

MILAN HODŽA'S CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONCEPTION

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Milan Hodža (Czechoslovak Agrarian party) was head of government from 5 November 1935 to 22 September 1938 — and up to 29 February 1936 he was also his own foreign minister. His plan for Central Europe was the first attempt on the part of the Little Entente at closer economic cooperation — without any political preconditions — first with Austria and Hungary, and possibly also with Bulgaria. The goal was „to create one single great economic unit in Central Europe“. The idea was that on this basis, each individual state of this community would no longer be dependent on an economic great power (above all Germany), but would be able to achieve a stable position as member of a strong economic grouping that would handle all negotiations with third countries. But the hard facts were another matter: by the beginning of 1936 the economic and political position of the Third Reich in the Danube countries was so strong that the conception of a bloc of states that could cooperate with Germany on the basis of equal partnership and at the same time act as a competitor was probably an illusion.