



**Blue challenge
for Europe**

Equal chances for all

PROGRAMME FOR THE ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

ODS

Future of the European union:

The enlargement of the European Union to 25 members – with the prospect of more countries joining the union – will essentially change the character of this supranational institution. In parallel to the enlargement, the EU has to reflect on the international situation of the beginning of the 21st century. The modern world is dominated by the acceleration of economic globalization, by growing interconnection of various national economic subjects and an increasing influence of the economy on politics. Another major influence on the current shape of the international relations is caused by a boisterous technical development and the use of new technologies.

With the end of the bipolar split of the world, it has come to the alternation of security risks to the contemporary international environment. The danger of international terrorism comes to the fore, followed by religious and ethnical extremism, organized crime and aggressive undemocratic regimes. In the same vein, ecological problems present at the contemporary world must not stay unheeded.

The response of Europe to the changing international environment cannot be a mere mechanical “deepening” of the integration process, a one-sided “federalization” of Europe, the construction of more institutions and authorities turning out to be only paper tigers or the irreversible process of further unification in all fields of policy. What the contemporary, constantly changing world requires is the ability of flexible reaction, conformability and the capability of rapid response. Indeed, these kinds of requirements match the notion of flexible Europe – Europe in which individual groups of nations are mutually interconnected on different stages of integration and setting their own pace of co-operation that serves their national interests and policy priorities. There is no need to fear this integration model while it definitely does not mean the failure of European integration.

The Czech Republic and the European Union:

With the accession to the European Union we become an active policy maker in the process of European integration. We cease to be undignified and passive recipients in the policy making process, as it was during our accession procedures many a time. Hence it is vital to make the most of the opportunity ahead of us. The Czech Republic is a mid-sized country of the EU and in comparison to other acceding countries, it ranks among the most developed economies. From geographical point of view, the Czech lands have been

situated on one of the European north-south civilization verticals, which traditionally constituted a territory of wealth and prosperity. In view of this fact, we should assume a dignified position within the EU that would provide us with equal conditions. Such a position is commensurate with our geographical and geopolitical position and at the same time, takes into account our historical experience, while protecting our interests. We have to act realistically, not to succumb to lures of unsubstantiated and naive visionaries. In order to achieve this aim, we have to analyse and comprehend the contemporary development in the EU properly and derive appropriate conclusions thereof.

The following issues are of special concern:

- I. Despite numerous proclamations, at the present time, the European Union does not head for a supranational form of its constitution. On the contrary, the present and real state of the integration is being varnished by the rhetoric of an alleged “federalization” of Europe; in reality we witness the re-nationalization of policy of some (especially big) member states of the EU. They aim to secure their dominant position in the institutional architecture of the future EU. Today, it is obvious that the role of nation states as cornerstones of the European integration will not decrease. Moreover, we can expect that their role will possibly grow in future. **Hence have to promote such institutional arrangement and decision-making procedures of the EU that will ensure the utmost attainable extent of equal rights for all member states of the EU, regardless of their size or number of population.**
- II. Nowadays necessity to stand up to both global competition and economic development urge many European countries to implement fundamental reforms of public expenditure systems and to reassess the functions of the current welfare state. The pressure for further unification of taxation, fiscal and social policy coming from certain European states is underpinned by their effort to postpone these politically sensitive and uncomfortable reforms even at the expense of the deterioration of a competitive environment inside the EU (esp. in the field of taxation rates). **In view of this fact, we do not have a sole reason to adopt such legislative framework of social policy as it does not present a viable perspective for future. On the contrary, we have to insist on the maintenance of fiscal, tax and social policies within the competences of national administrations and legislative assemblies and thereby ensure mutual competition of these systems, resulting in a necessary internal dynamics within the EU.**
- III. At present, the already relatively low capacity of EU financial resources, redistributed by means of European budget will not increase in the future. Quite the contrary. The

resources are very likely to be cut down after 2006. However, the number of applicants, aspiring to draw finances from the structural and cohesive funds after the enlargement is to rise. **Therefore we advocate necessary changes of EU structural policy and support a more effective way redistribution of the financial resources so they can be rationally employed. The aforementioned proposals imply, above all, a principle reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). At present CAP is discriminatory towards farmers from the new member states, substantially deforms the free market environment within the EU and presents a major obstacle to the liberalization of the world trade.**

