

## Résumé

Since 2007, the Institute of International Relations in Prague systematically monitors the Czech foreign policy, and this activity results in its publishing of an analytical monograph each year. Every year, the team of authors follows the same basic conceptual framework. The analysis is structured so that the first two chapters analyze the overall domestic political and media context of the Czech foreign policy and identify the influence and involvement of the crucial actors. The second part focuses on the key thematic areas of Czech foreign policy – the Czech activities in the European Union as well as the Czech security and defense policy. The third part analyses the main trends and dynamics of the Czech foreign policy in the immediate region of Central Europe. The fourth part discusses in detail selected bilateral and regional relations, and the fifth section analyzes the participation of the Czech Republic in other multilateral and thematic areas. At the same time all the chapters respect a unifying analytical structure. Again, every chapter first notes the political and conceptual context as the basic internal political basis for foreign policy. All the chapters then describe and analyze the specific agenda and events in 2012 and their impact on and relevance to foreign policy. Most of the authors also include an analysis of the involvement of the actors in their respective area of interest as well as its media coverage. The team of authors emphasizes the continuity of both the conceptual and the thematic matter. Therefore, the analysis contributes to the building of a robust empirical and analytical basis and also to a deepening of our understanding of the Czech foreign policy.

The book consists of 20 chapters, which were written by 22 authors from the Institute of International Relations and other collaborating institutions (Charles University, Masaryk University, the University of Economics). Most of the authors point to a continuity in 2012, to the Czech Republic completing the conceptual and programmatic base, and to various responses to the economic crisis. At the same time, however, a general overview of all the chapters points to an interesting argument (the validity of which will be either proved or disproved only over the next couple of years): the Czech foreign policy is currently more complex than it was in recent years in its responding to global and regional processes and challenges and, consequently, this is also reflected in the actual outcomes of the Czech foreign policy (though in many cases with rather significant delays).

This argument, however, is surely not valid when it comes to the overall political and media context (Part I) of the Czech foreign policy. The Czech political sphere and debate continue to be victims of their excessive inward looking nature and also of a rather remarkable lack of interest in foreign policy. As a consequence, the Czech

politics cannot be said to provide the necessary impetus for an executive conduct of foreign policy. A similar argument is made in a chapter devoted to the media coverage of foreign policy. It argues that all the negative trends in this area from previous years are on the rise, namely the trends towards flattening, personalization, and emotionalization of foreign policy coverage. A certain exception in this respect can be found in the debate on the European Union (Chapter 3). If we compare the situation to the situation in 2011, in 2012 there was an increased interest in specific EU topics, which led to a relative crystallization of the Czech attitude towards the process of the so-called differentiated EU integration. The security and defense dimension (Chapter 4) did not bring substantial changes, with the main topics discussed in this area consisting of the preparation and consequences of the NATO Summit in Chicago and the general development of trans-Atlantic relations and their impact on the EU security community.

Chapter 5 is devoted to Germany and it particularly looks at the 2012 Czech response to the double-single question; it examines the Czech Republic's relationships to the European integration (namely with regard to saving the euro and the reform of the EU institutions) and to Germany as the main protagonist of this process at the same time. Chapter 6 focuses on probably one of the most successful vectors of the Czech foreign policy, namely its relations with its neighbors (Slovakia and Poland) and the Visegrad cooperation. Chapter 7 points to the gradual consolidation of a multi-tiered relationship with the U.S., the process in which the Czech Republic and the U.S. look for and find new topics of cooperation, the gradual improvement in the Czech-American relations after 2009 and their subsequent downward development. The Czech Republic's relationship with Russia (Chapter 8) also belongs to those that attract a higher level of interest in the media and in the political debates. According to the author of this chapter, during 2012 some tendencies towards a deepening of the political divisions *vis a vis* Russia were recorded. On the one hand, there is a critical current, which was further intensified after the re-election of President Vladimir Putin and his displays of his tendency towards a less liberal concept of governing. On the other, there are those who especially see in Russia an economic opportunity, regardless of its internal political developments. Both positions also directly affect the main economic content of the bilateral relations in 2012 – energy and the enlargement of the Temelin nuclear power plant. The Czech Republic's bilateral and multilateral relations with the Eastern Partnership countries (Chapter 9) were partially affected by the weakening of the pro-democratic process in some of these countries. This, in turn, negatively affected their position within the context of the EU. The year 2012 was thus crucial for finding and maintaining a balanced approach to these countries. With respect to the Middle East and the Arab Spring processes (Chapter 10), the CR has maintained its cautious stance, which was accompanied by an emphasis on its traditional strong ties to Israel. This dimension also contributed to some significant political and public debates, especially because of the autumn vote of the General Assembly on the status of Palestine. The Czech Republic's bilateral relations to Great Britain and France (Chapters 11 and 12) differed from each other somewhat. Because of the closeness of the Czech Republic and Great Britain's opinion on some EU issues the Czech relationship with Great Britain was temporarily strengthened while France moved further

