

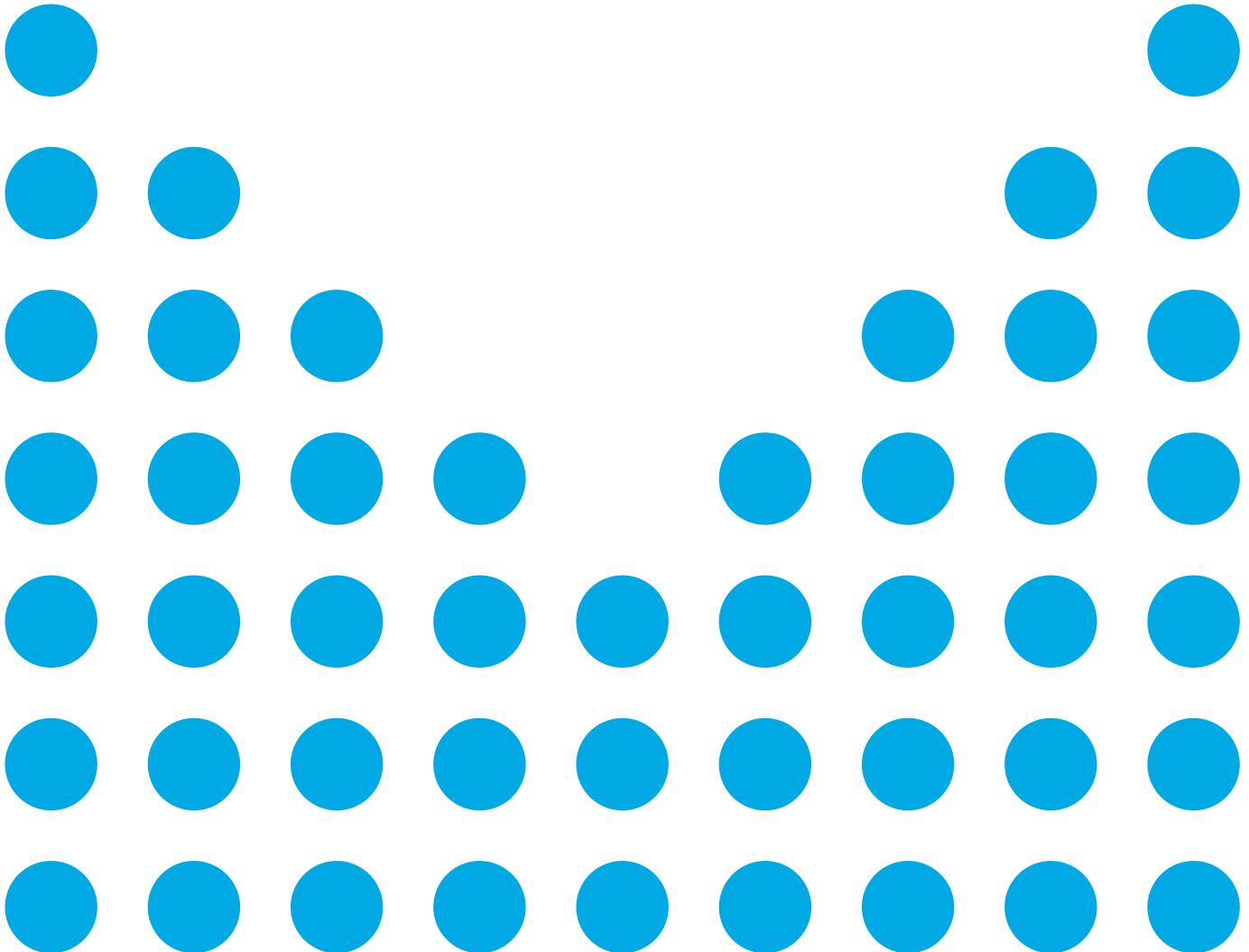


MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

PRIORITIES OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR FOR THE CZECH PRESIDENCY IN THE EU

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BUILDING ON FIRM FOUNDATIONS



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Introduction

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Dear reader,

You are holding a publication presenting the priorities of the Ministry of the Interior for the Czech Presidency in the European Union in the first half of the year 2009.

I see the European Union as a common house, a home that all of us share, each day contributing through our actions with what we have learnt from our parents and inherited from our ancestors. At the same time, brick after brick we build up new ideas to be able to respond to the demands of our hectic times. The aspirations of the Ministry of the Interior for the Czech Presidency are to help manage this house in such a way that every one of its inhabitants knows that in this house they can feel safe and "at home". To achieve this goal, we have set out several programme priorities, which you can find described on the following pages.

Finally, I have to point out that the Czech Republic will be presiding over the EU in no easy times. The whole world is facing serious economic problems and security threats. In addition, the period will also see the end of term of the current European Parliament. Nevertheless, I am convinced that none of these facts will prevent us from doing good work at the head of the European Union; that we will successfully cope with all new challenges, fulfil the tasks awaiting us, and thus help reinforce the foundations of our common "European house", making it a safer and more pleasant place to live.