IV. Regardless of many declarations, the EU will not be able to bolster up its foreign policy and security ambitions by adequate power tools (military force) that would be hedged by a corresponding financial frame. In the military field, EU will continue to lag behind the USA in operational, strategic as well logistic aspects. Consequently, the trans-Atlantic bond will henceforth constitute a crucial guarantee of security for the whole Europe. Its weakening or erosion would impose a risk to the European democracy and stability. **It is within our interest to support the strengthening of the common security structures of Europe and the USA (especially NATO) and to contribute to the creation of the common, politically, economically and militarily interconnected Euro-Atlantic area that would present the core of global democratic civilization.**

Policy priorities of ODS in the European Parliament:

ODS is the only political party on the Czech political scene that, in the long run, represents a consistent, straightforward and distinctive European policy. There is not a single word we would have to alter in our past policy documents. This fact grant us the credibility other political subjects miss. The ODS deputies that will be elected to the European Parliament will act in the same consistent way.

The European Parliament is a pan-European body whose representatives are directly elected in all the member states of the EU. One of its most important competences is the supervisory power towards the European Commission, the assent competence in approval of EU budget and the powers over EU legislation. After the enlargement by ten new members the European Parliament will have 732 MEPS. Twntety-four deputies will represent the Czech Republic.

1. In the European Parliament ODS will cooperate with all political powers wherewith it will be able to find an adequate and corresponding program compliance. However, policy of ODS in the European Parliament will be primarily always derived from national policy priorities. As a long-term member of the international centre-centre political organizations such as EDU (European Democrat Union) and IDU (International Democratic Union), ODS considers the strongest, centre-right political group in the European Parliament, the EPP-ED Group, as its natural and traditional political partner. ODS intends to participate in the work of the EPP-ED Group in the same way as the British Conservative Party, wherewith ODS shares the similar view of the institutional and constitutional arrangement of the EU and economic issues as well.
2. ODS will develop a political pressure and look for allies – especially among the new members- in order to eliminate the discriminatory terms, established towards the new member states during the negotiations on their accession to the EU. The discriminatory provisions concern the free movement of persons, services, financial support for farmers and other areas. ODS will resist the efforts of certain interest groups in the EU that cast doubt upon domestic legislative provisions ensuing from the post-war peace agreements and acts of de-nazification that grant the Czech citizens their property and legal guarantees.
3. ODS supports the simplification and transparency of the EU constitutional basis, however dismiss the attempts to draft the European Constitution. We consider the document as redundant. Should the political development in the EU result in the establishment of the European Constitution, ODS holds a view that the provisions included in the text of the Constitution must not impair the position of the Czech Republic in relation to the existing conditions agreed in the association treaties with the EU. ODS MEPs will not support any kind of provision included in the Constitution that would be at variance with the basic principles of ODS policy and in conflict with national interests of the Czech Republic. The constitutional draft, which was a bone of contention at the Intergovernmental Conference in December 2003, ODS regards as unsatisfactory in relation to the both above- mentioned criteria.
4. ODS is adherent to a simple and clearly arranged legislation and therefore it will support the limitation of the union law both in its volume and the scope of its force. ODS MEPs will judge the bills of the European Parliament according to their impact on the everyday life of the Czech citizens. Our deputies will also assess the effects it might have on the operation of the Single Market, as well as the process of liberalization of the economic environment inside and outside the EU, including the world trade liberalization. ODS deputies will not support any bills – though

frequently proposed under the noble pretext of ensuring the public health or environment protection – which would considerably contribute to the growth of bureaucracy, protectionism and that would deteriorate the entrepreneurial environment in Europe.

