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UNION DÉMOCRATIQUE EUROPÉENNE  
EUROPÄISCHE DEMOKRATISCHE UNION

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### New developments in the Czech party system

At the European Committee' last meeting and also in the Steering Committee meeting, members indicated that there were imminent changes in the Czech party system and that, in particular, the Civic Forum was falling in two parts.

On 13th and 14th November 1990, the Executive Secretary was in Prague and had discussions with representatives of our two Czech member parties, namely Party Chairman Dipl.Ing. Josef Lux and Party Chairman Dr. Vaclav Benda, but he also met other parliamentarians and, in particular, representatives of the Civic Forum, as well as political advisers to the President of the Republic.

### Split of the Civic Forum?

The following two objective facts have to be reported: In the Civic Forum, a great majority of parliamentarians, elected in the Civic Forum, have joined a right-wing group. Meanwhile the Civic Forum and elected the Economic Minister 166d Klaus as their Chairman. This seems to be, however, just one step. Others will follow. The Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, a leading right-wing politician of the Civic Forum, Dr. Pavel Bratinka, assisted by two other members of Parliament of the Civic Forum (one from Moravia, the other one of Western Bohemia) meant that now the left-wing members of the Civic Forum would now constitute their own group. He indicated that two more political parties, one liberal conservative party, namely his group chaired by Mr. Klaus, and a centre-left group of some ten or more members of Parliament of the Civic Forum. Their Chairman and their name was not yet known.

### Parliamentary group of Christian Democrats

The other objective fact to be reported is that, in the Federal Assembly of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, all members of Parliament coming from a Christian group, have decided to create one common Parliamentary group.



- 2 -

Party Chairman Dr. Vaclav Benda reported that it was their intention to open up their Christian Democratic Movement for all the groups outside the Parliament and of Christian or Conservative orientation. Dr. Lux from the People's Party indicated that they had in that respect a small difference to Dr. Benda since they wanted to be open for all Christian Democratic groups, but not for Liberals or Conservatives. He indicated that the Lidova Strana would have to insist on their Christian Democrat character.

### One electoral party right of centre?

Dr. Bratinka from the Civic Forum said that the Conservative right-wing group of the Civic Forum would aim at forming an electoral party with the People's Party: That means to have a common list for the next elections, but at the same time the two parties would still exist as separate entities. Dr. Bratinka also said that the next elections which were due in 18 months (after the new Constitution has been adopted by the Federal Assembly) the following groups would be the principle competitors in the ballot: A right of the centre group, the People's Party Alliance composed of the Christian Democrats + the right-wing of the Civic Forum, a centre-left group composed of the leftish members of the Civic Forum; a social democratic group and a communist group. It was interesting, however, that Dr. Bratinka thought that the split of the Civic Forum would not come about easily, because Mr. Klaus simply wanted to eliminate the leftish members and remain the Civic Forum as such. Mr. Bratinka thought that this was not possible and that the Civic Forum would fall into two parts, such as indicated above.

Similar developments seem to happen in the Slovak part of the republic: There the sister organization to the Civic Forum, 'Public against Violence', will also fall into two parts and find their partners in the world of existing parties.

### President Havel's attitude

President Havel's attitude has apparently changed. It is well-known that originally he wanted a 'real democracy' without parties, but just an assembly of elected representatives and, within the Civic Forum, the pluralism should prevail and ad-hoc-solutions for problems should be found. The reality has overtaken this idealistic model, and political parties have developed, as it had to be expected. The President had to accept this. However, people with whom I spoke, still think that 'the castle', that is the President's office, tries to combat, in particular with economic means, the various political parties.



I indicated to the Czechs I met that it would be essential to have a basis for political parties in the newly-drafted Constitution and to provide, already now, for a financing by the State. In this context they should also mention the international affiliations and the financial needs in this respect so that this activity of a political party which was clearly in the public interest of the whole of Czechoslovakia, could be well performed.

In this respect, the parties asked me whether we could not organize a Symposium in Prague, open to all political parties, where, as an appropriate moment in next spring, before the new Constitution is written and finished, the legal position of political parties in democracies, their financing and their role is explained.

I indicated that the Political Academy of the Austrian People's Party, perhaps in co-operation with the Political Academy of the Austrian Socialist Party and one of the German institutions and/or Göran Lenmarker's institution in Sweden, might be interested in co-sponsoring such a 'bipartisan event' which would serve a noble aim.

#### Summary and conclusion

The elections of this year brought about in Czechoslovakia a provisional party system only. Besides some classical political party, like the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, a Civic Forum competed and, with the support of the President, Vaclav Havel, scored a victory. Such as expected, there are now trends that the Civic Forum desintegrates, and a proper party system with right-wing parties, parties left of the centre, parties right of the centre and left-wing parties will emerge. We should follow these developments carefully and try to help our member parties in Czechoslovakia to have as much an integrative force as possible, so that they would benefit from these developments.