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PŘÍLOHA:

Návrh vystoupení „Od Dobříše do Astany: 20 let pan-Evropské spolupráce“ v rámci úvodního segmentu konference a informace o předání čestného uznání Nadace Partnerství Evropské hospodářské komisi OSN (21. 9. 2011, 16:00 – 16:15 hod.)

Dear Mr. Minister, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very honoured to have been given the opportunity to speak at this Conference as a representative of the Czech Republic, the country which 20 years ago witnessed the origins of the UNECE „Environment for Europe“ Process. Firstly, please allow me to thank His Excellency Mr. Nurgali Ashim, Minister of the Environment Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, for the hospitality and exemplary organisation. I am glad that the 7th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference is, on the occasion of the Process' 20th birthday, taking place in Kazakhstan which plays an important role in the Central Asia - not only through its economic potential but also through its growing interest in the environmental protection.

The Czech Republic has achieved a lot during the 20-year existence of the Environment for Europe Process. In 1989, the then Czechoslovakia was a country with a shocking state of environment which was having serious impact on the public's health and was indeed one of the reasons behind the mass anti-communist protests of 1989 that led to the Velvet Revolution and the fall of Communism. At that time, shortly before the Process was founded in Dobříš in 1991, the Czech Republic was a country with one of the highest rate of acidifying substances emissions, carbon dioxide and ground-level ozone emissions as well as extremely polluted water resources from municipal, agricultural and industrial sources. Concrete manifestations of the immense devastation of environment included frequent serious health problems of people living in the worst-affected areas, huge areas of dry forests affected by acid rain or frequent poisoning of groundwaters. Upon these conditions, Mr. Vavroušek - the initiator and visionary behind the 1st Ministerial Conference in Dobříš - took charge of the then Federal Minister of the Environment of Czechoslovakia. His motivation stemmed from his long-life study and interest in the environment that eventually found more than appropriate outlet in the organisation of the Dobříš Conference.

The Conference, attended by representatives of almost all European countries, most important international financial institutions but also by artists and philosophers, took place 40 years after the division of Europe into two parts. The Conference constituted a symbol of returning to the free, democratic Europe not only for the then Czechoslovakia but also for the wider pan-European region. Next to this, the Conference had other similarly important specifics: it was a first step towards a new approach to environmental protection and openness of the society as such - for the first time ever a conference of such an important nature was open to non-governmental organisations that held their own parallel conference in Přestavky close to Prague. As it later turned out, the Dobříš Conference and the subsequent establishment of the Environment for Europe Process played an important role in deepening of cooperation among the various NGO's which led eventually to the

establishment of their umbrella organisation European ECO-forum and adoption of the Aarhus Convention in 1998.

Another important feature of the Conference was the standpoint which, in similar vein with the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development report called „Our Common Future“, challenged the notion of technology being the sole cure for complex global environmental problems. Josef Vavroušek was painfully aware of this fact and was keen to launch a broad and intense discussion on the problem of environmental ethics during the Dobříš Conference, a discussion that was bound to continue on the global Earth Summit one year later in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

Besides the sustainable-development and environmental-ethics discussions which were to a great extent influenced by Vavroušek's traumatic experience of living in communist Czechoslovakia, a great emphasis was put on the idea of intensified and deepened environmental cooperation in Europe but also within the United Nations. Here as well we should look at the original propositions turned into outcomes of the Conference through the lens of a life-long totalitarian experience whose main feature was a total neglect of environmental issues and factual institutional void. This institutional vacuum which shortly after the fall of Iron Curtain engulfed part of the pan-European region was among the three main topics of the Dobříš Conference. As it turned out, after the break-up of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the only platform for policy coordination of the former communist countries, the need for their engagement in the established institutions of the democratic world was greater than ever. In this atmosphere of institutional vacuum but also renewed enthusiasm and „everything-is-possible“ attitudes, the idea of organizing regular conferences of European ministers of environment aimed at evaluating, prioritizing and strengthening of European environmental legislation sprang up. One of the measures that seemed ideal for intensified and more effective pan-European cooperation was the proposal to establish a European Agency for Environment with the seat in Dobříš complemented by a complex environmental programme for concerned states. The following years proved this idea right: it turned out that the ideas presented in Dobříš contributed greatly to launching a process of environmental cooperation that since its inception has brought many successes. Simultaneously, it is important to say that some of the Dobříš expectations were only half met or were not fulfilled at all.

