
Chapter 2

The Media Context of the Czech Foreign Policy

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In this chapter, which is devoted to the analysis of the news reporting by Czech media in 2015, we follow the research from the previous years with the same objective, i.e. we identify and determine the predominant characteristics of the news reporting on foreign affairs. The structure of the chapter and the analytical procedure remain the same as in the previous years, and we complement the continuous series of findings on this topic collected since 2008.

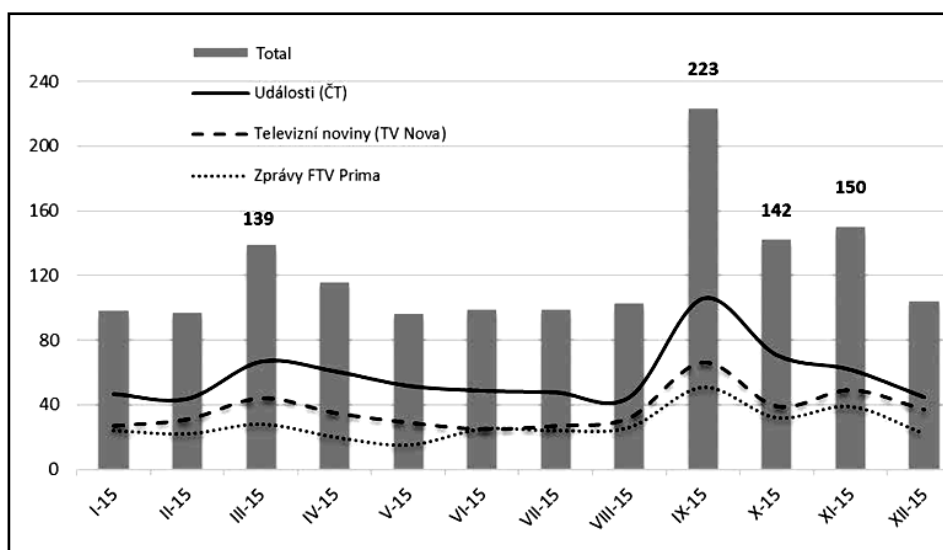
In the first part of the chapter we deal with the basic characteristics of the foreign affairs news reporting of three Czech television stations (ČT, TV NOVA, and Prima TV), particularly in connection with the main issues and actors that had been mentioned in the news, and the destinations that had been mentioned in connection with foreign policy. The content of the second half consists of two case studies that analyse two events of the year 2015 – the first one is the passing of the US military convoy across the Czech Republic, and the other event is the negotiations about the relocation quotas for the reallocation of the immigrants among the member states of the EU. The aim of these two specific analyses is to identify the context in which the events were reflected and the interpretive frameworks into which the media had put these events.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE IN 2015

The presented characteristics are the result of a quantitative content analysis of the main news-reporting programmes of three TV stations (ČT, TV Nova, and Prima TV) that were broadcast in the period from 1st January to 31st December 2015. The selected sample contains only those news reports that are devoted to foreign-policy issues related to other countries' relations with the Czech Republic. The resulting analysed sample¹ contains a total of 1,466 news reports. In 2015, the news service was very similar to the news services of the previously analysed years in terms of the distribution of attention in time (see Graph 1) as well as in terms of the main topics (Table 1). As to the numbers of the reports devoted to foreign-policy events, Česká televize is clearly in the first place with its news programme *Události*, where a total of 697 (48%) reports were broadcast; in TV Nova's *Televizní noviny*, 441 (30 %) re-

ports were recorded; and the remaining 328 reports (22%) were recorded from TV Prima's *Zprávy*. The period with the most foreign policy reports was from September to November, and a relatively high number of foreign policy reports were broadcast in March as well. The large number of reports from autumn are mainly related to the negotiations about the relocation quotas for the distribution of the asylum applicants among the member states of the European Union (September, October), and to information on the terrorist attacks in Paris (November). The increased interest in the topic of foreign affairs in March of last year is associated with the passing of the US military convoy across the Czech Republic. Two of the significant events covered in the media in 2015, the passing of the US military convoy across the Czech Republic and the negotiations about the relocation quotas, are analysed in detail in the second part of this article.

