Union with a total value of EUR 10.47 million, of which the CEI contribution was 53%.

The Western Balkans and Eastern Europe are priorities for Czech foreign policy. The enlargement of the European Union to include countries from Central and Eastern Europe has presented a new challenge for the CEI: seven new European Union members have completed the transformation process, which has opened new opportunities for transferring know-how from the accession process to other CEI member states. For a number of countries regional cooperation under the CEI has therefore remained a stimulator for institutional and infrastructure development, regulatory reforms, the use of multilateral funding for project implementation, etc.

The main coordinator for the Czech Republic's cooperation with the CEI is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a representative of which is a member of the *Committee of National Coordinators* that guides the work of the *CEI Executive Secretariat*. From 2002 to 2009, the Czech Republic was the third-largest donor to the CEI, after Italy and Austria. Since 2005, the Czech Republic has contributed to the work of the CEI by regularly organising, through the Czech Republic's *National Training Fund*, CEI international conferences in Prague that focus on human resources development and life-long learning.

In 2007, the Czech Republic made a voluntary contribution of CZK 3 million to the CEI, which was then transferred into a new fund for climate and environment protection. Of a total of 72 applications for project co-financing from the fund, three have been selected for implementation: in Moldova – *Water resources management to reduce the pollution of groundwater and protect the sources of drinking water in the city of Balti* and *Waste water*

treatment in the Chetrosu village, and in Montenegro – Climate and environment protection programme dedicated to hydrosphere monitoring, pollution control and raising awareness. Czech enterprises were involved in implementing all three projects in 2009.

In 2009 and 2010, the Environment and Wetland Centre, Prague, is implementing – with funding from the CEI, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – a project aimed at exchanging experience in sustainable development and organic farming in Blidinje national park in Bosnia and Herzegovina. If the implementation of this project is successful it will continue in 2011. www.ceinet.org

Regional Partnership

The *Regional Partnership*, whose members are the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia, is a grouping that since its inception in 2001 has focused mainly on cooperation for issues falling within the competence of interior ministries (internal security, asylum and consular matters), and for culture and joint infrastructure projects; its foreign policy focus is mainly on the Western Balkans region.

Unlike e.g. the Visegrad Group, the Regional Partnership does not have a set mechanism for cooperation between its member states, and the role of organiser of conferences for the foreign ministers of the Regional Partnership countries regularly rotates between its six members.

In 2008, there was no regional conference for foreign ministers, but in 2009 the conference was held on 19-20 May in Brdo in Slovenia. It was attended by representatives of the countries of the Western Balkans, and the issue of speeding up the process of integrating that region into the European Union was discussed.

Another important event under that regional format was the 11th meeting of the presidents of parliaments in the Regional Partnership, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, which was held in Ljubljana on 16-17 October 2009. It was attended by the Chairpersons of both chambers of the Czech Parliament, Přemysl Sobotka and Miroslav Vlček, and the main topics were issues related to climate change and the Lisbon Treaty.

The field where Regional Partnership cooperation has developed most successfully and has yielded concrete results is internal security, with regular meetings for interior

ministers under the *Salzburg Forum*. Since 2007, the Forum has also been attended by the interior ministers of Bulgaria and Romania, and Croatia has observer status.

Regional Cooperation Council

In 2009, the Czech Republic supported the development of regional cooperation in South-East Europe and strengthening regional responsibility for the forms and effectiveness of cooperation, especially by supporting the *Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)*.

Supporting the RCC in the Western Balkans was one of the important tasks for the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. A visit in April by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the *RCC Secretariat*, a meeting between the RCC Secretary General Hido Bišćević and the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra in Brussels in March 2009, Mr Bišćević's attendance at an informal meeting of foreign ministers in Hluboká nad Vltavou and his visit to Prague in April 2009 all underlined the importance the Czech Republic attaches to regional cooperation and the RCC. That was also the subject of a seminar organised by the Czech Presidency in February 2009 at Štířín.

The global financial and economic crisis significantly complicated the region's access to funding to implement regional cooperation projects. As the presiding country of the European Union, the Czech Republic, in collaboration with the RCC and the European Commission, paid greater attention to identifying ways of assisting the countries of the region in overcoming their economic problems, both from funds from the *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)* and by coordinating assistance programmes funded by other international financial institutions.

The Czech Republic actively participated in the quarterly sittings of the *RCC Board*. As the holder of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union it attended on behalf of the European Union meetings for foreign ministers under the *South East European Cooperation Process (SEECF)*, which provides political guidance for the work of the RCC. The Czech Republic also represented the European Union at the SEECF summit of regional leaders in June 2009 in Chişinău.

The Czech Republic sought to bring all countries in the Western Balkans into regional cooperation and the identifying of ways to find generally acceptable solutions for the full

integration of Kosovo into regional cooperation, regardless of differences of opinion over its status. Its efforts were focused primarily on pragmatic solutions facilitating practical cooperation in a range of key areas (transport, trade, energy, free movement of persons, etc.).

The Czech Republic used an extraordinary subsidy to support the work of the RCC (the Czech Republic contributes EUR 50 000 annually to the RCC budget) and it organised two conferences in Sarajevo with the RCC to launch the *Regional Strategy for Research and Development for the Western Balkans*.

The Czech Republic also supported other regional initiatives such as the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC), the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), and strengthening regional cooperation in standards, metrology and testing through seminars held by the Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing (COSMT) in the region.

Eastern Partnership

In line with the long-term priorities of Czech foreign policy for Eastern Europe, the completion of negotiations on the *Eastern Partnership* was an indisputable success for the Czech Presidency. The initiative was inaugurated at a summit held on 7 May 2009 in Prague.

The Eastern Partnership is a policy aimed at enhancing cooperation between European Union states and six partner states – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Previously the European Union had had no concept for a coherent policy for the European Union's non-Russian eastern neighbours, and in that respect the launch of the Eastern Partnership represents a historic and strategic step towards greater European Union commitment to its eastern neighbours.

The Eastern Partnership has two basic dimensions. Bilateral cooperation under the Eastern Partnership draws on the framework and instruments of the *European Neighbourhood Policy*, and the European Commission implements tasks from member states. The long-term objective of the bilateral dimension is the deepening and intensifying of bilateral relations between the European Union and the partner countries based on the principles of differentiation and conditionality. Under the Eastern Partnership's multilateral cooperation four thematic platforms meet twice annually (in the format EU 27 + 6 + other *ad hoc* participants), which facilitate cooperation and open dialogue on specific issues. The platforms

are: 1) *democracy, good governance and stability*; 2) *economic integration and convergence with EU policies*; 3) *energy security*; 4) *contacts between people*. The work of the platforms may be backed by panels of experts and projects in the broader framework of *flagship initiatives*.

In 2009, there were two rounds of the thematic platforms, which discussed and set out the main objectives and working programmes for the individual platforms in the period 2009-2011. At the platforms five flagship initiatives were approved: 1. *Integrated Border Management*; 2. *Small and Medium Enterprises*; 3. *Regional Electricity Markets, Improved Energy Efficiency and Increased Use of Renewable Resources*; 4. *Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters*; 5. *Environmental Governance*. The first meetings of the flagship initiatives on *Integrated Border Management* and *Prevention of, Preparedness for and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters* were held, as was the first session of a panel of experts on *Integrated Border Management*.

An important component of the Eastern Partnership is an instrument to build and strengthen the capacities of partner states' administrations, the *Comprehensive Institutional Building (CIB)* programme.

A crucial dimension of the Eastern Partnership is involving representatives of civil society in the work of the Eastern Partnership via the *Civil Society Forum*, which first met on 16-17 November 2009.

The December meeting of foreign ministers of all Eastern Partnership countries summarised progress in its implementation to date, confirmed the key objectives and programme for the platforms, took note of the main objectives and recommendations of the Civil Society Forum and discussed options for developing this European policy.

The Czech Republic contributed significantly not only to the inauguration of the Eastern Partnership in the course of its Presidency, but was subsequently actively engaged in discussions on the individual platforms and expert forums. In order to set up a functional and flexible model for interdepartmental cooperation and coordination to implement the Eastern Partnership, the *Committee for the European Union's* Resolution No. 13 of 13 July 2009 approved the establishing of a working group under the coordination group at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This interdepartmental working group is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. The fundamental strategic premise for its work is to enhance the Czech Republic's capacity to make maximum use of the opportunities offered by the Eastern Partnership, and to work to advance and deepen cooperation with partner states. The working group met twice in 2009; its rules of procedure were adopted and work to date by individual departments on project cooperation in the Eastern Partnership countries was mapped.

Union for the Mediterranean

The *Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)*, founded on the basis of a French initiative on 13 July 2008 at a summit in Paris, was created in connection with the *Barcelona Process*. It has 43 members, including the 27 European Union member states, and should become a platform to strengthen cooperation between countries in the Mediterranean region. To that end, there are biennial summits, the institution of co-presidency, a joint secretariat and a focus on specific regional and sub-regional projects. The Paris summit identified six priorities for cooperation: de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, the development of maritime and land highways, civil protection, the Euro-Mediterranean University, the Mediterranean initiative to promote enterprise and the development of alternative energy resources. That last priority, aimed at developing renewable and primarily solar energy resources in the Southern Mediterranean and the linking of electricity networks in Europe, includes the most ambitious and expensive UfM project, the *Mediterranean Solar Plan*.

The implementation of projects was to be preceded by the establishing of the UfM secretariat, the body responsible for projects, and the appointing of its Secretary General. However, the UfM came to a halt at the beginning of 2009 in consequence of the conflict in Gaza, and that situation persisted for almost the entire first half of the year. The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which together with Egypt and France chaired the UfM, therefore concentrated on drafting the statute for the secretariat. The draft was completed at expert level in the latter half of the year, but owing to persistent disagreements requiring political decisions, the statute was not adopted and the founding of the secretariat was deferred. A single candidate was nominated for the post of Secretary General, but that election was also deferred to 2010.

Owing to the aforementioned freeze on all UfM activities, almost the entire ambitious calendar for talks in 2009 was cancelled, and of the approximately 15 ministerial conferences

planned only two were held. At the request of Arab partners, the annual November meeting of foreign ministers was also postponed.

A meeting of trade ministers (Brussels, 9 December 2009) emphasised the need to liberalise trade and the necessity of avoiding protectionist measures in connection with the economic crisis. The *Euromed Trade Roadmap beyond 2010* was approved, identifying specific activities to accelerate the economic integration of the region and promote trade and investment, primarily through free trade agreements.

The ministerial conference on strengthening the role of women in society (Marrakech, 11-12 November 2009) pointed to persisting discrimination against women on the labour market, their inadequate representation in the public sector, problems in combining family and professional life, violence against women and the increased risk of discrimination wherever women are immigrants or refugees.

4. The Czech Republic and other European international organisations and forums

The Czech Republic and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The Czech Republic continues to regard the OSCE as an important part of the European security architecture, and supporting its work is one of the Czech government's long-term foreign policy priorities. The Czech Republic is concerned that the OSCE be a flexible organisation capable of adapting to current challenges and tasks. The Czech Republic supports a balance between all three dimensions of the OSCE (the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions) and the observation of the standards adopted in those dimensions by all OSCE participating states. The Czech Republic supports efforts by the OSCE to strengthen its capacities to monitor breaches of those standards, and its efforts to assist in their remedy.

The Czech Republic has systematically advocated making the OSCE capable of responding flexibly to old and new security challenges, threats and risks, and adjusting its instruments accordingly. In the Czech Republic's view, the OSCE's primary roles are conflict prevention, post-conflict renewal and the fight against terrorism. Last year, the OSCE was the main platform for the debate on the future of European security, which is viewed here in all three of its dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental, and human.

As in previous years, in 2009 the Czech Republic continued to be fully involved in cooperation with other European Union member states within the OSCE framework, where European Union members account for almost half the participating countries (27 out of 56) and their contributions make up roughly two-thirds of OSCE funds. As the presiding country of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic formulated and negotiated the positions of the European Union as a whole, and in the latter half of the year under the Swedish Presidency it actively contributed to formulating the standpoints of European Union member states on general issues and specific problems for the OSCE.

In 2009, Greece held the OSCE Chairmanship, culminating in the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens on 1-2 December 2009. The Czech delegation was headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kohout. In the plenary session there were speeches by OSCE participant states, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and representatives of international and regional organisations and OSCE Mediterranean and Asian partner states.

The main topic and output from the 17th Ministerial Council was an agreement on continuing the *Corfu Process*, launched in the summer as a response to current security issues of transatlantic significance. In the process of adopting that decision, a reference was included in the documents to the possible organising of an OSCE summit in 2010, under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan. For the Czech Republic, a precondition for holding the summit is a clearly defined agenda covering the full breadth of the OSCE security agenda.

Other outputs from the Ministerial Council were decisions and declarations covering all three OSCE dimensions, although the wording adopted was often the result of compromise. It was also decided that Ireland would chair the organisation in 2010, and that Australia would be offered cooperation with the OSCE under the *Partnership for Cooperation* programme.

Agreement was not reached on a number of issues for which ministerial decisions had been drafted whose adoption was perceived as crucial by Greece and the European Union as a whole. They included the question of the legal personality of the OSCE, the freedom of the media and the rule of law.

The OSCE politico-military dimension

In its politico-military dimension, the OSCE constantly seeks to implement existing confidence and security building measures as contained in the 1999 Vienna Document, the implementation of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the implementation of other documents such as the *Code of Conduct*, *Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers*, *Global Exchange of Military Information*, support for the implementation of *the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention*, etc. The Czech Republic actively contributes to those activities.

One highly important part of the OSCE's work in the politico-military dimension consists in talks on the arms control regime that take place in the *Joint Consultative Group* of the states parties to the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)*. 30 OSCE participating states are parties to the CFE, which the Czech Republic regards as one of the cornerstones of European security.

The Czech Republic continues to work for the ratification of the *Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (Adapted CFE)*. The Adapted Treaty is significant for the Czech Republic because it eliminates the bloc-based concept of the original treaty and improves the verification system for the structures of the signatory states' armed forces. The implementation of the Adapted Treaty should further enhance transparency and build confidence in the disarmament regime as a whole. Like other NATO countries, the Czech Republic will ratify the Adapted CFE after Russia fulfils the political commitments it assumed in respect of Georgia and Moldova at the Closing Conference at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999 (the *Istanbul Commitments*).

Since December 2007, Russia has failed to observe the commitments set out in the current Treaty (CFE), and that situation continued in 2009. However, from the legal perspective, the Treaty does not permit a moratorium, or suspension of the implementation of the commitments of the Treaty, as a unilateral step by one of the parties to the Treaty. The consequences of that suspension are e.g. that Russia has not provided the other parties to the Treaty with regular information on its armed forces, and has not facilitated inspections. Neither has Azerbaijan provided regular information on its armed forces, and has provided no justification of that, and for a longer period of time that now totals four years.

In view of the stalemate resulting from Russia's suspension of the implementation of the CFE, in a declaration at the NATO Council of Ministers and the Alliance declaration on the CFE in the OSCE Ministerial Council NATO emphatically warned Russia that unless it changed its approach NATO would have to consider taking reciprocal action in the following year by refusing to provide Russia with information.

The OSCE economic and environmental dimension

The main OSCE event in the economic and environmental dimension in 2009 was the *17th Economic and Environmental Forum (EEF)*, the first part of which was held on 19-20

January 2009 in Vienna and the second part on 18-20 May 2009 in Athens, which in view of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union replaced Prague, where the second part of the forum is traditionally held, as the venue. The theme was *Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region*.

Talks at the 17th EEF covered themes such as managing migration in a changing global environment, reviewing the implementation of the OSCE's commitments in the economic and environmental dimension focusing on migration, gender and labour migration policies, enhancing the development impact of migration, the environmental factors of migration and strengthening regional and inter-state cooperation in the area of migration management for the benefit of stability and security. The head of the Czech delegation spoke at the 17th EEF to present the European Union's standpoint on migration in the OSCE region.

On 5-6 October 2009, a Chairmanship Conference was held in Bucharest on *Security Implications of Climate Change in the OSCE region* as part of preparations for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen.

The first preparatory conference for the 18th EEF was held on 12-13 October 2009 in Astana. The Kazakh Chairmanship for 2010 proposed for the theme of the 18th EEF *Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region*.

On 10-11 December 2009, the Regional conference on migrant investment, return and economic reintegration for development in the South Eastern Europe and Central Asian region was held in Vienna as a joint project between the OSCE and the International Organisation for Migration, with the support of the Austrian government.

The OSCE human dimension

In its human dimension, the OSCE again organised the *Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM)*, three *Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (SHDIM)* and a human dimension seminar. The supplementary meetings in May 2009 were concerned with the effective implementation of legislation against hate crimes. In May, there was also a human dimension seminar on strengthening the rule of law, focusing on

the effective administration of justice. The next supplementary meeting in July examined freedom of religion or belief and the measures adopted by states since the human dimension implementation meeting on that theme in 2003. The meeting paid special attention to a current review of the problems that high-level conferences have examined in recent years concerning tolerance and the ending of discrimination based on religion or belief. The third supplementary meeting in November 2009 concerned gender equality, with a special focus on combating violence against women.

The OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting was held on 28 September – 9 October 2009 in Warsaw, and was attended by a delegation from the Czech Republic comprising representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Roma Community Affairs. The head of the office of the Roma Community Affairs Council chaired talks on education for Roma children. The Czech Republic presented the measures already adopted or in the planning phase to ensure effective access to education for Roma children. On the theme of freedom of speech, the Czech delegation distributed a document with information on the approach applied in the Czech Republic, which is intended to achieve a balance between the right to privacy and freedom of speech.

The meeting was actively attended by a broad spectrum of non-governmental organisations from OSCE participant states, with a number of accompanying events. Non-governmental organisations again criticised member states for their inadequate implementation of the commitments made under the OSCE human dimension. As the future holder of the OSCE Chairmanship, Kazakhstan was greatly criticised for violating the right to freedom of speech, persecuting human rights defenders and many other aspects. Themes under consideration for next year's meeting again provoked lengthy discussions: the European Union presented as its priorities the protection of human rights defenders, strengthening independent national human rights institutions, and freedom of assembly and association. Other themes the European Union would like to focus on are strengthening the implementation mechanisms for the OSCE human dimension, freedom of speech and the media, tolerance and non-discrimination, respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism, gender equality, conflict prevention and the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict renewal, the rule of law, national minorities, the prevention of torture and the abolition of the death penalty.

In the course of the year, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media continued to work to protect persecuted journalists and to strengthen mechanisms protecting freedom of speech in the region.

In February 2009, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities visited the Czech Republic, where he met the Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Vondra, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg and the Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities Michael Kocáb to discuss developments in the status of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic and his work to strengthen the protection of the rights of minorities and thereby prevent tension and conflict within and between the OSCE states.

Other OSCE institutions

Strained relations between the *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)* in Warsaw and certain participant states were somewhat eased by the arrival of a new Director at the Office, Janez Lenarčič from Slovenia, in July 2008. However, some countries continue to press for the ending of an apparent double standard in assessing compliance with OSCE commitments by the ODIHR, especially concerning elections and their monitoring, but also human rights in general. In 2009, the ODIHR had a number of disputes with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly over election monitoring.

The Czech Republic deployed experts in the majority of OSCE/ODIHR election observation missions as long-term and short-term election observers. In 2009, there were several dozen observers in total.

As in previous years, an important part of the OSCE's work in 2009 were its offices, centres and missions (*OSCE field missions*) in individual participating states in South-East Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The 18 field missions focus on providing assistance to the host countries and their work concerns all three OSCE dimensions.

The Czech Republic also sent civilian experts to long-term OSCE missions. In 2009, 6-7 persons from the Czech Republic worked for OSCE missions.

The Czech Republic continues to pay great attention to the work of the *Prague office of the OSCE Secretariat*. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides premises for the office free of charge and seconds the head of this institution. The Czech Republic is interested in further

enhancing the significance of the office and extending its activities for the benefit of the entire organisation by strengthening its function as an archive of historical documents and its role in providing information to experts and the general public, as well as its conference services and, most notably, the annual meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum attended by approximately 400 persons.

Council of Europe

On 12 May 2009, the 119th session of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers was held in Madrid, marking the organisation's 60th anniversary. On that occasion, Slovenia took over the chairmanship from Spain for the subsequent six-month period. The Czech delegation was headed by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomáš Pojar. Among the main points on the agenda were the election of the Council of Europe's Secretary General, the conflict in Georgia and relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union. An important theme was the consolidation of the system for the protection of human rights, especially in the light of measures adopted to ensure more effective decision-making by the European Court of Human Rights, where the number of outstanding complaints rose catastrophically throughout 2009.

On 11 May 2009, a *quadripartite meeting* was held in Madrid between the Council of Europe and the European Union at the highest level. The Czech Republic attended in its role as the holder of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and it was represented by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tomáš Pojar. The Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, also attended on behalf of the European Union. The Council of Europe was represented by its Secretary General Terry Davis and Angel Lossada, the Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The main themes at the meeting were current political issues: Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and the Eastern Partnership, and written conclusions were adopted.

The election of the new Secretary General took place at the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Committee of Ministers nominated two candidates, Thorbjorn Jagland from Norway and Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz from Poland. Thorbjorn Jagland was the clear winner in the elections, gaining a strong mandate for the next five years.

Switzerland took over the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers from Slovenia on 18 November 2009. On that occasion, the Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey presented the main priorities: the reform and strengthening of the European Court of Human Rights; respecting and supporting the organisation's fundamental values; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; enhancing cooperation with the European Union (the European Union's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights) and other organisations (opening an office of the Council of Europe in Geneva).

On 25 November 2009, the *Committee of Ministers' Delegates of the Council of Europe* approved the organisation's ordinary budget for 2010 at a level of EUR 218 million. In view of the global economic crisis, this was the first time the organisation's ordinary budget has fallen short of its traditional zero real growth (i.e. increasing the budget solely by an inflation coefficient). The Czech Republic's contribution to the ordinary budget represents 0.9053% of contributions by all member states, i.e. less than EUR 2 million.

In February 2009, the *European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)* published a report from a visit to the Czech Republic in 2008 (available [in Czech](#)), criticising the issue of surgical castration and the denial of CPT access to the medical documents of patients in psychiatric facilities. The Committee made another ad hoc visit to the Czech Republic in October 2009.

In September 2009, as part of the fourth monitoring cycle, the *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) Report on the Czech Republic* was published. The report is available [in Czech](#).

In December 2009, the first report monitoring the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by the Czech Republic was published. The report is available [in English](#).

Of the highest representatives of the Council of Europe, the President of the European Court of Human Rights Jean-Paul Costa visited the Czech Republic on 21-25 October 2009, where he met the highest representatives of the Czech Republic (President Václav Klaus and Prime Minister Jan Fischer, as well as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the President of the Constitutional Court).

In 2009, the European Court of Human Rights delivered a total of three judgments and seven other decisions in respect of the Czech Republic.

5. The Czech Republic and the United Nations

As one of the founding members, the Czech Republic takes active part in the activities of the UN. As in previous years, in 2009 the Czech Republic duly fulfilled its financial obligations to the UN in a timely manner, took part to a limited extent in selected peace missions and provided a number of voluntary contributions for specific UN projects. In drafting resolutions, the Czech Republic coordinated its position within the European Union, both directly in New York and through the thematic working groups and committees of the Council of the European Union in Brussels. The common European Union position is then presented by the presiding country of the European Union, whose role has been taken over by the Delegation of the European Union since 1 December 2009, when the Lisbon Treaty came into force. On questions for which European Union countries cannot find a common position, the Czech Republic acts independently. In the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic's activity in the UN was intensified by its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which carries with it the responsibility for drafting European Union statements on world events, leading coordination and negotiations, and promoting Czech interests in multilateral diplomacy.

Principle UN bodies

63rd session of the UN General Assembly

From the beginning of January to 14 September 2009, the *63rd session of the UN General Assembly* continued under the presidency of Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, the former Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs. Among the main topics in this part of the UN General Assembly were the issues of armament and disarmament, economic development against the backdrop of the global financial and economic crisis, sustainable development and climate change in connection with preparations for the conference in December in Copenhagen, human rights, UN reforms and implementing anti-terrorism measures. On 1 January 2009 the Czech Republic became the presiding country of the European Union, and it acted on behalf of the 27 countries in all of the principle UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The first test of the new Czech Presidency was the *emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on Gaza* (15-16 January 2009), convened despite opposition from a number of member countries after both sides in the conflict had refused to implement Security Council Resolution 1860. Thanks in part to the work of the Czech Presidency, it was possible to negotiate a more balanced draft resolution which the European Union could unanimously support.

The spring part of this session of the General Assembly was marked primarily by the *global financial and economic crisis*, which had broken out in full force towards the close of the preceding year. Under pressure from developing states and its activist President, discussions began in the General Assembly and its subordinate bodies on how the UN should respond and what reforms (including reforms of financial institutions) should be prepared. Many unrealistic ideas and demands were voiced. These complicated debates resulted in a decision to convene a *High-level Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development* (24-26 June 2009). The drafting of the outcome from this conference in the General Assembly was highly controversial and complicated. After negotiations lasting several weeks, in which the delegation of the Czech Presidency representing the European Union was one of the key actors, it proved possible to negotiate a compromise that entailed that the foundations of the international financial system would not be called into question under the pressure of the moment, and that the UN's role would be a pragmatic one. The conference was preceded by an interactive thematic debate organised by the President of the General Assembly.

Both the beginning and the end of the Czech Presidency were marked by a large-scale political crisis: on 30 June 2009, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the Honduran Army's action against President Manuel Zelaya, in the presence of Mr Zelaya.

The spring part of General Assembly sessions, when its main committees do not sit (other than the Budget Committee), has in recent years been devoted to *reform topics*. In line with the conclusions of the most recent UN summit in 2005, the key reform topics include the reform of the Security Council, the revitalisation of the General Assembly and ensuring better coherence in the way the UN works to provide development assistance.

Most attention was devoted to the *reform of the Security Council*, in part because in February, after many delays, intergovernmental talks (at an informal plenary session) were

commenced in the General Assembly. It was anticipated that this would be a significant impulse for the entire process, and that after almost 14 years of a largely theoretical exchange of opinions in a specialised working group, real progress in negotiations would gradually be achieved. It emerged, however, that not all UN states are willing to take any major steps. The intergovernmental talks soon began to resemble the earlier exchange of opinions.

Nor was there any major breakthrough in debates on how to revive and improve the effectiveness of the work of the General Assembly itself and make it more relevant to current global problems and challenges – i.e. how to revitalise it. Rather there was a tendency to repeat old disputes, including alleged encroachment by the Security Council on the powers of the General Assembly, the method for electing the UN Secretary-General, etc. On behalf of the European Union, the Czech Republic promoted practical measures to improve the daily workings of the General Assembly as the UN's most representative political body (the voting system, distribution of documents, etc.) and the full implementation of decisions already taken.

Discussion on ensuring better cooperation between UN agencies in the implementation of their mandates in the development agenda, i.e. *system-wide coherence*, covered three main areas: the reform of “gender architecture” (i.e. the rationalisation of the system in terms of better coordination between those parts of it devoted to the issue of gender), the management of operational development activities, and their financing. The part of the resulting resolution devoted to gender issues requests that the Secretary-General produce a proposal for creating a gender entity (directly subordinate to his deputy).

During the 63rd session of the General Assembly, a report by the Secretary-General was published on the concept of the *responsibility to protect (RtoP)*, i.e. the responsibility of governments and the international community to protect people from war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing. The European Union and other like-minded countries were successful in seeing that a resolution was passed in the General Assembly to ensure that UN member states would work with RtoP.

During the spring, the General Assembly held debates on HIV/AIDS and “*education in crisis situations*”, and in response to an initiative from Belarus there was a dialogue on combating human trafficking.

In the field of disarmament, there were sessions of an open working group for the drafting of an *Arms Trade Treaty*, sessions of the UN Disarmament Commission and the 3rd session of the *Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (3rd PrepCom NPT)*. In sustainable development, the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly adopted the first ever General Assembly resolution concerned with the negative impacts of climate change in international security, under the title *Climate change and its possible security implications*.

On the initiative of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, on 21 May 2009 a seminar on *Security Sector Reform* was held in New York with the aim of supporting better coordination between the European Union and the UN in this matter.

Decisions were taken to clarify and implement plans that had been approved earlier for the extensive reconstruction of the buildings of the UN Headquarters in New York, as well as decisions related to the personnel management reform approved in December 2008 and aimed at simplifying the system for engaging UN staff (and the conditions for the performance of their work). A budget was approved for peacekeeping operations, which now have an unprecedented scope in terms of finance and the troops, police officers and civilian experts deployed (there are approximately 110 000 persons working in 15 missions).

64th session of the UN General Assembly

From 15 September to 24 December 2009, the main (autumn) part of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly took place in New York. Ali Abdussalam Treki, the former Libyan Secretary of African Union Affairs, was elected its President. Taking part in the session for the Czech Republic was a delegation led by the President of the Czech Republic Václav Klaus, accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kohout.

Among the main events in the General Assembly was the general debate, the summit on climate change held by the UN Secretary-General, and a ministerial segment to support the *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty*.

The general debate of the 64th General Assembly was held on 23-29 September 2009 and was attended by the more than 190 UN member states at the level of heads of state, prime ministers, foreign ministers and two observers. The Czech President Václav Klaus spoke on

behalf of the Czech Republic on the very first day of the general debate, and his speech covered the global financial and economic crisis. Among other topics and global issues raised in speeches were climate change in connection with the forthcoming conference in Copenhagen; the security situation in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq; the fight against terrorism; the implementation of the millennium development goals; the reform of the UN and the impact of the financial and economic crisis on financing development.

On 22 September 2009, a high-level summit on climate change was held under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, attended by more than a hundred heads of state and prime ministers. The Czech delegation to the summit was headed by President Klaus, who also represented the Czech Republic at one of the round-table discussions. The summit aimed to mobilise the political will of world leaders in order for agreement to be reached at the December conference in Copenhagen.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kohout took part in events under the European Union ministerial week on the sidelines of the general debate, especially meetings between the European Union and the United States. President Klaus and the Deputy Prime Minister also had a number of bilateral meetings with their counterparts from other countries.

On 24-25 September 2009, the 6th ministerial conference to support the *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)* was held. The conference took place in a new atmosphere following a statement by the American administration that it would seek US ratification of the Treaty. At its opening, the conference approved a *Final Declaration* calling on the nine remaining states whose ratification will allow the Treaty to come into force to do so without delay. Over 50 countries, at least 40 of them at ministerial level, took part in the following debate. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Helena Bambasová spoke on behalf of the Czech Republic.

During the autumn part, the General Assembly passed a total 249 resolutions, of which 39 were plenary resolutions and the others were passed by the six main General Assembly committees. For the Czech Republic one of the important resolutions was one adopted consensually on the situation in Afghanistan, cosponsored by 108 states including the Czech Republic, which was active in the discussion on the resolution. On 5 November 2009, there was voting on a resolution on the *Goldstone Report* (a report by the *UN Fact Finding Mission*

on the conflict in Gaza), which received large-scale media coverage. The Czech Republic, which seeks an impartial investigation into breaches of international humanitarian law by both sides in the conflict, was forced along with 17 other states to vote against the resolution, as it had fundamental reservations over certain passages in its text. Among the other plenary resolutions passed, there was a resolution on humanitarian aid that ensures access to the victims of humanitarian catastrophes and places greater emphasis on the safety of humanitarian workers, and a resolution on a peaceful solution to the issue of Palestine. The General Assembly also consensually passed resolutions on aid for the Palestinian people, the role of diamonds on provoking conflicts, support for dialogue between cultures and religions, reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Criminal Court and a resolution on Nelson Mandela International Day.

There were also elections to UN bodies. The Czech Republic was elected a member of the *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)* for 2010-2013, the *United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)* for 2010-2013 and for 2016, the *Organisational Committee of the Peace building Commission* for 2010-2011 and the *Committee for the UN Population Fund Award* for 2010-2012. In elections for five non-permanent members of the Security Council for 2010-2011, the following countries were elected: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nigeria, Gabon, Lebanon and Brazil, replacing Croatia, Libya, Burkina Faso, Vietnam and Costa Rica.

Work of the main committees

The agenda for the *Disarmament and International Security Committee (1st Committee)* traditionally included a wide range of issues related to the eradication of the threat of weapons of mass destruction, the control of conventional weapons and confidence-building measures.

Sittings were held in a new atmosphere, positively influenced by the progress made at the Conference on Disarmament and new initiatives by the United States, including the successful Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The change of attitude in the United States contributed to an increase in the number of resolutions adopted by consensus. In addition to the traditionally consensually-adopted resolutions on the destruction of chemical and biological weapons and a resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from obtaining weapons of mass destruction, other resolutions adopted by consensus

covered restricting the manufacture of fissile material (FMCT), cluster munitions and measures to build confidence in space activities. The change in the United States' position in connection with the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) resulted in a significant increase in the number of countries voting in favour of the relevant resolution, and for the first time all five official nuclear powers voted in favour (only North Korea voted against, and India, Mauritius and Syria abstained). In the field of conventional weapons, the main issue was the illegal proliferation of light weapons and small arms. Great attention was paid to the drafting of the *Arms Trade Treaty*. There were continuing efforts to completely eradicate anti-personnel mines, and a resolution on surplus munitions stockpiles was approved by consensus.

In total, 49 resolutions and five procedural decisions were adopted. Of these, 29 resolutions and all five decisions were adopted by consensus. Of 20 resolutions voted on, European Union states were unanimous in 11 cases.

The *Economic and Financial Committee (2nd Committee)* worked on a number of topics related to sustainable development, macroeconomic and political issues, globalisation and mutual dependence, climate change, the eradication of poverty, agriculture and food security, the problems facing the least developed countries, South – South cooperation, information and communication technologies for development and the implementation of the conclusions of an international conference on financing development held in 2002. In the course of the autumn part, the 2nd Committee also held a number of accompanying events relating to the financial crisis, climate change, the millennium development goals and other themes such as cooperation for global food security and improving the position of the poor.

An important item on the 2nd Committee's agenda was discussing the draft resolution on climate change which was adopted by the UN General Assembly before the start of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen (7-19 December 2009). The Committee also worked on a draft of the closing document for the South – South cooperation conference held in Nairobi on 1-3 December 2009. In connection with preparations for a high-level plenary session on the implementation of the *Millennium Development Goals* in September this year, which will be immediately followed by the general debate of the 6th UN General Assembly, the 2nd Committee discussed organisational modalities and preliminary themes for the agenda. In

sustainable development, the Committee also worked on preparations for the *UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 and draws on earlier world summits in Johannesburg (2002) and Rio de Janeiro (1992). The General Assembly adopted a resolution on the implementation of *Agenda 21*, which includes a decision to hold the summit in 2012 and accepts Brazil's offer to host the conference, as well as covering organisational modalities for the preparation process. The high-level dialogue on financing development, originally planned for 23-24 November 2009, had to be moved to 16-17 March 2010 for organisational reasons.

In the autumn part, the 2nd Committee discussed and passed 42 resolutions, of which there was voting on six proposals (in every case a common European Union position was put forward).

The agenda for the *Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (3rd Committee)* covered issues of social development, human rights, crime prevention and criminal justice, international drug control, the rights of children, women and indigenous populations, racism and the right to self-determination. The committee also discussed reports by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Human Rights Council.

The Czech Republic cosponsored a resolution on the rights of the child and a resolution on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and supported resolutions pointing to human rights violations in North Korea, Iran and Myanmar/Burma. It also supported resolutions on the rights of disabled persons and against religious discrimination. It voted against resolutions on activities which were to follow from the *Durban Conference against Racism* on the grounds that they contradicted international human rights standards by restricting freedom of expression.

In total, the 3rd Committee adopted 58 resolutions, 42 of them by consensus. In two instances the European Union did not vote unanimously.

At its sessions, the *Special Political and Decolonization Committee (4th Committee)* discussed the issue of decolonising non-self-governing territories, matters associated with the work of the UN Secretariat in the provision of information, the effects of atomic radiation, the peaceful use of outer space and the Palestinian question.

Themes discussed concerning the Palestinian question included the Israeli military operation in Gaza at the turn of 2008 and 2009, the ongoing construction of Israeli settlements including barriers and violence committed by new settlers, as well as the worsening of the humanitarian, economic and social situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in Gaza, and the Goldstone Report. Despite the negative influence of split voting by the European Union on a resolution by the UN General Assembly on the Goldstone Report, it proved possible to maintain a unanimous European Union position for the package of regular Palestinian resolutions. That was largely due to a marked improvement in the texts of the original proposals in consequence of European Union efforts during negotiations.

Of the other topics, greater attention was devoted to a point for debate on the *effects of atomic radiation*, where a conflict arose over how to deal with some member states' long-standing interest in becoming members of the *United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)*. A resolution prioritised the resolving of this matter by the end of the 64th UN General Assembly.

The committee adopted 24 resolutions and three decisions, with 10 resolutions being adopted by consensus and 14 by voting. The European Union voted unanimously in ten cases.

The work of the *Administrative and Budgetary Committee (5th Committee)* focused on issues relating to the financing of the UN, including the financing of the *International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)* and the *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)*. The Committee also dealt with the issue of reforming the organisation, including its management, human resources management and the system for exercising justice within the UN.

The Committee approved the UN regular budget for 2010-2011 at a level of USD 5.16 billion. Negotiations on a contribution scale for UN peacekeeping operations ended with the reacceptance of the existing methodology. The resolution on the contribution scale for the regular budget includes a commitment to review elements in the methodology in the next round of negotiations.

In total, the Committee adopted 21 resolutions and eight decisions. All resolutions were adopted by consensus.

During the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, the *Legal Committee (6th Committee)* examined the criminal accountability of officials and experts working on UN missions, a report on the work of the Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the UN Programme of Assistance in the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law, a report from the 61st session of the International Law Commission, a report by the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on strengthening the role of the UN, the rule of law at domestic and international level, the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction, measures to counter international terrorism, the exercise of justice in the UN and a report by the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

The 6th Committee also examined six requests for the granting of observer status in the UN General Assembly for the following organisation: the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the International Olympic Committee, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. The Committee recommended in consensus that the General Assembly award observer status to all of those organisations.

Again, no progress was made in negotiations on the draft *Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism*, due primarily to the rigid positions adopted by states in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. In contrast, in the case of universal jurisdiction it was possible to prevent efforts by states in the African Union for the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution whose content would encroach on the independence of courts prosecuting persons in state functions for crimes under international law (the principle of universal jurisdiction is included in the current wording of the Czech Criminal Code).

In total, the 6th Committee adopted 16 resolutions, all of which were approved by consensus.

UN Security Council

In 2009, the *UN Security Council* adopted 47 resolutions and issued 35 presidential statements, approximately a third less than in the previous year. Traditionally it devoted much attention to Africa and the Near and Middle East.

In the early days of 2009, the Security Council was concerned with the conflict in the Gaza Strip, and in subsequent months with the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court for the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, and the worsening security and humanitarian situation in Sudan. In the course of the year, the Security Council repeatedly discussed instability in Afghanistan and Somalia, and for the first time ever it also discussed the situation in Sri Lanka, where the civil war was culminating. The Security Council issued a consensually adopted presidential statement on Sri Lanka and a number of press statements. In June 2009, the Security Council could not agree on extending the UN mission in Georgia (Abkhazia) and Russia vetoed the relevant draft resolution. During the year resolutions were adopted on e.g. the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, the Near East and Iraq.

Cross-sector thematic debates were regular items on the Security Council's agenda. In 2009, the Security Council paid particular attention to the causes and consequences of armed conflicts, including their impact on civilians, and to the issue of post-war peace building. During a debate in September 2009, where discussions were for the first time chaired by the American President Barack Obama, the Security Council adopted a resolution on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Another important output from the debates was the adoption of Resolution 1888 *Women, Peace and Security*, cosponsored by the Czech Republic.

During the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, representatives of the Czech Republic's Permanent Mission to the UN spoke on behalf of the European Union in twenty Security Council debates, both on cross-sector themes (UN peacekeeping missions; conflict mediation; protecting civilians; women, peace and security) and on individual conflicts (Afghanistan, Gaza, Somalia, Sudan, Haiti, East Timor, etc.). In debates, the Czech Republic presented the European Union's political standpoints and highlighted the support the European Union provides to the UN, whether by deploying soldiers, police officers and civilian experts, or by financing, or by deploying its own missions (ATALANTA in Somalia, EUFOR in Chad, EUSEC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the European Union mission in Guinea-Bissau, etc.).

On 15 October 2009, elections for five rotating Security Council members were held in the UN GA plenary. The new members chosen for 2010-2011 were Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria. The newly elected members replaced Burkina Faso, Croatia, Costa Rica, Libya and Vietnam, which had sat on the Security Council in 2008-2009.

During the year, informal intergovernmental negotiations continued on the reform of the Security Council, the essence of which covers increasing the number of Security Council members, the use of the right of veto, the election of new members and the Security Council's working methods.

UN Economic and Social Council

The *high-level segment* of the session of the *UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)* was held in Geneva on 6-9 July 2009, followed by the *coordination segment* (10-14 July 2009) and the *operational activities segment* (15-17 July 2009).

The main topic for the *high-level segment (HLS)*, attended by the UN Secretary-General and senior representatives of international financial and trade institutions, was the implementation of international objectives and commitments for global public health. The HLS session was split into four parts: political dialogue, the Annual Ministerial Review (part of which was the *Innovative Fair*) and thematic debates. At the close of the session the *Ministerial Declaration* was adopted by consensus.

Political dialogue in the HLS focused largely on the main trends for the world economy and international economic cooperation. The subject of the *Annual Ministerial Review* was the implementation of international objectives and commitments for global public health; panel discussions and informal round tables then focused on the progress made in global public health and the question of how to overcome the remaining challenges and which political instruments and approaches would best achieve that aim. During the Annual Ministerial Review, there was a side event on healthcare in Africa and the least developed countries (*Africa and the Least Developed Countries: Partnerships and Health*). The role of the *Innovative Fair* was to combine the work of governmental and non-governmental organisations in global public health. The panel discussion then covered current world and national trends and their impact on social development, including public health. Three round tables were organised for the general debate under the high-level political dialogue.

The key objective of the *coordination segment* (10-14 July 2009) was to continue implementing the conclusions of the *Ministerial Declaration* from ECOSOC's substantive session from 2008. The coordination segment focused mainly on evaluating the role of the UN and its activities in implementing the 2008 Ministerial Declaration. Debate also covered the *Report of the Secretary General on the theme of the coordination segment: the role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development*.

The *operational activities segment* (15-17 July 2009) focused on the ongoing implementation of General Assembly recommendations for operational activities, especially in view of Resolution 62/208. In the operational activities segment, five reports by the UN Secretary-General were discussed.

UN international conferences

Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol

On 7-18 December 2009, the 15th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 5th Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol were held in Copenhagen. The Czech delegation was headed by Prime Minister Jan Fischer. Before the conference itself, there were meetings of ad hoc working groups for long-term cooperation under the Convention and for the future commitments of Annex I parties to the Convention in Bonn (March, June 2009), Bangkok (the turn of September/October 2009) and Barcelona (November 2009), the outputs of which were to be the basis for the adopting of a new agreement on climate change in Copenhagen.

At the conference, European Union member states spoke in line with the common position. The Czech Republic's position was defined in the *Framework Position for international negotiations on climate change and the post-2012 regime* (adopted by the government on 12 October 2009), which covered the key issues concerning Czech negotiations in the European Union and the United Nations.

The European Union was among the first to announce its commitment to reduce emissions by 20% of 1990 levels by 2020, and in the event of successful agreement in

Copenhagen to raise that target to 30%. During negotiations, the European Union allocated a figure – EUR 7.2 billion – for measures on climate change for the period 2010-2012.

From the perspective of the European Union and the Czech Republic, the crucial aspect of the planned climate change agreement was a clear commitment by developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25-40% of 1990 levels by 2020. Developing countries should then achieve a significant reduction (15-30%) from the present increase in the production of greenhouse gases and produce policies and strategies for the transition to low-carbon economic development.

The final document, the *Copenhagen Accord*, was not adopted by consensus owing to dissent from the group of developing states, which were dissatisfied mainly with the commitments offered by developed countries and the procedural approach during negotiations. The output from the Conference of the Parties is not a legally binding document, and the participants merely “took note” of it.

Key elements in the Copenhagen Accord: (1) a recognition that the increase in global temperature should not exceed 2 °C in comparison with the period prior to the industrial revolution; (2) Annex I parties would submit to the Secretariat by the end of January 2009 qualified emission targets for 2020 covering all sectors of their national economies; (3) non-Annex I parties would implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and submit them by the end of January 2009; (4) developed countries undertook to provide funds of USD 30 billion in the years 2010-2012; (5) they would raise USD 100 billion per year by 2020; (6) to assess implementation by 2015 and consider long-term objectives on the basis of scientific conclusions, including those related to a temperature rise of 1.5°C.

Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

The fourth meeting of the *Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants* was held on 4-8 May 2009 in Geneva. On 7-8 May 2009, there was a high-level segment with panel discussions on the theme of *A Future Without Persistent Organic Pollutants*, and informal debates on the most controversial of the decisions prepared. The Czech delegation was led by 1st Deputy Minister of the Environment Jan Dušík. The Czech delegation coordinated European Union positions, acting and negotiating on its behalf.

The Conference adopted 34 decisions aimed at strengthening the Convention, which seeks to protect health and the environment from the effects of toxic substances. The greatest success achieved at the Conference was the inclusion of all nine substances proposed in annexes to the Convention, extending its scope from 12 to 21 substances. The inclusion of chemical substances was part of a comprise package whereby the additions to the list of substances were accompanied by a decision on regional centres and financial and technical assistance.

For the Czech Republic, the decision on regional centres to support the implementation of the Convention in developing countries and countries with transformation economies was a significant one. The Conference approved eight centres for a four-year period, including the Research Centre for Environmental Chemistry and Ecotoxicology at Masaryk University in Brno. The Brno centre is the sole centre for Central and Eastern Europe. It also supports the implementation of the Convention in Africa, which has no such centre.

UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The 9th regular meeting of the *Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa* was held in Buenos Aires on 21 September – 2 October 2009. The Czech delegation was led by Jiří Hlaváček, Director of the Department of Multilateral Relations at the Ministry of the Environment.

The conference adopted three dozen decisions. In negotiations on them, the Czech delegation proceeded in line with the principles approved by the government and according to the coordinated position of European Union member states. Negotiations chiefly concerned a decision approving two-year (2010-2011) and four-year (2010-2013) plans for the work of the Convention's bodies – the secretariat, the Global Mechanism, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the Committee on Science and Technology, including instruments for measuring their performance and especially indicators for evaluating progress and a more precise definition of the Convention's mandate and the functions of its permanent bodies. A broader account of regional priorities has increasingly been promoted, although the requirements and proposals put forward by the regions affected,

especially Latin America and Africa go beyond the budget of the Convention itself and the broad donor community.

Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

The 21st Meeting of the Parties to the *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer* was held on 4-8 November 2009 in Port Ghalib in Egypt.

During the meeting, it was repeated on a number of occasions that with the accession of East Timor in 2009 the *Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer* with the *Montreal Protocol* was the only multilateral environmental treaty to have been universally ratified. The key theme concerned a proposal for an amendment to the Montreal Protocol leading to a reduction in the manufacture and use of fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases.)

At the close of the meeting, a declaration proposed by Micronesia was adopted on substances with a high potential for global warming as an alternative to substances depleting the ozone layer, emphasising the necessity of amending the Montreal Protocol and the need for close cooperation between the Montreal Protocol, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. The declaration was signed by 40 states. The European Union and Australia expressed their support for prompt action and cooperation between the agreements concerned, but they did not sign the declaration owing to a lack of time to deliberate it.

UN Conference at the Highest Level on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development

On 24-26 June 2009, a UN conference on the impacts of the current financial crisis on development was held at the UN headquarters in New York. The Czech delegation, which acted on behalf of the European Union, was led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Helena Bambasová. Discussion concerned the impact of the crisis on employment, trade and investment, activities mitigating the impact of the crisis on development, the role of the UN in discussions on reforming the global financial architecture and the response of the UN to the present world financial and economic crisis.

The closing document from the conference declares the poorest countries have been most affected by the present crisis, and recommends that greater funding be mobilised for

developing countries to mitigate the crisis. The document recommends that the International Monetary Fund devote greater attention to international financial centres, financial markets and the movement of international capital.

High Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation

The *High Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation* was held on 1-3 December 2009 in Nairobi. Talks concerned the role of the UN in cooperation between developing countries, the specific features of that cooperation and ways of using its capacity. The output from the conference is a document that emphasises the significance of political and economic cooperation between developing countries and calls for greater linking with the UN.

UN specialised agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

During the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic organised dozens of UNESCO meetings in which it coordinated all of the European Union's more prominent positions in UNESCO. The main themes were nominations for the post of UNESCO Director-General and approving the budget for 2011-2012, which reflected the economic situation at the beginning of 2009. Its role as the presiding country of the European Union markedly increased the Czech Republic's prestige and visibility in UNESCO, and it was placed in the context of the major world players.

In addition, the Czech Republic organised a number of cultural events in UNESCO. For the official launch of the Czech Presidency in UNESCO on 16 February 2009, there was the premiere of a travelling exhibition on the UNESCO programme *Living Human Treasures*, under the title *Homo Faber (Man the Maker)* in collaboration with the Czech Ministry of Culture and the Institute of Folk Culture. The exhibition was opened by the Czech Minister of Culture Václav Jehlička. 2009 was declared the UNESCO *International Year of Astronomy* and the Czech Republic, as a country where astronomy is at a high level, was represented at its launch. As part of celebrations to mark International Women's Day on 9 March 2009, UNESCO headquarters hosted a group exhibition by women artists from several continents, with the Czech artist Xénia Hoffmeisterová representing Europe. On 4 June 2009, an

international round table was held in collaboration with the National Film Archive and the Czech Ministry of Culture on restoring old films and preserving the film heritage, which pointed to the Czech Republic's leading position in this field. A documentary on the UN, restored in the Czech Republic, was screened, as was an animated film by Jiří Trnka *What UNESCO Is*. On 17 June 2009, at the close of the presidency an event was held where the film *Citizen Havel* was screened.

At its 35th session on 6-23 October 2009, the UNESCO General Conference elected a new Director-General, Irina Bokova (Bulgaria), for a four-year period. This was the first time a woman has been elected to head the organisation, as well as the first time for a candidate from the East European election group. The agenda for the conference also included an evaluation of the six-year *UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013*, the approval of the UNESCO Programme and Budget for the following two years (2010-2011) at a level of USD 653 million, the opening of a debate on the *Programme for 2012-2013*, elections to the UNESCO Executive Board and subsidiary bodies, and discussions on a number of decisions and resolutions put forward by the Executive Board and member countries, as well as other documents. The meeting of the Conference also appraised other measures relating to the consequences of UN reform for UNESCO. The Czech government charged the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports with leading the Czech delegation at the General Conference, where she spoke in the general debate.

In 2009, UNESCO continued to implement the Medium-Term strategy for 2008-2013, adopted at the 34th session of the General Conference. The implementation of the *Programme and Budget for 2008-2009* was completed, based on a decision not to increase the regular budget.

During the year, there were two regular sessions (the 181st and 179th) of the UNESCO Executive Board, and one extraordinary session following the election of the new Director-General. The Czech Republic is an observer on the Executive Board.

In 2009, the Czech Republic was represented in seven UNESCO subsidiary elected bodies: the committees for bioethics, physical education and sport, the Nubian Museum in Egypt, restitution and the UNESCO headquarters, and the Council of the International Bureau of Education and the Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Programme. The Czech Republic was then elected to the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education

and Sport at the 35th UNESCO General Conference, and it also renewed its membership of the Committee for the Nubian Museum in Egypt.

The Czech Commission for UNESCO was the co-organiser of a number of educational and cultural events, especially as part of the ongoing *UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)*, the *International Year of Astronomy 2009* and preparations for the *International Year of Biodiversity 2010*.

The secretariat of the Czech Commission for UNESCO (SCC) continued to coordinate cooperation with the Czech network of 50 UNESCO-associated primary and secondary schools (ASPnet). In the first half of the year, the annual *UNESCO Global Action Week* was devoted to the *International Year of Astronomy 2009*. On 14-15 September 2009, the Annual ASPnet Meeting was held in Valašské Meziříčí. SCC continued working on preparations for a three-year project using resources from the European Social Fund. At the end of the year, the annual Youth Conferences on Sustainable Development for primary and secondary schools were held in collaboration with the Environmental Education Club, the SCC and the Czech Academy of Sciences.

UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)

UNIDO is a specialised UN agency for assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the fields of industry, environmental technology, energy and agriculture. UNIDO helps those countries develop their export capacities and promote a favourable investment climate as part of their integration into the world economy.

In 2009, the Czech Republic's voluntary contribution to a multilateral development project involving Czech expertise was CZK 1.85 million.

Czech institutions took part in the realisation of cleaner production projects and training courses in predicting technological development. An important branch of the Czech Republic's development cooperation is *Local sustainable energy sources in developing countries*, which was chosen as a priority for the Czech Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2009. In that respect UNIDO was a natural partner for the Czech Republic for ensuring the cooperation required.

On 7-11 December 2009, the 13th Session of the UNIDO General Conference, the highest organ of this international organisation, was held in Vienna. Discussions focused on current issues in development cooperation, especially the relation between development and the availability of energy resources. Special attention was devoted to natural energy resources and ways of using them, particularly in developing countries.

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) leads international efforts to resolve the issue of hunger around the world. The FAO is a partner for developing and developed countries alike. The FAO is currently undergoing a comprehensive reform based on the outputs from an independent external evaluation that took place on the initiative of member states in 2007-2008.

The most important event in 2009 was the *World Summit on Food Security*, held on 16-18 November 2009 in Rome. The Czech delegation was led by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Jiří Urban. At the summit, a declaration was adopted with five key principles to secure sufficient food around the world: investment into national plans for food security, increasing strategic coordination at the national, regional and global levels, the principle of a comprehensive approach, support for the institutions of the multilateral system and greater investments into agriculture and nutrition.

Subsequently, the regular 35th Session of the FAO Conference was held on 18-23 November 2009. The agenda included the election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council of the FAO, Luc Guyau (France), replacing Mohammad Saeid Noori-Naeini (Iran), who had held the post for two election terms (2005-2009).

Voluntary contributions from the Czech Ministry of Agriculture's chapter for development cooperation were once again allocated through the joint trust fund. In 2009, CZK 2.5 million was allocated to cover the costs of development cooperation projects – FAO training courses and seminars organised in the Czech Republic for experts from the countries of Eastern Europe.

In 2009, the number of Czech experts working at the FAO headquarters as specialists was retained; there are currently three experts from the Czech Republic working at the FAO in Rome.

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

In 2009, there were two high-level ILO meetings, both of which were attended by delegations from the Czech Republic. The first was the 8th European Regional Meeting in Lisbon on 10-13 February 2009. The Czech delegation was headed by the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra. The meeting covered the economic crisis and the agenda for dignified labour, and other topics discussed included wages, social protection, flexicurity, social dialogue and the quality of working life.

The second important event was the 98th session of the *International Labour Conference (ILC)*, which is the highest authority of the ILO, held in Geneva on 3-19 June 2009. The Czech delegation was led by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Petr Šimerka.

The main theme for the ILC concerned the impacts of the current financial and economic crisis on employment policy and social policy, while other themes included equality between women and men and HIV/AIDS in the world of work. The most important part of the ILC was the *Global Jobs Summit*, at the close of which a resolution was adopted on the *Global Jobs Pact*, prepared by a plenary committee established for the crisis. The document is aimed at helping to shape international and national policy to stimulate economic growth, job creation and protection for workers and their families. The ILC also approved the ILO programme and budget for 2010-2011. The ILO Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations discussed 25 instances of the breach of those working norms in individual countries, and in a separate session it examined a breach of Convention 29 on Forced Labour in Myanmar/Burma.

As the presiding country of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic coordinated the positions of European Union member states and drafted and delivered European Union standpoints, as well as representing the European Union in talks with other regional groupings, the employers and employees groups and the ILO secretariat.

Under its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic held an informal meeting on *European Labour Markets – opportunities and challenges of labour mobility*.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

The 62nd session of the World Health Assembly was held on 18-22 May 2009 in Geneva, attended by a delegation from the Czech Republic led by the Czech Minister of Health, Dana Jurásková.

On behalf of the Presidency of the European Union, the head of the Czech delegation expressed an appreciation of the role the WHO plays in combating the A(H1N1) flu pandemic. She also supported the financing of national health systems and expressed the importance of meeting the Millennium Development Goals related to health, and positively evaluated the change in the WHO budget for 2010-2013. In conclusion, she welcomed the participation of Taiwan as an observer at the session.

During the session, working committees and the plenum discussed issues related to the flu pandemic and other communicable and non-communicable diseases, and the public health impacts of climate change.

International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

The International Maritime Organisation worked on problems surrounding the introduction of a *Long Range Information and Tracking (LRIT)* system and a complete revision of the system for designing ships with regard to the planned lifespan of crafts; there was also intensive work on revising and supplementing the *International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW)*.

The IMO devoted extraordinary attention to the worsening security situation in the Gulf of Aden, in the territorial waters of Somalia and the adjoining international waters. According to IMO statistics more than 235 pirate attacks took place in this area in the first half of 2009, with 34 vessels and 447 sailors being kidnapped for ransom by pirates and two sailors murdered. This is an area via which more than 12% of the volume of world oil trade is transported. These security risks have a dramatic impact on the key sea route from Europe to the Middle and Far East transiting the Suez Canal. The worsening situation was also taken up by the UN Security Council.

On 23 November – 4 December 2009, the 26th Session of the IMO Assembly was held in London. It reviewed the work of the IMO over the last two years and discussed greater

cooperation between governments on international shipping, compliance with maritime safety principles, the protection of the maritime environment, etc. The Assembly elected 40 members in three categories to the Council, the organisation's supreme executive body.

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)

In 2009, the ICAO held a *Diplomatic Conference* in Montreal (20 April – 2 May 2009), the outcome of which was the adoption of two international conventions (the *Convention on Compensation for Damages to Third Parties Resulting from Acts of Unlawful Interference Involving Aircraft* and the *Convention on Compensation for Damage Caused by Aircraft to Third Parties*). The adopting of those conventions was a response to the new threats to civil aviation that have emerged since the attacks of 11 September 2001 and mark the outcome of several years' work by the ICAO bodies. The Czech Republic took part in negotiations on the content of the conventions, especially in view of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The role of the Czech representatives was above all to coordinate the positions of European Union member states.

On 9-17 September 2009, the 34th Session of the ICAO Legal Committee was held. The agenda included a revision of the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (Montreal, 23 September 1971)* and the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (The Hague, 16 December 1970)*. The revisions are a response to new security threats in civil aviation.

In 2009, the Council and the ICAO as a whole focused chiefly on the safety of civil aviation and its protection from unlawful acts (security) – see above, as well as the issue of the relation between environmental protection and the development of air transport. In 2009 the ICAO also completed audits of the implementation of the technical annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation in individual countries.

In 2009, Raymond Benjamin (France) became the new Secretary General of the ICAO. He should contribute work to restructure the ICAO with the aim of making it more effective.

World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

The key role of this intergovernmental organisation is the promotion, support and development of international tourism, with the aim of promoting member countries' economic growth, international understanding and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

At the 18th Session of the General Assembly in Astana (5-9 October 2009), a number of key documents were approved, including the programme for the work of the UNWTO in 2010-2011, which focuses on two strategic objectives:

- 1) *greater competition* in tourism, improving destinations and human resources, strengthening marketing and ways of improving the image of tourism in the eyes of the public, successful crisis management, methods to ensure the flow of the most up-to-date information and data on market trends and prognoses for a more accurate assessment of the contribution tourism makes to national economies;
- 2) *sustainable tourism*, so that tourism makes a more substantial contribution to meeting the millennium development goals, especially to mitigate poverty and protect the environment, including the issue of climate change and preserving biodiversity; it should also ensure that tourism is fully integrated into individual destinations' local economies and see that the benefits from tourism flow to as many parties as possible.

At the 85th Session of the UNWTO Executive Council in Mali, Taleb Rifai (Jordan) was elected Secretary-General for a four-year period commencing on 1 January 2010. His election was confirmed by the 18th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Astana.

UN programmes, funds and other specialised bodies

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

In 2009, the Czech Republic contributed actively to the work of UNCTAD, above all in the first half of the year in connection with its Presidency of the Council of the European Union. That particularly involved coordinating and presenting joint introductory declarations on behalf of the European Union at executive sessions of the Trade and Development Board and sessions of specialised commissions established by the *Accra Accord* (the *Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission* and the *Trade and Development Commission*). In

those sessions, the Czech Presidency coordinated and negotiated consensual conclusions on behalf of the European Union and ensured coordination with other developed countries and countries with transitional economies. Likewise the Czech Presidency was involved in the *52nd session of the Working Party for the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget*. The Czech Presidency also monitored the progress of newly established multiyear expert sessions and managed the exchange of opinions between European Union member states. It then presented the conclusions from those discussions in UNCTAD in order to make such sessions more effective in future. The Czech Presidency also ensured the exchange of information and opinions between European Union member states for the election of the new UNCTAD Secretary-General; Supachai Panitchpakdi was ultimately re-elected to the post.

Trade and Development Board (TDB)

There was one regular session and three executive sessions of the Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD's highest management body in the period between the sessions of the ministerial conference in 2009. The 46th executive session of the TDB was convened on 27 March 2009 to elect a new President and Vice-President. On 30 June 2009, the 47th executive session of the TDB was held, focusing on UNCTAD's work for Africa. The session also included a panel discussion on *Food security in Africa*. The session also approved by consensus the topics for expert sessions and sessions of the Commissions for the following year.

The 56th regular session of the TDB was held on 14-25 September 2009. The theme for the high-level segment was the global economic crisis and the necessary political response. The secretariat presented UNCTAD's main publications: *Trade and Development Report 2009*, *World Investment Report 2009* and *The Least Developed Countries Report 2009*. At the sitting, two committees were established for issues concerning the least developed countries (LDCs) and Africa, where there were negotiations on certain recommendations as guidelines for UNCTAD's future work in those fields. As certain differences of opinion emerged during the approval of the new UNCTAD communications strategy and publications policy, which subsequently presented problems for the approval of the report from the 52nd session of the Working Party for the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget with recommendations tied to the UN budget, further proceedings by the TDB to approve those documents were deferred until 12 October 2009.

Ultimately, a compromise was reached and the documents were approved at the resumed session on 12 October 2009. In view of the result of TDB negotiations on the report from the 52nd session of the Working Party for the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget, and in an attempt to strengthen its role and integrate it more effectively into the overall UN budget process, the autumn months saw informal consultations by the TDB President. Those consultations will continue in 2010.

The outcome of the 48th executive session of the TDB on 25 November 2009 was the approval of the UNCTAD draft programme plan for 2012-2013.

During 2009 (especially in the first half of the year), there were annual sessions of the *Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission* and the *Trade and Development Commission*, and a number of other expert sessions, both single year and multiyear (e.g. on services, facilitating trade, investments, South – South cooperation and commodities).

UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

The 17th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development was held on 4-15 May 2009 in New York. The Czech delegation was headed by the Minister of Agriculture Jakub Šebesta. The session was preceded by an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting on 23-27 February 2009, which was tasked with producing draft political decisions.

The main role of the delegation from the Czech Republic as the presiding country of the Council of the European Union was to coordinate a common European Union position and to negotiate on political decisions on its behalf. The negotiations were successfully concluded by the consensual adopting of the closing document. The atmosphere of the political debate was affected by the crisis in the world economy and financial sector, with negative impacts on agriculture, the food trade and the standing of developing countries. The text contains proposals for development policies for future years covering agriculture, rural development, combating drought and desertification, soil use and sustainable development in Africa.

At the close of proceedings, many delegations expressed reservations over the final form of the document, but they considered the text to be the sole possible compromise that could be agreed at the time. The recognition that another failure following the breakdown of talks at the 15th CSD session in 2007 would significantly weaken the Commission's role in the UN contributed to the acceptance of the closing document.

UN Commission for Population and Development (CPD)

The theme for the 42nd session of the *UN Commission for Population and Development*, which was held on 30 March – 3 April 2009 in New York, was the contribution of the Programme of Action of the *International Conference on Population and Development to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals*. As the presiding country, the Czech Republic coordinated the positions of European Union member states and presented European Union standpoints in negotiations with other regional blocks. The Czech Republic emphasised that in the following five years the European Union would increase its efforts towards the global availability of healthcare related to reproductive health.

UN Development Programme (UNDP)

The *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, founded in 1966 on the basis of UN General Assembly Resolution 2029, is the main UN body for coordinating development work. It has a global scope and annually manages funds of USD 5.2 billion, which makes it the largest provider of grant aid in the UN. In its development work the UNDP focuses on eradicating poverty, promoting democracy, the relation between the environment and sustainable development, the impact of climate change on development and mitigating the consequences for development of the economic and financial crisis. The UNDP plays a key role in the process of strengthening the coherence of the UN development system, especially in the *pilot countries*.

The UNDP is one of the main programmes to which the Czech Republic has directed its voluntary contributions for multilateral development assistance. The Czech Republic has donated development assistance to the UNDP since 2000, and since 2001 it has provided a regular contribution to the *UNDP Trust Fund* to provide assistance and technical support to developing and transformation countries (especially in South-East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States). That has largely concerned the transfer of Czech know-how and experience in the form of training, seminars, study visits, technical assistance and consultancy.

In 2009, the Czech Republic made two contributions from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the UNDP at a total of CZK 11.8 million for its regular direct support

for projects coordinated by the *UNDP Regional Centre* in Bratislava, and in October 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided CZK 7.4 million to the UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava to implement UNDP development projects in Georgia. In total, the 2009 contribution was CZK 19.2 million.

The Czech Republic's membership of the Executive Board of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) ended on 31 December 2004, and since then the Czech Republic has attended sessions of the Executive Board as an observer. The Czech Republic is a candidate for the *UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board* for 2010-2012 in elections that will be held in April 2010 in New York.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP works to support the development of international cooperation on the environment and the coordination of UN environmental programmes, monitoring the state of the environment around the world, submitting proposals to tackle the most pressing environmental problems, supporting research and development and facilitating the exchange and dissemination of information on the environment. UNEP is responsible for the environmental aspects of sustainable development and its integration with the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

2009 saw the *25th Session of the UNEP Governing Council* and the *10th Global Ministerial Environment Forum*. Negotiations were held in Nairobi and covered UNEP decisions and ministerial discussions on two current themes – *globalisation and the environment* and *the international management of environmental affairs and the reform of the UN*. As the presiding country, the Czech Republic coordinated the positions of European Union member states and presented European Union standpoints in negotiations with other regional blocks and on the Governing Council. At the 25th Session of the UNEP Governing Council, 17 decisions were adopted, of which the most important success was the adoption of a decision on chemical substances. The UNEP work programme and budget was approved for 2010-2011 at a level of USD 180 million, and is in line with the six priorities of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy.

The Czech Republic makes an annual contribution to the *UNEP Environment Fund (EF)*. In 2009, its voluntary contribution was CZK 3.87 million.

UN Programme for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT)

UN-HABITAT is a UN programme that focuses systematically on the issue of human settlements and the related issues of sustainable development and meeting the development goals set out in the *Millennium Declaration*. In 2008, the Czech Republic was re-elected to its Governing Council for 2009-2012.

On 30 March – 4 April 2009, the 22nd Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT was held in Nairobi. The Czech delegation operated on the basis of the Czech Republic's approach to the UN-HABITAT agenda to date and the relevant strategic government documents. As the presiding country, the Czech Republic coordinated the positions of European Union member states and presented European Union standpoints in negotiations with other regional blocks and on the Governing Council.

UN Volunteers Programme (UNV)

In 2009, Czech support for voluntary activities in the UN took the form of 22 volunteers, of whom 12 were women, working on UNV multilateral programmes. Czech volunteers worked on long-term missions largely based in Africa, Asia and the Balkans, in the following countries: Kosovo, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Mongolia, Vietnam, Yemen, Egypt, Afghanistan, Morocco, Ethiopia, Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In collaboration with UNV, the Czech Republic is working to identify additional forms of cooperation with the aim of increasing the involvement and strengthening the role of Czech volunteers in UN peacekeeping missions.

One of the ways to increase Czech involvement in UN peacekeeping missions is direct contact with the staff of UNV Bonn under the *Special Recruitment Drive* which the UNV National Contact Point (NCP) has organised once a year in its office in Prague with the direct participation of representatives of UNV Bonn. In that recruitment drive, around 50-60 Czech citizens who have been preliminarily selected by the UNV NCP are presented to the UNV staff. The outcome of those recruitment drives supports opportunities to assign Czech candidates to UNV vacancies and increase the number of Czech volunteers accepted.

World Food Programme (WFP)

In 2009, the Czech Republic's donor activities for the *World Food Programme (WFP)* continued, the WFP being reliant on voluntary contributions by donor countries, institutions, private business and individuals. The Czech Republic donated a total of CZK 5 million to the WFP in 2009 for food aid to Uganda.

UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

In 2009, the ECE continued to implement its mandate as a regional economic organisation of the UN. The Czech Republic is perceived here as an active member state, and Czech experts are involved in many subsidiary bodies and working groups.

In line with reforms, on 30 March – 1 April 2009, the 63rd *ECE Plenary Session* was held in Geneva, the first in two years. By coincidence, that was during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and under a new Executive Secretary, Jan Kubiš, who took office on 28 January 2009.

The task facing the 63rd ECE Session was primarily to review the implementation of the overall reform and make any corrections required. The work of the ECE over the 24 months since the 62nd Session in 2007 was rated positively. After lengthy negotiations, the adoption of a formal decision completed the reform of the *Environment for Europe* process, which was launched in 1991 at a conference in Dobříš. However, an appraisal of the possible dissolving of the *ECE Committee on Trade* continued until the end of the year, where agreement was reached on subsequent steps: the Committee on Trade will be preserved, but in a three-year adaptation period (until the end of 2012) it will focus (in collaboration with UNDP, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation) on overcoming barriers to the broader involvement of transition economies in international trade.

Given the global economic and financial crisis, the 63rd Session could not avoid the current debate on economic developments in the ECE region, which was not spared the impacts of the crisis. The 18 transition economies here were particularly affected, but some European Union member states were also hit hard. The exchange of opinions on ways of overcoming the crisis indicated that in this difficult situation it is appropriate to return to the tried and tested approaches that have a long tradition in the ECE.

2009 saw a wealth of international events on environmental protection, and specifically the climate. The 63rd Session, therefore, assessed ECE's contribution to global efforts to mitigate the influence of climate and adapt to climate change. ECE sector committees and their subsidiary expert bodies, where practical measures are formulated, worked on that issue throughout the year,

During 2009, attention was also devoted to cooperation between the ECE and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), including work on the preparations for and holding of the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, which was also attended by the ECE Executive Secretary, Jan Kubiš.

In 2009, the ECE again focused on technical aspects of regional cooperation. Nevertheless, thanks to objective factors on a global scale (the world crisis, climate change, energy and transport problems) and thanks to the efforts of the new Executive Secretary, Jan Kubiš, its political standing in the UN was strengthened and it was increasingly respected outside the UN.

UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

On 3-12 June 2009, a delegation from the Czech Republic headed by Professor Vladimír Kopal attended the 51st session of the *UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)* in Vienna. The session was traditionally devoted to questions of preserving outer space for peaceful uses and implementing the recommendations of the UNISPACE III conference. The Committee also examined questions of the spin-off benefits of space technology, the relation between outer space and society, and international cooperation on the use of geospatial data for sustainable development, as well as a European Union initiative for a *code of conduct in outer space*.

During 2009, the Czech Republic was involved in the work of the COPUOS *Scientific and Technical Subcommittee* (9-20 February 2009) and the *Legal Subcommittee* (23 March – 3 April 2009). At the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, attention was mainly devoted to the issue of space debris, the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, the danger of collisions with near-Earth objects and International Heliophysical Year 2007. The session of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee was chaired by Professor Vladimír Kopal. In the first half of 2009, there were several events by the *European Space Policy Institute*,

held under the auspices of the Czech Republic as the presiding country of the European Union, such as a seminar on the use of satellite technology for internal security, a panel discussion on cooperation in space between Europe and Latin America, etc.

The fight against transnational organised crime and drugs in the United Nations

UN Commission for Narcotic Drugs (CND)

The 52nd session of the *UN Commission for Narcotic Drugs, including a high-level segment*, was held in Vienna on 11-20 March 2009. Two important documents for the worldwide fight against drugs were approved: the *Political Declaration* and the *Plan of Action* for the next decade. On behalf of the European Union, the Czech Republic had negotiated intensively on the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action since the beginning of 2009. The European Union's priorities included the promoting of a balanced approach in measures leading to the restricting of the supply and demand for drugs, a focus on evidence-based approaches, human rights (e.g. the right to healthcare, including healthcare for prisoners), the collection and evaluation of data, alternative development and a realistic review of the decade since the Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) in 1998. Negotiations were very difficult from the start, both in the UN and within the European Union, above all due to the politicisation of the concept of harm reduction. Ultimately, however, thanks to the presidency's active approach, the greatest possible – yet fragile – degree of consensus was achieved on a global scale in negotiations on individual aspects.

UN Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)

A session of the *UN Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*, of which the Czech Republic was a member up until the end of 2006, took place on 16-24 April 2009. The substantive part of the session focused on evaluating the work, financing, and management of the *UN Office on Crime and Drugs (UNODC)*, the implementation of the *Vienna Declaration*, and strengthening technical assistance and development cooperation in the area of the fight against corruption, organised crime and terrorism. Some resolutions and negotiations on them were problematic for the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, such as a proposal by the United Arab Emirates on private security services,

although in the view of some states that theme does not come under the UNODC mandate. The Czech Republic will be a candidate for membership of the CCPCJ in 2012-2014.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

In 2009, the priorities of the UNODC remained the ratification and implementation of legal instruments, above all an appeal to countries (including the Czech Republic) which have yet to ratify the United Nations Conventions against Corruption (UNCAC) and against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC). Other priorities were the implementation of the conclusions of the *Bangkok Declaration*, technical and expert assistance, international cooperation in crime prevention and the fight against trafficking in human beings and drugs, development assistance with a view to eradicating the cultivation of coca and opium, the fight against money laundering and corruption, and the use of legal instruments related to the fight against terrorism. Significant progress was made in defining a UNCAC evaluation mechanism, which will be an instrument in the fight against corruption on a global scale.

6. The Czech Republic and other international organisations

The Czech Republic and the world economy

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development ([OECD](#)), founded in 1961 with headquarters in Paris, are the 31 most developed countries. As an intergovernmental organisation in 2009, the OECD's work was mainly aimed at broad cooperation to mitigate the influence of the economic and financial crisis and revive growth. In that respect, the governments of member and non-member countries, the G8 and the G20 used OECD analyses to define their policies. The OECD continued to support the Heiligendamm/Lecce process and extended its cooperation with the UN and its subsidiary organisations (e.g. the WHO, FAO, etc.) and other specialised organisations (e.g. the WTO, IMF, World Bank Group, etc.). Senior OECD representatives spoke at practically all major world forums on the global economic crisis, as well as supporting economic reforms and innovations. They also spoke on climate change and development cooperation.

In 2008, the OECD accession process continued for five candidate countries: Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia. At the end of 2009 the *OECD Council* decided to accept Chile as the 31st member of the OECD. Decisions will be taken on three other candidate countries – Estonia, Israel and Slovenia – in 2010, depending on the outcome of the remaining reviews. Russia restored relations with the OECD by submitting a draft Initial Memorandum and continued to express its interest in accession negotiations with the OECD. Under the *Enhanced Engagement* project, five more countries – Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa, were more active in the work of the OECD.

Cooperation between the Czech Republic and the OECD in 2009 was guided by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union and in the circumstances of the global economic crisis.

The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union focused on ensuring the exchange of opinions and coordinating the positions of the European Union member states in the OECD. This was the first presidency of a “new” European Union member state which was also a member of the OECD. In the OECD the Czech Presidency’s objective was to promote the main priorities of the presidency (*the 3 “Es”*) and specific priorities in individual areas, inform the OECD member countries and its secretariat of the work of the European Union and the Czech Presidency, increase awareness of the institution of the European Presidency in the OECD, increase the use of OECD activities in the work of the European Union, improve communication between the OECD and European Union bodies, and integrate those European Union member states that are not OECD members into the OECD.

Under the Czech Presidency on 22-23 January 2009, Deputy Secretary-General Pier Carlo Padoan attended a workshop in Prague on innovations, and on 11 May 2009 a conference on the future of the internet. On 29-30 January 2009, the Deputy Secretary-General for the environment Mario Amano attended an informal session of European Union development ministers in Prague. On 4 March 2009, the Secretary-General of the OECD Angel Gurría visited the Czech Republic for consultations with the Czech Prime Minister. On 10-12 May 2009, the Deputy Secretary-General for economics Aart de Geus attended a ministerial conference on the financial sustainability of healthcare systems. On 28 May 2009, the Economic and Development Review Committee discussed the *Economic Survey of the European Union*. The talks were led by the Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marek Mora on behalf of the Czech Presidency.

The annual meeting of the OECD’s supreme body, the *OECD Council at Ministerial Level*, was held in Paris on 24-25 June 2009 under the title *The Crisis and Beyond: building a stronger, cleaner, fairer world economy*. The Czech delegation was led by the Minister for European Affairs Štefan Füle, and its members were representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, the Environment and the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to the OECD. The topics for the meeting were the consolidation of the economies affected by the crisis, measures to support growth, the socioeconomic impacts of the crisis, the outlook for the financial situation including options for restoring its credibility, and the prompt suppression of non-standard pro-growth measures. This year’s meeting was historically significant due to the presence of the political representatives of ten invited non-member countries that represent a substantial proportion of world GDP. In addition to the

traditional ministerial conclusions, the Ministerial Council approved a *Declaration on Green Growth*. This year's OECD Forum was also devoted to post-crisis developments, and included representatives of the non-governmental organisations the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), the academic community and other partners. The Forum, at which the OECD Economic Outlook was presented, provided opportunities for a broad range of professionals to discuss with politicians and experts in structured panels.

The OECD Executive Committee Special Session (ECSS) in spring on 4-5 June 2009 was devoted to preparations for the Ministerial Council Meeting in 2009. At the spring and autumn ECSS, the Czech delegation expressed its views on meeting the OECD's strategic and operative objectives and other topics such as current economic issues, the expansion of the OECD, global political cooperation and the role of the OECD in the economic and financial crisis, the strategic focus of the OECD's work and matters concerning the running of the organisation. The autumn ECSS also paid particular attention to relations between the OECD and the G8/G20.

On 30 March 2009, a ministerial-level meeting of the *Territorial Development Policy Committee* was held in Paris, where the Czech Republic was represented by a delegation headed by the Minister for Regional Development Cyril Svoboda. The serious impacts of the financial crisis on the development of towns and the countryside were the main theme of the talks. The closing discussion examined proposals for ways to stimulate the economy.

On 28-29 May 2009, a joint high-level meeting of the *Development Assistance Committee (DAC)* and the *Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)* was held in Paris. The agenda covered an appraisal of the implementation of the conclusions from the joint ministerial meeting of both committees in 2006 and identifying areas for further cooperation between the DAC and EPOC in subsequent years. The *Issues Paper* was based on conclusions of three *ad hoc* DAC/EPOC task teams set up to implement tasks from the ministerial meeting in 2006. The outcome of negotiations was summarised in the *Co-Chairs' Summary*. The Czech Republic was represented by a delegation comprising representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to the OECD.

On 28-29 September 2009, a ministerial-level meeting of the *OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC)* was held in Paris. These exceptionally well-timed talks, devoted to the issue of resolving the employment crisis, were attended by ministers or senior representatives from 38 states, the European Commission and the ILO. The main output was a *Ministerial Communiqué*. The Czech Republic was represented by a delegation led by the Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Affairs Michal Sedláček.

On 14-15 October 2009, the *Governing Board of the International Energy Agency (IEA)* sat at ministerial level. The main motive for the meeting was to seek solutions to issues concerning highly pressing problems in energy and the climate. A communiqué was produced and the *IEA Action Plan* up to 2011 was approved, which identifies a number of objectives the IEA's bodies should work on, such as energy security, preparations for the Copenhagen Summit and the technical development of the energy sector. The Czech delegation was led by the Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Tomáš Hüner.

The Czech Republic continued to be actively involved in OECD external relations, primarily through its participation in the *Eurasia* and *MENA* regional programmes. Under the Eurasia programme, that concerns in particular the initiative for the South Caucasus and Ukraine (SCU). The Czech Republic successfully chaired the first meeting of the *Investment Climate Policy and Promotion* working group on 3 July 2009 in Bodrum in Turkey. The working group focused mainly on investment policy in the economic crisis, the OECD's strategic response to the economic crisis and its impact on the SCU countries, and the developing of a comprehensive strategy to support investments and investment policy instruments based on the principles of the OECD. Present at the meeting were representatives of international organisations, experts from OECD member countries and representatives of the OECD secretariat. The Czech delegation included experts from CzechInvest and representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The working group was chaired by the Czech Republic's Ambassador to the OECD in Paris, Karel Dyba. The Czech Republic was also active in its support for the work of the *Eurasia Competitiveness Programme's Working Group on Financial Markets Development*. The group's first meeting took place on 17 November 2009 in Warsaw. The key theme was extended to include the issue of central banks, and was linked with the regulation and supervision of the financial sector. The meeting was attended by experts from the Czech National Bank, the Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank and the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Czech Republic. The working group was chaired by the Minister-Counsellor of the Czech Republic's Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to the OECD in Paris, Vlastimil Tesař.

The Czech Republic has lent its long-term support to the OECD programme for the MENA countries, focusing on the development of public administration and investments with the aim of promoting regional development in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. It strengthens regional and international partnerships and supports sustainable economic development throughout the MENA region. The initiative comprises two pillars: the first is the public administration programme, which concentrates in Arab countries on modernising public administration structures and processes, and the second is an investment programme aimed at improving the investment policy climate. Both pillars were covered by the OECD/MENA Ministerial Conference held in Marrakech in Morocco on 23 November 2009. The conference resulted in the adoption of a declaration that reflects the work of regional working groups under the MENA initiative and a network of specialists created in recent years. The Ministerial Conference was preceded on 22 November 2009 by the *Business Forum*, *Women Business Leaders Summit* and the *Governance Forum*. The Czech delegation to the conference was led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Helena Bambasová.

The Czech Republic also made voluntary contributions, chiefly from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to specific OECD projects in line with Czech priorities, especially cooperation between the OECD and non-member countries (e.g. *Investment Compact for South-East Europe*, *Eurasia Competitiveness Programme*, *Middle East and North Africa*). Other traditional voluntary contributors are the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry for Regional Development, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, and in 2009 the Nuclear Research Institute. In total, the Czech Republic's voluntary contributions in 2009 were over CZK 5.83 million. Voluntary contributions also financed training for users of the OECD's new generation information system on 14-15 October 2009 in Prague for 63 state administration employees working on OECD issues. In collaboration with the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) training in Official Development Assistance (ODA) statistics took place on 26-27 November 2009, aimed at presenting ODA statistics and financial records in line with OECD standards.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to coordinate the Czech Republic's membership of the OECD. Coordinating activities and key positions for the Czech Republic mainly took place in the *Working Group for Cooperation Between the Czech Republic and the OECD*, whose members are all the central bodies of the state administration involved in the work of the OECD. One of the main outputs from the Working Group was a document for the government on instruments adopted by the OECD in 2008 and their implementation in the Czech Republic. Coordination efforts meant it was possible to optimise the limited funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other departments to support selected domestic policies, the functioning of the administration, education and the Czech Republic's interests with regard to OECD non-member countries. www.oecd.org

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

The [WTO](#) aims to set out the rules for trade between member countries, contributing to an increase in the standard of living, full employment, a high and rising level of real income, increasing production and the trade in goods and services while facilitating the maximum use of world resources in line with the objective of sustainable development. In 2009 the WTO had 153 members.

In 2009, the Czech Republic continued to promote its interests in the WTO and across the spectrum of trade policy primarily through the European Commission in view of the European Communities' exclusive competence in this area. As in the preparation of the European Union's common positions, the Czech Republic primarily made use of Committee 133, renamed at the close of the year to the *Trade Policy Committee* in connection with the Treaty of Lisbon, and other bodies of the Council of the European Union and European Commission or coordination meetings of the WTO's working bodies in Geneva.

The Czech Republic continues to be viewed as a liberal country that strongly promotes progress in accelerating the liberalisation of world trade and refining its multilateral rules. In this spirit it actively contributes to the work of the relevant bodies.

Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference

The main WTO event in 2009 was the Seventh Session of the *WTO Ministerial Conference*, which took place on 30 November – 2 December 2009 in Geneva. This time the session was not intended for negotiations, but rather to exchange opinions on the future direction of the WTO and expressing political support for further talks, especially concerning the *Doha Development Agenda (DDA)*.

