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## **EU Parliament: Mr Fiala (Czech PM), “united response to Moscow, de-Russification of energy sources”. Yes to nuclear power. Then a reference to Havel and Reagan**

(Strasbourg) “The priorities and programme for the six-month Presidency have been created over a period of many months, but the Russian aggression against Ukraine turned most of our plans upside down”. Petr Fiala, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, said this at the beginning of his address to the European Parliament as he presented the programme for the Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers that his country took on in July (until the end of 2022). “Our response to Russia so far has been quick, tough, and most importantly united”. We approved six packages of sanctions and granted candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, “giving these two countries hope of joining a free and democratic Europe”. Mr Fiala then quoted Havel, whose essay inspired the motto of the Czech Presidency: “Europe as a task”. The Prime Minister insisted on the need to find answers to the consequences of the war: inflation and the economic crisis, energy supplies (“de-Russifying” the supplies), and the world food crisis. Three principles should guide our action: to “rethink, rebuild, and re-power” our Union. Hence the priorities of the six-month Presidency: a joint management of Ukrainian refugees (although refugees from other parts of the world were not mentioned); preparing for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine; alternative energy sources to those provided by Russia so far (and he called on Member States to approve the Commission’s controversial proposal on taxonomy, including nuclear power: “countries that are unable to focus on renewables, such as ours, will not be able to meet climate objectives if they are not given permission to finance nuclear power as a clean source”). He then spoke at length about security (both military and digital). Finally, after quoting Ronald Reagan, he talked about our “effective and challenged” democracy, which we must “protect along with our common values”.

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