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State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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CONTENT:

[RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[II INITIAL CONDITIONS](#)

II.1 General Conditions

II.2 Obligations Following from Preparation for Accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union

II.3 Economic Aspects of SEP CR

[III PRIORITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS](#)

III.1 Acute Problems in the Quality of Components of the Environment

III.2 Problems in the Environmental Infrastructure

III.3 Urgent Structural Problems in Environmental Protection

III.4 Global Aspects, International Commitments and Shared Responsibility of the Czech Republic

[IV PRINCIPLES OF SEP CR](#)

IV.1 Sustainable Development

IV.2 Public Participation in Formation and Implementation of SEP

IV.3 Other Broadly Accepted Principles

IV.4 Inter-Sectoral Cooperation and Sectoral Policy Integration

[V TARGETS AND MEASURES OF SEP CR](#)

V.1 General Targets of SEP CR:

V.2 Measures and Targets for the Individual Components of the Environment

V.3 System of Selected Indicators

[VI SECTORAL POLICY MEASURES AND OBJECTIVES](#)

VI.1 Extraction of Mineral Resources

VI.2 Energy

VI.3 Industry and Trade

VI.4 Waste Management

VI.5 Transport

VI.6 Agriculture and Forest Management

VI.7 Water Management, Care for Water

VI.8 Health and the Environment

VI.9 Travel and Tourism

VI.10 Regional Development

VI.11 Education

[VII ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS](#)

VII.1 Legal Instruments

VII.2 Economic Instruments

VII.3 Voluntary Environmental Instruments

VII.4 Information

VII.5 Instruments of Education, Enlightenment and Public Awareness

VII.6 Institutional Instruments

VII.7 Public Participation and Agenda 21

VII.8 Research and Development

VII.9 Land Use Planning

VII.10 An Ecosystem Approach

VII.11 International Cooperation

[VIII COSTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROPOSED TARGETS](#)

VIII.1 Strategy of Target Financing

VII.2 Continual Economic Evaluation of Targets

[IX ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY TARGETS](#)

IX.1 Baseline Scenario: Europe 1990 - 1995.

IX.2 Optimum Scenario: Europe 2005.

[X OVERVIEW OF SELECTED ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INDICATORS AND TARGETS](#)

[XI CONCLUSIONS](#)

Harmonization and Implementation of the EC Environmental Legislation

Systematic Up-Dating of State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic

[GLOSSARY OF TERMS](#)

**THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC**



RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

of January 10, 2001 No. 38
on the Updated State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic

The Government hereby:

I. approves the updated State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic contained in Part III of the material submitted, as modified by the comments of the Government, where the numerical values given in Chapter VIII - Costs and Effectiveness of the Proposed Targets are indicative;

II. entrusts the Prime Minister with submitting the updated State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic as set forth in point I of this Resolution to the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament the Czech Republic and President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic as information for the relevant Parliamentary Committees of the Czech Republic;

III. requires

1. that the Minister of the Environment carry out further updating of the State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic and submit it to the Government by December 31, 2002, together with a report on the fulfilment thereof.
2. that the members of the Government implement the priorities, tasks and targets following from the updated State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic as set forth in point I of this Resolution (particularly in relation to Chapter VI.1 - Extraction of Minerals Resources, VI.2 - Energy, VI.3 - Industry and Trade, VI.4 - Waste Management, VI.5 - Transport, VI.6 - Agriculture and Forest Management, VI.7 - Water Management, Care for Water, VI.8 - Health and the Environment, VI.9 - Tourism and VI.11 - Educational System) in sectoral policies and activities of the sectors in the framework of the capabilities of the state budget, including the search for further financial resources,
3. that the members of the Government and heads of other central bodies of the state administration assist newly formed self-governing units in implementing the ideas, priorities and targets of the updated State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic as set forth in point I of this Resolution.

To be implemented by:
Members of the Government and
the heads of other central bodies
of the state administration

Prime Minister

Miloš Zeman M.Eng.

INTRODUCTION

The updated State Environmental Policy of the Czech Republic (SEP CR) is based on documents prepared in 1999, which the Government of CR acknowledged in its Resolutions of April 14, 1999, No. 323, of January 12, 2000, No. 54, and of July 3, 2000, No. 666. The Minister of the Environment has been asked to submit an

augmented and updated SEP CR to the Government for approval, taking into account the assessment of environmental impact pursuant to § 14 of Law No. 244/ 1992 Coll., and other relevant policies.

The SEP CR is a basic, strategic, cross-sectoral document which forms the foundation for detailed programs for the individual components of the environment and for dealing with particular environmental issues. The individual programs are specific and provide details of targets, responsibilities and deadlines.

The SEP CR formulates policy principles not only in respect of environment, in the traditional, narrower sense of the word, but also specifies the means and targets for implementation of environmental considerations in regional and sectoral policies, such as the energy, raw material, transport, agriculture and etc. Thus, the SEP CR constitutes a highly integrated and important Government document.