During the Conference and the accompanying events, the main emphasis was on an appeal for the swift completion of the Doha Round. It was frequently claimed that trade was not a cause of the crisis, but a factor that helped overcome its consequences. The multilateral system demonstrated that it can play an important role in times of crisis. No member country restored to extensive unilateral protectionist measures, and the *dispute settlement system* is used to resolve specific problems. The role of the WTO in introducing a *monitoring mechanism* was also appreciated. Another important aspect mentioned was the need for self-reflection in the WTO and strengthening the organisation's role in the new conditions after the crisis has been overcome. The importance of the *Aid for Trade* system and the continuation of the WTO's monitoring and analytical work were also highlighted.

The working part of the conference discussed the issue of regional trade agreements, *Aid for Trade* (development assistance to strengthen the capacity to trade) and accession proceedings.

At the opening ceremony, the Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton spoke on behalf of the European Union. The Czech Republic spoke in the plenary session. At the end of the conference, the Chairperson's summary was presented as an informal account of the outcome of the discussions.

The fight against protectionism

The WTO's main motto for 2009 was the fight against the crisis, and specifically the fight against protectionism. The monitoring list of protectionist measures that WTO members had introduced or planned to introduce was discussed quarterly by the *Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB)*. Since November 2008 when the TPRB was assigned that task following the G20 summit in Washington, four reports have been discussed. The most recent report reveals that despite some negative instances there was no wide-scale adoption of protectionist

measures, and that the world economy has remained as open as before the crisis. That is also supported by the fact that new restrictive measures introduced since October 2008 cover in total less than 1% of world trade.

Nevertheless, as the aforementioned TPRB report states, some countries, including members of the G20, have introduced protectionist measures. The initial response to the crisis was the introduction by some countries of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers for certain imports. An increasing volume of state aid for certain service sectors and manufacturing industry was recorded, especially in developed countries. In the recent past, there has been an increase in corrective trade measures, especially in rapidly developing economies, in the form of antidumping and protectionist measures, and in developed countries in the form of anti-subsidy measures.

Notwithstanding the above, many WTO members have implemented measures leading to the opening of their economies, stimulating the expansion of their trade and investments. The massive financial and stimulation packages introduced by developed countries to counter the crisis also had a positive effect, and helped prevent any further decline in global trade.

Agreement on Trade in Bananas

In 2009, the greatest success achieved in the face of very modest progress in talks on liberalising agricultural and non-agricultural products in the ongoing negotiations on the DDA was the negotiating and signing of the *Agreement on Trade in Bananas*, partly in the context of the issue of the erosion of preferences and tropical products.

The Agreement on Trade in Bananas marked the resolution of the longest dispute in the WTO, concerning the level of duty for banana imports to the European Union from Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, and the discrepancy between import regimes for those countries and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), which under a preferential trade agreement can import to the European Union with zero duty.

The essence of the draft *Geneva Agreement on Trade in Bananas* submitted to the European Commission was reducing import duty over 7-9 years (depending on the completion of DDA modalities) from EUR 176 to EUR 114 per ton. At proceedings in the WTO General Council on 17 November 2009 representatives of the ACP countries supported

that solution and gave undertakings not to raise any objections during the certification process.

On 15 December 2009, the Agreement on Trade in Bananas was initialled in Geneva, in the presence of the ambassadors of the European Union and Latin American countries. At the same time, the European Union and the United States initialled a deal in which the United States agreed to settle its WTO dispute on bananas with the European Union.

Trade Policy Review of the EU and 2009 Aid for Trade Report

In 2009, the European Communities underwent their ninth trade policy review, produced by the TPRB at two-year intervals.

The Trade Policy Review of the European Communities enabled WTO members to better understand the European Union's trade policy and other policies related to trade. The European Union had implemented a number of trade reforms and there was appreciation of its commitment to the multilateral trade system, including the DDA, where the European Commission is one of the key players. The European Commission was also praised for the technical assistance it provides and its non-reciprocal preferences. The low duty rates for industrial products can also be considered a positive factor. For agriculture, while the implementation and reform of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy can be regarded positively, in terms of trade the high level of customs protection and domestic support is problematic, as are export subsidies. In 2009, there was particular criticism of the reinstatement of subsidies for dairy products. From an economic perspective, and in the context of the global economic crisis, it is recommended that the European Union continues removing barriers to the trade in services and liberalises the energy, postal services, transport and telecommunications services sectors.

Another important WTO event in 2009 was the publishing of the *Aid for Trade Global Review 2009*, the second such review. It presented an opportunity to add impetus to the implementation of the ambitious mandate for Aid for Trade agreed at the 2005 Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, which aims to help developing countries, especially the least developed ones, to establish the incentive capacities and infrastructure required to benefit from an open trade system and join the global economy.

The review assesses progress made since the first review published in November 2007 in the implementation of four key objectives: the transition to the implementation of commitments; mainstreaming trade in national and regional development strategies; assessing the effectiveness of Aid for Trade and sustaining aid flows during the global economic downturn. www.wto.org

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The financial crisis provoked a political impulse that opened a new stage in the history of the [IMF](#). The London G20 summit in April 2009 confirmed the IMF's central role in resolving the global financial crisis and pledged to ensure sufficient funds for the IMF to effectively fulfil that role. Shareholders increased the funds available to approximately USD 770 billion, from the pre-crisis level of USD 250 billion. To increase global liquidity, there were General and Special *SDR (Special Drawing Rights)* Allocations, which increased the SDRs allocated to USD 317 billion. To protect low-income countries, the IMF backed a financial plan to mobilise sufficient funds to subsidise concessionary financing. Financial supervision was also discussed, its multilateral dimension was strengthened and there were greater ties to the financial sector, and the IMF will produce an analysis for an *exit strategy* from the measures adopted to deal with the financial crisis. One important change is the establishing of a global early-warning system in collaboration with the *Financial Stability Board (FSB)*.

At the October G20 summit in Pittsburgh, the reforms commenced were confirmed, and leading representatives of the world's most important economies agreed on the need for a fundamental reform of governance, which will be important to strengthen the IMF's legitimacy. A reform of quotas is viewed as a key element of governance, as the original quota reform from 2008 is considered inadequate by the majority of developing and emerging countries. Following agreement between the member countries, the 14th general review of quotas will be accelerated and should be completed by January 2011, and its outcome should be a significant increase in the voting power of developing and emerging countries.

The IMF Annual Meeting in Istanbul at the beginning of October 2009 outlined the most important areas the IMF would subsequently focus on. They include a review of its mandate, the IMF's financial role and the issue of governance. The Czech Republic actively contributed to those reforms.

In line with a decision by the Council of the European Union under the Czech Presidency in the first half of 2009, European Union member states decided to provide the IMF with a contribution of EUR 75 billion. The European Union subsequently increased its commitment so that the total contribution is 35% of the total increase in IMF funds, which approximately reflects its total share of voting power. At an ECOFIN meeting on 2 September 2009, it was agreed to increase the European Union's contribution from EUR 75 billion to EUR 125 billion (USD 175 billion). That decision was subsequently approved at a meeting of the Council of the European Union on 17 September 2009.

On 27 July 2009, the Czech Government approved joining the general SDR allocation, under which the Czech Republic subsequently received SDR of 780 million.

At present, cooperation between the Czech Republic and IMF takes place primarily in the form of regular annual IMF missions to the Czech Republic, undertaken in accordance with Article IV of the IMF's Articles of Agreement. These missions result in recommendations for the government's economic policy and a review of developments in the fiscal and monetary area, financial sector developments and progress in structural changes in the preceding period. The next IMF mission will take place at the beginning of 2010. www.imf.org

World Bank Group

2009 was marked by the global economic crisis. The main themes were the role of the [World Bank](http://www.worldbank.org) in the global economic crisis and the World Bank's capital requirement. A communiqué from the 2009 spring meeting of the *Development Committee (DC)* supported increasing the lending capacity of the *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)* to USD 100 billion in the next three years. However, the projection for funds provided during the first year of the crisis is already in excess of USD 100 billion, and after the crisis has receded, there is a risk that the IBRD's financial capacity to meet anticipated global development needs will be reduced. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure sufficient funds to maintain the annual level of lending at least at pre-crisis levels after the crisis has receded.

For the Czech Republic the first half of 2009 was particularly important in view of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, when it managed meetings of

representatives of European countries in the World Bank and subsequently coordinated common positions for European Executive Directors (including the Swiss and Norwegian Executive Directors) at meetings of the IMF Executive Board.

There was an important change to the representation of the Czech Republic in the IMF and World Bank in mid-2009. An agreement was concluded between the World Bank and IMF Governors for the Czech Republic and Slovakia on their joint representation in the Bretton Woods institutions, whereby the Czech Republic will represent the interests of both countries in the World Bank from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013, while Slovakia will represent both countries' interests in the IMF.

Following the Czech Republic's graduation from World Bank operations, it is no longer eligible to draw loans from the World Bank; on the contrary, it is expected to gradually increase its involvement in development assistance, both multilateral and bilateral. The period in which the Czech Republic could draw technical assistance (a consultancy service provided through World Bank and external experts) free of charge from the World Bank has also ended, and the Czech Republic now pays for technical assistance. Technical assistance in 2009 covered taxation, remittances and migration.

In addition to paid technical assistance, the World Bank will continue to expect a more active approach by the Czech Republic to its role as a partner in development cooperation. This will primarily involve active financial participation in various World Bank initiatives. www.worldbank.org

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

By graduating from the EBRD, the Czech Republic joined those states with developed economies that no longer require the EBRD's services. The recognition (graduation) of a member country as a developed state by an international financial institution such as the EBRD is regarded as an important signal for foreign investors.

Since the completion of the Czech Republic's graduation from the EBRD at the end of 2007, the EBRD has no longer invested in new projects in the Czech Republic, even in the context of regional projects. Existing projects will run their course in line with the contractual commitments, so the EBRD will continue to have active investments in the Czech Republic

for a number of years; these investments are both direct and indirect, e.g. through investment funds in which the bank has invested.

The EBRD is prepared to continue to support Czech companies' investments in countries that receive the bank's assistance (i.e. on attractive emerging markets in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia that have undergone or are undergoing the transformation process). Therefore, the Czech Ministry of Finance works closely with other institutions within the Czech Republic (CzechTrade, the Czech Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of Industry) in identifying mechanisms to support exports by Czech companies to those countries.

On completing the graduation process, the Czech Republic became an EBRD donor country; during its relatively brief time as a donor the Czech Republic has established a respected position and has acquired a reputation as an active partner. The Czech Republic is engaged in EBRD donor activities under the *European Western Balkans Joint Fund*, to which it has contributed EUR 2 million. In 2007, the Czech Government approved the creation of the *Czech Republic – ODA Technical Cooperation Fund*. The Czech Republic has contributed a total of EUR 3 million to the fund, and only Czech companies are eligible to draw from it. The fund's mission is to reinforce trade relations between Czech companies and the partner countries, and its projects will encourage investment in and export to the partner countries to assist in their transition to market economies. The fund focuses on the Balkans and the transforming countries of Europe and Central Asia, with no restrictions on sectors. Assistance takes the form of technical assistance and consultancy. www.ebrd.com

Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)

The CEB, until 1 November 1999 called the *Council of Europe Social Development Fund*, was established in 1956. It currently has 40 shareholders, including most of the member states of the Council of Europe (CoE). It is attached to the CoE and comes under its jurisdiction. The CEB is legally and financially autonomous and constitutes the principal tool of the solidarity policy pursued by the CoE. The Czech Republic has been a member of the CEB since 12 February 1999.

The CEB's priority objective is to help resolve social problems in member countries, primarily in aiding refugees, immigrants and victims of natural or environmental disasters.

The CEB also provides credit, chiefly for projects to create and preserve jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises, to build social housing, for social infrastructure, for environmental protection projects, to promote education and health, to improve the quality of the environment in disadvantaged urban and rural areas, and to protect the cultural heritage (including the restoration of historical monuments). To date the Czech Republic has not applied to the CEB for a loan to cover the needs of the state. The CEB has provided two private sector loans worth a total of EUR 40 million.

In 2009, the CEB joined the *Western Balkans Investment Framework* with investments of approximately EUR 10 billion in Central and South-East Europe. The CEB Development Plan 2010-2014 was approved and includes a 15% increase to the lending volume compared to the 2005-2009 period, primarily for the housing infrastructure, education, healthcare and regional infrastructure, and there will be greater collaboration with the European Union. www.coebank.org

International Bank for Economic Cooperation (IBEC)

The IBEC was established by the governments of the COMECON member states in 1963. Currently, the bank has nine owners: Russia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam.

The primary reason this bank was created was to provide multilateral accounting of supplies of goods and services between member states. However, in view of the fact that since 1991 the COMECON states have moved to a free market form of trading, multilateral bartering has been essentially terminated and the IBEC has abandoned its core activities. Member states decided to maintain the IBEC with the understanding that it is necessary to base its fundamental goals and work on a strictly commercial basis.

The bank's routine work was paralysed by the critical situation it found itself in at the beginning of the 1990s. The inability of certain members to repay loans accepted from the IBEC meant that the bank was unable to satisfy its commitments to Western creditors: it was insolvent. Most debtor countries have repaid their commitments in recent years, though Cuba's debt remains outstanding. Russia had repaid its debt by the end of 2007, an important step for the recovery of the bank's financial situation. Member countries are currently

working to restructure and transform the IBEC and IIB into a single *International Development Bank*. www.ibec.ru

International Investment Bank (IIB)

The [IIB](#) was founded by the governments of the COMECON member states in 1970. Currently it is owned by eight states – Russia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam.

The IIB's primary activity was providing long-term loans for the construction of large investment projects usually implemented by multiple member states. After COMECON was disbanded and the principles for foreign trade among member states were changed, work began to transform the bank into a financial institution whose activities are in line with its owners' economic interests under the new conditions.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the bank found itself in financial difficulties due to outstanding debts among some member countries, although with the exception of Cuba those debts have gradually been settled. By 2004, the IIB's financial relations with Russia had been settled in full and the bank's financial equilibrium was restored.

These positive changes in the IIB's financial situation were a precondition for its complete revitalisation and the gradual expansion of its activities. At present, the IIB is expanding its lending and has adopted international financial reporting and accounting standards, and is seeking to transform all of its banking activities to a standard that is compatible with international practice. At the same time, a process has been launched to restructure and transform the IBEC and IIB into a single *International Development Bank*. That process should be completed in 2010-2011. www.iibbank.com

The Czech Republic's membership of other international organisations

European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)

In 2009, the repair and related arrangements for a unique scientific instrument at CERN – the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) particle accelerator – were completed. As part of the process of bringing the LHC into operation, a particle beam was created in the LHC and the first collisions of particles took place in the interactive field of individual experiments. A

record amount of energy was achieved for the colliding particles, and that energy will gradually increase. The functioning of the detectors for all planned experiments – ALICE, ATLAS, CMS, LHCb, LHCf and TOTEM – was verified.

Another important event at CERN in 2009 was a symposium on the theme *From the Proton Synchrotron to the Large Hadron Collider – 50 Years of Nobel Memories in High-Energy Physics*, which was held on 3-4 December 2009 and attracted 13 recipients of the Nobel Prize in Physics. The main topics discussed at the symposium included developments in particle physics over the last 50 years and the outlook for the future, accelerators, and current and future challenges in this broad discipline.

In 2009, over 400 members of staff and students at 15 institutions of the Czech Academy of Sciences and universities were involved in cooperation with CERN, contributing to approximately 120 publications and 90 papers at international conferences.

CERN's budget for 2009 was in excess of CHF 1 000 million. The Czech Republic's contribution accounts for around 1% of that figure. To achieve the highest possible level of return on that contribution, there are public tenders announced by CERN for industrial supplies and services, spare parts, etc. from member states. Contracts won by Czech industry included components for the CMS detector and high voltage sources for the ATLAS experiment, etc. The Czech Republic also contributed to the development and deployment of eight of the 34 cutting-edge technologies in CERN, which have significant application beyond research into particle and high energy physics, especially in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and in the creation of the GRID computer and information network, which permits access to practically all sources of information in the world and simultaneously makes use of the spare capacity of a network of connected computers. www.cern.ch

Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR)

In 2009, as part of the science and research tasks related to the Czech Republic's membership of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR, Dubna, Russia), there were 71 short-term and seven three-month attachments at the JINR for the staff of four institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences and four university departments in the Czech Republic. 12 members of staff are on long-term attachments at the JINR. Short-term or long-term attachments were organised for staff from the JINR and Russia (as part of cooperation

between the Czech Republic and the JINR) at institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences (the Nuclear Physics Institute in Řež, the Institute of Geology, the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry and the Institute of Physics) and university science and research departments (Charles University's Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, and the Czech Technical University's Faculty of Nuclear Sciences and Physical Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Institute of Experimental and Applied Physics).

Cooperation between the Czech Republic and the JINR has continued to focus on joint long-term target projects (in 2009 there were 50 projects with total finance of USD 320 thousand from the Czech Republic's membership contribution to the JINR), subject to peer review both when issued and during the annual assessment of results. In 2009, the results of cooperation with the JINR were compiled into more than 48 articles published in international journals and over 33 papers at international conferences, symposiums and working meetings.

As part of cooperation with the JINR, in 2009 Czech scientists continued to take part in a number of experiments in collaboration with other international research centres (in Germany, France, Italy, the USA, etc.), as well as processing the results of various experiments.

Seven international conferences, symposiums, schools and working meetings were held in the Czech Republic in collaboration with the JINR, and long-term cooperation on teaching continued between Czech universities and the JINR (summer internships at the JINR; an international school on modern mathematical physics and an international summer school on *Nuclear Physics Methods and Accelerators in Biology and Medicine*).

In 2009, a new experimental facility, IREN-I, was completed. In line with the JINR's seven-year development plan, the modernisation of the Nuclotron will be completed and the related NICA collider will be built. The DRIBs-III cyclotron complex should be built and the reconstruction of the IBR-2M reactor completed. In 2009, the JINR assisted in the building of an experimental facility at a university in Astana in Kazakhstan. Some components for the facility have been supplied by the company Vakuum Praha, which has gained a reputation for its supplies to the JINR, and in consequence has been successful in winning contracts in other JINR member countries.

International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

The proposal to found the [*International Renewable Energy Agency*](#) was initiated by Germany, which in March 2008 presented the project to selected states from the international community. On 26 January 2009, the *Founding Conference* was held in Bonn, attended by 124 delegations representing states, the European Communities and international organisations. At the Founding Conference, the *IRENA Statute* was opened for signature and was signed by 75 states during the conference. Until the IRENA Statute comes into force, all activities related to the founding of IRENA will be managed by the *Preparatory Commission for IRENA*.

IRENA's main objective is to promote the widespread and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy sources by systematising and monitoring the ways in which those sources are currently used, covering political instruments, investment instruments, best technology, available technology, etc. IRENA's objectives also include exchanging information, consultation work and assistance for national, regional and local governments in member states, assistance in identifying sources of financing, training activities and promoting the transfer of technologies and know-how to developing countries with the aim of facilitating the rapid introduction of renewable energy sources. IRENA should effectively coordinate its work with established institutions concerned with renewable energy sources (e.g. the International Energy Agency – IEA) and complement their work.

On 30 November 2009, the Czech Government approved a proposal for negotiating the IRENA Statute, on the basis of which the Czech Republic signed the IRENA Statute on 6 January 2010 and became the 140th founding member of this international organisation.
www.irena.org

European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)

In 2009, the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) again concentrated mainly on this pan-European governmental organisation's cooperation with other global-impact organisations in the field of air transport. The ECAC's main goal remains promoting the sustainable, safe and efficient expansion of the European aviation system, facilitated by harmonising policies and procedures in ECAC member states.

In 2009, the work of the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA), an associated body of the ECAC, was disbanded and its work came under the jurisdiction of the European Aviation Safety Agency. Agreements on cooperation with the European Aviation Safety Agency were concluded with the aviation authorities of ECAC member states that are not members of the European Union in order to maintain high safety standards for air transport.

With the Czech Republic's active participation, the ECAC continued to work to protect civil aviation against unlawful activities, primarily in order to avoid any serious discrepancies between the regulatory frameworks of European Union member states and those ECAC countries that are not members of the European Union. In 2009, the ECAC continued its dialogue with the US aviation authorities on the further convergence of harmonising measures for aviation (in collaboration with the European Union). Significant ECAC activities also included environmental protection, the facilitation of air transport and promoting the reform of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Thanks to the unanimity displayed by ECAC member states, Raymond Benjamin (France) was appointed the new ICAO Secretary General in 2009. www.ecac-ceac.org

European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL)

This international organisation with 38 member states has as its primary objective the development of a seamless, pan-European air traffic management system.

In 2009, [EUROCONTROL](http://www.eurocontrol.int) developed, coordinated and planned the implementation of all proposed air traffic management strategies in the European airspace and the associated action plans. These activities took place in close cooperation with member states' civil aviation authorities, air traffic service providers, civil and military airspace users, industry partners and relevant European institutions.

For the Czech Republic, an important activity was the ongoing cooperation in creating a functional airspace block in Central Europe (FAB CE) which will replace *CEATS (an agreement relating to the provision and operation of air traffic services and facilities by EUROCONTROL at the Central European Air Traffic Services Upper Area Control Centre)*.

In 2009, EUROCONTROL also underwent major organisational and personnel changes aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the agency's work, based on decisions taken by the agency's Director General David McMillan (United Kingdom). www.eurocontrol.int

International Transport Forum (ITF)

On 26-29 May 2009, the [International Transport Forum](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org) was held in Leipzig at transport minister level. The forum was devoted to the theme of *Transport for a Global Economy – challenges and opportunities in the downturn*. The forum included a ministerial session which examined *Transport and the Downturn – social impacts, the economy and the environment*. The Czech delegation was headed by the Minister of Transport, Gustav Slamečka. www.internationaltransportforum.org

International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE)

The [BIE](http://www.bie-paris.org) is governed by the *Convention Relating to International Exhibitions* (Paris, 22 November 1928). The Convention generally governs the organisation of international exhibitions, regulating their frequency and stipulating guarantees and facilities that the organising country must provide for participants. The BIE is by nature an international government organisation. Exhibitions approved by the BIE are not of a commercial nature.

At the 146th session of the BIE General Assembly (Paris, 24 November 2009), the Czech Republic was elected to the *BIE Executive Committee* for 2009-2011.

The work of the BIE is dominated by EXPO world exhibitions. The Czech Republic is currently completing its preparations for EXPO Shanghai 2010, and the Czech pavilion is viewed as one of the best-built pavilions. (www.czexpo.com). The Czech Republic was also successful in its candidacy for membership of the *EXPO 2010 Steering Committee*. Future EXPOs will be held in 2012 in Yeosu (South Korea) and in 2015 in Milan (Italy). www.bie-paris.org

International Whaling Commission (IWC)

On 28 May – 26 June 2009, the 61st *Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC)* was held in Funchal. The IWC was founded on the basis of the *International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW)*. The IWC plenary session was preceded by meetings of the Scientific Committee and other committees, subcommittees and working groups. The Czech delegation was led by IWC Commissioner Pavla Hýčová from the Ministry of the Environment. At the meeting, the Czech Republic coordinated the positions of the European Union.

IWC talks and European Union coordination were dominated by two issues: the future of the ICRW and Denmark's request to increase the quota for subsistence whale hunting by the inhabitants of Greenland. This year's annual meeting was held in an atmosphere of attempts to reach a compromise on the future of the ICRW. Other than Denmark's proposal to increase quotas for Greenland no controversial proposals were presented. Although a small working group tasked with producing a package or packages of solutions for the future of the IWC did not yield results, significant progress was made at the talks and gives grounds for optimism that the process will be completed at the next annual meeting. www.iwcoffice.org

7. The international law dimension of the Czech Republic's foreign policy

In 2009, the priority for Czech foreign policy in this field was ensuring the success of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Representatives of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired meetings of the Council of the European Union's *Working Party on Public International Law (COJUR)*. Alongside the working party's usual agenda such as exchanging opinions on current issues in international law, which in 2009 were dominated by the implementation of antiterrorist sanctions by the UN Security Council following a 2008 European Court of Justice judgement in the case of Yassin Abdullah Kadi and Al Barakaat International Foundation, legal aspects of the fight against piracy, preparations for a dialogue between European Union legal advisors on public international law and the United States which was held, as is now traditional, on the sidelines of a meeting of the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI) in March 2009 in Strasbourg and a meeting of the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly in October 2009 in New York, the Czech Presidency in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) initiated the theme of strengthening the implementation of the *European Union Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with International Humanitarian Law* adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2005.

The Czech Presidency held a special informal COJUR meeting on that issue in March 2009 in Prague, which resulted in recommendations implemented by the subsequent Swedish Presidency (the revised *EU Guidelines* adopted by the Council of the European Union in December 2009 and their application in political dialogue between the European Union and third states, or by means of demarches calling on third countries to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights during conflict; raising awareness of the EU Guidelines in other Council of the European Union working parties and other committees and their implementation in European Union operations under the Common Foreign and Security Policy). To coordinate the work of the Presidency of the European Union with the ICRC on the issue of international humanitarian law, in January 2009 the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited the ICRC President, Jakob Kellenberger, to visit Prague, and in June 2009 in

cooperation with the ICRC a workshop was organised in Brussels for European Union member states on the ICRC Interpretive Guidance on the notion of direct participation in hostilities and on compliance with international humanitarian law during the conflict in Gaza at the turn of 2008 and 2009.

Supporting international humanitarian law was then the Czech Presidency's main priority in the sphere of international law. Outside that and beyond the framework of the Czech Presidency, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended a conference held under its auspices, on *International Humanitarian Law – the 60th Anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions*, which took place on 13 November 2009 at Charles University's Law Faculty.

In 2009, an important aspect of promoting respect for human rights law and humanitarian law, the rule of law and the principle of good governance, which are among the key pillars of Czech foreign policy, was international criminal justice and its role in combating the most serious crimes. In 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice completed the ratification process for the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, and the ratification deed was conveyed to the UN Secretary-General on 21 July 2009. The Czech Republic became the 110th state party to that important international treaty on 1 October 2009. As a full member it then attended the autumn Assembly of States Parties held on 18-26 November 2009 in The Hague. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to prepare a position on the crime of aggression and other proposed amendments to the Rome Statute which will be discussed at a Review Conference on 31 May – 11 June 2010 in the Ugandan capital Kampala. That was one of the reasons for a panel discussion organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 December 2009 on the theme of international criminal justice, attended by prominent judges, prosecutors and academics.

Czech support for international criminal justice is also evident in the voluntary donations the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made in 2009, with a total of CZK 703 870 for the work of international criminal tribunals (the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon).

The Czech Republic was also active in proceedings before the International Court of Justice in the case of the accordancy with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence by the provisional institutions of self-government of Kosovo.

On 9 October 2008, the UN Secretary-General had requested the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on the basis of a decision by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/63/3). 77 states voted in favour of adopting the resolution, six voted against and 74, including the Czech Republic, abstained. The Court set a time limit of 17 April 2009 for presenting written statements on the matter. On 14 April 2009, the Czech Republic was the first state to present its written standpoint on the basis of a decision by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and it confirmed that the unilateral declaration of independence by the provisional institutions of self-government of Kosovo does not violate any provision of international law. In later phases of the proceedings before the International Court of Justice, the Czech Republic did not exercise the option to respond to statements by other states in July 2009, and it did not attend the verbal hearing before the International Court of Justice in December 2009.

In 2009, the Czech Republic continued to monitor the work of the International Law Commission. At the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly the Czech Republic presented a standpoint on the Report of the Work of the International Law Commission covering the responsibility of international organizations, reservations to treaties, the expulsion of aliens, the protection of persons in the event of disasters, and shared natural resources.

During 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also devoted much attention to the scope and application of universal jurisdiction. Owing to the fear among some African states of the abuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction by some European Union member states, in November 2008 the European Union – African Union Ministerial Troika set up a technical ad hoc expert group with a mandate to clarify the understanding of universal jurisdiction by the European Union and the African Union. The outcome is an expert report of 16 April 2009 (a document by the Council of the European Union, 8672/1/09). In parallel, there was a discussion at the UN which resulted in the adoption of a resolution by the General Assembly on 16 December 2009 (A/RES/64/117) calling on UN member states to submit information on the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction in domestic law by the end of April 2010.

In 2009, as in previous years, the Czech Republic presented contributions to the International Law Week organised by the UN in September 2009. On that occasion, it

deposited the ratification deed for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which supplements the existing seven UN conventions on fundamental human rights. On 28 October 2009, the Convention came into force for the Czech Republic.

Significant attention was paid to questions of international treaty law in relation to reforms of the European Court of Human Rights. For that purpose, Protocol 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights was adopted earlier, aimed at simplifying proceedings before the court and ease the increasing number of complaints that the court is not able to process in time. In 2009, Russia remained the only member of the Council of Europe that had not ratified the Protocol. In May 2009, the Committee of Ministers decided to resolve the stalemate to some extent by allowing other countries to introduce selected provisions of Protocol 14, either by means of its preliminary application or by the ratification and preliminary application of a new Protocol 14bis, which incorporated those provisions. Under the Czech Presidency, the Czech Republic contributed to resolving the situation, and is now preparing the discussion and approval of the signing of Protocol 14bis, with the exception of ratification and preliminary application.

In 2009, the Czech Republic was active in space law. Vladimír Kopal, an internationally recognised expert on space law who was elected chairman of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), led discussions at the 48th session of the Legal Subcommittee on 23 March – 3 April 2009 in Vienna. The general exchange of information on national legislation relevant to outer space and the application of the five UN treaties on outer space were among the main points on the agenda. Discussions concerned a document presented by states parties to the *Moon Agreement*. Overall, the 48th session confirmed a renewed interest among member states in the development of this area, and the greater effectiveness of the work of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee in recent years.

On 6-17 April 2009, the *XXXII Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting* was held in Baltimore in the United States. This was a regular meeting for representatives of the parties to the Antarctic Treaty held to exchange information and consult on Antarctic issues of general interest. From 2010 onwards, the Czech Republic's reporting duty under the Antarctic Treaty and related agreements will be implemented using the Electronic Information Exchange System (EIES), aimed at simplifying the reporting duty for parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

The Czech Republic's reporting duty for 2009 was, therefore, implemented not by dispatching notes to the 46 other parties, but by inputting data into EIES and making it accessible.

In 2009, the relevant departments continued to negotiate other international agreements at the level of heads of states and governments, reflecting the developing and strengthening of cooperation with other states on a wide variety of issues.

The question of succession to agreements concluded during the existence of Czechoslovakia (1918-1992) was resolved with a few of the states remaining. In 2009, the Czech Republic sought to finish negotiations with Afghanistan, while talks were opened with Kosovo and Montenegro.

Under Article 307 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the Czech Republic is required to bring all its international legal obligations into line with EC/EU law. In June 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore began the process of renegotiating agreements on the promotion and protection of investments between the Czech Republic and states that are not members of the European Union. As at 1 January 2010, the obligation to renegotiate or rescind agreements still applies to 24 investment agreements. In 2009, protocols on the amendment of investments agreements with Romania and Vietnam came into force, and similar protocols were signed with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Guatemala, Canada, Jordan, Macedonia/FYROM, Uruguay and Uzbekistan. Protocols with Morocco and Turkey were discussed and prepared for signature. During 2009 new investment agreements were signed with Georgia and Saudi Arabia, and investment agreements with Bahrain, Yemen, Cambodia and Syria came into force.

Owing to the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, its bilateral investment agreements with other European Union member states largely became irrelevant. Therefore, at the turn of 2008 and 2009, the Czech Republic notified European Union member states of its proposal to rescind those bilateral investment agreements in the form of agreements between the parties concluded by exchanging diplomatic notes. By the end of 2009, bilateral investment agreements with Italy, Malta and Denmark had been rescinded, and the relevant parties had agreed to rescind agreements with Estonia and Slovenia.

In 2009, agreements on the prevention of double taxation with Armenia, Cyprus and Syria came into force and an agreement with China was negotiated and signed. Agreements on the prevention of double taxation with Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are ready for signing.

In parallel, a process is underway to renegotiate approximately twenty earlier agreements on the prevention of double taxation, primarily with the objective of extending the exchange of information between the tax authorities in the signatory states. In 2009, agreement between the parties amended treaties with Kazakhstan, Croatia, Russia, Serbia, Belgium and Belarus.

Agreements on economic cooperation are being negotiated with a number of states to replace trade agreements that were rescinded due to the European Communities' exclusive powers on trade policy (in 2009 economic cooperation agreements came into force with South Korea, Tunisia, Brazil and Belarus). An agreement on bilateral cooperation to support industrial research and development in the private sector was negotiated with Israel. An agreement with Poland on geological work along the common national border also came into force.

Talks are underway on new agreements in aviation that include the requirements for the maximum liberalisation of aviation relations, including the relevant Community provisions. In 2009, an aviation treaty was signed with Singapore. In road transport, a treaty with Austria on connecting the Czech R52 high-speed road with the Austrian A5 motorway came into force, as did a treaty with Slovakia on the maintenance and repair of road bridges and road sections along the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In police cooperation, treaties were signed with Albania and Bulgaria, and a readmission treaty was signed with Switzerland. The National Security Authority has negotiated a number of bilateral treaties on the protection of confidential information. In 2009, treaties with Finland, Georgia, Macedonia/FYROM, Norway, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden came into force, and treaties were signed with Greece, Albania and Spain.

Treaties on social security with the United States and Japan came into force, and a treaty was signed with Australia.

In culture, a cultural agreement with Austria came into force last year, and negotiations on cultural agreements continued with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, the Philippines, Georgia, South Africa, Costa Rica, Moldova and El Salvador. Regular cooperation programmes were also negotiated (programmes came into force for Pakistan and Israel, and were signed with Jordan, South Korea and North Korea). A new Action Programme was signed with Austria, covering cooperation in science and education. In Antarctic cooperation, a treaty with Chile came into force while a treaty with Argentina has been prepared for signature.

In 2009, in environmental issues there were negotiations e.g. on treaties to ensure the Czech Republic's membership of the *European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT)*. A treaty with Austria came into force on cooperation to protect forests in the Šumava region from the cross-border spread of the European spruce bark beetle. In 2009, the Czech Republic ratified the *Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians* and the *Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the UNECE Aarhus Convention*.

In legal assistance, supplementary conventions were negotiated with the United States on extradition and on mutual legal assistance in criminal cases.

In defence, negotiations continued in 2009 on framework treaties on cooperation with partner organisations in selected countries (specifically Azerbaijan, Jordan and Latvia). Agreements with the United States on cooperation in missile defence and exchanging engineers and science and research workers also came into force. A treaty was negotiated on the Czech Republic's participation in the *Multinational Force and Observers* in Sinai.

A number of multinational treaties came into force for the Czech Republic in 2009. In addition to the aforementioned *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, they included the *Convention on the International Protection of Adults*, the *Convention on Choice of Court Agreements* and the *Safeguards Agreement between EC member states, Euratom and the International Atomic Energy Agency on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*. In 2009, the Czech Republic also ratified the *International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)*.

In addition to the aforementioned agreements, departments agreed or held negotiations on approximately fifty more international agreements pertaining to individual departments.

8. Human rights in Czech foreign policy

The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union

During the Czech Presidency, the *Council of the European Union Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)* completed a review and update of the eight *EU Guidelines on Human Rights*. The guidelines were republished and presented to the public, and their implementation continued with the emphasis on human rights defenders, torture and the death penalty. In the fight against violence against women and the discrimination of women, analyses were produced of the situation in individual countries, with recommendations for European Union policy, including suitable projects for cooperation. A discussion was opened on additional ways of supporting human rights defenders and cooperation by European Union member states in providing sanctuary to activists facing persecution. In March 2009, the Czech Presidency organised a conference on democracy support around the world, *Building Consensus about EU Policies on Democracy Support*, which recommended consolidating the relevant instruments of the European Union's external policy to guide them more effectively towards one of the key objectives: supporting democracy around the world. The principles of the European Union's approach to this issue, formulated by the Czech Presidency, formed the basis of the Council Conclusions adopted in November. The Czech Presidency held a series of talks as part of dialogue and consultation on human rights with third countries, including China and Russia, and it opened dialogue with Georgia and Belarus.

As the presiding country, the Czech Republic was actively involved in resolving 69 breaches of human rights involving a total of 145 human rights defenders in various countries. 11 statements were issued on behalf of the European Union or the Presidency, and there were three interventions in the form of demarches, while approximately 15 individual cases were mentioned during the formal human rights dialogue between the European Union and the country in question. Many other cases were resolved through quiet diplomacy. Some cases were raised by diplomatic missions, while often the initial impulse was a report by one of the well-known international non-governmental organisations working in the field of human rights. Cooperation between the European Union and those organisations is based on

the principle of long-term strategic partnership. The Czech Presidency confirmed and extended that partnership.

In June 2009, the *Holocaust Era Assets Conference* took place in Prague and Terezín, and also covered social programmes for survivors and support for education. The conference adopted the *Terezín Declaration*, and a declaration on support for programmes and the reconstruction of Holocaust sites was signed by the Czech Presidency and the European Commission. Another outcome of the conference is the establishment of the *European Shoah Legacy Institute* in Terezín, whose work will include producing reports on social programmes for the victims of Nazism in individual countries, support for cooperation and sharing experience and best practice at international and European levels, issuing recommendations on that field to national governments and the European Commission, implementing projects designed to improve the welfare of victims of Nazism, and supporting education activities and research.

UN Human Rights Council

In 2009, the Czech Republic attended meetings of the *Human Rights Council* as an observer. The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg, delivered a speech at the 10th session of the Human Rights Council. By virtue of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, for this session the Czech Republic prepared and negotiated resolutions on the human rights situation in North Korea, Myanmar/Burma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan and, with a group of Latin American countries, a resolution on the rights of the child. The Czech Republic also coordinated the European Union's position on the situation in the Palestinian Territories, both at regular sessions of the Human Rights Council and at its two special sessions. At the *Durban Review Conference*, the Czech Republic coordinated the European Union's contributions and positions on the outcome document and negotiated on its final wording. The Czech Republic left the conference itself owing to an unacceptable speech by the Iranian President on its first day. At its 11th session, the Human Rights Council adopted, after a close vote, a resolution extending the mandate for the special mechanism on the human rights situation in Sudan by one year. That extension can be seen as an unexpected success for the European Union, under the leadership of the Czech Republic, in its long-term efforts to retain its special envoys for individual countries. On the initiative of the European Union a special session of the Human Rights Council was convened in June 2009 regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. At the 12th regular session of the Human

Rights Council, the Czech Republic actively contributed to defining the European Union's common position, now under the Swedish Presidency. It viewed as problematic (1) a resolution on traditional values presented by Russia, owing to elements of cultural relativism and an undermining of the universal character of the human rights, and (2) a resolution on freedom of speech (presented by Egypt and the United States) which included a formulation on "racial and religious stereotyping", which in the context makes the bearers of human rights groups rather than individuals, which is at odds with the fundamental principles of international human rights law.

Universal Periodic Review

From the start, the Czech Republic has been prominent in the *Universal Periodic Review*, a mechanism established by the UN Human Rights Council. In 2009, there were three rounds (4th-6th) of that review. As the presiding country of the European Union, the Czech Republic, in collaboration with the Council secretariat and the European Commission, produced overviews of themes for the 4th and 5th rounds that should, in the European Union's view, be raised in dialogues with the states under review, and it organised the exchange of information between member states which under the mechanism do not coordinate their approaches but act on the basis of a strictly national principle. The Czech Republic sent preliminary written questions to all states under review; it subsequently took up two-thirds of them in interactive dialogue, in which it focused on questions of cooperation with international human rights mechanisms, freedom of speech, the fight against torture, discrimination, violence against women and children and the protection of vulnerable groups, especially human rights defenders.

64th session of the 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly – human rights issues

The Czech Republic voted in favour of the adoption of a number of resolutions on human rights, among which it cosponsored e.g. resolutions on the rights of the child and on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It also backed resolutions pointing to human rights violations in North Korea, Iran and Myanmar/Burma and actively protested against their exclusion from the agenda for procedural reasons (*no action motions*). It supported resolutions on the rights of disabled persons and against religious discrimination, and represented the European Union in talks on a resolution on the

inadmissibility of practices contributing to the proliferation of current forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. It voted against resolutions on activities which were to follow from the *Durban Conference against Racism*, owing to provisions that not only contradicted international human rights standards by restricting freedom of expression, but also failed to respect the compromise reached under the Czech Presidency of the European Union in the *outcome document* from the *Durban Review Conference* in April 2009. The Czech Republic and the Swedish Presidency of the European Union also organised an event on the rights of the child, and in collaboration with the *Burma Fund* there was a now traditional event on the human rights situation in Myanmar/Burma, which this time focused on the 2010 elections. The Czech delegation spoke twice during interactive dialogues: (1) with the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture (in line with its long-term human rights priorities and in view of the fact that the Subcommittee's members include Z. Hájek, nominated by the Czech Republic); and (2) in discussion with the special envoy for the human rights situation in Myanmar/Burma.

Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

As in previous years, the Czech Republic contributed to the work of the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research*. The Czech Republic's main input consists in engaging experts in education and research about the Holocaust and the Roma genocide during World War II for individual working groups.

Community of Democracies

The Czech Republic contributes to the work of the *Community of Democracies* in the group of 17 countries that comprise the Community's core, the *Convening Group*. In an attempt to make the Community's work more effective, the holder of the Presidency, Lithuania, produced a proposal to establish or review the work of the Community's working groups. The Czech Republic made comments during the drafting of a new organisational concept for the Community of Democracies and is active in a new working group to promote democracy and respond to national and multilateral threats to democracy that should formally start operating in February 2010.

9. Non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament

For nuclear and conventional weapons, non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament are among the long-term priorities for Czech foreign policy, resulting in part from the *Czech Republic Security Strategy* from 2003. As in previous years, in 2009 Czech foreign policy was guided by the goals of the Czech government and proceeded in line with the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Given that the Czech Republic's foreign security policy is based on active conflict prevention and preventative diplomacy, the Czech Republic advocates multilateral cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The state's strategic interests include reducing the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and reducing the risk of the Czech Republic being attacked by weapons of mass destruction. At the international level, the Czech Republic therefore mainly seeks cooperation under the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*, the end goal of which is achieving nuclear disarmament. The Czech Republic acts in accordance with the *European Union Strategy against proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction* from 2003, and during the Czech Presidency in 2009 it contributed to the start of the implementation of that revised document. The Czech Republic also acted on the basis of the priorities for the European Union's common objectives on the First Committee of the UN General Assembly at its 64th session. In the fight against terrorism the Czech Republic takes part in other security initiatives aimed against the misuse of weapons of mass destruction.

In the issue of *small arms and light weapons*, the Czech Republic actively seeks to eliminate the security risks related to their illegal stockpiling and use. On the basis of the *European Union Strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, the Czech Republic joined initiatives in that field (*Joint Actions* and the *European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports*) and promotes activities aimed at preventing the transfer of such weapons to non-state actors. At the UN in 2009, the Czech Republic actively worked with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). In addition to regular financial contributions to support the fight against the unlawful use of small arms and light weapons, the Czech Republic also contributes its highly regarded expert and technical assistance to the international community.

The Czech Republic is a member of all five international control regimes aimed at preventatively eliminating the risks resulting from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and from the excessive stockpiling of conventional weapons in individual regions (*Nuclear Suppliers Group – NSG; Australia Group – AG; Missile Technology Control Regime – MTCR; Wassenaar Arrangement – WA; Zangger Committee – ZC*). In 2009, the Czech Republic was also active in space security in line with preparations for a European initiative, the *Code of Conduct in outer space*.

Czech foreign policy in these fields is based on the conviction that in the present globalised world it is essential to take multilateral action to ensure its own security and the security of the European Union as a whole.

Conference on Disarmament

As usual, the session of the *Conference on Disarmament* was held in three rounds (19 January – 27 March, 18 May – 3 July and 3 August – 18 September 2009). On 29 May 2009 the programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament was approved after ten years, but unfortunately was not implemented. For that reason, negotiations were not opened on a new *Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)*, which is directly linked to the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*. It is expected that negotiations might be opened in 2010, when there will be a Review Conference on the NPT. In that context, the Czech Republic, in collaboration with other observer countries and with the support of the European Union as a whole, constantly revived the idea of extending the Conference on Disarmament, which is in the Czech Republic's interests.

Nuclear weapons

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

On 4-15 May 2009, the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (3rd PrepCom NPT) was held at the UN headquarters in New York. This was the Preparatory Committee's final session before the 2010 Review Conference, and it worked to approve procedural matters for the Review Conference and prepare solid foundations for its work. Without question, this was the most important meeting on disarmament during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The session was attended by delegations from the 119 parties to the treaty. The Czech delegation was headed by Tomáš Pojar, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, who gave a speech on behalf of the European Union in the general debate.

It was clear at 3rd PrepCom NPT that the majority of delegations was not interested in repeating the failures of the 2000 and 2005 Review Conferences, and was actively seeking a positive outcome. The atmosphere at the session was strongly influenced by the latest declarations by the American administration and a declaration by Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev on opening bilateral talks on restricting nuclear weapons.

The approval of all procedural matters represents an extraordinary success for the session, and will allow the Review Conference itself to work on substantive issues from the first day of the conference. The 2005 situation, when the conference spent the first three weeks discussing the agenda and other procedural matters, will not be repeated.

As the presiding country of the European Union, the Czech Republic managed to present a unanimous position for the European Union (regardless of the persisting differences of opinion between individual European Union countries on specific issues) thanks to its early start of preparations for the session and intensive work during the session. Thanks to the Czech Presidency, the European Union was also able to respond in unison to developments at the session and present the European Union's agreed positions there.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

The *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)* is an important instrument for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament that became particularly important in view of the nuclear test carried out by North Korea on 25 May 2009, which was condemned by the entire international community.

A conference held in Vienna on 10-12 June 2009 marked the culmination of the International Scientific Studies Project (ISS) to independently assess the verification capabilities and future potential of the International Monitoring System (IMS). The ISS was also attended by representatives of the auxiliary seismic station in Vranov, near Brno, which is part of the IMS.

In 2009, Vienna hosted two sessions of the *Preparatory Commission (PC)* of the *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)* on 8-9 June and 16-17 November, and five sessions of its two working groups. All sessions worked on achieving the required degree of readiness for the verification regime when the CTBT comes into force, and on speeding up the ratification process.

The Czech Republic played an active role in work seeking to bring the CTBT into force as soon as possible, both at national level and, during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, via the implementation of a joint Action Plan of the Troika (France, the Czech Republic and the Swedish Presidency). During the Czech Presidency, the European Union was the initiator of greater support and promotion for the work of PC CTBTO, including more intense work on completing all components of the CTBT verification regime under preparations for the potentially imminent coming into force of the Treaty (the promising ratification by the United States and other key countries).

On 24-25 September 2009 New York hosted the sixth session of the *Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT (Article XIV Conference – AFC)*, which was held at its highest ever level and with the broadest participation to date. The conference took place in a new atmosphere following a statement by the American administration that it would seek the ratification of the Treaty by the United States. The timing of the conference, at the opening of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly, resulted in attendance at an unusually high level (more than 100 delegations were headed by ministers). At the opening of the session, the conference approved the *Final Declaration* calling on the nine remaining states whose ratification will allow the Treaty to enter into force to do so as soon as possible. The declaration also repeats participants' clear conviction that the CTBT is an important instrument in restricting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and supporting nuclear disarmament. (Note: adopting the declaration at the opening of the session was intended to give a positive signal to the concurrent high-level meeting of the Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.)

Over 50 countries spoke in the subsequent debate, approximately 40 of them at ministerial level. The first to speak was the United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who highlighted the fact that this was the first time in ten years the United States was taking part in the conference, and that it was ready to renew its leading role in nuclear disarmament

and non-proliferation. She emphasised that the United States supports the CTBT because it strengthens the prospects for a peaceful and stable world, and also increases the security of the American people. The great majority of speakers condemned North Korea's nuclear test, remarking that the test had simultaneously proven the effectiveness of the monitoring system. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Helena Bambasová spoke on behalf of the Czech Republic.

International Atomic Energy Agency

Alongside technical support for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and increasing nuclear safety and protection against radiation, one of the main roles of the *International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)* is verifying instances of the misuse of nuclear materials and technologies for military purposes. The issue of nuclear non-proliferation is also one of the priorities of the new Director General for the IAEA Yukiya Amano, who took office on 1 December 2009.

Among the key themes at the annual meeting of IAEA's highest policymaking body, the *General Conference* (14-18 September 2009, Vienna), were the traditional issues of applying guarantees in North Korea and the Middle East, measures to strengthen the fight against terrorism, and Israel's nuclear capabilities, on which a resolution was adopted for the first time. At Iran's request, the issue was also raised of a ban on attacks on nuclear facilities under construction or in operation.

The agenda for the *IAEA Board of Governors* (which meets five times a year in Vienna), the IAEA's political body, remained dominated by issues related to the Iranian, North Korean and Syrian nuclear programmes. Of the political and technical points discussed, the most significant success was progress on multilateral nuclear approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle (MNA), specifically the first activities leading to the founding of an International Nuclear Fuel Bank (INFB).

Questions over the nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and its possible military dimension continue to disquiet the international community.

Iran still has not satisfied the demands made through resolutions by the UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors, and in addition to increasing quantities of enriched uranium, it is also extending its enrichment capabilities, and in September 2009 it

announced the construction of a new enrichment facility near the city of Qom. In view of the complete lack of progress in resolving the Iranian question, which was confirmed in the latest report by the IAEA Director General at the last meeting of the Board of Governors in 2009 in November, the Board of Governors voted to adopt a resolution calling on Iran to cooperate fully with the international community and satisfy all of its obligations and commitments. Infuriated, Iran responded by promptly announcing its plans to build an additional ten enrichment facilities and indicated that it would reduce its voluntary cooperation with the international community to the essential minimum permitted by the NPT.

The situation in North Korea worsened in 2009. In April, North Korea broke off all cooperation with the IAEA and removed control and monitoring equipment from its nuclear facilities in Yongbyon and Taechon, announced the renewal of its nuclear activities, including the processing of spent nuclear fuel (plutonium separation), and expelled IAEA inspectors from the country. It also ended the six-party talks. On 25 May 2009, North Korea announced the successful completion of its second underground nuclear test. In response, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1874. However, North Korea continues to ignore demands from the UN Security Council and the international community that it return to the negotiating table, end its nuclear programme and ballistic missile tests, and unconditionally resume working to meet its commitments under the NPT and IAEA guarantee agreements, and in consequence it continues to present an acute threat to the rest of the world.

Investigations into a potential secret nuclear programme in Syria (the apparently completed nuclear reactor in Dair Alzour bombed by Israel) made no significant progress. A question remains over the origin of particles of manmade natural uranium that are not part of Syria's declared inventory and were found not only on the site of the destroyed reactor but also in other locations. The lack of active cooperation from Syria's side prevents to achieve a definitive explanation. The IAEA does not have all the information required, nor does it have access to Syrian facilities and locations that could help answer the question. Syria insists that the bombed building was a non-nuclear military facility, in which case it is not obliged to provide any further information under its guarantee agreement with the IAEA.

Discussions lasting several years on establishing a nuclear fuel bank that would represent a guaranteed reserve of low-enriched uranium under the auspices of the IAEA, and would therefore contribute to reducing the risk of proliferation by reducing the need to

develop national programmes for enrichment and processing, continue to meet opposition from developed countries. In March 2009, the target figure of USD 150 million was reached; that was set as an essential precondition to began concrete steps to establish a nuclear fuel bank, which was the impulse for commencing the formulation of the project framework (USD 50 million was pledged by the American non-governmental organisation the NTI on condition that another USD 100 million would be collected, which was raised from the United States – USD 50 million, the European Union – EUR 25 million, United Arab Emirates – USD 10 million, Norway – USD 5 million and Kuwait – USD 10 million). At its meeting in November, the IAEA Board of Governors voted – reaching a consensus proved impossible owing to the persistently negative response among developed countries – to approve a resolution presented by Russia that will establish a 120-ton reserve of low-enriched uranium in Angarsk in Russia.

The Czech Republic supports the work of the IAEA by providing its own expertise and training capacities, and through direct financial contributions, and in consequence it is a highly valued partner for the IAEA, which was confirmed by its new Director General at a bilateral meeting.

In 2009, the Czech Republic continued to strengthen its position as a net donor in the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme. More than CZK 14 million was allocated from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Office for Nuclear Safety, the coordinator for IAEA cooperation, to support the work of the IAEA. A substantial part of that sum was used to assist Serbia in transporting spent high enriched fuel from the Vinča research reactor to Russia, which was very significant for nuclear non-proliferation. Another technically and politically important contribution was support for the modernisation of the IAEA laboratories in Seibersdorf in Austria.

Nuclear Suppliers Group

The plenary session of the *Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)* was held on 11-12 June 2009 in Budapest. The session continued work to strengthen the NSG guidelines for transfers of technology, materials and equipment for enriching uranium and separating plutonium. It discussed the consequences of Iran's nuclear programme and the nuclear test carried out by North Korea for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The chairman of the *Zangger Committee*, who attended the NSG plenary session as an observer,

proposed commencing preparatory work on a convention to regulate nuclear exports. The European Union presented the *new lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems*. Iceland was accepted as a new NSG member state. The Czech Republic continued to contribute to the work of the NSG, which it considers an important instrument to strengthen the NPT regime.

Zangger Committee

Sessions of the *Zangger Committee* were held on 1 April and 30 September 2009 in Vienna, under the Chairmanship of a representative of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where discussions continued on a proposal to extend annual reporting. Member countries also reviewed the results of relations with non-members. At the sessions, there was agreement on adding to the Zangger Committee's website to include information on activities related to the NPT Review Conference in May 2010 and the NSG. In connection with the departure of the Chairman of the Zangger Committee, Pavel Klucký, it was decided that the acting Chairman would be the Committee's secretary (United Kingdom) until a new Chairman is appointed.

Chemical and biological weapons

Chemical weapons

On 30 November – 4 December 2009, the 14th *Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction* (the *Chemical Weapons Convention*) was held in The Hague. In addition to approving the budget of the *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)*, the conference adopted a decision on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention at national level (implementing Article VII of the Convention), which defined the annual producing of national reports and their structure. An important point was the approval of recommendations by the Executive Council and a decision to appoint a new Director-General of the *OPCW Technical Secretariat* for a term of office from 25 July 2010 to 24 July 2014. The new Director-General is Turkey's current ambassador and permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, Ahmet Üzümcü. A significant conclusion from the conference is the continuation of the Executive Council discussion on the issue of deadlines for the destruction of chemical weapons, which, given the present situation, some countries will be unable to meet. The Czech delegation to the

conference was headed by the Czech Republic's Permanent Representative at the OPCW, Ambassador Petr Mareš.

On 12 May 2009, the Czech Republic ended its membership of the Executive Council, of which it had been a member since May 2007. A candidacy for the subsequent two-year period was not presented, and the Czech Republic may only attend meetings of the Executive Council as an observer. On the basis of membership of the Executive Council, the Czech Republic's permanent representative to the OPCW took part in a visit by Executive Council representatives to two facilities for destroying chemical weapons in the United States (Pueblo and Umatilla, 31 May – 6 June 2009).

Until 2008, the Czech Republic made voluntary contributions to projects to support the implementation of Article X of the Convention (assistance and protection against chemical weapons). In 2009, a project for East African countries continued with a contribution from the Czech Republic.

In 2009, a project co-financed by the Czech Republic was completed to build a facility for the destruction of chemical weapons in Shchuchye in Russia, based on a bilateral agreement between Russia and the United Kingdom of 20 December 2001 under the *G8 Global Partnership*. The Czech Republic and a number of other states made repeated voluntary contributions to the project between 2003 and 2007.

Biological weapons

On 7-11 December 2009, the annual Meeting of States Parties to the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC)* was held in Geneva. The meeting discussed issues concerning support for capacity building for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases, where attention was mainly paid to the implementation of Article X of the Convention, which concerns cooperation between the states parties. Other important issues were preparations for the *Seventh Review Conference* in 2011, cooperation with the World Health Organisation, the universalisation of the BTWC, confidence-building measures and the work of the *Implementation Support Unit (ISU)*. The Czech delegation was led by the Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Ambassador T. Husák.

Australia Group

A plenary meeting of the *Australia Group*, an international control regime designed to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological substances and dual-use technologies, was held on 22-25 September 2009 in Paris. The information and knowledge exchanged on the efforts by certain countries, terrorist groups and non-state actors concerning research results and the development, manufacture and acquisition of chemical and biological substances, including related technologies and knowledge applicable to the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction, pointed to the increasing significance of this control regime. Information on countermeasures indicated the benefits of regularly updating and relaying information between member states. Discussions also covered practical procedures for detection and prevention. Additions to the control lists were approved. Other contributions focused on developments in synthetic biology, information on nanotechnology, experience in the use of micro reactors for chemical/biological reactions and information on the use of recombination methods. The Czech delegation was headed by J. Svoboda from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ballistic missiles and WMD delivery systems

The 24th plenary meeting of the *Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)* was held on 9-13 November 2009 in Rio de Janeiro. At the meeting, Brazil took on the chairmanship of the regime.

The plenary meeting adopted a number of decisions concerning the issue of regional non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, other contacts with the 1540 Committee, extending dialogue with non-member states, etc.

No decision was reached on extending MTCR membership, and none of the twelve applicants (China, Estonia, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Cyprus, Libya, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) were accepted as members.

Member states agreed that it would be useful to update the list of controlled items published in 2005. This is not meant to be a blacklist, but a useful tool to simplify decisions for member states on granting licences.

The Czech Republic and other international groupings for WMD non-proliferation

The Czech Republic is an active member in a number of security activities and initiatives by the international community aimed at strengthening the fight against WMD proliferation and terrorism. The aim is to bring not only state institutions, but also the private sector, academia and non-governmental organisations into the fight against terrorism and WMD proliferation. Another key priority is to reinforce the legal environment and police units' capabilities. The most important initiatives are:

Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation

On 28-29 May 2009, Vienna hosted the 8th Regular Meeting of the *Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC)*, which aims to improve transparency in ballistic missiles by confidence-building measures such as exchanging annual declarations and notifications of planned launches of ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles. During its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic sought to strengthen the implementation of universalisation of the HCOC, both during the meeting and by means of ministerial demarches and an international seminar in Prague on 26 June 2009.

Krakow Initiative

The *Krakow Initiative (Proliferation Security Initiative, PSI)* was set up in 2003 and its main objective is to contribute to combating attempts to acquire weapons of mass destruction and dual-use materials and prevent their illegal supply. In 2009, the Czech Republic took part in a number of PSI exercises such as Exercise Cobalt in the Netherlands.

G-8 Global Partnership against the Proliferation of WMD

The Czech Republic joined this initiative, announced at the G-8 summit on Sea Island, in 2004 and within its framework in 2009 it provided a voluntary contribution totalling CZK 10 million to a British project to destroy chemical weapons in Russia. The part of the project financed by the Czech Republic was successfully completed by 2009.

Global Threat Reduction Initiative

As part of its support for the *Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI)*, the Czech government adopted Resolution No. 1181 of 17 September 2008 on the provision of a voluntary contribution of CZK 18 million for the repatriation of highly enriched nuclear fuel from a research reactor in Vinča, Serbia. The amount outstanding from the contribution, CZK 12 million, was paid in 2009.

Conventional weapons

Anti-personnel mines

On 30 November – 4 December 2009, the *Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the Ottawa Treaty)* was held in Cartagena de Indias in Colombia, under the title *The Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World*. The conference aimed to review the implementation of the convention and draw up an action plan for future work. The conference decided to extend the deadlines for the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas in some states parties which have problems implementing the relevant provisions of the convention. Rwanda, Greece, Albania and Zambia announced that they had cleared all mines. The main motto for the conference was greater emphasis on help for mine victims. It was attended by representatives of 127 countries and delegates from non-governmental organisations, as well as 20 observers from states that are not parties to the convention, some of which announced their countries' intention to sign the Ottawa Treaty during the next few years. The majority of those countries supports the convention but have concerns over satisfying their obligations under the convention, destroying stockpiles and removing mines from mined areas. For the first time the United States attended the conference as an observer, where it announced that it would review its policy on landmines. A delegation led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Hynek Kmoníček attended the conference on behalf of the Czech Republic. In 2009, the Czech Republic contributed to programmes for humanitarian demining via international organisations, as well as via direct bilateral cooperation.

Restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons

On 12-13 November 2009, a meeting of the states parties to the *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)* was held in Geneva. The most important issue discussed was the future of talks on a new *Protocol VI (P – VI) to the CCW restricting the use of cluster munitions*. During 2009, there were five meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on P – VI, but the consolidated text put forward was not approved. After lengthy consultations, the meeting of the states parties decided to extend the work of the GGE on cluster munitions to 2010. A decision was adopted to establish a new *Implementation Support Unit (ISU)* for the CCW. As usual much attention was devoted to compliance with the Convention and questions concerning participation at meetings and extending the number of states parties.

At the 3rd *Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V (P – V) to the CCW on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)*, held on 9-10 November 2009 in Geneva, discussions concerned cooperation and requests for assistance from the states parties, national reports and electronic forms, assistance to ERW victims, removing ERW and general preventative measures.

At the 11th *conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II (AP – II) to the CCW on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps, and Other Devices*, held on 11 November 2009 in Geneva, discussions concerned the universality of AP – II, improvised explosive devices and the status of AP – II. At all meetings of the states parties to the CCW, the Czech delegation was led by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Ambassador T. Husák

Small arms and light weapons

In 2009, the Czech Republic supported the implementation of the *UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects*, adopted in 2001 (*UN Programme of Action*) and the requirements contained in the UN document *International Instrument to enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument)*.

In 2008, the Czech Republic made a voluntary contribution of CZK 1.8 million to support the work of the *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)*. In 2009, the contribution was used to hold a UNODA seminar on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument for West African states parties. The seminar was held on 14-18 September 2009 in the Czech Republic.

In 2009, the Czech Republic presented national information in line with the *Council of the European Union's Joint Action on the European Union's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons (Council Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP)*.

Wassenaar Arrangement

On 2-3 December 2009, the annual plenary meeting of the *Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies (WA)* was held in Vienna. The plenary meeting adopted documents from meetings of the WA General Working Group in May and October 2009, and as in 2008 its agenda was extended to include a discussion of the destabilising accumulation of weapons in conflict zones and exchanges of opinion on the content of the guidelines on re-export and licensed manufacture. The Czech delegation was headed by J. Svoboda from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

10. The Czech Republic in the fight against international terrorism

In 2009, terrorism was again a fundamental security risk to the world, alongside organised crime, ethnic, religious and social conflicts, the integration of immigrants and economic and ecological risks.

In 2009, the Czech Republic was again an active member of the international anti-terrorism coalition and was involved in international efforts to combat terrorism. That remained an important priority for Czech foreign policy, and the degree of the country's preparedness for a possible terrorist attack, either within the Czech Republic or against its interests abroad, corresponded to the country's geostrategic location and the level of its involvement in the global fight against terrorism. In 2009, that fight was an important theme in Czech bilateral and international relations, and was discussed by representatives of the Czech Republic on visits abroad and at meetings of international organisations. At the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic attended meetings of the COTER and TWG counter-terrorist working groups.

Under the Czech Presidency in the first half of 2009, the European Union continued a number of initiatives started during earlier presidencies, mainly concerning assistance for Pakistan and the Sahel countries in the fight against terrorism. In April 2009, there was a mission to Pakistan by the European Commission and Presidency with a number of other member states, accompanied by representatives of the Czech Republic, to identify areas for European Union assistance. The results of the mission and the conclusions from discussions in COTER were reflected in the conclusions of the first ever European Union – Pakistan summit.

The Czech Presidency also alerted to other countries that should be a priority for the European Union for cooperation and technical assistance in the fight against terrorism. This mainly concerned the countries of the Western Balkans and Yemen, with which the European Union opened a dialogue on cooperation in the fight against terrorism during the Czech Presidency. In May 2009, a political dialogue was held in the Troika format, aimed at identifying and defining areas for possible future cooperation.

Under the leadership of the Czech Presidency, there were also a number of meetings for political dialogue at expert level on the fight against terrorism between the European Union and third countries (Russia – Troika in February in Brussels; Egypt – Troika in March in Brussels; Canada – Troika in April in Brussels; GCC – Workshop on financing terrorism, in May; USA – Troika in May in Brussels; Workshop on financing terrorism in Prague; Troika on financing terrorism in Prague; India – Troika in June in Delhi).

Terrorism was also discussed in other formats for political dialogue (e.g. the Association Councils and meetings between high-level state officials). In this view the master messages were calibrated for the aforementioned talks with specific countries and they were also updated during the Czech Presidency.

The Czech Presidency was compelled to examine an entirely new issue, the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo. The European Union welcomed the decision by the President of the United States to close Guantanamo and opened a debate on the possible involvement of the European Union and its member states in the relocation of detainees cleared for release. The matter was also discussed at an informal summit between the European Union and the United States in April 2009 in Prague, where the European Union was officially approached by President Obama to request assistance. Despite pronounced differences of opinion between some member states, the Presidency was able to find a consensus on the matter, which was confirmed by the adopting of a joint coordinated approach to assist the United States in the closure of Guantanamo. The European Union and the United States subsequently adopted a joint declaration on the closure of Guantanamo.

In October 2009, there was an expert mission from the European Commission, supported by experts from a number of member countries, including the Czech Republic, to Yemen, where it identified areas for potential cooperation and assistance from the European Union in the fight against terrorism.

In the community law dimension of the fight against terrorism, the Czech Republic contributed to the drafting and backing of amendments of European Union regulations adopted in 2009 (e.g. the UN Security Council sanctions regime under Resolution 1267, which the European Union has implemented in Council Regulation 881/2002; a review of the European Union's autonomous sanctions lists). In the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Finance continued to implement those regulations.

The office of the government agent for representing the Czech Republic before the Court of Justice of the European Union monitored the court's decisions in cases concerning the inclusion of persons and organisations on sanctions lists by the European Union. In view of the geopolitical and security situation in the Czech Republic, the government did not consider it necessary to enter into those proceedings and present written statements in 2009. 2009 was a crucial year for the use of community law instruments in the fight against terrorism. If the mechanisms introduced at the legal and factual levels in 2009 can stand up before the Court of Justice of the European Union, the court will cease to annul antiterrorist measures by the Council of the European Union due to formal procedural errors and there will be an opportunity for a qualitatively new phase in the European Union's fight against terrorism, in which the protection of human rights and the protection of public safety will not be as opposed as they were again in 2009.

The Czech Republic continued to share intelligence on terrorism with other NATO member states and extended cooperation with them in counter-terrorist operations and building capabilities for the fight against terrorism. The Czech Republic focused on the fight against terrorism not only in the context of NATO operations (KFOR, ISAF), but also through activities related to developing the capabilities of the NATO Multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion and its ongoing active involvement in *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan.

Under the UN, the Czech Republic contributed to ongoing talks on the draft *Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism*, aimed at bridging the gaps between the existing sectoral international counter-terrorism conventions. In a resolution from 17 December 1996, the UN General Assembly entrusted the elaboration of the General Convention to an ad hoc committee, which met at the turn of June and July 2009. Discussions then continued in October 2009 in a working group of the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly.

In 2009, cooperation was extended between the operations centres of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, as well as greater cooperation with the European Union's *Joint Situation Centre (SitCen)* and other member states. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs operations centre played a key role by collecting and reviewing information, and during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European

Union it acted as a liaison point for communications with SitCen. During the Presidency, the Czech Republic was the coordinator for crisis resolution at central and local level in the event of crisis situations affecting multiple member states, and there were a number of situations requiring a joint response, e.g. the conflict in Gaza at the beginning of the year, when the Czech Presidency and the European Commission Delegation coordinated the evacuation of European Union citizens from Gaza, or the worsening security situation owing to the political crisis in Madagascar.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid systematic attention to the Czech Republic's diplomatic missions. Within the approved financial limit for 2009, there were improvements in security measures, both for passive protection such as electronic, mechanical or construction barriers, and for active protection such as security guards for the Ministry's buildings in the Czech Republic and abroad.

In 2009, gradual improvements were made to the system for informing Czech citizens abroad via SMS messages. An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vodafone Czech Republic, and an agreement was drafted with T-Mobile Czech Republic. In June 2009, the system for voluntary registration for Czech citizens abroad was launched. When staying abroad, Czech nationals can register on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website to be alerted by SMS messages in the event of extraordinary situations.

Many of the organisational, technical, scientific and research counter-terrorism measures applied by the Czech Republic in 2009 were above the usual standard when compared with other European Union member states. That particularly concerned the crisis management system and the *Integrated Emergency System*, including prevention and preparedness for the consequences of a terrorist attack involving chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear materials.

That part of preventing terrorism that comes under the intelligence services was also significant. One of the key preconditions for success in the fight against terrorism is the intelligence services' ability to gather information on terrorist organisations, their financing, activities and planned attacks, in good time. The intelligence services played a key role in gathering and reviewing information. The *Joint Intelligence Group of the Committee on Intelligence* regularly coordinated different departments in the fight against terrorism.

In 2009, the fourth update to the *National Action Plan to Combat Terrorism for the period 2007-2009* was implemented. This strategic document contained a set of measures and tasks to increase the Czech Republic's ability to deal with terrorist threats. The plan included improving communication and cooperation between the state's security forces, protecting the populace and infrastructure, preventative measures against radicalisation and the line for Czech foreign policy to take in the fight against terrorism. In October 2009, the National Action Plan was reviewed and used to elaborate the draft *Strategy for the Fight against Terrorism for 2010-2012*.

The Czech Republic's contribution in 2009 to the activities of the relevant international organisations of which it is a member and that work on the fight against terrorism can be regarded as significant and comprehensive. Cooperation between members of the Czech security community and their counterparts abroad, especially in European Union and NATO member states, was of a corresponding standard.

11. Transformation policy and cooperation

Transformation policy is an approach applied in Czech foreign policy that brings together foreign policy tools that can be used to influence the state of human rights and democracy in the world. Transformation policy is designed to motivate political processes leading towards long-term stability and prosperity and to help support human rights defenders and emancipate civil society as a key actor in sustainable democratic change. The financial instrument for transformation policy is the *Transformation Cooperation Programme*, designed to support projects abroad by Czech non-governmental organisations and institutions (under state grant policy). Projects are always implemented in collaboration with civil society and organisations in the target countries. The knowledge gained from long-term activities in those countries is a valuable source of information when designing foreign policy. The Czech Republic's work to promote democracy and human rights enhances its image as an active advocate of respect for human rights and support for democracy.

Transformation Cooperation Programme

The *Transformation Cooperation Programme (TRANSITION)* complements the Czech Republic's system for foreign development cooperation. However, it is a separate part of policy for countries in transition and undemocratic regimes. Cooperation is aimed at helping to ensure that the changes underway or potentially forthcoming in those countries will lead to democracy and the rule of law, rather than chaos, conflict and destabilisation. Transformation cooperation focuses on creating and strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil society and good governance. Implementation is mainly through education projects and by disseminating information, opinions and experience concerning non-violent opposition to totalitarianism and the transformation process the Czech Republic underwent in the 1990s. Transformation cooperation is characterised by systematic cooperation and support for civil society groups and non-governmental organisations, while contact with the state authorities in the recipient countries may be deliberately ruled out.

In 2009, the Transformation Cooperation Programme was again focused on countries of priority interest for Czech foreign policy where Czech experience can be transferred and there is a tradition of bilateral contacts (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iraq,

Kosovo, Cuba, Moldova, Myanmar/Burma, Serbia and Ukraine). In 2009, there were a number of changes in the Transformation Cooperation Programme that contributed to the better use of funds and better results in the target countries. Among the main innovations were the introduction of the option of submitting multiyear projects (for as many as three years), reducing support for study grants and the option of co-financing projects supported by the European Union, the UN and other major donors.

In total, the Transformation Cooperation Programme financed 47 projects by Czech non-governmental organisations and institutions, implemented in collaboration with their partners in the target countries, as well as separate activities by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that were mainly implemented via the Czech Republic's diplomatic missions. Outside the priority countries there were some one-off activities for other countries in Asia and the Middle East. Many projects involving Czech organisations are multilateral or international. The Transformation Cooperation Programme emphasises coordination with other governmental and non-governmental support providers and also reflects trends in European Union policy on the countries concerned. In total, approximately CZK 48.6 million was spent on projects, grants and transformation cooperation activities in 2009.

Cooperation with civil society on policy to support human rights and democracy

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs regards close cooperation with non-profit organisations and civil society as crucial for building democracy in third countries and for designing policy to support democracy and human rights. The expertise of civil society in the target countries is also crucial for setting objectives and the evaluation of the Transformation Cooperation Programme. In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the creation of the *Association of Czech non-governmental organisations working to foster democratisation and to support civil society and human rights around the world (DEMAS)*, a parallel to the *Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS)*.

In 2009, DEMAS, with financial backing from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, worked on the following key objectives: presenting the theme of support for democracy and human rights to Czech citizens and public institutions, establishing contacts between Czech and foreign non-governmental organisations, and contributing to a national debate and consensus on the significance of supporting democracy and human rights in Czech and

European foreign policy. At present, DEMAS has 11 member organisations, the majority of which are long-term recipients of support from the Transformation Cooperation Programme. In DEMAS the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs has gained a natural partner for discussion and cooperation that particularly proved its worth during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. DEMAS worked on preparations for an international conference in March, *Building Consensus about EU Policies on Democracy Support*, which brought together 150 leading experts, mostly from abroad, on European Union policy and support for democracy and human rights. At the inaugural Eastern Partnership summit in May, DEMAS hosted a round table focusing on current developments in Moldova, and during the year it organised discussions on e.g. the situation in Russia. Representatives of the platform took part in a number of internal themed debates with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thanks to cooperation with the *European Partnership for Democracy (EPD)*, foundation representatives of DEMAS member organisations had an opportunity to make a study visit to Brussels and establish closer cooperation with partner organisations in the European Union.

European Union election observation missions

European Union election observation missions are an instrument for European Union policy to support human rights and democracy around the world. European Union observation missions indirectly strengthen democratic institutions and their work, and they contribute to building confidence in election mechanisms among citizens and help avoid election fraud and potential post-election violence. European Union election observation missions effectively complement OSCE election observation missions. In their final reports, the missions make recommendations to improve election legislation and the entire election process. In 2009, the CRC took part in election observation missions to Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Lebanon, Ecuador, Malawi, Bolivia and El Salvador. It sent a number of short-term observers to Ecuador, Lebanon and El Salvador, and three long-term observers to Afghanistan for the presidential elections. The Czech Republic cooperated with the European Commission in appraising the election missions and supported – as the presiding country of the European Union – the better use of the final recommendations by those missions in European Union policy on the countries in question.

Projects implemented in 2009

Myanmar/Burma

People in Need – projects in Burma

The project's objective is to provide direct support to political prisoners, independent journalists, civic groups and all democratic activists in Myanmar/Burma and on the Thai-Burmese border, and to win international support for the democracy movement in Myanmar/Burma.

People in Need – Support for civil society organisations working to safeguard human rights in Burma

This is a two-year project funded by the *European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)* with co-financing from TRANSITION. The project works to support Burmese human rights organisations and improve the conditions for its future work.

Burma Centre Prague – an Indian base for the transformation of Burma

This three-year project is developing the civil society structures in India and on the Indian-Burmese border that are required for systematic support for Myanmar/Burma's transition to democracy. Under the project, a non-governmental organisation, the *Burma Centre Delhi (BCD)*, will be registered to work as a liaison point for activities and funding aimed at safeguarding human rights and the democratisation of Burma.

FAMU – Myanmar Moving Image Centre and FAMU III projects for Burma

This project continues earlier work by extending the activities of the *Myanmar Moving Image Centre (MMIC)*. In 2009, the specific outputs were: workshops covering preparations for more demanding film and video projects and their professional finalisation; support and development for the work of a newly-leased presentation venue (the *New Zero Group* gallery) as an independent local centre for alternative art; adding new works to the MMIC library and video library; extending its technical facilities; tuition fees and grants for two Burmese students in Prague.

In addition, last year the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly supported the work of the *Yangon Film School* and the independent press in Myanmar/Burma.

Belarus

Civic Belarus: Support for “European Radio for Belarus”

In 2009, the Czech Republic continued to support the international project *European Radio for Belarus (ERB)*, based in Warsaw. ERB has broadcast since 2005 and its main objective is to appeal to young people aged 15-35, including those not interested in politics, by presenting objective news on the European Union and Belarus and good music. The station’s management and staff are journalists from Belarus. In 2009, the ERB finally received official accreditation from the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work in Belarus. Alongside the Czech Republic other donors are the governments of the United States, the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland and the European Commission (via the EIDHR).

Civic Belarus: Support for civil society in Belarus, development of the Human Rights House in Vilnius

This project supports Belarusian non-governmental organisations and cooperation with their Czech counterparts. Group and individual study visits to the Czech Republic were organised for representatives of the Belarusian non-governmental sector, as well as visits by Czech instructors to the *Human Rights School in Vilnius*. The *Human Rights House (HRH)* is part of a network established by the Norwegian *Human Rights House Foundation*. The HRH in Vilnius provides facilities for Belarusian organisations, especially those concerned with safeguarding and promoting human rights. The Czech Republic has been one of this project’s international partners since 2005.

Association for International Affairs: Civic Alternative for Belarusian Schools

This project draws on the previous years of the *European Alternative for Belarusian Schools* project. In 2009, activities focused on improving the teaching of civics at primary and secondary schools in Belarus. The project also aims to present Czech experience in alternative forms of education, teaching for active citizenship and an understanding of human rights. Representatives of the Belarusian Education Ministry and the Advanced Teacher Training Institute were brought into the project.

People in Need: Improving the effectiveness of the work of non-governmental organisations in Belarus and their influence on the public

This comprehensive project draws on *People in Need's* long-term work in Belarus and covers the following activities: material and moral support for persons suffering political persecution; strengthening the capacities of small and regional non-governmental organisations through microgrants; study visits to the Czech Republic; raising awareness of the situation in Belarus (e.g. through the *One World* documentary film festival). *People in Need* also actively contributes to international monitoring of the human rights situation in Belarus and publishes monthly surveys of events in the country.

Archdiocesan Charity Prague: Education for Belarusian students at selected universities in the Czech Republic

Under this long-term project, ten young Belarusians are studying at selected universities in the Czech Republic. During their studies the project organiser meets the students' needs and involves them in its volunteer work.

Georgia

Agora Central Europe – Developing civil society and its role in public life in Georgia

The project's objective was to support civic participation in five selected municipalities in Georgia. It focused on enhancing the capacities of local non-governmental and non-profit organisations and civic initiatives, and supporting their cooperation with the local authorities. An important part of the project was working with the general public and articulating its interests. Under that work microgrants were given to projects that the public considered priorities. Throughout the project guidance was given to the leadership of both target groups. *People in Need* also worked on the project.

Transparency International – Czech Republic: Implementation of an Anticorruption Legal Advice Centre in Georgia

The project's objective was to develop the expertise of the new anticorruption advice centre in Georgia, and to change the perception of corruption in society and in state and public structures. The centre provides legal advice for citizens. The Georgian branch of Transparency International was a partner for this project.

Transitions Online – Increasing pluralism in the media and promoting civic activities through new media

The project's objective is to increase the pluralism of the media and the number of civic activities in Georgia, especially the work of lesser known groups, via publishing on the internet, blogging and other new media techniques.

Iraq

People in Need: Transformation of Iraqi society – support for civic initiatives and local authorities and promoting cooperation between them

Since 2004, this long-term project has used a wide range of activities – study visits, courses, training, direct support – to contribute to the development of civil society and its role in the transformation and democratisation of Southern Iraq. In 2009, the project focused on further training for local and regional governments and strengthening the capacities of local non-profit organisations to implement their own projects. There was a series of training courses in Basrah, Missan and Thi-Qar. About half of the training courses were aimed at enhancing the work of newly elected representatives from selected provincial authorities. Further training will focus on the staff of selected local authorities, and for 2009 the project organiser selected the Directorate of Health. During the year English and Arabic content on the website www.ngo-iraq.org was regularly updated, with [new information published](#).

Kosovo

Europeum – Institute for European Policy: Kosovo Debate on European Issues: forming and promoting positions on politicians and the state administration

The project's main aim was to stimulate expert and public discussion in the non-governmental sector on the relevant issues in Kosovan society (education, the rule of law, social problems) by establishing expert groups on those topics among Kosovan non-governmental organisations.

Cuba

People in Need – Support for civil society in Cuba

The project continues on earlier work, including providing direct support for civil society in Cuba (journalists, lawyers, the families of political prisoners and the civic opposition). It also focuses on raising awareness about the situation in the country by providing objective information and analyses.

Libri Prohibiti – Support for the movement for independent Cuban libraries

This project provides material and moral support for independent libraries in Cuba by delivering books, technical equipment and contacts abroad. It is also linked with a literature competition for unofficial Cuban authors. It also provides information on the situation in Cuba.

Moldova

People in Need – Strengthening Civil Society IV – Moldova/Transnistria

The project continued to support the development of non-profit organisations in Transnistria and extending their range of activities. English teaching was provided with the aim of reducing the region's isolation and the dominance of Russian-language media and strengthening prospects for cooperation with foreign organisations and donors.

Caritas Czech Republic – Developing capacities and supporting civic participation in the Cahul region, Moldova

The project's objective was to support cooperation between the local authorities and non-profit organisations in the Cahul region of Southern Moldova. Representatives of local authorities and non-governmental organisations identified their common interests in community projects. The project's activities were complemented by training for young people and involving them in solving local problems by means of study visits to the relevant local authorities and their subsequent involvement in implementing the projects supported. Projects will be selected from the proposal submitted in the second year of the project's implementation (2010) and funded through micro grants.

Agora Central Europe – Support for the democratisation of municipal administration in Moldova

The project aimed to strengthen civic participation among the inhabitants of selected Moldovan municipalities where a pro-reform agenda was established following the 2008 local elections. By actively involving the general public in municipal decision-making the project contributed to improving local administration and its work with the public. Municipal representatives were trained in fundraising, project management and other fields to enable them to raise funds from various sources for their planned activities. People in Need also worked on this project.

Serbia and the Western Balkans

Transitions Online – Investigating pollution – Balkans 2009

The project's objective was to increase the professionalism of journalists interested in the environment, while other target groups were environmental non-governmental organisations and citizens in the three recipient countries (Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo).

Transition Online – EU reporting – Improving the news on European integration and reform

This project is an on-going training cycle for journalists from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ADRA – Support for cross-sector cooperation and best practice in preventing domestic violence

The project focused on strengthening capacities and cooperation between Serbian non-governmental and non-profit organisations and the state authorities in the prevention of domestic violence and help for victims. Under the project, there was special training to produce manuals for individual authorities to combat domestic violence, which will improve coordination and cooperation.

VIA Foundation – Transformation cooperation with the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) – phase III; Promoting the development and viability of Serbian non-profit organisations

Both projects continued VIA's earlier work to develop donorship and stable financing for the Serbian non-profit sector. In addition to systematic work with non-governmental and

non-profit organisations, the project is also aimed at transferring experience in corporate social responsibility to the managers of Serbian companies, and more intensive cooperation between the non-profit, private and public sectors.

In 2009, the Transformation Cooperation Programme also financed the purchase of academic literature for the University of Mostar in the Herzegovina region.

Ukraine

People in Need – Easing ethnic tension in Crimea and the inspiration of the Czech transformation and Europe for Ukraine

This project to strengthen local government, non-governmental organisations and the media focused on three main themes: (1) ethnic tension in Crimea; (2) the work of local government and non-governmental organisations in Southern and Eastern Ukraine; (3) the role of investigative journalism there, drawing on an earlier project. As in 2008 the media part of the project was aimed at talented young journalists who took part in another round of the competition by reporting on corruption, the Russian-speaking majority in Crimea, cooperation between local government and the non-governmental sector, etc. The best articles were published.

Association for International Affairs– Civic alternative for schools in Eastern Ukraine

This continuation of work in previous years focused on civics in Eastern Ukraine (specifically in the Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk provinces) and the use of innovative teaching methods.

Centre for the Study of Democracy and Culture – Education institute for democracy and civil society in Eastern Ukraine

The two-year *democracy and civil society* study cycle for 50 students at Kharkiv University covers the issue of building democracy. It is accredited as a life-long learning programme by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

CERGE

Doctoral studies for students from target countries

As part of its transformation cooperation, from in 2005 to 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported a programme of postgraduate studies in macroeconomics and economic transformation at the CERGE Economics Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Charles University for several dozen students from priority countries for transformation cooperation and other countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Balkans and the Southern Caucasus.

During 2009, a number of small one-off projects outside the priority countries were also implemented, e.g. in Zimbabwe, Iran and Afghanistan.

12. Foreign development cooperation

As a member of the European Union and the international community of democratic, economically developed countries, the Czech Republic respects the principle of solidarity between peoples and countries and accepts its share of responsibility in dealing with global problems. One example of that approach is *foreign development cooperation*, which is an integral part of Czech foreign policy. The Czech Republic performs and provides foreign development cooperation on both a bilateral and multilateral basis, in line with international principles and its own interests.

