

Courtesy translation



THE SENATE
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
11TH TERM

232nd

RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE

Delivered on the 8th session held on 19th July 2017

on the White Paper on the future of Europe – Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025 (Senate Print No. K 31/11; COM (2017) 2025)

The Senate

I. Got acquainted

with the European Commission's White Paper on the future of Europe, which outlines the possible scenarios for the European Union's development in the coming years, and with the Government's Position on this document;

II. Is of the opinion that for the Czech Republic

1. it is most important to clearly state that in the current geopolitical situation the Czech Republic does not have a better alternative than EU membership (despite its imperfections) and, besides NATO members, it has no more reliable allies in political, economic and security terms than the EU and its member states;
2. it will be essential that the Government set – depending on the fulfilment of the Maastricht criteria by the current Euro area members – a clear Euro area entry plan, because, inter alia, the Euro area membership will continue to be the main dividing line in the EU and, furthermore, the ability to honour a voluntarily accepted commitment in such an important matter contributes significantly to the quality of relations with partner Member States;

III. Is convinced that, as far as the European Union is concerned,

1. strategic decision-making on future direction should always be based on the consensus of the Member States, reached in the European Council after a thorough discussion; this is particularly important in the area of justice and home affairs;
2. the effort to maintain the unity of the EU-27 and the integrity of the internal market must be the starting point for all further considerations;
3. in the current situation, it is particularly important for all Member States and EU institutions to act in the spirit of mutual cooperation;

4. efforts to increase the EU's capacity for action are fully justified, but it should not take the form of frequent outvoting in the Council of the EU as this is one of the factors that reduce the contentment of the outvoted state's citizens and their confidence in the EU;
5. differentiated integration leading to closer cooperation of several Member States should be considered as a last resort only, if fairly conducted efforts to negotiate a solution acceptable to all Member States fail; any such cooperation must remain open to all Member States and must avoid negative impacts on the functioning of the EU's common policies and on individual Member States;
6. In addition to the general scenarios set out in the White Paper, procedures for solving other possible crisis situations (such as the withdrawal of another Member State from the EU or from the Euro area) should be prepared on an expert basis;

IV. Notes that, as regards the priorities of the European Union,

1. it is necessary to focus on concrete realistic objectives, which will have broad support of the Member States and clear benefits for EU citizens, i.e. to concentrate EU action on areas in which the EU, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, brings real added value compared to the individual action of the Member States;
2. the EU should work together and unitedly in areas where the deepening of cooperation of all Member States is essential in the context of the current challenges in Europe and in the world, with particular reference to:
 - security, defence and foreign policy;
 - economic development;
 - quality of life in broader sense;
 - procedural and institutional matters;
3. in security, defence and foreign policy, the focus should be on the following priorities:
 - security, return, readmission and development policies, including cooperation with third countries;
 - developing EU-NATO cooperation;
 - protection of external borders;
 - fight against terrorism;
 - development of information systems facilitating cooperation in the Schengen area and in the related policies;
 - further developing an active neighbourhood policy, in particular to support the European perspective of the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries;
4. in economic matters, the focus should be on the following priorities:
 - completing the internal market in particular in the fields of energy, services and digital economy; the negative social impacts of internal market rules related to economic disparities between Member States must be tackled, above all, by greater support of the Member States' economic convergence and by approximation of standards in areas where it is possible;
 - stabilization of the common currency;
 - development of trade policy;
 - joint action against tax havens and aggressive tax optimization;
 - infrastructure investment;
5. regarding the quality of life in broader sense, the focus should be on the following priorities:
 - social adaptation to changes brought about by technological developments;
 - science, research and innovation;
 - environmental care;

- 6.** in the institutional functioning of the EU, the focus should be on the following priorities:
- strengthening the democratic scrutiny of the EU legislative and policy-making processes from the national level in order to ensure genuine respect for the principle of subsidiarity and for the necessity that decisions on politically sensitive issues are taken at the national level;
 - dealing with the overuse of delegation of power to adopt legal acts to the Commission;
 - respecting the position of the European Council by the European Commission and maintaining the impartiality and equal approach of the European Commission to all Member States;
 - rigorous and non-discriminatory monitoring and enforcement of obligations, not only in terms of ascertaining whether Member States adopted implementing rules, but also in terms of their factual implementation; among other reasons because long-tolerated non-fulfilment of obligations in the area of Economic and Monetary Union and in the area of cooperation and standards of asylum systems significantly aggravated the effects of both the financial and the migration crisis;
 - increasing the effectiveness of existing EU policies (notably the common agricultural policy and cohesion policy), in particular as regards EU budget expenditure and Member States' costs;
 - improving the level of citizens' education regarding the EU and the quality of transparent debate on its future and on the challenges it currently faces, and taking the citizens' attitudes into account in the decisions of the EU institutions;
 - finding ways to streamline processes in the EU, making them more comprehensible to citizens;

V. Notes that

the process of preparing the outputs of the European Council (including the outcomes of public consultations) which, according to the White Paper, should draw the first conclusions in December 2017, should not be concentrated within a few days before the meeting takes place, so as to avoid unexpected proposals that will not be sufficiently discussed in the national parliaments of the Member States;

VI. Requests the Government

- 1.** to inform the Senate about potential changes of its position to the White Paper on the Future of Europe;
- 2.** with regard to the possibility that the Czech Republic will be represented at the European Council in December 2017 by the Prime Minister of a newly appointed Government, to inform the Senate sufficiently in advance should the mandate for the Prime Minister for this meeting of the European Council depart in any way from the current Government Position;

VII. Authorises

the President of the Senate to forward this Resolution to the European Commission.

Milan Štěch
sign manual
President of the Senate

Jaromír Strnad
sign manual
Senate Verifier