Graph 1:
The frequency of foreign affairs reports in the monitored programmes in 2015 (N = 1,466)



In the previous analysed year, 2014, the foreign affairs programmes of the monitored stations focused mainly on the events connected with the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine that influenced not only the thematic structure of the news reporting, but also the composition of the most frequently appearing actors and the most frequently mentioned countries. The main topics of 2014 were the latest information on the situations in the areas where fights were taking place and the information on the course and results of diplomatic negotiations of the top representatives of the countries and international organizations (the EU, NATO) on the situation in Ukraine. One of the main actors of the news reporting was Vladimir Putin, and the most frequently mentioned country was Ukraine. In the following year, 2015, the thematic agenda of the

TV stations changed markedly. In the foreign affairs programmes the topic of the immigration and asylum policy of the EU dominated, and the news reports devoted to the immigration and asylum policy formed almost one fourth (23.5%) of all the broadcast reports, and in the case of the news-reporting programme of TV Prima it was even 30.5%. The second most frequent topic of the TV news reporting on foreign affairs was the security policy of the EU, which was thematized mainly in connection with the migration crisis in Europe and also in connection with the news reports about the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. The migration crisis related also to other topics covered in the media in 2015, such as the issue of relations of the European countries and the international humanitarian assistance (see Table 1).

The results from the comparison of the thematic agenda of the particular analysed stations in 2015 show that the foreign affairs news reports of all three of the stations are largely overlapping, which is also confirmed by the trend observed in the previous years. The same applies to the broadcasting of Česká televize, which, despite the fact that it provides more time to foreign affairs news reporting than the two commercial television channels, deals almost with the same events. All three of the stations offer very similar images of the crucial events and topics of the Czech foreign policy to their viewers.

Table 1:
The main issues in the monitored TV programmes in 2015 (N = 1,466)

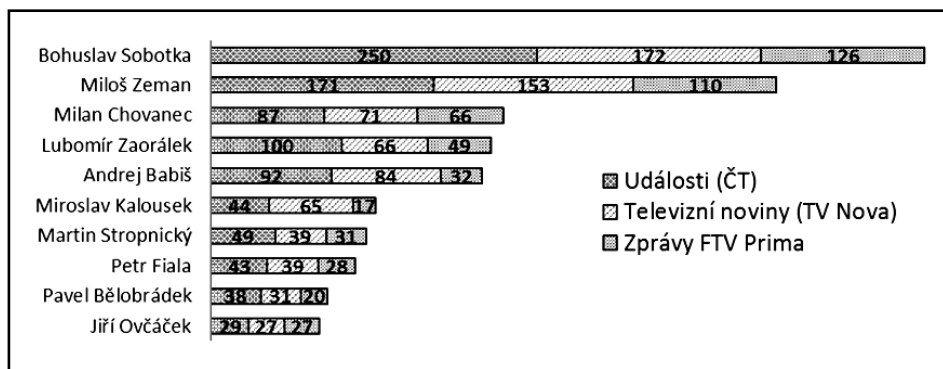
topic	% of reports in the news reporting programmes of the particular station*			Total	
	ČT	TV NOVA	Prima	Number	%
immigration and asylum policy	21.2	21.8	30.5	344	23.5
security policy of the EU	9.6	11.3	18.0	176	12.0
international visits and journeys of politicians	7.3	15.4	4.9	135	9.2
relations of the European countries	9.9	7.7	7.9	129	8.8
the international fight against terrorism, terrorist organizations	4.2	7.5	8.5	90	6.1
donation and development programmes of the EU	9.6	2.9	2.7	89	6.1
international humanitarian assistance	6.3	4.1	6.1	82	5.6
terrorist attacks	2.4	5.9	7.9	69	4.7
president (work, appointment, programme...)	3.2	7.7	3.7	68	4.6
international cooperation of armies	3.2	3.4	4.6	52	3.5

* The proportion of reports within the news reporting programme of the given television station: ČT (Události) = 697; TV Nova (Televizní noviny) = 441; Zprávy FTV Prima = 328 reports.

Besides the selection of topics, an important part of the news reporting is the selection of actors that give their opinions on the topics in the news programmes. The results of the analysis of the news reporting television programmes in 2015 confirm the dominance of the top Czech politicians in this respect. The Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Bohuslav Sobotka (548 times) and the President Miloš Zeman (434 times) were the actors who expressed their opinions on foreign affairs on the programmes most frequently.

In the next highest positions were the Minister of Internal Affairs Milan Chovanec (224 times), the Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek (215 times), and the First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Finances Andrej Babiš (208 times). Similarly to 2014, among the main actors of the foreign affairs news reporting in 2015, we can find only two non-governmental politicians, Miroslav Kalousek and Petr Fiala; see more details on this in Graph 2. Foreign or non-political actors appeared in the foreign affairs news reporting only rarely. The results of the analyses from the previous years were similar to those for the year 2015, which means that this year, the persons who got the largest amount of space to express their own opinions and interpret the meaning of foreign political events are mostly the Czech political elites (Nečas–Vochcová, 2014; Vochcová–Nečas, 2015).