The provision of foreign development cooperation is governed by the principles of partnership, effectiveness and transparency, and its primary objective is to contribute to reducing poverty in less-developed parts of the world through sustainable economic and social development. The Czech Republic fully supports the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* that came out of UN international conferences in the 1990s and were confirmed by UN summits in 2000 and 2005. The provision of foreign development cooperation and humanitarian aid is governed by the *Principles of Foreign Development Cooperation after the Czech Republic's Accession to the European Union*, approved in Czech Government Resolution No. 302 of 31 March 2004 and amended by Resolution No. 1070 of 19 September 2007. The Principles defined cooperation programmes with priority countries as the core of Czech foreign development cooperation in order to strengthen the predictability and effectiveness of Czech foreign development cooperation.

Czech bilateral foreign development cooperation is primarily aimed at the following priority countries: Angola, Zambia, Vietnam, Mongolia, Yemen, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. A second group comprises project countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Cambodia, Ethiopia and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories), and 2009 marked the second year of a three-year government-approved programme of development aid for Georgia. In addition to development cooperation programmes for priority and project countries, there were development projects in other countries and other forms of development activities (e.g. assistance for refugees in the Czech Republic, debt relief and restructuring, etc.).

Total funds for bilateral cooperation in 2009 were CZK 860 million, covering 225 projects. In regional terms, 28% of funds went to Eastern and South-East Europe, 18% to South, South-East and East Asia and 10% to Sub-Saharan Africa. The largest proportion went to Mongolia (22%), Serbia (19%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (15%), followed by Vietnam (14%), Moldova (10%), Angola (9%), Yemen (6%) and Zambia (5%). In terms of sectors the largest proportion went to industrial development (21%), environmental protection (14%) and agriculture (10%).

Funds for university scholarships comprised a significant proportion (approximately 18%). The total figure for the government scholarships programme was originally CZK 151.95 million (approved in Resolution No. 712/2007), but after budget adjustments that was reduced to CZK 143.49 million.

The tradition of providing scholarships to allow students from developing countries to study at public universities dates back to the 1950s, and since then approximately 22 000 government scholarship holders have studied in Czechoslovakia / the Czech Republic. Scholarships are annually offered to students from developing and other needy countries for study at public universities in the Czech Republic (pursuant to Resolution No. 712/2007 of 27 June 2007).

Scholarships are available for bachelor's, master's, post-master's and doctoral study programmes. The government scholarship programme is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, working closely with the Ministry of Health.

During 2009, there were on average 660 government scholarship holders from approximately 75 countries studying at public universities. 185 completed their studies last year, of whom 40 graduated, 63 completed their studies and the payment of scholarships was terminated for 85 students who exceeded the standard duration of studies (those students have mostly continued their studies at their own expense).

On the basis of Resolution No. 712 of 27 June 2007, the Czech Republic offered a total of 130 scholarship places for the 2009/2010 academic year (of which 60 were for post-master's and doctoral study programmes in English) to 43 developing and needy countries

and UNESCO. There were 211 nominations for those places, with 130 scholarships subsequently awarded. 113 students began their studies, of which 88 studied programmes taught in Czech (59 studied bachelor's study programmes, 15 master's study programmes, nine post-master's study programmes and five doctoral study programmes). 25 students studied post-master's programmes taught in English. Four students were accepted under the scholarship quota for UNESCO, of whom one commenced studies.

Under an amendment of Resolution No. 712/2007 on Government Scholarships, new rules have been prepared for education for students from developing countries.

In 2009, the reform and enhancement of the Czech foreign development assistance programme continued, based on previous practice (this comes out of the *Transformation of the Czech Republic's Development Cooperation System* proposal from 19 September 2007) and responding to new experience (e.g. the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the new reality and trends (taking account of the economic crisis)).

In that context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs put forward a draft act on foreign development cooperation and humanitarian aid abroad and on the amendment of certain acts.

Work also began on a conception for foreign development cooperation in the future, which will replace the present document from 2002. The new conception takes into account the changes in the foreign policy and economic contexts and the Czech Republic's new commitments in the European Union and other multilateral forums, and general trends in development policy. In October 2009, a working group was set up under the Council for Foreign Development Cooperation, which is working on a new text under the guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs increased its emphasis on involving the non-governmental sector and the public in development cooperation. During the year, under the guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *Council for Foreign Development Cooperation* developed its work; the council is an advisory and coordination body that discusses foreign development cooperation issues, bringing together approximately 40 representatives of Czech government donor departments, platforms for non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The Council met four times. Its key contribution was to increase transparency, share information and improve the coordination of participants'

standpoints. The main themes were the Czech Presidency of the European Union and information on the members' present and planned projects.

In 2009, work began on a new system for evaluating development projects, which will in future contribute to their greater effectiveness and transparency.

In 2009, the *Czech Development Agency (CDA)* took over the coordination of new development projects (the relevant ministries will remain responsible for longer-term projects until the end of 2010). It operated in Ethiopia, Angola, Zambia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Palestine and Georgia and had expenditure of approximately CZK 115 million on individual projects. In 2008-2009, the CDA presided over the *Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation* and in May 2009 it hosted its annual meeting.

The 12th annual *Summer School of Development Aid and Cooperation* was held in collaboration with Palacký University in Olomouc. In addition to bilateral development cooperation, in 2009 the Czech Republic also provided humanitarian aid, transformation aid and multilateral development aid through the European Union budget, UN agencies and international financial institutions (other chapters of this report discuss these forms of foreign development cooperation).

Each year the government approves a plan for bilateral foreign development cooperation for the following year and assesses foreign development cooperation for the preceding year. Government Resolution No. 1134 of 31 August 2009 approved the foreign development cooperation plan for 2010 and the medium-term outlook for its financing up to 2012.

[The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) belongs to the main sources of information on foreign development cooperation (with an existing [English version](#)).

13. Humanitarian aid

In 2009, the Czech Republic further extended its approach to providing humanitarian aid in line with the principles of *Good Humanitarian Donorship*. The first *Operational Strategy for the Provision of Humanitarian Aid by the Czech Republic* was elaborated, allowing greater predictability in financing humanitarian crises and a more comprehensive evaluation of humanitarian needs and challenges. At the end of the year, there was a formulation of the fundamental principles for evaluating humanitarian work in line with GHD as part of an overall review of the evaluation of Czech foreign development cooperation.

In line with the strategy adopted, the first subsidy selection procedure was held for humanitarian aid projects in countries with complex humanitarian crises (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Horn of Africa, Myanmar/Burma, and Sri Lanka). Using the procedure, almost CZK 20 million went to support eight projects by six non-governmental organisations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (three projects), Burma (two projects), Sri Lanka, Kenya and Somalia. That approach increased transparency, targeting and the control of humanitarian financing.

The Operational Strategy was also used during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, when the Czech Republic was the first country to preside over the *Council of the European Union Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)*. The Czech Republic subsequently made use of that experience in its involvement in assessing humanitarian proposals by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) as part of comitology.

In 2009, the budget item for humanitarian aid was moved from general treasury administration to the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CZK 85 million was allocated for humanitarian aid in 2009.

During the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic, by virtue of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, had to respond actively to current humanitarian crises resulting from violent conflicts that were the subject of European Union action; that primarily

involved the conflicts in Gaza, Somalia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. During 2009, the Czech Republic allocated CZK 34 million (40% of the humanitarian aid budget) to them.

The deployment of the humanitarian budget in 2009 was affected by the economic and financial crisis, and primarily by reductions in voluntary contributions owing to budget cuts for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and negative developments in the koruna exchange rate. Voluntary contributions were not paid to CERF, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, but that shortage was compensated by a contribution of CZK 17.5 million for humanitarian projects.

In contrast with previous years, there were no major natural disasters, especially in the first half of 2009, and therefore no material assistance was provided in 2009. In the autumn, natural disasters in South-East Asia and Central America and the flu epidemic in Ukraine required financial humanitarian aid from the Czech Republic at a total of CZK 11 million.

By region, CZK 35 million was donated to Asia (of which CZK 17 million went to Afghanistan and Pakistan), CZK 28 million to Africa and CZK 15 million to the Middle East, specifically Gaza. Latin America received CZK 3.5 million to cope with the consequences of natural disasters, and a single donation was made in Europe: CZK 850 000 for Ukraine. There was a regionally non-specific contribution of CZK 2.5 million to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which finances forgotten crises and acute needs.

Thanks in part to the subsidy selection procedure, the role of Czech and foreign non-governmental organisations was significantly greater in 2009. ADRA, Archdiocesan Charity Prague, People in Need, Humanist Centre Narovinu, Caritas Czech Republic, Médecins Sans Frontières, Caritas Jerusalem, HALO Trust Afghanistan, MERCY Malaysia, Iglesia Morava (a Moravian Church in Nicaragua) and the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) provided humanitarian aid using funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a total value of CZK 35 million. UN funds and agencies received CZK 32.5 million, and the international and national Red Cross received CZK 5.5 million. Via the Czech Republic's diplomatic missions quick impact projects were implemented in Afghanistan and aid was provided to the state of Amazonas in Brazil.

Under the *Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)* and the related ad hoc *Flash Appeals*, the Czech Republic provided CZK 40 million to meet needs in Somalia, Uganda, Gaza, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and El Salvador. An additional CZK 14.5 million went to

countries included in CAP (Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, and Zimbabwe) but outside the appeals organisations.

By devising an operational strategy, taking account of international priorities and carefully selecting aid providers, in 2009 the Czech Republic increased its alignment with the internationally recognised standards for the provision of humanitarian aid.

II. THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. The Czech Republic's relations with central European countries

Relations with central European countries, most of which are the Czech Republic's neighbours, continued to be one of the priorities of Czech foreign policy in 2009. Relations with central European partners encompassed bilateral, regional, European, transatlantic and other themes.

In keeping with tradition, the Federal Republic of Germany remained a key partner. In the first half of 2009 Germany proved to be a strategic ally in the course of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union; Germany also played a significant role in the economic and trade field. The elections to the Bundestag and the establishment of contacts with the new federal government were an important milestone in the second half of the year. The initial visit to Prague by the new German foreign minister G. Westerwelle at the start of December 2009 was an impulse for strengthening dialogue between the Czech Republic and Germany on foreign-policy questions.

As regards another important neighbour, the Republic of Poland, an important event at the beginning of 2009 was the start of work of the *Czech-Polish Forum*, which had been founded by a decision of the foreign ministers of the Czech Republic and Poland in November 2008. In the very first year of its existence, the Forum proved to be an effective tool for supporting joint Czech-Polish projects and for stimulating debate on possible ways to deepen Czech-Polish cooperation in strategic areas. In foreign policy questions, dialogue on the issues of Eastern Europe (*Eastern Partnership*), energy and security, for example, was important for the Czech Republic's relations with Poland.

The Slovak Republic remained a close partner and ally of the Czech Republic in 2009. The high intensity of contacts at all levels continued. Slovakia supported the Czech Republic during its presidency of the Council of the European Union. Among other areas of cooperation, the two countries particularly focused on energy in 2009.

As far as Austria is concerned, one important event in 2009 was the meeting of the two countries' foreign ministers near the common border in September 2009, during which a decision was made to establish a *Permanent Conference of Czech and Austrian Historians on Shared Cultural Heritage*.

In keeping with tradition, the Republic of Hungary was treated by Czech foreign policy in 2009 as a neighbour and an important regional partner in the *Visegrad Group*. The regularity and intensity of communication between the two countries' top-level representatives was maintained.

Relations with Slovenia in 2009 remained at the traditional very high level. A significant moment of mutual relations in the field of foreign policy was the visit to Prague undertaken by Slovenian foreign minister S. Žbogar in the course of the Czech presidency. The solution of the maritime border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia was among the questions discussed during the visit.

2009 was a historical milestone in the Czech Republic's relations with Lichtenstein: in September, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. The first official visit to the Czech Republic by the foreign minister of the Principality of Liechtenstein took place, and a *Memorandum on Future Cooperation* was signed during the visit. The concern of both sides is the broader development of relations, whose main potential lies in finance, the economic field, tourism, culture and education.

Problem-free bilateral relations with Switzerland enabled the Czech Republic to pay attention particularly to questions of deepening cooperation between this country and the European Union.

Regional cooperation is an important component of relations in central Europe. The intensity of regional cooperation remained high in 2009, most notably within the *Visegrad Group*; activities within the framework of the *Regional Partnership* also went ahead.

AUSTRIA

(Republic of Austria)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 5 June 2009 – working meeting in Vienna between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Federal Minister for European and International Affairs M. Spindelegger;
- 24 August 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer.

Visits by representatives of Austria

- 9 January 2009 – official visit by Federal Minister for European and International Affairs M. Spindelegger;
- 29 January 2009 – working visit by Federal Chancellor W. Faymann;
- 14-15 May 2009 – official visit by Federal President H. Fischer;
- 9 September 2009 – cross-border meeting in Mikulov and Laa an der Thaya between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Federal Minister for European and International Affairs M. Spindelegger;
- 14 October 2009 – meeting in Šumava between President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka and President of the Federal Council E. Preiner.

Economic relations

Austria has for long been one of the Czech Republic's important trade and economic partners. In 2009, it was the Czech Republic's sixth biggest export market and the eighth biggest exporter to the Czech Republic. After the Netherlands and Germany, Austria has traditionally been the third biggest investor in the Czech Republic. In 2009, the Czech Republic exported goods worth CZK 100.4 billion to Austria and imported goods worth CZK 72.4 billion.

Active perfecting operations and re-exports play a major role in mutual trade, so a number of items feature among the principal commodities on the part of both exports and imports.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automobiles and automobile parts, electrical conductors, coal and coke, computer equipment, electrical circuit breakers and distribution systems, oil derivatives, wood, metallurgical products, electricity, tyres *et al.*

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: oil derivatives, automatic gambling machines, electrical components and apparatus, pork, metallurgical products, electrical conductors, paper, plastic products, pharmaceuticals, lorries and trailers, automobile parts, *et al.*

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Federal Government of the Republic of Austria on the Connection of Czech High-speed Road R 52 and Austrian Motorway A 5 at the Czech-Austrian State Borders, 23 January 2009;
- Memorandum on the Establishment of a *Permanent Conference of Czech and Austrian Historians on Shared Cultural Heritage*, Mikulov, 9 September 2009;
- Agreement on Transboundary Expansion of Spruce Bark Beetle in Šumava between the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of the Republic of Austria, 13 October 2009.

Cultural relations

Cultural events in 2009 were closely linked to the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain. There was considerable interest in this anniversary on the Austrian side. This is borne out by the numerous cultural and political events that were held under the patronage of the Austrian foreign ministry and were co-organised by embassies of other central European countries, including the Czech Republic. The European congress entitled *Divided/United 1989-2009: Start into a New Europe*, held on 28-29 May 2009 in Hofburg, Vienna, can be regarded as the culmination of this project, which ran for the whole of last year.

The Czech Centre in Vienna in cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic commemorated the anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain with a series of interconnected documentary films, exhibitions and round tables held under the title *1989-2009: 20 Years after the Velvet Revolution*. Other significant cultural events included a grand exhibition of

works by A. Mucha in the Vienna Belvedere; a *Concert for Europe* organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Vienna on the occasion of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union; an exhibition of previously unknown photographs from the first world war which later enjoyed great success at Prague Castle; the staging of a Czech-Austria version of the opera *The Bartered Bride* to open the *OpernAir* opera festival in Gars am Kamp; an exhibition about architect J. Hlávka, which was inaugurated during a ceremonial evening marking the 140th anniversary of the opening of the Vienna State Opera; the traditional *Central European Theatre Carousel* festival staged in the Czech-Austrian Brett Theatre; the latest year of Czech-Austrian exhibitions at Riegersburg castle, this time devoted to art from the time of the Cold War; and an exhibition entitled *The Arrival of Art in Bohemia*, featuring works from the Rudolphine art collections of the Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna.

An initiative of the *Central European Cultural Platform* on the same theme of *20 Years after the Fall of the Iron Curtain* took place on 19-21 June 2009. The Czech side was represented by a project devised by the public benefit company Opona under the name *Totalitarian Circus*, which was a reminder and warning about communist totalitarianism and simultaneously a celebration of the opportunities afforded by present-day life in the free world. The event was staged in Slavonice in the Czech Republic and in the town of Weitra in Austria.

In addition, the Lower Austria state exhibition ran from April to November 2009. It was organised by the federal state of Lower Austria, the Vysočina region, the town of Horn, the Raabs region and the town of Telč. Under the title of *Austria, Czech Republic – In the Heart of Europe*, the individual expositions in the aforementioned towns showcased shared events in the two countries' histories. Attention was paid to various topics in each of the towns the exhibition was held in. The exhibition, which was particularly successful in Austria, received over 400,000 visitors.

GERMANY

(Federal Republic of Germany)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 25 January 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg attended a podium discussion in Berlin;
- 6-8 February 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg attended a security conference in Munich;
- 19 February 2009 – President V. Klaus attended a podium discussion in Bochum;
- 22 February 2009 – working visit to Berlin by Prime Minister M. Topolánek;
- 17-18 March 2009 – working visit to Berlin by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg;
- 3-4 April 2009 – President V. Klaus, Prime Minister M. Topolánek and Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg attended the NATO summit in Strasbourg and Baden-Baden;
- 9-10 May 2009 – visit to Freiburg by President V. Klaus to receive the International Prize of the Friedrich August von Hayek Foundation;
- 11 May 2009 – working visit to Berlin by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 18 May 2009 – visit to Munich by President V. Klaus to receive the Peutingen Gold Medal;
- 9 June 2009 – official visit to Berlin by Prime Minister J. Fischer;
- 16 September 2009 – President V. Klaus attended a podium discussion in Passau;
- 9-10 November 2009 – President V. Klaus and Prime Minister J. Fischer attended the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in Berlin.

Visits by representatives of Germany

- 18 February 2009 – working visit to Prague by Prime Minister of Saxony S. Tillich;
- 1-2 June 2009 – official visit to Prague by Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice-Chancellor F.-W. Steinmeier;
- 30 September 2009 – working visit to Prague by Prime Minister of Saxony S. Tillich;
- 2 December 2009 – official visit to Prague by Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice-Chancellor G. Westerwelle.

Economic relations

Trade relations with Germany have enjoyed a very high level for many years now. Although Germany's share of the Czech Republic's foreign trade has been falling gradually as Czech trade with other European countries has increased, Germany remains the principal trading partner with roughly 30% of the Czech Republic's foreign trade. Czech exports to Germany attained a value of CZK 689.4 billion in 2009 and imports CZK 527.3 billion. Along with the Netherlands, Germany is also the biggest investor in the Czech Republic. A substantial portion of Czech exports to Germany is therefore accounted for by firms with German capital.

The commodity structure of trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Germany again remained essentially unchanged in 2009. Czech exports are dominated by road vehicles, electrical apparatus and industrial machinery. Taken as a whole, machinery and transport equipment makes up over half of Czech exports to Germany.

The commodity structure of German exports to the Czech Republic is very similar to that of Czech exports. Just under half is accounted for by machinery and transport equipment, with road vehicles and electronic apparatus again the strongest categories.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Arrangement between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the State Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of the Free State of Bavaria on Cooperation in the Field of University Education, Munich, 21 April 2009;
- Arrangement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Federal Ministry of Finance of the Federal Republic of Germany on Cooperation in the Fight against Illegal Employment, Unreported Gainful Activity and the Illegal Hiring of Cross-border Workers and the Related Cross-border Abuse of Social Benefits and Non-payment of Insurance, Prague, 28 August 2009.

Cultural relations

The year 2009 was dominated by two principal themes: the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union and the 20th anniversary of the Velvet

Revolution. The symbolic inauguration of the Czech presidency took place on 14 January 2009 with the *Let's Dance Europe* gala ball at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Berlin. That was followed by *ARCHI CZECH*, a Czech architecture festival of unparalleled scope, *Czech Culture Days in Bremen*, an exhibition of *Czech Art Yesterday and Today* at the German foreign ministry and dozens of other significant cultural and presentation events. The closing concert, *Thank You, Czech Republic, Please, Sweden*, held on 30 June 2009 at the Berlin town hall was also a major event.

The 1989 Velvet Revolution was commemorated with a podium discussion of former presidents V. Havel and R. von Weizsäcker on 1 October 2009 and a cultural evening entitled *Czech Velvet Party* on 9 November 2009, both at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Berlin. Other historical events were presented through an exhibition entitled *Some of Us*, dedicated to victims of communist injustice in Czechoslovakia (Berlin, May to August) and a project honouring Sudeten German antifascists entitled *Forgotten Heroes* (Munich, June, and Schönsee, July).

One Czech-German cultural project of note was a touring exhibition of *The Life and Times of Karel Čapek* that toured many places in southern and central Germany. A large exhibition entitled *Alphonse Mucha – Master of Art Nouveau* was staged in Munich at the end of the year. Other events worth mentioning include the 18th year of *Festival Mitte Europa*, the 57th *Europäische Woche* in Passau, the 7th *Prague-Berlin Festival of Czech Culture and Art* and also the biggest presentation of Czech culture in Germany, the autumn *Days of Czech and German Culture* in Dresden, Ústí nad Labem and the Elbe/Labe Euroregion, during which an exhibition about the film *Three Nuts for Cinderella* staged at Moritzburg castle received an extremely large number of visitors. Two new traditions were established - a festival of *Prague Culture in Prague Square* in Berlin organised by the Rainer Maria Rilke Foundation and a music festival entitled *Europe Blues Train* featuring concerts in clubs in Berlin and Prague.

Activities by several dozen cultural associations of various kinds, e.g. *Porta Bohemica* in Bremen and *Pro Arte Vivendi* in Berlin, helped shape the cultural image of the Czech Republic.

HUNGARY

(Republic of Hungary)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 26-27 January 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek: participation at the Nabucco summit in Budapest;
- 16-17 April 2009 – official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence V. Parkanová;
- 5 June 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 26-27 June 2009 – President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka and President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček attended the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain;
- 27 June 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer on the occasion of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain;
- 29-30 July 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 24-25 August 2009 – official visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer;
- 3-4 October 2009 – working visit by Minister of Culture. V. Riedlbauch;
- 10-12 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament.

Visits by representatives of Hungary:

- 25-27 February 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Health of the National Assembly;
- 18-20 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Inter-parliamentary Group of Friends of the Czech Republic and Hungary of the National Assembly.

Economic relations

Hungary has for long been one of the Czech Republic's most important trading partners. Trade exchange decreased as a result of the global economic crisis, however. Exports from the Czech Republic attained a value of CZK 54.5 billion in 2009 and imports CZK 44.5 billion. The Czech Republic has for long maintained a balance of trade surplus with Hungary.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: parts for piston engines, pumps, machinery and apparatus, taps and valves; motor vehicle parts and components; passenger automobiles (Škoda); iron and steel; plastics; fuel and oils; paper, paperboard and cardboard; parts of televisions and transmission and reception devices; organic chemical products; iron and steel products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: telephones, voice transmission and reception devices (Nokia); automobile combustion engines; plastics and plastic products; motor vehicle parts and components; iron and steel; pharmaceuticals; three-wheelers, scooters, buggies and toys; passenger automobiles (Suzuki); monitors and projectors not incorporating television reception; television sets; wires, cables and electrical conductors.

Cultural relations

Czech-Hungarian cultural relations have a long tradition. In 2009, Czech culture was presented at a number of events in Hungary; in the first half of the year many of these events marked the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The events were mainly organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Budapest and the Czech Centre in Budapest. The most significant events are listed below.

- The Czech Republic's participation at the *Budapest Spring Festival*, the most important Hungarian cultural festival, at which the Czech Republic was the guest of honour by virtue of the Czech presidency. The festival, which ran from 20 March to 5 April 2009, featured a representative exhibition of the works of A. Mucha entitled *In Praise of Women* and fourteen other Czech cultural events.
- On 3 October 2009, the premiere of the musical *The Happiness of Ladies* by M. O. Štědroň, L. Málková and J. Tošovský took place in the *Pesti Színház* theatre, attended by Czech culture minister V. Riedlbauch. The musical was performed by a Czech ensemble and directed by L. Málková.
- On 7-8 November 2009, a unique Czech documentary from L. Příbyl's *Forgotten Transports* cycle was screened at the *Verzió* festival in Budapest.

Presentations of the Czech Republic staged in Hungarian regions had a prominent cultural dimension in the form of exhibitions, concerts and film screenings (Czech Days in

Bács-Kiskun county, 15-17 September 2009; Czech Days in the Great Market Hall in Budapest, 17-19 September 2009; Czech Days in Miskolc, 24-29 November 2009).

LIECHTENSTEIN

(Principality of Liechtenstein)

Visits by representatives of Liechtenstein

- 7-8 September 2009 – official visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein A. Frick; diplomatic relations between the two countries were officially established on the occasion of this visit.

Economic relations

Economic and trade relations have to date taken place directly through corporate relations and contracts. Imports in the year under scrutiny attained a value of CZK 304.9 million and exports CZK 204.2 million.

Cultural relations

Cultural relations are not governed by any treaty; cultural exchange takes place directly through cultural institutions in the two countries. As a result of the historical ties between the two regions and contacts already established, it is mainly subjects in the South Moravia region that are active in this field.

POLAND

(Republic of Poland)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28 January 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek;
- 4-5 June 2009 – working visit by President V. Klaus;
- 3 June 2009 – bilateral meeting between prime ministers J. Fischer and D. Tusk in Krakow on the sidelines of the V4 prime ministers summit;
- 30 July 2009 – official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 1 September 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer, who attended an event commemorating the 70th anniversary of the start of the Second World War in Gdansk.

Visits by representatives of Poland

- 8 January 2009 – working visit by President L. Kaczyński.

Economic relations

Poland was the Czech Republic's third biggest trading partner in 2009 with 6.2% of its total foreign trade. Czech exports to Poland attained a value of CZK 124.2 billion and imports CZK 126.8 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: equipment (passenger cars, tractors, machine tools), plastic and rubber products, chemicals, mineral products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: copper wire, coke, chemicals, mineral fuels and lubricants, coal, electricity, furniture, food products, textiles, footwear, live animals, beverages, tobacco.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Treaty between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Poland on the Performance of Geological Work in the Area of the Common State Borders, signed in Prague on 19 August 2008, with entry into force on 26 October 2009;
- Arrangement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Poland on the Establishment and Operational Principles of the Chotěbuz and Kudowa Slone Joint Workplaces, concluded by an exchange of notes, signed in Warsaw on 2 February 2009, with entry into force on 18 February 2009.

Cultural relations

Czech-Polish cultural relations have traditionally been very active. Cultural exchange takes place both on an official level through organisations set up by the culture and foreign ministries and through private subjects and partner institutions and organisations. The Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic supports selected Czech-Polish cooperation projects by awarding non-investment subsidies. The *Polish Institute* in the Czech Republic and the *Czech Centre* in the Polish capital Warsaw help raise awareness of their country's culture. Every year the two organisations offer the Czech and Polish public a number of film,

artistic, musical and literary events. The Czech Centre in Warsaw organised 145 events throughout the territory of Poland in 2009.

As well as cultural activities that have become established traditions (the *On the Border* film festival and the *Without Borders* theatre festival held in Český Těšín and Polish Cieszyn; *Czech-Polish Days of Christian Culture*; *Science Picnic*, a festival popularising science and technology in Warsaw; the two-month 5th *Warsaw Festival of Art Photography*; *Fotofestiwal* in Lodz; *Fotoartfestival* in Bielsko-Biala; the two-month Warsaw film festivals *Hot Summer with Cinema* and *Film Summer Metropolis*), other events in 2009 included *Czech Day* in Warsaw; a series of weekend concerts devoted to the Czech folk scene called *Czech Steamboat*; a film festival in Paczkow; an exhibition entitled *Stage Design for the Plays of Václav Havel*; *Czech Culture Days* in the Polish town of Zelow; *Czech Week* on the national radio station Radio Euro; and *Czech Culture Month* in Szczecin. In November, the Ateneum Theatre in Warsaw staged V. Havel's play *Leaving*. An *International Festival of Student Theatre* was held in Wroclaw, and Poland was visited by writers P. Kohout and J. Gruša. The Polish film academy conferred its *Golden Tape* award on director J. Menzel for his life's work and J. Škvorecký was awarded the *Angelus* international literary award in Poland. One of the most successful exhibitions presented by the Czech Centre was the touring exhibition *Czech Gems*, which received more than a million visitors in over twelve towns.

As part of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism, a conference entitled *Ryszard Siwiec Anniversary* was organised in Dębice as well as several exhibitions (an exhibition of photographs documenting meetings of Charta 77 and the Polish Workers' Defence Committee in the Krkonoše Mountains entitled *Road to Freedom*, an exhibition of documentary photographs called *From the Prague Spring to the Velvet Revolution*, an exhibition of contemporary independent art under the title *Confiscated*, and an exhibition of the history of Czech-Polish solidarity entitled *Legacy with a Human Face*).

As part of the celebrations of B. Martinů year the Czech Centre organised concerts and thematic exhibitions in Wroclaw and Warsaw.

SLOVAKIA

(Republic of Slovakia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 2 April 2009 – working visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček;
- 10 May 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 15 May 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer.
- 15 August 2009 – working visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček;
- 17-18 November 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka and President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček.

Visits by representatives of Slovakia

- 16 January 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister R. Fico;
- 6 February 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Lajčák;
- 9 February 2009 – official visit by President I. Gašparovič;
- 5 May 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister R. Fico;
- 29 May 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister R. Fico;
- 29-30 June 2009 – official visit by President I. Gašparovič;
- 26 October 2009 – working visit by Speaker of the National Council P. Paška;
- 16-17 November 2009 – official visit by Speaker of the National Council P. Paška.

Economic relations

Slovakia has for long been the Czech Republic's second biggest trading partner (after Germany). Exports from the Czech Republic attained a value of CZK 192.1 billion in 2009 and imports CZK 107.7 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: road vehicles, machinery and plant equipment, chemicals, industrial products, electricity, food products, raw materials.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: crude oil, petroleum products and related materials, machinery and plant equipment, chemicals, industrial products, food products.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Treaty between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic on the Maintenance and Repairs of Road Bridge Structures and Sections of Roads on the Czech-Slovak State Borders, Bratislava, 17 June 2009.

Cultural relations

Czech-Slovak cultural relations have for long been very intensive and are the subject of considerable interest on both sides. A large number of Czech ensembles were engaged as guest performers in Slovakia again in 2009; Czech artists exhibited there and Czech films were screened. The largest number of cultural events has traditionally been staged during *Czech and Slovak Cultural Cooperation Month*, which has taken place every October since 2001. During this month, there were presentations of Czech culture in Bratislava, Košice, Nitra and other Slovak cities. The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bratislava, the Czech Centres in Bratislava and Košice all contributed to the presentation of Czech culture in Slovakia. Czech expatriate clubs also organised cultural events, mainly presenting Czech art in the regions. Most such events took place in the East Slovakia region.

Many of the cultural activities in 2009 were used to present the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The most important of these included a gala concert of the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra with soloist V. Hudeček, which opened the Czech presidency; an exhibition of the collected works of J. Čapek in the Bratislava City Gallery; and a performance of B. Martinů's opera *Julietta* by the Opera of the National Theatre Brno, which closed the Czech presidency.

SLOVENIA

(Republic of Slovenia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 21-22 January 2009 – official visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček;
- 30-31 August 2009 – visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček on the occasion of the Bled Strategic Forum 2009;
- 15 September 2009 – working visit by President V. Klaus.

Visits by representatives of Slovenia

- 5-6 February 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Žbogar.

Economic relations

The relatively small country of Slovenia is one of the Czech Republic's important economic partners. For a number of years Slovenia's position in terms of the volume of exports and imports has ranged from 20th to 30th. In 2009, there was a year-on-year fall in Czech exports to Slovenia as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. The Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus with Slovenia. Exports from the Czech Republic were worth CZK 11.6 billion and imports CZK 9.04 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: market products, machinery and transport equipment, raw materials and chemicals. Broken down in greater detail: passenger automobiles and motor vehicle accessories, paper and waste paper, iron and steel, metal products, electrical apparatus, plastics, cleansing preparations, telecommunications equipment, office machinery, machinery and plant equipment for industry and the metal-working industry, live animals, dairy products, cereals. These products account for around 58% of Czech exports to Slovenia.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: market products, machinery and transport equipment, raw materials and chemicals. Broken down in detail: medicaments and pharmaceuticals, electrical apparatus, devices and appliances, passenger automobiles and motor vehicle accessories, metal products, non-ferrous metals, iron and steel, dyes, paper,

rubber products, industrial machinery and plant equipment, furniture, cosmetics, fruit and vegetables. These products account for around 79% of Czech imports from Slovenia.

Cultural relations

Czech-Slovene cultural relations were characterised by high intensity in 2009. One major contributory factor to this was the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, during which a number of events were held in Slovenia. Events worth mentioning include: the inauguration of an exhibition of photographs entitled *1968/69 – 1988/89* at the National Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana at the start of the presidency; a screening of *Citizen Havel* at the Kinodvor cinema club in Ljubljana to commemorate the time of the fall of the Iron Curtain as part of a festival of documentary films (26 and 28 March 2009); and an exhibition entitled *Contacts between Czechs and Slovenes from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* at the National and University Library in Ljubljana (17 April to 17 May 2009). Roma group Guločar performed in Ljubljana at the end of the presidency (23 June 2009). Other of the numerous events worth mentioning include: performances by the Prague Symphony Orchestra (9 July 2009) and Prague Chamber Orchestra (28 July 2009) during the *Ljubljana 09* music festival; *Radka Denemarková Literary Evening* (28 October 2009); a number of events staged on the occasion of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the events of November 1989 in the former Czechoslovakia, some of which were organised in cooperation with the Slovenian embassy; the *ANIMATEKA International Animation Film Festival* (7-13 December 2009); and, at the end of the year, the awarding of prizes to the winners of a translation competition by the Embassy of the Czech Republic during the ceremonial closing of the 3rd year of the translation competition for students of the Western Slavonic Languages Department of the University of Ljubljana.

SWITZERLAND

(Swiss Confederation)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28-31 January 2009 – President Klaus attended the annual *International Economic Forum* in Davos, during which he had a meeting with President of the Swiss Confederation H.-R. Merz;
- 27 March 2009 – in the context of the completion of the Swiss Confederation's accession to the Schengen Area Minister of the Interior I. Langer attended the inauguration of

Schengen operations at Swiss airports as the representative of the presidency country of the European Union.

Economic relations

Trade and economic relations have traditionally been very good and despite the global economic crisis 2009 was a successful year in terms of the volume of mutual trade. Trade exchange was comparable with the 2008 levels as regards both mutual trade turnover and Czech exports. The high degree of processing of products on both sides is a very positive aspect of mutual trade. The highly developed commodity structure is also favourable. Czech exports to Switzerland attained a value of CZK 34.2 billion and imports CZK 23.6 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and transport equipment (passenger automobiles, electrical appliances, office machinery), market products (primarily metal products), industrial consumer goods, chemicals and related products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: medicaments and pharmaceutical products, electrical apparatus, devices, appliances and machinery.

Cultural relations

Cultural relations are not governed by any treaties; cultural exchange takes place primarily on a commercial basis. As expected, one of the principal events in 2009 was the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the death of B. Martinů; these celebrations were linked to the annual festival in Basel devoted to this composer, who spent the last years of his life in Switzerland. The good reputation of Czech musicians was furthered by guest appearances by a number of artists and ensembles (the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, M. Kožená and others); Czech music was also promoted by Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* performed at the summer festival at Hallwyl Castle in Aargau. Other events deserving a mention include the festival of Czech film held in March in cooperation with the Slavonic Seminar of the University of Basel and the major role played by exhibits from Czech museum collections in a prestigious international exhibition of Celtic art at the History Museum in Bern. As far as historical anniversaries are concerned, the *Union of Czech and Slovak Associations in Switzerland* (an umbrella organisation of eighteen Czech community associations, most of them focused on the Sokol sports movement) commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and the fall of the Iron Curtain at the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

2. The Czech Republic's Relations with North European Countries

The countries of northern Europe (i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway and Sweden) represent traditional partners for the Czech Republic on the political, economic and cultural level. The Czech Republic is linked to the countries of northern Europe by superior friendly relations; bilateral relations with these countries are not encumbered by any unresolved questions.

One significant aspect of mutual relations is partnership in international organisations and most notably – in the case of most north European countries – common membership of the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. The core of relations between the Czech Republic and north European countries on the political level consists mainly in consultations and possible coordination of positions in the European Union and NATO. In the case of Norway and Iceland this cooperation is replaced by partnership in the European Economic Area; on the security policy level in the case of Finland and Sweden this cooperation is replaced by these two countries' involvement in the *Partnership for Peace*.

The Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009 was reflected in the frequency and nature of contacts. Compared to previous years, there was a reduction in the number of purely bilateral visits by high-level representatives and an increase in the frequency of consultations and contacts at working level.

A number of north European countries are important economic partners of the Czech Republic. However, the economic and financial crisis in 2009 led to a decline in mutual trade turnover.

The Czech Republic's intensive cultural cooperation with north European countries went ahead in 2009. In the first half of 2009, the activities of the Czech Republic's missions in these countries focused on presenting the Czech Republic as the presidency country of the European Union; in the second half of the year, they focused on commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution.

DENMARK

(Kingdom of Denmark)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 24 August 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 22-24 September 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on Health and Social Policy of the Senate of Parliament;
- 29 September – 6 October 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on Public Administration, Regional Development and the Environment of the Senate of Parliament;
- 7-19 December 2009 – visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer and Minister of the Environment J. Dusík for the *COP 15* conference.

Visits by representatives of Denmark

- 20-21 January 2009 – visit by the European Committee of Parliament;
- 2-4 March 2009 – visit by Speaker of Parliament T. Pedersen.

Economic relations

Denmark is the Czech Republic's 20th biggest trading partner in terms of the volume of trade exchange and is an important investor in the Czech Republic. Trade exchange fell by approx. 15% in 2009, with exports attaining a value of CZK 16.2 billion and imports CZK 13.8 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: road motor vehicles, consumer electronics apparatus, office machinery, electrical apparatus, metal products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: toys and mechanical assembly sets (Lego), medicaments and pharmaceuticals, telecommunications equipment, non-ferrous metals.

Cultural relations

As part of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, there were around 30 presentation events in Denmark (exhibitions, concerts, film screenings, literary evenings, discussions and lectures). The biggest official event accompanying the Czech

presidency was an exhibition of 60 photographs of leading Czech photographers entitled *Photo Exhibition 68/69* in the Royal Library in Copenhagen from 30 April to 27 June 2009.

Cultural and presentation events in the second half of 2009 focused mainly on the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. In cooperation with five Danish universities and other partners, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Copenhagen prepared two thematic exhibitions, lectures in Danish, Swedish and English, film screenings and other accompanying events.

ESTONIA

(Republic of Estonia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 30-31 March 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra attended the *Lennart Meri Conference 2009* in Tallinn;
- 28 May 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 2-4 June 2009 – visit by the Electoral Committee the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- 8-10 June 2009 – visit by the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament;
- 9-11 November 2009 – visit by the Standing Commission on Privacy Protection of the Senate of Parliament.

Visits by representatives of Estonia

- 11-12 May 2009 – private visit by President T. H. Ilves on the occasion of the opening of the new seat of Radio Free Europe.

Economic relations

The Czech Republic has constantly maintained a balance of trade surplus with Estonia. Czech exports were three times greater than imports in 2009. The global financial and economic crisis caused Czech exports to and imports from Estonia to fall sharply in 2009 compared to 2008 and 2007. In absolute figures, Czech exports attained a value of CZK 2.2 billion and imports CZK 0.7 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: transport equipment, washing and cleansing preparations, colour television sets, desks, control panels, electricity distribution systems, digital memory units, artificial casings, medicaments, non-wired glass.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: zinc-plated iron and steel rolled products, prefabricated buildings, wood, food products, kraft paper, glaziers' putty.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Science and Youth for the Period 2009-2012, Prague, 4 May 2009.

Cultural relations

The Embassy of the Czech Republic combined the presidency of the Council of the European Union with the presentation of Czech culture in Estonia. On the occasion of the start of the presidency in January 2009, there was a concert by the *Gentlemen Singers* male choir under the title *Music Without Barriers* in the Estonia Concert Hall, the largest concert hall in the country.

The *Foerster Female Chamber Choir* represented the Czech Republic at the prestigious *11th International Choir Festival TALLINN 2009*, which ran from 16 to 19 April 2009.

In November 2009, an exhibition entitled *1989 as Seen by Photographers* opened in the *Museum of Occupations* in Estonia; the event was attended by the Estonian president T. H. Ilves.

FINLAND

(Republic of Finland)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28-29 April 2009 – visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 28 May 2009 – visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle.

Economic relations

In terms of trade turnover, Finland was the Czech Republic's 24th biggest trading partner in 2009. However, the global economic crisis resulted in a year-on-year fall of approximately 20% in trade exchange in 2009. Czech exports to Finland attained a value of CZK 12.8 billion and imports CZK 8.2 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, television sets and monitors, audio and video recording and reproduction devices, automatic data processing machinery, and electrical apparatus including switches.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: paper and cardboard, audio and video recording and reproduction devices, rolled steel products, tyres and inner tubes, copper.

Czech-Finland Technology and Innovation Days took place in Finland on 2-4 June 2009; the Czech Republic was represented by a delegation led by P. Kalaš, advisor to the prime minister.

Cultural relations

Intensive cultural exchange between the two countries continued in 2009. The 8th *DocPoint* festival of documentary films took place in Helsinki on 20-25 January 2009 with many Czech films screened. On 18 March 2009, an exhibition of *Czech Cubism* was inaugurated in the Amos Anderson Art Museum. On 26 March 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a seminar in cooperation with the European Cultural Foundation Network. On 13 April 2009, it organised a joint concert of two choirs, the Foerster Female Chamber Choir and Finnish ensemble Canzonetta Nova at Temppeliaukio Kirkko, the rock church, which is one of the most visited tourist sites in Helsinki. On 15 May 2009, the Minor Theatre from Prague performed at the Studio Krunikka theatre and the *Vejvoda Trio* gave a jazz concert in the Storyville jazz club. From 22 May to 18 June 2009, an exhibition of Czech illustrators for children was organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in the children's department of *Rikhardinkadun Kirjasto* - the oldest library in Scandinavia.

ICELAND

(Republic of Iceland)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28-29 May 2009 – visit to Reykjavik by Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Němcová for a session of the sub-committee on the media of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

Economic relations

In terms of each country's overall foreign trade, the Czech Republic's share of Iceland's foreign trade is as marginal as Iceland's share of the Czech Republic's. In 2009, there was another decline in the exchange of goods, falling by approx. 26% from 2008. Czech exports to Iceland attained a value of CZK 0.212 billion and imports CZK 0.93 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles and other passenger vehicles, office machinery and automatic data processing machinery, prefabricated buildings, taps, valves and pipe fittings, clothing products and accessories, wood and metal furniture, structures of iron, steel and aluminium.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: market products (aluminium and its alloys, iron, ferrous alloys and steel), accounting for more than 84% of total imports from Iceland.

Cultural relations

There were limited opportunities for presenting Czech culture in Iceland, mainly because of the geographical distance between the two countries. Student exchanges and the provision of scholarships between the Czech Republic and Iceland continued in 2009. A widening of Czech-Icelandic relations can be observed in the field of tourism.

LATVIA

(Republic of Latvia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28 May 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle.

Economic relations

In trade exchange between the two countries, Czech exports to Latvia have for long exceeded imports several-fold. However, the global financial and economic crisis caused a rapid fall in Czech exports, partly owing to the reduced sales of Škoda passenger automobiles which have traditionally accounted for a major share of Czech exports to Latvia. The Czech Republic nevertheless maintained its long-term balance of trade surplus, though the surplus has fallen markedly in recent years. Czech exports to Latvia attained a value of CZK 2.9 billion and imports CZK 0.9 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: transport equipment, machinery and plant equipment, stone, glass and plaster products, base metals and products of such, food products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: metals and metal products, wood and wood products, machinery and plant equipment, food products, textiles and textile products.

At the beginning of 2009, the Czech government approved a loan of EUR 200 million to Latvia to help tackle the country's economic problems. The inter-governmental loan agreement was not signed in 2009 and drawing on the loan therefore did not begin.

Cultural relations

During 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Riga presented more than thirty cultural projects, a large number of which focused on Latvian regions. The cultural events were either isolated initiatives or took place in the context of broader projects such as international festivals and culture days. During the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union and under the auspices of deputy prime minister of the Czech government A. Vondra, a concert of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and pianist P. Kašpar took place under the title *From the New World*. In the second half of 2009, the emphasis was placed on commemorating the historical anniversaries of the fall of the Iron Curtain in Europe and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia – e.g. a photography exhibition entitled *1989 as Seen by Photographers*.

LITHUANIA

(Republic of Lithuania)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 14-15 April 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament;
- 28-29 May 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 24 June 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták.

Visits by representatives of Lithuania

- 9-10 April 2009 – official visit by President V. Adamkus.

Economic relations

The trend that emerged at the end of 2008 – pronounced year-on-year decline in Czech exports to and imports from Lithuania resulting from the global economic crisis – continued in 2009, with exports down by more than 40% and imports by 25%. In absolute figures Czech exports were worth CZK 5.2 billion and imports CZK 2.9 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, railway vehicles, chemical products, medicaments, machine engineering equipment, washing and cleansing preparations, iron and steel products, glass and household fittings.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: raw materials and semi-finished products for the chemicals industry including synthetic fibres, wooden furniture and products, machine engineering equipment, electrical apparatus, iron and steel products.

Cultural relations

In March 2009, Lithuania hosted the joint celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to NATO. A performance by the brass band of the *Central Music of the Army of the Czech Republic* was very well received.

In April 2010, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Vilnius took part in the now traditional *Open European House* event which aims to raise awareness about European Union member states among the Lithuanian public. The theme of last year's event was the 20th

anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the 5th anniversary of the accession of central and east European countries to the European Union. Other successful cultural events included classical music concerts, most notably a concert held in the St Michael the Archangel Church in Kaunas featuring A. Dvořák's work *Stabat Mater*.

At Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films, the traditional international festival of documentary films in Vilnius, director L. Příbyl personally presented his own documentary cycle *Forgotten Transports*, which is devoted to the experiences of Czech Jews during the Second World War.

NORWAY

(Kingdom of Norway)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 26-27 April 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 22-26 May 2009 – the Permanent Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly attended a session of the NATO Parliamentary Delegation in Oslo.

Visits by representatives of Norway

- 9 January 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Stoltenberg.

Economic relations

Norway is one of the Czech Republic's traditional trading partners and is its 22nd biggest trading partner in terms of trade turnover. Trade exchange between the two countries is strongly influenced by the level of supplies of Norwegian gas. That is the main reason that Czech imports from Norway were worth CZK 13.9 billion, while exports reached CZK 10.9 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles and other passenger vehicles, pipes, tubes, hollow profiles, iron and steel fittings, automatic data processing machinery, mechanical handling equipment and parts of such, products of base metals, especially iron and steel.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials – especially natural gas (accounting for more than 81% of imports from Norway); market products classified by type of material (aluminium, aluminium alloys,

ferromanganese, ferrous alloys, pig iron, spiegel iron, nickel and nickel alloys), accounting for approx. 10% of total imports.

Cultural relations

Visitors to the *Tromsø International Film Festival* in January could choose from thirteen Czech films. In March, the Embassy of the Czech Republic hosted an exhibition of photographs documenting the period from Prague Spring to the Velvet Revolution. On the occasion of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union, Europe Day and the 5th anniversary of the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, in May the embassy organised a concert of classical music in the Oslo Concert Hall. The Embassy of the Czech Republic organised three cultural events to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the events of 17 November 1989 and screened a documentary about the Velvet Revolution on the eve of the November 17 anniversary.

SWEDEN

(Kingdom of Sweden)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 27-28 April 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 11 May 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 18-20 May 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Health and Social Policy of the Senate of Parliament;
- 15 June 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 1 July 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 11-12 August 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Budgetary Control of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- 18 September 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 11-12 November 2009 – President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček attended a Conference of the Speakers of European Union Parliaments.

Visits by representatives of Sweden

- 24 June 2009 – official visit by Speaker of Parliament P. Westerberg;
- 9-10 October 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs C. Malström.

Economic relations

Trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Sweden was negatively influenced by the financial and economic crisis during 2009. Trade turnover for 2009 fell by approx. 25%. The Czech Republic maintained its balance of trade surplus, however, despite the surplus falling by approx. 30%. Czech exports were significantly lower in 2009 at CZK 33.0 billion; imports were worth CZK 18.6 billion.

The economic crisis also had a negative impact on the structure of the principal Czech export commodities. Consequently, there was a decline in trade in investment commodities and industrial consumer materials; exports and imports of passenger automobiles also fell substantially.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: IT equipment, road vehicles, consumer electronics, various metal products, pumps and air-conditioning equipment, iron and steel rolled products, musical instruments, furniture.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: iron and steel products, paper and paperboard, road vehicles, medicaments, telecommunications equipment, manufacturing machinery and plant equipment.

Cultural relations

One of the most significant cultural events was a concert performed by V. Hudeček on 19 January 2009 as the event ceremonially inaugurating the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union and organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the Czech Centre.

A concert by the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, including B. Martinů's Symphony No. 6 Fantaisies Symphoniques, took place in Norrköping on 26 February 2009 under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra.

The main event on the official programme of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in Sweden was a comprehensive political, cultural and trade presentation of the Czech Republic at the *EUROPAFORUM 2009* conference held on 11-12 May 2009 in Hässleholm, a town in southern Sweden. The event was attended by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle. This event had been preceded by smaller-scale presentations of the Czech Republic and the Czech presidency in the western Swedish town of Skara and other locations in Sweden.

On 28 June 2009, at the end of the Czech presidency, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Stockholm organised a concert of renowned jazz musicians, the Czech/Swedish guitarist R. Linka and Swedish pianist B. Stenson, at the Fasching jazz club in Stockholm.

In cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the Czech Centre organised a week of events entitled *Prague through a Lens* to mark the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. The week featured an exhibition in Stockholm entitled *Prague through the Lens of the Secret Police*, a screening of *Citizen Havel* and author's reading and concert by V. Třešňák. The events of 1989 were also commemorated by a multi-genre programme that took place on 17 November 2009 at the Czech Centre in Stockholm. In addition, the Czech Republic was represented at *Recasting the Peaceful Revolution of '89*, an international conference on the fall of the Iron Curtain held at Södertörn Högskola.

3. The Czech Republic's Relations with West European countries

In keeping with tradition, the Czech Republic's relations with the countries of Western Europe were very intensive in the period under scrutiny. Relations developed in all areas of common interest, within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic partnership and, above all, in partnership in the European Union.

During the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union, a number of government and ministry representatives visited the Czech Republic to take part in events (a summit, informal meetings and conferences) organised by the presidency country. These events are not included in the overview of bilateral visits. In addition, representatives of the Czech Republic made many trips abroad.

In the second half of the year above all, the Treaty of Lisbon ratification process in the Czech Republic was the subject of very close attention among the Czech Republic's partners.

The close partnership between the Czech Republic and the countries of Western Europe does not mean that all countries have taken the same view of European and global political problems. However, continual and open dialogue about any differences of opinion went ahead throughout 2009 with a view to find bilaterally advantageous and pragmatic solutions.

Despite the substantial fall in trade exchange as a result of the global financial and economic crisis, west European countries continued to rank among the Czech Republic's most important trade partners and investors, outweighed only by the Czech Republic's closest neighbours. Contacts and mutual understanding in the fields of culture, education and science were successfully developed.

BELGIUM

(Kingdom of Belgium)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 12-13 January 2009 – working visit by Deputy President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament L. Zaorálek;
- 20 January 2009 – working visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček;
- 20 March 2009 – working visit by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar;
- 12 May 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer;
- 4 June 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 5-7 December 2009 – visit by the Standing Commission on Compatriots Living Abroad of the Senate of Parliament.

Economic relations

Belgium is one of the Czech Republic's important trading partners. It has been the 9th or 10th biggest markets for Czech products and the destination of roughly 2.6% of Czech exports. Belgium is also the 13th biggest importer to the Czech Republic. Belgian exports account for 2.1% of the Czech Republic's total imports. In terms of overall trade turnover in 2009 (2.4%), Belgium was the 11th or 12th biggest trading partner of the Czech Republic. As a result of the economic crisis, however, exports to Belgium fell by approx. 17.5% to CZK 54.5 billion and imports from Belgium by 13.7% to CZK 40.5 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and transport equipment, including passenger automobiles and parts of such, industrial consumer goods, telecommunications equipment, electrical apparatus, electrical appliances, chemicals, furniture, glass.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: chemical products, in particular plastics (30.2% of all imports from Belgium), steel and products made of steel and cast iron, passenger automobiles, tractors and trailers, parts for power-generating machinery, glass products.

Belgium is one of the ten biggest foreign investors in the Czech Republic. Most Belgian investments are channelled into financial services and industry.

The principal trading partners and investors include: D'Ieteren (passenger automobiles), KBC Bank, Fortis Bank, Glaverbel (glassworks), Lhoist (lime), Bekaert (wire works), Bosal (automobile parts), Fabricom – Suez (planning and building work). In 2009, the Belgian-Brazilian firm of InBev (breweries) sold its acquisition in the Czech Republic (Staropramen breweries) and KBC Bank sold 40% of its stake in Československá obchodní banka.

Cultural relations

The Czech Centre in Brussels organised or co-organised a total of 123 events in 2009, among them the exhibitions *The Martinů Phenomenon*, *The Life and Times of Karel Čapek*, *František Drtikol* and *Art Brut*, concerts by D. Bárta, I. Bittová and A. Langerová, and a concert by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra on 11 June 2009 that brought to an end the cultural programme of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra concert was attended by Czech culture minister V. Riedlbauch.

GREAT BRITAIN

(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 2 April 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek and Minister of Finance M. Kalousek to attend the G20 summit;
- 24 April 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg;
- 13 May 2009 – visit by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament J. Dienstbier;
- 18-20 May 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Health Care of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- 9 June 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 15 June 2009 – official visit by Prime Minister J Fischer;
- 4 September 2009 – President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček and Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle attended the closing ceremony of the *Winton Train* project;

- 23 October 2009 – visit by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament J. Dienstbier;
- 12-13 November 2009 – working visit by President V. Klaus.

Visits by representatives of Great Britain

- 13 January 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons;
- 18 March 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons;
- 7 May 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons.

Economic relations

After Germany and Slovakia, Great Britain is the country with which the Czech Republic has its third largest balance of trade surplus. The Czech Republic's large balance of trade surplus with Great Britain covers approximately a third of the Czech Republic's balance of trade deficit with China. Despite this incontestably positive aspect, Czech-British trade also was negatively affected by the global financial and economic crisis in 2009. The consequences were a 20% fall in total trade turnover (compared to 2008), with exports falling to a value of CZK 194.9 billion and imports to CZK 43.07 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: data processing machines, passenger automobiles (approx. 18%), colour television sets, automobile parts, telecommunications equipment, hospital beds including parts, data processing machine parts and accessories, electrical lighting and signalling apparatus, tyres, alternate current generators, steel rods and bars, car radios.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: medicaments, parts and accessories for telecommunications equipment, passenger automobiles, data processing machine parts and accessories, front-end overhead loaders and earth excavators, television videogames and coin-operated games, electric condensers, automobile parts, electronic integrated circuits, organic detergents.

Cultural relations

In the first half of 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic and the Czech Centre in London concentrated on presenting the Czech Republic as the presidency country of the European Union. On 8 January 2009, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by J. Bělohlávek, performed selected compositions of Czech classical music (e.g. the prelude from B. Smetana's opera *Libuše* and A. Dvořák's *Symphony from the New World*) at the Barbican Centre, with mezzo-soprano D. Pecková and violinist I. Ženatý appearing as soloists. The concert was broadcast live by BBC Radio 3.

To mark *Europe Day*, the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the European Commission Representation and the Office of the European Parliament organised a concert by the European Union Youth Orchestra at St. John's Smith Square in London. The concert featured works by A. Dvořák and B. Smetana.

Other significant events co-organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic included the 100th birthday celebrations of Sir N. Winton on 16 May 2009 and the ceremonial handover of the presidency of the Council of the European Union to Sweden on 30 June 2009, accompanied by a jazz concert by pianist E. Viklický.

The closing ceremony of the *Winton Train* project upon the special train's arrival at Liverpool Street station on 4 September 2009 was another important cultural and political event organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

A number of events in November 2009 commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. On 18 November, the Czech Centre in London prepared an evening entitled *Close Up! November 1989 + Making History*, comprising the screening of three weekly news films from November 1989 and a panel discussion with leading figures of the Velvet Revolution: M. Kocáb, a founder member of Civic Forum, student leader V. Bartuška and former dissident and journalist J. Macháček. Other important events included an exhibition of illustrations from P. Sís's book (*The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*), and screenings of the best Czech films of the last 20 years at Riverside Studio in Hammersmith as part of the 13th festival of Czech cinema, this time devoted to the twentieth anniversary of 1989.

FRANCE

(French Republic)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 8 January 2009 – working visit by Governor of the Czech National Bank Z. Tůma;
- 16-18 February 2009 – working visit by Minister of Culture V. Jehlička;
- 20-21 February 2009 – working visit by Minister of Agriculture P. Gandalovič;
- 26-28 February 2009 – working visits by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka and President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček.
- 30-31 March 2009 – working visit by Minister for Regional Development C. Svoboda;
- 2 June 2009 – working visit by President V. Klaus;
- 3 June 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 12 June 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer;
- 17 June 2009 – working visit by Minister of Education, Youth and Sports M. Kopicová;
- 22-24 August 2009 – working visit by President V. Klaus;
- 22 October 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 22-23 October 2009 – working visit by former president V. Havel;
- 30 November 2009 – working visit by Vice-President of the Senate of Parliament A. Gajdušková.

Economic relations

France is one of the Czech Republic's most important trading partners: in 2009, France was the Czech Republic's fourth biggest trading partner in terms of total foreign trade turnover, behind Germany, Slovakia and Poland. The financial and economic crisis caused trade turnover to fall by 16%; exports were down by 12.3% on the previous years (CZK 120.2 billion) and imports by 21.4% (CZK 76.8 billion, above all in the automobile industry). The Czech Republic maintained its balance of trade surplus with France, ending the year at CZK 43.9 billion.

In the first half of 2009, the *Czech-French Economic Year* continued under the auspices of prime ministers M. Topolánek and F. Fillon. A number of presentations took place in France (e.g. *Atelier of Czech Musical Instrument Makers*) and in the Czech Republic

(e.g. a series of seminars entitled *Don't Be Afraid of Doing Business with France*) under this initiative.

Close cooperation in the second half of 2009 centred on the European projects Galileo and ELI.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and transport equipment, market products classified by type of material, various industrial products, chemicals.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: machinery and transport equipment, market products classified by type of material, chemicals, various industrial products.

Cultural relations

During the Trio, in the European Union there was a whole series of cultural events, from club events for younger audiences (e.g. opening the Czech presidency with a rock concert by the group *Tatabojs*) to presentations of art and music (e.g. the exhibitions *Karel Čapek*, *Bohuslav Martinů*, *Czech Gems*, *Legends of Castles and Chateaux*, the 4th biennale of Czech nativity cribs and an exhibition of photographs by B. Holomíček; concerts by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by K. Mařatka, by the ensembles Collegium Marianum, Gentlemen Singers and the Kaprálová Quartet; a literary evening with P. Ouředník; a film festival entitled *Czech-in* and a public screening of the film *Tobruk* by director V. Marhoul; and the inauguration of a touring exhibition of archive materials entitled *The Birth of Czechoslovakia and France: A Common Path towards a Democratic Europe (1914-1925)*).

Cultural events towards the end of the year concentrated mainly on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain in November 1989. Former president V. Havel received an honorary doctorate from the Paris Institute of Political Studies and there was a discussion panel with students from French universities. An exhibition of photographs by L. Bichaud was staged in cooperation with the Representation of the European Commission in France.

IRELAND

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 15 February 2009 – visit by Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra;
- 2-4 April 2009 – working visit by President of the Czech Statistical Office J. Fischer;
- 21-24 June 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Mandate and Immunity Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- 14-17 December 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Standing Commission on Rural Development of the Senate of Parliament.

Economic relations

The financial and economic crisis caused a sharp fall in Czech exports to Ireland in 2009 (roughly half the volume of exports in 2007). Imports from Ireland also shrank (roughly by a quarter compared to 2008). The Czech Republic continued to have a balance of trade deficit with Ireland, albeit slightly reduced (2009 exports: CZK 4.1 billion; imports: CZK 15.2 billion).

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: construction industry, renewable energy and environmental protection commodities; transport equipment (Škoda automobiles), agricultural machinery, medical technologies, small machinery, tourism.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: computer technology components, computer programmes, medical and veterinary instruments, chemicals, medicaments, printing products, packaging technologies, electrical engineering parts, transformers, switchboards.

Financial services constitute a special category of exports.

Cultural relations

In the spirit of the rotation of the presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech and French embassies in Ireland organised a joint project of students at the photography department of the Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, the National School of Photography in Arles and the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. The result of the project was a photography exhibition entitled

Paris – Dublin – Prague, which opened in Dublin on 3 March 2009 and then toured other Irish towns and cities. On 16 April 2009, an exhibition showcasing architectural monuments in the Czech Republic entitled *The Graceful and Defenceless* was inaugurated in Dublin in the presence of the featured artists. As part of the celebrations of Europe Day (9 May 2009), a presentation of the national desserts of twenty European Union member states was organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Dublin under the name *A Taste of Europe*. On 25 October 2009, the band Tony Ducháček & Garage performed a concert in Dublin, under the auspices of V. Havel, to mark the 20th anniversary of the political changes in central Europe.

In 2009, University College Dublin obtained a grant under the Promotion of the Czech Language and Literature Abroad project for a course of 20th century Czech literature.

ITALY

(Republic of Italy)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 23-26 February 2009 – working visit to Rome and Viterbo by a delegation of the Committee on Public Administration and Regional Development of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- 15-16 March 2009 – visit to Milan by President V. Klaus on the occasion of the publication of the Italian translation of his book *Blue Planet in Green Shackles*;
- 9-12 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Health Care of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by the committee chairman J. Krákora;
- 13-14 November 2009 – visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer and meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs F. Frattini on the occasion of the depositing of the instrument of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon in the depositary of fundamental treaties of the European Union at the Italian foreign ministry.

Economic relations

The economic recession in the Czech Republic and Italy caused a sharp fall in aggregate demand in both countries, which had a negative effect on bilateral trade. The trend of declining mutual trade exchange evident in 2008 thus continued in 2009. However, developments in the global economy had a similar impact on the Czech Republic's trade with

other countries, so Italy remained the Czech Republic's sixth biggest trading partner. Czech exports to Italy were worth CZK 93.5 billion and imports CZK 86.9 billion.

The downturns in the Czech and Italian economies in 2009 were more or less comparable and had essentially the same effect on exports and imports. The Czech Republic thus maintained its balance of trade surplus with Italy. As in 2008, Italy remained the Czech Republic's seventh biggest foreign market in 2009. Italy also continued to be the sixth biggest importer to the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and transport equipment, especially passenger automobiles, industrial machinery and plant equipment, telecommunications equipment, data processing machines, personal computers, monitors and television sets, cigarettes, tyres, steel products, textiles, motors and generators, accumulators, wood, polyethylene, leather.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: road vehicles, industrial machinery and plant equipment, electrical apparatus, medicaments, pipes, tyres, fittings, footwear, handbags, steel products, accumulators, fruit, electrical household appliances.

Cultural relations

The start of 2009 brought the final events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the events of 1968, organised with particular emphasis on the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The calendar of cultural events was opened by an exhibition in Rome entitled *Prague: From One Spring to the Next 1968 – 1969*. This exhibition was accompanied by screenings of period films (15-24 January 2009) and an international conference entitled *The Burnt Utopia of the Prague Spring*, at which contributions by M. Klimešová and J. Pelán from Charles University and by J. Šiklová were presented. The exhibition, including the screening of period films, subsequently opened in Udine in May.

On 19 January 2009, a wreath was laid by the statue of Jan Palach in Rome. That night, the Rome town hall arranged for the Colosseum to be specially illuminated in honour of Jan Palach. This is a profound display of respect that is used only in exceptional cases. Other commemorative events organised by both Czech and Italian subjects took place in many other Italian towns and cities.

In January 2009, an Italian translation of H. Epsteinová's book *Nalezená minulost* ("Found Past"), an autobiographical work describing the fates of the author's Jewish ancestors from the Second World War, was presented in the Jewish Centre in Rome. In April 2009, the Bohemia club in Naples staged a piano concert by Š. Kos in cooperation with the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic in Naples and the Czech Centre in Rome.

The main cultural event of the Czech presidency took place on 28 April 2009, a piano concert by the Ardašev Piano Duo at the prestigious National Academy of St Cecilia music conservatory.

In line with an agreement with the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic was also presented at the 53rd *Venice Biennale* contemporary art exhibition, which opened in June 2009 in Venice. In June 2009, an exhibition entitled *Josef Čapek – Mr. Europe* opened in the European Library in Rome. The exhibition took place as part of the 6th *Mediterranea* festival, which focused on futurism. The fifth edition of the international conference of European authors *TransEuropaExpress* took place in October 2009. The theme of the conference was *Walls between Us and within Us*. The Czech Republic was represented by sociologist J. Šiklová.

LUXEMBOURG

(Grand Duchy of Luxembourg)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28 April 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman L. Sefzig;
- 15 May 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 3 June 2009 – working visit Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout.

Visits by representatives of Luxembourg

- 12 March 2009 – official visit by Prime Minister J.-C. Juncker.

Other meetings

- 18 June 2009 – working meeting between Prime Minister J. Fischer and Prime Minister J.-C. Juncker on the sidelines of the Council of the European Union in Brussels.

Economic relations

Luxembourg is not one of the Czech Republic's principal trading partners; in 2009, it was the Czech Republic's 50th biggest trading partner, accounting for 0.15% of the Czech Republic's total foreign trade. Czech exports to Luxembourg were worth CZK 2.4 billion in 2009 and imports CZK 2.96 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: synthetic rubber, special textile products, passenger motor vehicles, iron and steel products. The principal exporters include Škoda Auto a.s., Rotarex Praha s.r.o., Karosa a.s., DEZA a.s., and Mittal Steel a.s.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: zinc-coated flat rolled products, heat-rolled sections, parts for taps, valves and pipes, special textile products, paper, impregnated paperboard. The principal importers include Arcelor Distribution, Good Year Dunlop s.r.o, Akuma a.s., Rotarex a.s., and Škoda Auto a.s.

Luxembourg plays a significant role in direct foreign investments in the Czech Republic. Direct investments from Luxembourg worth roughly CZK 139.1 billion are channelled into areas such as real estate, retail, sale of machinery and instruments, credit operations and insurance, manufacture of electrical machinery and radio, television and communications apparatus, manufacture of machinery and plant equipment, rubber and plastic products, and publishing and printing. The principal investors include Accumalux, Rotarex, Paul Wurth, ORCO, DELTA pekárny, Matthey, Astron Buildings, Ivensys Appliance Controls, Logit, Wagon Automotive *et al.* The portfolio of Luxembourg investments in the Czech Republic has attained a value of approx. EUR 2.8 billion; investments by Czech residents in Luxembourg amount to approx. CZK 60 billion.

Development cooperation

A trilateral project of the Czech Republic, Luxembourg and Mali to improve supplies of drinking water in Mali's Barouéli district was successfully completed in 2009.

Cultural relations

One significant event in January 2009 was the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the death of Jan Palach, which, besides a traditional commemorative gathering and oratorios by Belgian composer F. Glorieux and British composer D. Bullock, featured an exhibition of thematic photographs from the Luxembourg archives. In March, there was an exhibition of the lyrical abstraction of O. Smutný and an exposition of Z. Lukeš entitled *Czech Architectural Cubism 1911-1914*. Twelve chamber concerts of works by B. Martinů and a thematic exhibition about his life and work took place in May. A colloquium marking the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall took place in June; addresses were given by J. Dienstbier, H.-G. Genscher and L. Kovács, and modern music group *Dva na dva* performed a concert. The autumn months brought an exhibition of works by E. Ovčáček *Letterstory*, an exhibition of works by M. Janáček *Peintures/Pastels*, the *Czech-Luxembourg Ball*, a Christmas concert and a festival of Czech and central European cinema.

MALTA

(Republic of Malta)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 26-29 May 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on Budgetary Control of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament as part of Czech Week in Malta, led by committee member M. Patera;
- 29 September – 2 October 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman L. Sefzig.

Visits by representatives of Malta

- 16-18 March 2009 – visit by a Maltese business mission led by Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment T. Fenech, combined with the Czech-Maltese Business Forum in Prague.

Economic relations

Bilateral trade between the Czech Republic and Malta essentially corresponds to the size of both economies. After a dramatic decline in 2008, when trade turnover fell by half year-on-year, a revival occurred in 2009. Another encouraging fact is that the Czech Republic

maintained its balance of trade surplus with Malta in 2009 (exports worth CZK 0.327 billion; imports CZK 0.255 billion).

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automobiles, printed circuits, automatic data processing machinery, memory units, telephones, electrical fittings, vegetable oils, chocolate products, chemicals.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: medicaments, integrated circuits, textile products, rubber, clothing, electrical apparatus.

Cultural relations

A *Czech Week* was organised in May in Malta in connection with the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The cultural section of the event consisted of film screenings, an exhibition and a gala concert.

The festival of Czech films was devised to offer a cross-section of Czech cinema and Czech history. The films screened included 1939 film *Kristian* (whose female star A. Mandlová spent many years in Malta), a documentary entitled *Jan 69* as a commemoration of Jan Palach, and a short film called *Joseph Kilian* by directors Pavel Juráček and Jan Schmidt. These were followed by the films *Shadows of the Deceased*, *Little Girl Blue* and *Empties*.

A touring exhibition of photographs entitled *68-69* opened in the multifunctional centre of St James Cavalier. A concert of baroque music in St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta was attended by President of Malta G. Abela.

MONACO

(Principality of Monaco)

Visits by representatives of Monaco:

- 16 April 2009 – working visit by Government Counsellor for External Relations and for International Economic and Financial Affairs F. Biancheri.

Other meetings

- 16 September 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Government Counsellor for External Relations and for International

Economic and Financial Affairs F. Biancheri on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Economic relations

Records have not been kept of Monaco's share of the Czech Republic's total foreign trade turnover since the Czech Republic joined the European Union. Instead, it is included in the overall statistics for France's foreign territories. In recent years, the Czech Republic's economic relations with Monaco have been stimulated mainly by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Paris and the Czech honorary consulate in Monaco. The most significant event in the economic and trade field in 2009 was a business mission of the Monaco chamber of commerce in April 2009 during the working visit by Minister F. Biancheri.

Cultural relations

A joint Czech-Monaco project to renovate the Misericord Chapel in Monaco went ahead.

THE NETHERLANDS

(Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 20 January 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra;
- 31 March 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg to attend an international conference on Afghanistan in The Hague.

Economic relations

The Netherlands is one of the Czech Republic's ten most significant economic partners in terms of trade turnover. The trend that emerged in 2008, when the Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus instead of a deficit, continued in 2009. The trade exchange statistics, however, reflected the problems faced by both countries' economies as a result of the global crisis with a decline in trade turnover, which attained just approx. 86% of the 2008 figures (exports: CZK 82.5 billion; imports: CZK 66.5 billion).

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and components of such (primarily computer circuits, office machinery and road vehicles), market products classified by type of material (mainly metal and steel products) and industrial consumer goods, including medical instruments, toys and sports equipment and also musical instruments. The best-known Czech brand on the local market is Škoda passenger automobiles.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: machinery and components of such (electrical equipment, apparatus and appliances and also motor vehicles), chemicals (primary plastics, medicaments and organic chemicals products), market products classified by type of material (iron and steel products, metal products, textiles and paper), fruit and vegetables.

Cultural relations

The main aim of the cultural events staged in the first half of 2009 by the Czech Centre and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in The Hague was to present the Czech Republic as the presidency country of the European Union. A number of events were held in various towns and cities in the Netherlands; in the spirit of the *Europe without Barriers* motto, these events focused on European cultural relations and mutual influences. Cultural institutions and the embassies of other countries, e.g. Germany, Poland and Austria, often took part in the programmes as well.

In January 2009, the Hague City Library hosted an exhibition of 40 posters designed by art students from eight European countries on the theme of European identity; the exhibition was co-organised by the Polish and Austrian embassies. A project called *Czech Stars*, which aimed to present the Czech Republic as a modern country with a lot to offer in terms of culture, tourism and its economy, took place in The Hague in February; the project generated considerable public interest. As part of the project, M. Forman's film *The Firemen's Ball* was screened, vocal quartet QVOX and pianist J. Češková performed a jazz concert, there was a gastronomic presentation and an exhibition devoted to internationally renowned Czech brands (Škoda, Moser *et al.*). CzechTourism helped organise the project. On 19 June 2009, the period of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union was closed by a programme in Rotterdam entitled *Summer Improvisation*.

The twentieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia and the fall of the Iron Curtain were commemorated by a series of events coming under the joint name of *Twenty Years of Freedom*. The most important of these events included *Journalism Under Communism*, a debate evening on the importance of the media for creating a free society held in Amsterdam on 8 October 2009, the inauguration of an exhibition entitled *In the Middle of Europe* which featured a talk on the historical significance of 1989 given by ambassador P. Mareš and the screening of J. Novák's film *Citizen Havel Goes on Vacation*.

PORTUGAL

(Portuguese Republic)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28 April – 3 May 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs of the Senate of Parliament, led by Vice-President of the Senate J. Šneberger;
- 11-12 June 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle.

Other meetings

- 10-12 February 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra and Minister of the Economy and Innovation M. Pinho on the sidelines of the 8th regional meeting of the International Labour Organization in Lisbon.

Economic relations

Trade contacts between the Czech Republic and Portugal have developed dynamically in recent years. Although they were affected by the global economic downturn in 2009, exchange of goods fell less markedly than with the majority of other trading partners of the Czech Republic and Portugal. Preliminary results show that Portugal advanced from being the 30th to the 27th biggest market for Czech exports (CZK 7.6 billion), from 36th to 34th position in terms of imports to the Czech Republic (CZK 6.03 billion) and from 34th to 32nd in terms of trade turnover.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles and parts and accessories of such, automatic data processing machines, telecommunications equipment, metallurgical products, monitors and projectors, tyres, electrical instruments and machinery,

heating and cooling equipment, musical instruments, railway vehicles, medicaments, paper and paperboard.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: tobacco, tyres, special rubbers, recording and reproduction devices, electrical apparatus, measuring instruments, motor vehicles and parts of such, audio reproduction devices, furniture and parts of such, metal and plastic products, fibres and waste paper, medicaments, footwear, cork products.

Cultural relations

The Czech Republic's cultural presentation in 2009 mainly encompassed cinema, music, fine art and puppet theatre. The 25th *Festroia* film festival in Setúbal was devoted to Czech cinema. Czech cinema, which received the Crystal Dolphin prize, was represented in person at the festival by J. Menzel, J. Jakubisko, F. Renč, K. Roden, I. Trojan and J. Budař. Connections between the Czech Republic and Portugal was one of the themes of an exhibition of works by artist P. Penil, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague; the exhibition was staged in the Water Museum in Lisbon. Classical music of the most prominent Czech composers was heard in Palácio Foz; the jazz band *Vertigo Quintet & Dorota Barová* performed in Lisbon and Faro. The *Karromato* puppeteers gave a very successful performance of *Wooden Circus* at the *Sintra international puppet festival*.

SAN MARINO

(Republic of San Marino)

The core of bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and San Marino lies in trade exchange. Czech exports to San Marino were worth CZK 40.2 million in 2009 and imports CZK 13.2 million. The Czech Republic thus maintained its pronounced balance of trade surplus.

SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA

(Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 15 April 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg;
- 30 May 2009 – official working visit by President V. Klaus.

Visits by representatives of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

- 21 April 2009 – working visit by Grand Hospitaller A. von Boeselager.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta is represented by an embassy in Prague. Also active in the Czech Republic are the Grand Priory of Bohemia of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the affiliated public benefit company *Maltese Aid*.

SPAIN

(Kingdom of Spain)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 12 June 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 7-11 October 2009 – visit by Minister of Culture. V. Riedlbauch;
- 27 November 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout attended an evening organised by Minister of Foreign Affairs M. A. Moratinos to mark Spain's coming presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- 16-18 December 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs J. Chmiel.

Visits by representatives of Spain

- April 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Joint Committee on Cooperation with the Court of Auditors of the Congress of Deputies of Spain.

Economic relations

Spain was the Czech Republic's 13th biggest trading partner in terms of total turnover in 2009. Trade exchange, which had displayed steady growth up to 2007, declined in 2008 and 2009. According to the latest available data for November 2009, trade turnover shrank by 15.8% (approximately to the level of 2005, with exports worth CZK 49.6 billion and imports worth CZK 37.6 billion). The Czech Republic maintained its balance of trade surplus with Spain, however, which amounted to CZK 11 billion in the period under scrutiny.

By year-on-year comparison, exports were down 15.4% to CZK 45.7 billion for the period of January to November 2009 and imports down by 16.4% to CZK 34.7 billion. The commodity structure of trade exchange has remained essentially unchanged.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automobiles and parts, including accessories, automatic data processing machines and units, machinery and plant equipment used in industry and power generation, recording, reproduction and telecommunications equipment, motors and parts, including accessories.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: automobiles and parts, including accessories, electric machines and appliances, fruit and vegetables, pharmaceuticals, metallurgical products, tyres.

Cultural relations

The majority of cultural events in 2009 was concentrated in the first six months of the year. During the Czech presidency, the Czech Centre also published a monthly catalogue of information about Czech cultural events in Spain and about prominent Czech cultural figures and goings-on in the Czech Republic. In the second half of the year, activities focused on commemorating the anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

In January, a concert was performed by the Prisma Trio in the French Institute to mark the symbolic passing of the "presidency baton". Another presidency event in January was a theatre performance of *Obludárium* by the Forman Brothers Theatre in Gijón (Asturia); in February, there was an exhibition of photographs by Josef Sudek entitled *Window in Prague* at Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid; and in June, there was a jazz concert by Dan Bárta and the Robert Balzar Trio in Madrid.

Under the auspices of the Czech deputy prime minister for European Affairs, a ceremony was held in Cape Finisterre, Galicia, in May to unveil a plaque commemorating the message carried by Lev of Rožmítal. The ceremony was accompanied by a performance by the Continuo theatre ensemble. Two photography exhibitions were staged in Madrid in October and November: *When the Iron Curtain Disappeared* and *The End of Dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe*.

Based on the Programme of Cooperation in the Field of Culture, Education, Youth, Physical Education and Sport for 2004-2007 (automatically extended), in 2009 the full quota of scholarships awarded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic for the *Slavonic Studies Summer School* was used, with 14 students taking part. Three scholarships for postgraduate study in the 2009/2010 academic year were also used.

VATICAN (Holy See)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 28-29 January 2009 – working visit by Minister of Justice J. Pospíšil;
- 15 April 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg;
- 30 May 2009 – official visit by President V. Klaus;
- 14 November 2009 – official visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer.

Visits by representatives of the Holy See

- 5-6 February 2009 – President of the Pontifical Council for the Family Cardinal E. Antonelli attended a delivered an address at the international conference *Parental Childcare and Employment Policy* held in Prague;
- 26-28 September 2009 – state and apostolic visit by Pope Benedict XVI.

Cultural relations

On the occasion of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in the Holy See, in cooperation with the Chapter of the Canons of the Basilica of Santa Maria ad Martyres (the Pantheon), organised a concert to mark Europe Day, the fifth anniversary of the ten new countries' accession to the European Union and the anniversary of 1400 years since the consecration of the Pantheon. The *Boni Pueri* boy's choir from Hradec Králové performed at the concert. The concert was attended by Dean of the College of Cardinals Cardinal A. Sodano, the supreme representative of the Vatican city state Cardinal G. Lajolo and Grand Chancellor of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta J.-P. Mazery.

A ceremonial evening took place in the Church of Santa Maria della Pietà in Campo Santo Teutonico to mark the twentieth anniversary of the canonisation of St Agnes of Bohemia and the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the communist regime in the Czech Republic. Male choir *Schola Gregoriana Pragensis* gave a concert during the evening.

Seven leading Czech scientists took part in an international conference entitled *1609-2009: From Galilei's Telescope to Evolutionary Cosmology Science, Philosophy and Theology in Dialogue* organised by the Pontifical Lateran University.

4. The Czech Republic's Relations with East European Countries

The Czech Republic's relations with the countries of Eastern Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine) developed with greater intensity in 2009. It was mainly the Czech Republic's multilateral activities that had a positive influence on its bilateral relations with east European countries: above all the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009 and the Czech Republic's active role in launching the *Eastern Partnership* initiative. East European countries occupied an important place in the activities of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in the field of energy as well: at the start of the year, the Czech Republic successfully participated in efforts to resolve the crisis following the stopping of Russian gas supplies via Ukraine; and in May, a declaration on the *Southern Corridor*, one of the main European energy diversification projects, was signed in Prague. The stagnation of economic relations was a result of the global economic crisis.

Talks with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were dominated by the question of ensuring stability in the South Caucasus region and resolving existing conflicts. The Czech Republic continued to provide aid for the renewal of Georgia pledged after Georgia's military conflict with Russia in August 2008.

A decision by the government of the Czech Republic to open an embassy in Baku confirmed the improving level of mutual relations with Azerbaijan; the embassy was opened on 1 January 2010.

The year 2009 marked the start of a new stage in relations with Belarus. The previous policy of restricted political contacts with representatives of the Belarus government was replaced by new dialogue conducted with a view to promoting the development and democratic orientation of Belarus. The head of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Minsk was promoted to the rank of ambassador. The Czech side also went ahead with its traditional contacts with representatives of civil society in Belarus and with providing transformation assistance to Belarusian non-governmental organisations and independent media.

In talks and contacts with Moldovan representatives, the Czech side emphasised the need to stabilise the internal situation in the country as an essential precondition for further development in all areas. Moldova has for long been one of the priority countries of Czech development aid.

In addition to economic cooperation with the Russian Federation and numerous other contacts at expert level, the Czech Republic conducted intensive political dialogue with the Russian Federation. This culminated in President V. Klaus' participation in the European Union-Russia summit in Khabarovsk in May and his visit to Moscow in October 2009.

Ukraine is a significant partner of the Czech Republic, among other reasons as a transit country for energy raw materials. The Czech Republic has been a long-term supporter of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic ambitions, also emphasising the importance of undertaking the necessary reforms and consolidating the internal political situation in the country.

ARMENIA

(Republic of Armenia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 30 September – 5 October 2009 – visit by senators J. Obelfalzer and M. Antl to a conference on cooperation between constitutional courts and parliaments and the supremacy of the constitution; the conference was also attended by parliamentary deputies E. Dundačková and H. Šedivá.

Visits by representatives of Armenia

- 18 February 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs E. Nalbandian; he held talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and was received by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 7 May 2009 – President S. Sargisian attended the Prague summit to launch the Eastern Partnership; on the sidelines of the summit he had a meeting with President V. Klaus.

Economic relations

In 2009, the Czech Republic's trade turnover with Armenia fell from CZK 660 million in 2008 to CZK 458 million. Exports shrank from CZK 557 million in 2008 to 435.6 million; imports registered a sharp fall by 78% from CZK 103 million in 2008 to CZK 22.7 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: metal products (reactors, boilers, paper, cardboard and cardboard products, cosmetics, iron and steel products, electrical recording apparatus, motor vehicles.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: aluminium and aluminium products, iron and steel.

Transformation and development cooperation

Three development cooperation projects designed to stabilise potential migrants from Armenia, strengthen the migration management system in Armenia and develop social enterprise in Armenia were implemented.

AZERBAIJAN

(Republic of Azerbaijan)

In 2009, it was decided to open an embassy of the Czech Republic in Baku, Azerbaijan. The embassy was opened on 1 January 2010.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 13 February 2009 – visit by Prime Minister and President of the Council of the European Union M. Topolánek;
- 23-25 July 2009 – visit by Minister of Finance E. Janota; the Minister was also received by President I. Aliyev;
- 23-25 September 2009 – visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 1-2 October 2009 – visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták.

Visits by representatives of Azerbaijan

- 25 February 2009 – visit by Minister of Finance S. Sharifov;
- 7-8 May 2009 – President I. Aliyev attended summits on the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Corridor; bilateral meeting with President V. Klaus;
- 23 November 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Khalafov.

Other meetings

- 27 January 2009 – Budapest (Hungary) – Prime Minister and President of the Council of the European Union M. Topolánek held a meeting with President I. Aliyev on the occasion of the *Nabucco* summit.