At the present time, the main priority is to harmonize the environmental policy of the Czech Republic with the requirements associated with the anticipated accession of this country to the EU. Thus, there is a direct connection between the SEP CR and the National Program for the Preparation of the CR for Membership in the EU, with the Approximation Strategy in the Environment, and with the Implementation Plan for the Chapter 22: Environment, and with the State Program for Conservation of Nature and the Landscape of the Czech Republic.

At the Helsinki Summit of the Council of Europe, the European Commission was requested to prepare a draft long term strategy for sustainable development and to present this draft to the Council of Europe in June, 2001. This strategy will also be used for the ten-year evaluation of results of the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in 2002. Immediately following this summit, it was determined that the National Strategy of Sustainable Development in CR should be prepared by the end of the year 2001, so that it could be presented at the 10th Anniversary of the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in 2002. The updated SEP CR should be one of the basic documents for this strategy.

The State Environmental Policy and the National Strategy of Sustainable Development must reflect the conclusions of the Helsinki summit and the adopted documents on integration of the environmental policy into sectoral policies Collected working materials of the ME Consultation Forum for Accession to the EU – Documents of the EU Helsinki Summit, Ministry of the Environment, January 2000. Global evaluation of the 5th Environmental Action Program (5EAP) provides a number of indications for the future direction of environmental policy. The 6th Environmental Action Program, which has just been completed and which the Commission should present at the end of January 2001, will form the basis for European environmental strategy in the near future and will form the main pillar of the Community Strategy for Sustainable Development. It will be important to take this Community Strategy into account in the national Strategy, as it will view environmental policy in the broader context of an enlarged EU. The Commission expects that the main priorities of the 5th Environmental Action Program will remain valid and that future activities should be based on these priorities.

The updated SEP CR includes analysis of current conditions and deals specifically

with each of the main aspects of environmental protection in the period between 2001 and 2005. It will be beneficial to update the policy after two years in the light of the speed of developments in environmental issues.

The SEP CR is the result of broad discussion and intersectoral deliberations at all levels, and attempts to take into account foreign experience. Business associations, the sectors, professional groups and the general public concerned with protection of the environment all played an important role in its formulation. The updated version was created at a time when the state and development of the environment increasingly affects quality of life, prosperity, poverty, economic activity, security and relations between individuals, nations and continents. In spite of numerous attempts by professionals, nations and the international community, to exert control over the exploitation of natural resources, their distribution and effective conversion in order to guarantee sustainable development, conservation of the full diversity of plant and animals species has not yet been achieved.

The gradual loss of global equilibrium between human activities and nature increasingly affects the life of human society on the Earth. It is apparent that conditions in the environment will fundamentally affect the course of events and all human activities and state policies in the near future. The inadequacies of previous technical analyses and the impacts of poor decision-making in the past are becoming critical in the light of the dramatic increase in the population of the Earth and the increase in the material requirements of its inhabitants.

The general framework of the SEP reflects the interest of the Czech Republic in further improving the quality of the environment in CR and in implementing the principles of sustainable development on a global scale. The CR accepts its portion of responsibility for the state of the environment on planet Earth, participates in the mechanisms of international co-operation. Through activities within its territory and through support for activities in other areas the Czech Republic is taking part in dealing with existing global issues.

The Czech Republic, as a country in the continent of Europe, affects and will be increasingly affected by environmental factors in the world. It will also participate in the millennium evaluation of the principal global ecosystems, which has been begun by the World Resources Institute, in co-operation with the UN Development Program, UN Environment Program and the World Bank, and which the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, endorsed at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, in New York. The target will be to determine the state of the individual categories of ecosystems, since the global economy and individual persons are dependent on the ability of ecosystems to continue to provide the same or greater amounts of resources and services. Political approaches and decisions will be derived and elaborated on the basis of the analysis of the results, and are to include:

- a) improving the level of care for ecosystems through the application of best practice programs and the development of more effective institutions for their implementation;
- b) on the basis of the information obtained on the state of ecosystems, consideration will be given to decision making mechanisms which take account of the various values and services of ecosystems and of environmental, political, social and economic targets;

c) the general public will be encouraged to participate directly in care for ecosystems, in the first instance through local communities, whose direct interest in protection of ecosystems is the greatest.

The Government is aware of these issues and accepts responsibility for future trends and, together with individuals and through the SEP and the interconnected sectors and regional policies, will attempt to the maximum possible degree to ensure favourable changes that will lead to sustainable living, sustainable economic development and a better quality of life.

I UPDATED SEP CR

The Government of the Czech Republic recognises the necessity to fully support the policy of sustainable development and other principles derived from this policy and is aware of its obligation to implement these principles in all the activities of society. In accordance with its declaration of August 1998, it wishes to demonstrate to individuals, institutions and the international community that it is aware of its responsibility for the state of the environment in this country and of the joint responsibility for the state of the environment in the European continent and the entire World. The Government accepts this responsibility and, through its members, transfers it to all the central bodies of the state administration and, through adopted laws, also to its citizens.