Graph 2:
The most frequently appearing actors in the monitored news reporting
(N = 1,466)



If we focus on the persons that were most frequently mentioned by the main actors, we can see that the most frequently mentioned politician was clearly the President of the Czech Republic, Miloš Zeman (77 statements); he was most frequently mentioned by Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka – see Table 2. The presence of M. Zeman in the news reporting is quite specific because, despite the fact that he is one of the main actors of the foreign affairs news reports, in most cases he is presented only “passively” or “indirectly” when he is mentioned in the speech of someone else (of the Prime Minister or the Members of Government of the Czech Republic), and he appears in an “active” role, as the author of the speech, only in a few cases. This specific role of

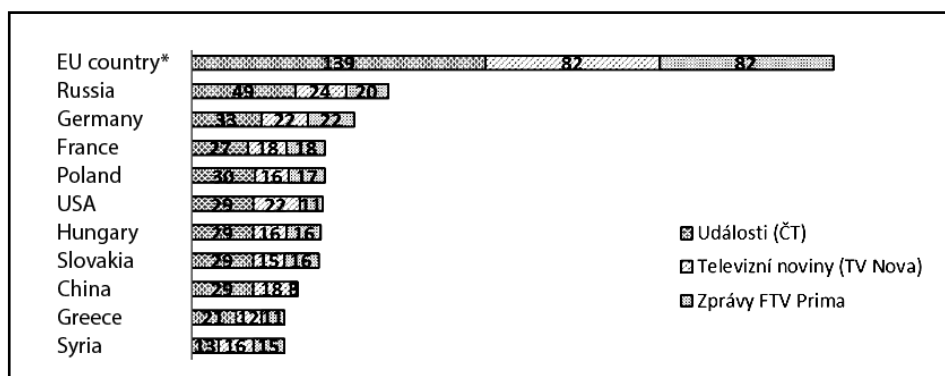
the President of the Czech Republic in the news reporting media was observed also in the previously analysed periods (Nečas–Vochocová, 2014; Vochocová–Nečas, 2015).

The last set of results from the quantitative content analysis focuses on the most frequent locations of the monitored news reporting (Graph 3). In the overall ranking as well as in the particular monitored stations, the news reports discussing several member states of the EU at the same time prevailed. This means that within one news report more inputs from a larger number of EU countries were broadcast. In 2015 this situation occurred typically in reports about the refugee crisis, and in the inputs of reporters from the Greek-Macedonian borders, or from Hungary and Germany, for example.

Table 2:
The main actors of the news reporting and the numbers of statements mentioning other persons

		Authors of the statements					Total
		Bohuslav Sobotka	Miloš Zeman	Lubomír Zaorálek	Andrej Babiš	Milan Chovanec	
The persons mentioned in the statements	Události (ČT)						
	Miloš Zeman	16		3	3	1	23
	Bohuslav Sobotka		4	2	–	2	8
	Karla Šlechtová	5	–	–	3	–	8
	Andrej Babiš	5	1	–		1	7
	Miroslav Kalousek	–	–	–	4	–	4
	Televízní noviny (TV Nova)						
	Miloš Zeman	24		1	8	3	36
	Andrej Babiš	7	1	–		1	9
	Bohuslav Sobotka		3	1	2	3	9
	Miroslav Kalousek	–	2	–	5	–	7
	Milan Chovanec	4	2	–	–		6
	Zprávy FTV Prima						
	Miloš Zeman	12		3	2	1	18
	Milan Chovanec	4	2	–	–	–	6
	Andrej Babiš	2	2	–		–	4
Václav Klaus	2	1	–	–	1	4	
Bohuslav Sobotka		2	–	–	2	4	

Graph 3:
The most frequent locations of the foreign affairs
news reporting in 2015 (N = 1,466)



* Note: This denotes the presence of more than one EU country, or a mention of the EU countries as a group without mentioning any particular EU country.

CASE STUDIES

In the following part we analyse the media coverage of two foreign affairs from 2015.² First, we focus on the news reporting of the Czech media related to the passing of the US military convoy across the Czech Republic at the turn of March and April in 2015.³ In the second case we analyse the news reporting covering the relocation quotas for the distribution of migrants among the member countries of the EU. Like in the previous years, we focus mainly on how the news reporting media interpreted these events; more precisely, we focus on what aspects were emphasized, and what kinds of contexts and frameworks the events were connected with in the media. We were also traditionally interested in the key actors and the degree of personalization in the news reporting, i.e. how important the individual actors of the events were for the media, or how they interpreted the influence of these actors on foreign policy issues. The basis for the selection of the analysed texts was the content of twelve printed periodical newspapers.⁴

The passing of the US military convoy

In the analysis of the first event – the passing of the US military convoy – we included all the thematically relevant texts that had been published in the period from 16th March to 2nd April 2015.⁵ We analysed 224 articles. The result is an identification of three basic interpretive levels, within which the event had been explained by the media. The first level describes the event as an expression of an opinion towards Russia, and therefore we call it *the symbolic act directed against Russia*, and the me-

dia used it mainly in the period before the given event. The second semantic context is characterized by the attitudes of the actors that were given some space in the media. The third, rather marginal level emphasizes the event mainly as a logistical act.