Economic relations

In 2009, the Czech Republic's trade turnover with Azerbaijan fell by 49% from CZK 27,941 million in 2008 to CZK 14,300 million. Exports grew by 8% from CZK 1,550 million in 2008 to CZK 1,641 million in 2009; imports fell by 51% from CZK 26,391 million to CZK 12,857 million. The Czech Republic ended the year 2009 with a balance of trade deficit of CZK 11,247 million with Azerbaijan. The large deficit is caused by imports of Azerbaijani oil, which accounts for almost a quarter of total imports of oil to the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: motor vehicles, glass and glass products, locomotives, carriages and transport equipment, metal products (reactors, boilers), cosmetics.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic, Baku, 23 July 2009;
- Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Mutual Cooperation in the Field of Defence, Baku, 1 October 2009;
- Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Economic, Scientific and Technical and Cultural Cooperation, Baku, 31 October 2009.

Transformation and development cooperation

In 2009, Azerbaijan was included in the *Support for Migration Management in the South Caucasus* development project. This project falls under the competence of the interior ministry; it is implemented by IOM (*International Organization on Migration*). This was the first time Azerbaijan has been made part of this kind of project (unlike Georgia and Armenia, where migration management projects have been running for several years now).

Cultural relations

Czech Culture Days in Baku took place from 18 to 23 March 2009. A meeting between students and teaching staff of the Film School and filmmakers was attended by director J. Svěrák. Another meeting (with students attending the lectures of Czech studies at the Slavonic languages department of the Baku Slavic University, students from the Film School and state officials working in the field of culture) entitled *Round Table on Czech Culture* was held after a screening of director Z. Troška's film *The Loveliest Riddle*. Czech culture was also represented in Baku by the five-member dulcimer band *Pozdní sběr* from Uherské Hradiště led by J. Snopka, director of the UNESCO school in Uherské Hradiště.

In addition to the events comprising Czech Culture Days, the concurrent 11th "East-West" International Film Festival in Baku afforded another opportunity to present Czech culture.

During this event, the Czech Republic successfully enhanced its profile among the participants (partly thanks to the quality of its representation in connection with the staging of Czech Culture Days). Czech Culture Days in Baku contributed to increased interest in the Czech Republic and paved the way for continuing contacts between the two countries' cultural representatives in the upcoming period as well.

BELARUS

(Republic of Belarus)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 20-21 January 2009 – visit to Minsk by the vice-presidents of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament J. Kasal and V. Filip;
- 21-23 January 2009 – working visit to Minsk by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka, accompanied by a business mission, in connection with the signing of the Agreement on Economic, Industrial and Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Czech Republic and Belarus;
- 16-17 April 2009 – working visit to Minsk by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg;
- 20-24 July 2009 – working visit by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar;

- 30 November – 2 December 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka, accompanied by a business mission.

Visits by representatives of Belarus

- 26 October 2009 – working visit to Prague by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs V. I. Voronetsky (consultations with First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar and meeting with Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka).

Other meetings

- 1 December 2009 – Athens (Greece) – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Martynov on the sidelines of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Economic relations

The global economic crisis caused a slowdown in trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Belarus. Trade exchange between the two countries shrank by 32.5% in Czech koruna terms in 2009. While Czech exports (CZK 3.7 billion) fell by a quarter, the decrease in exports from Belarus was almost 50% (imports of CZK 1.3 billion). The Czech Republic maintained its balance of trade surplus with Belarus. Belarus was the Czech Republic's 52nd biggest trading partner in terms of trade turnover. The commodity structure remained practically unchanged. Czech exports were dominated by machinery and transport equipment (59% of total exports: various types of machinery, power-generating equipment); imports from Belarus were dominated by market products classified by type of material (63.7%: mainly wires, cables and unwoven textiles).

As far as Czech investments in Belarus are concerned, these attained a value of USD 16.2 million in the first half of 2009 (in 10th place with 0.38% of total foreign investments), which is practically the same level as in the first half of 2008. Overall, however, both trade and foreign investments fall short of the two economies' potential. Czech businesses have good opportunities in the energy industry, in the modernisation of the Belarusian petrochemicals, machine engineering and food industries and in higher forms of cooperation, most notably in the context of the Customs Union of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan.

The year 2009 can be seen as more intensive in terms of the number of state-supported events to promote the development of Czech-Belarusian economic relations. The governments of the Czech Republic and Belarus signed an *Agreement on Economic, Industrial and Scientific and Technical Cooperation* in January 2009. In line with this agreement, a Czech-Belarusian *Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific and Technical Cooperation* was established; its first session took place in Brno in April 2009. Four business missions to Belarus (including the country's regions) and the Czech Republic took place. There was also progress in attempts to resolve certain problematic questions (e.g. renegotiation of the agreement on the avoidance of double taxation). Czech firms signed significant contracts in Belarus (mainly in the energy and petroleum industries).

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on Economic, Industrial and Scientific and Technical Cooperation, Minsk, January 2009.

Transformation cooperation

The Programme of Transformation Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic provides long-term support for the work and development of Belarusian non-governmental organisations and independent media. Projects include *European Radio for Belarus* (an international project of foreign broadcasting to Belarus that the Czech Republic has supported since 2005), *Human Rights House for Belarus* in Vilnius, and the *European Humanitarian University (EHU)* in Vilnius.

Cultural relations

In the first half of 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a series of cultural events, focusing on the tradition of Czech music, in connection with the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Czech Republic also supports the development of independent culture in Belarus and cooperates with a number of Belarusian cultural institutions.

GEORGIA

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 3-4 July 2009 – Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle attended the international conference *Georgia's European Way* in Batumi; he had meetings with President M. Saakashvili, Prime Minister N. Gilauri, Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration G. Baramidze and Minister of Economic Development L. Zhvania;
- 27-29 August 2009 – visit by Minister of Finance E. Janota;
- 23-27 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Standing Commission on Assistance to Worldwide Democracy of the Senate of Parliament, led by the Member of Senate T. Jirsa.

Visits by representatives of Georgia

- 25 March 2009 – visit by Minister of Health, Labour and Social Protection A. Kvitashvili; meeting with representatives of the Czech Export Bank;
- 7-8 May 2009 – President M. Saakashvili attended summits on the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Corridor; bilateral meeting with President V. Klaus;
- 10 October 2009 – visit by Minister of Health, Labour and Social Protection A. Kvitashvili; meeting with representatives of the Czech Export Bank.

Other meetings

- 27 January 2009 – Budapest (Hungary) – Prime Minister and President of the Council of the European Union M. Topolánek held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister N. Gilauri on the occasion of the Nabucco summit;
- 1 December 2009 – Athens (Greece) – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Minister of Foreign Affairs G. Vashadze on the sidelines of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Economic relations

In 2009, the Czech Republic's trade turnover with Georgia fell by 25% from CZK 1,230 million in 2008 to CZK 971 million. Czech exports were down by 30% from CZK 1,117 million in 2008 to CZK 870 million in 2009; imports from Georgia grew by 4% from

CZK 181 million to CZK 190 million. The Czech Republic ended the year 2009 with a balance of trade surplus of CZK 680 million with Georgia.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: electrical recording apparatus, motor vehicles, metal products (reactors, boilers), cosmetics.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: walnuts and other dried fruits, wine and grapes, alcoholic beverages.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Czech Republic and Georgia for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, Tbilisi, 28 August 2009.

Transformation and development cooperation

Georgia is one of the ten priority countries of the Czech Republic's *Programme of Transformation Cooperation*. Three projects were implemented under this programme in 2009. The projects supported the development of cooperation at local level in Georgia, the development of civil society and its involvement in public life in Georgia, and the implementation of the *Anti-Corruption Legal Advice Centre* in Georgia.

Three development cooperation projects were implemented, focusing on supporting the system of reintegration onto the labour market for members of the population susceptible to migration in Georgia and developing the capacities of Georgian state administration, preventing illegal migration from Georgia and developing the educational and economic activities of Georgian refugees from South Ossetia, supporting the stabilisation and improvement of the living conditions for inhabitants in the Orpiri area, improving the quality of waste water treatment in the city hospital in Gori, supporting migration management and the development of social enterprise.

Cultural relations

An exhibition of *Czech Gems* was held in the Tbilisi History Museum from 26 January to 8 February 2009. The exhibition received approx. 1,300 visitors over the fortnight.

In March 2009, the touring exhibition *The Magic World of Czech Illustrators for Children* opened in the Children's Art Gallery in the centre of Tbilisi.

In May 2009, the foyer of the Opera and Ballet Theatre in Tbilisi hosted a concert of chamber music by Czech duo *Musica Grata*.

In June 2009, an exhibition entitled *The Martinů Phenomenon* was inaugurated in the Tbilisi State Conservatory following a music concert. A concert of works by A. Dvořák was performed by the Georgian National String Quartet along with the rector of the Tbilisi State Conservatory.

On 18 December 2009, the premiere of the Georgian version of Czech fairytale *Princess with the Golden Hair* took place in the Nodar Dumbadze children's theatre. The production was assisted by a financial contribution from the Czech Republic to promote studies of Czech language and literature; this contribution was mainly used to pay for costume and set materials.

MOLDOVA

(Republic of Moldova)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 22 April 2009 – visit by Prime Minister and President of the Council of the European Union M. Topolánek.

Visits by representatives of Moldova

- 7 May 2009 – visit to Prague by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Stratan (to attend the Eastern Partnership summit).

Other meetings

- 13 November 2009 – Bucharest (Romania) – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration I. Leancă on the sidelines of the Central European Initiative summit.

Economic relations

In 2009, the Czech Republic's trade turnover with Moldova fell by 37% from CZK 1,284 million in 2008 to CZK 811 million. Czech exports were down by 30% from CZK 888 million in 2008 to CZK 660 million in 2009; imports from Moldova fell by 52% from CZK

396 million to CZK 189 million. The Czech Republic ended the year 2009 with a balance of trade surplus of CZK 433 million with Moldova.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: motor vehicles, plastics and plastic products, metal products (reactors, boilers), paper, cardboard and products of such, pharmaceuticals, electrical audio and video recording reproduction devices, soap and washing preparations.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: beverages and liquids, iron and steel, fruit and vegetable preparations, clothing and footwear.

Transformation and development cooperation

In 2009, eleven development cooperation projects were implemented in the fields of migration and security, social development, education, agriculture and the environment, in addition to several "small-scale local development projects". The most important project completed in 2009 was designed to mitigate the negative impacts of water management in the town of Leova on the environment and the population's health.

Under transformation cooperation, three projects were implemented in Moldova in 2009. The projects were designed to support the democratisation of municipal administration, develop capacities and promote civic participation in the Cahul region, and to strengthen civil society/small non-governmental organisations in the Transnistria region. A pilot project focusing on the transfer of know-how in the field of direct foreign investments was launched in autumn 2009.

Cultural relations

In January 2009, there was a *Festival of Czech Cinema* in Chisinau, during which eleven films were screened. The festival was accompanied by an exhibition entitled *The Czech Republic – Folklore Superpower*. Concerts of Czech classical music took place in March 2009. Moldovan schools took part in the 37th year of the *Lidice International Children's Art Competition*.

Cooperation with the Czech community in Moldova went ahead, including support provided in the form of financial donations.

RUSSIA

(Russian Federation)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 10 January 2009 – talks between Prime Minister M. Topolánek and President of the Russian Federation V. Putin in Moscow as part of the endeavour to resolve the gas crisis;
- 17 January 2009 – Minister of Industry and Trade M. Říman attended an international gas conference;
- 11 February 2009 – EU-Russia foreign ministers Troika meeting in Moscow (delegation of the Czech presidency led by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg);
- 5-8 April 2009 – talks conducted by Minister of Industry and Trade M. Říman in Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk provinces, accompanied by a business mission;
- 30 April 2009 – 4th session of the *European Union-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Energy* in Moscow (delegation of the Czech presidency led by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg);
- 14-15 May 2009 – 10th session of the European Union-Russia Permanent Partnership Council at the level of justice and interior ministers in Kaliningrad (delegation of the Czech presidency led by Minister of the Interior M. Pecina and Minister of Justice D. Kovářová);
- 21-22 May 2009 – 23rd European Union-Russia summit in Khabarovsk, attended by President V. Klaus and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 6-7 June 2009 – Minister of Agriculture J. Šebesta attended the World Grain Forum in St. Petersburg and had a meeting with the agriculture minister of the Russian Federation;
- 14 October 2009 – visit by President V. Klaus;
- 20 October 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout attended the opening of a Škoda Volkswagen plant in Kaluga;
- 10-11 November 2009 – visit to Tatarstan by Minister of the Interior M. Pecina;
- 1-3 December 2009 – visit to St. Petersburg by a delegation of the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport of the Senate of Parliament, led by committee chairman J. Hajda;
- 1-5 December 2009 – visit to Moscow by Minister of Culture V. Riedlbauch; talks with Minister of Culture A. Avdeyev and participation at the opening of the International Book Fair *Non-Fiction 2009*.

Visits by representatives of Russia

- 14-15 September 2009 – 5th session of the Czech-Russian *Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific-Technical Cooperation* in Prague (Russian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister A. Zhukov, who had separate meetings on 14 September 2009 with President V. Klaus, Prime Minister J. Fischer, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček, President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták and Minister of Industry and Trade V. Tošovský).

Economic relations

The Czech Republic's foreign trade with the Russian Federation registered a palpable decline in the first eleven months of 2009, with trade turnover falling by 34.8% in Czech koruna terms and by 41.9% in US dollar terms. Exports were down by 34.1% and 41.3% respectively, imports by 35% and 42.2% respectively. The general fall in the price of raw materials and the fall in demand for Czech industrial products were the main reasons that the Russian Federation dropped down the ranking of the Czech Republic's trading partners in terms of trade turnover from 7th place in 2008 to 10th place, i.e. a reversion to its position in 2007. Czech exports to Russia were worth CZK 49.6 billion in 2009, while Russian exports to the Czech Republic attained a value of CZK 102.5 billion.

Nevertheless, the Russian Federation continues to be one of the Czech Republic's key trading partners; this was confirmed by the Czech industry and trade ministry's decision to retain the Russian Federation on the list of foreign trade priority countries, which was narrowed down from eighteen to twelve countries in the first half of 2009. It is a reasonable assumption that further dynamic growth in mutual trade and investments will continue once the consequences of the global economic crisis have dissipated.

The platform for economic cooperation is the Czech-Russian *Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific-Technical Cooperation (IGC)*, whose fifth session took place in Prague in September 2009. The IGC and its working groups are currently an important and effective instrument of economic dialogue, including support for joint projects and other mutually beneficial activities. Economic diplomacy projects targeting

the Russian regions were another important form of support for Czech exports and investments in 2009.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: motor vehicle parts and accessories, automatic data processing machinery, passenger automobiles, industrial machinery and plant equipment, electrical instruments etc.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: crude oil, natural gas, semi-finished products of iron, steel and other metals, iron ore, synthetic rubber, fuel cells for nuclear power stations, helicopters, mineral fertilisers etc.

Cultural relations

Czech culture was successfully promoted in the Russian Federation in 2009 thanks to the combined efforts of consulates general in St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg and the Czech Centre in Moscow.

The Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union resulted in increased interest in high-quality cultural presentations of the Czech Republic among the Russian public. An exhibition entitled *Seventeen Centuries of Bohemian Garnet*, organised in St. Petersburg in cooperation with the National Museum in Prague and opened with a ceremony attended by president of the Senate of Parliament of the Czech Republic and the Czech culture minister, generated an outstanding response. The culmination of the cultural presentation activities was two productions of V. Havel's play *Leaving* by the Klicper Theatre from Hradec Králové in the prestigious Taganka Theatre in Moscow, which was awarded the status of an official event accompanying the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union.

To mark the anniversary of November 1989, the Czech Centre in Moscow organised an international history conference entitled *Transformation Processes in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the Years 1989-2009*, which was accompanied by other cultural and social events. The most demanding presentation project in Russia in 2009 was the extensive exposition installed at the *International Book Fair Non-fiction*, at which the Czech Republic was that year's principal guest country. The opening ceremony was attended by the Czech culture minister, who also participated in a whole series of other accompanying events presenting Czech literary culture in its entirety.

UKRAINE

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- January 2009 – repeated talks in Kiev between Prime Minister M. Topolánek and President V. Yushchenko and Prime Minister Y. Tymoshenko to find a solution to the gas crisis;
- 26-29 May 2009 – visit by the Committee on Foreign Affairs the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- 9 October 2009 – Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle addressed a session of the *ATA General Assembly* in Kiev.

Visits by representatives of Ukraine

- 5 February 2009 – EU-Ukraine foreign ministers Troika meeting in Prague; the Ukrainian delegation was led by Minister for Foreign Affairs V. Ohryzko; during bilateral talks between the foreign ministers of the Czech Republic and Ukraine a Plan of Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine was signed;
- 24-25 March 2009 – official visit by President V. Yushchenko;
- 7 April 2009 – Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs K. Yeliseyev attended an informal meeting on the Eastern Partnership;
- 7 May 2009 – President V. Yushchenko attended the Eastern Partnership launch summit.

Economic relations

The global economic crisis caused trade turnover for 2009 to fall by approx. 50 % from 2008 to CZK 25.37 billion (exports CZK 14.3 billion, imports CZK 11.1 billion).

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and plant equipment (passenger automobiles and components for manufacture of such, power-generating equipment etc.), accounting for 52 % of exports; chemicals with 20 %, market products with 7.5 %.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: raw materials (ores, concentrates, fuels etc.) accounting for 59 % of imports; market products with 15 %.

One significant event in bilateral trade and economic relations in 2009 was the 3rd session of the *Mixed Czech-Ukrainian Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific and Technical Cooperation* held in Kiev on 17-18 September.

Humanitarian aid

In response to the influenza and respiratory illnesses epidemic, the Czech Republic provided Ukraine with humanitarian aid worth CZK 848,500 through the World Health Organisation. The Vysočina region provided financial aid of CZK 200,000 to its partner Zakarpatska region to fight the epidemic.

Transformation and development cooperation

Transformation promotion projects are also designed to strengthen Ukraine's democratic system and European orientation; for example, these projects focus on work with educational institutions in eastern Ukraine, mitigating ethnic tension in the Crimea, and providing information about the European Union and sharing Czech experiences. The Czech Republic also implements projects in the fields of nuclear power plant modernisation, forest ecosystems and migration in Ukraine.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine concerning Strategic Airlift, Prague, 24 March 2009;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the State Committee of Ukraine for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy and the Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing, Kiev, 18 September 2009;
- Protocol between the Czech Statistical Office, the General Directorate of Customs of the Czech Republic, the State Customs Service of Ukraine and the State Committee of Ukraine for Statistics on Cooperation in the Area of Exchange of Customs and Statistical Information, Kiev, 17 September 2009.

Cultural relations

The Czech Centre in Kiev is the body that organises cultural contacts and events. In 2009, the Czech Centre was the principal organiser of 36 cultural events of various kinds and

the co-organiser of a further nine events. The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Kiev and honorary consulates in Donetsk and Lvov also participated in the events.

Most of the Czech Centre's events took place in Kiev, but many were also staged outside the capital – particularly in Lvov, Donetsk, Odessa, Tarnopol, Melitopol, Uzhgorod and other locations. A number of these events were organised in cooperation with local partners, Czech community associations and certain foreign cultural institutions operating in Ukraine. Cooperation in the field of culture between the Czech Centre in Kiev and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Minsk commenced during 2009.

A series of concerts was held in Lvov, Uzhgorod and the State Philharmonic in Kiev to mark the start of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The *Martinů Ensemble* performed works by Czech composers; in Kiev the ensemble shared the stage with Ukrainian string quartet *Post Scriptum*.

Š. Rak's performance at the Ukraine international classical guitar competition that ran from 8-13 December 2009 generated considerable media interest. A screening of films entitled *The Golden Sixties* in Kiev and Lvov was very well received.

To close the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union an exhibition of photographs entitled *A Day in the Life of the Czech Republic* was staged in the gallery of the Kiev-Mohyla Academy and later in Donetsk.

The prestigious Gallery 36 in Kiev put on an exhibition of paintings by M. Hajnal. His series of Holocaust-based paintings was simultaneously displayed at the Shalom Aleichem Museum in Kiev and other works by Hajnal were presented in the premises of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Kiev.

5. The Czech Republic's relations with southeast European countries

The countries of south-eastern Europe rank among the Czech Republic's important partners. In this group of countries, some are already members of the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance, while others are still aspiring to membership. It is these countries' relations with the Union that determine the Czech Republic's foreign policy towards them – towards member states and non-members. At the same time, the Czech Republic's foreign policy has afforded long-term support to southeast European countries' membership of the European Union and NATO, and the question of European Union enlargement was one of the priorities of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009.

The Czech Republic continued to strengthen the intensive cooperation with European Union member states in southeast Europe both within the framework of the Union and in regular bilateral contacts. The dynamism of relations was enhanced further by the Czech Republic's role as president of the Council of the European Union.

Czech foreign policy towards the countries of south-eastern Europe that are not Union members was guided by the effort to promote stabilisation, the development of democracy and the consolidation of the rule of law, the implementation of economic and social reforms, strengthening interpersonal contacts and achieving visa liberalisation with western Balkans countries, both at Union level and bilaterally. The Czech Republic made maximum use of the option of visa facilitation when issuing visas to citizens of western Balkans countries.

Non-European Union states of south-eastern Europe are also significant beneficiaries of Czech developmental and transformational assistance. Young people from the region study at Czech universities. The Czech Republic takes part in European Union twinning projects and on a bilateral basis shares its experiences from preparing for Union membership with the countries in question. One of the biggest Czech military contingents also operates in this region.

The countries of south-eastern Europe are important economic and trade partners of the Czech Republic, accounting for almost 3% of Czech foreign trade turnover and 3.5 % of Czech exports in 2009. Despite the Czech Republic's efforts to minimise the impacts the financial and economic crisis had on trade and economic relations, in 2009 trade exchange fell by almost a quarter from the previous year's level. The region continues to be a focus of significant Czech investment, especially in the power industry. Despite the economic crisis, Czech investments continued to flow into the countries of the region.

In its bilateral relations with the countries of the region, the Czech Republic strove to assist their universal development. The widening of the treaty framework and the further intensification of cultural exchange both contribute to this endeavour. Above all, presidency of the Council of the European Union provided an opportunity for extensive presentation of Czech culture, organised mainly by embassies. Close contacts with Czech communities and societies of friends of the Czech Republic were an integral part of foreign policy.

Despite a slight fall in numbers, the region continued to be one of the most sought-after destinations for Czech tourists wishing to holiday by the sea.

ALBANIA

(Republic of Albania)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 3-5 March 2009 – visit by General V. Pícek, Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic;
- 7-8 May 2009 – official visit by Minister for Regional Development C. Svoboda;
- 5-6 October 2009 – official visit by President V. Klaus;
- 24-27 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament.

Visits by representatives of Albania

- 21 January 2009 – working visit by Minister of European Integration M. Bregu;
- 28 April 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister S. Berisha;
- 7 December 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs I. Meta.

Economic relations

Mutual trade and economic relations are focused on deepening cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises and institutions in the two countries. Most of the business done to date has been on the basis of one-off contracts, however, and does not constitute long-term cooperation between Czech and Albanian firms. The Czech Republic maintained a large balance of trade surplus with Albania, with Czech exports worth ten times the value of imports (exports CZK 0.55 billion, imports CZK 0.04 billion).

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: washing and cleansing preparations, automatic gambling machines, passenger vehicles, automatic data processing machines, switchboards.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: plants for the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries, dried fruit, woollen clothing accessories, footwear.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy of the Republic of Albania in the Fields of Trade, Investments, Infrastructure, and the Energy and Extraction Sector, 30 March 2009;
- Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on Cooperation in Combating Crime, Prague, 28 April 2009.

Development cooperation

As part of the Czech Republic's development cooperation with Albania, a three-year project entitled *Implementation of New Environmental Technology for the Oil Industry, Kuçova Region* was opened; its total budget is CZK 20 million. Two other projects were implemented, *Insufficient Care for Long-term Patients (Mainly Oncological Ones, Who Need Palliative Care) in Albania* and *Re-education of Vulnerable Young Generation in Diocese of Rreshen*, for which the Czech Republic earmarked sums of CZK 1.5 million and CZK 500,000 respectively. In 2009, the Czech Republic provided a total of nine government scholarships for Albanians to study in the Czech Republic.

Cultural relations

Cultural and presentation events marking the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union included a concert by dulcimer group *Hradišťan* in Tirana on 7 May 2009. A documentary film called *The Tender Revolution* was screened on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of 17 November 1989. The most interesting Czech-Albanian cultural cooperation project in 2009 was the first Czech-Albanian co-production film *The Sorrow of Mrs. Schnaider*.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 8-9 April 2009 – visit to Sarajevo by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg (joint visit by ministers of the European Union presidency country, France and Sweden);
- 14-16 December 2009 – visit to Sarajevo by a delegation of the Committee on Defence of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by the committee chairman J. Vidím.

Visits by representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina

- 27-28 March 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Alkalaj (informal meeting of foreign ministers of European Union and Western Balkans countries at Hluboká nad Vltavou);
- 27-28 April 2008 – visit by Minister of Security T. Sadović to Prague (European Union conference on migration);
- 5 May 2009 – visit by the Commission for Sexual Equality of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- 7 May 2009 – visit by Minister of Defence S. Cikotić to Brno (military equipment trade fair);
- 26-30 June 2009 – visit by Minister for Human Rights and Refugees S. Halilović and Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Alkalaj to Prague (*Holocaust* conference);
- 27 August 2009 – unofficial visit by Prime Minister of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina M. Dodik, Speaker of the Parliament of Republika Srpska I. Radojičić and Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining of Republika Srpska S. Puhalc to Prague.

In the first half of the year, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Sarajevo represented the European Union at regular meetings of the *Steering Board of the Peace*

Implementation Council (PIC SB) and, together with the European Commission Permanent Delegation, in contacts with institutions and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Czech Republic provided financial and personnel contributions to the work of the *Office of the High Representative (OHR)* and the *EU Special Representative (EUSR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the *EU Police Mission (EUPM)* and the *EUFOR military mission*. It also made significant contributions to mine clearance (through the *International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance*) and to locating and identifying persons who disappeared during the armed conflict (through the *International Commission on Missing Persons*).

Economic relations

The global economic and financial crisis caused trade turnover between the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina to decline from the 2008 levels. The trade imbalance deepened further, with Czech exports almost four times greater in value than imports. Czech firms' interest was channelled mainly into the promising energy and transport infrastructure sectors. At the end of the year, Czech energy firms Škoda Power a.s., Plzeň, and AE&E CZ s.r.o, Brno, won contracts to renovate the machine room and boiler at the Kakanj Thermal Power Plant.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles and automobile industry items, boilers, apparatus, mechanical instruments, electronic sound recording and reproduction equipment.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: iron ore concentrates, steel industry products, boilers, apparatus, mechanical instruments, oil and fuel automobile filters, footwear, furniture, paper and paper products.

Transformation and development cooperation

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the priority countries of Czech development cooperation. Transfer of technologies in waste management, cooperation in the power sector, capacity building and transfer of know-how in agriculture, stabilisation of returnees through the renewal and development of agriculture, and cooperation in rail transport were identified as the priority sectors of this development cooperation for the 2006-2010 period. There were 24 projects being implemented in 2009 with a total budget of CZK 52 million. The most

significant project at present is the supply of spare parts for the renovation of trams in Sarajevo, where public lighting is being installed on the M-18 road in Živinice municipality.

The Czech Republic also continued with its support for small local projects in the fields of culture, healthcare and mine clearance. In addition, the Czech Republic actively participated in the area of studies and scholarships for study at Czech universities. In both cases, there was a considerable increase in demand from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Czech Republic thus now provides more scholarships to Bosnian students than any other European Union country. The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina also initiated and oversaw the creation of an internet database of study and scholarship opportunities in European Union countries for students from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As part of transformation assistance, the Czech Republic provided a total of CZK 2.5 million in support for projects focusing on better-quality news reporting on European integration and reform, improving journalists' qualifications, and environmental issues.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning Development Cooperation of 22 June 2006, Sarajevo, 2 April 2009;
- Protocol between the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Amendments to the Agreement between the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Promotion and Protection of Investments signed on April 17, 2002 in Sarajevo, Sarajevo, 9 June 2009.

Cultural relations

The Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union meant that the Czech Republic had a rich cultural programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2009. There were 38 cultural and presentation events featuring classical, popular and jazz music, fine art, theatre and film-related exhibitions and other events presenting world-famous Czech personalities, history and products.

BULGARIA

(Republic of Bulgaria)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 3-5 March 2009 – visit by Minister of Justice J. Pospíšil.

Visits by representatives of Bulgaria

- 18 March 2009 – working visit by President G. Parvanov;
- 27-28 March 2009 – visit to Prague by Minister of Foreign Affairs I. Kalfin (informal meeting of foreign ministers of European Union and Western Balkans countries at Hluboká nad Vltavou);
- 22-23 May 2009 – working visit by President of the National Assembly G. Pirinski.

Economic relations

Bilateral trade exchange fell in 2009, both in Czech exports by more than 20% (to CZK 9.5 billion) and in imports from Bulgaria by almost 10% (to CZK 2.7 billion). The value of total foreign trade turnover in 2009 was approximately CZK 12.4 billion, with exports from the Czech Republic worth CZK 9.6 billion and imports to the Czech Republic worth CZK 2.8 billion. Czech firms' interest in Bulgaria continues to focus mainly on participation in development and infrastructure modernisation projects in the fields of transport, power and the environment.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: industrial plant equipment, power-generating machinery and plant equipment, electrical apparatus and instruments, telecommunications equipment, road vehicles, printing machines, dairy products, medicaments and pharmaceuticals, plastics, rubber products, cleansing preparations, metal products, iron and steel.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: electrical apparatus, instruments and appliances, metal waste, medical products, plumbing and heating equipment, clothing products, beverages, cereals and cereal products, textile fibres and waste of such.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria on Cooperation in Combating Crime and Protecting Public Order and Security, Brussels, 30 November 2009.

Cultural relations

The main musical activities were classical music concerts organised under the international *Martinů Revisited* project and a concert marking the start of the Czech presidency at which the Prague Chamber Philharmonic shared the stage with the Bulgarian New Symphony Orchestra. The tradition of regular jazz evenings featuring leading Czech and Bulgarian jazz musicians went ahead successfully.

In fine art, there was a successful interactive exhibition entitled *Orbis Pictus*, an exhibition of P. Sís's work *The Wall* marking the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, and an exhibition of paintings by J. Sozanský entitled *Outsiders*. In cinema, the *FAMU Film Fest* took place and the *One World* regular cycle of human rights films went ahead.

The traditional Czech language courses organised by the Czech Centre attracted considerable attention. Societies of friends and the Czech community also successfully promoted the Czech language in Bulgaria.

CROATIA

(Republic of Croatia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 20-21 May 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 9-10 July 2009 – Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle attended the *Croatia Summit* in Dubrovnik;
- 24-25 October 2010 – working visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka.

Visits by representatives of Croatia

- 4 March 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister I. Sanader in connection with the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union;

- 27-28 March 2009 – visit to Prague by Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration G. Jandroković (informal meeting of foreign ministers of European Union and Western Balkans countries at Hluboká nad Vltavou).

Economic relations

As a result of the economic crisis, trade exchange registered a palpable decline (by approx. 35%) in 2009, falling to CZK 10.4 billion. Czech exports to Croatia nevertheless attained a value of CZK 8.4 billion in 2009, more than three times the value of imports (CZK 2.0 billion). The Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus with Croatia again increased substantially. This imbalance was partially offset by Croatia's surplus in the exchange of services, with approx. 610,000 Czech tourists visiting Croatia in 2009.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, electricity, hot rolled iron and plain carbon steel sheets, organic cleansing preparations and detergents, computer equipment, iron and plain carbon steel bars, milk and cream, electrical apparatus, seamless tubes and hollow iron sections, extracts, live farm animals, essences and concentrates of coffee and tea, *et al.*

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: sugar, electric transformers, aluminium products, seats, polyacetylates, polyesters and epoxide resins, pharmaceutical products, leather and artificial leather products, chocolate and food products containing chocolate, crude oil and gas hydrocarbons, cigarettes and tobacco products, electricity, aluminium *et al.*

Humanitarian aid

13.5 hectares of agricultural land in Tordinci municipality in the Vukovar district were demined in 2009. The Czech Republic contributed a sum of EUR 100,000 to mine clearance.

Cultural relations

In January and February 2009, there were two exhibitions of photographs by J. Reich in Zagreb and Split. The Bohuslav Martinů Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra performed concerts in March 2009. A *Week of Czech and Czechoslovak Oscar-winning Films* took place in Rijec and Zagreb in April. An exhibition of *Czech Glass in Exile* was staged in May and

June. The traditional *Czech Film Week* was held in October and November in Rijec and Zagreb.

CYPRUS

(Republic of Cyprus)

Visits by representatives of Cyprus

- 3-5 February 2009 – visit by President of the House of Representatives M. Garoyian.

Other meetings

- 17 November 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Kyprianou on the sidelines of the General Affairs and External Relations Committee of the European Union in Brussels.

Economic relations

From January to the end of November 2009, trade turnover grew by 15% to attain a value of CZK 1.6 billion thanks to Czech exports to Cyprus, which after two years of dynamic growth and subsequent stagnation again increased by 19% (2009: CZK 1.071 billion). Imports from Cyprus registered slight growth (up 6% to CZK 0.5 billion) compared to the same period in 2008. Trade exchange remained imbalanced, however, with the Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus exceeding the total value of imports to the Czech Republic from Cyprus.

In May 2009, Prague hosted a *Business Forum* organised by the two countries' chambers of commerce with the *Cyprus-Czech Republic Business Association* and the *Czech-Cypriot Chamber of Commerce*. Fifteen Cypriot firms (all law, accountancy and tax firms) took part in the forum. The board of directors of the Cyprus-Czech Republic Business Association and the participating Cypriot firms all regarded the event as a success.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and mechanical equipment, audio and video recording devices, iron and steel, motor vehicles, organic chemical products, washing powders.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: pharmaceutical products, audio and video recording devices, citrus fruit.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Cyprus for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and Protocol, Nicosia, 28 April 2009. The Agreement entered into force on 26 November 2009.

Cultural relations

The most significant cultural events organised in 2009 included a joint concert by the Cyprus State Orchestra and the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring two Turkish soloists, in June. A festival of films by directors J. Menzel and S. Kramer in February 2009 received a very good response.

In October 2009, there was a fashion show by designer H. Fejková, organised in cooperation with the *Diplomatic Ladies' Association of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus* under the auspices of the First Lady of Cyprus Mrs Elsi Christofia. During 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Nicosia also organised an exhibition of MOSER glass at the Leventis Municipal Museum, jazz concerts by the M. Svoboda Quartet and Cyprus' Big Band, and a joint exhibition of works by Czech artist O. Spanou and Dutch painter L. Aards entitled *One World*.

GREECE

(Hellenic Republic)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 3-4 May 2009 – President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček and chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the Senate of Parliament L. Sefzig attended the 7th meeting of the parliamentary speakers of *Adriatic-Ionian Initiative* participating countries;
- 14 June 2009 – bilateral consultations between Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Y. Valinakis on the EU agenda (in Luxembourg);
- 11-12 August 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Defence J. Fulík;
- 9-12 October 2009 – the Permanent Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly attended a session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Athens;

- 1-2 December 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout attended the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens.

Visits by representatives of Greece

- 29 May – 1 April 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Standing Committee on Cultural and Educational Affairs of Parliament;
- 1-4 December 2009 – official visit by President V. Papoulias.

Economic relations

In the period from January to the end of October 2009, the economic crisis caused trade with Greece to fall sharply from the level in the same period in 2008, both on the side of Czech exports (index 84.7) and imports (index 81.8). Czech exports attained a value of CZK 7.9 billion and imports CZK 2.74 billion. Expressed in euros, the decline in exports and imports was even greater (79.8 and 76.8). Trade turnover registered a fall of -16%, or -21%. Despite the fall of just under 15%, Czech exports continued to be dominated by machinery and transport equipment, in particular Škoda automobiles. Even exports of Škoda automobiles to Greece were down by 18%, however. There was a very pronounced decline in tractors exports (-78%).

Imports accounted for almost a quarter of total trade turnover. Consequently, the Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus with Greece remained large (approx. CZK 4.3 billion). This surplus is partially offset in the exchange of services, especially tourism (with over a quarter of a million Czech tourists visiting Greece every year).

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, automatic data processing machines, prams, toys and sports equipment, monitors, projectors and television sets, musical instruments, paper and paperboard, clothing and underwear, tyres.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: medicaments, oranges, fresh, dried and preserved fruit, nuts, aluminium, fats and oils, alcoholic beverages, fresh, frozen and chilled vegetables, textile industry products, copper, plastic articles, motor vehicle parts and accessories, tobacco.

Priority sectors for strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries included transport infrastructure in Greece (primarily railways), agricultural equipment, and

energy and the environment (equipment and technologies for waste and water management and electricity generation using renewables, fire safety technologies). Tourism occupies an important place in bilateral economic relations, accounting for 90% of turnover in services.

Cultural relations

During 2009, and particularly during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of the year, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Athens organised a number of cultural and educational events covering a wide range of cultural genres (music, fine art, literature). The events, some of which took place outside the Greek capital, met with considerable interest and positive responses among the expert and lay public in Greece. Other significant cultural events included the premiere of A. Dvořák's opera *Rusalka* at the National Opera in Athens (March 2009), and the publication of a translation of I. Klíma's book *A Summer of Love* into modern Greek, combined with a visit to Athens by this prominent, internationally renowned author.

Contacts in the fields of education and science were also successfully developed.

As in previous years, there were exchanges of participants in summer language courses, academic workers and university students under the *Programme of Cultural and Educational Cooperation*. There also continued to be strong interest in university study in the Czech Republic, primarily at Czech medical faculties.

KOSOVO

(Republic of Kosovo)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 19 August 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták;
- 29 May 2009 – visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták (to the Czech KFOR contingent).

Visits by representatives of Kosovo

- 27-28 March 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Hyseni attended the informal meeting of EU and Western Balkans ministers (Gymnich) at Hluboká nad Vltavou.

In February 2009, Kosovo requested permission to open an embassy in Prague, which was granted in March 2009. At the invitation of the International Court of Justice in The Hague preparing an opinion on the conformity to international law of the declaration of the independence of Kosovo, the Czech Republic provided its written opinion. According to the Czech Republic, the declaration of independence did not contravene the current principles of international law.

Economic relations

Economic cooperation with Kosovo is developing gradually. Czech businesses are mainly active in the power sector. ČEZ is taking part in a tender for a project to build a new thermal power plant. Other Czech companies have expressed an interest in the modernisation of the power sector; some of these companies are already implementing projects in the power and mining industries.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: organic chemicals, tyres, accumulators, washing and cleansing preparations, dyes, chipboard, frozen semi-finished products, gambling machines, automobiles.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: zinc, metal waste, jewellery, acrylic polymers.

Development cooperation

Development cooperation with Kosovo continued in 2009 within the framework of the project priorities of Czech foreign development cooperation. The sectoral priorities of this cooperation targeted the power industry, healthcare, employment support and socio-economic development.

A two-year project of *Technical Support for the Treatment of Complicated Traumatological Health Conditions in Kosovo* went ahead in 2009; the project's total value is CZK 52 million. Two social development projects were implemented: the construction of a bakery for the Ashkali minority (CZK 892,000) and sewers in the town of Podujevo (CZK 1,400,000). Other activities included a project designed to renovate the electricity grid in the mixed municipality of Binçë/Binać (CZK 410,000); a project consisting of archaeological exploration, rehabilitation and repairs in the Jewish cemetery in Pristina (CZK 320,000); a

training project for trainers for the blind and the visually impaired (CZK 375,000); a project for teaching professional skills to pupils at the School Centre for Children with Hearing Defects in Prizren (CZK 215,000).

Honouring its pledge from the international donors conference for Kosovo, in 2009 the Czech Republic approved the provision of approx. CZK 12.5 million (EUR 500,000) as a contribution to the World Bank Trust Fund for development of the social sector in Kosovo. In addition, projects supporting the training of forensic investigation with the OSCE and the renovation of the electricity distribution network in the multiethnic municipality of Berivojce with the UNDP were completed. The two projects received financing of CZK 1.1 million and CZK 1.75 million respectively from the Czech Republic.

Cultural relations

As part of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union a culture days event featuring screenings of Czech films was staged in April 2009.

Presence of the Czech Republic in international organisations and operations in Kosovo

The contingent of the Army of the Czech Republic continued to serve in KFOR as part of the *Multinational Task Force Centre*. A contribution of EUR 100,000 was provided to the NATO Trust Fund for the stand-up of the Kosovo Security Force.

A group of Czech policemen served in the *EULEX Kosovo mission*. Czech experts were also engaged in other components of the *ICO International Civilian Office (ICO)* and the EULEX mission.

MACEDONIA / FYROM

(Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/FYROM)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 10 March 2009 – working official visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek;
- 24 April 2009 – visit by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament;
- 19 May 2009 – visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka;
- 27 May 2009 – visit by First Deputy Minister of the Environment J. Dusík;

- 18-21 August 2009 – visit by Minister of Culture V. Riedlbauch;
- 2 September 2009 – working official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout..

Visits by representatives of FYROM

- 29-30 January 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs I. Bocevski attended the *Ensuring Energy Security for Member States of the European Union Within the Framework of the Common Electricity Market* conference in Ostrava;
- 27-28 March 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Milošoský attended the informal meeting of foreign affairs ministers (Gymnich) at Hluboká nad Vltavou;
- 26-30 June 2009 – Minister of Culture E. Kančesky–Milevsky attended the *Holocaust Era Assets Conference* in Prague;
- 25-26 November 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs V. Naumovski.

Economic relations

Trade exchange in 2009 was negatively affected by the global economic crisis and registered a decline of approximately 30%. Despite a roughly 25% reduction, the Czech Republic maintained its large balance of trade surplus with Macedonia/FYROM. During 2009, Macedonia/FYROM ranged from being the Czech Republic's 65th to the 70th biggest trading partner.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: motor vehicles, tractors, boilers, electrical devices, cleansing and washing preparations, glass and glass products, sugar and confectionary, food products of animal origin, paper, cardboard, paperboard.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: iron and steel and products of such, beverages, spirit-based liquids, tobacco and tobacco products, clothing and accessories, knitted textiles, vegetables, fruit, zinc and zinc products.

Development cooperation

A three-year project to remediate *Ecological Hotspots at the OHIS Chemicals Factory in Skopje* worth a total of CZK 9,447,000 was completed in 2009.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Protocol between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Macedonia Amending the Agreement between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Macedonia on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, Brussels, 5 April 2009;
- Arrangement on Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 19 August 2009.

Cultural relations

Cultural relations between the two countries registered considerable development thanks to the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. Language teaching at universities in the two countries has for long been a significant area of cooperation. Czech has been taught at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; in the Czech Republic, Macedonian has been taught at Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic provided four places at Czech language summer schools and the same number of students from the Czech Republic were invited to the Macedonian language summer school in Ohrid. Three government scholarships for study at Czech universities were provided to Macedonia/FYROM for the 2008/9 academic year; six government scholarships were provided for the 2009/2010 academic year.

In 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Macedonia/FYROM played a major role in the publication of the 4th volume of a digest of *Czechoslovak Diplomatic Documents on Macedonia*; the embassy co-organised the *Lidice 2009* international children's art exhibition and, in the context of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, participated in a number of important cultural, artistic and educational projects (including a concert by V. Hudeček, an exhibition of works by A. Born, a screening of films by J. Menzel, Czech film week and a performance by the National Theatre ballet).

MONTENEGRO

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 11 March 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek in the context of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- 24-25 June 2009 – visit by director of the National Security Authority D. Navrátil;
- 21-26 June 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions of the Senate of Parliament.

Visits by representatives of Montenegro

- 27-28 March 2009 – visit to Prague by Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Roćen (informal meeting of foreign ministers of European Union and Western Balkans countries at Hluboká nad Vltavou);
- 7-8 December 2009 – Speaker of Parliament R. Krivokapić attended a congress of the Party of European Socialists in Prague in his capacity as chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Montenegro.

For the first time the Consular Office of the Czech Republic in Podgorica was open for a full year as an arm of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Belgrade. Its role is to facilitate Czech tourism in Montenegro, provide assistance in need and promote cooperation in tourism.

Economic relations

The global financial and economic crisis in 2009 caused a significant fall in trade exchange. Czech exports fell to almost half the level of 2008; Czech imports attained roughly only a quarter of the value of the previous year.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: audio and video recording and reproduction devices; vehicles, tractors, wheels, fuels, oils, wax, soap, polishing preparations, wooden products, wood, coal, glass, glass products, rubber and rubber products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: iron and steel products, fuels, oils, wax, fruit, nuts, audio and video recording and reproduction devices, pharmaceutical products, spare parts for vehicles and tractors.

The *Czech-Montenegro Trade and Economic Forum* took place in Podgorica on 14-15 October 2009.

Cultural relations

The most significant cultural events were a series of performances by *Hradištan* in Podgorica and Kotor in spring 2009 and the ceremonial presentation of a book by F. Šístek on the history of Czech-Montenegrin relations.

ROMANIA

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 29-31 March 2009 – working visit by Minister of Justice J. Pospíšil;
- 5 June 2009 – working visit by Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle;
- 8-9 November 2009 – visit by General V. Pícek, Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic;
- 12-13 November 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout attended the Central European Initiative ministerial meeting and summit.

Visits by representatives of Romania

- 16 April 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs C. Diaconescu;
- 15-16 July 2009 – state visit by President T. Basescu.

Economic relations

Unlike in previous years, in 2009 there was a pronounced fall in mutual trade exchange, caused by the global economic slowdown. Among other things, that was reflected in a decline in Romanian consumption and thus also imports. Romania nevertheless remains the Czech Republic's biggest economic partner in the southeast Europe region. Exports from the Czech Republic attained a value of CZK 23.6 billion in 2009 and imports from Romania CZK 10.0 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger motor vehicles, motor vehicle parts and accessories, transport equipment, parts and spares for rail transport vehicles, iron and steel and products of such, reactors, boilers, electrical apparatus, devices and appliances, plastics and plastic products, metal products, rubber products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: wire, cables, conductors, turbines and boilers, iron and steel and products of such, motor vehicle parts and accessories,

electrical apparatus, devices and appliances, industrial machinery and plant equipment, aluminium, rubber, furniture.

Romania is a destination for significant Czech investments. ČEZ remains the biggest Czech investor: in 2009 it increased its investment and became the sole owner of the companies ČEZ Distributie and ČEZ Vanzare. Other major investors include Zentiva and PPF/Generali.

Cultural relations

Events organised as part of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union – concerts of classical and popular music, Czech films at a film festival – can be ranked among the most significant cultural events of 2009. The conference entitled *Twenty Years After* and the screening of documentaries co-organised by the Czech Centre were devoted to the anniversary of the collapse of totalitarian regimes.

Romanian students continued to attend summer language courses in the Czech Republic and students from both countries again participated in several-month study visits in 2009. A Czech language teacher continued to work at Bucharest University and a Romanian language teacher at Charles University in Prague.

In addition, programmes for Czech community members went ahead and three teachers sent from the Czech Republic carried on their work at elementary schools in Svatá Helena, Gernik, and Eibenthal. Members of the Czech community in Romania attended both the language course at Dobruška and a methodological course on Czech language tuition in Prague in 2009.

SERBIA

(Republic of Serbia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 5 March 2009 – working visit by Minister of the Interior I. Langer (to attend a conference on border security);
- 17-20 May 2009 – working visit by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Dienstbier;

- 1-4 June 2009 – working visit by the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Hajda;
- 19-20 June 2009 – President V. Klaus attended the 16th summit of central European presidents in Novi Sad;
- 15 December 2009 – official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták.

Visits by representatives of Serbia

- 23 January 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister for European Union Integration and Minister of Science and Technological Development B. Đelić;
- 28-29 January 2009 – working visit by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior I. Dačić;
- 27-28 March 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs V. Jeremić (informal meeting of foreign ministers of European Union and Western Balkans countries at Hluboká nad Vltavou);
- 8 September 2009 – working visit by Minister of Finance D. Dragutinović;
- 7-8 December 2009 – President B. Tadić attended a congress of the Party of European Socialists in Prague in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Party.

Other meetings

- 22 September 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Minister of Foreign Affairs. V. Jeremić at the 64th United Nations General Meeting in New York;
- 12 December 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Minister of Foreign Affairs. V. Jeremić at the Central European Initiative (CEI) meeting in Bucharest.

Economic relations

The Czech Republic ended 2009 with a balance of trade surplus with Serbia. Czech exports to Serbia attained a value of CZK 5.058 billion in 2009; imports from Serbia were worth CZK 2.94 billion; turnover was CZK 7.14 billion; making the Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus CZK 1.56 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger and goods motor vehicles and spares, chipboard, washing and cleansing preparations, accumulators, electricity, computers, TV sets, polyethylene, iron and steel products, steam turbines.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: aviation equipment and servicing of such, iron and steel sheets and profiles, tyres, sheet aluminium, sheet copper, electricity, sugar, methanol, men's clothing.

Transformation and development cooperation

Serbia is one of the priority countries of Czech foreign development cooperation; in terms of financing and the number of projects Serbia is the biggest beneficiary in the region. In 2009, there were 21 projects being implemented in Serbia, with a total value of approx. CZK 310 million. The projects mainly target industrial development, environmental protection, healthcare and the social field. Another aspect of foreign development cooperation is “*small-scale local projects*” that provide specific assistance to smaller localities, some of which are places where there is a significant Czech community. Twelve such projects with a total value of CZK 2.12 million were implemented in Serbia in 2009.

The Czech Republic provided Serbia with eight government scholarships for study at Czech universities, seven for bachelor's study courses and one for a master's study course.

Serbia is one of nine priority countries for transformation cooperation, i.e. the implementation of projects in which the Czech Republic leverages its own experiences with political and economic transformation. CZK 2.85 million was earmarked for transformation cooperation projects in Serbia in 2009.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Additional Protocol to the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation, Prague, 8 September 2009.

Cultural relations

The most successful and significant cultural events in 2009 included a performance by dulcimer band Hradišťan, an exhibition of photographs by J. Šibík and I. Szábo entitled *Applied Nostalgia*, and a photography exhibition *1989 as Seen by Photographers*, which

documented the atmosphere of 1989 in the then Czechoslovakia and was accompanied by a screening of the documentary film *The Tender Revolution*.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic also organised Czech Glass Days in Belgrade and supported the participation of Czech writers and other artists at significant cultural events in Serbia (J. Rudiš, L. Daňhelová, J. Straka).

TURKEY

(Republic of Turkey)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 19-22 April 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Senate of Parliament, led by its vice-chairman L. Sefzig;
- 23-24 April 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra;
- 19-23 May 2009 – working visit by the Committee on Social Policy of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by its chairman Z. Škromach;
- 18-20 October 2009 – official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 2-5 December 2009 – working visit by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Dienstbier.

Visits by representatives of Turkey

- 11-12 March 2009 – working visit by Minister of State for the European Union and Chief Negotiator with the European Union E. Bağış;
- 27-28 March 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Babacan (informal meeting of foreign ministers of European Union and Western Balkans countries at Hluboká nad Vltavou);
- 29-30 April 2009 – state visit by President A. Gül.

Economic relations

Turkey is one of the Czech Republic's important trading partners. Turkey is the Czech Republic's 21st biggest trading partner in terms of total trade turnover. In the period from January to the end of October 2009, the economic crisis caused trade turnover with Turkey to fall from the level achieved in the same period in 2008 (index 87.7), mainly due to reduced

imports from Turkey (2009: CZK 13.8 billion – index 76.9) Despite the economic crisis, Czech exports managed to grow by one percent year-on-year to a total value of CZK 16.2 billion. The balance of trade surplus for the Czech Republic after many years was a positive result.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles and other passenger vehicles, automatic data processing machines, motor vehicle parts and accessories, telecommunications equipment, audio and video recording and reproduction devices, wool, flat-rolled products, vacuum tubes, X-ray tubes, diodes and transistors, television sets.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: passenger automobiles and other passenger vehicles, clothing and underwear, road motor vehicles, goods motor vehicles, textile clothing components, motor vehicle parts and accessories, household electrical and mechanical devices, television sets.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments, Prague, 29 April 2009.

Cultural relations

The Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union presented an ideal opportunity for promoting various aspects of Czech culture in Turkey. On 4 February 2009, to mark the start of the Czech presidency, the concert hall of the Ankara Museum of Fine Arts hosted a gala concert by the Janáček Quartet, which had previously performed in Istanbul. At the 20th *International Film Festival* in Ankara from 12 to 22 March 2009, the Czech Republic was represented by a retrospective of films by J. Hřebejk; the director attended the event in person. An exhibition of photographs depicting the events of 1968/89 was staged in Istanbul during March. Works by renowned cartoonists V. Jiránek and M. Barták were displayed at the 15th *International Cartoon Festival* in Ankara on 17-20 April 2009. The *Prague Wind Quintet* performed at the Ankara Music Festival on 28 April 2009. The *New Wave* festival in Istanbul from 17 to 27 December 2009 featured a section of 1960s Czech cinema. In education, cooperation between universities in Turkey and the Czech Republic successfully went ahead on the basis of the EU's *Erasmus* and *Socrates* student exchange programmes, under which dozens of Turkish students studied at Czech universities and vice versa.

6. The Czech Republic's Relations with Middle East and North African countries

As close neighbours of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa represent an area of fundamental strategic significance for the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic has a direct interest in the area's stability, prosperity and conflict-free development and, through its bilateral activities and work in the European Union, strives to achieve these goals. In 2009, the development of relations with the countries of the Middle East and North Africa was largely shaped by the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. Although this area was not one of the declared priorities of the presidency, in practice it demanded similar levels of attention and care as the themes and relations identified as key. Intensive contacts with certain states during the presidency brought resurgence in bilateral relations.

The main theme the Czech Republic dealt with during its presidency was the Israeli operation against the *Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)* in Gaza, the operation's consequences and other aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The effort to stop the hostilities and find a long-term solution for the situation in Gaza brought frequent contacts with representatives of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority and also Egypt and Jordan. The frequency of meetings between foreign ministers was unprecedented: in the first quarter of the year the Czech foreign minister made four visits to the Middle East and organised three informal meetings with foreign ministers from the area in Brussels; he took part in *Middle East Quartet* (UN, European Union, Russia, USA) talks and led the European Union's negotiations with the committee of the *League of Arab States*. Czech diplomacy's principal concern was for a quick end to the fighting in Gaza and improvement in the humanitarian situation there. In pursuing these goals, it successfully maintained good communication with both Palestinian representatives and Israel.

The activities of the Czech presidency also comprised ministerial meetings of the Association Councils with Algeria, Egypt, Israel and Lebanon, in informal European Union-Jordan summit and ministerial meetings under the European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council. Other significant bilateral events were related to the presidency: a state visit to the

Czech Republic by King Abdullah of Jordan and visits by Palestinian president M. Abbas and Israeli president S. Peres.

The dynamism injected into relations with certain Middle East countries during the six-month presidency was maintained afterwards; the foreign minister visited three states in the area in the second half of the year. Czech foreign policy paid constant attention to the region's hot spots, such as Yemen, at risk of internal conflicts, and Iran, under observation for its nuclear programme, clashes between the regime and the opposition and the concerning human rights situation.

The countries of the Middle East and North Africa are among the Czech Republic's traditional trading partners, but their current share of the Czech Republic's total trade turnover is modest, amounting to less than 2%. Their share of the Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus is more significant, at around 13% in 2009.

ALGERIA

(People's Democratic Republic of Algeria)

Visits by representatives of Algeria

- 3-6 November 2009 – official visit by Minister of Commerce El-Hachemi Djaaboub with a delegation; cooperation memorandum signed between the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Economic relations

The global crisis impacted on the development of the Algerian economy only indirectly – state budget revenues were influenced by the fall in global oil prices. Despite that the economy continued to grow, which was reflected in mutual trade exchange. Czech exports grew substantially over 2008 levels to attain a value of CZK 3.41 billion. Imports were worth CZK 138 million. Moreover, the question of Algeria's debts to the Czech Republic was fully resolved in 2009.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automatic data processing machines, processors and control units, transmission and reception apparatus, aviation industry components, self-powered building machinery, passenger automobiles, tyres, steel rods, bars, L and H sections, kegs and barrels, pharmaceutical products, hygiene products, glass, light fittings.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: lubricants and mineral oils, fruit, fibres and textiles.

Cultural relations

The Czech Republic presented its culture at a number of events in Algeria in 2009. The most successful events included two exhibitions of photographs: *The Prague Pedestrian* by J. Všetěčka in the desert city of Ghardaia and *The Devil Within Us* by J. Šibík in Algiers. *Brouhátko*, a fairytale acted out by a quartet of mimes J. Grígerová, P. Liška, M. Sochor and Z. Tomeš, was highly enjoyed by the audience of children. The end of the Czech presidency was marked by the inauguration of an exhibition of paintings by J. Švéda and M. Pošvic and a closing concert by the Bierhanzl guitar duo.

BAHRAIN

(Kingdom of Bahrain)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 15-17 November 2009 – visit by Minister of Finance E. Janota at the invitation of Bahraini Minister of Finance Sheikh Ahmad bin Muhammad Al Khalifa; the ratification of an agreement on the mutual promotion and protection of investments was completed during the visit.

Economic relations

The liberal and open economic environment and the highly developed financial and consultancy services sector make Bahrain the ideal starting point for Czech firms looking to expand into the area. Bahraini investors have invested significant amounts in spas in the Czech Republic.

Exports from the Czech Republic increased slightly in 2009 from previous years to exceed CZK 270 million. By contrast, imports from Bahrain to the Czech Republic fell to CZK 8 million, so their share of total imports to the Czech Republic remained minimal.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles; there were also significant contracts for supplies of filtration machinery and high-voltage electrical conductors. The fast rate of population growth and the need to develop the infrastructure

translate into good prospects for rapid growth in imports of medical supplies and consumer goods.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: the only significant commodity in Bahraini exports to the Czech Republic was plastic materials for the building industry.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement on the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments, signed in Prague in autumn 2007, entered into force on 17 November 2009.

EGYPT

(Arab Republic of Egypt)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 4-5 January 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and the European Union Troika, accompanied by the foreign ministers of Sweden and France;
- 17 January 2009 – working visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg;
- 18 January 2009 – Prime Minister M. Topolánek and Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg attend the summit in Sharm el-Sheikh;
- 26 February – 2 March 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Hamáček;
- 2 March 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg attended an international conference in support of the Palestinian economy and reconstruction of Gaza;
- 30 April – 4 May 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Culture J. Talíř;
- 7-8 June 2009 – visit by a delegation of representatives of the national parliaments of European Union member states and the European Parliament, led by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament of the Czech Republic M. Vlček;
- 7-8 October 2009 – official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 23-24 November 2009 – working visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček.

Economic relations

The two states have well-developed and long-term economic relations that were further strengthened in 2009 by business missions to and seminars held in Cairo and Alexandria. The goal was to present and promote firms working in medical equipment manufacture, the chemicals industry and tourism.

The global economic crisis caused trade exchange between the two countries to fall slightly. Trade turnover for 2009 attained a value of CZK 4.654 billion, with exports worth CZK 3.9 billion and imports CZK 0.692 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: motor vehicles, machinery and plant equipment, chemical fibres, iron and steel products, rubber, glass, artificial silk.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: cotton, textile products (cotton underwear), fruit and vegetables, aluminium, soap and washing preparations.

Development cooperation

As part of development cooperation, the Czech Republic provided Egypt with four government scholarships for master's degree study for the 2009/2010 academic year.

Cultural relations

The standard of cooperation in science and culture has traditionally been high. Six cultural and presentation events were organised during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union; three of these events were pan-European in format. After many years, joint European cultural events in Egypt were successfully revived during the Czech presidency.

The Czech presidency was inaugurated in Cairo and Alexandria with a ceremonial *Czech Evening*, at which Czech cuisine was presented and a thematic exhibition entitled *The Czech Republic – The Folklore Superpower in the Heart of Europe* was opened. The key cultural event of the programme accompanying the presidency was *European Film Club*, which took place in May 2009 in Cairo and in June and July in Alexandria. Another event during the presidency was an exhibition of Czech jewellery design. An exhibition entitled *Europe-Egypt: A Long Lasting Archaeological Cooperation* was inaugurated in the Egyptian Museum in June jointly with a delegation of the European Commission and France.

The presidency was officially brought to a close by an event presenting prominent figures of Czech classical music in Cairo and Alexandria: a concert by the Czech Ladies String Quartet was accompanied by an exposition of *Eminent Figures of Czech Music – Smetana, Dvořák, and Janáček*.

On the occasion of the celebrations of the anniversary of the founding of the independent Czechoslovakia, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised *Czech Days in Egypt*, during which the jazz ensemble Urban Quintet performed a number of concerts.

Under the *Executive Programme of Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation*, in 2009 seven nominated students from the Czech Republic were accepted for study in Egypt during the 2009/2010 academic year. Five nominated Egyptian students who applied for scholarships and one self-funded student were accepted for study in the Czech Republic.

IRAN

(Islamic Republic of Iran)

Economic relations

Czech exports to Iran increased from the previous year but still remained around a hundred times smaller than German exports to Iran. Total trade turnover was approx. CZK 2 billion, with Czech exports to Iran worth CZK 1.5 billion and imports from Iran just CZK 0.5 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and parts and accessories of such, including spares, transport equipment, technical glass and glassware, raw materials, industrial semi-finished products (axles *et al.*), pumps, flanges, valves and slide valves for the petroleum industry, food products, cosmetics, pharmaceutical products and raw materials for pharmaceutical production.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: fruit and nuts, especially dried (pistachios, raisins, almonds, dates, *et al.*), pharmaceutical products, rubber and rubber products, cotton, carpets, machine engineering products.

Cultural relations

On 18 and 19 June 2009, two concerts by the *Prague String Trio* were staged in the residency of the head of the embassy to mark the end of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union.

IRAQ

(Republic of Iraq)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 26-29 October 2009 – visit by Minister of Industry and Trade V. Tošovský with a delegation of representatives from fourteen firms. A *Memorandum of Understanding between the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic and the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce* was signed and contracts worth a total of CZK 91 million were concluded during the visit;
- 24-25 November 2000 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout. The principal aim was to support the process of democratic transformation of the country and to assure Iraqi representatives of the importance attached to the parliamentary elections scheduled for spring 2010. J. Kohout held talks with the top-level representatives of all the main confessional groups and political coalitions in Iraq. Together with Minister of Foreign Affairs Hoshyar Zebari he inaugurated an exhibition marking the 20th anniversary of the events of 17 November.

Visits by representatives of Iraq

- August 2009 – visit by Minister of State of Tourism and Antiquities Qahtan al-Jibouri; talks focused on continuing cooperation in the restoration of Iraqi monuments and in archaeological exploration;
- September 2009 – visit by Minister of Industry and Minerals Fawzi Hariri.

Economic relations

Despite the unsatisfactory security situation, limited economic cooperation is going ahead, mainly in supplies of investment plant (construction of hydrogenation isomerisation and atmospheric distillation units at the Basrah, Daura, Baiji refineries). The Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus with Iraq grew by 150% year-on-year thanks to the sharp

growth in Czech exports, which reached CZK 2,650 million; imports from Iraq were marginal at CZK 110,000.

Support for the activities of Czech businesses is provided by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Baghdad; in areas of the Kurdish regional administration support is provided by the Commercial Department Liaison Office in Erbil. The equivalent office in Basrah was closed in summer 2009.

The promotion of the Czech Republic in Iraq and Czech firms' participation in trade fairs contributes significantly to the development of mutual trade relations. In 2009, the Czech Republic took part in the 5th International Erbil Trade Fair in the form of a catalogue stand. Two business forums were organised during the visit of Minister V. Tošovský (in Baghdad and Erbil). In addition, an economic diplomacy project to promote Czech waste disposal and water purification technologies was implemented.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: heat exchangers, turbo generators, laboratory instruments, turbines, passenger automobiles. Textile products also accounted for a significant portion of Czech exports in 2009.

The composition of goods exported to Iraq reflects the Czech Republic's traditional position on the Iraqi market. Czech firms are most successful in the petrochemicals industry and water management. Major contracts were signed for the modernisation of oil refinery plants and supplies of water purifications stations; planning work on significant power plants in the Kurdistan region is taking place. Other projects are under negotiation, some of them unrelated to industry: these include the further work of Czech restorers at the citadel in Erbil and their assistance in the rehabilitation of historical monuments in the town of Zakho.

The only notable commodity exported from Iraq to the Czech Republic is data transmission and reception devices.

Transformation cooperation and humanitarian aid

In 2009, the Czech Republic continued to provide Iraq with transformation aid in the form of training projects. CZK 15.5 million was earmarked for long-term development cooperation projects (for 2005-2009) under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

the Czech Republic. The *Support for the Transformation of Iraqi Society* project targeting the development of civil society in the southern provinces of Iraq was successfully completed in 2009. Some non-governmental organisations were donated computer equipment as part of the small-scale local project.

As part of bilateral development cooperation, the Czech Republic offered Iraq three university scholarships for bachelor's/master's degree study in the 2009/2010 academic year.

Cultural relations

On the occasion of the visit to Iraq by the Czech Republic's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, an exhibition marking the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution was inaugurated at a ceremony on 25 November 2009. Despite the enduring bad security situation, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Baghdad continued to promote Czech culture in the form of exhibitions and classical music concerts – either in its own premises, at the public Plastic Art Gallery in Baghdad or in Erbil and Dohuk in the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

The completion of the project to save the Choli minaret, which was badly damaged by earthquakes and was renovated by Czech company Gema Art Group, was a significant cultural event.

ISRAEL

(State of Israel)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 5-6 January 2009 – visit by a delegation of the European Union Troika, led by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg, in connection with the crisis in Gaza;
- 22-24 April 2009 – visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek, accompanied by the first deputy ministers of foreign affairs and defence T. Pojar and M. Barták;
- 23-27 May 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport of the Senate of Parliament, led by Vice-president of the Senate M. Štěch; the delegation met with the Economic Affairs Committee of the Knesset and visited agricultural and food production enterprises;
- 10-12 June 2009 – visit by the President of the Chamber of Deputies M. Vlček, leading a delegation of members of the national parliaments of European countries to Egypt, the

Palestinian territories and Israel; in Israel the delegation met with the Foreign and Defence Committee of the Knesset, Speaker of the Knesset R. Rivlin and representatives of non-governmental organisations;

- 23-25 June 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 21-23 July 2009 – visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer, leading a delegation composed of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová and Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka; the delegation was accompanied by a numerous business group;
- 26-27 October 2009 – visit by Minister of the Interior of M. Pecina with a delegation of the police forces of the Czech Republic;
- 15-18 December 2009 – chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament J. Hamáček attended a conference on the fight against anti-Semitism organised by the Israeli foreign ministry and held talks with the chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset T. Hanegbi;
- 15-19 December 2009 – Minister for Human Rights M. Kocáb addressed the conference on the fight against anti-Semitism and held talks with Information and Diaspora Minister J. Edelstein.

Visits by representatives of Israel

- 30-31 March 2009 – state visit by President S. Peres;
- 6 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Lieberman visited the Czech Republic on his first trip to Europe after taking office;
- 26-30 June 2009 – Information and Diaspora Minister Y. Edelstein led an Israeli delegation to the Holocaust Era Assets Conference in Prague and Terezín;
- 13 October 2009 – one-day visit of the Czech Republic by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence E. Barak at the invitation of the Forum 2000 conference.

Economic relations

The economic downturn in Israel was one of the reasons for a slight decline in Czech exports in 2009, but the statistics show that the decline was not dramatic: the year-on-year fall was approx. 9%. The Czech Republic continues to have a balance of trade surplus with Israel, with exports worth CZK 6.9 billion and imports CZK 4.3 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: motor vehicles, optical, photographic and medical instruments, data processing machines, industrial glass, rail track, chemical organic products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: pharmaceutical products, mechanical devices, chemical products (especially herbicides), fresh vegetables, plastics, printed circuits.

Besides the activities of Czech exporters, Israeli investors in the Czech Republic are very important for the development of mutual economic relations. These are mainly building and real estate firms or developers that invest in the construction of residential buildings, shopping centres and office buildings. Other sectors worth mentioning include recent investments in the production of medicines and meat-free food products.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Governments on Bilateral Cooperation for the Support of Industrial Research and Development in the Private Sector, March 2009;
- Programme of Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the State of Israel for the Years 2008 - 2010, September 2009.

Cultural relations

Cultural contacts between the Czech Republic and the State of Israel have traditionally been numerous and diverse. More than 40 cultural, presentation, scientific and educational events were organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in 2009. These events generated a favourable response from the media and expert public and confirmed the local public's strong interest in Czech culture. The greatest interest in Czech culture in Israel concerns Czech theatre and dance. One key event in the year 2009 was the Czech-Israeli theatre season, during which there were performances by several Czech theatre ensembles, among them:

- a performance by the *Nanohach* dance group at the Tmuna Theatre;
- *Theatro pantomissimo* at the alternative theatre festival in Akko;
- Czech National Theatre performed Tom Stoppard's play *Rock'n'Roll* at the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv.

Exhibitions:

- the first-ever comprehensive exhibition of L. Blum in the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv (35 years after the death of this Czech native who played a significant role in Israel's history);
- photographs by K. Cudlín entitled *The Velvet Revolution 1989* (to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain);
- *Tel Aviv Old-New Metropolis* (an architecture symposium prepared to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the city of Tel Aviv).

Concerts:

- concert by *Plastic People of the Universe* (the open-air concert by the legendary underground group in Tel Aviv drew an audience of around 1,000).

Film:

- Animated Film Week with M. Pavlátová at the Haifa International Film Festival. (The Czech animated filmmaker conducted a seminar on animation and was elected president of the festival's international jury.)

Other:

- two events marking the 20th anniversary of 17 November 1989, at which the principal guest was Š. Pánek, student leader from 1989 and now director of the People In Need foundation
- a European football tournament of Jewish and Arab youth; under an initiative of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union a further seven European countries took part, as well as 200 Jewish and Arab children.

JORDAN

(Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 6 January 2009 – visit by a delegation of the European Union Troika, led by Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg, in connection with the crisis in Gaza;
- 25-27 March 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Defence M. Barták; signing of a cooperation agreement between defence ministries;

- 4-5 May 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Justice T. Boček, who chaired the *Euro-Arab Conference on Education in Justice*;
- 12-13 June 2009 – visit by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček and a delegation of representatives of the national parliaments of European Union member states;
- 5-6 October 2009 – official visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 16-19 October 2009 – visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták.

Visits by representatives of Jordan

- 6-7 April 2009 – visit by King Abdullah II at the invitation of President V. Klaus. A Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries' agriculture ministries and an Additional Protocol to the Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments were signed.

Economic relations

The Czech Republic's balance of trade surplus with Jordan continued to grow. Trade turnover decreased to CZK 473 million in 2009 from CZK 590 million in 2008. The decline was caused by the global economic crisis, which was reflected in a considerable slowdown of growth in both the Jordanian and Czech economies.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automobiles, paper, office and computer machinery.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: machinery, fruit and vegetables, cosmetics. The defence industry is the sector experiencing the strongest trade growth. Imports from Jordan attained a value of CZK 22 million in 2009.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Mutual Cooperation, 26 March 2009;
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Agriculture of the Czech Republic and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 6 April 2009;

- Protocol on the Amendments to the Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, 6 April 2009;
- Memorandum on Cooperation between the Air Forces of the Czech Republic and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 19 October 2009;
- Executive Programme of Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Youth and Sports between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the Years 2009-2011, 26 November 2009.

Development cooperation

Support for a *Recycling paper workshop in Azraq* project was approved in 2009. The project deals with the processing of waste paper that will create new jobs, mainly for women, and will help raise the local population's awareness of refuse collection and recycling. This project, which received CZK 500,000 from the Czech Republic's development cooperation budget, was implemented in cooperation with *The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature*.

Cultural relations

In February, there was an exhibition in Amman on the work of baroque sculptor M. Braun and his work at Kuks chateau. The exhibition included films about Kuks and the surrounding area and an accompanying musical programme featuring works by Czech baroque composers.

To mark the 45th anniversary of the establishment of Czech-Jordanian diplomatic relations, in May the Embassy of the Czech Republic prepared an exhibition of historical photographs of *Jordan Through the Eyes of Alois Musil*, presenting photographs taken by the eminent Czech Orientalist and explorer from 1898 to 1917.

The Valašský vojvoda ensemble performed in five places in Jordan as part of the international *Summer Cultural Festival of the Jordanian Ministry of Culture*.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the collapse of communism, on 17 November 1989 the Embassy of the Czech Republic staged an event to commemorate the Velvet Revolution and the fall of communism in the Czech Republic. The evening featured the inauguration of

an exhibition entitled *1989 as Seen by Photographers*, followed by a screening of the film *Citizen Havel*.

KUWAIT

(State of Kuwait)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 7-10 November 2009 – visit by the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport of the Senate of Parliament. The delegation was received by the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the National Assembly and the Minister of electricity and water, and held talks at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and with members of the Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs of the National Assembly.

Economic relations

Trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Kuwait consists mainly in exports from the Czech Republic, as imports of goods from Kuwait are negligible. Czech exports to Kuwait in 2009 fell significantly from 2008 levels to CZK 759 million; imports were worth a marginal CZK 46 million; total turnover amounted to CZK 805 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: electrical products, passenger cars, accessories and spares, steel pipes, pumps, metalworking machinery, paper industry products, telecommunications equipment, food industry machinery, glass, refrigeration equipment, steel products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: organic chemicals, polymers of ethylene, telecommunications equipment, iron and steel products, taps, valves and fittings, light fixtures.

On 12 May 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a workshop in cooperation with CzechTourism, at which tourist and spa treatment organisations made presentations with a view to gaining clients from Kuwait.

Cultural relations

On 12 January 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a classical music recital by the AD Trio Prague at the Al-Maidan Culture Centre.

LEBANON

(Republic of Lebanon)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 21-23 October 2009 – visit by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar.

Economic relations

Trade exchange forms the core of Czech-Lebanese economic relations; the Czech Republic has traditionally had a pronounced balance of trade surplus with Lebanon. The value of Czech exports to Lebanon reached CZK 697 million in 2009; imports amounted to CZK 15 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: dairy products, paper, glass, iron and steel, automobiles and spare parts. Incoming tourism from Lebanon to the Czech Republic, centred on spa treatments, also plays an important role in mutual economic relations.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: tobacco, spirits, wine, food products. The volumes of other import items fluctuate considerably.

In November, a project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic implemented a project in Beirut entitled *Presentation of Czech Firms Interested in Participating in the Preparation and Implementation of Projects for the Renewal and Reconstruction of the Lebanese Energy Industry*.

Cultural relations

Echoes of One World took place in Beirut from 6 to 8 May 2009. The slimmed down version of human rights documentary film festival One World, which is organised in the Czech Republic by People In Need, took place under the auspices of the Lebanese culture

ministry and the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of the Czech Republic and was organised in cooperation with People In Need.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the political changes in central Europe and the then Czechoslovakia, on 17 November 2009 the embassy organised a cultural event featuring a screening of *The Tender Revolution* and a selection of photographs from the *1989 as Seen by Photographers* exhibition.

LIBYA

(Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Economic relations

The question of Libya's unpaid debts to the Czech Republic continues to be an unresolved problem that complicates mutual relations. Nevertheless, economic relations developed successfully in 2009. Czech exports to Libya registered further growth to reach CZK 3.08 billion, almost triple the value of exports in 2008. On the other hand, imports from Libya to the Czech Republic fell by 60% from 2008 to CZK 239 million.

Czech firms took part in two important events in Libya in 2009, namely the *Tripoli International Fair* from 2 to 12 April 2009 and a symposium on the sidelines of the *Lavex 2009* aviation fair from 5 to 8 October 2009. Firms that supply or offer equipment related to aviation, air traffic control and training took part in the symposium with potential Libyan customers. It consisted of presentations organised as part of the economic diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: clothing products and accessories, non-metal mineral products (table glassware and ceramics, light fixtures, crystal glass), earth-working machinery. The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: oil, chemicals.

Cultural relations

The Embassy of the Czech Republic organised two successful exhibitions that met with a great response from the local media and public: an exhibition of photographs taken by Czech explorers J. Hanzelka and M. Zikmund *Czech Travellers in Libya in 1947* and *The Magic World of Czech Illustrators for Children*.

MOROCCO

(Kingdom of Morocco)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 21-24 November 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová.

Economic relations

The global financial and economic crisis slowed Morocco's growth somewhat, though government incentives for key economic sectors helped growth remain relatively good. The positive trend of constant growth in trade exchange that began in 2004 continued in 2009, with Czech exports again increasing slightly to a total of CZK 1.808 billion. Imports from Morocco to the Czech Republic increased to CZK 1.148 billion. The Czech Republic maintained its traditional slight trade surplus with Morocco.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automatic data processing machines, memory units, automobiles, steam turbines, road-building machinery, tyres, plastic products, steel tubes, aluminium foil, transmission and reception apparatus, cables, light fittings, paper products. The spectrum of exports remains very fragmented, numbering almost 200 different items. Paper and iron may be ranked among the regularly recurring commodities.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: food products (fruit, vegetables and marine products), small electrical engineering components, clothing and footwear.

Cultural relations

The Czech Republic organised a number of cultural events in Morocco. At the beginning of the year, a concert by J. Svěcený accompanied by an exhibition of *Czech Gems I (Le meilleur de la Tchéquie I)* met with great success. In April, there was an event entitled *The Czech Republic on a Plate: A Week of Czech Creativity in Morocco (La Tchéquie sur l'assiette: une semaine de créativité tchèque au Maroc)*, which was accompanied by the exhibitions *Czech Gems II (Le meilleur de la Tchéquie II)* and *The Art of the PET Bottle in the Czech Republic (L'Art de la bouteille pet a la tchèque)*. Visitors could admire an extensive exhibition of various kinds of Czech glass. In June 2009, the National Theatre in Rabat hosted

a *Gala Evening of the Czech Presidency (Soirée gala de la Présidence tchèque)*. The event was organised in cooperation with the National Theatre of Morocco and Czech dance ensemble Trn v oku. Besides a dance performance called *Care to Dance, Europe? (Voulez-vous danser, Europe?)*, the evening consisted of a touring exhibition of *Czechs in Africa (Les Tchèques en Afrique)* and a photography exhibition entitled *Morocco Seen and Dreamt (Le Maroc vu et revé)*. On 25 November 2009, an exhibition of *The 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain (20e anniversaire de la chute du rideau de fer)* was inaugurated and a film entitled *1989* was screened. The cultural events were greeted with great interest from both foreign and Moroccan guests and the local media.

OMAN

(Sultanate of Oman)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 30 April 2009 – meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah on the occasion of a meeting of European Union foreign ministers and the Gulf Cooperation Council; a Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman was signed.

Economic relations

The very stable political situation and rapid economic growth in the past decade have created the right conditions for Czech firms to participate in infrastructure development programmes in the country. In November 2009, a Czech draft of an investments promotion and protection treaty was presented to Omani representatives for assessment.

Trade between the Czech Republic and Oman is not particularly significant. The balance of trade in 2009 was fairly evenly balanced, with a slight surplus on the Czech side: CZK 214 million compared to CZK 180 million. Czech exports were dominated by vehicles and automatic data processing machines; imports were dominated by parts for automobile brakes.

PALESTINIAN AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

(Palestinian National Authority)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 23 April 2009 – visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek, who held talks with Prime Minister S. Fayyad on the European Union's role in the Middle East peace process;
- 25 May 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport of the Senate of Parliament, led by Vice-president of the Senate M. Štěch;
- 11 June 2009 – visit by a delegation of representatives of European parliaments, led by President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament of the Czech Republic M. Vlček;
- 24 June 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout, who held talks with Prime Minister S. Fayyad; the main topics were the need for a common approach by the European Union and the USA to the Middle East question, the economic situation in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories and the potential for growth, the activities of the Czech presidency, East Jerusalem, settlements and security questions.

Visits by representatives of the Palestinian National Authority

- 23 February 2009 – official visit by President of the Palestinian National Authority M. Abbas, who met with Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg, President V. Klaus, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček, President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka, and Mayor Prague P. Bém.

Economic relations

Trade exchange is reported in the statistics for Czech-Israeli trade relations. The value of Czech exports to the Palestinian Autonomous Territories is marginal.

Humanitarian aid

In connection with the Israeli military operation *Cast Lead*, which lasted from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009 in Gaza, the government of the Czech Republic released CZK 5 million in extraordinary humanitarian aid on 2 January 2009. In addition, CZK 10 million was released in February 2009, CZK 5 million of which was provided to Caritas Jerusalem for healthcare, and the other half to UNRWA for Gaza aid programmes.

Transformation and development cooperation

There was extensive development and transformation work in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories in 2009. Most of the projects were continuations of activities approved by the Czech government in 2008 (resolution No. 801 of 27 June 2008) as part of extraordinary humanitarian aid of CZK 60 million to the Palestinian Autonomous Territories. The projects mainly focus on energy (a study for the use of solar energy in the conditions of the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, construction of a centre for maintenance and repairs of transformers at Tubas) and water management. In 2009, the Czech Republic invested a further CZK 1.8 million under small-scale development projects for the next phase of building a system for rational use of water sources (*Water Allocation System, WAS*).

Work went ahead on the significant energy project for the electrification of Tubas district, whose budget for 2009 was CZK 10.5 million. The core of the work focused on stabilising, securing and maintaining the grid rather than widening it. A GIS (*Geographical Information System*), a comprehensive database/map of the grid enabling simulation and analysis of electrical current, was put into operation. In addition to this, an NIC (*Network Information System*) subsystem providing specific information about the state of the grid was launched. 95% of dangerous cabling, which was mainly laid below ground, was removed. Electricity was introduced to a further five towns/villages.

The Czech Republic also supported institution-building in the territory through the work of two officers of the Police of the Czech Republic on the EUPOL COPPS mission.

In view of the complicated political and security situation, the Czech Republic has not undertaken any development projects in the Gaza Strip yet.

The Czech government decided to allocate two university scholarships to students from the Palestinian Autonomous Territories (West Bank) for the 2009/2010 academic year.

Cultural relations

In 2009, there were two cultural events, both staged during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union: the screening of the film *Cosy Dens* during *Francophonie Days* on 15 March 2009 in the French-German cultural centre in Ramallah, and a concert given by a wind quintet on the roof of the Austrian hospice on the occasion of the end of the

Czech presidency. The concert was part of the *Sounding Jerusalem* festival, during which wind ensembles played concurrently on six roofs in Jerusalem's Old City.

SAUDI ARABIA

(Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 17-19 November 2009 – Minister of Finance E. Janota, accompanied by a delegation, held talks with his Saudi counterpart Ibrahim Abdulaziz Al Assaf; the two ministers signed an *Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments between the Czech Republic and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*.

Economic relations

2009 brought another increase in trade turnover with Saudi Arabia, with Czech exports to the Kingdom increasing from CZK 3.9 billion in 2008 to CZK 4.1 billion. Saudi exports to the Czech Republic fell, though, from CZK 253 million to CZK 124 million. The figure remains relatively low mainly because the Czech Republic is not a direct buyer of crude oil from the Kingdom.

Tourism is another area of cooperation worth mentioning, above all the popularity of Czech spas among clients from the Kingdom.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: automatic data processing machines, parts for steam boilers, iron and steel and products of such – shaped pieces, sections, semi-finished products, iron ingots, castings etc. Loaders, passenger automobiles and food products (cheeses, curd cheese, dairy products and dried milk) continue to be significant export items.

There are good long-term prospects for steam boilers, transport equipment (especially passenger automobiles), electrical apparatus, medical equipment (especially hospital beds and sterilising equipment), food products (especially dairy products), chemicals, computer components, glass, and iron products as export items to Saudi Arabia.

There is substantial demand in the Kingdom for qualified labour from the Czech Republic, most notably medical personnel (nurses, doctors, physiotherapists).

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: polymers of ethylene and synthetic fibres, insulated wires and cables, impregnated textiles, epoxide resins. Other items are fresh and dried fruit and nuts, perfumes, cosmetics and toiletries.

No Czech investments in the territory have been registered to date. The currently small influx of direct investment from Saudi Arabia has been concentrated in real estate intended for rent.

Cultural relations

There are currently several dozen self-funded Saudis studying medical and technical fields at Czech universities. The Saudi authorities confirmed the recognition of diplomas issued by Charles Universities in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno and the Brno University of Technology.

SYRIA

(Syrian Arab Republic)

Visits by representatives of Syria

- January 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Syrian Parliament, led by the committee chairman S. Haddad.

Economic relations

Trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Syria attained a value of CZK 1.248 billion in 2009, which represents a fall of approx. 15% from the previous year. Czech exports to Syria were worth CZK 1.193 billion and imports CZK 55 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, electrical rotating machinery, textile clothing components, textile products, textile machinery, measuring and control apparatus.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: petroleum oils.

