



Tisková zpráva

Declaration of the Visegrad Group “Responsibility for a Strong NATO”

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, declare our decisive resolve to promote regional and Euro-Atlantic security by strengthening our political commitment and enhancing defence capabilities. NATO, founded on strong bonds between North America and Europe and offering the assurance of collective defence, will continue to remain the cornerstone of our security. Keeping the transatlantic partnership strong and stable is in our shared and vital interest.

The shifting focus of U.S. foreign and security policy as a response to evolving conventional and emerging threats lends urgency to the need to contribute adequately to countering these threats through European political will and military capacity. The upcoming NATO Summit in Chicago will be a good opportunity to clarify mutual obligations on both sides of the Atlantic: a lasting and substantial U.S. commitment to Europe and Europe’s more coherent and visible investment in defence capabilities.

We adhere to our commitment to continuing the implementation of the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept and its three core tasks – Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security. We must ensure that NATO **capabilities** meet the full spectrum of requirements arising from those tasks and remain in line with the agreed Level of Ambition of the Alliance. We expect the Defence Package for Chicago to further this objective. Our experience from the operations and missions of the past two decades constitutes an important parameter for further transformation.

The NATO Response Force is a crucial operational tool of the Alliance and a means for increasing credibility and **interoperability** of our defence capabilities, as well as a driver for their transformation. We strongly support conducting exercises based on Article 5 scenarios, including live exercises of the NATO Response Force on our territories. In this respect, we urge Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013 to be conducted as a live exercise. We encourage Allies to actively engage in this exercise. On our part, we reaffirm our determination to provide robust force contributions to this exercise, as well as to other multinational military exercises in the region, covering, among other things, military police activities, logistics and engineering.

Capability development in NATO and the EU must be mutually supportive in order to avoid duplications. We see the concepts of the NATO Response Force and the EU Battlegroups as complementary. We are committed to setting up the 2016 Visegrad Group EU Battlegroup to increase our collective and individual combat capacity to be used either by the EU or NATO. We welcome the Allied Command Transformation-European Defence Agency efforts to ensure synergies between the Smart Defence and Pooling & Sharing projects.

NATO’s Deterrence and Defence Posture should continue to rely on the balanced mix of conventional, nuclear and missile defence capabilities in order to meet the challenges of the evolving security environment. A continued and adequate presence of U.S. capabilities in Europe is an integral part of this posture. The Deterrence and Defence Posture Review should also reconfirm NATO’s readiness and willingness to engage Russia on the basis of reciprocity on all topics, including

transparency of tactical nuclear weapons. NATO should also discuss the consequences of increased defence spending and acquisition of advanced capabilities by some traditional and emerging powers.

The Smart Defence initiative is an important driver for maintaining and increasing both our collective and national defence capabilities. We see NATO's Alliance Ground Surveillance as a fundamental pillar of allied Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities. We therefore support the common funding of its operational and related security investment costs. These financial arrangements should be applied to other similar NATO capabilities too. Missile Defence is another core element of our collective defence that will contribute to the indivisible security of the Alliance. It is critical to declare Interim Operational Capability in Chicago. We will continue to support the extended Baltic Air Policing mission.

Furthermore, together with our partners in the region we are going to contribute to Smart Defence through concrete individual commitments in the following areas: air controller training (FAC/JTAC); Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defence (CBRN); helicopter pilot training (MATC); joint logistics; medical treatment facilities; multinational experimentation; pooling maritime patrol aircraft; training in Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED), and others. In order to complement Smart Defence and to substantiate the Connected Forces Initiative, we are ready to contribute to enhancing NATO's education and training capabilities by making greater use of existing ACT training centres as well as national and multinational facilities.

In **Afghanistan**, we remain committed to the principle of "in together – out together." Our primary focus will be to ensure the sustainability of the Afghan National Security Forces through continuing training and mentoring and with steadily growing Afghan ownership. It is important that all nations taking part in the operation coordinate closely their future plans in Afghanistan. It is essential for the Visegrad Group that the military and civilian engagement in Afghanistan leads to a successful transition.

Our own experience confirms that the **ability of NATO to welcome new members** is one of the most important and successful tools for spreading stability and security, contributing to the objective of creating a Europe whole, free and at peace. Therefore we will continue to support those countries that are willing and able to assume responsibilities of NATO membership and whose inclusion can contribute to our security. We commend the efforts of these countries and express our sincere hope that we will welcome them in the Alliance as soon as possible.

The Alliance's **partnership policy** has been one of the most successful tools in our cooperative approach to security. Coping with current and future risks and threats requires a global network of partner nations and organisations. We should further cooperate with nations that share our common values and contribute significantly to NATO's fundamental tasks. The NATO Summit in Chicago should reconfirm this approach.

The Visegrad Group countries are ready to shoulder their share of responsibility for maintaining a coherent and effective NATO. The task ahead is to face the challenge posed by a dynamic security environment, building upon the credibility of our Alliance. To achieve this objective, we will work constructively to reinforce political solidarity and advance capability development. To meet this goal, we are open to pragmatic and result-oriented cooperation with our Allies and partners. We are looking forward to discussing and pushing forward these issues through concrete decisions taken at the Alliance's Chicago Summit.