

OECD Nuclear Energy Agency's 50th Anniversary

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Guests,

First of all, on behalf of the Czech Republic I would like to congratulate the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency on its 50th anniversary. The Czech Republic thinks very highly of the contributions of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and considers it an honour to be a member.

Since 1995, when as the first of the transforming economies, the Czech Republic was accepted as a member of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency, it has become fully involved in the work of technical committees through its administrative bodies and research institutes and has participated in the nuclear-related aspects of 15 projects directed and coordinated by the Agency. In this context I would also mention our part in the Halden Reactor Project, which focuses on research into the behaviour of nuclear fuels and research into advanced systems of nuclear block management.

According to some prepared scenarios we can expect production and consumption to become balanced in our country between 2009 and 2012. In relation to this, a discussion on the distribution of the energy mix for the coming decades is currently taking place in the Czech Republic.

In relation to the planned update of its state energy concept, the Czech government has decided to create an independent expert committee under the direction of the chairman of the Academy of Sciences in the Czech Republic and has allocated it the task of assessing the energy needs of the Czech Republic in the long-term. The committee submitted its materials in September and they are currently being evaluated. We assume that the government will discuss the resulting material in December this year and the state energy concept will subsequently be updated.

Today's anniversary has come at a time of a renaissance in nuclear power. Upon a proposal by the Czech and Slovak governments, the European Committee has established the European Nuclear Forum after the fashion of other power energy commodities (gas, liquid

fuels and renewable resources) as an opportunity for general discussion by all the involved parties. Allow me to provide several conclusions issuing from these discussions.

The Nuclear Forum stated that in the great majority of scenarios nuclear power is considered the most economic means for producing electricity for base load. Nuclear power makes a significant contribution to the social policy due to its influence on job creation and its positive influence on stable and foreseeable prices of electricity in the economy. The prices of utilities are a key element for consumers and we must be able to transfer the comparative advantage of nuclear power to the consumer.

The task of training and educating new generations has been emphasised. It is no secret that as a result of the moratorium on the construction of nuclear blocks, the know-how obtained by previous generations is being lost. We also feel the consequences of this in the Czech Republic. We are looking for opportunities to make use of the fact that approximately 70% of the citizens in our country support the further use of nuclear power and to find a way of making this field more attractive to the young generation when they are selecting their future professions.

Dear Director General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency,

Please allow me to assure you of the Czech Republic's support during the next period of its activities

Thank you for your attention