



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH
REPUBLIC
SECTION FOR THE CZECH PRESIDENCY OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE EU
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT**

PRESS RELEASE

**Press Release on the Forthcoming Visit to Prague
by Swedish and French Counterparts
of Czech Vice Premier for European Affairs A. Vondra
on September 20, 2007**

On Thursday, September 20, 2007, Czech Vice Prime Minister for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra will meet in Prague Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, Swedish Minister for the European Union Cecilia Malmström, and French State Secretary for European Affairs Jean-Pierre Jouyet. Their one-day visit will take place on the occasion of the start of preparations for the programme of the 18-month presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Czechs will share the program with France and Sweden between July 2008 and December 2009. The program will be based on the priorities of the three countries, while ensuring to the European Union a greater thematic continuity.

Alexandr Vondra will discuss current preparations for the Czech Republic's presidency with his opposite numbers at a working lunch to be attended on the Czech side by Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, Czech Ambassador to the EU Jan Kohout, and Czech Ambassadors to Sweden and France, Marie Chatardová and Pavel Fischer respectively.

The Czech Vice Premier and his foreign partners will brief journalists about the outcome of their talks at a press conference to be held in Prague's Hrzánský Palace, **on September 20, 2007**, at 2.00 p.m. After the press conference, Alexandr Vondra, Cecilia Malmström and Jean - Pierre Jouyet will continue their talks.

The Czech Republic has chosen the motto "Europe Without Barriers" for its presidency of the Council of the European Union that will start on January 1, 2009 and end on June 30,

Ondřej Karas, spokesperson of the Czech EU Presidency

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2009. The No. 1 priority of the Czech presidency should be the field of competitiveness, freedom of the movement of goods, people, services and capital, and liberal trade policy. Other Czech priorities will be a sustainable and safe energy sector, budget review and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, EU's external relations, and the area of justice and internal affairs.