TUNISIA

(Republic of Tunisia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 24-26 February 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by committee chairman J. Hamáček;
- 15-17 April 2009 – official visit by President V. Klaus, accompanied by his entourage and a business delegation.

Economic relations

The long-term problem-free and traditionally friendly relations between the two countries were strengthened further during the official visit by President V. Klaus. An economic cooperation agreement was signed between the Czech and Tunisian governments, as well as three major business contracts. Tunisia is a country that can be relied on to honour its commitments, and there are no unsettled claims of the Czech Republic. Around 110,000 Czech tourists visited Tunisia in 2009.

Despite the global financial and economic crisis, trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Tunisia increased in 2009. The value of Czech exports was CZK 1.163 billion; imports were worth CZK 709 million; and the Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus of CZK 454 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: aircraft parts, automatic data processing machines, processors, printed circuits, memory units, polyethylene, tubes *et al.*, plastic products, steel tubes, iron and steel for use in construction, road rollers, radiators, compressors, cast iron axles and wheels, textile machinery, cables and electrical devices, fabrics and fabric products, tyres, pharmaceutical products, light fittings, glassware and glass jewellery.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: phosphates, clothing products and accessories, footwear, leather products, loudspeakers, optical instruments, cables, switches and printed circuits, ceramic products, dates.

Cultural relations

The Czech Republic took part in preparing a joint European Union cultural event, the *European Pavilion* at the *Tunis International Book Fair*, which took place at the end of April 2009. With the cooperation of journalist and literary critic H. Bourial, there was an informal Sunday meeting about Czech poetry and a discussion about the life and work of J. Seifert, V. Nezval and V. Holan. A number of events took place during the visit of President V. Klaus to Tunis, most notably a cultural afternoon at the El Bousten Hotel in Hammamet. The Škampa Quartet performed at the 15th *Carthage Music Festival (Octobre musical de Carthage)* on 6 October 2009.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 5 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Senate of Parliament, led by Vice-president of the Senate J. Liška;
- 15 November 2009 – visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták to the *Dubai Air Show*.

Economic relations

The value of Czech exports fell by 15% and imports by 8% by year-on-year comparison. The Czech Republic has a pronounced balance of trade surplus with the UAE: Czech exports to the UAE attained a value of CZK 10.218 billion, with imports from the UAE worth CZK 678 million.

More than half of Czech exports are re-exports, as many Czech firms use the UAE as a trading and logistical base for the entire Middle East region, Indian subcontinent and east Africa. Areas with good potential for Czech firms include construction, the power industry, petrochemicals, machine engineering, exports of consumer goods, and agriculture. There is also a considerable demand for spa services in the Czech Republic among UAE citizens.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: glass products (mainly crystal chandeliers), automobiles and accessories, tyres, data processing machines, consoles and panels for control or distribution of electricity, iron and steel semi-finished products, memory units, food products (primarily curd cheese and cheeses).

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: aluminium and aluminium alloys (for use in the automobile and construction industries).

Cultural relations

On 7 and 8 April 2009, the Czech Republic organised concerts by young Czech and Emirates musicians.

An exhibition about Czech UNESCO heritage sites at the biggest university in the UAE, the Higher Colleges of Technology, took place during the course of the Czech presidency from February to April 2009.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic participated in the 8th European Movies festival with a screening of the film *Želary* by director O. Trojan.

YEMEN

(Republic of Yemen)

Economic relations

Economic relations with Yemen are developing primarily in the area of the trade in goods, but the relatively low volumes achieved to date mean that the figures vary considerably from year to year. Czech exports to Yemen are considerably greater than imports from Yemen. In 2009, there was a fairly dramatic increase in Czech exports to Yemen, which rose from CZK 120 million to CZK 565 million. Imports from Yemen were negligible at CZK 34,000.

The principal Czech export commodities in 2009 were arms, motors and vehicles, which is doubtless connected with the internal political development in the country and the government's current priorities.

Basically, the only Czech import commodity from Yemen is cotton T-shirts.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, signed 20 March 2008, ratified 4 September 2009.

Development cooperation

Czech government resolution No. 302 of 31 March 2004 included Yemen among the Czech Republic's eight priority foreign development cooperation countries for 2006-2010. Given the Yemeni government's interest in developing the less advanced southern Yemen (the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen), Czech development cooperation mainly targets this territory, and specifically the Hadhramaut province, under whose administration the Socotra archipelago also falls. In agriculture, development cooperation projects comprise a water treatment plant at Al-Mukalla (in 2009 CZK 2.3 million of the total budget of CZK 6.0 million was scheduled for drawdown), waste water treatment in Ghail Bawazir (CZK 3 million of CZK 9.7 million) and sludge treatment in the town of Hadibo (CZK 5.7 million of CZK 15.0 million). In energy, the Czech Republic is participating in modernising the Al-Hiswa power station (CZK 5.7 million of CZK 49 million). CZK 1.9 million of Czech funding was used to buying equipment for elementary schools in Al-Hamza and Al-Hakim and for a women's education centre in the Yemeni Women's Union. A generator was purchased for the Al-Olufi Medical Centre.

Five government scholarships for bachelor's/master's study courses were allocated to Yemen for the 2009/2010 academic year. Given the ongoing development activities, the following study fields are recommended to Yemen: water management, agroforestry and veterinary medicine.

7. The Czech Republic's Relations with the Countries of Sub-Saharan Africa

In the first half of 2009, the Czech Republic concentrated on its presidency of the Council of the European Union, which helped enhance the country's presence considerably on the African continent. The Czech Republic played a significant role in the European Union's efforts to find ways to end the difficult situations in the Horn of Africa, in the Great Lakes area, in Zimbabwe and in countries that have experienced illegal takeovers of power in recent years. The presidency also strengthened the Czech Republic's status with traditional partners such as the Republic of South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia. The Republic of South Africa was in fact the first country Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg visited after the start of the presidency.

The Czech Republic also enhanced its reputation on a pan-African level through close cooperation with the African Union and other regional African economic organisations, most notably IGAD and ECOWAS. Chairman of the African Union Commission J. Ping visited the Czech Republic in April 2009. The Czech Republic was an active participant in several partnerships based on the Action Plan of the Africa-European Union Joint Strategy and helped look for ways to implement the Strategy as effectively as possible.

Importance was also attached to contacts at bilateral level, especially in the second half of the year. In keeping with tradition, the emphasis was placed on trade and economic cooperation, which developed successfully in 2009: trade exchange between the Czech Republic and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa attained a value of CZK 11.8 billion, with Czech exports worth CZK 7 billion and imports CZK 4.8 billion. The Czech Republic also paid considerable attention to cultural presentation. The importance of development cooperation with African countries is constantly growing; in 2009 Czech subjects implemented dozens of projects in sub-Saharan Africa. The interest in the further development of relations between the Czech Republic and African countries was supported by visits by constitutional and state representatives at various levels.

ANGOLA

(Republic of Angola)

Economic relations

Exports from the Czech Republic to Angola attained a value of CZK 214.5 million in 2009; imports were worth a mere CZK 206,000. The Czech Republic's principal export commodities were iron and steel, metal products, paper and paperboard, and rubber products. Industrial consumer goods were imported to the Czech Republic from Angola.

Transformation and development cooperation

Angola is one of the eight priority (programme) countries of Czech foreign development cooperation. Several projects were implemented in Bié province in 2009. The following projects were implemented under the authority of the Czech Development Agency: *Support for Secondary Agricultural Education in Kuito; Support for a Specialist Agriculture School in Catabola; Distance Training of Elementary School Teachers in Bié Province; Construction of Five Elementary Schools in Central Municipalities of Remote Districts; Provision of Alphabetisation Courses in Communes in the Districts of Cabola, Kamacupa, Kunhinga, Andulo, Kuito and Nharea.* In addition, one project, *Socio-pedagogic Centre in Bié Province*, came under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; and others under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic: *Poultry Farming and Selling of Agricultural Produce in Bié Province; Support for Local Communities in the Development of Primary Agricultural Production; Consultancy in the Field of Fish and Poultry Farming; and Building Capacities in the Field of Fish and Poultry Farming.*

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Luanda implemented a small-scale local project entitled *Computer Classrooms with Satellite Internet Connection in Catete Parish*, took part in the opening phase of a project for *Conservation of the Mayombe Biosphere* and is currently assisting on a project for *Construction of a Small Hydroelectric Plant in Cuemba Municipality.*

BENIN

(Republic of Benin)

Economic relations

Following the marked revival in political relations in 2008, Czech diplomacy focused on strengthening the gradually developing trade exchange in 2009.

Czech Republic Open Day in Benin was staged in Cotonou from 25 to 28 November 2009. This was an event designed to support and promote Czech exporters of goods and services seeking to break onto new and challenging markets in west Africa. Meetings with four departmental ministers, the speaker of parliament, the advisor to the president, the president of the Benin Chamber of Commerce and Industry *et al.* were held during the event. Business representatives held a number of bilateral meetings. The Czech delegation was led by I. Příklad, director of the office of the president of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities to Benin in 2009 were textile products, motor vehicles and agricultural machinery. The value of Czech exports to Benin was CZK 29.6 million; imports were worth a mere CZK 43,000.

BURKINA FASO

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 5-7 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament, led by the committee chairman J. Dienstbier. The purpose of the senators' visit was to establish ties between the two countries' parliaments, to support the idea of this francophone country's development by deepening mutual economic cooperation and, on a more general level, to strengthen the Czech Republic's relations with other countries in this part of Africa. In all the official talks, appreciation was expressed for a small-scale development project of the Czech Republic to build an orphanage for the Home Kisito Association, which was successfully completed in 2009. During the visit, the delegation held talks with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation M. Samate representing Minister B. Yoda and the

Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso and was received by the Speaker of Parliament R. M. C. Kabore.

Economic relations

Trade between the Czech Republic and Burkina Faso has for long been minimal and subject to considerable fluctuation. Exports from the Czech Republic to Burkina Faso attained a value of CZK 13.0 million in 2009; imports were worth CZK 2.5 million. The principal commodities exported from the Czech Republic to Burkina Faso are clothing, pumps and mobile telecommunications equipment; fruit and nuts are the principal import commodity.

Transformation and development cooperation

A small-scale local project linked to the construction of an orphanage of the Home Kisito Association with a budget of CZK 500,000 was completed in Ouagadougou in 2009.

CAPE VERDE

(Republic of Cape Verde)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 18-22 May 2009 – visit by the Committee on Security of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament. Cooperation at parliamentary level was thus commenced following the establishment of intergovernmental contacts during the official visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek in 2008. The delegation was received by the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Internal Administration and the Mayor of the capital city.

Economic relations

As in the previous year, the Czech Republic ended 2009 with a pronounced balance of trade surplus with Cape Verde. The value of Czech exports was CZK 8.7 million; imports were worth a mere CZK 355,000. The opening of an honorary consular office of Cape Verde in Prague in 2009 should help foster trade.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Economic relations

Czech firms are taking part in a number of commercial energy projects in DRC, mainly in the field of hydroelectric power.

Exports from the Czech Republic to DRC attained a value of CZK 45 million in 2009; imports were worth CZK 19.2 million. The Czech Republic's principal export commodities include textiles and clothing, instruments, tools and aircraft tyres. Wood and veneers, rubber products and iron products were the main imported items.

Transformation and development cooperation

In 2009, the Czech Republic, through non-governmental organisation People In Need, took part in a trilateral project entitled *Improving Hygiene Conditions and Access to Drinking Water for the War-affected and Relocated Inhabitants of the Kalehe Zone*. People In Need also set up a permanent mission in the city of Bukavu at the start of the year. Caritas Czech Republic is running a successful distance adoption project.

The UN's MONUC peace-keeping mission is deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo – three Czech citizens served on the mission in 2009.

ETHIOPIA

(Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia)

Visits by representatives of Ethiopia

- 1-2 April 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs Seyoum Mesfin. The minister met with his counterpart Minister K. Schwarzenberg, Minister for Regional Development C. Svoboda, President of the Chamber of Deputies M. Vlček and Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka.

Other meetings

- 4-10 April 2009 – a delegation of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Parliament of the Czech Republic attended the 120th Assembly of the Inter-parliamentary Union.

Economic relations

By year-on-year comparison, exports from the Czech Republic to Ethiopia increased in 2009 to attain a value of CZK 252.0 billion; imports were worth CZK 60.5 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: devices and models designed for demonstration and training, food industry machinery and equipment, telephones, voice and data transmission equipment, passenger automobiles.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: dried pulses, coffee, cut flowers, shoes with leather uppers.

Humanitarian aid

In September 2009, the Czech Republic provided financial aid of CZK 5 million through the UNHCR to help refugees in Ethiopia.

Transformation and development cooperation

In 2009, Ethiopia was ranked among the so-called *project countries* for foreign development cooperation. Development projects were implemented in the education and water management sectors. Specifically, this comprised two educational projects implemented by the organisation People In Need: *Improving the Quality of Education and Widening the Education Opportunities for Teachers in Addis Ababa, in Oromiya Region and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region* and *Providing Access to Secondary School Education for Orphans and Vulnerable Groups of Children*; and two water management projects: *Anti-erosion Measures in the Area around Awassa Lake* (implemented by People In Need) and *Surveying of Water Resources Focusing on Areas Affected by Drought* (implemented by the company Aquatest). A small-scale local project dealing with the use of locally available materials for ecological brick production was also implemented.

Ethiopia is one of the three biggest scholarship beneficiaries in sub-Saharan Africa. Seven scholarships were offered to Ethiopia for the 2009/2010 academic year, four for bachelor's/master's study courses (two in Czech, two in English) and three for doctorate study in English. There are currently sixteen government scholarship beneficiaries from Ethiopia studying in the Czech Republic; most of them study at Charles University, others at the Czech University of Life Sciences and the Czech Technical University in Prague.

Cultural relations

On 5-10 March 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Addis Ababa organised an exhibition entitled *Roll out the Barrel*, presenting the tradition of Czech beer brewing. The exhibition was accompanied by the chance to sample Czech beer and also Ethiopian beer from breweries using Czech technology. The exhibition was inaugurated by President of the African Union Commission J. Ping and was attended by numerous representatives of political life and the grandson of the last emperor of Ethiopia.

Under an initiative of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the group Spirituál Kvintet toured Ethiopia from 7 to 15 May 2009. The tour consisted of three concerts in Ethiopia: in the National Theatre, attended by the chairman of the Ethiopian parliamentary club of friends of the Czech Republic, in the seat of the African Union attended by the African Union commissioner for infrastructure and energy, and in the city of Mekelle attended by the mayor and leading representatives of local government and political and economic circles.

GHANA

(Republic of Ghana)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 18-20 April 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by committee chairman J. Hamáček. The delegation was received by the second deputy speaker of Parliament of Ghana M. Oquaye, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Parliament F. Safro and the political director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs P. Aryene. The deputies also met with Ghanaian business representatives and former Czechoslovak government scholarship beneficiaries and members of the Czech community. The visit also reflected the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ghana and the then Czechoslovakia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic used this anniversary to organise thematic public debates combined with a cultural programme at the Náprstek Museum in Prague on 9 December 2009. The following day, a gala reception was held at Czernin Palace.

Visits by representatives of Ghana

- 12-16 October 2009 – visit to the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Parliament of Ghana. Besides visiting both

chambers of the Czech parliament and being received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Kmoníček, the delegation dealt with questions of cooperation in the fields of agriculture and food production and e-government.

- Ghana's Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing A. Abongo undertook a working visit to the Czech Republic. On 21 May 2009, he held talks with Minister for Regional Development R. Vondruška on questions of housing construction and tourism.

Economic relations

Mutual trade was more diverse than in previous years. The value of Czech exports to Ghana was CZK 223.4 million; imports were worth CZK 47.7 million. The principal export commodities were passenger automobiles, tractors, gardening machinery, plant equipment, and to an increasing degree textile products. Rubber and aluminium are the principal import commodities. Fruit, nuts, coffee and cocoa are also significant import items.

Transformation and development cooperation

In 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Accra implemented a small-scale local project worth CZK 500,000 comprising the replacement of a generator at the hospital in the Liberian refugee camp at Budumbura.

There were eight Ghanaian students studying on government scholarships in the Czech Republic in 2009, four of them on bachelor's study courses and four on master's courses. Three scholarships were offered to Ghana for the 2009/2010 academic year.

Cultural relations

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Czech-Ghanaian diplomatic relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic prepared an exhibition depicting the rich historical ties between the two countries, which stretch back as far as the 17th century.

KENYA

(Republic of Kenya)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 15-20 February 2009 – working visit by Minister of the Environment M. Bursík and First Deputy J. Dusík for the 25th session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- 30 March – 3 April 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister for Regional Development M. Půček for the 22nd session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme;
- 12-14 May 2009 – working visit by the Committee on Economic Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by the committee chairman O. Vojíš. The delegation of deputies was accompanied by a group of Czech business representatives. The delegation was received by Prime Minister R. Odinga, Minister of Trade A. Kimunya and Speaker of Parliament K. Marende.

Visits by representatives of Kenya

- 25-26 June 2009 – working visit by Minister of Tourism N. Balala, accompanied by a delegation of the Kenya Tourist Board. The Czech Republic subsequently opened talks with the Republic of Kenya on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Republic of Kenya and the Government of the Czech Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism;
- 13-16 September 2009 – working visit by Minister of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security G. Saitoti. The minister was received by Minister of the Interior M. Pecina and Deputy Minister J. Komorous and by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová. The main reason for the visit was to draw on the Czech Republic's experiences with the transformation process and the reform of the interior ministry and the police following the overthrow of communist rule. Both sides subsequently started to consult on other forms of cooperation.

Economic relations

Trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Kenya registered a marked increase over previous years. The value of Czech exports to Kenya reached CZK 370.8 million and imports CZK 97.8 million. The Czech Republic's principal export commodities were

machinery, transport equipment and automatic data processing machines. Raw materials of animal and plant origin and textile fibres are among the main items imported by the Czech Republic.

Humanitarian aid

In July 2009, the Czech Republic provided CZK 2.5 million for the construction of a health centre on Rusinga Island.

Transformation and development cooperation

A project under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic entitled *Sustainable Fishing in Lake Turkana* and a small-scale local project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic called *Restoring Livelihoods for Youths in Dadaab Refugee Camp* were implemented in Kenya. Kenya received three government scholarships from the Czech Republic for the 2009/2010 academic year.

Cultural relations

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Nairobi organised several cultural events during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. It helped prepare the *European Film Festival*, which took place in Nairobi (13-31 May 2009) and Mombassa (2-12 June 2009), at which J. Hřebejk's film *Teddy Bear* was screened. At the end of the Czech presidency, the Embassy of the Czech Republic, in cooperation with the *One World* festival and the Kenya National Human Rights Commission, organised a two-day (26-27 June 2009) festival *Echoes of One World*, which was attended by the festival's founder and director I. Blažević. The films *Up and Down*, *Power of the Powerless* and *Citizen Havel* were presented at the festival. Another event marking the end of the Czech presidency was the visit by a 47-member delegation of Amfora, a football team composed of Czech celebrities, and Czech Miss 2009, which was combined with cultural and sports presentation events. On 3 July 2009, a joint concert of Czech and Kenyan musicians took place under the auspices of Minister for National Heritage and Culture W. O. Ntimana. Musicians representing the Czech side included H. Vondráčková, M. Muzikářová, P. Nagy, V. Patejdl, L. Semelka, K. Štědrý, K. Vágner, P. Salava, S. Tofi, J. Dvořák, J. Čenský and V. Čech. Vice-president of Kenya K. Musyoka was among those attending the concert. Amfora also took part in sports and cultural events in Shimo la Tewa Prison in Mombassa, receiving intensive media

coverage in Kenya. The entire event was highly appreciated by representatives of the Kenyan government and parliament as exemplary cooperation between the Czech Republic and Kenya.

A project to save the Northern White Rhino is one expression of the broad range of activities comprising relations between the Czech Republic and Kenya. Last year, there were evidently only eight such rhinoceroses living in the world: six at Dvůr Králové Zoo and two in San Diego, USA. The animals were no longer breeding in captivity, however. For that reason, at the end of December 2009 four rhinos were transported from Dvůr Králové to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. The experts hope that the rhinos will start to breed again in their natural habitat, thus saving this subspecies from extinction. The project to transport the rhinos to Kenya was supported by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

MALI

(Republic of Mali)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- Prime Minister M. Topolánek's visit in May 2008 was successfully followed up in 2009. On 3-5 November 2009, there was a working visit by a seven-member delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Dienstbier. During the visit, the delegation held talks with their counterparts from the Foreign Relations Committee and National Defence Committee of the National Assembly of Mali; the delegation was received by the President of the National Assembly of Mali, Minister of Defence N. Plea, Minister of Justice M. Traore, Prime Minister M. Sidibé and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mali. The main purpose of the visit was to strengthen relations between the two countries' parliaments, support the Czech Republic's economic activities in Mali and generally to strengthen relations between the Czech Republic and Francophone west Africa.

Visits by representatives of Mali

- 12-16 October 2009 – visit by a delegation led by Minister of Defence N. Plea. During the visit, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the defence ministries expressing their intention to develop cooperation in defence and security policy.

Economic relations

In 2009, the Czech Republic maintained its pronounced balance of trade surplus with Mali. The growth trend in Czech exports to the country also continued, so in 2009 Mali again strengthened its leading position among the Czech Republic's principal trading partners in sub-Saharan Africa. Exports attained a value of CZK 713.9 million, the highest value since 1993; imports were worth CZK 21.1 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: textiles and textile products, tyres, clothing accessories, glass.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: cotton, fruit and vegetables.

Transformation and development cooperation

The Czech-Luxembourg-Mali trilateral development project to improve drinking water supplies in Baroueli district was completed. However, another significant development project for *Non-Mineral Resources Exploration*, worth over CZK 100 million in total, went ahead.

In line with the pledge made by Prime Minister M. Topolánek, the government university scholarships programme was resumed. One scholarship was offered for the 2010/2011 academic year. In addition, Mali was offered as many as five places for stand-ins.

Cultural relations

On 28 February 2009, an exhibition of photographs by Czech photographer J. Všečetka *The Prague Pedestrian* was inaugurated in the National Museum of Mali in Bamaku under the auspices of mayor of Prague P. Bém. An exhibition of photographs by Czech photographer J. Šibík entitled *The Devil Within Us* was staged in Bamaku from 17 to 31 September 2009.

NAMIBIA

(Republic of Namibia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 11 March 2009 – working visit by a delegation led by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka. At the Namibian Ministry of Industry and Trade, Consultations were held with Deputy Minister T. N. Mushelenga;
- 20-23 November 2009 – working visit by Minister of the Environment L. Miko, who held talks with Minister of Environment and Tourism N. Nandi-Ndaitwah. Minister Miko's visit followed up the visit to Namibia by former Czech environment minister L. Ambrozek in November 2003.

Economic relations

Czech exports to Namibia were in excess of four times the value customary in recent years and the Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus with Namibia for the first time since 2004. The value of Czech exports was CZK 56.7 million; imports were worth CZK 39.4 million. The main items exported to Namibia were telecommunications equipment and audio recording and reproduction equipment. The Czech Republic imported meat, meat products and fruit from Namibia.

Transformation and development cooperation

A project under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic entitled *Socio-economic Stabilisation of Families and Communities Affected by HIV/AIDS and Opportune Infections, Karas Region*, was implemented in Namibia.

Namibia received two government scholarships from the Czech Republic for the 2009/2010 academic year.

NIGERIA

(Federal Republic of Nigeria)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 14-18 April 2009 – visit by a joint delegation of the Committee on Defence and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by the two committee chairmen and accompanied by a business delegation. The visit started in the

north Nigerian city of Kano, where the delegation was received by the governor of the state of the same name and the traditional ruler and where the delegation visited a military base at which Czech-made Aero L-39 training aircraft are stationed. In the capital Abuja, the delegation held talks in parliament and at the defence ministry and was received by Minister of Foreign Affairs O. Maduekwe.

Visits by representatives of Nigeria

- 12 March 2009 – meeting between Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria B. Hirse and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic H. Bambasová;
- 7-9 June 2009 – official visit by a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs O. Maduekwe combined with the EU-Nigeria Ministerial Troika. During the visit, Minister Maduekwe met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout, Minister for European Affairs Š. Füle, Deputy Minister of Defence J. Fulík and Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka. He was also received by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka. Both sides declared an interest in broadening and deepening mutual contacts and above all economic and trade cooperation. They also agreed to conclude new treaties, resume the work of the mixed commission and strengthen defence and security cooperation.

Economic relations

Although mutual trade turnover was down on the previous year, in 2009 Nigeria continued to be one of the Czech Republic's most important trading partners in sub-Saharan Africa. The Czech Republic ended the year with a pronounced balance of trade surplus with Nigeria, mainly because of the marked fall in imports. Exports from the Czech Republic to Nigeria attained a value of CZK 518.3 million in 2009; imports were worth just CZK 11.6 million. The Czech Republic's principal export commodities were razor blades, passenger automobiles, steel structures, telecommunications devices, motors, compressors and detonators. The Czech Republic imported mainly aluminium and plants for use in the production of medicaments.

Transformation and development cooperation

In 2009, bored drinking-water wells combined with functional distribution stations were built in two local communities of the Ogoni ethnic group in the south of Nigeria under a small-scale local project. On 27 October 2009, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Nigeria J. Siro officially handed over the wells to the local government authorities of Rivers State. The cost of building the wells was CZK 341,000.

Cultural relations

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Abuja organised several cultural events during the year, some linked to the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The end of the presidency was marked on 26 June 2009 by a social function combined with a presentation of Czech beer brewing traditions, during which an exhibition entitled *Roll Out the Barrel* was inaugurated. A festival of Czech cuisine took place in October 2009. Czech film *The Loners* was screened at the European Film Festival in Abuja in October 2009. In the same month, bagpipe band *Bedrník* toured Nigeria, performing in Abuja, Kaduna and Port Harcourt.

RWANDA

(Republic of Rwanda)

Visits by representatives of Rwanda

- September 2009 – working visit by a delegation led by Minister of Defence M. Gatsinzi, during which a *Memorandum of Understanding* was signed between the two countries' defence ministries.

Economic relations

Exports from the Czech Republic to Rwanda attained a value of CZK 7.2 million in 2009; imports were worth CZK 303,000. The principal commodities exported from the Czech Republic to Rwanda were machinery and transport equipment. Coffee, tea and cocoa were the principal imports.

SENEGAL

(Republic of Senegal)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 31 October – 2 November 2009 – working visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Dienstbier. The delegation held talks with the chairman and members of the equivalent committees of the Senegalese senate. The group of senators was also received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Senegal. The discussions centred on the question of mutual cooperation, projects to support Senegalese nature reservations and develop tourism and investment opportunities for Czech firms.

Economic relations

Exports of Czech textile products to Senegal grew again in 2009. Exports of paper and transport equipment are also thriving. In the same period, exports of the already important commodity of fresh vegetables from Senegal to the Czech Republic increased sharply. The value of Czech exports was CZK 353.9 million; imports were worth CZK 20.1 million.

SEYCHELLES

(Republic of Seychelles)

Visits by representatives of Seychelles

- 12 October 2009 – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Kmoníček met with former President of Seychelles J. Mancham, who attended the FORUM 2000 conference.

Economic relations

Trade exchange fell short of previous years' levels. Exports from the Czech Republic to Seychelles attained a value of CZK 61.6 million in 2009; imports were worth CZK 1.8 million. The principal items exported from the Czech Republic to Seychelles were plumbing and heating equipment, electrical machinery, and glass and ceramic products. Industrial consumer goods and fish were imported to the Czech Republic from Seychelles.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 16 January 2009 – meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and his South African counterpart Minister N. Dlamini-Zuma on the sidelines of the

ministerial Troika of the Republic of South Africa-European Union near Cape Town. The meeting dealt with current questions of bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and the Republic of South Africa;

- 9-11 March 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka. On 9 March, he took part in a meeting at the Cape Town Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- On 10 March, Deputy Minister M. Hovorka was present at the first meeting of the Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation between the Czech Republic and the Republic of South Africa. The South African delegation was led by Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry R. Davies;
- 9 May 2009 – President of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament M. Vlček represented the Czech Republic at the inauguration of the newly elected president of the Republic of South Africa J. Zuma.

Economic relations

The Republic of South Africa remained the Czech Republic's most important trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa in 2009. Trade was very evenly balanced, with Czech exports attaining a value of CZK 4.8 billion and imports CZK 3.4 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and transport equipment, industrial consumer goods, rubber products, metal products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: machinery and transport equipment, non-ferrous metals, iron and steel.

Cultural relations

Cultural relations were very intensive in 2009, especially during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. During that period, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Pretoria organised seven cultural events and projects. For example, from 7 February to 8 March 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Pretoria organised an exhibition entitled *Hans Ledwinka – From Präsident to Hall of Fame*. From 27 February to 7 March, the embassy co-organised a tour by Czech jazz musicians O. Štveráček and L. Kytnar. A dance ensemble toured the Republic of South Africa with a production called *Baring Our Souls* from 31 March to 8 April 2009, organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Czech

pianist L. Vondráček toured the Republic of South Africa from 29 April to 13 May 2009. As the European Union presidency country, the Czech Republic organised the *European Union Film Festival 2009* from 8 May to 4 June 2009, at which Czech film *Citizen Havel* was screened. In June 2009, the group *Chodská vlna* toured the Republic of South Africa. Events worth mentioning in the second half of 2009 include the premiere of L. Janáček's opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* performed by the Cape Town Opera on 20 November. The Embassy of the Czech Republic contributed financially to the production of the opera, which was performed in Czech. In the second half of November 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a tour by the dulcimer music group *Slovácko Junior*.

SUDAN

(Republic of Sudan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 1-5 November 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Kmoníček, accompanied by a business mission. During the visit representatives of the Czech Institute of Egyptology of Charles University and the National Museum of Sudan signed a licence agreement for archaeological exploration concessions.

Visits by representatives of Sudan

- 21 April 2009 – visit in connection with the issuance of the ICC arrest warrant for Sudanese president O. al-Bashir by presidential advisor and special envoy B. Malwal, who was received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová;
- 9 December 2009 – the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Sudan based in Vienna, Mahmoud Hassan Elamin, presented his credentials to the President of the Czech Republic.

Economic relations

The value of Czech exports to Sudan was CZK 139.9 million; imports were worth CZK 4.5 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: pipes and tubes, passenger automobiles, spare parts for combustion engines, dried milk, petroleum oils, paper and paperboard, compressors and spare parts.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: plants for use in the production of medicaments, cotton.

Transformation and development cooperation

In view of the expulsion of non-governmental organisations from the country, no development assistance was provided by the Czech Republic to Sudan in 2009.

Cultural relations

During 2009, expert-level talks were held between the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of the Republic of Sudan, the Czech Institute of Egyptology of Charles University and the National Museum in Prague on Czech specialists' participation in archaeological exploration in northern Sudan.

During the visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic H. Kmoníček from 1 to 5 November 2009, representatives of the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of the Republic of Sudan, the Czech Institute of Egyptology of Charles University and the National Museum in Prague signed licence agreements for archaeological exploration in the Oslí locality, the area of the sixth cataract of the River Nile and the Wad Ben Nagaa locality. Work subsequently began in the said localities.

TANZANIA

(United Republic of Tanzania)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 12-14 May 2009 – working visit by the Committee on Economic Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by the committee chairman O. Vojříř. The delegation of deputies was accompanied by a group of Czech business representatives. The visit took place in line with the Czech Republic's trade diplomacy.

Economic relations

The value of Czech exports to Tanzania was CZK 126.3 million; imports were worth CZK 45.1 million. The Czech Republic's principal export commodities are machinery and power-generating equipment, and textiles; the Czech Republic primarily imported tobacco from Tanzania.

ZAMBIA

(Republic of Zambia)

Economic relations

Exports from the Czech Republic to Zambia attained a value of CZK 22.5 million in 2009; imports were worth a mere CZK 666,000. The Czech Republic's principal export commodities were telecommunications equipment, accessories for audio and video recording and reproduction devices, and electrodiagnostic instruments for medical purposes. The Czech Republic mainly imported flowers, live animals and vegetables from Zambia.

Transformation and development cooperation

Zambia is one of the eight priority (programme) countries of Czech foreign development cooperation. The following development cooperation projects were implemented in 2009: *Promotion of the Quality of Surgical Interventions in Provincial and District Hospitals in Zambia's Western Province* under the authority of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic; *Increasing the Production Properties of Livestock in Kaoma District* under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic; and *Addressing the Impacts of the Extraction and Processing of Ores on the Environment and Health of the Population in Selected Areas, Central and Copperbelt Provinces* under the authority of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. Small-scale local projects of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic were also implemented: *Electronic Cataloguing in Nayuma Museum*; *Mwadi Museum Construction*; *Upgrading of Choma Museum and Crafts Centre*; *Mukonchi Mission – Installation of Internet Facilities and IT Equipment*; *Noah's Ark Day Centre*; and *Provision of Clean Water to Kalenge Basic School and Village Community*.

Zambia received two government scholarships from the Czech Republic for the 2009/2010 academic year.

ZIMBABWE

(Republic of Zimbabwe)

Visits by representatives of Zimbabwe

- 12 October 2009 – while in the Czech Republic to attend the FORUM 2000 conference, Zimbabwean politician T. Stevenson from the former opposition party *Movement for Democratic Change – Mutambara* met with Minister for Human Rights and National

Minorities M. Kocáb; on 13 October 2009 she met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Kmoníček;

- 26 November 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout held talks with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe M. Ndlovu, who informed the minister about current developments in Zimbabwe.

Economic relations

Exports from the Czech Republic to Zimbabwe consisted of agricultural equipment and telecommunications equipment. Minerals, fruit and vegetables were imported. The value of Czech exports was CZK 8.6 million; imports were worth CZK 26.7 million.

Humanitarian aid

In February 2009, the Czech Republic provided CZK 2.7 million for healthcare in Midlands province through the organisation Médecins Sans Frontières.

Transformation and development cooperation

The Czech Republic supported the work of the organisation *Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights* by contributing a sum of CZK 100,000.

Cultural relations

On 14 May 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a cultural event entitled *Stories without Boundaries* in the city of Bulawayo; the event included an exhibition focusing on the Ndebele folklore tradition. There was also a concurrent festival of Czech film fairytales. On 28 May 2009, as part of *Europe Day* organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic, there was an exhibition about Opava-born Joy Adamson, which presented the Czech Republic as a country with a diverse natural heritage. The exhibition was sponsored by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. In addition, with the participation of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, an international colloquium entitled *La Création Artistique comme Vecteur de Développement* was held in Brussels. Its goal was to present the phenomenon of Zimbabwean sculpture at the headquarters of the European Union. In the second half of 2009, the exhibition *Once Upon a Time – Stories without Boundaries* was also opened in the towns of Gwanda and Victoria Falls. To follow up the exhibition, the Embassy of the Czech Republic initiated the English-language publication of a collection of Ndebele

tales with the title *Kolobeja – Folktales from a Ndebele Past*. A ceremony was held in Gwanda on 16 November 2009 to officially hand over the publications to schools in Matabeleland. O. Trojan's film *Zelary* was screened at the *International Images Film Festival for Women* held in Harare from 20 to 28 November 2009 and won the award for the audiences' favourite film.

8. The Czech Republic's Relations with North American Countries

Czech-American and Czech-Canadian relations have the character of a strong alliance within NATO based on shared values and the transatlantic link. The Czech Republic's link with the countries of North America is also founded on the close ties between the USA and Canada and the European Union. The policy of the Czech Republic on the one hand and the policies of the USA and Canada on the other have many common elements, most notably in the field of security cooperation, energy security, the fight against terrorism and support for democracy and human rights. The countries of North America also represent key trading partners for the Czech Republic. Mutual relations in the fields of culture, sport, science and technology are very close. One specific feature of North America is the large community of Czechs based there.

The Czech Republic's mutual relations with the USA and Canada have for long been outstanding in all regards. In the case of Canada, however, relations were affected in July 2009 by the unilateral introduction of a visa requirement for Czech citizens. The planned development of a European component of Missile Defence, which had been a core theme of bilateral relations for several years, was reassessed when President B. Obama's new US administration took office in September 2009. The Czech Republic understands the US administration's reasons and is working with the USA to define its role in the new security architecture being created. Strategic cooperation between both countries in the defence and security field is going ahead.

The outstanding bilateral relations with North American countries were confirmed in 2009 by visits to the Czech Republic by both countries' top-level representatives. In the case of the United States, President B. Obama, Vice President J. Biden and Secretary of State H. Clinton visited the Czech Republic. Moreover, in Prague President B. Obama delivered the first of his key foreign-policy speeches of 2009 on the subject of nuclear disarmament. In the case of Canada, the Czech Republic was visited by Prime Minister S. Harper.

The Czech Republic's relations with the countries of North America, also referred to as transatlantic relations, are among the constant priorities of Czech foreign policy. That

remained the case in 2009, when, during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, transatlantic relations were declared as one of three foreign-policy priorities.

One of the high points of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union was an informal meeting of heads of state and government of the European Union with President of the USA B. Obama, held in Prague on 5 April 2009. It was of crucial significance that after Great Britain, Germany and France, i.e. big and key members of the European Union, President B. Obama chose to visit Prague. The Prague summit was enhanced further by the parallel informal meeting between European Union foreign ministers and Secretary of State H. Clinton. In the case of Canada, Prague hosted a European Union-Canada summit on 6 May 2009. That summit represented a breakthrough because it announced the launch of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union.

CANADA

Canada is an important transatlantic ally of the Czech Republic. The two countries cooperate intensively in international organisations and in multilateral forums and jointly participate in responding to many foreign-policy questions, e.g. international peace operations, the provision of transformation assistance to selected countries, the protection of human rights, the fight against terrorism and illegal migration and protection of the environment. Both the Czech Republic and Canada are intensively engaged in efforts to resolve the crisis in Afghanistan and in that country's post-war renewal through their provincial reconstruction teams.

Bilateral relations in 2009 were profoundly influenced by the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. Talks were dominated by the preparations for the European Union-Canada summit held in Prague on 6 May 2009. The summit was preceded by intensive talks dealing mainly with the preparation of a mandate for negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union and Canada; the launch of these negotiations was one of the key points on the Prague summit's agenda.

In the middle of 2009, there was a palpable deterioration in bilateral relations in connection with the re-introduction of a visa requirement for Czech citizens travelling to

Canada, which came into effect from 14 July 2009. The main reason for Canada's decision was the rapid increase in the number of applications for asylum in Canada lodged by Czech citizens. Although the Canadian government declares that the introduction of the visa requirement is a temporary measure, it simultaneously links the measure to the necessary reform of its asylum system. The Czech Republic's concern is to reach agreement on specific steps that would lead to the restoration of visa equality, i.e. ideally the abolition of the visa requirement. Based on an agreement between the deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of the Czech Republic and the Canadian minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, a Czech-Canadian expert working group was established with a view to mapping the possibilities for achieving such an agreement and possibly opening talks on steps that could lead to the restoration of visa reciprocity.

The visa question also has a European Union dimension. In its October report submitted to the Council of the European Union, the European Commission called on Canada to take specific measures by the end of the year towards eliminating the visa asymmetry. The European Commission proposed opening a visa department in the Czech Republic, specifying concrete steps that would lead to the lifting of the visa requirement for Czech citizens in the near future and going ahead with dialogue within the framework of the Czech-Canadian expert working group. Should Canada fail to fulfil these demands by the end of 2009, the European Commission recommended that the Council decide that European Union member states would introduce visa requirement for holders of Canadian diplomatic and service passports. Canada only satisfied the first condition: on 21 December 2009 it opened a visa department at its embassy in Prague.

The principal goal of Czech foreign policy in Czech-Canadian relations is now the expedited return to visa-free travel, as the current situation holds back the dynamism of cooperation in all other areas.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 12-15 May 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Tlapa;
- 18-19 September 2009 – visit by Minister of Defence M. Barták;
- 20-30 September 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions of the Senate of Parliament, led by the committee vice-chairman J. Hálek.

Visits by representatives of Canada

- 15-16 January 2009 – visit by Minister of International Trade S. Day and Deputy Minister of International Trade L. Lévesque;
- 16 February 2009 – visit by Minister of Fisheries and Oceans G. Shea;
- 25 March 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs L. Edwards;
- 5-6 May 2009 – visit by Prime Minister S. Harper on the occasion of the European Union-Canada summit;
- 28-29 June 2009 – visit by Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism J. Kenney (to attend a conference on the Holocaust), during which he met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout, Minister of the Interior M. Pecina and Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities M. Kocáb.

Other meetings

- 5 March 2009 – meeting between foreign ministers K. Schwarzenberg and L. Cannon on the sidelines of the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels (Belgium);
- 4 December 2009 – meeting between foreign ministers J. Kohout and L. Cannon on the sidelines of the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels (Belgium);
- 15 December 2009 – meeting between Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities M. Kocáb and Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism J. Kenney on the sidelines of a *Shoa* conference in Jerusalem (Israel).

Economic relations

In terms of overall foreign trade, the Czech Republic's share of Canada's foreign trade is relatively small (below one percent), as is Canada's share of the Czech Republic's; mutual trade has so far not played a serious role for either the Czech Republic or the Canadian provinces or Canada as a whole. Trade exchange between the two countries was deeply affected by the global financial and economic crisis in 2009, with Czech exports to Canada in particular registering a drastic fall in year-on-year terms. The CzechTrade office in Toronto closed down as of 30 June 2009.

A large part of Czech exports to Canada is effected via transnational companies, investments by Canadian firms in the Czech Republic and Czech holdings in Canada. There are currently around 80 firms in the Czech Republic that have Canadian capital or are joint ventures or offices of Canadian companies. The Celestica works in Kladno and investments

by Magna International Group are among the most significant Canadian direct foreign investments. Exports to Canada attained a value of CZK 2.8 billion in 2009; imports were worth CZK 3.8 billion.

Trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Canada is mainly composed of items with a high degree of processing and high value added.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: mechanically propelled aircraft over 15,000 kg in weight, iron and steel castings, mobile telephones, tyres for passenger automobiles, artificial casings, beer, parts for water turbines and waterwheels, antibiotics, microscopes, replaceable parts for hand tools and machine tools.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: medicaments for retail sale, agglomerated iron ore, pet food, mechanically propelled aircraft from 2,000 to 15,000 kg in weight, miscellaneous parts for aircraft and helicopters, lenses, miscellaneous food products, mobile telephones, static converters.

Cultural relations

During 2009, the diplomatic missions of the Czech Republic in Canada participated in the organisation of an intensive programme which, thanks to the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, helped enhance the Czech Republic's presence at more than 30 cultural and presentation events showcasing various aspects of Czech culture. The activities were not confined to the capital – there was also successful cooperation with the provinces of midwest and western Canada.

One of the most significant events was without doubt the *Orbis Pictus* exhibition of Czech artist P. Nikl that took place in Vancouver from October 2008 to February 2009. In view of both countries' ice hockey tradition, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ottawa prepared a major presentation of the Czech Republic and an exhibition of photographs presented at the junior ice hockey championships in Ottawa in January 2009.

Music was, of course, central to the Czech Republic's cultural presentation throughout the year. There were concerts by the *Pražák Quartet*, *Zemlínksý Quartet* and *Panoch Quartet* and by the group *Čechomor*. The *Canadian Opera Company* performed the opera *Rusalka* in Toronto and a gala concert of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* was performed by the *Toronto*

Philharmonic Orchestra to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism. A theatre performance of T. Stoppard's play about the former Czechoslovakia *Rock'n'Roll* by the *Canadian Stage Company* ran for three weeks in Toronto.

In the field of fine art, there were presentations of graphic works by V. Palečková, an exhibition of *The Magic World of Czech Illustrators for Children* at the Children's Museum in Winnipeg, an exhibition of *1989 as Seen by Photographers* staged to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism, an exhibition about the activities of the Czech provincial reconstruction team in Logar, and an exhibition entitled *100 Czech Gems*, which was accompanied by several presentation events, including the *Travel and Vacation Show* in Ottawa.

Regular film evenings presenting new works of Czech cinema, among them the documentary *Czech Dream*, ran from January to June 2009. The film *The Karamazov Brothers* was screened at the *European Union Film Festival* in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver.

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the General Consulate of the Czech Republic in Toronto organised an evening in honour of Sir Nicholas Winton. Under the initiative of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ottawa, preparations went ahead for a project to build a monument in the capital Ottawa to the victims of communism.

USA

(United States of America)

The Czech Republic continued in the intensive development of its relations and alliance with the new US administration of President B. Obama that took office in January 2009. During the first half of 2009, the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union led to the further strengthening of mutual relations and political consultations. The transatlantic agenda occupied a leading position among the Czech presidency's external relations priorities. The culmination was the April visit by President B. Obama to Prague, where, during his first European trip, he took part in an informal summit of heads of state and government of the European Union and the USA and on this occasion also held bilateral talks. President Obama also chose Prague as the site of his first major foreign-policy speech, in which he declared that he would prioritise efforts to achieve a future without nuclear

weapons. Another significant event during the Czech presidency was the opening of European Union-USA dialogue on energy security.

In September 2009, the US government announced the results of its policy reassessment in the matter of the missile defence system in Europe. The outcome was a decision to abandon the project to station a radar site in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, the US administration offered the Czech Republic the chance of participating in the new missile defence strategy (known as the Phased Adaptive Approach), in which NATO's role will be strengthened. Representatives of the Czech Republic have already expressed their readiness to participate in the new form of missile defence.

US Vice President J. Biden visited Prague on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the November 1989 revolution. He confirmed the strength of the US alliance commitment to the entire central Europe region and appreciated the enduring inspiration that can be drawn from the events of 1989 both by the USA and by nations still not living in free and democratic regimes.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 8-10 February 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg met with Secretary of State H. Clinton, Secretary of Defence R. Gates and senators C. Levin and J. Kerry;
- 5-9 March 2009 – working visit to Santa Barbara, California, and New York by President V. Klaus;
- 16-17 March 2009 – meeting of European Union-USA justice and interior ministers, held on behalf of the European Union by Minister of the Interior I. Langer. There was a parallel meeting in the European Union Troika format held by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment M. Bursík on global climate change;
- 22-23 March 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra met with economics adviser to the president D. Lipton, national security adviser J. Jones, Deputy Secretary of State J. Steinberg, legal advisor to the White House G. Craig, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs D. Fried, director of the Missile Defense Agency P. O'Reilly, senior directors of President B. Obama on Russia and non-proliferation, congressman R. Wexler and the Secretary of State's special adviser on Iran D. Ross;
- 24-27 April 2009 – visit by Minister of Finance M. Kalousek to Washington D.C. on the occasion of the April meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank;

- 26-28 April 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment M. Bursík attended the *Major Economies Forum* in Washington D.C.;
- 29 April – 1 May 2009 – First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar attended the *Daimler U.S. – European Forum on Global Issues* at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C.;
- 14-18 September 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták held talks with Secretary for Defence R. Gates and National Security Advisor J. Jones;
- 19 September 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and Secretary of State H. Clinton on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York;
- 20-21 September 2009 – working visit by President V. Klaus;
- 4-7 November 2009 - working visit by President V. Klaus, who met with Vice President J. Biden and attended a conference on the 20th anniversary of the political changes in central and eastern Europe in The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley (California);
- 20 November 2009 – visit to Miami by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament as part of its working trip to the countries of Latin and Central America.

Visits by representatives of the United States of America

- 4-5 April 2009 – visit to Prague by President B. Obama and spouse Michelle on the occasion of an informal European Union-USA summit. He held bilateral meetings with President V. Klaus, Prime Minister M. Topolánek, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment M. Bursík, Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and Minister of Finance M. Kalousek. Besides attending the informal European Union-USA summit, President B. Obama also delivered a key speech in Prague on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- 28 April 2009 – Attorney General E. Holder and Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security J. Holl Lute attended the European Union Troika – US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Meeting;
- 17 April 2009 – visit to Prague by a delegation of the Armed Services Committee of the Senate of Congress, led by C. Levin (D-MI);

- 17-20 April 2009 – meeting between a delegation of the *Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue* of Congress, led by S. Berkley (D-NV), and Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra;
- 17 September 2009 – talks between a US delegation led by Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs E. Tauscher and a Czech delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 22-23 October 2009 – Vice President J. Biden met with President V. Klaus, Prime Minister J. Fischer, selected government ministers and representatives of political parties and representatives of parliament;
- 6 November 2009 – first session of the *Czech-US High Level Defence Group* in Prague. The US delegation was led by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security A. Vershbow;
- 16 November 2009 – visit by an expert team led by Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs E. Tauscher.

Other meetings

- 6 March 2009, Brussels (Belgium) – Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs A. Vondra met with Secretary of State H. Clinton and Vice President J. Biden in the European Union Troika format.

Economic relations

The USA is one of the Czech Republic's strategic economic partners and is one of the priority countries for state export support. US investments in the Czech Republic exceed CZK 50 billion in total. The Czech Republic is the seat of the regional centres of a number of prominent US firms. For the Czech Republic, the USA traditionally represent a source of modern technologies and innovation in manufacturing, trade, services and scientific research. The main share of Czech exports to the USA comprises Czech industry's involvement in global supply chains, the expansion of in-house supplies of transnational companies and manufacturing orders for major US firms. Products with substantial value added again formed a large part of Czech exports to the USA in 2009. Despite the dynamic development of mutual trade, the USA has in recent years gradually dropped out of the group of the Czech Republic's ten most significant trading partners; in 2009, the USA occupied 14th place (*data*

for the first 11 months of 2009). The main reason for this situation was the enormous growth in the Czech Republic's foreign trade turnover with European Union countries.

The world of trade, and in particular economic relations with the USA, was overshadowed by the economic crisis in 2009, which also hit the Czech Republic hard. According to Czech statistics, total trade turnover between the Czech Republic and the USA registered a year-on-year fall of approximately 30%.

According to Czech statistics, the value of total foreign trade turnover in 2009 was approximately CZK 76.2 billion, with exports from the Czech Republic worth CZK 34.3 billion and imports to the Czech Republic worth CZK 41.9 billion. Trade turnover in 2009 amounted to 79 % of the figure for the previous year, exports from the Czech Republic 72.8 % and imports to the Czech Republic 84.4 %.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: computer technology, electronics, motors, aviation technology, optical apparatus, aircraft and other transport equipment, medical apparatus.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: office machinery and computer technology, civil aircraft and parts, machinery and plant equipment, electrical machinery, medical apparatus, medicaments and pharmaceuticals, telecommunications equipment, transport equipment.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

The following treaties and agreements entered into force in 2009: *Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the United States of America on the Exchange of Engineers and Scientists (ESEA)* and *Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the United States of America on Cooperation in the Field of Missile Defence*.

Cultural relations

Cultural relations between the Czech Republic and the USA were developed mainly through the activities of Czech missions and institutions in the USA. In the first half of 2009, a number of cultural events formed part of the programme accompanying the Czech

presidency of the Council of the European Union. Events staged in the second half of the year were often related to the 20th anniversary of the fall of the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia. In general, cultural events staged in 2009 were based on the priorities of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic's long-term foreign-policy priorities and also the endeavour to present the Czech Republic in the context of the European Union.

In the capital, the Czech presidency presented itself with a programme entitled *CZ in DC*. The culmination of this programme was without doubt two performances by the National Theatre Ballet in April 2009, choreographed by the renowned choreographers J. Kylián a P. Zuska. Concerts by popular group *Čechomor* (18 and 19 June 2009) rounded off the cultural events organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic and the Czech presidency as a whole. Two joint projects of European embassies took place in the second half of the year: the *Kids Euro Festival* (involving the Prague-based Minor Theatre and the group of leading Czech musicians *Slet bubeníků*) and a conference entitled *Museum and Change* under the auspices of the Swedish presidency. To commemorate the Velvet Revolution, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington D.C. organised a conference on 6 November 2009 entitled *Czechs and Balances: Twenty Years of Czech Freedom and Democracy*, which was preceded by a concert by Prague-based underground group *Psí vojáci* (5 November 2009).

In cooperation with the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York and the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the UN, the Czech Centre in New York opened the presidency programme with an improvised jazz concert of seventeen musicians from European Union countries (*Concert for Europe*). With the support of eight eminent European cultural institutions, the Czech Centre presented the first festival of contemporary European film in April. *Šance 1989 aneb Windows of Opportunity*, a production by the Archa Theatre, was staged on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the fall of communism. In addition, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York organised a number of cultural events, either independently or in cooperation with the Czech Centre (e.g. a jazz concert marking Europe Day in May, an exhibition of works by children from the Terezín ghetto entitled *Escaping their Boundaries – The Children of Theresienstadt*, and *The Ironic Curtain* film festival mapping Czech cinema since 1989).

Another event in New York was *Days of the Czech European Union Presidency at the UN*, featuring: an exhibition entitled *The Time in Which I Live* presenting the contemporary world through the eyes of world-famous Czech photographer A. Kratochvíl (UN, 1-12 June 2009); *Echoes of One World*, the biggest film festival specialising in human rights in Europe, featuring a screening of *The Power of the Powerless* in the context of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Velvet Revolution, and the film *Burma VJ* in connection with the long-term efforts to organise events focusing on human rights issues (Bohemian National Building, 15 and 17 June 2009); a concert by Zuzana Stivínová and the Robert Balzar Trio entitled *From the Stage to the Bar* and presenting Czech culture/repertoire in a European and American context (Bohemian National Building, 8 June 2009); and *Czech Gourmet Week at the UN*, following on from the tradition of culinary festivals of UN member countries, co-organised with CzechTourism New York and including a presentation for the specialist culinary and tourist press (UN, 8-12 June 2009).

In connection with the anniversary of the end of the second world war, L. Přibyl's documentary *Forgotten Transports* was screened at the UN as the Czech contribution to the preservation of historical memory and the endeavour to draw attention to the horrors of genocide (UN, 27 May 2009).

The final cultural event of the Czech presidency in New York was a gala reception marking its close, including a concert by I. Bittová accompanied by G. Mraz with a repertoire including Swedish elements in connection with the following Swedish presidency of the Council of the European Union and a performance by the Karel Růžička Jazz Trio (Bohemian National Building, 30 June 2009).

Other events accompanying the Czech presidency and organised by the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago were also very well received; events particularly worth mentioning include the 12th *European Film Festival*, the *European Drinks Festival* and *Homage to a Great European – Sir Nicholas Winton*. To mark the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago organised a commemorative series of events entitled *VELVET REDUX*, which included the Chicago premiere of the film *Citizen Havel*. The biggest and most successful of the events marking the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution was the annual gala evening organised by the American Friends of the Czech Republic. In addition, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in

Los Angeles organised several events marking the Czech presidency and the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution.

9. The Czech Republic's Relations with Central and South American Countries

Given its significance and remoteness, the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region is not among the traditional priorities of the Czech Republic's foreign policy. Nevertheless, the growing economic potential of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the increasingly important role of LAC countries in global politics and the current constellation of global relations are contributing to the growing importance of individual countries in Latin America and regional groupings in Czech foreign policy.

In 2009, there was a number of meetings with representatives of Latin America and the Caribbean, encompassing a wide range of institutions and topics. The most important event in bilateral relations was the state visit to the Republic of Peru and the Federative Republic of Brazil by President V. Klaus in November 2009. The Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009 was another very important impulse for the development of relations between the Czech Republic and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. On 13 May 2009, Prague hosted the 14th European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting, which was attended by 56 delegations from European Union and Latin American countries as well as some special guests. Numerous contacts also took place on the multilateral level.

Latin America is a region that offers extensive opportunities for trade and outstanding investment potential. Ever since 1993, the Czech Republic's trade turnover with Latin America has accounted for approximately 1% of its total turnover; in 2009 this increased to 1.66% of total turnover.

Although Latin American countries have not been the principal focus for Czech development assistance, several successful development projects have been implemented in the region.

Human rights and democracy represent a long-term cross-cutting theme of Czech foreign policy not only to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Czech Republic draws on its recent experiences with political and economic transformation to share

its know-how with countries undergoing similar processes in Latin America. At the same time, it pursues a very active human rights agenda, doing so bilaterally, within the European Union, and in multilateral forums.

The increasing trade exchange, the growing potential of Latin American and Caribbean countries, the tradition of mutual relations, the impacts of the Czech presidency and the Czech Republic's interest in widening bilateral relations in other areas make it important to maintain active relations with the countries of the region.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

The Czech Republic has diplomatic relations with Antigua and Barbuda on the basis of non-resident embassies. The Czech Republic and Antigua and Barbuda maintain low but constant trade exchange. One significant event in November 2009 was the opening of the honorary consulate, headed by banking lawyer A. Thomas. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Minister of Trade, Economy and Finance H. Lovell.

Economic relations

Mutual trade is relatively small, with Czech exports to Antigua and Barbuda attaining a value of CZK 4.1 million in 2009 and imports CZK 12.2 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: drinking glassware, spherical-roller bearings, electric motors, inks.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: optical recording media, fabrics, cosmetics, wine from fresh grapes, wine must, printed circuits, footwear, electric conductors, blueberries, cranberries.

ARGENTINA

(Argentine Republic)

Relations between Argentina and the Czech Republic were mainly influenced in 2009 by the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union and by parliamentary cooperation. During the Czech presidency, human rights dialogue was opened between the European Union and Argentina and, by an initiative of members of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament of the Czech Republic, the parliaments of the Czech Republic and Argentina began working on a joint report on mutual relations. The intensive work on an

agreement on cooperation in the Antarctic was completed during 2009; its signing is scheduled for 2010.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- March 2009 – visit by the Committee on Agriculture of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament;
- September 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs of the Senate of Parliament.

Visits by representatives of Argentina

- June 2009 – visit by Minister of Science, Technology and Innovative Production L. Baranao.

Economic relations

There was a significant increase in trade exchange in 2009. For the first time since 2000, the Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus, with Czech exports accounting for 86% of trade turnover. Exports were boosted by Czech investment in Argentina – Vítkovice Cylinders a.s. bought a majority share in the Cidegas S.A. factory manufacturing high-pressure cylinders. There has also been positive development in scientific and technological bilateral cooperation, assisted by the staging of Czech-Argentine Technology Days on 23-27 November 2009. Czech exports in the period under scrutiny attained a value of CZK 4.9 billion and imports CZK 790.6 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: aircraft and parts, turbines, motors and generators, motor vehicles and tractors including parts and accessories, electronic audio and video recording and reproduction devices, air conditioning units, sulphonamides, high-pressure gas cylinders.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: fruit and vegetables (especially groundnuts, grapes, citrus fruit, oranges and mandarins, maize), road vehicles and motor vehicle parts and accessories, oleaginous seeds and fruits.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

Within the framework of the Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the Ministry

for Science, Technology and Innovative Production of the Argentine Republic, a Programme of Cooperation in the Field of Science and Technology for the Years 2010/2011 was signed on 27 June 2009.

Cultural relations

The intensive work of the Czech Centre in Buenos Aires went ahead in 2009. The *Dejvice Theatre*, the *J. Srnec Black Theatre*, the choirs *Iuventus Svitavy* and *Vox nymburgensis* and the writers M. Pilátová and I. Pecháčková were presented to the Argentine public. Several Czech films were screened. The biggest media response was generated by the documentary films of H. Třeštíková, who presented them in person at a festival of independent cinema. Through the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Buenos Aires, contributions were paid to the large Czech community in Argentina for cultural activities intended to promote Czech culture as well as contributions towards work on buildings used by Czech community clubs. The total amount allocated in 2009 was CZK 1.19 million. Three Czech language teachers worked in Argentina and the neighbouring Paraguay.

BRAZIL

(Federative Republic of Brazil)

Brazil is one of the Czech Republic's most important partners in Latin America and relations with Brazil are a priority in the region. Mutual relations centre on trade and economic cooperation.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- April 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Army of the Czech Republic, represented by Chief of General Staff General V. Pícek;
- October 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová;
- 22-26 November 2009 – visit by President V. Klaus; the delegation included Minister of the Interior M. Pecina, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka and Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic General V. Pícek; the president was accompanied by a business mission.

Visits by representatives of Brazil

- June 2009 – visit by Governor of the State of Ceará C. Gomes;

- October 2009 – visit by Vice-minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade of Brazil I. Ramalho, accompanied by a business mission.

Economic relations

Brazil is a traditional and the most important trading partner of the Czech Republic in Latin America. As part of the programme to develop bilateral trade and economic relations, Brazil was identified by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic as a country of priority interest. Trade exchange has been very dynamic in recent years, but declined in 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis. Czech products enjoy a good reputation on the Brazilian market and are regarded as offering high quality at an acceptable price. In October 2009, the National Congress of Brazil ratified the *Agreement on Economic and Industrial Cooperation*; one key output of the Agreement is the establishment of a *Mixed Commission* between the two countries' industry and trade ministries. The talks conducted by business representatives accompanying President V. Klaus on his state visit to Brazil opened up new business opportunities.

Czech Republic Week took place in São Paulo from 16 to 22 June 2009. *Czech Beer and Goulash Week* was an event staged in São Paulo to promote imports of Czech beer brands to Brazil.

Mutual trade was evenly balanced in 2009, with exports attaining a value of CZK 5,177 billion and imports CZK 5.144 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: piston engines and parts of such, parts of vehicles and tractors, lead crystal glass, pumps, lorries, textile machinery, machine tools.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: aircraft, ethyl alcohol, frozen hens, conserved poultry, meat, coffee.

Humanitarian aid

The Czech Republic provided the state of Amazonas with humanitarian aid of CZK 500,000 to deal with the consequences of the destructive floods that culminated in July 2009. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová handed over the symbolic cheque to the

vice-governor of Amazonas on 19 October 2009. The food bought with this aid was delivered to the inhabitants of the remote Jesus Maracapura community.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- The Agreement on Economic and Industrial Cooperation between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 12 April 2008 was ratified by the National Congress of Brazil in 2009 and entered into effect on 20 October 2009.
- Memorandum of Understanding between investment support agencies CzechInvest and APEX, Brasília, 24 November 2009.

Cultural relations

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Brasília organised the following exhibitions in 2009: *Josip Plečnik – Architect of Prague*, *Jewellery by Karel Votípek* in Vitória on the occasion of the opening of the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic in Vitória, and *Glass Underpainting with Historical Motifs* by J. Vildt in Fortaleza on the occasion of the opening of the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic in Fortaleza.

During the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, there was a concert performance of B. Smetana's work *My Country* by the Symphony Orchestra of the National Theatre in Brasília and the Czech films *Secrets* and *I Served the King of England* were screened at the *European Union Film Festival* in Brasília. A screening of the film *Empties* and a pop music concert by P. Černocká took place during *Europe Week*.

Together with photographer J. Štreit, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Sao Paulo carried out a project to photograph members of the Czech community in Brazil, leading to the publication of a book entitled *Czech Brazilians*. The works *René*, *Broken Promise* and *Baba* represented Czech cinema at film festivals in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. To mark the 50th anniversary of the death of B. Martinů, his work *The Frescoes of Piero della Francesca* was performed in the São Paulo concert hall. The Consulate General of the Czech Republic in São Paulo organised the exhibitions *From Prague Spring to the Velvet Revolution* featuring photographs by J. Štreit from 1965 to 2005, *The Explorer Enrique Stanko Vráz* and an exposition of children's artwork from the Lidice art competition. Czech language teaching commenced at Universidad de São Paulo in April 2009.

CHILE

(Republic of Chile)

The Czech Republic's bilateral relations with Chile benefited most from the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2009. During the visit of the Chilean foreign minister to the Czech Republic, both countries reaffirmed their interest in cooperating on Antarctic research. The considerable openness of the Chilean economy, combined with a trade-oriented foreign policy, continued to facilitate the further deepening of mutual trade and economic relations.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- November 2009 – visit by a delegation led by Minister of Agriculture J. Šebesta.

Visits by representatives of Chile

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs M. F. Amunategui attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Other meetings

- September 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile M. F. Amunategui on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Economic relations

Czech exports to Chile in 2009 were more than double the value of exports in the previous year. Two turbo generators for the Mejillones power plant (2 x 165MW) were the most significant export item. The economic downturn was reflected in Czech imports from Chile, which declined substantially. As a result, the Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus with Chile for the first time in many years. The value of Czech exports to Chile was CZK 1.543 billion; imports were worth CZK 776.1 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: boilers and reactors, audiovisual equipment, plastics, furniture.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: ferrous alloys, dried fruit, honey, wine, non-ferrous metals.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement on Antarctic Cooperation between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Chile, Prague, 14 May 2009; entered into effect on 1 June 2009.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile, Vienna, 23 September 2009.

Development cooperation

A development project to rehabilitate part of the Torres del Paine national park damaged by fire went ahead in 2009. In total, 140,000 Lenga trees have been planted. The situation was monitored on site by a team of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic in November 2009; because of the good results achieved to date a decision was made to continue with the project.

As in previous years, in 2009 the Diplomatic Academy of the Chilean foreign ministry offered one scholarship place for a junior Czech diplomat.

Cultural relations

The first half of 2009 was a period of intensive presentation of Czech culture in Chile. In April, the Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a festival of films by director J. Svěrák and an exhibition of photographs of *Pilgrimage Sites of the Czech Republic*. At the end of June, it organised two concerts by leading Czech jazz trio Pavel J. Ryba & The Fish Men in Santiago de Chile. The eleventh *Festival of European Cinema* in Chile took place during the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The festival, the largest to date, presented European cinema in the Chilean capital and also sixteen other towns and cities, including Easter Island. Two prominent classical music ensembles, Virtuosi di Prague and the Guarneri Trio Prague performed to Chilean audiences. In May, representatives of the Prague University of Economics and Charles University had a presentation stand at the study opportunities trade fair *Europosgrados 2009* in Santiago de Chile.

COLOMBIA

(Republic of Colombia)

Relations between the Czech Republic and Colombia continue to be centred on trade and economic cooperation. In addition, there is political dialogue, which increased in intensity in 2009.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Hamáček.

Visits by representatives of Colombia

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Bermúdez attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Economic relations

Colombia is a traditional and important trading partner of the Czech Republic in Latin America. Trade exchange between the two countries declined slightly in 2009 in consequence of the global financial crisis and reduced demand on the Colombian market. The Czech Republic has for long had a balance of trade deficit with Colombia, caused mainly by imports of bananas and coffee.

In 2009, the activities of Czech firms in Colombia gained in intensity, particularly in the fields of forestry, medical equipment, communal technologies and vehicles. Of significant benefit in this regard was a project entitled *Continuation of “Czech Healthcare Days in Colombia”*, which took place in November 2009. The project made it possible to present the high standard of Czech healthcare in the most important economic regions of Colombia through technically and technologically advanced products and services with high value added. The value of Czech exports to Colombia was CZK 359.6 million; imports were worth CZK 473.7 million.

The Czech Republic’s principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, cosmetics, toys, whey, artificial casings, iron and steel seamless tubes, building machinery.

The Czech Republic’s principal import commodities: bananas, flowers, coffee, coffee concentrates, confectionaries.

Development cooperation

The Czech Republic provided Colombia with two government scholarships for master's study courses in the 2009/2010 academic year.

Cultural relations

The *XV EUROKINE* international film festival of European Union countries took place in Bogotá in April 2009. Director J. Menzel was the festival's guest of honour and the festival opened with two of his films, *I Served the King of England* and *Closely Observed Trains*. The screening for journalists, film critics and students was accompanied by the opening of an exhibition about the work of B. Hrabal. For the first time, the Czech Republic, Sweden and France organised a humanitarian section of the festival. Fairytales and educational films for children who were unable to attend screenings in prestigious cinemas in the centre of Bogotá were screened in slum districts on the capital's outskirts. The Embassy of the Czech Republic organised a number of exhibitions and talks devoted to the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain and cultural themes.

COSTA RICA

(Republic of Costa Rica)

Although Costa Rica announced that it was closing its embassy in Prague as of 31 May 2009 for economic reasons, the country remains a traditional partner of the Czech Republic in Central America.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- October 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová;
- November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Foreign Affairs the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by its chairman J. Hamáček.

Visits by representatives of Costa Rica

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs B. Stagno attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Economic relations

There were no major changes in mutual trade: Czech firms' interest in Costa Rica remains low. There is still the opportunity for Czech firm INEKON to participate in an urban public transport project. Trade turnover and exports in particular, fell slightly in 2009 in consequence of the crisis. The Czech Republic ended the year with a pronounced balance of trade deficit with Costa Rica. Czech exports to Costa Rica attained a value of CZK 128.9 million and imports CZK 1.23 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: plastics and plastic products, paper, paperboard and cardboard, glass and glass products, turbines, instruments, to a lesser extent motor vehicles, toys, revolvers.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: Intel computer components, electrical recording devices, agricultural produce (bananas, pineapples and other tropical fruit, fruit concentrates).

Humanitarian aid

The Czech Republic provided CZK 250,000 in humanitarian aid to the Costa Rican Red Cross for the purchase of children's school uniforms in San Miguel de Sarapiquí.

Development cooperation

The second three-year phase of the successful project *Geological Risks Prevention* in Miramar and San Ramón implemented by the Czech Geological Survey went ahead in 2009.

Cultural relations

In January 2009, the B. Hlavenková Jazz Quartet performed at a concert in San José marking the start of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. In the same month, there was a workshop of glass art techniques led by painter E. Vlasáková and attended by fifteen Costa Rican artists. The Czech artist then exhibited her works at the Klaus Steinmetz Museum in February and March. The inauguration of the exhibition was attended by Minister of Culture M. Carballo. The Embassy of the Czech Republic took part in the Francophonie Festival by staging an exhibition of *The French Influence on Czech Art* and screening the film *Empties*.

CUBA

(Republic of Cuba)

The Czech Republic's foreign policy towards Cuba was influenced by the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union more than in the case of other countries. Despite the long-term emphasis placed by Czech foreign policy on defending human rights, the Czech Republic exercised a consensual presidency representing all European Union countries and continued with the policy of dialogue between the European Union and Cuba. Contacts established between the Czech Republic and Cuba during the Czech presidency also brought about something of a revival in bilateral relations in the second half of the year.

Visits by representatives of Cuba

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs B. E. R. Parilla attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Other meetings

- September 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba B. E. R. Parilla during the UN General Assembly in New York.

Economic relations

The Czech Republic's share of Cuba's overall foreign trade is relatively small, and vice versa: Czech exports were worth CZK 179.6 million and imports CZK 97.4 million. The Export Guarantee and Insurance Corporation EGAP stopped insuring Czech firms' exports to Cuba in 2009 on the grounds on non-repayment of loans. Expert negotiations with Cuban partners during the year failed to resolve the payment problems.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and transport equipment, electrical apparatus, devices and appliances.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: beverages, tobacco and tobacco products.

Transformation and development cooperation

The organisations *Libri Prohibiti* and *People In Need* implemented transformation cooperation projects in 2009. The goal of the transformation projects in general is to support

ongoing or potential future democratisation. The projects focus on promoting civil society and raising awareness of human rights. Negotiations on the resumption of development cooperation were opened in 2009.

Cultural relations

Presentation of Czech culture intensified during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. In March 2009, the Czech Republic took part in Francophonie week by screening the film *Empties* and organising a concert by Spirituál Kvintet, which also gave two further concerts in Havana and Pinar del Río. An exhibition of *Photographs 1968-89* was staged in the Embassy of the Czech Republic on 1 April 2009. *Contemporary Czech Film Week* took place in Pinar del Río from 25 to 30 May 2009.

ECUADOR

(Republic of Ecuador)

Relations between the Czech Republic and Ecuador developed mainly in the economic field in 2009.

Visits by representatives of Ecuador

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs F. F. Benítez attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Economic relations

Bilateral trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Ecuador developed in 2009; the Czech Republic ended the year with a slight balance of trade deficit. Both exports and imports are worth millions of crowns: the value of Czech exports CZK 331.9 million, imports CZK 459.6 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: passenger automobiles, parts and accessories for motor vehicles, glass and glass products, textile and leatherworking machinery, chemical fertilisers, plastic tubes, pipes and hoses, hand tools, arms and ammunition.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: fruits and nuts, medicaments, fish, confectionaries, soap, coffee.

Development cooperation

The project entitled Reducing Vulnerability and Maintaining Urban Infrastructure in the Unfavourable Geological Conditions of the City of Loja in Southern Ecuador, which was part of the Czech Republic's foreign development cooperation in Ecuador, was completed in 2009. The project, whose budget was CZK 3.9 million, began in 2007. The aim of this development cooperation project, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and implemented by geological firm Gekon s.r.o. Karlovy Vary, is to design preventive and mitigating measures to protect important sustainable development buildings in Loja. The project simultaneously proposed the most effective way to ensure the long-term stability of the mineral underbed of a drinking water conduit and assessed geological risks in planning the city's transport infrastructure.

The Czech Republic granted Ecuador two government scholarships for the 2008/2009 academic year.

EL SALVADOR

(Republic of El Salvador)

Relations between the Czech Republic and El Salvador are very good and are developing on the basis of trade cooperation and the provision of development cooperation.

The office of the former honorary consul P. Tesák (died 7 August 2009) was taken over by his wife I. Tesáková. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic conferred on P. Tesák the Gratias Agit award in memoriam. The award was presented to I. Tesáková by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová during her visit to El Salvador.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- November 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová.

Visits by representatives of El Salvador

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs M. A. de Barillas attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Economic relations

Despite the crisis, mutual trade increased slightly. The Czech Republic maintained its balance of trade surplus, exporting goods worth CZK 839.7 million and importing goods worth CZK 69.9 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: iron and steel, electrical recording devices, pharmaceuticals, dyes, chemical products, plastic products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: electrical recording devices, coffee, clothing.

Development cooperation

In 2009, the Czech Geological Survey completed the second phase of the three-year development assistance project *Geological Risks Prevention*. El Salvador expressed an interest in continuing with the project. In 2009, the Czech Republic awarded El Salvador one scholarship for master's study in English.

JAMAICA

Bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and Jamaica focus on the trade and economic field and development cooperation. The number of Czech tourists visiting Jamaica has been rising in recent years. For these reasons, an Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic was opened in Kingston in February 2009. The Honorary Consulate is headed by J. Joseph.

Economic relations

The value of bilateral trade is not high. Imports from Jamaica were worth CZK 20.7 million in 2009 and exports CZK 29.6 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: Škoda Octavia automobiles, mirrors, textiles for books, transformers, automobile bodywork parts including tractor cabins, parts of tractors, passenger automobiles and lorries.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: rum, spirits, voice and data conversion, transmission and regeneration apparatus, chemical products, printers and copiers, coffee, liqueurs.

Development cooperation

In 2009, there was a successful Czech development project in Jamaica entitled Mining and Processing of Industrial Raw Materials in Jamaica and Selected CARICOM States (CARICOM = community of Caribbean states). The project's objective was to find new limestone deposits and technologically test their effective potential. All the abandoned limestone quarries were mapped, environmental rehabilitation methods were proposed and deposits of high-quality stone for gravel production were located.

Cultural relations

During the Czech presidency, there was an exhibition of Czech modern art entitled *Art and Democracy* in Jamaica, which generated a big response in the media and society. The exhibition was visited by Prime Minister B. Golding. The exhibition was the Czech Republic's first-ever cultural event in Jamaica and the entire Caribbean. In cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Jamaican sprinter U. Bolt took part in the Golden Spike athletics meeting in Ostrava.

MEXICO

(United Mexican States)

The traditionally very good relations between the Czech Republic and Mexico, which rank this country among the most important political and trading partners in Latin America, were enhanced in 2009 by cooperation in the security field, a *National Exhibition* of selected sectors of Czech industry and *Czech Gastronomy Days* and cultural presentations. The Czech Republic was one of the few European Union member states to respond to the difficult security situation in Mexico and the request for international cooperation by sending instructors to the Federal Police Academy.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- June 2009 – Deputy Minister of the Environment J. Dusík attended a UN preparatory conference on climate change;

- September 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport of the Senate of Parliament, led by Vice-president of the Senate M. Štěch;
- October 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka on the occasion of the Czech National Exhibition;
- November 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of the Environment F. Pelc for a biodiversity conference;
- November 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of the Interior for European Affairs L. Ptáčková-Melicharová, Deputy Police President V. Čech and Deputy Director of the Office for Foreign Relations and Information J. Šásek.

Visits by representatives of Mexico

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs P. E. Cantellano attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Economic relations

The global economic crisis caused trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Mexico to fall for the first time in fifteen years in 2009. Czech exports to Mexico fell by approx. 20%, imports were down 15%. The Czech Republic ended the year with a slight balance of trade surplus, with exports worth CZK 3.906 billion and imports CZK 3.634 billion.

The *National Exhibition of the Czech Republic* staged in the capital Mexico City at the end of September and start of October 2009 was intended to widen trade relations with Mexico. More than 30 Czech firms from various fields (energy, machine engineering, the environment, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, mining equipment, glass production) took part in the exhibition. At the same time, a prestigious restaurant in Mexico City hosted *Czech Gastronomy Days*, which promoted the Czech Republic as an attractive tourist destination and presented an opportunity to sell Czech glass and for potential Mexican importers to taste Czech beer brand Bernard.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machine engineering products, instruments and components for the automobile industry and IT, glass, glass jewellery, chemical products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: instruments and components for electrical audio, TV and video recording, optical instruments, automobile industry products, traditional food products i.e. juices, tequila, dried and conserved fruit.

Cultural relations

Throughout the year, Czech culture was presented at a number of events prepared by either the Embassy of the Czech Republic or commercial agencies. These events included several exhibitions: *Damas de Blanco*, about the wives of Cuban independent journalists arrested in 2003; an exhibition of nudes by A. Feldeková; *Occupation 1968* by J. Koudelka with the photographer's personal participation; and an exhibition of graphic art works by illustrator K. Pacovská. The exhibitions *Legends of Castles and Chateaux* and *A Tribute to PET Bottles* were presented during the Festival of Friendly Cultures on Paseo de la Reforma avenue in the capital. Czech music was represented at the EuroJazz festival and other concerts by *Band...James Band* from Hradec Králové; virtuoso guitarist and president of the Czech Guitar Society V. Bláha took part in a festival in Guanajuato; and pianist P. Kašpar performed at concerts with the Estado de México Symphony Orchestra. Czech cinema was also presented at UNAM university; the films *René* and *Cooking History* were screened at the European Film Festival; and *Greedy Guts* and *Fimfarum 2* were screened in a number of Mexican cinemas. Successful student exchanges continued in 2009, with a number of these exchanges taking place directly between universities. Educational cooperation in the security field is a specific and entirely new form of cooperation. Czech instructors had placements at the Federal Police Academy at the request of the Mexican ministry of public security.

NICARAGUA

(Republic of Nicaragua)

The Czech Republic continued to support the local Moravian Church and a development assistance project in 2009.

Economic relations

The total turnover of trade exchange is low. The Czech Republic had a balance of trade deficit with Nicaragua. The value of Czech exports was CZK 11.0 million; imports were worth CZK 3.6 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: turbine components, mechanical devices, plastics and plastic products, paper, paperboard and cardboard.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: tobacco products, fruit juices, citrus fruits, alcoholic beverages, clothing, clothing accessories, coffee.

Humanitarian aid

In response to the destructive floods that affected the country in November 2009, the Czech Republic provided CZK 1 million in humanitarian aid to the Moravian Church.

Development cooperation

The Czech Republic contributed to two development projects submitted by the Moravian Church. The Czech Republic provided CZK 200,000 towards the building of two wells in Isnawas region to help secure drinking water for the local population and CZK 120,000 towards the construction of a cultural and social centre in Jan Hus Square in Puerto Cabezas for the local Indian and Creole population.

In the first half of 2009, the Czech Geological Survey completed the second phase of a successful three-year *Geological Risks Prevention* project in the area around the town of Boaco.

PANAMA

(Republic of Panama)

The Czech Republic has problem-free relations with Panama. It is a reasonable assumption that relations will intensify with the new government of President R. Martinelli. Relations currently fall short of both countries' potential, particularly in the area of trade.

Visits by representatives of Panama

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs S. L. Navarro attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.

Other meetings

- September 2009 – meeting between President V. Klaus and President R. A. Martinelli at the UN General Assembly in New York.

Economic relations

Trade turnover increased slightly from the previous year and the Czech Republic again had a slight balance of trade deficit with Panama. The value of Czech exports to Panama was CZK 128.7 million; imports were worth CZK 195.1 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: ceramic products, glass and glass products, furniture, components for power plants and turbines, automobiles and automobile components.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: tropical fruit, to a lesser extent machinery and instruments, locomotive components, toys, sports equipment.

Development cooperation

In 2009, the Czech Republic contributed CZK 160,000 towards the building of a small cultural centre in the Indian autonomous region of Cunamarca with a view to boosting tourism and thus alleviating poverty among the local population.

The Czech Republic provided Panama with two scholarships for master's study courses in the 2009/2010 academic year, one for study in Czech and the other for study in English.

PERU

(Republic of Peru)

There was a further deepening in all areas of mutual relations in 2009. The most important event in bilateral relations was the first-ever state visit by President V. Klaus to Peru from 18 to 22 November 2009.

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- May 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Defence J. Fulík;
- 18-22 November 2009 – visit by President V. Klaus; the delegation included Minister of the Interior M. Pecina, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka and Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic General V. Pícek; the president was accompanied by a business mission.

Visits by representatives of Peru

- 13 May 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs J. A. G. Belaúnde attended the European Union-Rio Group ministerial meeting in Prague.
- June 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Andean, Amazonian, African Peruvian Peoples and Environment and Ecology of Congress of the Republic of Peru.

Economic relations

Two Czech firms that were active on the Peruvian market in 2009 were Šindlar EU s.r.o., which carries out water management projects, and Dio Latina a.s., which was endeavouring to implement an investment project for bio-ethanol production. During 2009, two Czech turbines from ČKD Blansko were delivered to the Poechos 2 power station (10 MW) and a regulatory system from INGOS s.r.o. Peru started to import Czech beer Bernard. The value of Czech exports to Peru was CZK 290.4 million and imports CZK 262.7 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: building machinery, toys, turbines, knitting machines, arms, cables and other conductors, wool, transformers, motor parts, textiles, condensers, iron and steel structures, pharmaceuticals, ball bearings.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: fish flour, coffee, tin, zinc, dried fruit, boron oxides, natural dyes, cotton yarn, wine, textiles, fruit, fish products, fresh vegetables.

Development cooperation

The agriculture development project Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in the Amazonian Region was successfully completed in 2009. Work went ahead on the environmental project entitled Survey of Geomorphological and Hydrogeological Conditions in the Puirake River Basin and Mitigation of Environmental Factors Restricting the Development of the Region.

Every year, the Czech Republic offers Peru government scholarships for study at Czech universities. The Czech Republic offered Peru two government scholarships for the 2009/2010 academic year and two more for the 2010/2011 academic year. The provision of scholarship exchanges directly between universities also developed successfully in 2009.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Declaration of Cooperation in the Prevention and Suppression of Illegal Narcotics Trafficking between the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Peru, Represented by the General Narcotics Administration of the Peruvian Police;
- Programme of Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Sports between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Peru for the Years 2010-2012;
- Memorandum of Cooperation between CzechInvest and ProInversión;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Prague Institute of Chemical Technology and the National University Micaela Bastidas de Apurímac.

Cultural relations

During 2009, *Czech Day* was held at the University of Lima; the event featured a talk about the Czech Republic and an exhibition entitled *Beauty and Secrets of the Czech Republic*. The Czech Republic's musical tradition was presented by an exhibition entitled *Great Figures of Czech Music*, prepared in cooperation with the National Conservatory of Peru in March 2009. This cooperation was deepened in mid-October 2009 by the visit by professor of the Prague conservatory and cellist V. Kočí, who gave several masterclasses at the Peru National Conservatory as well as performing two concerts in Lima. The main tourist destinations in the Czech Republic were presented to the Peruvian public on the *Tiempo de Viaje* television programme in March and April 2009. The programme was shot in Prague, Karlovy Vary and Český Krumlov in cooperation with the CzechTourism agency. The All Colours Theatre black theatre company performed *Fausto* in May 2009 in Peru. At the end of 2009, the Czech Republic took part in the XXI European Union Film Festival. The Czech Republic was represented by the film *Secrets*. An exhibition of *Photographs 1968-1989* was inaugurated at Universidad del Pacífico in November 2009 in connection with the visit to Peru by President V. Klaus.

VENEZUELA

(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Bilateral contacts in the past decade have focused mainly on supporting economic, cultural and educational relations, supporting the Czech community in Venezuela and strengthening the human rights dimension.

Economic relations

Although the development of economic relations is hindered by a restrictive foreign exchange policy, mutual trade exchange is developing and the Czech Republic ended the year with a slight balance of trade surplus with Venezuela. The value of Czech exports was CZK 317.1 million; imports were worth CZK 23.6 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: transformers, powdered milk and cream, machinery, tubes, turboprop motors, electric conductors, glass jewellery, artificial casings, Škoda automobiles.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: aluminium, tobacco, lemons and limes, spectacle lenses, silicon oxide, aircraft propellers, refrigerators.

