

## THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND GREEN GROWTH

According to the OECD, green growth means fostering economic growth and development, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide their sources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. Thus green growth has the potential to address economic and environmental challenges while simultaneously paying specific attention to many of the social issues and equity concerns that can arise as a direct result of greening the economy. The necessity to consider economic, environmental, and social aspects leads directly to sustainable development that provides an important context for green growth.

The OECD Green Growth Strategy leverages off a substantial body of analysis and policy effort that flowed from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Green growth has not been conceived as a replacement for sustainable development, but rather should be considered as a subset of it. In practical terms, green growth is an engine for the green economy (more commonly called sustainable economy in the Czech Republic).

The Czech economy has been developing and growing over the past two decades. National policies recognize however that economic growth has also had harmful side effects. The impacts of a fossil fuel-based economy and the subsequent exploitation of natural resources, which enable economic growth, may be critical limits to the growth in future.

Recognizing these new challenges, the Czech Republic adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2004. The Strategy defines the principal (strategic) goals, as well as partial goals and instruments, formulated so as to eliminate imbalances in relations between the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainability. They are designed to achieve the best attainable quality of life for the present generation and create conditions for a high quality of life for future generations.

The recently updated Strategy (called Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development in the Czech Republic) defines five priorities:

- Society, people and health;
- The economy and innovation;
- Regional development;
- Landscape, ecosystems and biodiversity;
- A stable and secure society.

The Strategy does not explicitly contain the green growth concept although that and sustainable development interrelate. A sustainable economy is based on an increase in income, employment, public health and a secure society, which is driven by investments and innovations reducing carbon emissions and pollution, whereby enhancing resource efficiency, and preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services. Thus, this conception is fully in compliance with the conclusions of the Ministerial Council Meeting of the OECD which committed itself to a green growth strategy in 2009, as well as to other concepts (e.g. UNEP's Green Economy).