5. ODS is convinced that the sole guarantee of peace and freedom in Europe is the transatlantic bond and warranty of security conveyed by NATO. We want the EU and the USA to develop an intense cooperation in future, void of any attempts to prompt global rivalry between these two partners. The interconnection of transatlantic security structures should not be undermined by the creation of duplicitous and parallel structures inclusive of Europe only. ODS will support the integration of foreign policy attitudes of the EU towards its closest neighbourhood – Northern Africa, Near and Middle East, Turkey and Eastern Europe. This stance should also include an adequate increase of resources devoted for foreign aid. By providing the assistance to the development of stability and prosperity in these regions, the EU, at the same time, contributes to the maintenance of its own stability and security.
6. ODS considers acts of international terrorism as an unprecedented menace to the whole free and democratic world. ODS advocates the inter-cultural dialogue. Nevertheless, we resolutely deprecate any concessions to be made towards terrorism and regimes that support it either directly or indirectly. Within the EU, ODS will be supportive to all forms of close cooperation and co-ordination of repressive bodies that are in charge of fight against organized crime. However such procedure should not give rise to establishment of new supranational structures. In the same vein, ODS is adherent to the coordination of asylum and immigration policy within the EU. ODS will promote the Czech Republic to become the member of the so-called Schengen system in a short course of time.
7. ODS does not hold the view that that it will come to the increase of the proportional share of the European budget in the pan-European GDP (today 1,24%) in the future. On the contrary, we consider as possible that it will come to its decrease. In view of this fact ODS states that the total volume of financial resources that are redistributed from EU budget will not significantly raise, while, at the same time, the number of potential recipients of financial support from EU budget will grow. Hence ODS is of the opinion that it is necessary to conform the level and range of EU activities to the real financial situation of the EU and for the time being, avoid any planning of further ambitious activities that lack appropriate financial support. ("EU should do less but do it better"). ODS will also promote more effective allocation of distributed resources including changes of EU structural policy.

8. ODS is convinced that the current shape of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU is adverse to the interests of European consumers and taxpayers. It deforms the free market environment in the EU, hinders the liberalization of the world trade and what is more, it discriminates agricultural countries of the developing world. ODS states that according to our accession conditions that have been negotiated, the position of Czech farmers vis-@-vis their colleagues from the current EU states is unequal. Having been aware of this situation, ODS MEPs will promote a principle reform of the CAP, and push for gradual matching of expenditures in the "old" and "new" member states. It should come to a gradual transition of agricultural subsidy programmes into the programs that deal with landscape re-cultivation and infrastructure development of countryside and rural areas. The re-allocation of resources to the other budgetary chapters, such as structural or cohesive funds is also needed.
9. ODS considers as vital to re-assess the priorities for allocation of financial support from the EU with respect to natural benefits of the geographical position of the Czech Republic. For instance. to take advantage of its location at the traffic junction of Europe. It is necessary to direct the financial resources towards more regional development projects and towards investments into road-traffic infrastructure that would connect the Czech Republic to the European system. We must not leave aside the investments in the area of environmental protection including the completion of the water-supply network, sewerage and wastewater treatment systems. A substantial deal of the investments should be allocated for the promotion of incoming tourism. ODS will insist on the fact that the option of the utilization of power resources will stay exclusively within the competence of nation states, including the decisions on the exploitation of nuclear power.
10. ODS will consistently promote the exclusive and sole competence of nationa states not only in the field of taxation policy- especially in the area of direct taxation- but also in the field of fiscal policy, including health care, social and pension systems. ODS will endeavour to advance the Czech economy so it is able to fulfill the so-called convergence criteria before too long. Only under such circumstances we can decide freely and by public vote whether or not to join the EMU. ODS will support the principles of European budgetary discipline within the EU and the compliance with the rules of the Pact of Stability. In the same vein, we are in favour of imposing sanctions against the states, which do not stand by the criteria of the Pact.



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