away from the orbit of Czech foreign policy, despite the fact that the French company Areva submitted a bid to extend the capabilities of the Temelín NPP. As for the Far East, which traditionally lies rather low in the Czech foreign policy considerations, the author of Chapter 13 noted that the year 2012 will be remembered in the future as the year “in which the beginning of the rise of China in Central and Eastern Europe was declared”. This is mainly due to the establishment of a revolutionary semi-institutionalized dialogue between China and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In Chapter 14, which is devoted to sub-Saharan Africa, the author notes that in 2012 this region began a slow and gradual transformation of the perception of the African continent, since it is moving from being perceived as a “problem” to being viewed as an “opportunity”, which, however, is long overdue, and this change is only slowly translating into a real foreign policy.

The final part of the book deals with various thematic issues of the Czech foreign policy. Chapter 15 is devoted to Czech multilateral activities (excluding the EU and NATO). Its author is quite critical of this topic, especially because of the continued political disinterest in this area but also due to the fact that global or regional multilateralism is an underestimated concept as such. This might be worrisome since for countries the size of the Czech Republic, effective multilateralism provides one of the few opportunities to face existing or future regional and global challenges. At the same time, however, the author points to the fact that (mostly for economic reasons) a wide debate about the effectiveness of the Republic’s involvement in multilateral organizations was launched in 2012. Meanwhile, the external economic relations and the economic dimension of the Czech foreign policy (Chapter 16) still suffered from the rivalry between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which did not diminish even after an interdepartmental agreement was signed in 2011. On the positive side, a conceptual and programmatic base of the external economic relations policy was strengthened and completed as well, as there were certain signs of the Czech exporters moving to the non-EU countries. This can be regarded as a welcome trend towards a differentiation in the structure of the countries to which the Czech Republic exports. Next, the energy chapter (17) analyses various reactions of the Czech Republic to regional energy challenges (supply of raw materials and the capacity of transmission systems). The chapter also deals with the Czech attempts to influence the EU debate on energy policy, as well as with the fate of energy policy and nuclear power in the country. Chapter 18 focuses on the Czech international development cooperation, and its author is rather optimistic in this regard. In particular, the author points to a positive paradox, as despite the adverse political and economic developments, the Czech Republic managed to keep the previous level of funds that were allocated for development cooperation and also gradually improve the way these funds are spent. The chapter on human rights in the Czech foreign policy (Chapter 19) is set in a similarly positive tone. Its author highlights the active use of the Czech membership in the UN Human Rights Council and also the fact that the Czech Republic successfully underwent the so-called universal periodic survey of the state of human rights. Finally, the chapter dedicated to the cultural dimension of Czech foreign policy (Chapter 20) refers to a further consolidation of the conceptual framework for

this policy after 2011 but also to efforts to seek other and alternative ways by which the cultural dimension of the Czech foreign policy can maintain and further develop itself given the conditions of economic crisis under the conditions of the increasing competition of other actors and countries in this sector.

At this point it should be noted that because of the research capacity we were not able to include a chapter devoted to Latin America, and unfortunately, for personal reasons, we were not able to include a chapter on one of the highest priorities of the Czech foreign policy, namely the countries of the Western Balkans. Chapters on these two regions, however, will be included in the book next year, and they will cover both 2012 and 2013.

The ultimate goal of the project of the annual analysis is fourfold. First, it aims to contribute to a build-up of a large and continuous empirical and analytical body of material for future research. Second, it tries to be a critical reflection of the Czech foreign policy. Third, although this point is related to the second objective, the project attempts to contribute to an ever needed debate on the Czech foreign policy. Fourth, we believe that the annual publication of *Czech Foreign Policy* is able to provide a useful study material for students and members of the wider public who are interested in the given topic, as well as the foreign diplomatic community. On behalf of the authors I would like to express the hope that the publication *Czech Foreign Policy in 2012. An Analysis of the IIR* will help us to attain these goals.

It is important to stress that the book would not have been possible without the considerable effort, commitment and professionalism of all parts of the Institute of International Relations- particularly its publishing and information department, but also the personnel department, the department of external relations and the many interns who, with dedication, helped the research team in its work. Huge thanks belong to the main reviewer Paul Pšejka from the Faculty of Social Studies in Brno, who kindly agreed to accept the task of reviewing this complex body of analysis and provide an independent and critical assessment. We are also grateful for the helpful reflections from the reviewers Filip Černoch and Petr Kaniok, also from Brno FSS, who contributed with their independent assessments to the chapters on energy policy and EU policy, respectively. On behalf of the team of authors I would also like to thank the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other ministries and state institutions who, through their support and willingness to share their views and insights, contributed significantly to the creation of this publication. Finally, it is my great pleasure to thank the Czechoslovak Trade Bank, Inc. (ČSOB, a. s.), which financially supports the IIR activities associated with the Czech foreign policy, including this publication.

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