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The Czech EU Presidency began long ago. We have been preparing for several months – we are closely cooperating with the French now and we will also closely cooperate with the Swedes after our Presidency is over.

We have concentrated on priorities that are not only in our own national interest, but a European interest. We can sum them up into the motto “Europe without Barriers” or into three E’s – economy, energy and external relations.

In the economic part, we intend to implement such measures as will increase the competitiveness of citizens, their companies and the EU as a whole. At the same time, we will have to deal with the impact of the financial crisis, which is felt differently in different countries, and we will be the driving force of this process.

In the energy part, we will try to bring into accord environment issues with our national interest, which is energy security.

And in the external relations part, we will try to strengthen transatlantic relations, the Eastern dimension of European politics, and the Western Balkans, especially Croatia.

I want to say that the Czech Republic and we as its administrative body are ready for the Presidency. We will do our best to succeed, we will cooperate with others, and promote national interests, which are also interests of the EU. For me personally, the success of the Presidency is a personal priority.