

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Jan Kohout

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of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*

*Conference on facilitating the entry into force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty
(Vienna, 3-5 September 2003)*

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this post and wish you every success in your work.

On this occasion, let me express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening this conference and the Government of Austria for hosting it. I extend my appreciation also to Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann for his work as the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission and his endeavour at building up the Treaty's verification régime and its strong future Secretariat.

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic has fully associated itself with the Statement made here by Italy on behalf of the European Union which allows me to focus only on some issues that are of particular interest to my country:

The Czech Republic regards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as an ultimate goal of the international community. However, it can be attained only by stages. Undoubtedly, the entry into force of the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) will be one of steps to achieve it. However, that we are here today meeting at the Third Article XIVth Conference only reveals how arduous is the road towards nuclear disarmament.

The Czech Republic has always been committed to the implementation of disarmament and arms control treaties to the full. In September 1997, it ratified the CTBT as the very first European country.

That is also why it expects all States that have not yet signed and ratified the Treaty to do so without further delay and conditions. It is increasingly urgent that all remaining Annex 2 States should ratify it. Moreover, it is of the utmost importance for us that, pending the entry into force of the Treaty, all States abide by a moratorium on nuclear explosions and refrain from anything what might undermine the Treaty.

The continued build-up of the verification régime, that we establish and support, including the International Monitoring System, is in itself conducive to the entry into force. We have to convince others also by the technical viability and preparedness of the International Monitoring System which add to the political arguments.

The Czech Republic is proud that the seismic station situated on its territory has been certified in the first group of the six auxiliary stations of the International Monitoring System. Beside this the Czech National Data Centre also provides technical feedback on software tools designed by the PTS for all National Data Centres.

Mr. President,

The CTBT entry into force should also be seen and pursued in the perspective of the NPT review process. The next NPT review conference is on the horizon. We should all be mindful of the need for positive synergy between the two processes.

Lastly wish you every success in your work and assure you of our full support.

Thank you.