Cultural relations

An exhibition entitled *Franz Kafka* was staged in cooperation with the Goethe Institute. An exhibition of *Art and Democracy* was opened at Simon Bolívar University. To mark Europe Day, the Juvenil de Caracas Symphony Orchestra performed Dvořák's *Symphony from the New World*. Other significant events commemorating 17 November 1989 and the fall of the Iron Curtain included exhibitions and media interviews. In 2009, the Respekt Institut human rights foundation CAS LA (Centre for Analytical Studies of Latin America) invited well-known figures of Venezuelan political life to take part in discussions as part of the FORUM 2000 conference. Members of the Czech community met at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Caracas in 2009. The work of the Czech community association focused on preserving knowledge of the Czech language, i.e. screening Czech films, publishing a Czech community bulletin, organising Czech language courses and supporting productions by the *Jatelinka* ensemble. Two young members of the Czech community in Venezuela attended the *Summer Language School* at Dobruška in 2009.

10. The Czech Republic's Relations with Asian and Pacific Countries

The Czech Republic's relations with the countries of Asia and the Pacific are as diverse as this extensive territory itself. As its international influence has grown, the Czech Republic has become an important partner for a number of large and small countries here in the past two decades.

Despite the varied background to and conditions of relations with Asian and Pacific countries, some common features could be found in bilateral relations in 2009.

The Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009 presented an opportunity to enhance the Czech Republic's profile considerably. The presidency also had a pronounced effect on purely bilateral relations, particularly as regards the dissemination of Czech culture, know-how and human rights awareness.

If the foreign policy annual reports from previous years contained little mention of cultural events in Asian countries, thanks to the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2009 we can find an unprecedented intensity of activity presenting the Czech Republic through its culture. The presidency of the Council of the European Union was therefore not only an opportunity to promote certain political and economic aspects of the Czech Republic in Asia and the Pacific: it also enriched the cultural dimension of bilateral relations, bringing a number of remarkable results. What is more, the presentation of eminent Czech artists and musicians often helped attract the attention of leading representatives of local business communities, thus indirectly broadening the economic opportunities for the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic successfully used the presidency of the Council of the European Union to organise bilateral meetings on the sidelines of relevant formations of the Council of the European Union focusing on important Asian states; on occasion the Czech Republic could be heard in these forums making strong appeals for respect for human rights.

Another common feature of the Czech Republic's bilateral relations with the countries of Asia and the Pacific was the palpable downturn in economic activity in most Asian countries as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. The decline in economic relations with Australia, for example, was pronounced, with the volume of trade exchange halving, even though it had displayed growth exceeding 300% to 400% in previous periods.

Overall, it is fair to say that the Czech Republic has good and in many cases practically problem-free relations with Asian and Pacific countries. One reason for this is the traditional ties the Czech Republic has capitalised on to gain greater access to opportunities that enrich our lives and the lives of our foreign partners.

AFGHANISTAN

(Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 23-23 March 2009 – working visit by General V. Pícek, Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic, who visited units of the Army of the Czech Republic and met with ISAF representatives;
- 24-25 May 2009 – working visit by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar, who visited PRT Logar and met with the director of the IDLG (Independent Directorate for Local Governance) G. Popal;
- 1-3 June 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták to units of the Army of the Czech Republic, during which he was received by President H. Karzai and met with his counterpart A. Wardak;
- 8-9 July 2009 – working visit by General V. Pícek, Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic, who visited units of the Army of the Czech Republic and met with ISAF representatives;
- 27-30 August 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták to units of the Army of the Czech Republic, during which he met with ISAF representatives;
- 26-28 November 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence M. Barták, comprising an inspection of units of the Army of the Czech Republic and a meeting with ISAF representatives, during the first-ever meeting between a delegation of Parliament of the Czech Republic and representatives of the lower chamber of parliament

of Afghanistan took place. On the Czech side the meeting was attended by six deputies and one senator and on the Afghan side by 15 members of the lower chamber of parliament of Afghanistan.

- 21-22 December 2009 – working visit by General V. Pícek, Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic, to units of the Army of the Czech Republic.

Visits by representatives of Afghanistan

- 28 January 2009 – bilateral meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs R. Spáta and the Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg after the European Union Troika-Afghanistan ministerial meeting in Prague.

Economic relations

Despite the complicated security situation, the Czech Republic continued to export to Afghanistan. The principal commodities were propellers, motor vehicles, audio and video recording and reproduction devices, arms, ammunition, furniture and iron products. The main imports were nuts, dried fruit, clothing and carpets. The value of Czech exports was CZK 631.2 million; imports were worth CZK 6.9 million.

Development cooperation

Development cooperation takes place mainly through the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar province. CZK 81.3 million was earmarked for projects implemented in close cooperation with the local community. The priorities include support for security and good governance, education, infrastructure development, healthcare, agriculture, reconstruction of water sources and irrigation systems, women's rights and independent media. CZK 5.4 million of this assistance was provided through the *People In Need* organisation. On top of that, the Czech Republic provided CZK 3 million towards the *National Solidarity Programme*, CZK 2.5 million towards UN development programmes for Afghanistan and CZK 2.5 million for Afghan army training.

Humanitarian aid

In 2009, the Czech Republic provided a total of CZK 6.88 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. CZK 4 million was provided to the British NGO *HALO Trust* for continued mine clearance in central Afghanistan. CZK 2.88 million was allocated to “*quick impact projects*” (*QIPs*) of the civilian part of the Logar PRT. 25 projects were implemented in total,

comprising primarily repairs to schools, equipping police stations, supporting women's employment and pre-election information campaigns.

Cultural relations

For the first time Afghan children took part in the *Lidice International Children's Art Competition*. The children sent in over a hundred artworks, two of which were awarded with medals and one an honourable mention.

AUSTRALIA

(Commonwealth of Australia)

Economic relations

Trade exchange had grown dynamically from 2003 to 2008 (with Czech exports to Australia increasing by 440% and trade turnover by 308%), but in 2009 the volume of trade exchange fell by half in consequence of the global economic crisis. The Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus, with exports worth CZK 3.623 billion and imports CZK 1.801 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: toys, motor vehicles, wood, electronic recording devices, building machinery, pumps, hand tools, paper, plastic products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: wool, pharmaceuticals, optical, medical and surgical instruments, devices for the hard of hearing, beverages – wine, electrical engineering products.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement on Social Security, Canberra, 16 September 2009. (The agreement will enter into effect after it has been ratified in both countries, which should take place, according to legal experts, in 2011.) The agreement mainly covers the question of the payment of pensions from Australia to Czech citizens who have resettled in the Czech Republic after a long time in Australia. This treatment is reciprocated to Australian citizens by the Czech Republic.

Cultural relations

Compared to previous years, in 2009 the Czech Republic mainly organised a large number of cultural events mainly connected with the Czech presidency (but also afterwards).

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Canberra and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Sydney presented the Czech Republic in Perth, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane, in some of the cities repeatedly. Concerts of classical music, exhibitions showcasing Czech artists, presentations of modern Czech design and Czech cinema were met with considerable public interest. These events also received broad coverage in the mass media. Throughout the year, staff at both missions delivered a number of talks and participated in a number of presentational events in various political, educational and economic forums.

In cooperation with the Australian National University in Canberra, the Embassy of the Czech Republic participated in a symposium entitled *Transitions and Transformations in Central Europe 1989-2009* at the National European Centre by staging an exhibition entitled *The 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain*.

The celebrations of the year's significant anniversaries were rounded off in December with *The 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain* exhibition and a screening of *The Velvet Revolution* at the *Czecho-Slovakian Country Club* near Sydney, which attracted the attention of the Czech community, the Australian public and the local press.

Czech students are interested in studying a wide variety of courses at Australian universities; there are estimated to be around 2,000-4,000 Czechs currently studying in Australia.

BANGLADESH

(People's Republic of Bangladesh)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 8-9 June 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová as part of the European Union Troika; she met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Minister of Foreign Affairs D. Moni and opposition leader K. Zia, among others. The Czech Republic has an honorary consul in Bangladesh, M. Rahman.

BHUTAN

(Kingdom of Bhutan)

The Czech Republic has for long sought to establish diplomatic contacts with Bhutan. In April 2009, Bhutan opened a diplomatic mission to the European Union in Brussels.

BRUNEI

(Sultanate of Brunei)

Economic relations

Economic relations have for long been minimal, with the value of trade exchange not exceeding a few million Czech koruna. In the first ten months of 2009, the Czech Republic exported goods worth CZK 1.7 million to Brunei, mainly pumps and fittings for the local oil and gas extraction sector and glass products.

CAMBODIA

(Kingdom of Cambodia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 25-28 May 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Finance J. Kubínek;
- 27-28 May 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout attended the 17th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Phnom Penh during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Economic relations

The level of trade exchange is low: imports were worth CZK 36.3 million, exports CZK 229.0 million (the Czech Republic's principal export commodities: antennas, bicycle tyres, washing machines, irons; the Czech Republic's principal import commodities: textile products, footwear, bicycles).

Development cooperation

In 2009, Cambodia was designated as a project country for the Czech Republic's foreign development cooperation. The priority areas of development assistance in Cambodia include supporting social development, education and healthcare.

The two-year bilateral project *Increasing the Availability of Quality Healthcare with the Emphasis on Mother and Child Care* launched in 2008 went ahead in 2009. The project's total budget will be CZK 3.25 million.

A small-scale local project for *Construction of a Basic School in Takeo Province*, with a total budget of CZK 628,000, was successfully completed in October 2009. It was the second Czech school-building project in this province.

Two government scholarships were offered for Cambodian students in 2009; one candidate was selected.

Humanitarian aid

Under the programme of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, a project entitled *Heart Operations in the Czech Republic for Two Child Patients from Cambodia* took place in 2009. Two Cambodia children chosen by Czech doctors were brought to Prague accompanied by their parents in December 2009 and underwent heart operations at the Motol University Hospital. All the costs, including convalescence costs, are covered by Czech subjects and other sponsors. Operations for four more Cambodian children diagnosed with cardiac problems are scheduled for 2010 in Prague.

Cultural relations

On 28 May 2009, on the occasion of the birthday of King N. Sihamoni, a cultural programme featuring Czech performers took place at Chaktomuk Theatre in Phnom Penh. The production was broadcast live on Cambodian state television and organised by private subjects from the Czech Republic and friends of King N. Sihamoni.

CHINA

(People's Republic of China)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 22-27 June 2009 – visit to Shanghai by Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs M. Sedláček and Commissioner General for the Czech Participation at EXPO 2010 Shanghai P. A. Stehlík;
- 4-6 September 2009 – working visit to Special Administrative Regions Hong Kong and Macau by Prime Minister J. Fischer;
- 8-10 September 2009 – visit to Shanghai by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová following up Prime Minister J. Fischer's visit to Hong Kong, Macau and the Philippines.

Visits by representatives of China

- 16 February 2009 – consultations in Prague between Vice Foreign Minister Wu Hongbo and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar;

- 20 May 2009 – meeting of President V. Klaus in his role as Chairman of the EU Council with Premier Wen Jiabao at the 11th European Union-People's Republic of China summit in Prague. The Chinese premier subsequently held bilateral meetings with President V. Klaus and Prime Minister J. Fischer.

Other meetings

- 19 January 2009 – meeting between First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar at the head of the European Union Troika at the 4th round of the European Union-People's Republic of China Strategic Dialogue in Beijing. He also met with State Councillor of the People's Republic of China Dai Bingguo on the sidelines of this meeting.
- 30 January 2009 – meeting in Brussels between Prime Minister (and President of the Council of the European Union) M. Topolánek and Premier of the People's Republic of China Wen Jiabao on European Union and bilateral questions;
- January 2009 – talks between Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg and his Chinese counterpart at a courtesy meeting of foreign ministers on the margin of a visit to the Republic of South Africa (European Union Troika).

Economic relations

According to Czech Statistical Office foreign trade data for 2009, China was – as in 2008 – the Czech Republic's fifth biggest trading partner (behind Germany, Slovakia, Poland and France). Once again, China was the country with which the Czech Republic had its biggest balance of trade deficit. Imports from China exceeded Czech exports to China by CZK 183 billion; in other words, imports of goods from China to the Czech Republic were fourteen times greater than Czech exports to China in 2009. In absolute terms, the Czech Republic exported goods worth CZK 15.854 billion to China and imported goods worth CZK 199.077 billion.

As regards the commodity structure of imports from China in 2009, the biggest commodity categories were office machinery and automatic data processing machines (CZK 50,782 million), telecommunications and audio recording and reproduction equipment (CZK 29,865 million), electrical apparatus, devices and appliances (CZK 24,645 million) and clothing products and accessories (CZK 14,887 million). Exports from the Czech Republic to China consisted of general industrial machinery and plant equipment (CZK 2,027 million), electrical apparatus, devices and appliances (CZK 1,340 million), metal products (CZK

803,978,000), road vehicles (CZK 717,741,000) and metal-working machinery (CZK 701,665,000).

One key event in economic relations between the Czech Republic and China in 2009 was the biggest Czech investment of recent years in China: the completion and opening of the ECM Mall in Beijing by Czech developer ECM. 2009 also brought further expansion by Czech company PPF in consumer credit provision (through its PPF China branch). Other economic cooperation between Czech and Chinese enterprises in 2009 took place as part of the *EU – China Environmental Business Facilitation Conference on CDM and Bioenergy* in June and a November seminar on renewable energies.

Of no less significance was the April premiere at the *Shanghai Auto Show* and subsequently August start of production of the new Škoda Superb automobile (under Chinese brand *HaoRui*) on the Chinese market, which is likely to become the biggest world market for the Škoda brand.

In September 2009, there was an investment seminar co-organised by CzechInvest in conjunction with the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Shanghai. The seminar presented investment opportunities in the Czech Republic for joint projects in the aviation, precision engineering, food production and information technology sectors.

In November 2009, CzechTrade and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Shanghai organised a major presentation of Czech food products and food industry firms at the *FHC* trade fair.

Cultural relations

The organisation of cultural events in 2009 was linked to the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Czech Republic and the People's Republic of China.

In January, the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union was opened by a *European Union Ball* held under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister A. Vondra and attended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar. The ball, sponsored mainly by Czech firms operating in China, was held in the Hilton Beijing hotel. The music performed by the *O. Havelka Orchestra* and the *Havelka Sisters* and also the *Jasénka* folk ensemble earlier in the evening was very favourably received.

As part of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, on 4 April 2009 an exhibition entitled *Zdenek Sklenar's China* was inaugurated at the prestigious *National Art Museum of China (NAMOC)* in Beijing. To mark the 99th anniversary of the birth of this painter and illustrator, a Czech-Chinese publication of *Songs of Old China*, with texts by B. Mathesius and illustrations by Z. Sklenář, was also presented at this event.

Throughout the year, there were many successful cultural events, most associated with the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union: an exhibition of works by Czech illustrators of children's books, art glass by architect and designer B. Šípek, and concerts by pianist P. Kašpar and other chamber ensembles, the group *Čechomor* and the *Organic Quartet* jazz band.

The exhibition *Splendid Czech Republic* displayed examples of Czech folk art, prepared in conjunction with the Beijing office of CzechTourism at the 4th *Cultural and Creative Industry Expo* in Beijing (from 25 to 29 November 2009).

In conjunction with the China National School of Administration and Masaryk University in Brno, the Czech Republic, as the presidency country of the European Union, organised an international expert seminar for representatives of the majority of provincial and metropolitan governments on the use of science for natural disaster early warning and prevention systems.

The exchange of students went ahead on the basis of the Arrangement on School Exchanges between the two countries' education ministries. A Czech language teacher continued to work at the Beijing Foreign Studies University. At the end of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union and on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic V. Grepl presented medals of honour of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and Jan Masaryk silver medals to several deserving Chinese scholars and translators in the branch of Czech studies. On 30 November 2009, the new ambassador of the Czech Republic attended the ceremony to welcome new Czech language students at the Beijing Foreign Studies University and informal discussions with the university vice-president and students.

Hong Kong

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 4-6 September 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer, accompanied by a delegation.

Visits by representatives of Hong Kong

- 14-16 September 2009 – working visit by a delegation of members of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong.

Economic relations

Hong Kong is one of the few Asian economies with which the Czech Republic has a balance of trade surplus; this surplus has continued uninterrupted since 1999. The majority of trade exchange items are re-exports to the south of the People's Republic of China or, conversely, from the south of the People's Republic of China to the Czech Republic. Trade turnover attained a value of almost CZK 6.754 billion in 2009, with Czech exports to Hong Kong worth CZK almost 5.576 billion. Despite the global economic downturn Czech exports to Hong Kong actually increased by 6.5% from 2008.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: tantalum and ceramic capacitors, inductors, processors and control units, wireless network telephones, parts of automatic data processing machines, glass products, imitation beads and precious stones, industrial products, industrial machinery and spare parts and components of such, electrical machinery and devices (light fittings, microscopes etc.), toys, TV videogames, plastic waste.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: electronics, computer peripherals, integrated circuits, clothing, footwear, jewellery, watches, toys, blank electronic media, other consumer goods.

Cultural relations

The Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Hong Kong made use of the opportunity to enhance the Czech Republic's profile in Hong Kong through cultural and social events associated with the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009. Events included the screening of *Dark Blue World*,

The Country Teacher, Václav, and Hana's Suitcase; a number of chamber music concerts; an extensive gastronomic presentation called *Tastes of the Czech Republic*; and performances by two folklore groups.

In conjunction with the consulates general of fifteen European Union member states and the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic staged an original photographic exhibition of selected UNESCO world heritage sites in European Union countries under the title *European Splendour – UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the European Union Member States*.

Macau

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 5 September 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer, accompanied by a delegation.

Economic relations

Mutual trade is limited; the Czech Republic usually has a balance of trade deficit with Macau. Some re-exports to southern provinces of the People's Republic of China take place through Macau, but these are irregular so the statistics may display substantial fluctuations between different periods. In 2009, Czech exports to Macau attained a value of CZK 3.3 million and imports CZK 71.5 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: light fittings, glass, glass semi-finished products, glass jewellery, optical instruments and pharmaceuticals. The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: clothing, footwear, bicycles, electronics.

Cultural relations

With the help of three members of the Czech National Culinary Team, there was an extensive presentation of Czech cuisine entitled *Czech It Out at MGM Grand Macau*. The event was accompanied by the Radhošť folk song and dance ensemble and an exhibition of modern Czech glass.

In October, the Prague Chamber Choir performed a programme featuring music by Czech composers at the 23rd *Macau International Music Festival*.

Taiwan

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 19-23 May 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament, led by the chairman of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs M. Benda;
- 26-29 November 2009 – visit by a delegation of the General Directorate of Customs of the Czech Republic on the occasion of the *Czech-Taiwan Customs Summit*;
- 7-11 December 2009 – visit by a delegation led by Vice-president of the Senate of Parliament P. Pithart.

Visits by representatives of Taiwan

- August 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs F. Ou – private visit to the Czech Republic;
- October 2009 – visit by former premier Liu Chao-shiuan to attend the FORUM 2000 conference.

Economic relations

The trend of the Czech Republic's increasing balance of trade deficit (exports/imports ratio of roughly 1:17) continued. It was also amplified by the global financial and economic crisis. The main reason for the imbalance is the massive investment by Taiwanese firms in electrical apparatus. Exports from the Czech Republic attained a value of CZK 1.122 billion and imports CZK 17.793 billion.

As regards Czech investments and dealings in Taiwan, the only Czech company with a branch on the island, the firm of Jablotron (security systems), declared its intention to relocate in the People's Republic of China. Inmite, a firm producing software applications for mobile phones, intends to open an office in Taiwan.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: audio and video recording and reproduction apparatus, mechanical machinery, glass and glass products, iron and steel products, optical, medical and in particular surgical instruments.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: components of TV signal transmission and reception apparatus, telephone and other equipment for voice and data transmission, audio and video recording media, computer components, monitors, integrated

circuits. Other import commodities were bicycles and bicycle components, components for motor vehicles, including motorbikes, iron and steel products, sports equipment and toys.

Humanitarian aid

The Czech Republic provided Taiwan with USD 50,000 in humanitarian aid to mitigate the consequences of Typhoon Morakot in September, which resulted in over six hundred casualties. The sum was paid to the *Taiwanese Red Cross*.

Cultural relations

The main cultural event of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union (the event lasted until the first half of 2010) was a touring exhibition entitled Czech Gems comprising three sets of posters and photographs, namely *Gems of Czech Baroque Architecture*, *A Tribute to PET Bottles* and *Czech Gems I*. The inauguration in Taipei on 17 February 2009 was attended by Minister of the Council for Cultural Affairs Huang Pi-tuan; the exhibition then toured five other cities during the year.

An exhibition entitled *Czech Republic – 20 Years after the Fall of the Iron Curtain* (composed of the expositions Europe of Values and Ideas, 20 Years after the Fall of the Iron Curtain and Czech Gems II) was opened in Taipei on 17 October 2009. The Czech Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei took part in an exhibition of photographs by Taiwanese artist S. Chang whose subject matter was drawn from his six-year stay in the Czech Republic.

As part of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, the head of the Czech Economic and Cultural Office presented Jan Masaryk medals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic to seven Taiwanese citizens for their contribution to the promotion of the Czech Republic, its culture and economy in Taiwan. Czech film *Empties* was screened at the *European Film Festival* staged in twenty Taiwanese universities and cultural centres.

EAST TIMOR

(Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- October 2009 – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Kmoníček held talks with President J. Ramos-Horta, Minister of Foreign Affairs Z. A. da Costa and representatives of international organisations (Delegation of the European Commission, UNMIT, IOM).

Economic relations

Trade relations between the Czech Republic and East Timor have for long been minimal; the value of trade exchange is in the thousands of Czech koruna. In the first 10 months of 2009, the Czech Republic exported no goods to East Timor. Czech imports from East Timor in the same period in 2009 were worth just under CZK 60,000.

Transformation and development cooperation

During 2009, a foreign development cooperation small-scale local project entitled *Support for the Development of Infrastructure in East Timor – Delivery of a Mobile Drinking Water Purification Plant* was implemented in East Timor. The project's total budget was CZK 870,000; CZK 500,000 of this came out of the Czech Republic's foreign development cooperation funds and CZK 370,000 was put up by the implementing organisation.

The aim of the project was to transfer the Czech Republic's know-how in protecting and treating drinking water through the supply of a mobile water purification system type WWT-01 delivered as part of the renewal and reconstruction of areas affected by the tsunami.

Cultural relations

The Czech Republic supported the 2nd year of the *European Union Film Festival in East Timor*, which took place in the first two weeks of December 2009.

INDIA

(Republic of India)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 6-11 December 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports V. Růžička.

Visits by representatives of India

- 28-29 June 2009 – official visit by Federal Foreign Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna.

Other meetings

- 20-23 January 2009 – talks of Deputy Minister of the Environment K. Bláha at the European Union Troika meeting;
- 4-7 February 2009 – official visit by Minister of the Environment M. Bursík as part of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Economic relations

In terms of foreign trade turnover, India was the Czech Republic's 29th biggest trading partner in 2009. The volume of mutual trade in 2009 was down from the previous year, but despite this fall (by 2.4%) it exceeded the USD one billion mark and the Czech Republic maintained its long-standing balance of trade surplus with India. The growth in imports from India to the Czech Republic slowed considerably (increase of 0.4%). The decline in mutual trade was mainly the result of the global financial and economic crisis. In 2009, the Czech Republic exported goods worth CZK 11.262 billion to India and imported goods worth CZK 8.704 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: components of tractors and passenger and goods motor vehicles, lorries, fibre production machinery, miscellaneous heterocyclic compounds, electric motors and generators, automobile and machine etc.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: iron and steel pipes, tubes and seamless hollow sections, parts of electric motors and generators, pharmaceutical products in measured doses, iron flat rolled products, electrical components, textiles etc.

Cultural relations

The programme of cultural events marking the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union commenced in January with a production by the Prague-based *Hoidekr Interactive Light Theatre* (HILT). J. Stivín and other multi-instrumentalists performed at a concert of *Contemporary Czech Music*; their performance in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was combined with an exhibition of photographs by J. Turek. The film *Czech Dream* was screened in Delhi, Mumbai and other cities during the 14th *European Union Film Festival*. As part of

the cultural programme of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Mumbai organised four concerts by Czech chanson singer R. Drössler and her band in Mumbai, Chennai and Aurangabad from 18 March to 24 April 2009.

The film *Cosy Dens* was screened in October 2009 at the *Little Europe* film festival organised by the Slavonic studies department of the University of Delhi. In November 2009, there was an exhibition devoted to the life and work of J. Seifert under the name *All the Beauties of the World*. Music group *Kale*, which performed twice in Delhi and once in Calcutta in October, received considerable press coverage. A *Panorama of Czech Film Comedy* (featuring the films *Grandad Automobile*, *If a Thousand Clarinets*, *Marecek Pass Me the Pen*, *How to Get Daddy into Reform School*, *You Are a Widow Sir*, *Run Waiter Run*, *Capricious Summer*, *Cutting It Short*) was presented at the *International Forum of New Cinema* in November 2009. As part of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the communist bloc in Eastern Europe the film *The Tender Revolution* was screened on 26 November 2009 in a joint project by the embassies of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Artworks by 20 Indian children received awards in the 37th Lidice International Children's Art Competition.

One Indian student received a government scholarship for bachelor's course study in the Czech Republic. A Czech teacher taught Czech language and related studies at the Department of Slavonic and Finno-Ugrian Studies of the University of Delhi.

INDONESIA

(Republic of Indonesia)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- October 2009 – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Kmoníček attended the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and was received in Yogyakarta by regional governor Sultan Hamengkubuwono X.

Visits by representatives of Afghanistan

- March 2009 – visit by Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence S. Sjamsoeddin. He was received by Minister of Defence V. Parkanová and held his principal talks with Deputy Minister J. Kopřiva;
- May 2009 – visit to the *IDET 2009* trade fair by a delegation of the defence ministry;
- August 2009 – 1st session of the Czech – Indonesian Mixed Economic Commission at the level of the deputy ministers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic – interdepartmental consultations between the Director General for American and European Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia R. Marsudi and Director General of the Non-European Countries and Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Karfík.

Economic relations

The volume of trade exchange was roughly twice the level of the best years of mutual trade from the period before the Asian economic crisis (1995-1996). The impact of the current global economic crisis on mutual trade was minimal, with trade exchange attaining a value of CZK 5,762 million in 2009, a decline of just 1.6% from the same period in the previous year.

For the first 10 months of 2009, Czech exports to Indonesia amounted to CZK 986.7 million, a fall of 25% from the same period in the previous year. The problem in mutual trade relations is the Czech Republic's worsening balance of trade deficit, but this is a problem faced by the majority of European Union countries. The main reasons for this were imports of hardware components for information and communication technologies and the relocation of textile, haberdashery, footwear and sports equipment production from European Union countries to Indonesia. Czech imports from Indonesia were worth CZK 4,776 million, an increase of 3% from the same period in the previous year.

The successful completion of a transaction for the delivery of radar systems for the eastern section of Indonesian air traffic control by ELDIS Pardubice in 2009 means that there is a realistic chance of launching a completely new product on the Indonesian market. Other important references for Czech business in the territory include deliveries of turbines and complete electromechanical parts for hydroelectric plants on the islands of Sumatra and

Sulawesi by ČKD Blansko, deliveries of fittings by MSA Dolní Benešov for natural gas extraction projects for the Indonesian state firm of PGN, deliveries of railway equipment by BONATRANS Bohumín for the Indonesian railways and deliveries of diesel generators by HANA for various Indonesian buyers.

Based on the positive references from humanitarian aid projects to mitigate the consequences of the December 2004 tsunami, Czech environmental technologies manufacturers IWET Brno, GEOTest Brno and SIGMA Group Lutín established the first Czech-Indonesian joint venture PT Indonesian Water Equipment Technology to build waste water treatment plants and supply other environmental technologies.

Humanitarian aid

In September 2009, the Czech Republic provided Indonesia with CZK 3.9 million in humanitarian aid following a series of earthquakes in western Sumatra. The humanitarian aid was provided through Czech non-governmental organisations Caritas and People In Need.

Development cooperation

Two Czech foreign development cooperation projects were completed in 2009: Cooperation in the Field of Air Transport – Construction of a New Airport in Java implemented by Mott MacDonald Praha s.r.o., and Cooperation in the Field of Urban and Regional Transport in Central Java implemented by KPM Consult a.s. Each of the projects had a total budget of CZK 2.3 million.

Another project that has been running since 2008 is *Renewal of the Territory around Lake Tondano* with a total budget of CZK 7 million. The project will be completed at the end of 2010.

Cultural relations

Virtuoso violinist J. Svěcený performed in the historical setting of Gedung Kesenian in Jakarta in April 2009 to mark the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The concert was preceded by the inauguration of a touring exhibition of *The Magic World of Czech Illustrators for Children*.

JAPAN

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 15-17 April 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Čermák;
- 16-18 April 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová representing the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union at the Friends of Democratic Pakistan Group Ministerial Meeting;
- 12-16 September 2009 – private visit by Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities M. Kocáb, during which a meeting was held at the Tokyo University of the Arts;
- 19-25 November 2009 – working visit by Minister of Culture V. Riedlbauch;
- 30 November – 3 December 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka.

Visits by representatives of Japan

- 3 May 2009 – official visit by Prime Minister T. Aso.

Other meetings

- 12-14 March 2009 – working visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment M. Bursík representing the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union at the European Union Troika-Japan meeting of environment ministers.

Economic relations

The influx of Japanese foreign investments in the Czech Republic continued in 2009, but the global economic and financial crisis resulted in a clear trend of declining interest among Japanese businesses and some projects were postponed. The cumulative value of Japanese investments has reached USD 3.114 billion. Japanese firms employed approx. 44,000 people in the Czech Republic. More than 250 Japanese firms operated in the Czech Republic (87 of them manufacturing firms), which was the fourth largest number in Europe after Great Britain, France and Germany. The Czech Republic again ended the year with a balance of trade deficit with Japan. Czech imports from Japan were worth CZK 62.444 billion and Czech exports just CZK 8.011 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: industrial machinery and plant equipment, road vehicles, power-generating machinery and equipment.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: office machinery and automatic data processing machines, electrical apparatus, devices and appliances, telecommunications and audio recording and reproduction equipment.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Administrative Agreement for the Implementation of the Agreement between the Czech Republic and Japan on Social Security, Tokyo, 17 March 2009; effective from 1 June 2009;
- Agreement between the Czech Republic and Japan on Social Security, Tokyo, 21 February 2008; effective from 1 June 2009.

Cultural relations

The standard of Czech cultural presentation in Japan in 2009 was very high, generating considerable interest among the Japanese public: for example, Czech artist F. Díaz was presented at the multimedia festival *Roppongi Art Night*; the *Czech Philharmonic Orchestra* performed a concert to celebrate the 50th anniversary since its first concert performance in Japan; and the *State Opera Prague* gave 17 performances. The Czech Centre in Tokyo organised a number of cultural events comprising exhibitions, presentations, workshops, talks, film screenings and concerts.

During culture minister V. Riedlbauch's working visit in November 2009, the *Artis Bohemiae Amicis* medal of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic was presented to music expert and long-term promoter of Czech music in Japan Dr. H. Sekine.

In 2009, Japanese scholar in the branch of Czech studies and translator Professor I. Iijima received the *Gratias Agit* award, which is conferred by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for promoting the good name of the Czech Republic.

In keeping with tradition, there was an exchange of five two-year government scholarships for university study between the Czech Republic and Japan. Five Japanese students attended the Slavonic Studies Summer School. Other scholarships were also provided to Czech students, mainly for technical study fields and Japanology.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Economic relations

The Czech Republic has for long had a balance of trade deficit with DPRK. Imports from DPRK remained at the same level as the previous year, while exports to the country practically ceased bar a few isolated transactions. The value of Czech exports was CZK 884,000; imports were worth CZK 140.5 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: machinery and plant equipment.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: primarily iron and steel products, plastics, chemical raw materials, electrical apparatus, devices and appliances, clothing products and accessories.

Transformation and development cooperation

As part of development cooperation, the Czech Republic provided DPRK with two government scholarships for ordinary study at public universities in 2009.

On 19-24 April 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staged the 2nd year of seminars for economic experts from DPRK focusing on the transfer of experiences with transformation and the working of the Czech Republic's economy.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 11-14 October 2009 – Special Envoy for Energy Security V. Bartuška held meetings in Seoul, Busan and Changwon.

Visits by representatives of the Republic of Korea

- 19 March 2009 – working visit by Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly L. Yoon-sung;
- 20-22 April 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister Han Seung-soo;
- 15-17 September 2009 – official visit by Mayor of Seoul Oh Se-hoon on the occasion of *Seoul Days* in Prague.

Other meetings

- 23 May 2009 – President V. Klaus chaired the European Union-Republic of Korea summit in Seoul; the European Union was also represented by President of the European Commission J. Barroso, commissioners B. Ferrero-Waldner and C. Ashton; also attending on behalf of the Czech presidency was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout;
- 15-16 June 2009 – at the invitation of Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea Han Seung-soo J. Kavan attended a conference of former chairpersons of the UN General Assembly;
- 10-16 October 2009 – director of the Czech Space Office J. Kolář and member of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament Z. Lhota attended the 60th International Astronautical Congress in Daejeon;
- 27-30 October 2009 – Deputy Minister of the Environment R. Bízková attended the 3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy approaches in Busan.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea on Economic Cooperation, Prague, 21 April 2009;
- Executive Programme of Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Korea for the Years 2009-2011, Seoul, 30 December 2009.

Economic relations

As every year, in 2009 the position held by the Republic of Korea in the Czech Republic's investment and trade cooperation was again consolidated. The Republic of Korea became the Czech Republic's 4th biggest trading partner outside Europe (behind China, the United States and Japan). The Czech Republic had a balance of trade deficit with the Republic of Korea, with exports worth CZK 5.064 billion and imports worth CZK 25.649 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: crank shafts, iron and steel products, toys, optical and measuring instruments, pumps, automobile components.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: consumer electronics, televisions, mobile communication devices, passenger automobiles and automobile components, electronic components.

The greatest benefit to the Czech economy is the Hyundai factory at Nošovice (the biggest-ever green-field investment in the Czech Republic, valued at USD 1.221 billion). At the start of 2009, the factory began mass production and the majority of the approx. 200,000 vehicles it has produced were exported. Another major investment in the Czech Republic was the takeover of Škoda Power by Korean manufacturer of power-generating equipment, including atomic power stations, Doosan Heavy Industries (value in excess of USD 800 million). There are several dozen Korean investors active in the Czech Republic and their number is gradually increasing.

Cultural relations

The biggest cultural event organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Seoul during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union was an exhibition of works by dozens of winners of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award for young artists; the exhibition ran from February to May at the Kyongbuk National University Museum of Art in Daegu. The local Czech presidency in Seoul also initiated and arranged with four cultural institutes in the country the formation of the EUNIC platform in Seoul. The agreement was signed at the end of the Czech presidency. The main event in the second half of 2009 was the opening of the Czech Info Centre, comprising an exhibition hall, library, screening room and permanent exposition of business opportunities, in a replica of Prague's Old Town Hall, which also houses one of four Czech restaurants *Castle Praha*.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic also organised exhibitions about the life and work of K. Čapek and J. Seifert (at the Korea Foundation Cultural Centre in Seoul and University of Foreign Studies in Yongin), about the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia (at the Korean National University in Seoul, at Yonsei University and at the Czech Info Centre), and an exhibition of Czech ground glass (at the Czech Info Centre). Seoul City Hall and the Embassy of the Czech Republic co-organised a series of concerts of Czech music and exhibitions of *Legends of Czech Castles and Chateaux* and the most famous Czech animated character *Moley* created by Z. Miler on the occasion of the opening of Seoul's biggest natural amphitheatre in Nung-dong Park.

Under an initiative of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, the specialised Bucheon fantasy film festival (PiFan) and the biggest feature film festival in Seoul (CHIFFS) featured special Czech sections entitled respectively *Czech-Imagination* and *Lions of Czech Film*. Czech films were also screened at the biggest Asian film festival in Busan (PIFF), festivals of children's and family films in Busan (BiKi) and Seoul (SIFFF) and documentary films in the demilitarised zone (DMZ Film Festival).

Czech music is very popular in the Republic of Korea; in 2009 there were performances by, for example, the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Chamber Orchestra and the Bambini di Praga choir. Korean ensemble Seouloratorio continued to promote the work of A. Dvořák, and the ensemble's director and conductor Choi Jung-chul received the Gratias Agit Award in 2009. Czech musicals are no less popular in the Republic of Korea: two musicals premiered in 2009 (*The Three Musketeers* by M. David and *Jack the Ripper* by V. Patejdl) and new productions of three other were staged (*Hamlet* by J. Ledecký, *Cleopatra* by M. David and *A Christmas Carol* by Z. Barták).

Czech studies are thriving in the Republic of Korea. There were 120 students studying at the Czech and Slovak studies department of the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in 2009; roughly twenty of them were beneficiaries of scholarships and took part in commercial courses at Czech universities. Several of them participated in the first year of a competition for Korean translations of Czech literature run by the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Several new books by Czech authors – among them B. Hrabal, P. Sís and K. Pacovská – were published in Korean. The most significant publication linked to the Czech Republic was *Prague and Its Geniuses*, a book by the well-known Korean journalist Cho Sung-gwan that was nominated for an award of the Republic of Korea culture ministry. In addition, the Czech Republic took part in the Seoul International Book Fair for the first time in 2009.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Seoul awarded two medals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for their significant contributions to Czech-Korean relations: one award was conferred on the doyen of Korean studies in the Czech Republic V. Pucek, the other on the founder and owner of the Castle Praha chain of Czech restaurants in Seoul Tai H. Ham.

Other events worthy of a mention include the annual participation in the *Lidice International Children's Art Exhibition* by Korean children from Seoul and Busan and the

staging of the first *Seoul Days* in Prague, an event attended by the mayors of both capitals, and *Czech-Korean Days* in Ostrava.

Relations between Czech and Korean universities are developing intensively: more than ten Czech universities have signed agreements with partner institutions in Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Daejeon, Suwon, Asan, Ansong, Cheonan and Cheongju. Every year several hundred students from the two countries take part in exchange programmes and teacher exchanges are becoming increasingly common. Contacts at the level of towns and regions are also developing gradually. Sportspeople and coaches from the Czech Republic work in the Republic of Korea and vice versa.

LAOS

(Lao People's Democratic Republic)

Development cooperation

Laos has for long been dependent on foreign assistance. The Czech Republic's activities in this territory are developing with difficulties. A small-scale local project entitled *AVAFed Mixes and their Benefit for Increased Effectiveness in Farm Animal Breeding*, approved in 2008 and implemented in conjunction with the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry of the National University of Laos in Vientiane, was completed in 2009. In 2009, the Czech Republic exported goods worth CZK 1.245 million to Laos and imported goods worth CZK 14.7 million.

There were two students from Laos studying in the Czech Republic in 2009 having been awarded scholarships offered by the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague in 2008.

MALAYSIA

Visits by representatives of Malaysia

- February 2009 – visit by Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rastam Mohamed Isa – consultations with Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová;
- May 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister for Defence Abdul Latiff Ahmad to the *IDET 2009* trade fair – talks with Deputy Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic;

- October 2009 – visit by Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz – talks with the Minister of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic;
- November 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Malaysia Dato’ Ir Wong Foon Meng.

Economic relations

A fall in imports caused by the global economic crisis led to a reduction in the Czech Republic’s balance of trade deficit with Malaysia in 2009. Czech exports also fell back to the 2006 level. The value of Czech exports was CZK 1.088 billion, with imports worth CZK 14.310 billion.

The Czech Republic’s principal export commodities: machinery and plant equipment, modified silicon for electronics, tyres, plastics, plastic products, paper and paperboard, measuring and optical instruments, metal products, steel structures, synthetic rubber, chemicals, antibiotics, electrical devices, toys.

The Czech Republic’s principal import commodities: electrical and electronic apparatus and devices (processors and controllers), office machines and automatic data processing machines (in particular memory units), telecommunications equipment, crude rubber, measuring instruments, clothing, furniture, iron and non-ferrous metal products, chemicals, plastic products.

Humanitarian aid

For the third year, the Czech Republic financed a mobile health clinic for Burmese refugees in Malaysia through the NGO MERCY Malaysia. CZK 540,000 in humanitarian aid was released to the clinic for the period from April 2009 to March 2010.

Cultural relations

For the fourth year, the Malaysian government funded Malaysian students’ studies at the First Medical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, in Hradec Králové and the Medical Faculty of Palacký University in Olomouc. The total number of Malaysian students in the Czech Republic has reached almost three hundred.

Cultural activities were concentrated during the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. A *Czech Film Festival* took place in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 29 March 2009. An exhibition of *Glass and Gellages* by M. Macků was staged at the Weiling Gallery in Kuala Lumpur from 6-30 April 2009. The *Prague Chamber Orchestra* performed in Malaysia in October. The concert was part of a tour of southeast and east Asian countries sponsored by Toyota. The 10th *European Union Film Festival* took place in Kuala Lumpur from 12 to 22 November 2009. The Czech Republic was represented at the festival by *Children of the Night* by director M. Pavlátová.

MALDIVES

(Republic of Maldives)

The process of the appointment of the Czech Republic's honorary consul in the Maldives was begun in 2009. President V. Klaus met with President M. Nasheed on the sidelines of the 64th UN General Assembly in New York.

MONGOLIA

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 3 September 2009 – 2nd session of the *Czech-Mongolian Mixed Commission* in Ulaanbaatar, which assessed the two countries' economic cooperation to date and defined strategies for the future, including foreign development cooperation. The session was accompanied by a number of separate expert-level consultations and discussions between representatives of Czech ministries and their Mongolian counterparts (ministries of finance, agriculture, industry and trade, the Czech Development Agency, the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic and such like). A *Protocol on the Session of the Czech-Mongolian Mixed Commission* was signed at the end of the session. On the same occasion, a *Memorandum of Cooperation between Courts of Arbitration* was signed; the Memorandum should be of considerable assistance in resolving business disputes. The Czech delegation was led by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka.

Other meetings

As part of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the director of the Asia and Pacific Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs J. Šitler visited Ulaanbaatar in April 2009 at the head of the European Union Troika delegation.

Economic relations

The financial and subsequent economic crisis had a negative impact on trade exchange in 2009. The sharp fall in purchasing power and the lack of confidence on the banking market held back the development of foreign trade between the Czech Republic and Mongolia. Another factor was imports of poor-quality Chinese goods at dumping prices. Exports to the territory in 2009 were worth CZK 164.3 million and imports CZK 7.9 million.

Development cooperation

Mongolia is one of the “programme countries” of Czech foreign development cooperation. 20 development projects were implemented in 2009 (CZK 76 million was spent in 2008. The planned allocation in 2009 was approx. CZK 80 million) and four small-scale local projects (CZK 1.5 million). Seven projects were completed by the end of 2009.

MYANMAR / BURMA

(Union of Myanmar)

Humanitarian aid

Financial humanitarian aid of CZK 1 million was provided through the *Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC)* in 2009. The funds were used to provide for the basic needs of the displaced inhabitants of the Burma/Thailand border area of Karen State who have fled to Thailand.

Development cooperation

In 2009, *People In Need* and the *Community Development Association* implemented a small-scale local project of *Participatory School Construction* in the village of Kyan Thar Yar, Bogalay township, Irrawaddy Division, in the area of the Irrawaddy river delta affected by the destructive cyclone Nargis in 2008. The project had a budget of CZK 175,000.

In addition, the *Free Burma Rangers (FBR)* implemented a small-scale local project for *Computer Education Programmes in Eastern Burma* in the form of cross-border cooperation. The project's budget was CZK 325,000.

Transformation cooperation

As part of transformation cooperation in 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic provided Myanmar/Burma with more than CZK 4.65 million in support of human rights and the transition to democracy.

NEPAL

(Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal)

The slow-moving peace process in Nepal prevents the establishment of more intensive relations between the Czech Republic and Nepal. The process of the appointment of the Czech Republic's new honorary consul in Nepal was started in 2009.

NEW ZEALAND

In 2009, the Czech Republic made full use of the quota of places offered under the bilateral *Working Holiday Scheme*.

Economic relations

Czech exports exceed imports again in 2009. Exports were worth CZK 607.1 million; imports CZK 285.2 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: paper and paperboard, electronic recording devices, toys, motor vehicles, machine engineering products.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: wool, simple mechanical devices, fruit, electronic recording devices, optical instruments.

Cultural relations

Although the Czech Republic did not exercise the office of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in New Zealand locally, the Czech Republic's profile was enhanced in this territory, particularly in the political and cultural fields.

PAKISTAN

(Islamic Republic of Pakistan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- A visit by Minister of Defence M. Barták had been prepared for August 2009, but for reasons of his Pakistani counterpart's health the visit had to be cancelled roughly ten days before it was scheduled to start.

Visits by representatives of Pakistan

- March 2009 – visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi in connection with the European Union Troika-Pakistan ministerial meeting.

Economic relations

- The favourable development of mutual economic relations and the overall revival in bilateral relations that began at the start of the new millennium continued in 2009. The Pakistan market offers a considerable and still relatively unexplored potential for Czech exporters. However, the opportunities for greater involvement by Czech firms are to a large degree overshadowed by the enduring deterioration in the security situation in the country.

The value of trade exchange in 2009 was CZK 2.7 billion (compared to CZK 2.9 billion in the same period in 2008); the Czech Republic had a CZK 555 million balance of trade surplus with Pakistan. The fall in the value of trade exchange was the result of the gradual completion of energy projects in Balloki and Muridke – these two projects and the associated export of plant to Pakistan had constituted a significant part of total trade exchange in 2008.

In the biggest investment by a Czech firm in Pakistan, Moravské naftové doly Hodonín (MND) is involved in the exploration of a large natural gas deposit in the Khairpur district of Sindh province. MND operates in Pakistan through its UK-registered subsidiary MND Exploration and Production Ltd. Along with OMV, Agip, PPL and GHPL, MND is a stakeholder in production at the Sawan natural gas deposit, where the firm holds 7.89% of the licensing rights under the Petroleum Concession Agreement for the South-West Miano Block

(SW-Miano). In partnership with Pakistan state firms Mari Gas and PPL, MND is exploring other gas and oil deposits in Balochistan province.

Czech firms are completing projects to deliver plant for construction of the Balloki and Muridke 225 MW steam-gas power plants.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: steam turbines, centrifuges, filtering apparatus, textile machinery, pumps, valves, boilers, radiolocation apparatus, conductors, industrial equipment, paper cartons.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: textile and leather products, cotton yarn, ethyl alcohol, bed linen, sports equipment, medical instruments.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- March 2009 – a *Cultural Exchange Programme* for the years 2009-2011 between the two countries' culture ministries was signed in Prague by Minister of Culture V. Jehlička and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Athar Mahmud.

Humanitarian aid and transformation/development cooperation

In 2009, the Czech Republic provided Pakistan with financial assistance of CZK 10 million, half through the UNHCR and half through UNICEF.

Cultural relations

In November 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Islamabad and the German embassy co-organised the screening of Czech film *Kolya* as part of a series of film evenings marking the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

THE PHILIPPINES

(Republic of the Philippines)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 21 April 2009 – working visit by J. Karfík, Director General of the Non-European Countries and Development Cooperation Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to attend the ASEM conference organised by the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines and hold bilateral talks with E. Manalo, Undersecretary for Policy of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and R. E. Seguis, Undersecretary for Special and Ocean Concerns of the Department of Foreign Affairs;
- 6-7 September 2009 – official visit by Prime Minister J. Fischer, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová and Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka, who were received by President G. M. Arroya, President of the Senate J. P. Enrile and Secretary of Foreign Affairs A. Romulo.

Economic relations

Total trade turnover between the two countries in 2009 was CZK 3.093 billion, with exports from the Czech Republic accounting for CZK 983 million and imports to the Czech Republic CZK 2.111 billion. The Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade deficit of CZK 1,128 million.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: electronic integrated circuits, micro sets, transistors, semi-conductor and photosensitive apparatus, electric capacitors (fixed, rotary, trimming), tubes, hoses and plastic accessories, water turbines, waterwheels, regulators etc.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: electronic integrated circuits, micro sets, automatic data processing machines, units, scanners, diodes, transistors, semi-conductor and photosensitive apparatus, optic fibres, cables, lenses, prisms, rubber, textile products etc.

At the turn of October and November 2009, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Manila organised *Czech Culture and Gastronomy Days*, during which there were seminars and presentations by Czech firms operating in renewable energies and a presentation of the City of Prague.

Development cooperation

The *Improvement of Waste Management in Naga City* project that has run since 2007 was completed in 2009. The Government of the Czech Republic provided a total of CZK 9.7 million for this project.

Humanitarian aid

In October 2009, the Czech Republic provided aid of CZK 2.65 million to mitigate the damage caused by Typhoon Ondoy.

The project entitled Assistance for Measures Ensuring Reliable and Sustainable Drinking Water Supplies for Manila after the Damage Caused by Catastrophic Typhoons, for which the Czech government earmarked CZK 39.2 million for the years 2006-2010, went ahead.

A project for Assessment of Mercury and Cyanide Contamination in the River Naboc was implemented, with CZK 270,000 contributed to the implementing organisation out of the resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Cultural relations

- January 2009 – *Glimpses of Europe* concert in conjunction with the Cultural Centre of the Philippines. The Philippine Symphony Orchestra performed works by J. Sibelius, F. Liszt, E. Elgar and A. Dvořák;
- February 2009 – opening of the *Rizal-Blumentritt Friendship Park* in Dapitan, combined with a seminar entitled *J. Rizal and Europe*;
- April 2009 – presentation of poetry by J. Seifert entitled *Book Days* in English and Spanish;
- May 2009 – *UNESCO Heritage Sites in the Czech Republic* exhibition at the Far Eastern University and the Philippine foreign affairs department and a concert by Czech ensemble *Trio Concertino*;
- June 2009 – the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Manila and the Order of Knights of J. Rizal, the Delegation of the European Commission and KLM organised a *Rizal and Europe* competition for university students;

November 2009 – the concert by J. Svěcený formed part of the *Czech Culture and Gastronomy Festival*.

SINGAPORE

(Republic of Singapore)

Economic relations

Trade exchange in 2009 fell short of the trade turnover record of almost CZK 17 billion achieved in 2008. The value of trade exchange in 2009 was CZK 15.2 billion, a fall of 15% from the same period the previous year. One of the reasons was the global economic crisis, which hit the Singapore economy worst of all Asian countries in 2009.

Czech exports to Singapore amounted to CZK 1.653 billion, a fall of 48% from the same period in the previous year. At CZK 13.514 billion, imports from Singapore were 8.8% down from the same period the previous year. Bilateral trade is dominated by transnational companies, which is linked to both economies' substantial involvement in international division of labour and export focus.

In April 2009, CzechInvest, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Jakarta organised the first *Czech-Singapore Technology Days*. An all-day conference was attended by over fifty scientists and researchers from Singapore and a tour of local technological centres was organised. The principal aim of the event was to establish cooperation between Czech and Singaporean science and research specialists. Opportunities for cooperation are opening up in the pharmaceuticals and biotech industries and in the field of sophisticated security systems. On the Czech side, a dozen representatives of research institutes and universities took part in the event.

SRI LANKA

(Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 12-13 May 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová within the European Union Troika framework. The Czech Republic's honorary consul in the country is J. Fernando.

Development cooperation

An environmental project entitled *Pollution of Inland Waters* was implemented in Sri Lanka in 2009. The development project's total budget for 2007-2009 was CZK 7.8 billion.

Humanitarian aid

The Czech Republic provided Sri Lanka with humanitarian aid worth a total of CZK 5 million (aid to internally displaced persons, provision of drinking water).

THAILAND

(Kingdom of Thailand)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 4-7 November 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Defence J. Kopřiva with a delegation to attend the 4th *DEFENCE & SECURITY* trade fair.

Visits by representatives of Thailand

- 12-15 April 2009 – visit by a delegation of the Committee on Human Rights, Rights and Liberties and the Committee on Corruption and Good Governance of the Senate of Thailand.

Other meetings

- 18 September – 10 October 2009 – a delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic attended the UNFCCC Bangkok Climate Change Talks.

Economic relations

Thailand has consistently been one of the Czech Republic's most important trading partners in Southeast Asia. Trade relations with Thailand are dominated by imports, which attained a value of CZK 21.987 billion in 2009. Czech exports were worth CZK 1.457 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: dried milk, fuel pumps, arms and ammunition, turbo generators, artificial casings, steam turbines.

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: automated data processing machines, electronic parts of audio and video technology, optical fibres, printed circuits, crude rubber, tyres, copper tubes.

Cultural relations

There were many cultural events that were covered by the media, including: P. Šmok's Ballet Prague's performance of *Te Deum* at the *International Dance Festival 2009* in March 2009; an exhibition of graphic art by J. Skalník at Suan Pakkad Palace; and, above all, a V. Svěcený violin concert performed in the Dusit Thani hotel on 1 January 2009.

The film *Citizen Havel* was screened at the *European Union Film Festival* in the two biggest Thai cities of Bangkok and Chiang Mai and also at pre-premiere screening for Thai and non-Thai journalists at the Foreign Correspondent Club Thailand in Bangkok. The Embassy of the Czech Republic organised the event to mark 20 years since the collapse of communism in eastern Europe.

Under the project entitled *The Czech Republic – a Significant Trade and Tourism Partner* promoting the Czech Republic as an attractive destination for tourism and business, the third *CZECH DAYS 2009* was staged by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in conjunction with Czech and Thai partners. The week-long event in the capital city Bangkok and, for the first time, in the Pattaya tourist resort featured Czech cuisine, fashion shows and a series of exhibition and performances.

A concert by the Prague Chamber Orchestra performed on 27 October 2009 as part of the *Toyota Tour 2009* in the Thai Cultural Centre under the auspices of the royal family was another major success.

As a further commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, an exhibition of *1989 as Seen by Photographers* took place in December, combined with a screening of the documentary film *The Tender Revolution*.

The Czech-Thai Society, which has operated since 1998, gained official registration in 2009.

There are currently several dozen Thai students taking master's and doctorate studies at universities in the Czech Republic, a number of them self-funded. There is particularly strong interest in studying at Czech universities with an artistic focus.

VIETNAM

(Socialist Republic of Vietnam)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 25-26 May 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout attended a meeting of ASEM 9 foreign ministers in Hanoi;
- 15-23 November 2009 – working visit by the Committee on Public Administration, Regional Development and the Environment of the Senate of Parliament, led by Vice-president of the Senate J. Liška.

Visits by representatives of Vietnam

- 24-28 April 2009 – official visit by Chairman of the National Assembly Nguyen Phu Trong.

Economic relations

Despite the global financial crisis and the general contraction in foreign trade, trade exchange between the Czech Republic and Vietnam in 2009 maintained a level comparable with the previous year. Less favourable, however, is the slow growth of Czech exports and the growing balance of trade deficit with Vietnam. In 2009, the Czech Republic exported goods worth CZK 776.8 million to Vietnam and imported goods worth CZK 4.561 billion.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of National Defence of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on Cooperation in the Field of Military Training. The Arrangement was signed by the Czech side on 26 August 2009 in Prague and by the Vietnamese side on 28 August 2009 in Hanoi.

Development cooperation

In line with the European Union's development strategy, the Czech Republic's development cooperation has targeted the environmental protection sector, agriculture, labour and social affairs, and supporting enterprise and modernisation of the industrial infrastructure. New development cooperation projects were stopped in 2009 by a decision of the Czech government.

Cultural relations

The principal cultural events of 2009 were presentation events staged as part of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. They included the screening of *Cutting It Short* during the *European Film Festival* (11 May 2009); an exhibition of *15 Years of Czech Press Photo* (opened on 21 May 2009); an exhibition entitled *Roll Out the Barrel* (opened on 18 June 2009); and a festival of Czech films (10-16 June 2009). Other successful events were the screening of the best-known Czech animated fairytales as part of *Children's Film Day*, an event organised by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Hanoi, and a performance by the Prague Chamber Orchestra on 7 November 2009 in Ho Chi Minh City as part of the *Toyota Classics* concert series.

In 2008, Vietnam was included in a pilot project of government scholarships for study in the English language. In 2009, an agreement was signed covering educational cooperation between the two countries' defence ministries.

The Czech Republic's Relations with Central Asian Countries

KAZAKHSTAN

(Republic of Kazakhstan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 20 January 2009 – working visit to Astana by First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar, mainly to prepare the visit of Prime Minister M. Topolánek;
- 11-12 February 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek in connection with preparations for the *Southern Corridor* summit – meeting with President N. Nazarbayev and Prime Minister K. Masimov;
- 21-22 May 2009 – chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament J. Hamáček and vice-chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of Parliament P. Lededa attended the *Contemporary Kazakhstan: Road to Europe* conference; besides attending the conference there was a meeting with Chairman of the Mazhilis U. Mukhamedjanov and chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Mazhilis N. Rustemov;
- 22-26 June 2009 – visit by Director General of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic M. Štěpán, accompanied by a business delegation. The key meetings took place at Kazakhstan's Emergency Ministry;
- 6-8 October 2009 – V. Bartuška, Special Envoy for Energy Security, attended the traditional KOIGE energy trade fair in Almaty. During the visit V. Bartuška held talks with a number of representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and met with a number of other foreign partners.

Visits by representatives of Kazakhstan

- 19-20 April 2009 – working visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Tazhin. In addition to the main meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Schwarzenberg, he also met Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs M. Mora;
- 21-22 September 2009 – 3rd session of the *Czech-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Trade, Scientific and Technical Cooperation*, attended by the commission

vice-chairmen Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic M. Hovorka and Deputy Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan D. N. Turganov. A Czech-Kazakh business forum took place as part of this visit;

- 15 December 2009 – visit by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs R. Zhoshibayev.

Other meetings

- 29-30 May 2009 – at the European Union – Central Asia regional dialogue Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout met with his counterpart M. Tazhin in Dushanbe, Tajikistan;
- 24-26 June 2009 – First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs T. Pojar, leading a Czech delegation, attended the EAPC security forum and Rose-Roth seminar of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Astana;
- 15 September 2009 – at the European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Conference Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Zhigalov in Brussels.

Economic relations

Kazakhstan is the Czech Republic's biggest trading partner in Central Asia in terms of trade turnover. Trade exchange has displayed dynamic annual growth from 2004 to 2008, increasing by a full 430% over those five years. This trend came to an end in 2009, as the global economic crisis affected both countries.

The Czech Republic has for long had a balance of trade deficit with Kazakhstan. This is the result of the structure of Czech imports, which are dominated by energy commodities and other raw materials (in the first half of 2009 crude oil made up 72% of the volume of imports and gas 7%). Imports from Kazakhstan attained a value of CZK 5.387 billion in 2009 and exports CZK 2.400 billion.

The Czech Republic's principal export commodities: in the first half of 2009: industrial machinery and plant equipment (22.3%), food production machinery (8.8%), paper and paperboard (7.8%), automatic data processing machines (6.7%), metal-working machinery (4.3%), medicaments (3.6%), motor vehicles parts and accessories (3%), heating and cooling apparatus including parts (2.9%), paper and paperboard (2.5%), cosmetics (1.9%), pumps (1.8%), veneers, plywood (1.5%), optical instruments and apparatus (1.47%).

The Czech Republic's principal import commodities: in the first half of 2009: crude oil (72%), hydrogen (14.9%), natural gas (7.1%), ferrous alloys (3.9%), cotton (0.9%), wool (0.4%), cotton fabrics (0.23%), tobacco (0.18%), steel cisterns and barrels (0.06%), chrome oxides (0.05%).

One key factor in the Czech Republic's economic relations with Kazakhstan is the decision by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic to include Kazakhstan as one of the Czech Republic's priority partners.

In 2009, Kazakhstan was classified as a priority country in terms of the Czech Republic's export interests. The 3rd session of the Czech-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific and Technical Cooperation and a business conference entitled *Kazakhstan Economy Day in the Czech Republic* took place in Prague in September 2009. The conference was attended by over 130 representatives of 75 Czech firms and 50 representatives of the biggest Kazakh firms. A Czech Tourism presentation was held in Almaty and Astana in December 2009 in the context of Czech National Day. Government agency CzechTrade opened an office in Almaty at the end of 2009.

Cultural relations

During the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, *Czech Culture Days in Kazakhstan* were staged on 8-11 May 2009, featuring screenings of Czech films (*Empties* and *Grapes, The Loveliest Riddle*), concerts by dulcimer band *Pozdní sběr* and an exhibition of contemporary Czech art organised by the *Miro Gallery*. A reciprocal cultural event of Kazakh artists in Prague took place in mid-December 2009.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic and the Embassy of the Slovak Republic organised a joint exhibition on the occasion of the anniversary of 17 November 1989. Kazakhs are interested in university study in the Czech Republic and studying the Czech language.

KYRGYZSTAN

(Kyrgyz Republic)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

Presence of a parliamentary observers delegation at the July parliamentary and presidential elections in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Other meetings

- 29-30 May 2009 – Dushanbe (Tajikistan) – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout met with Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Sarbayev (on the occasion of the European Union-Central Asia regional dialogue);
- 15 September 2009 – Brussels – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout met with Minister of Foreign Affairs K. Sarbayev during the occasion of the European Union-Central Asia Ministerial Conference.

In 2009, there were no high-level political contacts in relations between the Czech Republic and Kyrgyzstan; one reason for this was the presidential and parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan in the second half of July 2009.

Economic relations

The volume of trade exchange is generally very small. Both the value (approx. USD 4.5 million) and structure of Czech exports have been relatively stable during the past three years (2007-2009). The principal export commodities are pharmaceutical products and other medicaments for retail (18.0%), automatic data processing machines (17.6%), cigarette paper (11%), X-ray devices (9.7%), rubber tyres and inners (7%), plastic pipes, tubes and hoses (5.9%), rubber products, sanitary paper, light fittings etc. The first Budvar beer was exported to Kyrgyzstan in November 2009. The relative levels of commodities fluctuate.

Imports, which have been declining every year, were worth just CZK 6.3 million in 2009; uncarded wool is by far the dominant commodity (83% in 2007).

Development cooperation

One significant project in Kyrgyzstan is *Risk Analysis and Mitigation of the Consequences of the Floods Caused by Breaks of Moraine Dams* (2007-2010) implemented by Czech firm GEOMIN družstvo, Jihlava. The project's total budget is CZK 15.24 million.

This project has great environmental significance for Kyrgyzstan from the point of view of analysing and addressing impending natural catastrophes linked to climate change and helps create an image of the Czech Republic as an economically developed and environmentally advanced country.

TAJKISTAN

(Republic of Tajikistan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 29-30 May 2009 – EU – Central Asia Ministerial Troika meeting at Foreign Minister Level in Dushanbe chaired by the Czech presidency. During the event there was a meeting between the European Union and Tajikistan led on the Czech side by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout and on the Tajik side by Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Zarifi.

Visits by representatives of Tajikistan

- From 8 August 2009 President E. Rachmon spent over a week in the Czech Republic on a private visit.

Other meetings

- 15 September 2009 – meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan H. Zarifi on the sidelines of the European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Conference in Brussels;
- 13 November 2009 – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan H. Zarifi telephoned Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout and invited him to visit Tajikistan;
- I. M. Sattorov became the first non-resident ambassador of Tajikistan, based in Berlin, to be accredited for the Czech Republic. The agrément was granted to him on 18 June 2009; he presented his credentials to President V. Klaus on 20 October 2009.

Economic relations

Trade turnover in 2009 amounted to almost CZK 181.2 million, with Czech exports accounting for CZK 137.3 million and imports from Tajikistan over CZK 43.9 million. Practically the only commodities the Czech Republic has imported from Tajikistan are non-

ferrous metals, mainly aluminium (69%), and textile fibres (30%). The principal export commodities to Tajikistan are sugar and sugar products (70%), machinery and plant equipment (16%) and plastics (8%).

Czech-Tajik joint venture to build small and medium-sized hydroelectric plants was established at the end of 2009. One fundamental obstacle to the development of trade relations between the two countries is the unresolved question of the reconstruction of a cement works in Dushanbe, or specifically the financing of this project.

Under the Czech government's voluntary repatriation programme introduced in connection with the ongoing economic crisis, the Czech Republic provided a contribution towards the return home of three Tajik nationals.

Humanitarian aid

Heavy rains in various parts of Tajikistan in April 2009 led to floods and landslides. The result was 2,000 destroyed or damaged homes, 500 kilometres of damaged roads and 83 damaged bridges. The catastrophe directly affected 12,000 people and caused 26 losses of life (including 10 children). In response to the request from Tajikistan received by the Delegation of the European Commission in Dushanbe and NATO/EADRCC, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Latvia and Austria sent a rescue team to the Khurason province from 26 May to 5 June 2009.

TURKMENISTAN

(Republic of Turkmenistan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 13 February 2009 – working visit by Prime Minister M. Topolánek in the context of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- 23 April 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister A. Vondra attended a conference on issues of the reliability of energy raw material transit;
- 21-23 September 2009 – official visit by President of the Senate of Parliament P. Sobotka.

Visits by representatives of Turkmenistan

- 8 May 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister Deputy Chair of the Cabinet of Ministers T. Tagyev at the *Southern Corridor – New Silk Road* summit.

Other meetings

- 29 May 2009 – Dushanbe (Tajikistan) – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan R. Meredov (on the occasion of the European Union – Central Asia Regional Dialogue);
- 15 September 2009 – Brussels – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout met with First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan V. Hajiyev during the occasion of the European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Conference.

Economic relations

The Czech Republic has maintained a balance of trade surplus with Turkmenistan. The direct contacts with representatives of the Turkmenistan administration in 2009 revealed that both sides are interested in strengthening bilateral economic relations. Turkmenistan will support the development of bilateral trading relations with the Czech Republic mainly in the textile industry (exports of cotton and cotton products). The Turkmen side also declared an interest in setting up joint ventures in the fields of agricultural, food and textile production. Czech exports to Turkmenistan were worth CZK 247.7 million in 2009 and imports CZK 1.9 million.

UZBEKISTAN

(Republic of Uzbekistan)

Visits by representatives of the Czech Republic

- 24-25 August 2009 – 3rd session of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation; the Czech delegation was led by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade M. Hovorka, who met with Minister for Foreign Economic Relations, Investment and Trade E. M. Ganiev and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan A. Shaikhov.

Visits by representatives of Uzbekistan

- 27-28 April 2009 – Minister of the Interior I. Langer met with Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Uzbekistan B. B. Alimukhamedov on the sidelines of the *Building Migration Partnerships* ministerial conference;

- 8 May 2009 – chairman of the board of directors of national holding company Uzbekneftegaz U. Nuzarov attended the *Southern Corridor – New Silk Road* conference.

Other meetings

- 1 December 2009 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout met with Minister of Foreign Affairs V. I. Norov on the sidelines of the 12th OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens;
- 29 May 2009 – Dushanbe (Tajikistan) – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic J. Kohout met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan B. A. Islamov (on the occasion of the European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Troika meeting).

Economic relations

Exports from the Czech Republic to Uzbekistan attained a value of CZK 1.0 billion in 2009. Imports from Uzbekistan were worth almost CZK 184 million. The Czech Republic has constantly maintained a balance of trade surplus with Uzbekistan. Besides exports of services, the biggest export items are tyres (31%), machinery and plant equipment (21%), and pharmaceutical products (13%). The Czech Republic imports primarily cotton (54%), cotton fabrics (30%) and metals and metal products (19%) from Uzbekistan.

The *Czech-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce and Industry* resumed its work in 2009. The start of direct Czech Airlines flights from Prague to Tashkent in July 2009 was a significant impulse for the development of mutual economic relations.

After a prolonged pause, the *Joint Czech-Uzbek Intergovernmental Commission for Industrial and Scientific and Technological Cooperation* held its 3rd session on 24-25 August 2009 in Tashkent.

Czech Republic Week, focusing on the Czech Republic's tourism potential and cultural assets and co-organised by CzechTrade and the Embassy of the Czech Republic, took place in Tashkent in October 2009. In December 2009, there were two successful seminars in Prague devoted to investment and business opportunities in Uzbekistan and cooperation in geology and mineral extraction.

Bilateral agreements concluded in 2009

- Memorandum between the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Delegation of the Government of the Czech Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Air Travel, Tashkent, 6 August 2009;
- Protocol between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan on an Amendment of the Agreement between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments, Signed on 15 January 1997 in Prague, Tashkent, 24 August 2009;
- Agreement between the Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing and the Uzbek Agency of Standardisation, Metrology and Certification on Mutual Cooperation in the Field of Conformity Assessment, Tashkent, 25 August 2009;
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Czech-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tashkent, 25 August 2009;
- Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between the Information Support and Foreign Investments Promotion Agency *Uzinfoinvest* and the Czech-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tashkent, 25 August 2009;
- Code Sharing Agreement between the National Carriers Uzbekistan Airways and Czech Airlines, Tashkent, 1 September 2009.

Development cooperation

A small-scale local development cooperation project entitled *Cooperation in the Introduction of Solar Photoelectric Electricity Generation Systems in Housing and Communal Management in Tashkent* was successfully implemented in Uzbekistan in 2009.

A Czech government programme of voluntary repatriation introduced in connection with the ongoing economic crisis in the Czech Republic was also successful and was used by 341 Uzbek nationals. In terms of the provision of Czech state resources, Uzbekistan was thus the second biggest beneficiary (behind Mongolia).

Cultural relations

Several Czech films were screened to Uzbek audiences on various cultural occasions in 2009: *Tales of Ordinary Madness*, *Conspirators of Pleasure*, *Between Heaven and Earth*.

The 20th anniversary of the events of November 1989 in the Czech Republic was marked in Uzbekistan by an exhibition *1989 as Seen by Photographers*.

The biggest cultural promotion event during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union was a series of musical, singing and dance performances of dulcimer music by P. Růžička at the end of June 2009. In July 2009, the Uzbek song-and-dance ensemble *Rhythms of Uzbekistan* took part in the 64th *Strážnice 2009* international folklore festival in the Czech Republic.

Czech Week was staged in Tashkent in October 2009 and featured a presentation of the Czech Republic as a tourist destination, an exhibition entitled *Prague as Seen by Photographer E. Kurtveliev* and several dulcimer music concerts by *Strážničan*.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tashkent initiated the production of Uzbek dubbing for Czech film *Three Nuts for Cinderella*. The film was broadcast on Uzbek national television on New Year's Eve 2009.

In December 2009, Uzbekistan took part in an international children's festival of Jewish culture in Prague.

The Czech Republic offered Uzbekistan two government scholarships for the 2009/2010 academic year; the University of West Bohemia provided other scholarships. Since September 2009, the Global Study private language school in Tashkent has organised Czech language courses taught by a Czech teacher.

11. Consular Dimension of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy

In 2009, the Czech consular service continued to contribute to the fulfilment of the Czech Republic's foreign policy objectives. Tasks in this area are handled by the Consular Section, which has two mutually complementary departments: the *Consular Department* handles consular relations with individual states and the practical implementation of consular agendas at embassies vis-à-vis Czech citizens. Among other things, it deals with the agenda of travel documents, granting visas to diplomats, informing the public in connection with travel to foreign states and dealing with cases of Czech citizens who get into difficulties abroad. The *Consular Policy and Methodology Department* deals mainly with conceptual matters of the consular service; it ensures the application of EU/Schengen regulations concerning consular work; it coordinates visa work at embassies; and it draws up opinions and other materials for internal and international talks on migration questions.

2009 was the second year when the Czech Republic was part of the Schengen area and Czech embassies issued visas valid for all Schengen states and a short-term visa issued by another Schengen state authority enabled its holder to enter and stay in the Czech Republic. A 22% fall in short-term visa applications was registered in 2009 compared to the previous year, mainly because of the global economic recession. The fall in applications for long-term visas is even more marked, down 64% from 2008. The total number of visa applications received and processed by Czech embassies in 2009 was 475,978.

In the area of visa policy, the Czech presidency managed to complete a key piece of legislation harmonising the current fragmented Community law instruments; the document is entitled *Visa Code – Regulation (EU) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009*. This regulation will also be the standard legal basis for collecting visa applicants' fingerprints as part of the *Visa Information System (VIS)* and will enter into effect on 5 April 2010. In connection with the VIS project that had been scheduled for launch at European level in 2009 but was postponed until 2010, the Czech consular service has continued to prepare for the collection of biometric data, i.e. fingerprints, which will take place at embassies and will apply to all visa applicants. The collection of biometric data has

already begun at certain embassies of the Czech Republic, specifically those in North Africa (Cairo, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli).

On 19 December 2009, a decision on visa liberalisation between the European Union and three Western Balkans countries – Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia/FYROM – entered into effect. In practice, this step means that holders of biometric travel documents from the said three countries may enter the Schengen area, i.e. including the Czech Republic, without visas. The introduction of visa-free travel was fully consistent with the long-term efforts of the Czech Republic, which has traditionally been one of the strongest advocates of visa liberalisation with Western Balkans countries.

Agreements on the abolition of visa requirements between the European Union and the following island states were also negotiated in 2009: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, the Republic of Mauritius, the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis, and the Republic of Seychelles. An equivalent agreement was concluded with Brazil as well.

By contrast, the European Union's visa policy was negatively affected by Canada's unprecedented step of reintroducing visas for a Schengen state, the Czech Republic, the only third country to do so. The Canadian government's decision to introduce a visa requirement for Czech citizens entering Canada was announced on 13 July 2009 by Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism J. Kenney. The decision entered into effect a day later, on 14 July 2009. The Canadian minister justified this step by the large increase in the number of Czech citizens applying for refugee status. In response to Canada's unilateral and harsh action, the government of the Czech Republic introduced visas for Canadian diplomats entering the Czech Republic with effect from 16 July 2009.

In October 2009, the European Commission issued a special report declaring that should Canada fail to facilitate the formalities linked to visa applications and to submit by the end of 2009 a proposal for measures that would lead to the lifting of the visa requirement for Czech nationals, the European Commission would propose the imposition of visa requirement for certain categories of Canadian citizens (probably holders of diplomatic and service passports). Although, under pressure from the Czech Republic and the European Union, Canada opened a visa office at its embassy in Prague as of 21 December 2009, the second demand has still not been met. The Czech side regards the current state of affairs as a

provisional solution. The resumption of visa-free travel is therefore an important goal of Czech foreign policy and the Czech side is making efforts on all levels to achieve this goal.

Certain aspects of the visa process were tightened as part of the fight against illegal migration and abuse of reasons for stay. The measures in question were coordinated with other authorities, above all the Ministry of the Interior and the Directorate of the Alien Police. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the attempts to address the situation of foreign nationals who had lost their jobs as a result of the economic crisis and had no means at their disposal (voluntary repatriation project).

The *Analytical Centre for Protection of State Borders and Migration*, which is composed of representatives of the concerned state authorities, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serves as a platform for information exchange and cooperation on migration. In the area of migration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to be actively involved in the *Active Selection of Skilled Foreign Workers* programme and the *Green Cards* programme, whose objective is to secure the kind of workers the Czech labour market lacks.

In 2009, and above all during the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic played an active role in strengthening cooperation between European Union member states in the field of consular protection for European Union citizens. A two-day seminar on consular crisis management was organised in Prague for partners from the European Union; there was also a three-day consular training exercise in Prague and Vyškov on the topic of European consular regulations and the psychological aspects of consular crises. The Czech presidency strove to achieve a clarification of the legal framework for substitute travel documents for cases of emergency involving citizens of member states in third countries, where the member state in question does not have a consular office and assistance is provided to other member states. In addition, the Czech presidency coordinated procedure and information sharing in the context of consular protection for European Union citizens in connection with the H1N1 influenza epidemic in third countries.

The Czech consular service is directly involved in the protection of the interests and rights of individuals in difficult situations, often far from home. One integral part of this is the handling of routine consular tasks by the consular sections of Czech embassies abroad. Alongside this routine work, the provision of care for Czech citizens who find themselves in

crisis situations, frequently with their life or health in danger, and are dependent on the assistance of consular staff, is a task of the utmost importance.

In order to make the provision of assistance to Czech citizens faster and more effective, on 10 June 2009 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a public web application that enables Czech citizens to submit, on a voluntary basis, information about planned journeys abroad. The link to the *Voluntary [Registration of Citizens Travelling Abroad](#)* web application is located in the *Travelling Abroad* section of the Foreign Ministry web site. It can also be accessed at <http://drozd.mzv.cz/>. The application is referred to by the acronym DROZD. Once the application has been launched, the traveller fills in a simple four-part form:

1. Information about the traveller
2. Information about co-travelling family members
3. Information about the stay abroad
4. Contact in the Czech Republic

The submitted information helps the Foreign Ministry's consular service provide assistance to Czech citizens in a wide variety of emergencies, including natural disasters and social unrest. The application makes it possible to contact the traveller or his relatives in the Czech Republic quickly, if necessary.

The application also makes it possible to send out mass e-mails or SMS text messages to all registered persons currently in a particular foreign country. The application is therefore able to pass on important information or warn about impending danger in a relatively short time. The system enables the inputted data to be edited, for example if the traveller changes his route, length of stay and so on, based on the traveller's log-in name and chosen password.

The indispensable role of Czech honorary consulates in the consular service of the Czech Republic must also be mentioned. In 2009, there were more than 150 honorary consulates of the Czech Republic operating all over the world; fourteen of those were Honorary Consulates General. It should be stressed that honorary consuls, as the name suggests, are not state officials of the Czech Republic. The exercise of this function is honorary and unpaid. In fact, honorary consuls themselves cover the costs of running their offices. Their work has also proved important for the development of economic and cultural contacts with the country in question. Last but not least, with their knowledge of the local conditions, honorary consuls are able to provide effective assistance to Czech citizens in need.

III. ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY

1. Economic Dimension of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy

Economic diplomacy and pro-export activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Promoting exports and investment is one of the priorities of the Government of the Czech Republic. The government bases this approach on the fact that, in the conditions of the current economic crisis and increasing globalisation combined with the Czech economy's high degree of openness, the country's prosperity is dependent on its ability to promote its economic interests internationally.

Economic diplomacy has a key role to play in this process. Economic diplomacy can be defined as a set of measures intended to promote government policy in the field of the movement and exchange of goods, services, labour and incoming and outgoing investments. Economic diplomacy thus helps create a positive image of the country throughout the world. Economic diplomacy also plays an important role in the process of formulating, promoting and protecting the interests of the Czech Republic in EU bodies.

Economic diplomacy, and its *trade diplomacy* component, is an important precondition for the success of Czech firms on foreign markets, for supporting pro-growth factors in the vulnerable open Czech economy and, last but not least, for the Czech Republic's standing in EU structures and when negotiating internal positions in the EU.

Economic diplomacy focuses on the following:

- promoting the government's economic policy abroad at the multilateral and bilateral level – visits by constitutional functionaries and representatives of economy ministries;
- working with chambers of commerce, sectoral federations, honorary consuls etc. (initiating cooperation between them and Czech partners, building up a network of contacts facilitating Czech entities' access to markets, verifying the opportunities for cooperation on third markets, supporting the formation of joint ventures etc.);
- implementing Ministry of Foreign Affairs pro-export projects by organising business missions, seminars, workshops, participation at major trade fairs or projects of Czech embassies – within the framework of multifaceted presentations of the Czech Republic as a significant partner in economic cooperation with the country of operation;
- actively working together with representatives of other EU countries in a particular region within the framework of the Delegation of the European Commission and also bilaterally – for example, supporting Czech firms' participation in EU projects in regions – with representations located in non-EU countries;
- consulting and coordinating opinions on economic questions with partners as preparation for negotiations in Brussels – at representations located in countries that are EU members;
- actively engaging in development cooperation;
- monitoring the economic policies of the receiving state and informing headquarters about important changes in the economic and business environment;
- putting forward proposals for how best to promote national interests (in the “understanding and strength” style);
- preparing the programme and accompaniment for government and parliamentary delegations;
- initiating bilateral trade agreements, establishing international and inter-ministerial working groups;
- compiling summary territorial information (a comprehensive source of information for business and the state on the BusinessInfo web site);
- actively supporting business activities (seminars, workshops, exhibitions and trade fairs, corporate presentations);
- lobbying in the interests of specific firms;

- brokering effective contacts between Czech businesses and state authorities in the territory;
- preparing and running Czech Days in regions;
- promoting the development and deepening of cooperation at regional level within the framework of the programme of the European Union;
- seeking out partners at the town and municipality level;
- contacts with representatives of international trade and economic organisations;
- supporting and developing contacts among science and research institutions, supporting cooperation among universities;
- promoting the Czech Republic;
- participating in conferences, lectures and workshops in the country of operation and in the Czech Republic.

Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in economic diplomacy

Economic diplomacy is one of the pillars of the Czech Republic's foreign policy, which is implemented or overseen by several ministries and bodies of the government of the Czech Republic. The fundamental strategic objectives of this policy are:

- creating opportunities for Czech companies to enter and succeed on international markets and for further influxes of investments to the Czech Republic;
- creating and implementing a systematic and effective public diplomacy strategy;
- developing a system to coordinate action between state bodies involved in economic and public diplomacy;
- promoting the economic interests of the Czech Republic in European Union structures and its external economic relations;
- optimising and modernising activities shaping the positive image of the Czech Republic abroad;
- ensuring the adequate provision of public information (*Public Affairs*).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, whose powers are defined by the *Competences Act*, play an indispensable role in conducting economic diplomacy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the central body of state administration for foreign policy; it formulates the foreign policy concept and coordinates external economic

relations. The Ministry of Industry and Trade is the central body of state administration for trade policy, foreign economic policy, foreign trade and export support. As the key protagonists in the promotion of trade and economic interests, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade cooperate within the framework of operative agreements on cooperation between the two ministries in matters connected with the implementation of foreign trade policy, foreign trade and export support in the work of the foreign service of the Czech Republic and on the coordination of the activities of subordinate organisations which are part-funded from the state budget and whose work concerns foreign economic activities. Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade is coordinated by *Permanent Working Groups*, which meet at the deputy minister level of the two ministries.

Promoting important economic interests abroad is increasingly becoming a political matter requiring negotiations at both the political and multilateral levels. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a whole must logically play one of the lead roles in taking these steps.

For trade diplomacy to be effective, it must have a clear vision and orientation, it must be effectively organised, equipped with sufficient resources, treated as an active part of the state's foreign and economic policy and created and conducted in partnership with the private sector. Thanks to the *Concept for a Unified Presentation of the Czech Republic*, a uniform system has been devised for presenting the Czech Republic abroad and building a positive image of the country as a modern, advanced democratic country, a reliable partner in trade relations and a suitable place for investment, and the necessary resources for this system have been defined.

Czech trade diplomacy possesses a number of these attributes. Its vision is contained in *Export Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2006-2010*. Czech economic diplomacy is able to make use of the network of embassies with trade and economic sections, as well as the international network of state agencies. At central level, it is supported by specialised departments, particularly at the ministries of foreign affairs and industry and trade, which regard the promotion of economic interests at an international level as one of their priorities.

The Czech Republic's accession to the EU gave rise to an additional agenda related to the conduct of negotiations with Brussels when promoting and defending the Czech Republic's economic interests. In the first half of 2009, during the *Czech Republic's*

presidency of the Council of the European Union, the heads of the trade and economic sections of embassies of the Czech Republic chaired many working groups that discussed various aspects of the European Union's joint trade policy. Consequently, Czech economic diplomacy gained a unique opportunity to promote the country's economic interests both within the European Union and in respect of third countries.

The synergy effect of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' economic diplomacy derives from cooperation with other concerned ministries and their subordinate organisations.

In addition to the foreign affairs and industry and trade ministries, the *Ministry for Regional Development*, which is responsible for tourism and, within the EU framework, oversees the interests of local government bodies, also plays a role in building effective economic diplomacy. Tourism accounts for more than three percent of GDP and generates foreign exchange revenues exceeding CZK 100 billion per annum. The Ministry for Regional Development also plays a very important role in implementing the EU's regional and structural policy, referred to as *economic and social cohesion policy*.

The *Ministry of Agriculture* is the central body of state administration for agriculture and conducts marketing activities to promote Czech agricultural products.

The *Ministry of the Environment* monitors the environmental impact of economic processes. It promotes Czech know-how and technologies abroad through foreign development cooperation programmes, chiefly in less developed countries.

In general terms, there is an international element in the work of every central body of state administration to a greater or lesser degree. Consequently, every such body is either a co-architect or user of economic diplomacy. An example of this is the *Ministry of Culture*, which promotes the Czech Republic abroad both itself and through cultural institutes.

In total, there were 104 economic diplomats in economic sections at the Czech Republic's embassies, consulates general and permanent missions in 2009. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for embassies. Economic sections form an integral part of these embassies and their staff are subordinate to embassy heads. Expert management of economic sections falls within the competence of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs currently uses the services of 150 Honorary Consuls. Their number will be increased further. The importance of promoting Czech economic and commercial interests will continue to be stressed when new Honorary Consuls are appointed and they will be asked to play a greater role in organising events to support exports and promote the Czech Republic.

