

**EDITORIAL SE120**

The Czech Republic has become a member of the European Union but this is by no means the end, on the contrary, it is only the beginning. First of all, we shall have to cast off some illusions which most political representatives are spreading in our country; for example, that this community ensures a high material standard to all its members by redistribution mechanisms adding to the advantages of an extensive common market. We shall now draw intensive resources from the Union, Czech ministers are promising, while overlooking that a number of reform measures will have to be introduced in the Czech Republic, that we shall have to have resources for our own shares in order to take advantage of the relevant funds, and that even this will not be enough. The decisive fact will be our ability to transform from within, to change our customs, habits and our behaviour. The most important thing will be to radically diminish the corruption environment, to improve the work of the state administration, to secure a functioning judiciary, to raise the standard of the Czech education system and so forth. For the moment it appears that no Czech Government is capable of taking serious steps in this direction. It is Czech society as such which acts as a decisive constraint in this respect since it resists all major changes and thereby undermines all efforts made by the Government. But even if more substantial measures were to be accomplished, we would merely come closer to solving far more profound and more decisive problems of the European Union. We can achieve genuine changes in our customs and habits only by becoming members of the European community not only from the legal and institutional point of view but first and foremost by joining in creating new forms of a European identity in a complex globalized world, which, what is more, is threatened by international terrorism. The Europe of today is still a community of nation states with their developing national identities. But the decisive problem concerning the future is to see whether these identities will develop towards strengthening nationalist myths and prejudices or in the direction of Europe with a functioning common awareness of the unchangeable values of this continent. The new members do not for the moment offer a promising image since anti-European forces are gaining momentum there, including those that have a totalitarian past and do not intend to get rid of it. An example is the law on Edvard Benes passed by the Czech Parliament. On the contrary, these forces want to exploit their totalitarian abilities fully on the European field, which they regard as a battlefield of national and other insensitivities. But integrated Europe has been conceived from the very beginning as a means of suppressing and overcoming these forces. In other words, a united Europe as a mere community of a free market or as a community of laws interlinked by specific institutions has no chance of survival unless it becomes a living community of common values, customs and habits.

– *The Editors* –