The symbolic act directed towards Russia

The key level that the monitored Czech print media used to frame the passing of the US armoured convoy across the territory of the Czech Republic was its symbolism. The so-called *Dragoon Ride* was presented as a symbolic act, mostly in articles published before its beginning. The context of this presentation was formed by the foreign-policy position towards Russia. In regard to the relation with Russia, the given symbolism in the texts had two frameworks but in reality they are two aspects of the same issue. On one hand, the texts characterized the passing of the convoy as the embodiment of the statement “one for all, all for one”. This characterization is based on a quoted statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, L. Zaorálek, who said the following words about the route of the convoy: “*The issues that had been discussed at the last NATO summit included the fact that it is necessary to point out that NATO is ‘one for all and all for one’, and that it is also necessary to understand that it is clear that they have to help each country that is in trouble.*”⁶ But, on the other hand, the texts characterized the passing of the convoy as “a demonstration of power”. Even though, the mentioned characteristics are definitely not in conflict with each other, it is good to differentiate them clearly because in the texts they are usually connected with antagonistic attitudes to the passing of the convoy.

The framework of “all for one, one for all”

This given characterization is definitely connected with a positive attitude to the passing of the convoy. In this view, the convoy is “*a symbolic exhibition of the determination to defend the boundaries of the NATO countries by the use military forces,*”⁷ whose “*aim is to show the alliance’s solidarity,*”⁸ “*to demonstrate the determination to defend an ally*”⁹ and “*to fulfil obligations*”.¹⁰ Some authors think that the target audience of such a symbolic exhibition is the Czech public: “*Some of the local web discussions or politicians want to [...] exchange our horse for the Russian one. I am therefore glad that the American tanks will go there. In this way they will show that they will not let in the Russian armoured forces, that we are part of a global group whose aim is to defend freedom.*”¹¹ According to other authors “*it is a sign for the allies that if there is a conflict with Russia they can rely on the USA.*”¹² So this is an example of the following kind of opinion: “*while the Baltic NATO countries, which are in a more complex geo-political situation than the Czech Republic, want a sign of solidarity that they deserve, this is a completely different case; it is as if the NATO armies found themselves on the hot ground of a non-member – Ukraine – or if they exported weapons to this country.*” And it is interesting that the articles with this framework were published almost entirely during the period shortly after the second half of March 2015, they reached their peak on 17th March 2015, and then they disappeared from the periodical newspapers. But later this phenomenon appeared again, e.g. in the attitude regarding the convoy to be a mere gesture: “*In the White House*

in Washington they only check how beautifully they expressed their interest in strong relations with this part of the world, but it has been clear for many years that the alliance of Central and Eastern Europe is an issue that Barack Obama had never regarded as a serious one."¹³

Also remarks related to the obligations of the Czech Republic, as a NATO member country, were published: *"It is not possible and it cannot be expected that our safety happens somehow on its own"*.¹⁴ In this regard, the news reports then referred to M. Zeman's statement that the Czech Republic is part of NATO and that it should be sympathetic to the other member countries,¹⁵ or M. Stropnický, who said that *"we do not do anything; we only fulfil our alliance obligation."*¹⁶

The framework of "the demonstration of power"

There is a longer duration in the topic of the convoy being understood as a demonstration of power. The articles framed like this do not have a clear plus in terms of the mentioned attitudes towards the passing of the convoy. What is common for them is the fact that they understand the convoy as a demonstration of power against Russia, but they differ in their assessment of such a conception. Even though the convoy, according to an official statement of the US army, should have been a demonstration of *"the ability of NATO to flexibly move an army unit across the borders of the allies in close cooperation with them,"*¹⁷ the monitored articles mentioned the given "aim" in a negative context, especially in connection with the attitude of KSČM. This attitude is expressed in the statements of the Chairman of KSČM, Vojtěch Filip: *"It is contrary to the previous statement of the Government that it supports a diplomatic solution to the dramatic situation in Ukraine. On the contrary, it is only about the demonstration of power – this can never contribute to the peace efforts; it can only increase the tension."*¹⁸ Regarding the fact that a lot of articles¹⁹ mentioning the disagreement of KSČM with the convoy frame the convoy as a symbolic act directed against Russia, there is an implication of a relation of KSČM to Putin's Russia.