Organisations which are part-funded from the state budget (“part-funded organisations”) also play a key role in conducting economic diplomacy, not only through their offices abroad, but also through the diverse range of services they provide in the Czech Republic itself.

CzechTrade, a part-funded organisation under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, is the government agency which supports trade. It ran 33 offices in 36 countries in 2009.

CzechInvest, also a part-funded organisation under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, is the government agency which supports enterprise and investment. It has seven offices abroad. In the Czech Republic it has offices in 13 regions.

Czech Centres is a part-funded organisation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with 25 offices abroad. Its mission is to develop dialogue with the public in foreign countries through culture, education, trade and tourism and to help shape the Czech Republic’s image as a modern and dynamic country.

CzechTourism, an organisation part-funded from the state budget under the Ministry of Regional Development, is represented by 27 offices abroad. Part of its work is carried out by foreign private entities. CzechTourism promotes the Czech Republic as a tourist destination, coordinates the state promotion of tourism with activities carried out by private-sector companies and develops the medium-term and current strategy for marketing tourism products on both domestic and foreign markets.

The joint-stock companies *Czech Export Bank (ČEB)* and *Export Guarantee and Insurance Company (EGAP)* operate in the field of financing and insuring state-supported exports.

Cooperation with business – Czech Council for Trade and Investment

Effective economic diplomacy must reflect the needs of businesses. The private sector must be more closely involved in decision-making on the formulation and application of fundamental aspects of economic diplomacy. With these considerations in mind, the *Czech Council for Trade and Investment* was established as a permanent advisory and coordinating body of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Representatives of the trade and industry and foreign affairs ministries and of other bodies of state administration and their subordinate institutions sit on the Council with private sector representatives.

The Council is empowered to make proposals and recommendations that either ministry may utilise to improve the quality of state services. The Council also works with the relevant committees of both chambers of Parliament, with the Office of the President of the Republic and with the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

The Council's principal activities are:

- developing partnerships with the private sector;
- coordinating individual components of the Czech Republic's foreign policy;
- providing feedback on the private sector's satisfaction with the services of economic diplomacy;
- putting in place the right conditions for the effective promotion of Czech economic interests abroad;
- making use of the uniform brand of the Czech Republic when promoting the country around the world through trade and investment.

State services for exporters and investors

Special emphasis is placed on the quality and effectiveness of state services for businesses. These are not merely limited to the export of goods. The goal is to offer professional and high-quality services, to secure investments and to put in place a liberal trade policy which focuses on trade facilitation and the removal of barriers to foreign markets. These services should be available to the widest possible range of organisations and should meet the expectations placed on state services in a market economy.

The services are divided into several types: training, advice, information, assistance and presentation services, and export financing and insurance. The services are mainly provided through internet portals such as *Export Hotline*, *BusinessInfo.cz* and *Export.cz*, for example. A joint project team, comprising members from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as from other ministries, agencies and the business community, is improving the export opportunities information system so that this information is presented to businesses in a uniform and easily searchable manner and the undesirable duplication of data, which previously existed in the system, is eliminated.

In addition, since 2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CzechInvest and the Ministry of Industry and Trade have jointly organised the *Czech Technology Days* project, under which direct contacts are established and information exchanged between Czech science and research institutes (and individuals) and representatives of research institutes and companies from other technologically advanced countries all over the world.

Last but not least, it is in the interests of state institutions to make the services they provide more accessible to businesses in the various regions of the Czech Republic – this is a characteristic of developed countries. With this in mind, CzechTrade and the Czech Chamber of Commerce set up a joint project for the development of thirteen regional export points offering the export-promotion services of CzechTrade, the Export Guarantee and Insurance Company and the Czech Export Bank in the regions. As part of its export-support work, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has concluded cooperation agreements with the Defence Industry Association of the Czech Republic, the Czech Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of Industry.

The Czech Republic's economic development in 2009

After the gradual slowdown in growth in 2008, the Czech economy entered recession in 2009. Gross domestic product shrank by 4.2% in 2009. As part of the declining performance of the Czech economy in 2009 work productivity fell by 3.3% year-on-year. Regardless of developments in 2009, the Czech economy's performance and price level have for long been drawing closer to the European Union average. One concomitant phenomenon is the long-term strengthening of the Czech koruna against the principal international currencies (especially the euro), which affects the price competitiveness of Czech exports.

The year-on-year fall in gross domestic product was to some extent offset by gradual growth in final consumption expenditure. Government final consumption expenditure grew by 4.4% year-on-year, whereas household expenditure on final consumption fell slightly in real terms.

The Czech economy has for long had low inflation, though this trend was bucked for a short while in 2008, when the average rate of inflation based on the HCIP index reached 6.3%. However, once the pressure on world markets mainly pushing up energy and food prices had waned and as demand on world markets was tempered by recession, the rate of inflation slowed markedly during 2009.

2009 brought the biggest-ever state budget deficit of CZK 192.4 billion, which was caused by increased expenditure and an extraordinary decline in revenues. Budget revenues fell by 8.4% year-on-year, while expenditure increased by 7.7%. In the second half of the year, the growth in expenditure slowed slightly and the fall in revenues accelerated substantially. The fall in revenues was mainly caused by a decrease in the amount collected in legal persons' income tax; it was tempered by growth in other revenues, above all transfers received from the European Union. In the revenue structure, revenue from legal persons' income tax registered its biggest-ever year-on-year fall, plunging by 34.5%, and natural persons' income fell by 9.8%. The amount levied in value added tax and withholding taxes was roughly the same as in 2008.

Throughout 2009, the Czech economy functioned in fundamentally altered external and internal conditions during the global crisis and the long-unseen contraction in international trade. The government of the Czech Republic actively supported exports, investments and trade policy instruments as one of the key priorities of its economic policy (this is a long-term approach) and as one of the principal tools for countering the impacts of the global economic crisis.

The Czech economy's growth has traditionally been driven by foreign trade, which is crucial to the Czech Republic's export-oriented economy. The decline in foreign trade and exports in particular was one of the fundamental factors that contributed to the decline in gross domestic product in 2009. On the other hand, exchange rates had a favourable impact on the Czech economy in 2009 mainly thanks to the fall in import prices. Czech exporters were confronted with a reduction in external demand in 2009 and by the declining economic

performance of all the Czech Republic's key export markets. The situation on foreign markets was made even more complicated for Czech exporters because a number of countries focused their efforts on maintaining their own export performance. With this in mind, the governments of a number of countries adopted export-support measures ranging from extra budget spending in the form of aid to banks, financial institutions and individual companies to increased direct and indirect intervention in their economies.

Czech exports of goods attained a value of CZK 2,133 billion in 2009, a fall of 13.8% from 2008. All European Union countries registered large falls in their exports. Imports of goods to the Czech Republic attained a value of CZK 1,982 billion in 2009, a fall of 17.7% from 2008. The value of total trade turnover was CZK 4,115.4 billion. The Czech Republic ended the year with a balance of trade surplus of approx. CZK 152 billion, which is CZK 84.1 billion more than in 2008 (a 97.1% increase). Under the circumstances, it is a positive fact that the Czech Republic was one of the European Union member states that generated a foreign trade surplus in 2009.

In keeping with tradition, Germany, Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Great Britain, Russia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the USA, China, Japan, Spain, Belgium, Hungary, Turkey and Ukraine were among the Czech Republic's significant trading partners in 2009. The main export markets for Czech firms included Germany, Slovakia, Poland, France, Great Britain, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, Belgium and Spain.

The trade balance current account registered just -1.0% relative to GDP in 2009, caused mainly by the best-ever surplus in foreign trade in goods. The balance of trade in services worsened year-on-year. The financial account surplus covered the current account benefit almost three times over, which indicates a relatively good degree of external equilibrium. With a pronounced year-on-year decline in the dynamism of trade, the trade balance surplus was caused by the slower rate of decline in imports compared to imports and highly favourable exchange rates. Although balance of services revenues and expenditure maintained their growth, the resulting surplus was much smaller in 2009 than in 2008.

The economic recession's negative impact on direct foreign investments in the Czech Republic continued in 2009. The value of direct foreign investments fell year-on-year by almost a half to CZK 52 billion (the lowest since 1997). Direct foreign investments by Czech entities attained a value of CZK 26 billion in 2009 reaching a value of CZK 54.1 billion.

Portfolio investments, which had a positive balance of CZK 113 billion in 2009, were characterised by an influx of money into the country as a result of the investment activities of Czech subjects abroad and also non-residential entities in the Czech Republic.

Germany, Austria, France, Slovakia, the USA, Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Spain, Great Britain and Switzerland were among the countries from which most foreign investment in the Czech Republic came in 2009. It is evident that the majority of foreign capital entering the Czech economy came from Europe.

2. The Czech Republic's Foreign Cultural and Information Policy

Presentation of the Czech Republic and its culture abroad

Culture is one of the fundamental elements of the identity of European Union member states. During the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Czech Republic focused on implementing the *European Culture Programme* and the *Working Plan for Culture for the Period 2008 – 2010*. The following were the key themes of cultural policy during the Czech presidency: promoting civil society's access to culture; the digitisation of cultural content; promoting creativity in the context of 2009 as the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation*; protecting cultural assets, mainly through support for cultural heritage and cultural tourism combined with education in art and raising public awareness of the protection of intellectual property.

The main task for the *Department of Culture, Communication and Presentation (DCCP)* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic during the Czech presidency was to coordinate cultural, presentation and social events of the presidency abroad (outside Brussels), covering territories and target groups in line with the *Concept for the Presentation of the Czech Republic Abroad during the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Council of the European Union*. When organising events abroad, the unified visual style of the presidency ensured by the *Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs (ODPMEA)* was used.

Among the most significant of the total of over nine hundred events were the *Let's Dance Europe* ball in Berlin, the staging of V. Havel's play *Leaving* in Moscow, the exhibition of *Seventeen Centuries of Bohemian Garnet* in St Petersburg, the *Photo Exhibition 68/69* in Copenhagen etc. In Washington DC, there was a presentation of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union under the name *CZ in DC*, which encompassed a very wide range of events (cinema, fine arts, theatre, music, conferences, seminars). It is fair to say that the cultural and presentation events staged to a very high standard successfully enhanced the Czech Republic's profile abroad in the spirit of the Czech

presidency motto *Europe Without Barriers*. In most cases, embassies of the Czech Republic presented the Czech Republic as an “advanced, democratic, modern and developed country with a rich and distinctive culture, identity and natural beauty”, thus successfully fulfilling Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 74/2005.

As part of the Czech presidency, the DCCP prepared its own set of presentation items, gifts and information packs; it coordinated the distribution of these items with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs. New Year’s cards and wall calendars featuring interesting maps and cartographical curiosities from Czech map collections were very successful items. The maps were arranged so as to zoom out from the centre of Prague to the universe. This method made it possible to highlight the place (the epicentre of the presidency) where something important took place. The design and accompanying texts were created by E. Semotanová from the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The limited series of calendars intended for the heads of diplomatic missions was complemented by a numbered re-print of the *Regina Europea* map from the 16th century produced by Daniel Adam of Veleslavín on handmade paper from Velké Losiny.

During the Czech Republic’s presidency of the Council of the European Union, there was an *Informal Meeting of Directors General in charge of External Cultural Relations of the European Union* in Prague on 19-21 May 2009. The meeting was hosted by Director General of the Economic Cooperation and Promotion Abroad Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic P. Kafka. The two-day working meeting at Czernin Palace was opened by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová. During a discussion on cultural cooperation with three countries, the DCCP initiated the idea of *A Project to Share* joint projects that could involve several European Union member states. The meeting was accompanied by a diverse and rich cultural programme: an organ concert by V. Roubal; a performance by *Slovácko Junior* dulcimer group; a performance of Bohuslav Martinů’s *The Opening of the Springs* and exhibition entitled *The Martinů Phenomenon* at the Museum of Music; exhibitions *A Tribute to PET Bottles* and *Braun & Kuks* in the garden of Czernin Palace; and a tour of Prague’s most interesting monuments from the Prague Castle, the baroque Church of St Nicholas and the Estates Theatre to the Art Nouveau Municipal House.

During the presidency, the Czech Republic also took over the chair of the *Central Europe Culture Platform* (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia).

At a working meeting held in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm on 4-6 May 2009, representatives of Platform countries discussed the preparation of cultural events during the presidency and the plan of events for 2010. The 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain was chosen as the theme of a joint cultural event. Symbolically, two cities on either side of the former Iron Curtain – Slavonice in the Czech Republic and Vitoraz (Weitra) in Austria – were chosen as the venues for the event. On 19-21 June 2009, an exhibition entitled *Calendar of Totalitarianism*, a retro 1970s/80s fashion show, a performance by Bratislava-based Skrat theatre (the play *Central Europe Loves You*), and an exhibition of Polish posters entitled *Solidarity – The Road to Freedom* were held in Slavonice. In Vitoraz, there was a podium debate on the subject of *The Church's Role in the Collapse of the Eastern Bloc* and the inauguration of a Polish exhibition of *10 Years of Solidarity 1979-1989* and a Hungarian exhibition entitled *Freedom and Democracy: Hungary from the Fall of the Iron Curtain to Schengen*. The event was accompanied by two concerts, one by the Austrian Alternberg Trio, the other by the Czech Panenka Quartet.

The event staged in Slavonice was accompanied by the publication of *Central Europe in Focus*. This publication was the result of cooperation between the DCCP and six young writers from Platform countries who had written stories about developments in Europe following the fall of the Iron Curtain. In Slavonice, the publication was presented by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic H. Bambasová and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic M. Sedláček. The publication was designed by T. Coufal, who added a hologram at the request of the DCCP. In this way, the DCCP sought to reflect the idea of the protection of intellectual property as one of the Czech presidency's priorities in culture. The London-based *International Hologram Manufacturers Association* subsequently chose the hologram for the *Holography Award 2009* in the *Best Applied Decorative Product* category. Representatives of Czech firm Optaglio s.r.o. which created the hologram collected the award in London. The DCCP sent the publication with the hologram to all departments of the foreign ministry and all embassies of the Czech Republic as well as to all the participants of the Platform meeting.

The second cultural event of the Central Europe Culture Platform was a joint exhibition in Gothenburg, Sweden, mapping the life of the Jewish community in the territories of the Platform countries before the Second World War.

Under the motto of the 20th anniversary since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the DCCP organised an exhibition entitled *1989 as Seen by Photographers* at Czernin Palace on 10 November 2009 for the diplomatic corps accredited in the Czech Republic. The exhibition was opened by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs J. Kohout. In the presence of Director General of the Economic Cooperation and Promotion Abroad Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs P. Kafka, the exhibition was subsequently presented to the cultural councillors of embassies accredited in the Czech Republic and the directors of foreign cultural institutions.

In 2009, the DCCP continued to support, assist and organise the presentation of the Czech Republic abroad through exhibitions, films and literature and the creation and sending of presentational items as well. Establishment of this “foundation” assisting the embassies in cultural promotion did not only support the Czech Republic’s cultural diplomacy: it also helped shape the Czech Republic’s “*nation branding*”.

In line with the rules contained in the manual for the “bubbles” visual style, the DCCP produced a series of three DVD exhibitions entitled *Czech Gems*, which contain print materials for more than 100 image panels in six language versions. The exhibitions showcase phenomena from the gallery of “the Czech Republic’s family silver”: monuments, natural and cultural gems, sports achievements, discoveries and inventions made in the territory of the Czech Republic and typical of the nation, gained international recognition or exist solely in the Czech Republic.

The *Czech Gems* DVD exhibitions also included postcards that served as the basis for the December “surprise” calendar *Czech Pres*. The calendar was distributed to all embassies as a gift from heads of diplomatic missions to their European Union colleagues. A re-issue of the publication *The Czech Republic at a Glance* was prepared in seven language versions in line with the “bubbles” visual style.

The DCCP proposed and produced a set of new presentational items in the “bubbles” visual style featuring the motif of a map of the Czech Republic: sets of pencils, coloured pencils, crayons, writing sets, mouse mats, sets of tag (flash disk, luggage tag, mini-torch, key ring), and wrapping paper and paper bags. A set of representational items was also produced: cufflinks and a broach/badge. The same visual style was used on the very effective wrapping used on all these presentational items.

The “bubbles” visual style used for the Czech Republic’s presentation abroad was also put to very effective and innovative use in the new redesign of the Czech Republic’s information and presentation portal www.czech.cz, which continued to serve as a powerful public diplomacy tool in 2009. It is a comprehensive presentation and information portal providing a general description of the Czech Republic and a “links directory” for relevant information from various areas of life in the Czech Republic. It is operated in six language versions, including Czech.

As part of the presentation of the Czech Republic abroad/nation branding in 2009, the DCCP also produced a DVD exhibition with the title *Czech Republic – An Affair of the Heart*, which contributes to a positive perception of the Czech Republic on the international scene and follows up the long-term presentation of the Czech Republic as a country “in the heart of Europe”.

Other exhibitions the DCCP initiated in 2009 strove to stress the European Union’s priorities in the field of culture. These priorities are: supporting society’s involvement in culture – *Great Czechs by Little Czechs*; digitisation of cultural content – *Manuscripts in Czech Libraries*; promoting creativity during the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation* – *A Tribute to PET Bottles*; protecting cultural assets, especially through support for cultural heritage and culture tourism in combination with cultural education – *Braun & Kuks, Legends of Castles and Chateaux, Memory of Stone in the Czech and European Landscape*, and *A Europe of Values and Ideas*.

Two exhibitions reflected historical/cultural events characterising the Czech Republic: *20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain* and *1989 as Seen by Photographers*.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and Ghana, the DCCP worked with the Africa department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic to prepare an exhibition devoted to the history of bilateral contacts beginning from the times of explorer E. Vráz to the Africa agenda during the Czech presidency. The exhibition was presented in Prague at Czernin Palace and the Náprstek Museum. Information about touring exhibitions and DVD exhibitions can be found at <http://www.mzv.cz/kultura>.

In 2009, film screenings continued to be a popular and relatively cost-effective way to present Czech culture abroad. Many embassies focused more on co-organising the participation of Czech feature films, documentaries and animated films at international film festivals. Embassies also help organise non-commercial screenings of Czech films for Czech communities, at universities or actually on embassy premises. Embassies made use of the opportunity for cooperation with the *National Film Archives*, for even older Czech films are considerably popular abroad. In 2009, embassies received from the DCCP a DVD of *The Velvet Revolution* by directors J. Střecha and J. Slavík, which was presented on the occasion of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of 17 November 1989, for example at gala receptions or as accompaniment to lectures. In 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also took part in organising the 16th *Days of European Film* in the Czech Republic.

To herald the upcoming 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the DCCP issued a set of two documentaries with a view to raising awareness of the Lidice tragedy, the Lidice Memorial and the *Lidice International Children's Art Exhibition*. The DVD seeks to involve children in the art competition co-organised every year by embassies of the Czech Republic, schools and educational facilities around the world.

A project promoting awareness of Czech literature abroad was completed in 2009. English, German, French and Spanish translations of books by Czech authors were distributed to 42 embassies, which passed them on to cultural institutes (Czech Centres, Alliance Française, British Council, Goethe-Institut, Instituto Cervantes etc.), libraries, schools and book fairs, thus making them available to the general public. The presentation of the books to an institute was usually combined with activities of a broader information and presentation nature, in some cases with a cycle of literary discussions or seminars about the Czech Republic.

Under the five-year programme to promote Czech cultural heritage abroad defined by Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No. 1622/2005, continued support was given to Czech language teaching at foreign universities in 2009. In 2009, the DCCP registered increasing interest among embassies of the Czech Republic in organising Czech lessons for children. The DCCP financially supported Czech study initiatives abroad, e.g. lectures about the Czech language, literature and life, translations of Czech literature, informal meetings with Czech scholars, a translation and general knowledge competition

about the Czech Republic, presentations of Czech schools, the publication of Czech-language magazines, participation in European language or literary festivals etc.

Subsidies are also provided to NGOs to promote the Czech language; in 2009 a total of approx. CZK 6.3 million was provided. The approved projects promoted the Czech Republic's relations with countries and geographical regions on a non-governmental level; they provided assistance to Czech communities abroad and supported the conservation of the specific features of the Czech language as spoken by Czech communities abroad.

Besides the activities set out above, in 2009 the DCCP financially sponsored a special edition of the publication entitled *Welcome to the Heart of Europe* devoted entirely to the events of 17 November 1989. The DCCP also continued with the tradition of issuing and sending the *České listy (Czech Newspaper)* yearbook to selected recipients around the world.

Under Article 18 of the Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Austria on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science, Youth and Sports, in České Budějovice on 3 December 2009 a protocol of the ACTION Czech Republic – Republic of Austria – cooperation in science and education programme was signed for a further five-year term.

Every year since 1997, the foreign ministry's *Gratias Agit Award* has been conferred on individuals and organisations for promoting the good name of the Czech Republic abroad. In 2009, twelve individuals and one organisation from twelve different countries were honoured (see Appendix). The awards presentation ceremony was held at Czernin Palace on 2 October 2009. The Digest of Laureates is available at <http://www.mzv.cz/kultura> – Gratias Agit Award.

Czech Centres

Czech Centres (CC) is an organisation part-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. It plays a key role in public diplomacy. Czech Centres' mission is to create a positive image of the Czech Republic abroad in line with the priorities of Czech foreign policy and to promote its interests primarily in the cultural, economic and tourism fields but also by promoting trade and tourism.

There were 24 CCs operating abroad in 21 countries on three continents in 2009. Besides Europe, CCs are also found in the USA, where the Czech Republic has moreover assumed the custodianship of the renovated *Bohemian National Hall in New York*, in Japan and Argentina and, since March 2009, in Israel.

Czech Centres' top priority in 2009 was to implement the extensive programme for the Czech Republic's cultural presentation abroad during the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this period, Czech Centres abroad staged almost 1,500 events either on their own or in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and other Czech and foreign partners. The events were attended by over a million visitors. The Czech Centres' programme broadly reflected the important themes and anniversaries linked to 2009, such as 20 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the 5th anniversary of the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, the anniversary of the death of B. Martinů, the Year of Creativity and Innovation and other significant events.

Some of the most interesting events during the Czech presidency included *Après 89* in Paris; *ARCHICZECH*, a project presenting contemporary architecture in Berlin; a concert by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Brussels; the *My Europe* exhibition staged in Brussels and Prague in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; or a grand exhibition of works by A. Mucha in Budapest. Exhibitions created on the initiative of Czech Centres headquarters were put on throughout the year. They included *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* by painter and illustrator P. Sís; *Some of Us...* mapping the fates of victims of the totalitarian regime after 1948 staged in the Stasi Museum in cooperation with the Federal Government Office in Berlin; *Czech Revolutionary Posters*; and an exhibition of photographs from the years 1968/1989, whose curator was D. Kyndrová. Besides thematic exhibitions, Czech Centres abroad also organised a number of seminars and podium debates that generated considerable interest, among them the *20 Years of Freedom* cycle in The Hague, *The Velvet Revolution Then and Now* in London, and a series of programmes about the fall of the Iron Curtain at Czech Centres in Dresden, Madrid, Stockholm, Warsaw and Vienna.

For a number of years, human rights have been a firmly established part of the Czech Centres' agenda and have traditionally been featured in a project organised in conjunction with the documentary film festival *One World*. This was followed up by the second year of a

separate Czech Centres festival *One World Romania* in Bucharest. In Belarus, where the human rights situation is at the core of Czech foreign policy, the Czech Centre in Kiev, in conjunction with the *Belarus Civic Association* and with the support of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Minsk, commemorated the significant anniversaries of 2009 with a cultural programme designed to enhance the promotion of the Czech Republic not just in the present day but also in the future.

Many events were organised by Czech Centres abroad for fans of Czech creative arts or various musical genres or for fashion aficionados. Among the most important projects abroad were P. Nik's interactive *Orbis Pictus* that was admired by visitors in Brussels, Sofia and Moscow, an exhibition of *Plastic Art from PET Bottles* by sculptress V. Richterová showing innovative items made from ordinary plastic bottles, an exhibition of puppets combined with a screening of *The New Generation of Czech Animation*, which premiered in Tokyo. Other exhibitions such as *Glass in Czech Jewellery* and an exhibition of illustrations entitled *The Most Beautiful Children's Book* were staged with support from Czech Centres. The exhibitions *Czech Cubism* and *The New Face of Prague* presented historical and contemporary Czech architecture.

The rich Czech musical tradition was showcased by a series of concerts under the title *Bohuslav Martinů Revisited*, accompanied by an exhibition about this eminent composer's life and work. The young public was targeted by *Czech Sound*, a competition for amateur music groups, whose winner played a concert in Berlin that was broadcast by Czech Radio.

Theatre and cinema also played an important role in the presentation of culture abroad. During the Czech presidency alone, Czech Centres organised almost 300 screenings of Czech feature films and documentaries. In addition, Czech Centres took part in many discussions with directors and actors and promoted Czech participation at prestigious film festivals in Buenos Aires, Madrid, Rotterdam and Sofia. The most important festivals of Czech cinema took place in Great Britain, New York and Paris. The *Czech-Israel Theatre Season* prepared by the Theatre Academy of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and the Czech Centre in Tel Aviv has become a prestigious event for Czech theatre.

Czech Centres also paid considerable attention to literature and supported Czech authors' participation in book fairs in Moscow, Frankfurt, Leipzig and Gothenburg. Regular literary discussions were staged in Berlin, Bratislava, The Hague, Košice, Madrid, Munich

and Warsaw. The most important literary event was the 3rd year of *Literature Night*. This event was staged in conjunction with eleven embassies of European countries and cultural institutes that are members of the *European National Institutes for Culture*. For the first time it crossed the borders of the Czech Republic, being staged by Czech Centres in twelve European cities.

The Czech Centre in Prague played a specific role, serving as a link between the Czech Republic and Czech Centres abroad by providing space for the presenting their interesting projects to the Czech public as well. It makes it possible to present the activities of embassies and foreign cultural institutes based in the Czech Republic. In 2009, it organised more than 50 events, the most significant events including an exhibition linked to P. Sís's picture book *The Wall* and an exhibition of *Plastic Art from PET Bottles* by V. Richterová. A project for a touring exhibition of young Swedish designers *UNG 7* was created in cooperation with the Swedish embassy. The exhibition was staged as part of *Designblok 09*. The end of the exhibition season was devoted to the Czech Republic's leading comic strip author K. Saudek.

Czech Centres also provided information about study opportunities in the Czech Republic and gave assistance to foreign students of Czech studies. Czech Centres abroad continued to organise Czech language courses; the Czech Centres in Moscow, London, Berlin and Warsaw enabled students to obtain a certified Czech exam. Czech Centres supported the branches of *Czech School Without Barriers*, which operate in Paris, London, Brussels, Berlin, Dresden and Munich and, in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, strove to establish Czech language courses for children living abroad.

Integral to the work of Czech Centres abroad was support for Czech exports, mainly in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic and the agencies CzechTrade and CzechInvest. Czech Centres offered Czech organisations assistance in organising corporate presentations abroad. 231 corporate presentations took place in 2009. Czech Centres abroad had an information stand at twelve trade fairs and actively took part in or directly organised 25 expert seminars. Design and innovation projects formed an important part of Czech Centres' activities to support the creative industries. Czech Centres supported the best industrial and

graphic design students in the form of placements at Czech Centres abroad. They also presented the work of Czech students from the K.O.V. studio of the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design at the Czech Centre in New York and the work of the winners of the National Student Design Awards in Stockholm, Moscow and Munich.

Czech Centres operated the www.export.cz information server, which publishes territorial summaries, as well as information about current conditions for doing business, and demand and supply enquiries from Czech and foreign firms for both goods and services. The Czech Centre – Czech House in Moscow, where more than one hundred Czech businesses could draw on a broad range of *business centre* services and complete technical facilities, offered specific services. In cooperation with CzechTourism, Czech Centres carried out the combined project *Czech Stars* to support Czech brands as well as culture and tourism. The project was presented in sixteen cities in twelve countries.

Membership of EUNIC, the network of *European Union National Institutes for Culture*, has added a new dimension to the Czech Centres' work in recent years as EUNIC has played an increasingly important role in European cultural policy. Thanks to support from the European Commission, in 2009 an international project *Generation '89* was created, which gives young people the chance to take part in dialogue on the future direction of Europe. One EUNIC joint project in 2009 devised by the Czech Centres was *Literature Night*. The directors of the Czech Centres in Stockholm, Vienna and Bucharest were elected to head the local EUNIC groups and other important positions were achieved by the directors of the Czech Centres in Berlin, London and Madrid. The Czech Centres headquarters plays a key role in formulating EUNIC strategies that affect the way local groups are run and operate.

The Czech Centres' internet portal is www.czechcentres.cz, which notifies the public of the work done by Czech Centres abroad, services offered and current programmes. The quarterly *czEcho*, a magazine brought out by the press department of Czech Centres, has proved to be an effective communication tool that made it possible to promote the best programmes being operated by individual Czech Centres abroad. The wide range of Czech Centres activities was positively received and gained broad publicity abroad and in the Czech media, which carried information practically every day about events organised by Czech Centres.

Media and information

Foreign media coverage of the Czech Republic in 2009 was several times bigger than in previous years. The presidency of the Council of the European Union and ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon meant that the Czech Republic found itself in the spotlight of foreign mass media, above all in Europe. The Czech Republic received most coverage in print media. Reports also appeared in agency news services, but there was less coverage on radio and television.

The Czech Republic received closer attention in January, when it began its half-year presidency of the Council of the European Union. A number of analyses and comments pieces attempting to pre-judge the Czech presidency had already appeared in foreign media at the turn of 2008 and 2009. The media in France, whose presidency the Czech Republic followed, were particularly active on this front.

Foreign media did not pay particularly systematic attention to the Czech presidency's priorities, however. Consequently, the greatest media attention was sparked by the Czech involvement in attempts to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip and the impacts of the ongoing economic crisis. (Europe Comes Together, *Le Figaro* 2 March 2009, or We Must Not Allow a New Iron Curtin, *Dagens Byheter*, 2 March 2009.) In some European countries, especially the Czech Republic's neighbours, column space was devoted to the Eastern Partnership initiative and the Nabucco pipeline. (Turkey's Yes to Nabucco, *Magyar Nemzet*, 9 May 2009.) The long-term interest in the Lisbon Treaty ratification process in the Czech Republic continued.

Some foreign media had tagged the Czech Republic as a "Eurosceptic" country before it had even started the presidency. Czech presidency initiatives and activities were then often viewed through this lens.

The Czech presidency came in for the greatest criticism in the French media, most notably *Le Figaro* and *Liberation* newspapers. The Greek, Spanish, Portuguese and Belgian media were also sceptical. In other European Union countries, the media image ranged from being neutral, balanced and oscillating between positive and negative (Germany, Austria), to uninterested in EU topics (Great Britain). The most favourable reactions to the Czech presidency were found in the media in Slovakia and Scandinavia.

The Czech Republic's involvement in the response to the Ukrainian-Russian gas crisis, and to a lesser extent in the response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza, were among the most frequently mentioned themes of the Czech presidency in foreign media. (Sarkozy Should Let the Czechs Get On With It, Pravda, 9 February 2009.) For example, the French media often commented on the Czech initiative for the Gaza issue, sometimes criticising the Czech Republic for an unbalanced approach to the two sides in the conflict. The Czech presidency received unqualified praise for its approach to the Eastern Partnership; this topic was mainly of interest to media in the European Union's new member states.

The unveiling of the *Entropa* sculpture by D. Černý in Brussels received broad coverage in foreign media. Editorials in the leading European newspapers were a blend of enthusiasm for "a breath of fresh air" (Art – Czech Salt in Europe's Eyes, Le Monde 16 January 2009), more restrained views and open criticism of certain parts of the work.

The Czech presidency gradually began to earn respect during the first half of the term, even in countries whose media had originally been critical of the Czech Republic. (Czech Republic Shows Its Claws, La Libre Belgique 11 February 2009.) The internal political situation in the Czech Republic put an end to this trend in April. It was mainly media in neighbouring countries that brought thorough analyses of the political developments in the Czech Republic.

Other actions and initiatives of the Czech Republic did not receive much coverage abroad. One exception was the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union, known as Gymnich, held at Hluboká nad Vltavou castle at the end of March. It was mainly the fact that representatives of Serbia and Kosovo were sitting at the same table for the first time that received positive coverage.

During 2009, most articles in foreign newspapers, and especially European dailies, were devoted to the completion of the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon in the Czech Republic. The uncertainty whether the treaty would be ratified in the Czech Republic generated much speculation, analysis, comment and portraits of the main actors in the ratification process.

Interest in the Czech presidency in non-European countries was minimal, which only confirmed the trend registered during previous presidencies of the European Union. If the

non-European media gave any space to the Czech presidency, it was only for factual reporting (USA or China).

One exception to this was the visit by US President B. Obama to the Czech Republic in April. The US president attracted the international media's attention to Prague mainly with his long-awaited speech setting out his vision for nuclear disarmament. During President Obama's visit to Prague, some foreign media began to speculate about a possible re-assessment of the US administration's plan to locate a US missile defence site in Central Europe.

Another event that received media coverage was the Pope's visit to the Czech Republic in September. The Holy Father's stay in the Czech Republic and other church themes interested the Polish media above all, while the Austrian press kept up their tradition of writing about Temelín nuclear power station. The Czech Republic received most press coverage in the USA in connection with the US administration's plan to build elements of its missile defence system in the region. The Canadian mass media covered the issue of Czech asylum-seekers.

If the foreign media image of political events in the Czech Republic was mixed in tone in 2009, coverage of the Czech Republic in connection with culture and tourism was unreservedly positive. The Czech Republic is regarded as an outstandingly interesting centre of culture and history and a destination with strong tourism potential. Besides the traditional focus on Prague, foreign media also began to take notice of other attractive places in the Czech Republic, e.g. spa towns in West Bohemia. In keeping with tradition, Czech sportsmen received positive coverage abroad. The view of the Czech Republic's economy is still positive overall; despite the current global economic crisis, commentaries characterise the Czech Republic as a country with a prospering economy, as a reliable business partner and a suitable place for foreign investment.

Internet presentation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

At the start of 2010, the internet presentation of the ministry headquarters and the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union in Brussels was migrated to the new editing system, which works on the XHTML 1.0 Strict (or Transitional) platform and fulfils the requirements of Decree No. 64/2008 Coll. implementing Act

No.365/2000 Coll. which requires the public administration authorities to adhere to the rules “of publishing information related to the exercise of public administration through web sites for disabled persons”.

In 2009, the internet presentation was composed of the main presentation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, 125 presentations of Czech embassies, Czech consulates general, liaison office, agencies, permanent missions, representations and delegations to international organisations and one presentation of an honorary consulate.

The addresses of the web sites of Czech embassies are written in a uniform format: *www.mzv.cz/city name in English*. Besides the Czech language version, the content on embassy web sites is presented in English or French and in the national language of the host state. In 2009, the embassy web sites were presented in 23 foreign language versions.

The most visited parts of the internet presentation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (in descending order by number of “hits”): home page of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Moscow, Russian-language section about the consular section of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Moscow, home page of the English-language presentation of the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, section on job opportunities at the foreign ministry, and the For Travellers section on the web site of the foreign ministry headquarters. More broadly, the following individual presentations received the most hits: foreign ministry headquarters, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Moscow, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Kiev, Embassy of the Czech Republic in London, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington DC, and Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar, Afghanistan.

As well as its own internet presentation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic operates and updates the web site of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar province in Afghanistan, which has been part of the NATO ISAF mission since February 2008. The presentation at www.prtlogar.cz is updated daily with new information about the renewal of industry, agriculture, infrastructure and the education system in Logar province, with editorial contributions directly from the PRT Logar locality and in cooperation with editors from the press department of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and a member of the military contingent actually in the PRT Logar.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic also runs a web site for the *Czech-Polish Forum* www.mzv.cz/cesko-polske_forum, set up under the *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by the two countries' foreign ministries in 2008. The web site contains information about support for projects by NGOs, regions, municipalities, schools, research institutes and other organisations with a view to stimulating the development and deepening of Czech-Polish relations.

At www.natoaktual.cz the Ministry of Foreign Affairs operates the *NATO Information Centre* news portal, set up by the Czech foreign ministry before the Prague NATO summit, in cooperation with the *Jagello 2000* civic association and the *International Institute of Political Science of Masaryk University*.

The magazine entitled *Welcome to the Heart of Europe* is published in electronic form at www.theo.cz. This magazine is published in six language versions for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the publisher Theo and serves to promote the Czech Republic internationally. Since 2007, the back issues of the magazine (beginning from the year 2003), have been archived and made available in *pdf* format. In view of the long-term utility of monothematic issues of the magazine, archive issues of *Welcome to the Heart of Europe* can be printed out when required for current presentation themes.

Czech Radio international broadcasting

In 2008, Czech Radio ČRo7 – Radio Prague continued to implement the agreement on Czech Radio international broadcasting concluded between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Czech Radio. Broadcasts were in six languages - English, German, French, Spanish, Russian and Czech. In 2009, Czech Radio ČRo7 balanced its budget of CZK 64.6 million that was covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Like most European foreign radio broadcasters, Czech Radio 7 adopts a multi-platform approach, i.e. it uses various technologies to cover the maximum possible audience, both geographically and in terms of age and social structure. The most important media are short wave (transmitters at Litomyšl and several foreign re-transmitters) and the internet, which registers the biggest audiences. Other platforms are PM broadcasting in English and French in Prague (Regina, RFI), limited-scope digital DRM broadcasting (English, German),

digital satellite broadcasting on WRN channels in Europe, North America and Asia, and medium wave in Moscow (Russian).

Rebroadcasting, i.e. radio stations abroad transmitting elements of Czech Radio 7 programming on their own platforms, is a specific component of international broadcasting. In 2009 Radio Prague programmes were used by three stations in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova, three stations in Germany and Austria, eight stations in Latin America and fifteen *Czech community broadcasting stations* from Australia to the USA.

Programming in 2009 was dominated by the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union, the fall of the government, the European Parliament elections, the aborted parliamentary elections, the gas supply crisis, the 40th anniversary of the death of J. Palach, President Obama's visit to Prague, the visit by Pope Benedict XVI and the canonisation of Anežka Česká, the 20th anniversary of the events of November 1989, the 50th anniversary of the death of B. Martinů, Forum 2000 and the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The core of the broadcasting continues to consist in the established half-hour news programmes consisting of news, a correspondents' section and topical sections. These have been partially innovated; new features include *Umwelt und Verbraucher* (environment and consumer rights), *Anno dazumal (Some Time Ago...)* in the German section; *No se lo Pierda, Un Poco de Sol* and *La Aventura del Progreso* in the Spanish section; or the serial on Czech popular music *From Pop to Punk* and *Ask a Lawyer* in the Czech section. The different language sections mapped events intended for their audiences, such as *Winton's Train, Francophonie Days, French Film Festival, Lower Austria Exhibition* and *20th anniversary of the migration of East Germans across Czech territory*.

The European radio project *Euranet*, which brings together seventeen radio stations from thirteen European countries, entered the second year of its existence in 2009. Some partners left the project during the year and others joined it. Czech Radio 7 editors contribute to various *Euranet* modules in English, German, French and Spanish. Some *Euranet* members broadcast the created co-productions on their own frequencies; others only use the www.euranet.eu web site for broadcasting.

The aim of Czech Radio 7 promotional activities is to maintain and widen the existing audience. With this in mind, Radio Prague keeps in constant contact with its listeners, organises competitions, promotional events and presentations and takes part in certain events

as a media partner. In 2009, Czech Radio 7 received 20,440 responses, which is roughly the same as in the previous year. More e-mails were received than letters. The language sections obtaining the most responses were the English section – 7,696, German 4,207, Spanish 2,680, French 2,622, Russian 1,635 and Czech – 875. Small promotional items – programming flyers, QSL cards, stickers etc. – are used when contacting listeners. Competitions are held with a view to gaining new listeners; the competitions are advertised outside the radio environment and target those who do not usually listen to radio. Competition winners receive non-cash prizes, or in some cases a stay in the Czech Republic, paid for by a sponsor. The station competition was won in 2009 by Claire le Bris-Cep from France, the daughter of the exiled writer J. Čep. In the first half of the year, Czech Radio 7, Czech Radio 1 Radiožurnal and the Czech Centres organised a *Czech Rock for Europe* competition.

To raise awareness of international broadcasting, in 2009 Radio Prague was the media partner of a presentation in the Russian Cultural Centre in Prague and the *Forgotten Heroes* exhibition in the Czech Centre in Vienna, at which G. Schubert chaired a panel debate. Czech Radio has been on Facebook since autumn 2009.

On 1 September 2009, Czech Radio 7 launched its redesigned web site. The response was positive, but the total number of hits received by the Czech Radio 7 web site fell from the previous year.

Average web site visitor numbers in 2009 (per month):

- www.radio.cz 740 000 (- 15 %)
- www.krajane.net 19 000 (+ 7 %)
- www.romove.cz 50 000 (+ 2 %)
- www.incentraleurope.radio.cz 25 000 (- 35 %) NB: project terminated
- www.networkeurope.org 4700 (- 20 %) NB: project terminated
- audio listener numbers on *www.radio.cz* 50 000 (no difference)
- number of podcast downloads 500 000 (no difference)

Analysis of visitor numbers shows that, besides hits on articles that are a mere reflection of broadcasting, pages covering projects with new information, photo or video content are also very popular. Projects of this nature in 2009 were e.g. 40 years since the

death of J. Palach, B. Martinů year, 20 years since the events of November 1989 and *Czech History in Sound*.

“*Czech communities abroad*” is a theme covered by the Czech section, which broadcasts a special weekly programme for Czech abroad and makes its own programming for Czech community radio stations abroad. There are currently fifteen radio stations of this kind in seven countries: Australia, USA, Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Ukraine, and Slovakia. They have recently been joined by the Romanian *Radio Resita* which broadcasts for the local Czech minority. In total 352 hours of programming was sent to these stations in 2009. Around 10% of that was special productions “to order”; the rest were modified Radio Prague programmes and programmes taken from the Czech Radio archive. The programmes are sent abroad on CD or over the internet, depending on the station’s technological capabilities.

Radio Prague creates news coverage about all important events in the Czech Republic related to Czechs abroad. Last year this included the *Gratias Agit Awards*, the *Prominent Czech Women in the World*, the 3rd international Czech expatriate folklore festival, a conference on exile arranged by the Senate of Parliament of the Czech Republic, and also selected events abroad, e.g. the opening of Czech House in Rijeka. Czech Radio 7 has for long cooperated with the relevant departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (Special Envoy for Czechs Abroad, Department of Culture, Communication and Presentation), with the Standing Senate Commission on Compatriots Living Abroad, with Czech Centres and with *České listy*. In addition, Czech Radio 7 operates the www.krajane.net web site for Czechs abroad, which contains its own news section and also serves as a “links directory” for databases of Czech community clubs, media etc. In the five years of its existence, the web site has gained a good reputation among Czechs abroad, as evidenced by the slight but constant increases in visitor numbers.

IV. CZECHS ABROAD

There are currently almost two million people abroad who claim Czech origins. Some of them are the descendents of Czechs who emigrated several generations ago, so they do not speak Czech but retain a sense of belonging to the Czech nation. They sustain the culture of their ancestors' homeland and disseminate it in the countries that have become their new home. Thousands more were forced abroad by the turbulent political events of the mid-20th century and subsequent years. In recent years, there has been a constant increase in the number of Czechs, mainly young, university-educated people, who have decided to put their abilities to use abroad, without necessarily intending to settle there for good. They mostly spend a long time abroad, though, as managers of transnational firms, for example, or experts in international or European Union institutions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic appreciates the majority of Czech expatriates' positive ties to their original home and strives to conduct meaningful dialogue with any interested Czech communities abroad.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Department for Culture, Communication and Presentation (DCCP) handles the agenda of Czechs abroad. The department's work is coordinated by the Special Envoy for Czechs Abroad, which has been part of the team of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Bambasová since 2009.

The Special Envoy for Czechs Abroad is authorised to issue anyone who presents documents proving their Czech origins with a *Czech Community Membership Certificate*. This document is submitted as part of applications for permanent residence in the Czech Republic. The Alien Act enables Czechs abroad to resettle permanently in the Czech Republic if Czech origins and has satisfactory reasons for resettlement are proven. 270 applications were received in 2009, and 253 of them were approved. Most of the people applying for this confirmation came from Ukraine (173).

The DCCP works with other state administration authorities that are involved in issues concerning Czechs abroad, e.g. with the *Standing Senate Commission on Expatriates of the Parliament of the Czech Republic*, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and its subordinated organisation *Foreign Services House*, the Ministry of the Interior and others. The everyday work of Czech Radio 7 – Radio Prague (Czech Radio international broadcasting) is an indispensable part of this agenda.

On 16 September 2009, a traditional meeting of representatives of organisations of Czech communities abroad and Czech state administration and academia took place under the auspices of President of the Senate of Parliament of the Czech Republic P. Sobotka. The meeting took the form of a seminar entitled *Czechs Abroad and the Czech Republic – Identifying Opportunities for New, Open Cooperation*. A book entitled *Domestic Attitudes to Czechs Abroad in Modern History 1918-2008* by S. Brouček and T. Grulich was presented at the seminar. Points of discussion at the seminar included archive heritage, Czech writers abroad in the context of Czech literature, and Czechs abroad and media. An address by Mrs L. Slavíková-Boucher, a Czech living in France, on Czech language teaching abroad for children of pre-school and school-going age aroused considerable interest. Her efforts developed into the *Czech School Without Borders* project, which Czech communities in other countries took up and began to elaborate (Australia, France, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain). This seminar was directly followed up by the 3rd *Czechs Expatriates' Folklore Festival*, staged by non-governmental organisation *Seven Rays* under the auspices of the Senate of Parliament of the Czech Republic.

The *Support Programme for Czech Cultural Heritage Abroad for 2006-2010* entered its fourth year in 2009. Around CZK 50 million is provided annually in various sorts of support for Czech communities abroad and Czech language and literature teaching abroad; the total amount will exceed CZK 287 million.

In 2009 as in previous years, the intensive four-week Czech language course for expatriates at Dobruška attracted the greatest interest – it was attended by 60 participants and 5 self-funded students from 36 countries. Also under the programme, one-term study stays were organised for Czechs abroad and Czech language teachers were sent to Czech communities abroad. The year's two-week course in Prague on Czech language teaching methodology was rated very positively. The methodology course is specially designed to train members of Czech communities abroad to teach Czech; its principal objective is to improve knowledge of methodology and didactics for teaching Czech as a foreign language. 20 expatriate teachers from fourteen countries were trained in current questions of the development of the Czech language and in teaching technologies in 2009.

One-term study stays for Czech expatriates at public universities in the Czech Republic are designed to maintain and spread knowledge of the Czech language and culture.

In the 2008/2009 academic year, 28 students from Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Norway, Paraguay, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine were awarded scholarships to study at Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno. The scholarships were for one-term or two-term study of Czech language for foreigners, Czech language and literature, Czech language and literature teaching, history, ethnology and history of art.

Thirteen Czech teachers were sent to Czech communities abroad. In the 2008/2009 academic year, the teachers worked in nine countries: two in Argentina (until February 2009 one of them travelled to the Czech community in Paraguay); one in Paraguay (a separate destination since March 2009); two in Brazil; one in Germany in the Lusatian Serbia region (this destination was brought under lectorates in September 2009); two in Croatia; one in Russia; one in Ukraine and three in Romania – since August 2009 two of them have travelled regularly to the Czech community in Serbia). Since September 2009, a full-time teacher has been sent to Serbia as well. The teachers' work is not confined solely to class-work, but also comprises broader educational and organisational assistance. The teachers take part in preparing and presenting ethno-cultural and promotional projects by Czechs abroad (e.g. folklore performances, concerts and theatrical performances), work with children's groups, take part in building libraries and collecting documents about Czech community life, help publish local Czech community press publications etc.

The programme includes support for the work of Czech language and literature "lectorates" abroad under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. These lectorates are not exclusively designed for Czechs abroad: they are all university posts for students interested in Czech studies, regardless of nationality or origin. Over CZK 32 million was earmarked for this work and for one-off projects to equip these departments in 2009.

One important part of the department's regular work is the administration of financial support (cash donations) for specific projects of foreign organisations with a link to the Czech Republic (Czech community clubs, societies of friends of the Czech Republic, associations of graduates from Czech universities and schools, and associations of Czech scholars).

In 2009, 184 Czech community clubs and societies of friends from 43 countries around the world applied for support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These applicants'

projects concerned both cultural and educational activities by Czech community clubs and applications for contributions towards the repair of club buildings owned or on long-term lease and repair of Czech community monuments. The sum applied for amounted to almost CZK 44 million in total, while CZK 20,232,000 is available.

A very wide range of projects were undertaken in 2009. Some marked the twentieth anniversary of the “Velvet Revolution”: Czech community clubs in the Italian cities of Milan and Udine organised informal discussions on the subject of the *Velvet Revolution 1989*; the Czech and Slovak Club in Austria organised a commemorative event; and the anniversary was commemorated by Czech community magazines in Australia, Canada, Austria etc. and by Czech community radio broadcasting in various countries around the world. The clubs organised various music and folklore events. For example, the Czech community in Porto Alegre, Brazil, prepared a *Czech Culture Week*; the Czech puppet ensemble in Australia staged a production of *Bohemia – Magical Country of Fairytales and Puppets*; Chilean Czechs organised a *Saint Wenceslas Day Meeting*; the *Circle of Friends of Czech Culture in Slovakia* presented a Karel Čapek Award; Czech communities beyond the Urals took part in a festival of national cultures in Chita in Siberia; members of the Sokol organisation in Switzerland organised the 36th traditional international Sokol gathering in Oetz in Tyrol; young Ukrainian Czechs met in Lvov at the *Pan-Ukrainian Festival of Young Czech Expatriates*, where they presented song and dance performances and organised a competition testing knowledge of Czech language and culture; in the Zaporizhia province Ukrainian Czechs celebrated the 140th anniversary of the founding of the Čechohrad municipality (now called Novhorodkivka); Czechs from the village of Kirillovka near Novorossiysk celebrated the same anniversary; the Czech community in Lincoln, USA, commemorated the 100th anniversary of Czech language teaching in Nebraska; Czechs in Minnesota convened a genealogy conference; and the *Moravian Cultural Society in Westmont* staged the 45th folk costume ball. Czechs in Israel organised several events marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Rabbi J. Loew of Prague. The Association of Friends of the Czech Republic in Montevideo organised a successful course in Czech cuisine, as well as teaching Czech and staging talks on the Czech Republic.

Besides cash donations to club projects, Czech communities abroad were provided with in-kind donations through Czech embassies and consulates: Some Czech embassies maintain local Czech libraries or video libraries facilitate regular meetings of Czech

community members, help teach Czech etc. Czechs abroad are of course invited to cultural and social occasions, just as diplomats participate at key events in Czech communities abroad.

An important demonstration of the long-term interest in Czechs abroad is the Czech Republic's cash donations for repairs to the schools, cultural facilities and monuments of Czech communities. This assistance has been provided since 1996. Many Czech communities abroad own or have long-term leases on buildings used for their educational and cultural activities (schools, clubs, meeting places), many of which were built at the start of the past century from collections organised by their ancestors; some have become run down over the years and the communities are often unable to fund the necessary repairs. In 2009, repair work continued on two Czech community buildings in Australia (plumbing, roof) and a third community organisation received a contribution to fire safety fittings to its club; repair work also went ahead in the Argentine localities of Oberá, Rosario and Roque Saenz Peña, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Ukraine and the USA. Also in the USA, donations were provided for minor repairs to the walls of Bohemian national cemeteries from the 19th century in Chicago and Baltimore. Long-term repair projects in Croatia also continued.

For the eighth consecutive year, the Department of Culture, Communication and Presentation and the Special Envoy for Czech Abroad continued to cooperate with the publisher of *České listy* ("Czech Newspaper"), which facilitates the sharing of information between Czech communities around the world. The magazine is accessible at the web site www.czech.cz/ceskelisty. In view of the sustained interest in *České listy* in paper form, a *České listy* Yearbook 2009 was published, containing the most interesting articles and information from the past year.

One of the key standing tasks of the DCCP is to keep records of Czech community clubs, societies of friends of the Czech Republic and similar organisations of this kind abroad. The assembled information can be found in the form of a clearly laid out four-part directory on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' web site at www.mzv.cz/kultura. The information is updated regularly. Anyone interested can therefore access a wide range of contacts in the directorates: addresses of Czech community clubs and similar associations in more than 80 countries, address of Czech community press organisations, addresses of Czech civic associations working with organisations abroad, and the addresses of institutions offering courses in Czech studies. The www.krajane.net internet portal, a source of information for

Czech expatriates and a discussion forum open to all, has been in operation for three years now. The portal is administered by Czech Radio (Radio Prague – Czech Radio 7).

V. THE CZECH FOREIGN SERVICE

1. Staffing

In 2009, tasks associated with the formulation and implementation of personnel policy and the staffing of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union were carried out. Staff at Czech embassies abroad was rotated according to the *Rotation Plan* in the standard manner. 242 employees were posted to embassies, 217 of them on long-term postings and 25 for short-term postings (up to one year).

Under inter-ministerial agreements between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the one hand and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior on the other, staff were posted to trade and economic sections and Czech defence attachés and interior ministry liaison officers were assigned to Czech embassies. In order to ensure sufficient staffing for the work connected with the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union, four employees were sent on short-term posts. Employees who were accepted for specially created posts were enabled to continue their employment in suitable roles after the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union ended.

Specialised training for staff, including their partners and attachés from other ministries, was provided in 2009. In addition, gender equality and family policy issues were dealt with; in cooperation with the *Czech Spouses' Association*, the 25th conference of the European Union Foreign Affairs Spouses, Partners and Families Association was held in Prague. The event is included in the list of official foreign ministry events staged in the context of the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union.

National Contact Point

In 2009, the *National Contact Point*, a unit of the Personnel Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, continued to administer the www.mzv.cz/nkm and www.mzv.cz/kariera web sites, which provide information about

recruitment competitions for posts in European Union institutions and other international governmental organisations. The National Contact Point continued to select and nominate election observers for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU) and organised the participation of Czech citizens in election observation missions conducted by these and other organisations. The National Contact Point offered anyone interested in the work of election observer the chance to undergo training in the Czech Republic and abroad. It was also involved in staffing the Czech Republic's participation in EU civilian crisis missions.

Specific work and results in respect of the principal international governmental organisations

European Union

On the web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the National Contact Point provided an information service for candidates for recruitment competitions for the posts of assistant, administrator, head of department and director. It also published up-to-date offers of vacancies for the positions of national experts in European Union institutions (mainly the European Commission) and nominated Czech candidates.

The National Contact Point was actively involved in selecting and sending Czech citizens on European Union civilian missions in 2009. Candidates for these EU missions could benefit from a new article on the website www.mzv.cz/kariera entitled *International Governmental Organisation Civilian Missions*, with the emphasis on European Union missions.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department for Human Rights and Transformation Policy, the National Contact Point sent observers to European Union election observation missions. Overall, 25 election observers (eight long-term and seventeen short-term) were sent to the following missions: El Salvador (presidential elections, Ecuador (parliamentary and presidential elections), Malawi (parliamentary and presidential elections), Lebanon (parliamentary elections), Afghanistan (presidential elections), Mozambique (general election) and Bolivia (general election and referendum). In conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department for Human Rights and Transformation Policy, the National Contact Point organised training for new election observers. The training, which took place at the ministry in December 2009, was attended by 40 candidates.

UN

In respect of the UN, the National Contact Point concentrated on providing information on its web site about vacancies in 2009.

OSCE

Throughout 2009, the National Contact Point organised nominations of Czech citizens to OSCE field missions, the sending of Czech citizens to these missions and the process of extending their work on OSCE missions. The sending of Czech observers on OSCE election observation missions continued in 2009. In total, the National Contact Point sent 46 short-term observers on the following missions in the countries of the former Soviet Union and southeast Europe: Macedonia/FYROM, Montenegro, Moldova, Albania and Kyrgyzstan.

Miscellaneous

During 2009, the National Contact Point was in charge of organising recruitment competitions for the head and members of the civilian part of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Logar, Afghanistan.

In November and December 2009, the National Contact Point organised the sending of nine Czechs to observe the local elections in Kosovo.

2. Diplomatic Academy

During the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009, the *Diplomatic Academy (DA)* worked to prepare and organise the 4th and 5th modules of the *European Diplomatic Programme* and discussed the document establishing the *European Diplomatic Programme* from 1999; it was also actively involved in international cooperation in diplomatic training. Systematic diplomatic training was suspended during the presidency due to a lack of available time. Training in all modules continued as standard in the second half of the year. The Diplomatic Academy organised the 9th year of the international *European Studies Summer School* for foreign diplomats and Czech state administration staff at Horažďovice from 17-21 August 2009.

Training modules

1. basic diplomatic training (DA 1)
2. individual course for junior diplomats (DA IN)
3. advanced diplomatic training (DA 2)
4. language tuition
5. computer training
6. European Union affairs training

Basic diplomatic training (DA 1)

In the 2008/2009 academic year, a total of 15 students completed *basic diplomatic training (DA 1)* having passed the annual course of theoretical and practical training, even though it was interrupted for the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The course included lectures and seminars focusing on the acquisition and improvement of knowledge of international relations, diplomacy, security policy and economic relations, and practical courses to assimilate communication, negotiation and psychological skills and abilities. The students also took a special course in crisis situations organised in conjunction with the *Military Academy at Vyškov* and went on an excursion to Brussels. A new *Basic Consular Course* was made part of the course syllabus during the year. On 1 September 2009/2010, 15 new students began the new, standard academic year 2009/2010.

Individual course for junior diplomats (DA IN)

The *individual course for junior diplomats (DA IN)* entered its seventh year in 2009. 42 diplomats started the course in 2009 and the 44 already on the course continued their studies. All the students have an individual programme of courses and seminars corresponding to their prior education and their work experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to date. 19 students successfully completed the course in 2009. 182 students have successfully taken the course since it was launched in 2003.

Advanced diplomatic training (DA 2)

2009 was the eleventh year of *advanced diplomatic training (DA 2)*, whose course is modified to meet the current requirements of senior diplomats. Five diplomats started the course in 2009 and four already on the course continued their studies. Six students completed advanced diplomatic training in 2009. The DA 2 course has been successfully taken by 258 diplomats since it was launched in 1999.

Language tuition

The Diplomatic Academy has been in charge of *language tuition for foreign ministry staff* since 2007. 262 members of foreign ministry staff have signed up for the English, French, Spanish, Russian, German and Arabic courses organised at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The standardised exams of grade 1 to grade 4, which correspond to levels A2, B1, B2 and C1 of the *European Reference Framework*, have been taken by 207 members of staff. *Individual language tuition* (including languages such as Japanese, Turkish etc.) was provided for 26 senior employees. In cooperation with the *French Institute*, the DA staged two intensive courses in diplomatic French; three senior employees were sent on an intensive fourteen-day French course in France.

Since 2009, the DA has provided French language courses for all Czech state administration staff in conjunction with the *International Francophonie Organisation* and the *French Institute*.

Computer training

In 2009, 363 Ministry staff was received training on standardised *computer courses*: MS Word, MS Excel, MS Power Point, the Windows environment, Internet, Lotus Notes, Filing Service. The “pre-posting” course for staff about to be posted to embassies was taken

by 31 staff members. 43 members of staff just starting work took the “computer literacy” test. 24 special web editing courses were organised.

European Union affairs training

On 14-16 May 2009, the final module of the *European Diplomatic Module (EDP)* was held in Prague as part of the programme of the Czech Republic’s presidency of the Council of the European Union. This comprised the joint training of junior diplomats from European Union member states and European institutes. In 2008/2009, the EDP was co-organised by the foreign ministries of France and the Czech Republic. The themes of the 9th year were *Energy Security* and *Neighbourhood Policy*. A COADM informal Training meeting is always held at the time of the opening and closing module. The French and Czech presidencies initiated the discussion of an amendment to the document establishing the *European Diplomatic Programme founding document* from 1999. The Czech presidency managed to negotiate a new document, which was approved at the COADM working meeting on 13 February 2009 and subsequently approved by the Council of the European Union on 18 May 2009.

On 17-21 August 2009, the DA organised the 9th *European Studies Summer School* intended for both Czech and foreign diplomats and for staff of Czech state administration. 58 participants attended the lectures and discussions on the central topic of *Europe’s Global Role – Capabilities and Challenges*, led by foreign and Czech instructors.

In 2009, the Diplomatic Academy organised foreign placements for 21 diplomats; six were one-year placements (DA Madrid, DA Lima, DA Santiago de Chile, College of Europe Bruges, and Oxford University).

3. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget and operations

The expenditure side of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget heading was influenced by the following activities: in 2009:

- the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009;
- performance of foreign service tasks and implementation of the Czech Republic's foreign policy concepts;
- increased cooperation with international organisations, including the honouring of financial commitments in respect of these organisations;
- supporting and implementing economic diplomacy projects;
- the continuing modernisation of the visa process in line with EU requirements and the Schengen Agreement;
- the provision of a reliable consular and visa service;
- ensuring the security of embassies and personnel abroad and protecting the Ministry's classified information;
- improving the operational security and reliability of the Ministry information system and its certification for the handling of classified information;
- the Czech Republic's active role in providing humanitarian aid to foreign countries;
- the implementation of foreign development cooperation and transformation cooperation projects;
- preparing the Czech Republic's participation at EXPO 2010 Shanghai.

Incomes

The state budget for 2009 set a total figure of CZK 650,000,000 for income under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs heading. Actual total incomes amounted to CZK 814,137,920.

Expenditure

The total expenditure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic was CZK 7,321,307,560. Finances for top-level visits, security and biometric elements in travel documents and the participation of Czech citizens in the civilian missions of the European

Union and other international governmental organisations were released into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget heading from the *Treasury Administration* (“TA”) heading. *Reserve Fund* (“RF”) finances were used for projects related to security and biometric elements in passports and travel documents. In addition, with the consent of the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic a total of CZK 42,116,580 was released from claims on retained expenditure from the previous year (“RE”) to cover the Czech presidency; CZK 24,000,000 to cover projects of the *Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar* (Afghanistan); CZK 128,373,000 to cover the programme financing of selected investment projects; and CZK 7,900,000 to finance EXPO 2010 Shanghai.

Expenditure associated with the Czech Republic’s presidency of the Council of the European Union

CZK 435,170,000 was released into the budget heading of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for expenditure associated with the Czech Republic’s presidency of the Council of the European Union. Based on budgetary measures of the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic the approved budget was reduced to CZK 410,895,000 during the year, with the balance transferred to the budget headings of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic. The final drawdown of resources for the presidency was CZK 449,936,350. The excessive drawdown was fully covered by RE.

Expenditure on transformation cooperation

In 2009, CZK 50,000,000 was released into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget and earmarked for *transformation cooperation*. The budget’s binding indicator was reduced by CZK 2,200,000 during the year. Actual expenditure was CZK 47,708,590.

Since 2005, transformation cooperation has complemented *foreign development cooperation* as a policy instrument focusing on the creation and strengthening of democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil society and good governance. Ten priority target countries were chosen for 2009: Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo, Moldova, Myanmar/Burma, Serbia, and Ukraine.

Humanitarian aid expenditure

In 2009, a total of CZK 85,000,000 was earmarked for the Czech Republic's humanitarian aid to foreign countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic drew down a total of CZK 84,919,530, CZK 25,547,440 of that in the form of subsidies for Czech non-governmental organisations based on tenders for humanitarian aid projects. No aid in-kind was provided.

Promotion of Czech cultural heritage abroad

A total of CZK 21,399,000 was allocated to the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for the *promotion of Czech cultural heritage*. Total drawdown was CZK 19,825,630. In accordance with government resolution No. 1622 of 14 December 2005, this amount was used for the cultural projects of Czech expatriate clubs and societies of friends of the Czech Republic abroad and for maintenance and repairs of Czech community schools, club houses, small monuments and other elements of Czech cultural heritage abroad.

Czech Radio international broadcasting

CZK 68,000,000 was approved for allocation to Czech Radio international broadcasting; the budget was revised to CZK 64,000,000 and actual expenditure was CZK 64,600,000. The funding of this broadcasting takes place in accordance with government resolution no. 573 of 10 September 1997.

Expenditure on top-level state visits

A total of CZK 99,000,000 was earmarked in the Treasury Administration for expenditure on top-level state visits in 2009. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested the release of these finances into the ministry heading up to the total of CZK 99,000,000. In total, CZK 71,602,790 was drawn down. The funding of top-level visits takes place in accordance with government resolution no. 506 of 22 May 2000.

Expenditure on security and biometric elements in passports and travel documents

In 2009, CZK 32,760,000 was earmarked in the Treasury Administration heading for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents, in line with government resolution No. 740 of 15 June 2005. Total drawdown

amounted to CZK 127,461,110, of which CZK 80,336,520 was transferred from the reserve fund and the remainder was drawn down from retained expenditure from the previous year.

Funding for the involvement of Czech citizens in civilian missions run by the European Union and other international governmental organisations

In 2009, a sum of CZK 120,000,000 was earmarked in the Treasury Administration budget heading for all state budget headings to cover the involvement of Czech citizens in civilian missions run by the European Union and other international governmental organisations. The funding of civilian observer missions takes place in accordance with government resolution no. 515 of 10 May 2006. CZK 43,000,000 was released into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget; drawdown was CZK 37,781,050. CZK 5,218,950 was not drawn down because the planned number of experts to be sent to OSCE field missions and OSCE observer missions (ODIHR) was not fulfilled.

Provincial Reconstruction Team, Logar, Afghanistan

A total of CZK 80,000,000 was earmarked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget for this purpose in 2009. The limit was revised to CZK 77,890,000. With the consent of the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic granted under ref. no. 14/36 668/2009-143, CZK 24,000,000 from retained expenditure from the previous year was released during the year. Total drawdown was CZK 81,804,130. CZK 20,085,870 was not utilised. Drawdown is hindered by the complicated political and security situation in the territory.

Expenditure on foreign development cooperation

Foreign development cooperation projects are implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Czech Development Agency. Expenditure on foreign development cooperation for 2009 was set at CZK 270,794,000 and was revised downwards to CZK 257,727,000 during the year. Actual expenditure was CZK 242,314,670, CZK 13,308,270 of which was Czech Development Agency operating expenditure.

Research and development support

CZK 21,697,000 was earmarked for research and development in 2009; of that sum, institutional expenditure amounted to CZK 14,274,000 and special-purpose expenditure CZK

7,423,000. Drawdown of institutional expenditure was CZK 3,766,000; CZK 422,000 was drawn down by the International Relations Institute.

Ensuring preparedness for crisis situations pursuant to Act No. 240/2000 Coll.

CZK 5,534,000 was released into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget for this purpose; drawdown was CZK 1,787,870. The finances were spent on pre-posting training of staff sent abroad, purchases of walk-through metal detectors, protective vests and helmets, satellite hardware, radio stations and for drawing up and updating evacuation plans.

Expenditure on financing asset replacement programmes

Asset replacement programmes (“ISPROFIN”) were implemented under the following programmes:

- 106 010 – Development and renewal of the material and technical assets of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – since 2007
- 206 010 – Development and renewal of the material and technical assets of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 306 020 – Acquisition and technical amelioration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ fixed assets abroad

Total expenditure on all programmes was CZK 555,384,060, with most of the expenditure (86.23%) falling under programme 106 010. In programmes 206 010 and 306 020 the commenced building work is being completed – renovation of Bohemian National Hall in New York, renovation of Czech House in Moscow and the final minor renovation work on embassy buildings.

ISPROFIN expenditure went on building actions and projects undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (CZK 223,075,000), information and communication technologies (CZK 186,017,000), building security (CZK 30,016,000) and acquisition and maintenance of movable property (CZK 39,923,000).

Organisations part-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- *Diplomatic Service* administers and manages state and private property that is used primarily by foreign embassies in the Czech Republic. It also performs agency work for

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CZK 35,000,000 was provided as a contribution to Diplomatic Service's operations and CZK 26,750,000 as an investment subsidy.

- *Czech Centres* promote the Czech Republic and develop cultural and trade contacts through the network of Czech Centres abroad. A contribution of CZK 120,110,000 towards operations was provided.
- *Štířín Castle* provides conference, accommodation, hospitality and sports services. CZK 10,461,000 was provided as a contribution to its operations and CZK 10,100,000 as an investment subsidy.
- *The Office of the Commissioner General for EXPO* was established in accordance with government resolution No. 601 of 21 May 2008 in order to prepare and realise the Czech Republic's participation in EXPO 2010 Shanghai. CZK 161,522,000 was provided as a contribution to its operations and CZK 39,998,000 as an investment subsidy.

State budget expenditure on financing joint programmes of the European Union and the Czech Republic

In 2009, CZK 23,687,000 was released into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget and earmarked for joint programmes of the European Union and the Czech Republic. CZK 22,778,000 of that sum was from ISPROFIN programme financing. Drawdown of finances released under the *External Borders Fund* was CZK 9,042,640. Projects are co-financed out of the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic owing to the protracted approval process for projects.

Final evaluation

Developments in the drawdown of expenditure in the year 2009 corresponded to the specific features and requirements of the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, in line with the tasks and objectives that make up the Czech Republic's foreign policy. The biggest influences on the Ministry's expenditure were the Czech Republic's presidency of the Council of the European Union and the preparations for *EXPO 2010 Shanghai*. A number of security measures were implemented at embassies in selected locations in connection with the global threat of terrorism. The situation surrounding the performance of tasks of the Logar PRT in Afghanistan was complicated by the local security, political and economic conditions, and this ultimately resulted in lower drawdown of the special-purpose finances.

CZK thousands

	2007 Actual	2008 Actual	2009 Approved Budget	2009 Revised Budget	2009 Actual	% Actual/2009 Revised Budget
Summary indicators						
Total incomes	804,422	631,045	650,000	650,000	814,137.92	125.25
Total expenditure	6,910,580	7,098,746	7,352,773	7,486,887	7,321,307.56	97.79
Specific indicators						
Specific indicators – incomes						
Tax incomes			600,000	600,000	601,990.68	100.33
Total non-tax incomes, capital received transfers	804,422	631,045	50,000	50,000	212,147.24	424.29
of which: incomes from EU programming period						
other non-tax incomes, incomes and received	804,422	631,045	50,000	50,000	212,147.24	424.29
Specific indicators –						
Expenditure on performance of	6,910,580	7,098,746	7,352,773	7,486,887	7,321,307.56	97.79
of which:						
expenditure linked to CZ PRES transformation cooperation	84,106	254,133	435,170	410,895	449,936.35	109.50
humanitarian aid	44,672	44,205	50,000	47,800	47,708.59	99.81
contributions to international donations to selected	88,994	70,596	85,000	85,000	84,919.53	99.91
promotion of Czech cultural international radio broadcasting	1,043,062	1,151,692	1,255,000	1,208,480	1,207,589.20	99.93
top-level state visits	20,621	30,280	21,399	20,329	19,825.63	97.52
security and biometric elements	68,000	68,000	68,000	64,600	64,600.00	100.00
participation of Czech citizens	63,221	39,682		99,000	71,602.79	72.33
Provincial Reconstruction	85,766	81,967		32,670	127,461.11	390.15
other expenditure on Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4,968	18,752	80,000	77,890	81,804.13	105.03
	5,265,947					
		5,314,326	5,358,204	5,397,223	5,128,079.18	95.01
Cross-cutting indicators						
Employees' salaries and other	638,391	733,802	771,721	781,463	778,174.58	99.58
Obligatory insurance paid by the	22,752	255,635	262,386	265,640	262,719.44	98.90
Transfer to the Cultural and Social	12,634	14,543	15,272	15,379	15,33.26	99.70
Employees' salaries	630,244	725,669	763,583	768,880	767,033.88	99.76
Pay of representatives of the state	1,406	1,390	1,407	1,407	496.71	35.30
Expenditure on research and programmes co-financed by the	17,361	18,152	21,697	21,697	18,039.72	83.14
of which: total from the state	17,361	18,152	21,697	21,697	18,039.72	83.14
of which: total institutional	14,274	14,274	14,274	14,274	14,274.00	100.00
total special-purpose covered by income from	3,087	3,878	7,423	7,423	3,765.72	50.73
National Research Programme						
Programmes within the						
Public contracts	3,071	3,870	7,373	7,373	3,748.72	50.84
International R&D cooperation						0.00
Foreign development cooperation	48,569	158,319	270,794	257,727	242,314.67	94.02
Ensuring preparedness for crisis pursuant to Act No. 240/2000	824	3,294	5,534	5,534	1,787.87	32.31
Expenditure on EU co-financed Period of 2007 – 2013				23,687	12,124.34	51.19
of which: from the state budget		0			3,081.70	
covered by income from		0		23,687	9,042.64	38.18
Total expenditure on ISPROFIN	1,552,400	1,175,978	498,434	506,547	555,384.06	109.64

APPENDICES

Overview of the Czech Republic's diplomatic relations

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Afghanistan	1937	1993	Kabul	Prague
Albania	1927	1993	Tirana	Prague
Algeria	1962	1993	Algiers	Prague
Andorra	no diplomatic relations	1996	Madrid	Vienna
Angola	1975	1993	Luanda	Berlin
Antigua and Barbuda	no diplomatic relations	1997	Caracas (HC St. John's)	London
Argentina	1924	1993	Buenos Aires (HC Presidencia Roque Sáenz Peña, HC Mendoza)	Prague
Armenia	1992	1993	Tbilisi	Vienna
Australia	1972	1993	Canberra (CG Sydney, HCG Melbourne, HC Perth, HC Adelaide)	Warsaw (HC Prague)
Austria	1920	1993	Vienna (HC Graz, HC Innsbruck, HC Salzburg, HC Klagenfurt, HC Linz)	Prague (HC České Budějovice, HC Brno)
Azerbaijan	1992	1993	Tbilisi	Prague
Bahamas	no diplomatic relations	2005	Havana	not designated
Bahrain	1990	1993	Riyadh	Berlin
Bangladesh	1972	1993	Delhi (HC Dacca)	Berlin
Barbados	1977	1996	Caracas	London
Belarus	1992	1993	Minsk	Prague
Belgium	1919	1993	Brussels (HC Antwerp, HC Liège, HC Namur)	Prague
Belize	no diplomatic relations	1996	San José (HC Orange Walk Town)	not designated (HC Prague)

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Benin	1962	1993	Abuja (HC Cotonou)	Berlin (HC Prague)
Bolivia	1935	1993	Lima (HC La Paz)	Vienna
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992	1993	Sarajevo	Prague
Botswana	1968	1997	Pretoria	London
Brazil	1918	1993	Brasilia (CG São Paulo, HC Manaus-AM, HC Vitoria-Vila Velha HC Fortaleza-CE HC Rio de Janeiro HC Joinville, HC Salvador-BA HC Recife)	Prague
Brunei	1992	1995	Jakarta	not designated
Bulgaria	1920	1993	Sofia (HC Varna)	Prague
Burkina Faso	1968	1993	Accra	Vienna
Burundi	1963	1993	Nairobi	Moscow
Cambodia	1956	1993	Bangkok	Berlin
Cameroon	1990	1993	Abuja (HC Douala)	Moscow
Canada	1942	1993	Ottawa (CG Montreal, CG Toronto, HC Calgary, HC Winnipeg)	Prague
Cape Verde	1975	1993	Accra (HC Praia)	Berlin
Central African Republic	1970	2008	Kinshasa	Paris
Chad	1967	1994	Abuja	Moscow
Chile	1924	1993	Santiago	Prague
China (PRC)	1930 (1949)	1993	Beijing (CG Hong Kong, CG Shanghai)	Prague
Colombia	1934	1993	Bogotá (HC Barranquilla, HC Cartagena de Indias)	Vienna

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Comoros	1977	1995	Nairobi	Moroni
Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo)	1960	1993	Kinshasa (HC Lubumbashi)	Berlin (Prague)
Costa Rica	1935	1993	San José	Prague
Croatia	1992	1993	Zagreb	Prague
Cuba	1920	1993	Havana	Prague
DPRK	1948	1993	Pyongyang	Prague
Cyprus	1960	1993	Nicosia (HC Limassol)	Prague
Denmark	1920	1993	Copenhagen (HC Aarhus)	Prague
Djibouti	1977	1997	Addis Ababa (HC Djibouti)	not designated
Dominica	no diplomatic relations	1996	Caracas	not designated
Dominican Republic	1942	1993	Caracas (HC Santo Domingo)	Brussels (CG Prague)
East Timor		2002	Jakarta	not designated
Ecuador	1935	1993	Bogotá (HC Guayaquil, HC Quito)	Warsaw
Egypt	1922	1993	Cairo (HC Alexandra)	Prague
El Salvador	1930	1994	San José (HC San Salvador)	Berlin
Equatorial Guinea	1970	1993	Abuja	Berlin
Eritrea		1993	Nairobi	Berlin
Estonia	1922	1993	Tallinn (HC Tallinn)	Prague
Ethiopia	1944	1993	Addis Ababa	Berlin
Fiji	1970	1996	Canberra	not designated
Finland	1921	1993	Helsinki (HC Oulu, HC Tampere)	Prague
France	1918	1993	Paris (HC Lille, HC Marseille, HC Nancy, HC Nantes)	Prague
Gabon	1976	1993	Abuja	Libreville

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Gambia	1972	1993	Accra (HC Banjul)	Brussels
Georgia	1992	1993	Tbilisi	Prague
Germany	1920 GDR 1949 FRG 1973	1993	Berlin (CG Bonn, CG Dresden, CG Munich, HC Dortmund, HC Frankfurt am Main, HC Hamburg, HC Nuremberg, HC Rostock, HC Stuttgart)	Prague
Ghana	1959	1993	Accra	Prague
Greece	1920	1993	Athens (HC Heraklion, HC Piraeus, HC Rhodes, HC Thessaloniki)	Prague
Grenada	1979	1993	Caracas	not designated
Guatemala	1927	1993	Mexico (HC Guatemala City)	Vienna (HC Prague)
Guinea	1959	1993	Accra (HC Conakry)	Berlin
Guinea Bissau	1973	1993	Accra	Brussels
Guyana	1976	1993	Caracas	London
Haiti	1943	2005	Caracas	not designated
Honduras	1930	1993	San José (HCG Tegucigalpa)	Berlin (CO Prague)
Hungary	1922	1993	Budapest	Prague
Iceland	1946	1993	Oslo (HC Reykjavik)	Vienna (HCG Prague)
India	1947	1993	Delhi (CG Mumbai)	Prague
Indonesia	1955	1993	Jakarta (HC Bali, HC Makassar, HC Surabaya)	Prague
Iraq	1933	1993	Baghdad	Prague

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Iran	1925	1993	Tehran	Prague
Ireland	1947	1993	Dublin	Prague
Israel	1948	1993	Tel Aviv (HCG Tel Aviv, HC Eilat, HC Haifa, HC Jerusalem)	Prague
Italy	1918	1993	Rome (HC Venice, HC Cagliari HC Florence, HC Genoa, HC Naples, HC Palermo, HC Udine,	Prague
Ivory Coast	1984	1993	Accra	Berlin
Jamaica	1975	1993	Caracas (HC Kingston)	Berlin (HC Prague)
Japan	1920	1993	Tokyo (HC Kobe)	Prague
Jordan	1964	1993	Amman	Vienna
Kazakhstan	1992	1993	Astana	Prague (HC Hradec Králové)
Kenya	1964	1993	Nairobi	The Hague
Kosovo		2008	Pristina	not designated
Kuwait	1963	1993	Kuwait City	Prague
Kyrgyzstan	1992	1993	Astana (HC Bishkek)	Vienna (HC Prague)
Laos	1962	1993	Bangkok	Warsaw
Latvia	1922	1993	Riga	Prague
Lebanon	1946	1993	Beirut	Prague
Lesotho	1982	1993	Pretoria	Rome
Liberia	1972	1993	Accra	not designated
Libya	1960	1993	Tripoli	Vienna (HC Prague)
Liechtenstein	1938	2009	not designated	not designated

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Lithuania	1922	1993	Vilnius	Prague (HC Brno)
Luxembourg	1922	1993	Luxembourg (HC Luxembourg)	Prague
Macedonia (FYROM)		1994	Skopje	Vienna
Madagascar	1976	1993	Addis Ababa	Moscow
Malawi	1991	1993	Harare	Berlin
Malaysia	1971	1993	Kuala Lumpur (HC Johor Bahru)	Prague
Maldives	1975	1993	Delhi	not designated
Mali	1960	1993	Algiers (HC Bamako)	Berlin
Malta	1968	1993	Rome (HC Naxxar)	Valletta (HC Prague)
Mauritania	1965	1993	Rabat (HC Nouakchott)	Moscow
Mauritius	1976	1993	Pretoria (HC Port Louis)	Berlin (HC Prague)
Mexico	1922	1993	Mexico City (HC Guadalajara, HC Monterrey, HC Tijuana)	Prague
Micronesia	no diplomatic relations	2004	Manila	not designated
Moldova	1992	1993	Chisinau	Budapest
Monaco	no diplomatic relations	2008	Paris	not designated
Mongolia	1950	1993	Ulaanbaatar	Prague
Montenegro		2006	Belgrade	Vienna
Morocco	1959	1993	Rabat (HC Casablanca, HC Fes)	Prague
Mozambique	1975	1993	Harare (HC Maputo)	Berlin
Myanmar/Burma	1955	1993	Bangkok	Berlin
Namibia	1990	1993	Pretoria	Vienna
Nauru	no diplomatic relations	2007	Manila	not designated
Nepal	1959	1993	Delhi (HC Kathmandu)	Berlin (HC Prague)

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Netherlands	1919	1993	The Hague (HCG Amsterdam)	Prague
New Zealand	1958	1993	Canberra (HC Auckland)	Berlin (HC Prague)
Nicaragua	1930	1993	San José (HC Managua)	Berlin (HC Prague)
Niger	1975	1995	Accra (HC Niamey)	Bonn
Nigeria	1961	1993	Abuja	Warsaw
Norway	1921	1993	Oslo (HC Bergen, HC Trondheim)	Prague
Oman	1990	1993	Riyadh	Vienna
Pakistan	1950	1993	Islamabad	Prague
Palau		2003	Manila	not designated
Palestinian Autonomous Territories	1983	1993	Ramallah (liaison office to the Palestinian Autonomous Territories)	Prague
Panama	1929	1993	San José (HC Panama)	Berlin (HC Prague)
Papua New Guinea	no diplomatic relations	1995	Jakarta (HC Port Moresby)	not designated
Paraguay	1936	1993	Buenos Aires (HC Asunción)	Vienna (HC Prague)
Peru	1922	1993	Lima	Prague
Philippines	1973	1993	Manila (HC Davao)	Prague
Poland	1919	1993	Warsaw (HC Poznań)	Prague (CG Ostrava, HC Brno)
Portugal	1920	1993	Lisbon (HC Porto, HC Faro, HC Funchal)	Prague
Qatar	1990	1993	Kuwait	Budapest
Republic of Congo	1964	1993	Kinshasa	Berlin (HC Prague)
Republic of Korea	1990	1993	Seoul	Prague

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Romania	1919	1993	Bucharest	Prague
Russia	1934 (USSR)	1993	Moscow (CG Yekaterinburg, CG St. Petersburg, HC Khanty-Mansiysk, HC Nizhniy Novgorod)	Prague (CG Karlovy Vary, CG Brno, HC Ostrava)
Rwanda	1965	1998	Nairobi	Berlin
Samoa	no diplomatic relations	1995	Canberra	not designated
San Marino	1991	1993	Vatican	San Marino (HC Prague)
Sao Tomé and Príncipe	1975	1993	Luanda	not designated
Saudi Arabia	no diplomatic relations	1995	Riyadh (HC Jeddah)	Prague
Senegal	1967	1993	Rabat	Berlin
Serbia		2003	Belgrade	Prague
Seychelles	1976	1993	Nairobi (HC Victoria)	Victoria (HC Prague)
Sierra Leone	1963	1993	Accra	Moscow
Singapore	1973	1993	Singapore	Singapore (HC Prague)
Slovakia		1993	Bratislava	Prague
Slovenia	1992	1993	Ljubljana	Prague
Solomon Islands	no diplomatic relations	1996	Canberra	Brussels
Somalia	1960	2002	Nairobi	Moscow
South Africa	1991	1993	Pretoria	Prague
Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta	1939	1993	Vatican	Prague
Spain	1919	1993	Madrid (HC Barcelona, HC Benidorm, HC Jerez de la Frontera HC Oviedo, HC Palma de Mallorca, HC Tenerife)	Prague
Sri Lanka	1957	1993	Delhi (HC Colombo)	Vienna (HC Prague)
Sudan	1956	1993	Cairo (HC Khartoum)	Vienna (HC Prague)

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
Suriname	1976	1993	Caracas	not designated
St. Kitts and Nevis	no diplomatic relations	2010	Caracas	not designated
St. Lucia	no diplomatic relations	1996	Caracas	not designated
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	no diplomatic relations	1995	Caracas	not designated
Swaziland	1991	1993	Pretoria	Brussels
Sweden	1920	1993	Stockholm (HC Göteborg, HC Malmö)	Prague
Switzerland	1919	1993	Berne (HC Basel, HC Zürich, HC Locarno)	Prague
Syria	1946	1993	Damascus (HC Aleppo)	Prague
Tajikistan	1992	1993	Tashkent	Vienna (HC Prague)
Tanzania	1961	1993	Nairobi	Berlin
Thailand	1974	1993	Bangkok	Prague
Togo	1960	1993	Accra (HC Lomé)	Paris
Trinidad and Tobago	1979	1997	Caracas (HC Port of Spain)	not designated
Tunisia	1959	1993	Tunis	Prague
Turkey	1924	1993	Ankara (CG Istanbul, HC Antalya, HC Izmir)	Prague
Turkmenistan	1992	1993	Moscow	Vienna
Tuvalu	no diplomatic relations	2005	Kuala Lumpur	not designated
Uganda	1962	1993	Nairobi	Berlin
Ukraine	1922	1993	Kiev (CG Lvov, CG Donetsk)	Prague
Uruguay	1921	1993	Montevideo (HC Punta del Este)	Prague
United Arab Emirates	1988	1993	Abu Dhabi	Vienna

Country	Diplomatic relations established with the former Czechoslovakia	Diplomatic relations established with the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the Czech Republic	Seat of the competent mission of the given state for the Czech Republic
United Kingdom	1918	1993	London (HCG Edinburgh, HC Cardiff)	Prague
USA	1919	1993	Washington D.C. (CG Chicago, CG Los Angeles, CG New York, HCG Atlanta, HCG Fort Lauderdale, HCG Houston, HCG Philadelphia, HCG San Francisco, HC Anchorage, HC Boston, HC Buffalo, HC Kansas City, HC Minneapolis, HCG New Orleans, HC Portland, HC San Juan, HC Pittsburgh) <i>NB: awaiting official opening: HC Livingston, HC Ontario, HC Salt Lake City. Opening of HC Honolulu under negotiation.</i>	Prague
Uzbekistan	1992	1993	Tashkent	Berlin
Vanuatu	no diplomatic relations	2002	Canberra	not designated
Vatican	1920	1993	Vatican	Prague
Venezuela	1929	1993	Caracas (HC Maracaibo)	Prague
Vietnam	1950	1993	Hanoi (HC Ho Chi Min City, HC Haiphong)	Prague
Yemen	YAR 1956 PDRY 1968	1993	Sana'a	Prague
Zambia	1965	1993	Harare	Berlin
Zimbabwe	1981	1993	Harare	Vienna

1) State as at 31 December 2009.

