

9. Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland

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Joint Statement

Issued at the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have met in Budapest to commemorate the first anniversary of the accession of our countries to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, a moment which reminds us of our historic removal of the iron curtain in Europe. We believe the accession of our countries to NATO has contributed to the strength and cohesion of the Alliance. This was proved decisively during last spring's Kosovo crisis.

We recognise our obligations towards our allies. In this context, we have reviewed the progress achieved in the political and military integration of our countries into NATO structures, as well as the tasks to be done.

We strongly believe that the future of security on our continent depends directly on maintaining and strengthening the North Atlantic Alliance and preserving our transatlantic links. At the same time we declare our interest in the successful development of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy, which we regard as a potential contribution to European security. We therefore emphasise the need of the development of co-operation between NATO and the European Union. We wish to stress that the role of those NATO countries which are not members of the EU must be taken in account.

We reaffirm the determination of our countries to assist in bringing about a lasting settlement of the problems in the South-Eastern Europe. We remain committed to taking an active part in promoting the success of the process. In addition to our military contribution, we attach great importance to international efforts designed to promote the implementation of the civilian aspects of the peace process. We firmly believe that democratic institutions and the rule of law are the only solid base for further future development.

We reiterate of our countries' strong support for the further enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance, for which we feel a special responsibility. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland share many strategic and political interests and we are determined to continue our mutual consultations in the context of the Alliance.

Today, recalling the events of the past year, we restate our commitment to the values enshrined in the North Atlantic Treaty as we subscribed to them on the March 12, 1999, and to the guidance set for the Alliance in the Strategic Concept - the first document of its kind adopted by all 19 NATO members at the Washington summit.