The Government cannot ensure the transition to the pathway of sustainable development by itself. Thus, the SEP CR is intended to act as an inspiration, motivation and challenge to the general public. Whilst recognising the results achieved in protection of the environment over the past decade, the SEP CR identifies the need for change, and sets out the means and targets of these changes:

- improvements in the behaviour of individuals as producers, consumers, inhabitants and visitors to the natural and artificial environment in this country,
- similar changes in community organizations,
- increased informal civic initiatives aimed to improve the approach to the environment,
- additional support for science,
- systematic education and enlightenment of the present and next generation, and
- broader international co-operation.

Updating of the SEP CR is necessitated by a number of factors, including the current unsatisfactory state of the environment in a great many respects, the preparation of the Czech Republic for accession to the EU, the increasing tension caused by global environmental changes and the need for international co-operation in the framework of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

For these reasons, it is essential:

- to achieve a further improvement in the quality of the environment as a whole and the state of its components;
- to implement the principle of sustainable development and further integrate environmental concerns into sectoral policies,

- to improve environmental education, enlightenment and public awareness (EEEE) and to coordinate these approaches
- to apply the principles of economics and develop economically-aware approaches in all plans and targets in environmental protection.

In the period 1997-99, the environmental performance of the Czech Republic was evaluated in the framework of OECD. This is to date the largest and most independent form of evaluation of the environment in this country. The Czech Republic was the 23rd country of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development to undergo the first cycle of this evaluation procedure. The following points were emphasized as part of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the OECD Environmental Performance Report, dealing with implementation of environmental policy:

- the traditions of the Rainbow Program (1990) and the SEP of 1995 should be continued; areas that remain neglected for various reasons should be developed;
- quantified targets and time periods for achieving them should be set in relation to preparation for accession to the EU;
- the level of information and data on the state and quality of the environment (e.g. wastes, expenditures for protection of the environment) should be improved in accordance with Law No. 123/1998 Coll.;
- greater emphasis should be given to horizontal approaches to environmental protection such as integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC), and eco-management and audit schemes (EMAS) in contrast to traditional media specific vertical approaches;
- there should be a substantial increase in the resources devoted to the implementation of laws for the protection of the environment and its monitoring;
- there should be an increase in the capacity of the Ministry of the Environment, especially in respect of economic analyses and economic approaches to environmental issues.

In addition to implementation of environmental viewpoints, key steps towards achieving sustainable development include:

- the reinforcement of existing measures,
- development of new measures for dealing with new issues in the framework of the 6th European Environmental Action Program,
- increased integration of environmental interests in other policies,
- the acceptance of greater environmental responsibility by individuals, and
- more active participation of the public in decision-making processes.

Thus, the updated SEP CR concentrates on increasing the effectiveness of environmental measures especially prevention, on considering the economic aspects of protection of the environment, on suggestions for innovation of technical processes and on greater implementation of voluntary and economic instruments, which are implemented as part of a joint approach by the Ministry of the Environment and the industrial, agricultural and business spheres.

It is essential that the Ministry of the Environment co-operate and participate in the creation and implementation of industrial, energy, transport, agricultural and other policies, and in all the changes that follow from their practical implementation. Weak

or inconsistent implementation of the criteria of environmental protection in the preparation and the initial stages of large projects later requires expensive correction. To avoid such problems the Ministry of Environment must ensure broader and deeper environmental enlightenment, fuller implementation of environmental law and a more rigorous application of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures.

Integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies also requires constant refinement of the set of environmental indicators, that reflect the impacts of the individual policies and are also submitted for public discussion. Consequently, changes in the environment and key parameters must be monitored and evaluated on the basis of constant, comprehensible, quantifiable indicators that are comparable over time. It is also necessary to collate these indicators with other parameters of economic development and compare them with indicators of social, economic and environmental performance in other European countries, with which this country would like to be equated.

The updated SEP CR recommends fundamental changes in the approach to consistent, systematic co-operation between professionals and the general public with all levels of the public administration and civic life, whilst respecting local administrations and shared responsibilities. Reform of the public administration can significantly improve the efficiency and targeting of environmental protection. Simultaneously, it requires positive action in the areas of employment, social development, and development of the regions. This policy will continue to require open exchange of information and co-operation between the business sphere, individuals, NGOs and between all the sectors in dealing with specific environmental issues.

II INITIAL CONDITIONS

II.1 General Conditions

Democratic Changes in the Nineties

A great many democratic changes were achieved in the Czech Republic in the period following November 1989 and these changes have favourably affected the approach to dealing with environmental issues. A large number of non-governmental organizations have been created, most of which are frequently engaged in effective environmental protection and education, especially of young people. Thus, they have significantly contributed to the development of a civic society and their influence

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