
Vystoupení pana RNDr. Pavla Punčocháře, CSc.

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Your Royal Highness,
Your Excellency,
Dear Ministers,
Spectabilis,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

at the beginning of my speech I would like to express many thanks to Your Royal Highness in the name of all Czech water managers for your activities dedicated to the global problems of water resources and their sustainability. The Award of the Charles University certainly reflects our appreciation of your engagement in performing the World Water Vision.

This is not surprising as the Netherlands represents not only European but worldwide source of professional and research knowledge in water management.

Since the political changes in Europe in 1989, I had the opportunity to develop the research co-operation with Dutch water management institutions – particularly with the RIZA and Delft Hydraulic. After the first catastrophic flood affecting the Czech Republic in 1997, the Ministry of Agriculture accepted an offer presented by the Netherlands to help our country in the area of flood protection. After that, the project entitled “Renewal of flood damages and strategic flood protection” was realised during 1998 – 2000 that responded to the need to improve the quality and accuracy of forecasting the flood development. In addition to the know-how transfer, 5 automated flow-rate metering stations were installed in the river basin threatened by local flooding.

The co-operation established between the water managers of both our countries continued in form of the second project that is just now being concluded.

This second project once again represented a generous help provided by the Dutch government. The scope of the project was arranged by Dutch and Czech water managers less than one month after the disastrous flood in 2002 that affected the capital of the Czech Republic, Prague, as well.

Development of floods on our territory, as well as in the whole Europe, has shown the necessity to pay attention mainly to prevention. That was the reason why the Czech government approved the Strategy for Prevention against Floods in the Czech Republic followed by programmes of measures. Furthermore, there were introduced the new water management legislation and a special act on integrated crisis management with the aim to reduce the catastrophic impacts of floods.

In this sense, the outputs of joint project entitled “Strengthening the Risk Analysis in Czech Water Management” will definitely improve our flood prevention strategy.

The project was co-ordinated again very efficiently by the ARCADIS company and well-known Dutch institutions contributed to its realisation – namely the TNO Bouw, RIZA, Waterschap Groot Salland, etc.

I would like to stress the general benefits of project outputs for the European water management since such knowledge is missing in most of the countries. The results therefore can be used for extending the wide co-operation between the EU Member States and other countries.

Due to the reasons just mentioned I would like to express that we highly appreciate support given by the Kingdom of Netherlands to Czech water management, especially in the area of flood protection.

Finally, I would like to wish to Your Royal Highness very pleasant stay here in Prague and I hope that there will be much more opportunities to welcome you in our country again in the future.