



Seul le discours prononcé fait foi

**Visite d'État du président de la République tchèque, Petr Pavel
et Eva Pavlová
(29.02-01.03.2024)**

**Discours prononcé par S.A.R. le Grand-Duc à l'occasion
du dîner de gala au palais grand-ducal
(29.02.2024)**

Mr President, dear Madame Pavlova,

It is a great pleasure for the Grand Duchess and myself to welcome you here in Luxembourg.

This State Visit gives us the opportunity to look back on a longstanding friendship, taking its origin in history which links the House of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of Bohemia. The cultural and political achievements of John of Luxembourg – or John the Blind, as he is more commonly known - and even more so his son Charles IV, can be seen as the beginning of cross-border European cooperation and exchanges on all levels. This is not common in our sometimes troubled European history.

2025 will see the celebration of the Czech Republic's 25th anniversary of joining NATO and the 20th anniversary of its membership in the European Union.

These important milestones bear testimony to our belief that countries like ours depend on international structures, guaranteeing democracy, liberty, and economic prosperity. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine underlines, painfully, the importance of international organisations.

Indeed, almost eighty years after the end of World War II, during which both the Czechoslovakian and Luxembourg governments in exile maintained resistance for independence and national sovereignty, part of our continent is again at war. Yet today we stand united with our partners in the European Union and in NATO, to defend and uphold the fundamental values which we designed and enforced in the aftermath of World War Two. President Putin's aggression against Ukraine is not a mere conflict over territorial claims, it is an attempt to put an end to democracy.

I cannot help but recall the brutal repression by Soviet Forces that occurred in Budapest in 1956 and in Prague twelve years later, when citizens called for liberty and democracy. This is why our Nations must remain determined in their support to Ukraine.

Mr President,

Right after the collapse of communism in Central Europe in 1989, our two countries, treasuring a common past, embarked on a series of State and other high-level visits between President Havel and my father Grand Duke Jean. I also had the pleasure to meet a number of your predecessors. Despite having been separated by the “iron curtain” for almost half a century, our two countries immediately and naturally relaunched cooperation, which has been growing ever since.

Mr President, today you stand for a strong belief in the values of democracy and the need to preserve them on a European and global level, fighting against populism and disinformation.

The wise choice of former Prime Minister Pierre Werner’s home to host the Czech Embassy here in Luxembourg is the perfect illustration of where your heart lies today: deeply embedded in the construction of our European Union.

Our past and present defines our decisions of tomorrow. During your stay here in Luxembourg Mr President, I am confident that you will have plenty of occasions to measure the potential of further cooperation in the private as well as in the public sectors. This will give even more substance to our existing ties, for the benefit of both our Nations.

Mr President, hardly any other European Nation has, like the Czech Republic, given to the modern world such a remarkable number of cultural personalities like Kafka, Kundera, Forman, Smetana or Dvořák, to name but a few. All of them, through their work, have made us better human beings. So let me conclude by quoting Václav Havel: “Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred.”

Ladies and gentlemen,

Together with the Grand Duchess, please raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the health of the President of the Czech Republic and Madame Pavlova, to the ongoing and expanding cooperation and friendship between our Nations.

Na zdraví!