1 Modern technologies

The use of modern technologies and information networks is a key security issue of today. It is linked to the Government priority "Europe without Barriers" and will be the umbrella topic of the entire Czech Presidency in the area of home affairs. The Czech Republic wants to initiate a political discussion on the issue "Use of modern technologies for security purposes and a secure use of modern technologies". This should cover, apart from other things, a search for balance between security

and technologies on the one hand and protection of privacy on the other. The roles of modern technologies in the field of security and the development of European information networks and databases call for a global and concerted approach. The Czech Presidency will therefore seek to open a debate which would lead to the development of a common methodology for efficient implementation of new instruments in the security agenda.



Use of modern technologies for security purposes and a secure use of modern technologies.



2 Protection of children

The priorities of the forthcoming Presidency include the essential issue of child protection. The Czech Presidency intends to stimulate a discussion on various aspects of protecting children in today's world. Within this topic, it will concentrate on active police cooperation in searching for missing children, in particular through better use of the Schengen Information System. The aim is to draw attention to the problem of missing and kidnapped children and the protection of children from criminal offenders.

The Czech Presidency will also focus on combating illegal Internet content and child abuse through the Internet. The main activity in this area will be a ministerial conference entitled "Safer Internet for Children – fighting together against illegal content and conduct online" to be held in April 2009.

The Czech Presidency will build on the Council Conclusions concerning the coordination mechanism for searching for missing children.



The Czech Presidency intends to stimulate a discussion on various aspects of protecting children in today's world.



3 Rational anti-drug policy

Fight against drugs is a long-standing subject of interest in all EU Member States. The Czech Republic will pay a special attention to this topic. It will take the first steps in the implementation of the new EU Action Plan on Drugs for 2009–2012, which is based on the overall EU Strategy on Drugs and which was adopted in December 2008.

One of the priorities of the Czech Presidency will be the reduction of drug supply. Also the manufacture and use of amphetamine drugs will be in particular focus.

The Czech Republic will also coordinate a joint position of the EU at the annual session of the UN Commission for Narcotic Drugs, which will include the ten-year review of the UNGASS process (20th United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs).

A geographic priority in this area continues to be the Eastern dimension of the EU Neighbourhood Policy. In this connection, a special attention will be given to the development of a programme of EU's technical assistance to Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and, if possible, Georgia. The Czech Republic will also try to draw upon the French initiative on stepping up the fight against drugs in West Africa.



The Czech Presidency intends to focus on the effective start of the implementation of the new EU drugs Action Plan on Drugs for the Period 2009–2012.



4 Complementary and flexible migration policy

We will support a balanced approach to the migration policy, covering the complementary issues of migration and asylum. We will strive for an efficient complementary and flexible EU migration policy that will arise from a discussion based on real facts, reflect the actual needs of the EU and its Member States and be flexible enough to respond to the changing migration developments in the EU.

We will focus on legal (working) migration, being aware of its positive impacts in view of the unfavourable demographic development in Europe and the shortage of domestic labour in certain sectors. At the same time, we will struggle for removing the transition periods for the free movement of person, as we believe that the EU labour markets should be completely opened up for citizens of all Member States. In connection with legal migration, we will deal with the issue of integration of foreigners, including the inter-cultural dialogue, which plays an

important role in peaceful integration of immigrants of various religions and cultures into the society.

We will also target illegal migration to ensure better security for EU citizens.

During our Presidency, we will continue building the Common European Asylum System. The aim is to ensure, on the one hand, access to international protection for those who really need it and on the other to minimize the room for abusing asylum procedures by persons seeking illegal entry in the EU.

In developing the Global Approach to Migration, we will accentuate the countries neighbouring the EU in the East and South East and qualitatively improving mutual relations towards genuine migration partnerships.



We will strive for an efficient complementary and flexible EU migration policy that will arise from a discussion based on real facts.





5 Schengen cooperation, border control and visa policy

The Schengen cooperation denotes the cooperation of states within the Schengen area – a territory of states with no border checks at the common internal borders. Instead, controls concentrate on the external Schengen borders. In order to maintain a high level of security for citizens, it is necessary to adopt compensating measures in the areas of police cooperation, visa and consular practices, data protection or access to the Schengen Information System. These measures compensate for the absence of checks at the internal borders.

Information System. A priority regarding the visa policy will be the adoption of the Community Code on Visas, which is to replace the current legislation governing visas and further harmonize the application of visa rules by Member States. Another activity to be pursued will be the evaluation of the readiness of the new EU Member States – Bulgaria and Romania – to join Schengen as well as the evaluation of some of the states already fully participating in the Schengen cooperation. During the Czech Presidency, the integration of Switzerland into the Schengen area will also be finalized and border checks at its airports removed.