There are also some opinions that agree with the convoy as a demonstration of power – e.g. one such opinion holds that it is a demonstration *"not directly of power, but of the commitment of the NATO countries to face the aggressive liking of the Russian bear in the east."*²⁰ According to another attitude, it is *"clearly a demonstration of power, but if someone does not like it, they should say how NATO has to respond to the demonstration of the Russian power that had started in 2008 and culminated in the annexation of Crimea."*²¹ The same thing is said also in a piece published on the opinion page of a daily newspaper: *"The post-Soviet Russia provided us with a lot of proofs of its expansion and threatening of other independent countries in the last year [...] we can only be glad that there is a power which demonstrates that it is prepared to turn against the potential violence"*.²² But we can also find a direct and explicit refusal of the idea that the convoy is a demonstration of power: *"This convoy is not a demonstration of military power; it is an internal strategic communication that the Americans and the Alliance want to manifest: We are here for you too, and we do not let you alone in it."*²³ The conceptions "all for one, one for all" and "the demonstration of power" are in contradiction there.

The attitudes of the public and of the political entities

This is the level that the media used in the period just before the event, in its course and also after it. At the same time, it greatly changed with time. This level replaced the framework of “the symbolic act”, which had been used only marginally in the media. Before the arrival of the convoy to the Czech territory, the framing of the articles was related to the attitude of the public or politicians, with the names of those who opposed the given method of transport being given. As the convoy got closer to the Czech territory, the topics of the articles were dominated by the contradiction between the opponents and the supporters of the convoy; this changed at the moment when the convoy got to the Czech Republic, and since that time the topics of welcoming the convoy and the meetings between the citizens and the soldiers were dominant.

The framework of “planned rejection”

The articles informing about the then upcoming rejection of the convoy (planned blockades, demonstrations, banners on roads) emphasize that this was mainly a position of the communists and the activists with a positive opinion of Russia. So we can say that it was practically about the automatic identification of the opponents of the convoy with the Russian interests. In the case of KSČM, this happened mostly implicitly, but there were also some completely explicit links: *“Their main political patrons [author’s note: meaning the opponents of the convoy] are the communists. It brightens the position of KSČM in the contemporary international political situation and establishes it as the main party support of the Kremlin in the Czech Republic.”*²⁴ Then the generalization gained the following form: *“If they had been ashamed today, it is after all a pro-Putin activist group that is encouraged in the mustiest debates on the internet these days so that in a few days’ time they can set off for the motorways with placards in their hands just to shame the Czechs. We should call them an acronym that was well-known to the older generations, and induced goose bumps on their skin – CCCP: Celkově Cákklá Cizorodá Pakáz (in the Czech language this is a play on words with the meaning ‘completely foolish foreign scum’).”*²⁵ This type of criticism, though not marked in this way, occurred in the monitored articles only rarely. At the same time, this attitude is practically not recognized in the articles (an exception is an interview with the expert on Czech history Ivan Šedivý, who *“warns that the division of the society should not be undervalued by assuming that only the communists and some Russian friends are protesting”*).²⁶

The monitored media, with only a few exceptions, were interested in the actual reasons of the protests only broadly and briefly: *“But on the side of the opponents, it is not only about the passing of one alliance convoy, but about latent anti-Americanism, about the questioning of the meaning of the Czech membership in NATO, and, finally, about the revision of what bothers even Putin himself – the European security arrangement, as it developed after the end of the Cold War.”*²⁷ When the reasons were mentioned, only the arguments of KSČM were particularly articulated, according to which (aside from the reservation that the convoy was about demonstrating the US’s power) the Government had not acted in accordance with the Constitution when it had discussed the passing of the armed forces (but the articles added that the govern-

mental politicians and the constitutional lawyers had not agreed with this opinion).²⁸ Then the articles about the rejection of the convoy related to ČSSD are quite interesting. This is the only party where we can see visible conflicts relating to the given issue (the leaders of ČSSD, Michal Hašek, Jan Mládek and Jan Keller, expressed their critical opinions on the convoy), and the journalists repeatedly emphasized this conflict. Similarly, the articles also called attention to the fact that one of the most visible organizers of the protests, Jiří Vyvadil, was a Senator of the Parliament of the Czech Republic elected for ČSSD.²⁹ In a few cases, the monitored articles called the protests provocations, and the protesters provocateurs (but it is likely that they only copied the terminology used in the Czech army or by the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic in these cases).