The idea of a complex environmental programme materialized at the 2nd Ministerial Conference in Luzern where an Environmental Action Plan for Central and Eastern Europe, conceived as a platform for long-term environmentally-oriented cooperation of governments, NGOs, private sector and other partners, was adopted. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, whose main goal was to support environmental projects, took upon itself to oversee the Plan's Preparatory Committee. One of the main pillars of the Plan was the emphasis on mainstreaming environmental protection into economic development which seemed best suited in the period of hasty economic transformation of the former communist states – it is only to be regretted that only the 2008 financial crisis, almost 20 years later, actually unleashed the discussion on the linkage of the seemingly unlikable. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe thus found in the Action Plan

opportunity to conceptually elaborate their national Environmental and Health Action Plans even before 8 of them embarked upon EU accession talks.

The period up until 1998, when the “Environment for Europe” Process reached its climax in adopting the Aarhus Convention, was marked by a relatively speedy progress. Afterwards, however, a new period of the process began, as several of environmental reports concluded that the difference between the candidate EU countries and other pan-European countries, especially those from the former Soviet Union, had become disquietingly large. This conclusion was vital for the future of the Environment for Europe Process as the focus has since shifted considerably towards the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia sub-region with all due consequences – one of them being long-term diminishing of the significance of the Process for the EU Member States. The implications of such a shift have been dealt with ever since and were partly dealt with also through the reform of the “Environment for Europe” Process, as adopted in April 2009. Nevertheless, many of the ramifications of the refocusing in 1998 will have to be solved in the following years – integral part of the quest to find a proper place for the Process within the international environmental governance context will be the evaluation of the Process in 2013, in accordance with the adopted reform.

In spite of the shift in focus, it would be foolish to look past the results achieved within the review of the priorities that happened towards the end of the 2nd Millennium. Apart from the creation of the Regional Environmental Centres in Chisinau, Kiev, Moscow, Tbilisi and Central Asian region, which still play an essential role in promoting environmental protection in the respective sub-regions, the main achievements consist of concrete measures adopted since 2000 through the policy, water-sector and environmental financing reforms in the EECCA countries. To name just few examples I should mention the reform of economic instruments in Russia and Armenia, introduction of water-quality standards in Moldova, adoption of the Strategy for transition to integrated permitting in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia or the reform of self-monitoring in Kazakhstan. In addition to the concrete matter-related contributions, the projects brought as an added value a shift in political-economic frame in the EECCA countries which proved to be an important durable asset for future success.

As I have already mentioned, in spite of all the achievements, much still remains unresolved, many features of the Process do not work as had been imagined. It is increasingly being made clear that apart from the uneven distribution of success in introducing sound environmental protection, which in no way means absence of serious environmental problems elsewhere, the Process suffers from protracted negotiation and adoption process of complex documents that are subsequently impossible to implement due to lacking institutional infrastructure. To be more specific, it was the tiresome negotiation of the Kiev and Belgrade Ministerial Declarations and their insufficient implementation that led to the decision to reform the Process. The reform, adopted at the annual UN Economic Commission for Europe meeting in April 2009, is set to strengthen the effectiveness of the Process which should be a mechanism to improve the quality of environment and of people’s lives in the region. It should, furthermore, contribute to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication and increased security in the UNECE region. To what extent we succeed in this depends mainly on the responsible national authorities – in this

regard it is to be pointed out that even the best institutional infrastructure or reform cannot replace their concentrated efforts and determination to continually improve the state of environment. In this regard, the Process might be bound to get into bigger trouble – if it started in 1991 as a unique idea to unify the divided pan-European region, 20 years on it must compete for its very existence in fierce competition with other, institutionally and financially better secured tools, especially those provided by the EU. Paradoxically, the fact that half of the UNECE member states are simultaneously member states of the EU proved to be a Process' curse and blessing at the same time. Thus, the task we are now facing is to search for synergies of the UNECE and EU policies, within the terms of the ongoing international environmental governance reform. Following up on this, I am convinced that Mr. Vavroušek's words, uttered 20 years ago at the Dobříš Conference, are still valid: „More focused, strongly supported and better coordinated pan-European activities could create a better environment and perhaps just as importantly, could form a natural basis for the future integrated Europe, and – perhaps – the whole planet“.

Dear Mr. Minister, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my sincere hope that the Astana Conference will be an important contribution to the 20 years of pan-European environmental governance and will bear tangible results so important for the future of the “Environment for Europe” Process which have been since its beginning under the aegis of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. Without this institutional framework it would not have been possible to achieve what has been achieved, to shape the Process in way in which it has been shaped during the past 20 years.

Therefore it is my pleasure to be here in the position of an envoy of the Czech non governmental organization Partnership Foundation which has decided to award the UNECE with a statutory award that bears the name of the founder of the process, Mr. Vavroušek. Now, I would like to invite Mrs. Eva Vavroušková to the podium to personally hand over the award to H. E. Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.