

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been my pleasure to give my patronage to the NE•RS 2014 conference that is taking place at the time when we finalize the definition of the Czech energy policy and the relevant ministers of the Czech Government are preparing the future strategy of nuclear energy development.

There is no doubt that these are serious steps decisive not only for our energy future. I am well aware of the fact that the study of nuclear science, engineering and technology is considered one of the most demanding and respected and the graduates of such studies find their place in other different fields. In a way it means that nuclear education is a synonym for quality and it certainly creates the driving force that determines the standards for achieving quality in education, development and innovation.

Comparing to the most European countries the GDP share of the industry in the Czech Republic is extremely large. In the future it will be difficult to maintain this share without putting emphasis on science, research and innovation, which could result in loss of our competitiveness.

Therefore I consider the development of nuclear energy as an undisputable and important pillar of the future of our economy.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you a *successful* meeting and fruitful discussion. I am looking forward to the outcomes of the conference and its suggestions, which will certainly find their use when creating plans and training targets to keep our technical education and erudition as driving forces of our future development.

*Pavel Bělobrádek*

*Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic for Science, Research and Innovation*