Any kind of approval or at least understanding for the rejection of the convoy is really rare in the monitored articles: *“The texts on social networks can be used as an identification of the fear of people. They connect [the convoy] with the results of the military engagement of the USA and its allies after 11th September 2001, and the fact that they have left only destabilized countries behind themselves, where there are still fights and the terrorism has spread from there into other countries and, in the form of migration, also into Europe. People are not really afraid of Russia, and probably not all are afraid of the fact that the Americans want to discourage us, but we are mostly afraid of what may happen because of our thoughtless acts.”*³⁰ Then another article expressed the view that the protests are a standard demonstration of a civil society and added that *“it is funny that the unanimous positive opinion on the passing of the US convoy is the opinion of the same people who are really frightened of the fact that Andrej Babiš might get 100% of the votes in the Prime Minister election”*.³¹ The agreement with the rejection of the convoy came from pacifist positions too: *“The revival of the post-war acts is regarded as important now, in the period in which we show off our strength and efforts to shift from the Cold War to a hot one [...] the Czech anti-war attitudes are also in accordance with the idea of the establishment of the EU and of the European communities [...], and the effort to maintain peace in Europe and in the world has been here since World War II.”*³²

The framework of “opponents versus welcoming and curious persons”

As the date of the arrival of the convoy was getting closer, the media framed the given event more often (though mainly symbolically) as a conflict between its opponents and supporters along the roads and at the stop locations. This framing was often shown already in the headlines of the articles: from the informative ones (*“The Americans are welcomed in many places, the largest protest is in Prague”*) to the implicative ones (*“The supporters of the Americans are already chilling the Pilsner, the opponents seek for signatures”* and *“The curious persons as well as those who reject it are going to see the passing of the convoy”*) to the suggestive ones (*“Fight for the convoy. Who will shout down whom?”*).³³ The articles mainly factually informed about the activities of the supporters (welcoming the convoy with flags, leaflets, beer, riding on motorbikes or veteran bikes, concerts, etc.) as well as of the opponents (demonstrations,

protests, blockades, petitions, etc.) and often about the expectations and motives of the people who were simply curious and wanted to see the transported military equipment and meet the American soldiers. At the same time, in this stage some people stated that the initiative was taken over by the supporters of the convoy.³⁴

The framework of “triumph of the supporters”

The convoy and its arrival to the Czech territory were depicted as a clear triumph. The nature of the informing about it is again well documented in headlines like “*Hi, friends! This ride was worth it*”, “*The enthusiastic Yankees: this is a carnival*” or “*Welcome! Prague welcomes the USA*”.³⁵ In most of the articles the opponents are pushed into the background, or their activities are presented as a failure: “*For the communists and permanent critics this was an opportunity they only rarely have, but they stretched a point in utilizing it. So they got a boomerang response, which was demonstrated in the mainly positive welcoming of the convoy*”, and “*The arguments of the ex-Senator, communists and other friends of Russia against the passing of the convoy, which were at the level of explanation of statements about the existence of the cosmic people led by Ashtar Sheran or the living Elvis Presley, had the opposite effect [of the one they were supposed to have] in fact. Instead of the pro-Russian moods and anti-American rejection with the aim of exiting NATO, we have seen a wave of liking*.”³⁶ Some authors, though, then admit that the opponents were partially successful in the information war: “*The overall impression from the public activities of the pro-Russian lobby is that they still have not showed much of anything. It seems that the only thing the fans of the Kremlin have succeeded in is the mobilization propaganda*” and “*The Czech followers of Putin have lost ‘the fight for the convoy’ only partially. They have been able to modify the Czech media reality for weeks*.”³⁷

In some articles there is an interesting context – that of an explicit or implicit historical parallel with the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the US Army in 1945. For example, one of the authors concludes that “*for a part of the crowd along the roads, the view of the convoy is a kind of satisfaction for the absence of the American soldiers in Prague seventy years ago*.”³⁸

Banal logistic action

Unlike the previous frameworks, this is a strictly marginal issue. In fact, here we can talk mainly about two separate frameworks: that of “a routine transport” and that of “logistics”. The logistic aspect of the transport plays only a subordinate role in the monitored articles. One article discusses the possible problems with the accommodation of the soldiers,³⁹ the traffic issues are mentioned too,⁴⁰ and other mentioned problems of this sort include the necessity to control the entire route of the transport⁴¹ and the convoy’s avoidance of having to pay tolls⁴².