2) The table does not give information about periods during which diplomatic relations were suspended.

3) The missions listed are the highest-ranking resident missions. Consulate Generals (CG), consulates headed by an honorary consular officer (HC), and Consulate Generals headed by an honorary officer (HCG) are given in brackets.

4) The data on diplomatic relations correspond to the current state of research.

5) The table does not show the differences between the establishment of diplomatic relations at envoy and ambassador level.

Heads of Missions of the Czech Republic

Missions headed by Ambassadors and Chargés d'Affaires

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Kabul	NEKVASIL Jiří Ambassador	9. 1. 2008	11. 3. 2008
Republic of Albania Tirana	FIALKOVÁ Markéta Ambassador	30. 8. 2007	12. 10. 2007
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Algiers <i>Competence:</i> Algiers Mali	KLUCKÝ Pavel Ambassador	28. 8. 2009 13. 10. 2009	13. 12. 2009
Republic of Angola Luanda <i>Competence:</i> Angola São Tomé and Príncipe	VÁLKY Vladimír Ambassador	22. 11. 2006 15. 4. 2008	14. 11. 2007 10. 11. 2008
Argentine Republic Buenos Aires <i>Competence:</i> Argentina Paraguay Uruguay	ZAJAC Štěpán Ambassador	10. 9. 2007 1. 10. 2007 4. 8. 2008	18. 4. 2008 25. 3. 2008 19. 11. 2008
Commonwealth of Australia Canberra <i>Competence:</i> Australia New Zealand Cook Islands Fiji Samoa Solomon Islands Vanuatu Tonga	PECL Radim Chargé d'Affaires		
Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku	MATULA Radek Ambassador	6. 6. 2008	4. 7. 2008
Kingdom of Belgium Brusel	MÜLLER Vladimír Ambassador	4. 5. 2006	10. 10. 2006
Republic of Belarus Minsk	KARAS Jiří Ambassador	27. 7. 2009	15. 9. 2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina Sarajevo	SZUNYOG Tomáš Ambassador	27. 7. 2009	7. 10. 2009

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Federative Republic Of Brazil Brasília	JANČÁREK Ivan Ambassador	6. 3. 2008	6. 11. 2008
Republic of Bulgaria Sofia	KLEPETKO Martin Ambassador	18. 7. 2006	3. 11. 2006
People's Republic of China Beijing	SEČKA Libor Ambassador	4. 8. 2009	
Kingdom of Denmark Copenhagen	LYČKA Zdeněk Ambassador	15. 4. 2008	7. 7. 2008
Arab Republic of Egypt Cairo <i>Competence:</i> Egypt Sudan	STAŠEK Miroslav Ambassador	21. 9. 2006 15. 11. 2006	4. 12. 2006 31. 7. 2007
Republic of Estonia Tallinn	LANGER Alexandr Ambassador	6. 5. 2008	28. 8. 2008
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Addis Ababa <i>Competence:</i> Ethiopia Djibouti Madagascar Commission of the African Union UN Economic Commission for Africa	LIBŘICKÝ Marek Ambassador	29. 7. 2009	
European Union Permanent Representation to the EU Brussels	VICENOVÁ Milena Ambassador		
Republic of the Philippines Manila <i>Competence:</i> The Philippines Palau Micronesia Marshall Islands Nauru	RYCHTAR Josef Ambassador	28. 8. 2009 31. 8. 2009 22. 9. 2009	
Republic of Finland Helsinki	KOTZY Vladimír Ambassador	17. 2. 2006	18. 5. 2006
French Republic Paris <i>Competence:</i> French Republic Monaco	FISCHER Pavel Ambassador	30. 4. 2003	4. 11. 2003

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
		4. 3. 2008	16. 9. 2008
Republic of Ghana Accra <i>Competence:</i> Ghana Togo Sierra Leone Liberia Côte d'Ivoire Niger Burkina Faso Gambia Guinea Guinea-Bissau	TOUFAROVÁ Petra Chargé d'Affaires MACHÁLEK Miloslav Ambassador-Designate (from 12. 1. 2010)	26. 11. 2009	
Georgia Tbilisi <i>Competence:</i> Georgia Armenia	JESTŘÁB Ivan Ambassador	21. 12. 2007 29. 2. 2008	24. 4. 2008 19. 6. 2008
Republic of Chile Santiago de Chile	KUBÁNEK Zdeněk Ambassador	5. 11. 2007	26. 3. 2008
Republic of Croatia Zagreb	KŮHNL Karel Ambassador	23. 7. 2007	16. 10. 2007
Republic of India Delhi <i>Competence:</i> India Bangladesh Sri Lanka Nepal Maldives	KREUTER Jan Chargé d'Affaires		
Republic of Indonesia Jakarta <i>Competence:</i> Indonesia Brunei East Timor Singapore	ŘEZÁČ Pavel Ambassador	18. 10. 2006 17. 4. 2007 1. 3. 2007 6. 10. 2008	30. 1. 2007 26. 3. 2009
Republic of Iraq Baghdad	TOMÁŠOVÁ Bronislava Ambassador	2. 8. 2009	17. 10. 2009

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Islamic Republic of Iran Tehran	HAVLAS Josef chargé d'affaires		
Ireland Dublin	KAFKA Tomáš Ambassador	28. 4. 2008	2. 9. 2008
Republic of Italy Rome <i>Competence:</i> Italy Malta	ZAVÁZAL Vladimír Ambassador	29. 8. 2006 4. 10. 2006	15. 12. 2006 21. 12. 2006
Israel <i>(State of Israel)</i> Tel Aviv	HRADÍLEK Antonín Chargé d'Affaires POJAR Tomáš Ambassador-Designate (from 31. 1. 2010)	8. 12. 2009	
Japan Tokyo	NOVOTNÝ Jaromír Ambassador	28. 3. 2006	25. 7. 2006
Republic of Yemen Sana'a	VRABEC Jozef Ambassador	3. 11. 2007	18. 3. 2008
Republic of South Africa Pretoria <i>Competence:</i> Republic of South Africa Botswana Namibia Mauritius Lesotho Swaziland	POHL Martin Ambassador	28. 8. 2007 30. 11. 2007 29. 1. 2008 13. 12. 2007 22. 4. 2008 9. 5. 2008	4. 10. 2007 27. 2. 2008 26. 3. 2008 4. 3. 2008 29. 10. 2008
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Amman	HOLOUBKOVÁ Ivana Ambassador	10. 9. 2006	5. 6. 2007
Canada Ottawa	ŽEBRAKOVSKÝ Karel Ambassador	11. 9. 2008	21. 10. 2008
Kazakhstan <i>(Republic of Kazakhstan)</i> Astana <i>Competence:</i> Kazachstan Kyrgyzstan	KOPECKÝ Bedřich Ambassador	13. 2. 2008 11. 4. 2008	5. 5. 2008 26. 8. 2008

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials Presented
Republic of Kenya Nairobi <i>Competence:</i> Kenya Burundi Comoros Rwanda Seychelles Somalia Tanzania Uganda Eritrea UNEP UN-Habitat	FUCHSOVÁ Margita Ambassador	26. 11. 2007 16. 6. 2008 16. 1. 2008 25. 2. 2008	16. 4. 2008 17. 4. 2009 22. 7. 2008 5. 11. 2008
Republic of Colombia Bogotá <i>Competence:</i> Colombia Ecuador	KREJČÍ Zdeněk Ambassador	25. 9. 2006 10. 10. 2006	31. 1. 2007 27. 3. 2007
Democratic Republic of the Congo Kinshasa	ŘÍHA Petr Chargé d'Affaires DOLEŽEL Jiří Ambassador-Designate (from 29. 1. 2010)	27. 11. 2009	
Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang	TOMČO Martin Ambassador	23. 3. 2006	29. 6. 2006
Republic of Korea Seoul	OLŠA Jaroslav, jr. Ambassador	19. 3. 2008	4. 9. 2008
Kosovo <i>(Republic of Kosovo)</i> Pristina	HŘEBÍČKOVÁ Janina Chargé d'Affaires		
Republic of Costa Rica San José <i>Competence:</i> Costa Rica Honduras Nicaragua Panama El Salvador Belize	PROCHÁZKA Pavel Ambassador	25. 6. 2009 13. 8. 2009 26. 8. 2009 17. 8. 2009 27. 7. 2009	6. 10. 2009

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément Granted	Credentials Presented
Republic of Cuba Havana <i>Competence:</i> Cuba Bahamas	JAKOBEC Milan Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador		
Kuwait <i>(State of Kuwait)</i> Kuwait <i>Competence:</i> Kuwait Qatar	VÁVRA Martin Ambassador	24. 8. 2008 3. 11. 2008	1. 12. 2008 11. 2. 2009
Republic of Cyprus Nicosia	BONDY Jan Ambassador	21. 12. 2006	18. 5. 2007
Republic of Lebanon Beirut	ČÍZEK Jan Ambassador	27. 7. 2006	1. 9. 2006
Libya <i>(Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)</i> Tripoli	HUŠNER Jiří Chargé d'affaires KOUTSKÝ Josef Ambassador-Designate (from 8.1.2010)	26. 10. 2009	
Republic of Lithuania Vilnius	BUCHTA Alois Ambassador	8. 8. 2005	26. 9. 2005
Republic of Latvia Riga	PŠTROSS Tomáš Ambassador	30. 8. 2007	27. 11. 2007
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg Luxembourg	LUKEŠOVÁ Kateřina Ambassador	3. 11. 2006	14. 12. 2006
Republic of Hungary Budapest	PLÍŠEK Jaromír Ambassador	27. 7. 2006	5. 10. 2006
Macedonia/FYROM Skopje	BRAUN Jozef Ambassador	29. 10. 2007	20. 3. 2008
Malaysia Kuala Lumpur <i>Competence:</i> Malaysia Tuvalu Papua New Guinea Kiribati	FÜRY Jan Ambassador	14. 5. 2008 24. 7. 2008 6. 2. 2009 27. 6. 2008	16. 9. 2008 14. 7. 2009

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Kingdom of Morocco Rabat <i>Competence:</i> Morocco Mauritania Senegal	BURIL Tomáš Ambassador	 31. 10. 2007 23. 11. 2007 20. 11. 2007	 29. 2. 2008 23. 6. 2008 9. 7. 2008
Mexico <i>(United Mexican States)</i> Mexico City <i>Competence:</i> Mexico Guatemala	HAVLÍK Jiří Ambassador	 20. 9. 2007 20. 2. 2008	 8. 5. 2008 2. 10. 2008
Republic of Moldova Chisinau	KYPR Petr Ambassador	28. 2. 2006	14. 7. 2006
Mongolia Ulaanbaatar	JÍLEK Václav Ambassador	16. 4. 2008	21. 7. 2008
NATO Permanent Delegation Brussels	POVEJŠIL Martin Ambassador		25. 8. 2009
Germany (Federal Republic of Germany) Berlin	JINDRÁK Rudolf Ambassador	13. 10. 2006	11. 12. 2006
Federal Republic of Nigeria Abuja <i>Competence:</i> Nigeria Benin Chad Camerun Equatorial Guinea Gabon	SIRO Jaroslav Ambassador	 17. 12. 2007 18. 12. 2007 7. 4. 2008 13. 3. 2009	 15. 2. 2008 6. 8. 2008 29. 7. 2009
Kingdom of the Netherlands The Hague	MAREŠ Petr Ambassador	7. 7. 2006	25. 10. 2006
Kingdom of Norway Oslo <i>Competence:</i> Norway Iceland	NOVÝ Luboš Ambassador	 27. 4. 2007 15. 5. 2007	 23. 8. 2007 12. 1. 2008

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
United Nations New York Permanent Mission	PALOUŠ Martin Ambassador		11. 9. 2006
United Nations Office of the UN, OSCE and other international organisations based in Vienna Vienna Permanent Mission MAAE OBSE UNODC CTBTO UNIDO	KUCHYŇOVÁ-ŠMIGOLOVÁ Veronika Ambassador		25. 8. 2009 11. 9. 2009 25. 8. 2009 18. 8. 2009 21. 8. 2009
United Nations Office of the UN and other international organisations based in Geneva Geneva Permanent Mission	HUSÁK Tomáš Ambassador		24. 2. 2006
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Paris Perm. Mission	JANYŠKA Petr permanent representative of the Czech Republic		credentials presented on 21. 9. 2006
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Paris Permanent Mission	DYBA Karel Ambassador		credentials presented on 10. 10. 2007
Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Islamabad	ŠEPELÁK Pavol Ambassador	16. 12. 2008	9. 4. 2009
Republic of Peru Lima <i>Competence:</i> Peru Bolivia	ZEMANOVÁ Věra Ambassador	17. 3. 2006 18. 5. 2006	1. 6. 2006 2. 4. 2007
Republic of Poland Warsaw	SECHTER Jan Ambassador	5. 5. 2008	22. 7. 2008

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Portuguese Republic Lisbon <i>Competence:</i> Portugal Cape Verde	ŠARBOCHOVÁ Markéta Ambassador	5. 8. 2009 23. 9. 2009	15. 10. 2009
Council of Europe Strasbourg Permanent Mission	HRNČÍŘ Pavel Chargé d'affaires BOČEK Tomáš Ambassador-Designate (from 28.1.2010)		
Republic of Austria Vienna	KOUKAL Jan Ambassador	26. 9. 2006	28. 11. 2006
Romania Bucharest	DOKLÁDAL Petr Ambassador	9. 8. 2006	10. 10. 2006
Russian Federation Moscow <i>Competence:</i> Russia Turkmenistan	PEJCHA Hynek Chargé d'affaires		
Hellenic Republic Athens	MOTTLOVÁ Hana Ambassador	5. 7. 2006	4. 10. 2006
Saudi Arabia <i>(Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)</i> Riyadh <i>Competence:</i> Saudi Arabia Bahrain Oman	HLADÍK Eubomír Ambassador	6. 11. 2008 21. 12. 2008 6. 1. 2009	11. 1. 2009 20. 10. 2009 23. 11. 2009
Slovak Republic Bratislava	KARFÍK Jakub Ambassador	20. 8. 2009	21. 10. 2009
Slovenia <i>(Republic of Slovenia)</i> Ljubljana	VOZNICA Petr Ambassador	31. 7. 2009	6. 10. 2009
United Arab Emirates Abu Dhabi	TOUŠEK Miloš Chargé d'affaires LUDVA Jaroslav Ambassador-Designate (from 15. 1. 2010)	25. 10. 2009	
United States of America Washington D.C.	KOLÁŘ Petr Ambassador	20. 9. 2005	2. 12. 2005

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Serbia <i>(Republic of Serbia)</i> Belgrade <i>Competence:</i> Serbia Montenegro	HUBÁČKOVÁ Hana Ambassador	5. 12. 2007 4. 2. 2008	18. 3. 2008 16. 5. 2008
Holy See Vatican <i>Competence:</i> Holy See Sovereign Military Order of Malta San Marino	VOŠALÍK Pavel Ambassador	30. 4. 2008 30. 6. 2008 9. 7. 2008	27. 9. 2008 26. 2. 2009 3. 2. 2009
Syrian Arab Republic Damascus	ULIČNÝ Tomáš Ambassador	3. 9. 2006	2. 11. 2006
Kingdom of Spain Madrid <i>Competence:</i> Spain Andorra UNWTO	BERAN Karel Ambassador	28. 7. 2009 6. 8. 2009	5. 10. 2009 16. 11. 2009
Kingdom of Sweden Stockholm	KÁRA Jan Ambassador	11. 9. 2007	28. 11. 2007
Swiss Confederation Bern	LAZAR Boris Ambassador	28. 1. 2008	11. 4. 2008
Kingdom of Thailand Bangkok <i>Competence:</i> Thailand Cambodia Laos Myanmar/Burma	HOTĚK Ivan Ambassador	6. 9. 2006 23. 1. 2007 21. 11. 2006 29. 6. 2007	26. 8. 2007 19. 4. 2007 31. 1. 2007 9. 7. 2008
Republic of Tunisia Tunis	SLABÝ Alexander Ambassador	17. 7. 2009	19. 11. 2009
Republic of Turkey Ankara	FILIPI Eva Ambassador	20. 8. 2004	13. 12. 2005
Ukraine Kiev	BAŠTA Jaroslav Ambassador	8. 6. 2007	10. 12. 2007

Country	Head of Mission	Agrément granted	Credentials presented
Uzbekistan <i>(Republic of Uzbekistan)</i> Tashkent <i>Competence:</i> Uzbekistan Tajikistan	KOPECKÝ Robert Ambassador	22. 10. 2008 14. 1. 2008	3. 2. 2009 20. 4. 2009
Great Britain <i>(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)</i> London	ŽANTOVSKÝ Michael Ambassador	7. 9. 2009	
Venezuela <i>(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)</i> Caracas <i>Competence:</i> Venezuela Dominican Republic Grenada Barbados Guyana Jamaica Trinidad and Tobago Surinam Antigua and Barbuda Dominica St. Lucia St. Kitts and Nevis St. Vincent and the Grenadines Haiti	SLAVICKÝ Stanislav Ambassador	7. 4. 2008 28. 10. 2008 17. 9. 2008 29. 10. 2008 21. 10. 2008 2. 2. 2009 18. 9. 2008 15. 9. 2008 15. 9. 2008 25. 9. 2008 10. 9. 2008 3. 10. 2008	18. 8. 2008 25. 1. 2009 4. 6. 2009
Socialist Republic of Vietnam Hanoi	KRÁL Michal Ambassador	24. 4. 2008	15. 8. 2008
Republic of Zimbabwe Harare <i>Competence:</i> Zimbabwe Malawi Mozambique Zambia	ZAHRADNÍČEK Luděk Chargé d'Affaires		

Consulates General

Country Seat of Consulate General	Consul General	In office since
Australian Commonwealth Sydney competence: Commonwealth of Australia (except Australian Capital Territory – capital of Canberra, Victoria and Tasmania), New Zealand, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	KOLÁŘ Vít	17. 6. 2006
Federative Republic of Brazil São Paulo competence: states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo	KÁZECKÝ Stanislav	1. 12. 2006
People's Republic of China Hong Kong competence: Special Administrative Regions Hong Kong and Macau	ZELENÝ René Chargé d'affaires KANTŮREK Jaroslav Consul General Designate (from 11. 1. 2010)	
People's Republic of China Shanghai competence: provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui and the city of Shanghai	MAZÁNEK Bohumil	7. 8. 2008
Republic of India Mumbai competence: union states of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu; union territories of Dadra, Nagal Haveli, Daman and Diu, Pondicherry, Lakshadweep	DRDÁKOVÁ Eva	31. 1. 2007
Canada Montreal competence: provinces of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec	JESLÍNKOVÁ Jaroslava	18. 3. 2008
Canada Toronto competence: part of the province of Ontario, provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan	KRPAČ Richard	27. 1. 2007

Country Seat of Consulate General	Consul General	In office since
United States of America Chicago competence: states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin	SKOLIL Marek	28. 11. 2005
United States of America Los Angeles competence: states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming	KUMERMANN Daniel	31. 10. 2006
United States of America New York competence: states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont	ŽIGOVÁ Eliška	15. 9. 2008
Federal Republic of Germany Dresden competence: federal states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia	PODIVÍNSKÝ Tomáš	19. 9. 2005
Federal Republic of Germany Munich competence: federal states of Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg	HLOBIL Josef	7. 9. 2009
Russian Federation Yekaterinburg competence: republics of Altay, Buryatia, Sakha (Yakutia), Tuva, Khakassia; territories of Altai, Khabarovsk, Kamchatka, Krasnodar, Primorsky, Zabaykalsky; provinces of Amur, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Kurgan, Magadan, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Sakhalin, Sverdlovsk, Tomsk, Tyumen, Chelyabinsk, Jewish Autonomous; autonomous districts of Khanty-Mansi, Chukotska, Yamalo-Nenets	RAMEŠ Miroslav	9. 4. 2008
Russian Federation St. Petersburg competence: St. Petersburg; provinces of Arkhangelsk, Leningrad, Murmansk, Novgorod, Pskov, Vologda; Republic of Karelia, Republic of Komi, Nenets Autonomous District	BARTOŠ Lubor	11. 9. 2006

Country Seat of Consulate General	Consul General	In office since
Republic of Turkey Istanbul competence: provinces of Istanbul, Ardahan, Artvin, Balikesir, Bartin, Bayburt, Bilecik, Bolu, Bursa, Canakkale, Corum, Edirne, Erzurum, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Kars, Kastamonu, Kirlareli, Kocaeli, Ordu, Rize, Samsun, Sakarya, Sinop, Tekirdag, Trabzon, Zonguldak	ŠTĚPÁNEK František	1. 12. 2006
Ukraine Donetsk competence: provinces of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Dnipetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Chernihiv, Autonomous Republic of Crimea	MURGAŠ Antonín	15. 1. 2007
Ukraine Lviv competence: provinces of Volyn, Rivne, Chernivtsi, Lviv, Zakarpathia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil	PAVLITA David	20. 7. 2009

Other types of mission

Country	Head of Mission	In office since
Ramallah Liaison Office Palestinian Autonomous Territories	ŠILHAVÝ Ivo	15. 2. 2008
Czech Economic and Cultural Office (CECO) Taipei	ŠKODA Pavel Chargé d'Affaires KOUDELKA Juraj Designated Head of CECO from 15. 1. 2010	

Consular offices

Seat of consular office	Consular Office period of operation
Barcelona	1. 7. – 31. 8. 2009
Marseille	1. 7. – 31. 8. 2009
Split	15. 6. – 30. 9. 2009
Rijeka	15. 6. – 30. 9. 2009
Burgas	28. 6. – 5. 9. 2009
Podgorica	constant

Branches of embassies of the Czech Republic

Country	Type of branch	Seat of branch
Iraq	Branch of the Commercial Department of the Embassy of the Czech Republic	Erbíl
	Branch of the Commercial Department of the Embassy of the Czech Republic	Basra
Kazakhstan	Branch Office of the Embassy of the Czech Republic	Almaty
Greece	Office of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Thessaloniki Branch (Czech-Hellenic Board)	Thessaloniki

Overview of bilateral visits from 2000 to 2009

Central Europe

Hungary

	President		Prime Minister		Minister of Foreign Affairs	
	Date	Representative's name	Type of visit/reception			
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2000	28-29 April V. Havel Central European presidents		24-25 November M. Zeman CEI summit	9 June V. Orbán V4 summit 12-13 October V. Orbán V4 PMs	18 March J. Kavan foreign ministers CR, Hungary, Poland 24 June J. Kavan CEI	9 June J. Martonyi V4 summit
2001		19-20 September F. Mádl state		27 June V. Orbán official		27 March J. Martonyi official
2002				20-22 November P Medgyessy summit NATO		
2003	7-9 October V. Klaus official		5 June V. Špidla official		23 January C. Svoboda official	
2004						
2005				22 August F. Gyurcsány working		15 February F. Somogyi official
2006		12-13 January L. Sólyom official				
2007	20-21 September V. Klaus V4 summit		29-30 March M. Topolánek official		19 March K. Schwarzenberg official	
2008	6 May V. Klaus working			20-21 November F. Gyurcsány official		23 April K. Gónczová working

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2009			26-27 January M. Topolánek working/ Nabucco summit		29-30 July J. Kohout working	
			27 June J. Fischer working			
			24-25 August J. Fischer official			

Poland

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date	Representative's name	Type of visit/reception			
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2000		22-23 February A. Kwaśniewski official			31 March J. Kavan	
2001	19 January V. Havel V4 presidents	17 December A. Kwaśniewski working	31 May – 1 June M. Zeman with J. Buzek V4 summit 24-25 August M. Zeman with J. Buzek V4 summit 16 November M. Zeman with L. Miller CEFTA 30 November M. Zeman official 5 December M. Zeman with L. Miller V4 and Benelux summit		27 February J. Kavan with W. Bartoszewski NATO Brussels summit 11 November J. Kavan with W. Cimoszewicz UN GA 3 December J. Kavan with W.Cimoszewicz OSCE summit	23 May W. Bartoszewski with J. Kavan Luxembourg Group 23 July W. Bartoszewski with J. Kavan 2+2
2002		20-22 November A. Kwaśniewski NATO summit	4-5 September V. Špidla official	26-27 April L. Miller Official	2 December C. Svoboda official	
2003	3-4 April V. Klaus official	28 January A. Kwaśniewski working 26 September A. Kwaśniewski working		30 September – 1 October L. Miller official		21 February W. Cimoszewicz Official
2004		7-8 December A. Kwaśniewski official	22 September S. Gross working			

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2005			31 August J. Paroubek working ¹	21 September M. Belka working	22 July C. Svoboda working	25 November S. Meller working
2006	28 July V. Klaus working ²	16-17 February L. Kaczyński working		16 January K. Marcynkiewicz working	6-7 October A. Vondra working	
2007	25 January V. Klaus working 10-12 July V. Klaus official	25 May L. Kaczyński working 11-12 December L. Kaczyński working	19-20 February M. Topolánek official		20 February K. Schwarzenberg ³	
2008	11 March V. Klaus working 12-13 October V. Klaus working	24 July L. Kaczyński working		10 January D. Tusk official		13-14 November 2008 R. Sikorski official
2009	4-5 June V. Klaus working	8 January L. Kaczyński working	28 January M. Topolánek working 3 June J. Fischer ⁴ 1 September J. Fischer working		30 July J. Kohout official	

1) to attend the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Solidarity movement in Gdansk; 2) to attend the 50th anniversary of the workers' strike in Poznan; 3) separate meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Fotyga during the official visit of Prime Minister M. Topolánek 4) bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the V4 summit

Germany

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2003	17 January V. Havel working			5 September G. Schröder working	14 January C. Svoboda working	16 August J. Fischer working
	10 April V. Klaus working				15 February C. Svoboda working	
	2-3 May V. Klaus working					
	17 September V. Klaus working					
2004	7 February V. Klaus working	15 October H. Köhler working	17-18 February V. Špidla working	4 October G. Schröder working	9 September C. Svoboda working	27 February J. Fischer working
	22 June V. Klaus working		1 May V. Špidla working			
			19 November S. Gross working			
2005			6 December J. Paroubek working	17 May G. Schröder working	26 November C. Svoboda working	
				30 September G. Schröder working		
2006	28 February V. Klaus working				13 September A. Vondra working	6-7 April F.-W. Steinmeier working

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2007	23-24 February V. Klaus working	28 March H. Köhler working	17 June M. Topolánek working	26 January A. Merkel working	11 February K. Schwarzenberg working Munich	9-10 November F.-W. Steinmeier working
	17 April V. Klaus working		17 October M. Topolánek meeting with Bavarian interior minister G. Beckstein Munich		10-11 March K. Schwarzenberg working	
	10 December V. Klaus lunch with the federal president		16 October M. Topolánek working Saxony		26 April K. Schwarzenberg working	
			21 December M. Topolánek meeting with Chancellor A. Merkel (Schengen)		11 May K. Schwarzenberg working	
2008	18 January V. Klaus working Düsseldorf		25 June M. Topolánek working	26 October A. Merkel official	22-23 March K. Schwarzenberg working Munich	
	23-24 April V. Klaus working				14 April K. Schwarzenberg working Saxony	
	23 October V. Klaus working Dresden				15 February K. Schwarzenberg working Berlin	

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2009	19 February V. Klaus podium debate Bochum		22 February M. Topolánek working Berlín		25 January K. Schwarzenberg podium debate Berlin	1-2 June F.-W. Steinmeier official
	3-4 April V. Klaus ¹		9 June J. Fischer official Berlín		6-8 February K. Schwarzenberg Security Conference Munich	2 December G. Westerwelle working
	9-10 May V. Klaus ²				17-18 March K. Schwarzenberg working Berlin	
	18 May V. Klaus ³				11 May J. Kohout working Berlin	
	16 September V. Klaus podium debate Passau					
	9-10 November V. Klaus ⁴					

1) with M. Topolánek and K Schwarzenberg at the NATO summit (Strasbourg, Baden-Baden);

2) to collect Hayek Foundation award in Freiburg;

3) to collect Peutinger Gold Medal in Munich;

4) to attend the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Minister of Foreign Affairs CR – other meetings	
Date	Partner
Event	
2007	2008
26 September F.-W. Steinmeier New York UN General Meeting	10 February F.-W. Steinmeier Munich Security Conference
18 October F.-W. Steinmeier Lisbon, European Council	

Austria

	President		Prime minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2001	6 September V. Havel working		6-8 July M. Zeman Nachdenk- runde conference		6 June J. Kavan Regional Partnership conference Vienna	8 November B. Ferrero- - Waldner expert conference
2002		5 September T. Klestil border region meeting Znojmo			25 August C. Svoboda Europa-Forum conference Alpbach	24 September B. Ferrero- - Waldner border region meeting South Bohemia 29 November B. Ferrero- - Waldner Gelebte Nach- barschaft conference
2003	23 April V. Klaus working Vienna 22-23 May V. Klaus CEI, Salzburg	17 July T. Klestil working	29 June V. Špidla Europa-Forum conference Wachau Göttweig 17 October V. Špidla working Vienna	2 April W. Schüssel working 2-3 July W. Schüssel working	29 June C. Svoboda Europa-Forum conference Wachau Göttweig 29 October C. Svoboda working Freistadt	4 July Regional Partnership foreign ministers Buchlovice
2004	21 May V. Klaus CEI, Mariazell 10 July V. Klaus T. Klestil's funeral Vienna 28-29 August V. Klaus Europa-Forum conf. Alpbach	25 August H. Fischer working 31 October - 1 November H. Fischer working	24 September S. Gross working Vienna		1-2 July C. Svoboda official Vienna	5 November U. Plassnik working Prague

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2005	8 June V. Klaus working Lower Austria	29 April H. Fischer working	14 July J. Paroubek official Vienna	20 January W. Schüssel official Prague	28 November C. Svoboda official Vienna	
	30 August V. Klaus Econ. Forum Alpbach		14 December J. Paroubek working Vienna			
	24 November V. Klaus working Vienna					
2006	23-26 February V. Klaus working Tyrol				14 September A. Vondra Regional Partnership foreign ministers Vienna	
	21 August V. Klaus Econ. Forum Alpbach					

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit / reception					
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2007	16-18 March V. Klaus working Innsbruck	24-26 May H. Fischer presidents Brno	23 April M. Topolánek working Vienna	27 February A. Gusenbauer official Prague	26 March K. Schwarzenberg working Vienna	14 June U. Plassnik working Znojmo
	23 June working Lower Austria				20 June K. Schwarzenberg working Vienna	
	22-23 August V. Klaus working Vienna				4 July K. Schwarzenberg working Vienna	
	28 August V. Klaus Econ. Forum Alpbach				20 August K. Schwarzenberg Econ. Forum Alpbach	
					26-28 October K. Schwarzenberg The Trilateral Commission Vienna	

	President		Prime minister		Foreign minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit / reception					
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2008	25 March V. Klaus working Vienna	20 August H. Fischer working Mikulov	7 January M. Topolánek official Vienna 29 June M. Topolánek working Vienna		25 April K. Schwarzenberg UN SG, Regional Partnership ministers and U. Plassnik Vienna 1 September K. Schwarzenberg meeting of ambassadors of Austria	
2009		14-15 May H. Fischer official	24 August J. Fischer working Vienna	29 January W. Faymann working	5 June J. Kohout working Vienna	9 January M. Spindel-egger official 9 September M. Spindel-egger border region meeting

Slovakia

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date	Representative's name	Type of visit/reception			
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2000			2 November M. Zeman official	22-23 May M. Dzurinda official		
2001		1-2 March R. Schuster Official	19 November M. Zeman official	30 March M. Dzurinda working 28.-29 May M. Dzurinda official	22 March J. Kavan official	
2002		25 January R. Schuster presentation of Combat Banners to the 1st Czecho-Slovak KFOR Battalion	30 November V. Špidla official	19-20 May M. Dzurinda official 28 May M. Dzurinda working	4 September C. Svoboda official	12 April E. Kukan working 25 October E. Kukan official
2003	29 January V.Havel official 18 March V. Klaus official	6 June R. Schuster working 19 November R. Schuster working	27-28 October V. Špidla official	23-24 May M. Dzurinda official	9 June C. Svoboda official	
2004	14-16 January V. Klaus working 7 October V. Klaus working	13 February R. Schuster Working 25-26 May R. Schuster working 12 July I. Gašparovič official	29 August S. Gross working	20-21 May M. Dzurinda official		12 October E. Kukan official
2005	21 October V. Klaus working		7 June J. Paroubek official		23-24 October C. Svoboda official	

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2006		31 May I. Gašparovič working 16-17 September I. Gašparovič working	14 September M. Topolánek official	15 July R. Fico official		9 May E. Kukan working 13 July J. Kubiš official
2007	11.-13 January V. Klaus working	3-4 April I. Gašparovič working	21 December M. Topolánek/R. Fico meeting at the border	11-12 February R. Fico working	13 January K. Schwarzen- berg working	16 March J. Kubiš official 3-5 September J. Kubiš working
2008	10-11 January V. Klaus working 10 March V. Klaus working 21 August V. Klaus working	27 October I. Gašparovič working	17 December M. Topolánek working	21 August R. Fico official	28 November K. Schwarzen- berg official 10 December K. Schwarzen- berg working	22 December J. Kubiš working
2009		9 February I. Gašparovič official 29-30 June I. Gašparovič official	15 May J. Fischer working	16 January R. Fico working 5 May R. Fico working 29 May R. Fico working	10 May J. Kohout working	6 February M. Lajčák working

Slovenia

Year	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2000	27 April V. Havel working					18 April D. Rupel working
2001		28 May M. Kučan working	24-25 May M. Zeman official		28 February J. Kavan official	
2002	31 May V. Havel meeting of heads of states of Central and Eastern Europe					
2003	21-22 October V. Klaus official	12 June J. Drnovšek working			26 February C. Svoboda working	21 May D. Rupel official
2004						
2005						23 May D. Rupel working meeting
2006						
2007				9-10 December J. Janša working meeting	5 January A. Vondra working 31 May – 1 June K. Schwarzen- berg working	16 November D. Rupel working official
2008		8-9 December D. Türk state	30. 8-1 September M. Topolánek working			
2009	15 September V. Klaus working					5-6 February S. Žbogar working

Švýcarsko

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception		<i>No prime minister post in Switzerland</i>			
Year	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
2000						
2001	28-29 June V. Havel state					
2002						
2003					9 October C. Svoboda working	
2004	26 June V. Klaus meeting with J. Deiss	1-2 November J. Deiss working				
2005	29 January V. Klaus meeting with S. Schmid					14 December M. Calmy- Rey working
2006	22-23 March V. Klaus working					
2007					14-15 November K. Schwarzen- berg working	
2008						16 December M. Calmy- Rey working
2009	29-31 January V. Klaus working					

Northern Europe

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Denmark	9. - 10 November 2006 V. Klaus working		9 September 2002 V. Špidla official 28 October 2002 V. Špidla working 12 January 2006 J. Paroubek official	22-24 August 2001 P. N. Rasmussen official 24 April 2003 A. F. Rasmussen official 22 October 2004 A. F. Rasmussen working 27 March 2007 A. F. Rasmussen working 9 December 2008 A. F. Rasmussen working	4 October 2001 J. Kavan official 4 October 2002 C. Svoboda working	9 March 2000 N. H. Petersen official 11 November 2003 P. S. Møller working
Estonia	23-24 May 2006 V. Klaus official	29 May – 1 June 2000 L. Meri state 2 May 2002 A. Rüütel working 4-6 June 2007 T. H. Ilves working 11-12 May 2009 T. H. Ilves private	18. - 19. 1 2001 M. Zeman official 6 May 2008 M. Topolánek official	19-21 October 2003 J. Parts official 26 March 2008 A. Ansip working	25. - 26 June 2003 C. Svoboda official	22 October 2002 K. Ojuland working 27. - 29 June 2005 U. Paet official

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Finland	1-3 June 2005 V. Klaus official		28-30 March 2000 M. Zeman official 29-30 March 2004 V. Špidla official	2-3 May 2001 P. Lipponen official 28 February 2006 M. Vanhanen working 4 November 2008 M. Vanhanen official	26 March 2002 J. Kavan official	12 February 2001 E. Tuomioja official 13 May 2008 A. Stubb working
Iceland	21-24 August 2005 V. Klaus official			21-22 November 2002 D. Oddsson working	14-15 May 2002 J. Kavan working	2004 H. Ásgrímsson working
Lithuania	25-26 May 2006 V. Klaus official	2 May 2002 V. Adamkus working 27-29 July 2005 V. Adamkus private 9-10 April 2009 V. Adamkus official	30 March – 1 April 2000 M. Zeman official 17 April 2002 M. Zeman working	18. - 19 March 2008 G. Kirkilas official 22-23 May 2008 G. Kirkilas working	25 June 2003 C. Svoboda official 13-14 September 2007 K. Schwarzenberg working	1-2 March 2001 A. Valionis official 24-25 January 2008 P. Vaitiekunas official
Latvia		2 May 2002 V. Víke-Freiberga working 8 October 2006 V. Víke-Freiberga working	16-17 September 2003 V. Špidla official 5 May 2006 J. Paroubek Working 21 May 2006 J. Paroubek working	11-13 June 2001 A. Bérziņš official 1. - 2 February 2005 A. Kalvītis working 23 May 2008 I. Godmanis working	17-18 February 2002 J. Kavan official	15-18 October 2000 A. Bérziņš 2/2005 S. Kalniete official

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Norway	13-14 May 2004 V. Klaus official		26-28 March 2000 M. Zeman official 11-12 January 2006 J. Paroubek working	31 October 2003 K. M. Bondevik official 9 January 2009 J. Stoltenberg working	18 April 2002 J. Kavan official 30 October 2007 K. Schwarzenberg working	5 May 2000 T. Jagland 18-19 October 2004 J. Petersen working 18 December 2008 J. G. Støre working
Sweden	1-3 December 2003 V. Klaus working 10/2006 V. Klaus working		5-6 February 2001 M. Zeman official 16 June 2001 M. Zeman EU summit 4 October 2005 J. Paroubek official 17-18 April 2007 M. Topolánek official 15 June 2009 J. Fischer working	22 May 2003 G. Persson official 6-7 November 2008 F. Reinfeldt official	16 June 2001 J. Kavan summit EU 15 June 2009 J. Kohout working	10-11 November 2000 A. Lindh working 8 April 2002 A. Lindh official 14 April 2003 A. Lindh official 3-4 December 2006 C. Bildt working 19-20 September 2007 C. Bildt working

Western Europe

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Andorra				16-19 March 2000 M. Forné official	9/2007 K. Schwarzenberg	
Belgium		24-26 October 2000 King Albert II. state	12 May 2009 J. Fischer working	2 March 2004 G. Verhofstadt working	4 June 2009 J. Kohout working	22 May 2006 K. De Gucht working
France	26-28 August 2006 V. Klaus working 2 June 2009 V. Klaus working 22-24 August 2009 V. Klaus working	16 June 2008 N. Sarkozy official	12 June 2009 J. Fischer working		6 April 2006 C. Svoboda working 3 June 2009 J. Kohout working	26-27 May 2008 B. Kouchner official
Ireland	10-12 November 2008 V. Klaus state		3 March 2004 V. Špidla consultation	30-31 January 2003 B. Ahern official 20 May 2004 B. Ahern working	29-30 June 2000 J. Kavan official 10 October 2002 C. Svoboda official	27-28 June 2001 B. Cowen
Italy	6-7 September 2007 V. Klaus working	24-26 May 2007 G. Napolitano Brno - summit	23-24 October 2000 M. Zeman official 13-14 November 2009 J. Fischer depositing of the instrument of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon	14 May 2007 R. Prodi working	13 November 2003 C. Svoboda working 5 October 2005 C. Svoboda working	12 May 2003 F. Frattini official

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit / reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Luxembourg	8 March 2006 V. Klaus official	1 July 2003 Grand Duke Henry official	12-13 February 2001 M. Zeman official 5 February 2001 M. Zeman V4 and Benelux summit 7 November 2008 M. Topolánek on sidelines of EC	22 November 2004 J. - C. Juncker working 12 March 2009 J. - C. Juncker official	15 May 2009 J. Kohout working 3 June 2009 J. Kohout working	27-28 June 2001 L. Polfer official
Malta	7-9 April 2002 V. Havel official	17-19 January 2005 E. F. Adami official		9-10 December 2002 L. Gonzi official	13-14 November 2003 C. Svoboda official	8-10 March 2006 M. Frendo official
Sovereign Military Order of Malta	30 May 2009 V. Klaus state				14-15 April 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working	
Monaco						16 April 2009 F. Biancheri working
Netherlands	21 April 2008 V. Klaus working		23-24 January 2000 M. Zeman official 23 November 2004 S. Gross working 4 June 2007 M. Topolánek working	16-17 February 2004 J. P. Balkenende working 12 November 2008 J. P. Balkenende working	29 October 2002 C. Svoboda working 31 March 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working/ conference on Afghanistan	22 May 2001 J. van Aartsen official 3 November 2005 B. R. Bot working
Portugal	23-25 March 2004 V. Klaus official	10-11 July 2001 J. Sampaio official	26-28 January 2004 V. Špidla official	25-26 May 2003 J. M. D. Barroso official	2 December 2008 K. Schwarzenberg on sidelines of NATO	13 March 2006 D. Freitas do Amaral working
San Marino						
Spain	27-29 September 2004 V. Klaus state		18 September 2008 M. Topolánek		29-30 November 2007 K. Schwarzenberg on sidelines of NATO	21 May 2007 M. A. Moratinos to attend OSCE EEF

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Vatican	30 May 2009 V. Klaus state	26-28 September 2009 Benedikt XVI. state	22 October 2000 M. Zeman working 14 November 2009 J. Fischer official	4 July 2007 T. Bertone working	14-15 April 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working	
Great Britain	6-7 September 2004 V. Klaus working 18-19 October 2005 V. Klaus working 9-10 May 2006 V. Klaus working 7-9 November 2007 V. Klaus working 12-13 November 2009 V. Klaus working	30. 10-1 November 2000 Prince Charles official	10-11 October 2000 M. Zeman official 28-29 October 2002 V. Špidla working 23 May 2005 J. Paroubek working 28-29 November 2005 J. Paroubek working 13 June 2007 M. Topolánek working 18 December 2008 M. Topolánek working 2 April 2009 M. Topolánek working/ summit G-20 15 June 2009 J. Fischer working	8 April 2002 T. Blair working 10 March 2006 T. Blair working	13-15 January 2000 J. Kavan working 29. 2-1 March 2000 J. Kavan working 3-5 July 2001 J. Kavan working 5 June 2003 C. Svoboda working 27-28 February 2006 C. Svoboda working 17-19 July 2007 K. Schwarzenberg working 22-23 May 2008 K. Schwarzenberg working 24 April 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working	25-26 July 2000 R. Cook official

Eastern Europe

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Armenia		7 May 2009 S. Sargysyan summit on Eastern Partnership			5-7 July 2008 K. Schwarzenberg official	18 February 2009 E. Nalbandyan working
Azerbaijan		7-8 May 2009 I. Alijev summits on Eastern Partnership and Southern Corridor	13 February 2009 M. Topolánek		3-5 July 2008 K. Schwarzenberg official	
Belarus					16-17 April 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working	
Georgia		7-8 May 2009 M. Saakashvili summits on Eastern Partnership and Southern Corridor	10-12 May 2007 M. Topolánek official	12-13 June 2007 Z. Noghaideli working meeting of Board of Governors	6 February 2005 C. Svoboda state funeral of PM Z. Zhvania 1-3 July 2008 K. Schwarzenberg official	7-8 June 2005 S. Zurabishvili working 27 November 2008 E. Tkeshelashvili official
Moldova		13 September 2006 V. Voronin official	22 April 2009 M. Topolánek	20-21 April 2006 V. Tarlev official 2-3 September 2008 Z. Greceanii working	22 September 2000 J. Kavan 19 December 2005 C. Svoboda official	24 November 2007 A. Stratan official 7 May 2009 A. Stratan summit on Eastern Partnership

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Russian Federation	31 October - 2 November 2003 V. Klaus working	1-2 March 2006 V. Putin official	14-17 April 2002 M. Zeman official 26 May 2005 J. Paroubek working	9-10 October 2001 M. Kasyanov official	23. -24 January 2002 J. Kavan working 24-25 April 2003 C. Svoboda working 20 December 2005 C. Svoboda working 11 February 2009 K. Schwarzenberg EU Troika – Russia 21-22 May 2009 J. Kohout EU-Russia summit	2 February 2001 I. Ivanov working 19-20 October 2004 S. Lavrov working
Ukraine	4-16 June 2005 V. Klaus official	24-25 March 2009 V. Yushchenko official 7 May 2009 V. Yushchenko Eastern Partnership summit	15-17 September 2008 M. Topolánek official 1/2009 M. Topolánek with V. Yushchenko and J. Tymoshenko on the gas crisis	17 February 2006 J. Yekhanurov working	22 October 2001 J. Kavan official 10 May 2005 C. Svoboda working	23-24 April 2003 A. M. Zlenko official 15 January 2007 B. Tarasyuk working 23 April 2008 V. Ohryzko working 5 February 2009 V. Ohryzko EU-Ukraine summit

Southeast Europe

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Albania	5-6 October 2009 V. Klaus official	24-26 May 2007 A. Moisiu Brno - Summit	18 April 2008 M. Topolánek official	1 March 2006 S. Berisha 28 April 2009 S. Berisha working	30-31 October 2008 K. Schwarzenberg	1 June 2004 K. Islami 27-28 March 2009 L. Basha to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt. 7 December 2009 I. Meta working
Bosnia and Herzegovina		24. - 26 May 2007 N. Radmanović Brno - Summit	12-13 November 2005 J. Paroubek working	20 November 2007 N. Špirić	8-9 November 2007 K. Schwarzenberg 8-9 April 2009 K. Schwarzenberg	20-21 October 2008 S. Alkalaj working 27-28 March 2009 S. Alkalaj to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.
Bulgaria	9. - 10 December 2007 V. Klaus working	18 March 2009 G. Parvanov working	7-9 November 2007 M. Topolánek	14-15 February 2006 S. Stanišev	3/2005 C. Svoboda	27-28 June 2007 I. Kalfin official 27-28 March 2009 I. Kalfin to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.
Montenegro		24-26 May 2007 F. Vujanović	1 November 2005 J. Paroubek working 11 March 2009 M. Topolánek working		8-9 June 2005 C. Svoboda working	9-10 February 2005 M. Vlahović 25 November 2008 M. Roćen working 27-28 March 2009 M. Roćen to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Croatia	6-8 September 2005 V. Klaus official	24-26 May 2007 S. Mesić Brno - Summit	8-9 September 2008 M. Topolánek official	4 March 2009 I. Sanader working	12-13 June 2007 K. Schwarzenberg working	13-14 February 2008 G. Jandroković official 27-28 March 2009 G. Jandroković to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.
Kosovo			19 August 2009 J. Fischer working		14 January 2008 K. Schwarzenberg working	21-23 August 2008 S. Hyseni working 27-28 March 2009 S. Hyseni to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.
Cyprus	5-7 May 2004 V. Klaus official	17-20 April 2005 T. Papadopoulos official	12-14 April 2008 M. Topolánek official		18-19 April 2001 J. Kavan official	
Macedonia		24-26 May 2007 B. Crvenkovski Brno - Summit	10 March 2009 M. Topolánek working		2 September 2009 J. Kohout working	30 April 2007 A. Milošoski accompanying the PM 27-28 March 2009 A. Milošoski to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.
Romania	1 June 2006 V. Klaus 10-11 December 2008 V. Klaus working	24-26 May 2007 T. Basescu Brno - Summit 15-16 July 2009 T. Basescu official	1 March 2004 V. Špidla	22 January 2008 C. Popescu-Tariceanu working	1 March 2005 C. Svoboda 12-13 November 2009 J. Kohout CEI session	22-23 October 2007 A. Cioroianu 16 April 2009 C. Diaconescu working

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Greece	22-23 November 2006 V. Klaus official	14-16 November 2000 K. Stefanopoulos 1-4 December 2009 K. Papoulias official	11-12 April 2008 M. Topolánek official	28-29 August 2005 K. Karamanlis	14-15 October 2001 J. Kavan official	11/2002 G. Papandreou NATO summit
Serbia	1-4 November 2008 V. Klaus 19-20 June 2009 V. Klaus summit of Central European presidents	16-17 June 2007 B. Tadić working	13-15 November 2005 J. Paroubek working	21 September 2001 Z. Djindjić working	26-30 June 2005 C. Svoboda working	14 November 2008 V. Jeremić working 27-28 March 2009 V. Jeremić to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.
Turkey	18-20 April 2006 V. Klaus state	6-8 March 2002 A. N. Sezer state 29-30 April 2009 A. Gül state	7-9 October 2008 M. Topolánek official	14-16 November 2007 R. T. Erdogan official	16-19 February 2006 C. Svoboda working 18-20 October 2009 J. Kohout official	6 November 2008 A. Babacan official 27-28 March 2009 A. Babacan to attend Gymnich Hluboká n. Vlt.

Middle East and North Africa

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Algeria					1-3 March 2002 J. Kavan official	
Bahrain			3/2001 M. Zeman working 17 and 19 January 2006 J. Paroubek working			
Egypt	7-9 April 2008 V. Klaus state		8-10 September 2003 V. Špidla official 29-31 March 2006 J. Paroubek official 18 January 2009 M. Topolánek working		22-24 January 2000 J. Kavan official 18 January 2004 C. Svoboda official 4-5 January 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 17 January 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 18 January 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 2 March 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 7-8 October 2009 J. Kohout official	9-10 October 2007 A. AboulGheit official 14-15 December 2008 A. AboulGheit official
Iraq		3-5 October 2005 J. Talabani working			24-25 November 2009 J. Kohout working	16-18 September 2007 H. Zebari Official
Iran						28 April 2004 K. Kharrazi working

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From Czech Republic	To CR
Israel	12-15 September 2005 V. Klaus official	30-31 March 2009 S. Peres official	2/2005 M. Zeman official 9-11 March 2008 M. Topolánek state 22-24 April 2009 M. Topolánek official 21-23 July 2009 J. Fischer official		13-17 July 2000 J. Kavan official 24-26 May 2002 J. Kavan official 12-14 July 2003 C. Svoboda official 21-22 September 2003 C. Svoboda official 19-21 December 2004 C. Svoboda official 11/2005 C. Svoboda working 30. 11-1 December 2008 K. Schwarzenberg official 5-6 January 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 23-25 June 2009 J. Kohout official	25-27 January 2000 D. Levy official 15-17 June 2004 S. Shalom official 30 May 2007 C. Livni official 6 May 2009 A. Lieberman working
Yemen		18-19 March 2006 Ali Abdullah Saleh working	20 March 2008 M. Topolánek official		29. 4-1 May 2006 C. Svoboda official	12-14 September 2001 Abu Bakr Abdullah al-Qirbi official

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Jordan	16-19 February 2005 V. Klaus official	24 May 2004 Abdullah II bin al-Hussein state 6-7 April 2009 Abdullah II bin al-Hussein state	8-11 March 2008 M. Topolánek official		1-3 June 2001 J. Kavan official 1-3 December 2004 C. Svoboda working 6 January 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 5-6 October 2009 J. Kohout official	
Kuwait	11-12 February 2001 V. Havel state				27-28 April 2002 J. Kavan official 30 November – 1 December 2004 C. Svoboda official	
Lebanon	3-5 May 2004 V. Klaus working	26-28 June 2002 E. Lahud official			28 February 2004 C. Svoboda working	
Libya						
Morocco			13-14 February 2006 J. Paroubek official			
Oman					30 April 2009 K. Schwarzenberg meeting with foreign minister	

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Palestinian Autonomous Territories		23 February 2009 M. Abbas official	23 April 2009 M. Topolánek official	26-27 June 2008 S. Fayyad official	15 July 2000 J. Kavan official 25 May 2002 J. Kavan official 17 January 2004 C. Svoboda official 18-20 November 2005 C. Svoboda official 30 November – 1 December 2008 K. Schwarzenberg official 1/2009 K. Schwarzenberg working 24 June 2009 J. Kohout official	20-22 June 2004 N. Shaath official 19 November 2008 R. Malki Official
Saudi Arabia	10-11 February 2001 V. Havel state 2/2005 V. Klaus working 8/2005 V. Klaus king's funeral					11 May 2006 Saud Al-Faisal Abdul-Aziz Al Saud working
United Arab Emirates			23-24 March 2008 M. Topolánek working			

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Syria					4-5 June 2001 J. Kavan official 28-29 February 2004 C. Svoboda official	
Tunisia	15-17 April 2009 V. Klaus state		10-12 September 2003 V. Špidla official 12-13 February 2006 J. Paroubek official			7-9 March 2001 H. Ben Yahia official

Subsaharan Africa

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date	Representative's name				
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Angola	9 December 2006 V. Klaus flight stopover and meeting	12 September 2003 J. E. dos Santos private 25-28 July 2006 J. E. dos Santos private			25-28 January 2006 C. Svoboda working	
Ethiopia						1-2 April 2009 Seyoum Mesfin working
Ghana						
RSA	9-13 December 2006 V. Klaus state	19-21 September 2000 vice-president J. Zuma official 19 May 2008 vice-president P. Mlambo-Ngcuka official			14-17 February 2001 J. Kavan official 16 January 2009 K. Schwarzenberg meeting with foreign minister	
Cape Verde			13-14 May 2008 M. Topolánek official			
Congo (DRC)						
Mali			18 May 2008 M. Topolánek official			
Mauritania					2005 C. Svoboda technical stop (aircraft defect)	
Mauritius						11/2001 A. K Gayan
Namibia					20-31 January 2006 C. Svoboda working	

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Nigeria	7-9 December 2006 V. Klaus state				2-4 February 2006 C. Svoboda official	7-9 June 2009 O. Maduekwe working
Seychelles		12 October 2009 Ex-president J. Mancham (to attend Forum 2000)			22-23 November 2007 K. Schwarzenberg working	
Sudan					2005 C. Svoboda working	24 January 2007 A. W. el- Samani consultation
Swaziland						1/2001 A. Shabangu official
Tanzania					31 January – 2 February 2006 C. Svoboda working	
Zambia						10/2005 R. S. Shikapwasha working 20-22 May 2008 K. J. Pande official
Zimbabwe						

North America

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Canada	6-13 November 2004 V. Klaus working	7-9 October 2007 Gov. Gen. M. Jean private 29 November - 3 December 2008 Gov. Gen. M. Jean official	28-29 February 2008 M. Topolánek working	20-22 November 2002 J. Chrétien NATO 2-3 July 2003 J. Chrétien official 5-6 May 2009 S. Harper working + EU-CDN summit	21-24 April 2006 C. Svoboda working	
USA	4-10 September 2000 V. Havel UN 17-23 September 2002 V. Havel official 18-22 June 2003 V. Klaus conf. 17-23 September 2003 V. Klaus conf. 18-22 November 2003 V. Klaus working 9-11 June 2004 V. Klaus R. Reagan's funeral	20-22 November 2002 G. W. Bush NATO 4-5 June 2007 G.W. Bush working 4-5 April 2009 B. Obama working/ EU-USA summit	4-10 November 2001 M. Zeman working 31 March - 6 April 2002 M. Zeman working 14-21 July 2003 V. Špidla official 25-28 February 2008 M. Topolánek official	22-23 October 2009 J. Biden working	11-16 April 2000 J. Kavan working 10-16 September 2000 J. Kavan working + UN 13. -20 May 2001 J. Kavan working 30 October – 2 November 2001 J. Kavan working 9-16 November 2001 J. Kavan UN 5-9 March 2003 C. Svoboda working 12-14 July 2004 C. Svoboda working 19-21 April 2006 C. Svoboda	5-8 March 2000 M. Albright official 20-22 November 2002 C. Powell working pre- NATO 8 July 2008 C. Rice working 4-5 April 2009 H. Clinton working EU-USA summit

	<p>7-9 November 2004 V. Klaus working</p> <p>8 March 2005 V. Klaus working</p> <p>19-24 September 2005 V. Klaus working</p> <p>23-27 April 2006 V. Klaus working</p> <p>4-7 May 2006 V. Klaus working</p> <p>4-10 March 2007 V. Klaus working</p> <p>23-28 September 2007 V. Klaus working</p> <p>26-30 May 2008 V. Klaus working</p> <p>29 September - 3 October 2008 V. Klaus working</p> <p>20-21 September 2009 V. Klaus working + UN</p> <p>4-7 November 2009 V. Klaus working</p>				<p>working 16 May 2006 C. Svoboda working</p> <p>20 September 2006 A. Vondra working + UN</p> <p>19-21 April 2007 K. Schwarzenberg working</p> <p>5-11 June 2008 K. Schwarzenberg working</p> <p>8-10 February 2009 K. Schwarzenberg working</p> <p>19 September 2009 J. Kohout working + UN</p>	
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NB: 1) this is a list of working and official visits (not, for example, conference visits by the president); 2) attendance at the UN GA is only registered if meetings with US representatives were held on the sidelines

Central and South America

Country	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Argentina			2-7 March 2006 J. Paroubek official			1-3 October 2008 J. Taiana official
Brazil	22-26 November 2009 V. Klaus state	11-12 April 2008 L. I. Lula da Silva working	2-4 March 2006 J. Paroubek official		13 March 2002 J. Kavan working	
Dominican Republic					7/2005 C. Svoboda official	13 May 2009 C. M. Troncoso working EU-Rio
Ecuador						13 May 2009 F. F. Benítez working EU-Rio
Guatemala					7/2005 C. Svoboda official	7/2003 E. A. G. Giron official
Chile			1-5 November 2003 V. Špidla official		5-8 December 2000 J. Kavan official	13 May 2009 M. F. Amunategui working EU-Rio
Colombia			14-15 May 2008 M. Topolánek working		7-8 July 2005 C. Svoboda official	29 November 2004 C. Barco working 13 May 2009 J. Bermúdez working EU-Rio
Costa Rica						5-9 October 2005 R. Tovar working 13 May 2009 B. Stagno working EU-Rio
Cuba						13 May 2009 B. E. R. Parilla working EU-Rio

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Mexico		11-12 October 2001 V. Fox official	3-6 April 2002 M. Zeman official		30 November – 4 December 2000 J. Kavan 18-22 March 2002 J. Kavan UN	13 May 2009 P. E. Cantellano working EU-Rio
Panama						13 May 2009 S. L. Navarro working EU-Rio
Paraguay					7/2005 C. Svoboda official	20-22 October 2002 J. A. M. Ruffinelli official 5/2006 L. Rachid official
Peru	18-22 November 2009 V. Klaus state		5-7 November 2003 V. Špidla official 15-17 May 2008 M. Topolánek working (EU-LAC summit)		13-18 March 2002 J. Kavan	10-14 January 2000 F. de Trazegnies official 4-6 December 2007 J. A. G. Belaúnde official 13 May 2009 J. A. G. Belaúnde working EU-Rio
El Salvador						13 May 2009 M. A. de Barrillas working EU-Rio
Uruguay						13 May 2009 G. Fernandez working EU-Rio

NB: The EU-Rio meeting was the 14th meeting between the EU and the LAC group of states held in Prague in May 2009.

Asia and Pacific

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Afghanistan			3 October 2002 V. Špidla official		15-16 April 2007 K. Schwarzenberg official	28 January 2009 R. Sparta working
			1 April 2007 M. Topolánek official			
			8 May 2008 M. Topolánek working			
			28 October 2008 M. Topolánek working			
Australia					4-5 February 2004 C. Svoboda working	14-15 September 2005 A. Downer official
Bangladesh						
Bhutan						
China	14-26 April 2004 V. Klaus official		25-28 June 2005 J. Paroubek working	8-9 December 2005 W. Jiabao official	28-29 May 2007 K. Schwarzenberg + Y. Jiechi ASEM Hamburg	21-23 April 2001 T. Jiaxuan
	5/2006 V. Klaus + business mission		14-18 August 2008 M. Topolánek private – Olympic Games	20 May 2009 W. Jiabao 11 th EU- China summit Prague/ with V. Klaus and J. Fischer		
	27-28 September 2006 V. Klaus working		30 January 2009 M. Topolánek + W. Jiabao Brussels			
	20 May 2009 V. Klaus EU-China summit		4-6 September 2009 J. Fischer working			

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Hong Kong	14-26 April 2004 V. Klaus official		4-6 September 2009 J. Fischer working			
Macau	14 - 26 April 2004 V. Klaus official		4-6 September 2009 J. Fischer working			
Taiwan						
Philippines			6-7 September 2009 J. Fischer official		31 January – 3 February 2004 C. Svoboda working	6-10 September 2008 A. Romulo working
India	6-13 November 2005 V. Klaus state		6/2000 M. Zeman official 17-19 January 2006 J. Paroubek official		18-21 November 2007 K. Schwarzen- berg official	19-20 Febr. 2002 state minister O. Abdullah working 21-25 September 2003 state minister D. Singh working 8-9 September 2008 state minister A. Sharma working 28-29 June 2009 S.M.Krishna official
Indonesia	2000 V. Havel + A. Wahid New York UN	17-19 June 2002 M. Sukarno- putri			2-4 February 2002 J. Kavan 8-14 March 2005 C. Svoboda (Aceh) official 2009 J. Kohout + H. Wirajuda ASEM Hanoi	

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Japan	13-16 February 2007 V. Klaus official	6-9 July 2002 imperial couple Akihito+ Michiko state	22-26 June 2005 J. Paroubek official	20-22 August 2003 D. Koizumi official 3 May 2009 T. Aso official		14-16 July 2001 M. Tanaka working
Cambodia		19-26 September 2006 N. Sihamoni state			27-28 May 2009 J. Kohout EU-ASEAN	
Republic of Korea	23 May 2009 V. Klaus Seoul on sidelines of EU-KR summit		15-17 March 2001 M. Zeman official 1/2006 J. Paroubek	28 June – 3 July 2003 Goh Kun 20-22 April 2009 H. Seung- soo working		
Laos						9/2003 S. Lengsavat
Malaysia						18-20 September 2007 S. Albar working
Maldives	2009 V. Klaus + M. Nasheed on sidelines of 64 th UN GA					
Mongolia	25-27 September 2006 V. Klaus state					
New Zealand					6-9 February 2004 C. Svoboda official	8-10 May 2002 P. Goff official
Pakistan			8-10 May 2007 M. Topolánek official			13 March 2009 M. S. M. Qureshi Prague EU Troika

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Singapore	3-5 October 2006 V. Klaus official	12-16 June 2005 S. R. Nathan private	25-28 March 2001 Goh Chok Tong official		7-9 February 2002 J. Kavan official 21-22 November 2007 K Schwarzenberg EU-ASEAN	10-12 April 2008 G. Yeo
Sri Lanka						
Thailand					4-7 February 2002 J. Kavan 11-12 March 2005 C. Svoboda working	5-7 May 2003 S. Sathirathai
Vietnam	29.9-3 October 2006 V. Klaus official		21-23 March 2008 M. Topolánek official	12-13 September 2007 Ng.T. Dung official	12-15 March 2003 C. Svoboda official 7-9 October 2004 C. Svoboda + D. Nien ASEM summit 25-26 May 2009 J. Kohout ASEM, Hanoi	
East Timor					17-23 May 2002 J. Kavan	

Central Asia

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Kazakhstan	8-9 September 2004 V. Klaus official	21-22 November 2002 N. Nazarbayev NATO summit	11-12 February 2009 M. Topolánek working		29-30 January 2004 C. Svoboda working 29-30 May 2009 J. Kohout + M. Tazhin Dushanbe EU-Central Asia reg. dialogue 15 September 2009 J. Kohout EU min. Troika- Central Asia- Brussels 1-2 December 2009 J. Kohout + K. Saudabayev 17 th OSCE meeting, Athens	19-20 April 2009 M. Tazhin working
Kyrgyzstan	9-12 September 2004 V. Klaus official				29-30 May 2009 J. Kohout + K. Sarbayev Dushanbe EU-Central Asia reg. dialogue 15 September 2009 J. Kohout EU min. Troika- Central Asia- Brussels	21-22 November 2002 A. Aitmatov NATO summit

	President		Prime Minister		Foreign Minister	
	Date Representative's name Type of visit/reception					
Country	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR	From CR	To CR
Tajikistan		21-22 November 2002 E. Rahmon NATO summit			11/2003 C. Svoboda	
		7-11 October 2004 E. Rahmon			29-30 May 2009 J. Kohout reg. dialogue Dushanbe	
		8/2009 E. Rahmon private			15 September 2009 J. Kohout + H. Zarifi Brussels, EU-Central Asia	
Turkmenistan			13 February 2009 M. Topolánek working		29-30 May 2009 J. Kohout reg. dialogue Dushanbe	
					15 September 2009 J. Kohout EU min. Troika- Central Asia- Brussels	

Historically and Architecturally Important Buildings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Czernin Palace

The most important building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic is Czernin Palace, which is the seat of the minister and most of the ministry apparatus. Czernin Palace was built in 1669-1757 as the Prague seat of the family of the counts of Czernin of Chudenice and was the biggest palace in the city. The building was commissioned by Count Humprecht Jan Czernin of Chudenice



Czernin Palace Frontage

and the architect of the original palace was the north Italian Francesco Carratti. Under financial pressure, the Czernin family began to lease out part of the palace in the second half of the 18th century. For a time it housed, among other things, a collection of paintings of the Society of Patriotic Friends of Art, the predecessor of today's National Gallery. Inhabitants of the palace included the poor and, increasingly, the army. In 1851, the army bought the entire palace and converted it into a barracks. The palace interiors were totally ruined during this



Czernin Palace – Great Hall

time. In 1920, the palace was acquired by the recently founded Czechoslovak Republic, which decided to make it the seat of the foreign ministry. The run-down palace had to be renovated, which took place from 1929 to 1934 according to a project drawn up by architect Pavel Janák. The palace

building is mainly used for representational purposes. A new building had to be added to the original palace to provide sufficient capacity for administrative requirements. This project ran from 1934 to 1939 and the new building bears the architect's name: the Janák Extension. The complete renovation of the palace and the new building were not completed until the Nazi occupation, so the first institution that made full use of the entire complex was the Office of the Reichsprotektor. In 1945, Czernin Palace and the extension began to serve the requirements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Czernin Palace Garden

Tuscany Palace

Tuscany Palace was built in the years 1685-1695 for the Thun

family. The building was initiated by Count Michal Oswald Thun. The original project was designed by the eminent Prague-based French architect Jean Baptiste Mathey. In 1718, the



Tuscany Palace Exterior

Tuscany Palace was acquired by Anna Marie Franziska, Countess of Tuscany, who gave the palace its name. During her tenure, part of the palace was rebuilt to a design by architect Václav Špaček. After her death, the palace was inherited by the counts of Bavaria and passed into the hands of the Hapsburgs in the first half of the 19th century. After the

founding of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the palace became the principal seat of the foreign ministry. It remained so throughout the inter-war First Republic and was the seat of the first Czechoslovak foreign minister Edvard Beneš. From 1994 to 1998, the palace was completely renovated. This project received the biggest Czech architecture prize, the Grand Prix of the

Society of Czech Architects in the Reconstruction category. The Tuscany Palace today houses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' legal and consular sections.

Trautmannsdorf Palace

Trautmannsdorf Palace was built in the 17th century for the aristocratic Trautmannsdorf family. In the 19th century, the original baroque palace became the property of the state, which decided to found a workhouse there. The palace was converted in 1831-1833 to adapt it to that purpose. Besides the façade being renovated in the Classicist style, the interior rooms were converted into prison cells and workshops. After the founding of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the building partly served as a university hall of residence. After 1945, the palace was acquired by the interior ministry and used as the depository of the National Archives. The foreign ministry gained Trautmannsdorf Palace in 2005-2006. Today the building is badly run down and requires complete renovation.



Trautmannsdorf Palace

Carmelite Monastery

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Rytířská Street was built in 1671-1704 as a monastery of the Calced Carmelites attached to the Church of St. Havel, which Emperor Ferdinand II dedicated to the order in 1627. The monastery was built with support from Emperor Leopold I; the paintings preserved in the monastery date from his reign. Emperor Joseph II abolished the monastery in 1784. After various changes in use, the former monastery fell into the hands of the Municipal Savings Bank (Městská spořitelna), which had it renovated in 1937. In 1970-1971, the building was then converted into the House of Soviet Science and Culture. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acquired the building in 2005. Besides housing certain divisions of the foreign ministry, the building today



Carmelite Monastery

is the seat of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Czech Centre Prague.

“U kominíčka” House

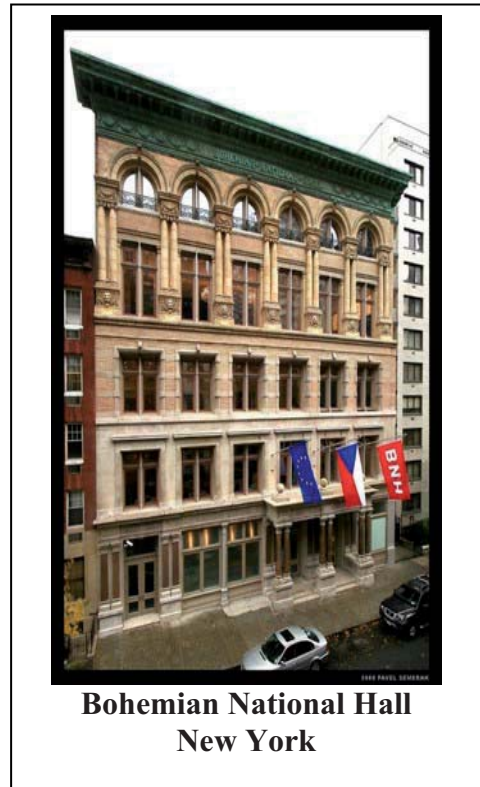
The building known as “U kominíčka” House is located in one of the oldest parts of Prague’s Little Quarter in Nerudova Street. The building’s cellars are the only remaining part of the original structure that stood on this site. The building was destroyed in the 1541 fire that consumed most of the Little Quarter district. When the ravaged district was rebuilt, a new building was erected in the late Renaissance style. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acquired “U kominíčka” House in 1970. Today it houses the Institute of International Relations.

Štiřín Castle

Štiřín Castle was the administrative centre of the Štiřín estate. The seat of the lord of the manor was originally a Gothic fortress built at the start of the 15th century. The fortress was destroyed during the Thirty Years’ War. Three ground floor rooms were preserved to this day, however. After the Thirty Years’ War, when the estate belonged to the counts of Wallenstein, the ruins were converted into a chateau. In 1751, the estate was bought by the Salm-Reifferscheid family, which immediately had it converted into today’s form. The chateau took on the appearance of a late baroque chateau in the French style, with a typical three-wing structure and a cour d’honneur. In 1822, the chateau was bought by the princely family of Rohan, who sold it to the Nostitz family just nine years later. In 1870, Štiřín was acquired by the well-known industrialist František Ringhoffer, the owner of the famous factory – later ČKD Tatra – in Prague’s Smíchov district. The chateau was nationalised after world war two. It was in the nationalised chateau that pacifist Přemysl Pitter cared for Jewish and German children rescued from German concentration camps and Czech internment camps. The ministry of education acquired the chateau in 1955. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic acquired Štiřín in 1991.

Bohemian National Hall, New York

During the 1880s Yorkville became the centre of the Czechoslovak community in New York, which was moving away from Lower Manhattan at that time. Bohemian National Hall was the focal point of the Czechoslovak community's social life. After world war two, Czechs and Slovaks began to move to other districts and spread all over New York, so Yorkville ceased to be the focal point of the Czechoslovak community. Bohemian National Hall began to fall into disrepair; by 1986 it had become so derelict that the local authorities declared it unfit for use. Renovation work began in the 1990s. In 1994, Bohemian National Hall was declared a New York cultural monument. In 2001, the building was acquired from the Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association by the Czech Republic for the symbolic price of one dollar. It now houses the Consulate General and Czech Centre.



**Bohemian National Hall
New York**

Embassy in Paris – Princess de Ligne Palace

The Paris embassy is the most opulent seat of any Czech embassy abroad. It originally belonged to French aristocrat Elisabeth Françoise Marie de la Rochefoucauld Princess de Ligne, who had it built in the late Historicist style in 1909-1912 near to Paris' newest attraction the Eiffel Tower. In 1919, it was rented by the Czechoslovak



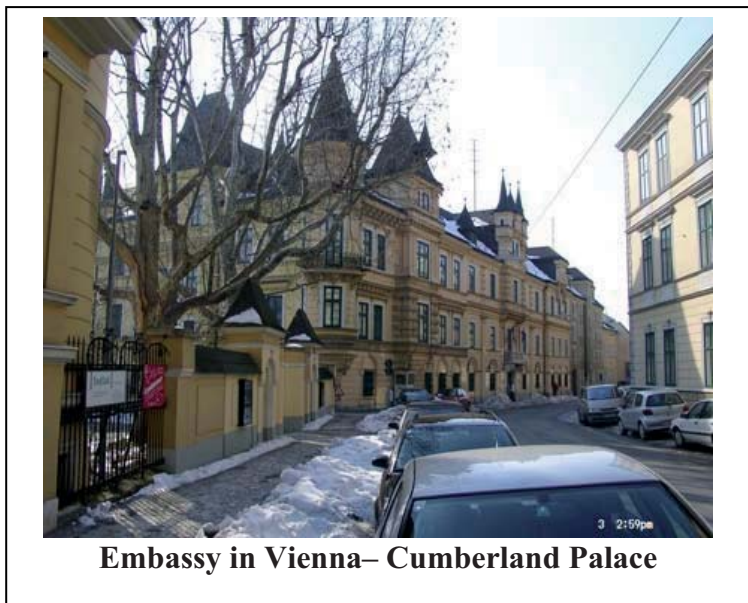
Embassy in Paris - Princess de Ligne Palace

Republic as the seat of its diplomatic mission in Paris. In 1924, the Czechoslovak Republic bought the building from Princess de Ligne for over 4 million francs. In the same year it was

renovated by French architects Charles Duval and Emmanuel Gonse, who retained its original appearance. The building of the Paris embassy is the oldest serving seat of a Czechoslovak and later Czech embassy abroad. It has been used for this purpose since 1919. From 1921, it was the seat of Czechoslovak ambassador Štefan Osuský, one of the country's most eminent inter-war diplomats. In March 1939, this building witnessed a legendary scene when, following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany, foreign minister František Chvalkovský issued an order requiring Czechoslovak ambassadors to surrender embassies to officials of the German government. Osuský was one of the diplomats who refused to follow the order. He had the German officials who came to take over the embassy removed from the premises. Under Osuský's leadership the embassy continued to operate until the Nazi occupation of Paris in June 1940, even though the Czechoslovak Republic had by then formally ceased to exist. It was one of the first centres of the nascent Czechoslovak foreign resistance. After world war two, the palace was reverted to the Czechoslovak diplomatic mission in Paris.

Embassy in Vienna – Cumberland Palace

The palace's historical core consists of three baroque and rococo buildings from the 18th century in Vienna's Penzing district. The first of these was built by Count Emanuel Sylva-Tarouca as his seat in Vienna in 1744. The count sold the palace to Empress Marie Theresa, who dedicated it to her brother-in-law Prince Karl of Lorraine, from whom this building got its name. As a replacement, Count Sylva-Tarouca commissioned the building of a new palace next to it. Both buildings were bought in 1867 by Emperor Franz Joseph I, who provided them to the King



Embassy in Vienna– Cumberland Palace

Georg V of Hannover. The Hannoverian dynasty sat on the British throne at the time. However, unlike in Great Britain, the monarch of Hannover could not be a woman. Consequently, after Queen Victoria came to power, members of the younger branch of the

royal dynasty, the Dukes of Cumberland, had to ascend to the throne of Hannover. In 1866, Hannover was conquered by King William I of Prussia, who annexed it to Prussian territory. The king of Hannover had to flee and settled in Vienna. The two buildings in the Penzing district were connected, partly renovated in the Historicist style and were renamed Palais Cumberland. In 1908, a third building was incorporated into the complex, a Hapsburg hunting chateau from the 18th century. Palais Cumberland was again partly rebuilt and acquired its current late Historicist street façade. After 1920, the palace has belonged to the Czechoslovak Republic, which first used it to house its consulate and then, in 1936, relocated its entire diplomatic mission here. The diplomatic mission was closed down after the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Part of the palace, the former Lorraine House and the main baroque ballroom, was acquired by the Max Reinhardt drama school. Palais Cumberland has again been the seat of the Czech mission since 1945; the drama school retained the part it moved into during the war.

Embassy in Bern – Villa Jenner

Villa Jenner was built by architect René von Wurstemberger in 1873-1875. This late Historicist villa was designed in the style of the French Renaissance. René von Wurstemberger was a respected architect in Switzerland who oversaw exceptionally prestigious commissions such as the City Theatre and City Library. The villa was originally intended for a wealthy local buyer but was obtained after world war one by the Czechoslovak Republic for the seat of its diplomatic mission in Switzerland. With a brief interruption during world war two, Villa Jenner has served as the seat of the Czechoslovak and then Czech embassy in Switzerland to this day.



Embassy in Bern – Villa Jenner

Embassy in Belgrade

The building of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Belgrade has been used by Czech diplomacy since the period of the interwar First Republic. Apart from the residence of the ambassador of the Czech Republic in Ankara, it is the only building that was specially built for Czech diplomacy in the interwar period and still serves that purpose today. It was built in 1927



Embassy in Belgrade

in neo-Classical style on a site that King Alexander I of Serbia dedicated to his friend President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk after world war one. Former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright has ties to the building. At the time of her birth, her father Josef Korbel worked at the embassy as press attaché. Her father returned to Belgrade in the years 1946-1948 as ambassador of the Czech Republic and during that period Madeleine Albright also lived with him there. In May 1941, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was defeated by Nazi Germany and forced to sign a capitulation. The signing took place in the embassy's Wooden Salon. In 1945, after world war two, the building again became the seat of the Czech diplomatic mission in Belgrade.

Embassy in Moscow

Besides the buildings' massive scale, interiors and driveway, granite panelling on the walls enhance the embassy's monumentality. The monumental style of the embassy complex was down to the fact that Moscow became the centre to which communist Czechoslovakia gravitated following the rise to



Embassy in Moscow

power of the communist regime. From the architectural point of view, the buildings of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Moscow are a textbook example of the Socialist Realism of the highest order.

Embassy in London



Embassy in London

The London embassy was designed by architect Jan Šrámek and his colleagues Jan Bočan and Karel Štěpánský from the Beta studio of the City of Prague Planning Institute. Work on the project began in 1965 and the building was completed in 1970. At that time, Jan Šrámek had already co-designed the check-in hall of Prague's Ruzyně airport. Subsequent works included the

former ČKD building at Můstek in the centre of Prague and, with Jan Bočan, the concourse of Central Station in Prague. Šrámek and his colleagues divided the London embassy into two buildings. The smaller building facing Kensington Palace Gardens served the embassy's administrative functions. The larger building facing Notting Hill Gate was mainly residential. The ground floor housed the consular offices and smaller state rooms. The mezzanine contained offices of the embassy's commercial section. Since the break-up of Czechoslovakia, the building of the original embassy has been used as the Slovak embassy, while the residential and consular buildings comprise the embassy of the Czech Republic. The building, which to a layman may resemble an ordinary prefabricated tower block, is a pioneering work of New Brutalism. This style was very popular among British architectural circles at the time when the Czechoslovak embassy was being built. Sir Robert Matthew, a leading light of New Brutalism in Great Britain, worked with the Czech architects on the final design of the embassy. In 1971, the complex of buildings won the most prestigious British architecture award of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) for the best work done by foreign architects in Great Britain.

Embassy in Berlin

The building of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Berlin was built in 1978 to a design by Vladimír and Věra Machonin. The Machonin husband-and-wife team also designed the Thermal Hotel in Karlovy Vary and the Prague department store Kotva. Besides the striking exteriors, the interiors' tasteful use of bright colours, a typical feature of the duo's work, is

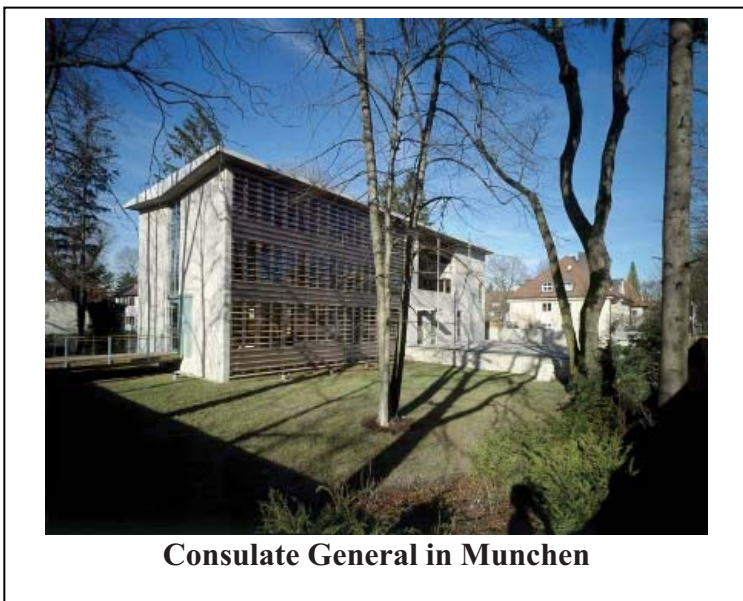


Embassy in Berlín

also remarkable. From the architectural point of view, the building is an important structure that was created for the purposes of Czechoslovak diplomacy during the period of “normalisation”.

Consulate General in Munich

In architectural terms, the building of the Consulate General in Munich is one of the most significant achievements of Czech diplomacy following the Velvet Revolution. It was created



Consulate General in Munchen

in 2001 to a design by Josef Pleskot, Radek Lampa and Jitka Svobodová from the firm of AP Ateliér. In 2003, the building won the Interior of the Year award from the Union of Visual Artists of the Czech Republic. International recognition followed in 2004, when the architects received the Piranesi Award for their creation.

Embassy in Vilnius

The building of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Vilnius is another significant architectural creation supporting Czech diplomacy after the Velvet Revolution. It was designed by Markéta Smrčková, Jindřich Starý, Tomáš Starý, Jiří Stejskalík a Michal Schwarz from the firm of Lennox architecti. The project was completed in 2004. The



Embassy in Vilnius

design consists of a set of two buildings, the first of which houses the embassy offices and the second the ambassador's residence and rooms for diplomatic couriers.

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