

## Czech Presidency Newsletter

**9 March 2009**

This week's events:

### **Informal meeting of EU Ministers of Defence**

An informal meeting of the Defence Ministers of the EU Members States will be held on 12 and 13 March in Prague. This meeting is the only opportunity for the EU Defence Ministers to meet in the Czech Republic during the Czech Presidency to discuss current issues on the European Security and Defence Policy agendas.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/event/1/341/>

### **EU Finance Ministers will meet for regular ECOFIN Council**

The EU Finance and Economy Ministers will meet on 10 March in Brussels, already their third meeting this year. The ECOFIN Council will be chaired by Czech Finance Minister Miroslav Kalousek.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/press-releases/eu-finance-ministers-will-meet-for-regular-ecofin-council-11507/>

### **Minister Nečas will chair the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)**

Formal meeting of the Council will take place on 9 March in Brussels. Traditionally, the main topic on the agenda is the preparation of the Spring European Council.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/press-releases/minister-necas-will-chair-the-employment--social-policy--health-and-consumer-affairs-council-epsco--11538/>

**Minister Schwarzenberg to Meet Secretary-General of the Council**

President of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council Karel Schwarzenberg will meet Javier Solana on 9 March 2009 in Prague.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/minister-schwarzenberg-to-meet-secretary-general-of-the-council-11481/>

**Building Consensus about EU Policies on Democracy Support (Conference on the role of NGOs in EU Policy on Human Rights)**

<http://www.eu2009.cz/event/1/1821/>

Last week's events:

**Topolánek: EU to seek ways to strengthen democracy and security in Afghanistan**

Czech Prime Minister and President of the European Council Mirek Topolánek visited Prostějov to meet the soldiers of the 601st SFG deployed in Afghanistan within the framework of the Enduring Freedom operation.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/topolanek:-eu-to-seek-ways-to-strengthen-democracy-and-security-in-afghanistan--11557/>

**Competitiveness Council: we invest in research and development**

Today, on 6 March 2009, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports Liška chaired a meeting of the Competitiveness Council in Brussels. The meeting provided a platform for a discussion of EU Ministers responsible for research and development.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/press-releases/competitiveness-council:-we-invest-in-research-and-development-11545/>

**Competitiveness Council discusses impacts of current economic downturn**

Several reports responding to the current economic downturn were discussed today in Brussels at the Competitiveness Council chaired by Czech Minister of Industry and Trade Martin Říman.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/competitiveness-council-discusses-impacts-of-current-economic-downturn-11482/>

**Representatives of all EU Member States to take part in EU-USA Summit in Prague**

After consulting the European Commission and the U.S. administration of President Barack Obama, Mirek Topolánek will invite the highest representatives of all 27 EU Member States to the EU-USA Summit.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/representatives-of-all-eu-member-states-to-take-part-in-eu-usa-summit-in-prague-11456/>

**Commissioner Špidla answered your questions in the European chat**

Lost jobs, a ban on smoking or the reactions of Brussels to the Czech Presidency. These are only some of the questions you asked the Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, V. Špidla.

<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/commissioner-spidla-answered-your-questions-in-the-european-chat-11251/>