The articles often trivialize the transport itself by saying “*the transport of the NATO armed forces in our territory, including the American ones, has become a routine*”,⁴³ while “*last year, more than six hundred American soldiers were transported on the roads of the Czech Republic*”.⁴⁴ Other politicians are quoted making simi-

lar statements: we can mention M. Stropnický, according to whom the convoy was “a routine alliance obligation”⁴⁵, and then particularly M. Zeman, who repeatedly said that “these are completely normal manoeuvres [...] only last year, eleven similar military convoys had passed through the republic and nobody noticed it”.⁴⁶

Relocation quotas

In the case of the relocation quotas, the selection of the analysed media outputs took place in two stages. In the first stage, some thematically relevant articles which had been published from 29th April to 30th November 2015⁴⁷ were selected, and this selected set contained 886 texts (N1). In the second stage, a total of 200 texts were selected from this basic sample, and these texts formed the final selection sample for the analysis (N2), so that the proportion (%) of the analysed texts in the particular months and in the selection sample (N2) corresponded to the original proportion in the basic sample (N1); see Table 3 for more details.

Regarding the development of the situation in connection with the migration wave, the topic of the relocation quotas was accented in the media throughout the whole year, and we identified a total of five key frameworks that the media had used for the contextualization of the topic. Probably the most significant framework is the one called “a sovereign state versus the EU”, which uses the traditional polarization of us versus them, and expresses a completely negative attitude towards the acceptance of the quotas as a dictate from outside.

Table 3:
The construction of the selection sample for the analysis of the media coverage of the relocation quotas in 2015

	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	total
N1	92	122	47	37	335	151	102	886
N ¹ (%)	10	14	5	4	38	17	12	100
N2	21	28	11	8	76	34	23	200
N ² (%)	10	14	5	4	38	17	12	100

The second framework, called “quotas versus Schengen”, interprets the system of quotas as a meaningless or non-functional one in regard of the Schengen Convention guaranteeing the free movement of persons in the member countries of the EU. The next context, which, to some extent, follows the framework of “a sovereign state versus the EU”, is the framework called “voluntary assistance”, in which the rejection of the quotas is connected with the alternative assistance in finding the solution to the migration crisis that the state itself defines. The fourth framework, that of “radicalization”, points out and describes the relocation quotas as an important factor and a pos-

sible cause of the strengthening of the radical or populist movements in the Czech Republic. The last framework, called “the dehumanization of migrants”, occurs in the media only rarely. It reflects the fact that the issue of quotas and the migrants is described in the media almost exclusively through the perspective of politicians and political negotiations. The humanitarian aspect or the perspective of the migrants is completely in the background of the media.

The framework of “a sovereign state versus the EU”

A large number of the articles (we can say the majority of them) provide information on the negative reaction of the Czech political representation (together with those of the other V4 countries) to the proposed relocation mechanism. The most frequently mentioned actors in this respect are the individual Czech politicians and the European Union as an unspecified whole. So in the articles, the deep disagreement of the Czech Republic with the policy of the European Union is stressed: “*The negative attitude towards the immigrant quotas had been confirmed by the Czech Republic also before the summit of the EU that started yesterday and had to deal with it. It got under the pressure of the rest of the Union when a claim about the mandatory participation in the relocation of refugees occurred in the prepared conclusions of the Summit.*”⁴⁸ The word “pressure” is a widely used term in connection with this issue. It is also used in the statements of journalists – e.g. “*We can expect other pressures because of the acceptance of the quotas*”⁴⁹ – as well as in the statements of politicians: “*The quotas are rejected also by the boss of ODS, Petr Fiala; in his opinion the Government cannot give in to the German pressure.*”⁵⁰

At the same time, the articles often mention the fact that the Czech Republic has an ally in this issue in the EU: e.g. “*For example, Great Britain shares the rejection of the mandatory quotas with the Czech Republic and Slovakia*”⁵¹, or “*The mandatory quotas, which the Czech Republic and also other Eastern European countries deeply reject, are to be one of the pillars of the plan for how to cope with the increasing flow of migrants.*”⁵² The dispute over the quotas is also presented as a fight of individual countries: “*The Slovak Prime Minister, Róbert Fico, showed the winning V (or antlers on Italy?) when he announced the success in the fight against the mandatory immigrant quotas yesterday. Also the statements of Prime Minister Sobotka had a triumphant tone.*”⁵³

At the same time, some uncertainty of the domestic political scene is accented. There are also articles describing the inconsistency of the Czech political scene: “*The plan of Junker’s (European) Commission introducing the quotas for the redistribution of refugees is a slap for the parties of the Government coalition whose Deputies supported Junker and his Commission, while the Government will now have to stand against him,*’ said the Deputy Prime Minister from ODS Jan Zahradil.”⁵⁴