The priorities of the Czech Presidency in this area include the preparation of the launch of the second generation Schengen Information System and a maximum progress in the development of the Visa

In the field of external border control, we will particularly focus on making progress in the area of integrated border management on the external EU borders.



The Czech Republic will work towards further development of Schengen cooperation.



6 Police cooperation



During its Presidency, the Czech Republic will mainly focus on the already mentioned topic of child protection, in particular the issue of Safer Internet for Children. This priority also relates to other areas of cooperation and can be perceived as one of the aspects of combating illegal Internet content, i.e. a part of the fight against cyber crime.

Following the activities of the French Presidency, the Czech Presidency will continue drafting a new electronic Handbook on Police Cooperation and the development of the Police and Customs Common Centres. The Czech Republic will also work towards improving road safety, both by means of regular exchange of operational information relating to accidents, their consequences, road closures and traffic density, and by fighting against illegal car racing with cross-border dimension.

We will also focus on troublemakers at sports events, in particular with a view to serious crime prevention, making use of a new category of alerts in the Schengen Information System. The Czech Republic will also be active in supporting the enhancement of international cooperation in the area of police training. In the framework of the European Police College (CEPOL), we will primarily promote simplification of the organizational structure of this agency in order to increase its efficiency and focus on evaluating and promoting its activities. Furthermore, in the course of the Czech Presidency, the election of a new director of the European Police Office (Europol) will be held.



The Czech Republic will mainly focus on combating illegal Internet content as a part of the fight against cyber crime.



7 Fight against terrorism and organized crime

An important priority of the Czech Presidency will be to make progress in combating terrorism; the Czech Republic will take over a number of already launched or prepared activities in this field.

Terrorist radicalisation and recruitment remains to be a major problem in this area, and the Czech Presidency will coordinate the implementation of the European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism and the related Action Plan.

The Czech Presidency will also coordinate further implementation of the European Union Action Plan on Enhancing Security of Explosives. We will support further research for related technical solutions and the set up of systems and databases listed in the Action Plan.

The Czech Republic will focus on deepening cooperation with partners from the Western Balkans, including enhanced cooperation in combating terrorism.

During the Czech Presidency, the second round of Member States' evaluations relating to terrorism preparedness will continue.

In the area of organized crime, it is mainly trafficking in human beings that we regard as a key issue. Our Presidency will build on the Member States' and the Commission's activities carried out so far with a view to preparing the mechanisms for data collection and situation assessment in the area of human trafficking, as well as the trends in the prevention of this crime and the assistance programmes for its victims.



An important priority of the Czech Presidency will be to make progress in combating terrorism.



8 Civil protection

In the field of civil protection, the Czech Republic will generally support activities facilitating better coordination of the Member States, including the Early Warning System, and strengthening the capacities of the Monitoring and Information Centre.

Furthermore, the Czech Republic will focus on EU citizens' awareness in the area of civil protection, aiming to increase the awareness of possible dangers, possibilities of prevention, emergency warnings, and the recommended behaviour in such situations.

The Czech Republic will develop projects within the common programme of the Trio Presidency and continue negotiations on the establishment of European disaster management training. This initiative is connected with another important topic, which is the approval and operational application of civil protection modules (human and material resources which can be provided by individual states in case of emergencies). The Czech Republic would like to concentrate above all on drafting a list of the existing modules in individual Member States and adjusting it with respect to their workability.



The Czech Republic will focus on EU citizens' awareness in the area of civil protection.



9 External relations

The current global security challenges require the EU to cooperate closely in justice and interior affairs with third countries and international organizations. In this field, the Czech Presidency will concentrate mainly on the activities already in progress. It will not only focus on the cooperation with the candidate countries and the states with European prospects (Western Balkans, Croatia in particular), but will also carry on negotiating on enhanced cooperation with the

states of the southern and eastern wing of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It will pay a special attention to the process of fulfilling and evaluating the criteria set out in the agreements with the Western Balkan countries with a view to introducing a visa free regime and the development of relations with EU strategic partners in the area of justice and home affairs, i.e. the USA and the Russian Federation.



The current global security challenges require the EU to cooperate closely in justice and interior affairs with third countries and international organizations.



10 A new multi-annual programme for Justice and Home Affairs

We expect that a new multi-annual programme will be drawn up in 2009 setting out the general priorities and political goals in the area of EU internal security for the period 2010–2014 and at the same time reflecting the current problems in this area, the EU enlargement to 27 Member States and, as the case may be, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Already in the past, the Czech Republic took an active part in the Informal High Level Advisory Group on the Future of European

Home Affairs Policy. It also co-authored this group's Final Report, which should serve as an inspiration in the preparation of the new EU programme. During the Czech Presidency, the European Commission will submit its draft to be discussed by the Member States and the European Parliament. Therefore, the Czech Republic intends to engage intensely in the preparation of the multi-annual plan already during its Presidency.



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