We can also observe some tendency towards an anti-European tone in the articles – some “Eurosceptic” articles even had the ambitions to go beyond the topic of migration: “*It can be said that the proposal for quotas is based on good reasons. But it belongs among those that enforce feudalism from above. And this is its weakest part.*”⁵⁵ And the difficulties of managing the migration are, in some cases, used as a source

of support for a much more general argument against the Union: *“The bending of the bananas, the definition of rum or the butter spread. Europe acts in accordance with the orders of the Union officers. And now they have decided that the Czech Republic should accept 525 refugees from the countries of the Third World...”*⁵⁶

At the turn of August and September 2015, the topic of rejecting the quotas came to the forefront the ideas that were expressed by some foreign politicians. The related message in the Czech press was again strongly confrontational: *“While the eastern part, including the Czech Republic, firmly rejects the mandatory quotas for the acceptance of asylum seekers, in the western part of the continent we can even hear, together with appeals, some threats.”*⁵⁷ The “threats” are the statements about the possible restrictions of the donations from the EU: *“Do you turn up your nose at refugees? You will not get any ‘coins’! This is the message of the Austrian Minister of Internal Affairs, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, inter alia, even to the Czech Republic. She would restrict the money from Brussels to those countries that had refused to accept the refugee quotas. Mikl-Leitner said that there was a possibility to reduce the requirements if there was no solitary responsibility.”*⁵⁹ The European politicians who had commented on the refusal of the quotas by some member countries of the EU are subjected to sharp criticism: *“And the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, does not hesitate to chide democratically elected governments for not wanting to accept the refugee quotas dictated by him.”*⁵⁹ But the possible cuts in funding are criticized also as a measure that supports the Eurosceptics.⁶⁰

In connection with the negotiations of the Council of the European Union, where the Ministers of Internal Affairs of the member countries of the EU voted on the quotas, the quotas are presented as a primarily German interest that will be enforced by outvoting the opponents.⁶¹ At the same time, the rejection of the countries of the Visegrad Four is accentuated, as they do not want the quotas, in the language of the authors of the monitored articles, *to be forced on [them]*⁶², and the press announced that there will be “the last fight” for the quotas in Brussels.⁶³ The final approval of the relocation quotas is then described as a “Czech failure”⁶⁴ and a “dictate of the EU”.⁶⁵

The framework of “quotas versus Schengen”

This framework is basically the main argument in the articles that are critical toward the quotas or that relate to the rejecting attitude of the Czech Republic. The topic of these particular articles is the absurdity of the quotas in the situation of the free movement of people: *“As long as there are roast chickens on trees, and the gates are open, it is pointless to play the game of quotas. We can still promise Brussels that we will accept twenty thousand refugees. They will just disappear on their first walk towards Germany and Great Britain...”*⁶⁶In connection with this, some articles even mention the danger to the Schengen area: *“The quotas are nonsense, of course, only because there is the free movement of persons within the Schengen area, and those who are assigned to us will disappear into Germany the next day. Or is there someone who wants to cancel Schengen and break it into pieces? And are the quotas the first step?”*⁶⁷ But a different opinion presumes that the Schengen area will have to be reviewed independently of the quotas: *“A woman feeding her children in the Sicilian port of Cata-*

nia is waiting until the European Union finishes the argument on the quotas, and the refugees will move solitarily from the southern countries to the northern ones [...]. The next step will surely be the reconstruction of the Schengen area, in which the Europeans have moved from one place to another without border controls for 30 years already. But is such a system sustainable when there are thousands of migrants on the continent?"⁶⁸ Other articles mention the possible danger for the migrants themselves: "If we determine the quotas, how many of them we can accept, the tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea will be repeated: a lot of them will try to overtake the others and squeeze themselves into the quotas. The smugglers will have a feast, and the poor fellows in overcrowded ships will continue to sink."⁶⁹

The framework of "voluntary assistance"

Together with the thematization of the rejection of mandatory quotas by the Czech politicians, proposals of alternative solutions for the migration crisis appear in the monitored articles. Primarily, the voluntary solidarity is emphasized in connection with the official attitude of the Czech Republic or the Visegrad Group: e.g. "The Czech Republic is willing to accept a certain number of refugees, but only under the condition that there will be no mandatory quotas, it will be on a voluntary basis and, moreover, the Czech Republic can have a say in what kind of people they will be, their number and when they will be relocated to the Czech Republic"⁷⁰, or "The countries of the Visegrad Four, which means the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, again refused the mandatory quotas for the relocation of refugees in the common statement yesterday, before the upcoming meeting of the European Council. In their opinion, the solidarity actions should be performed voluntarily within the EU."⁷¹

In connection with this, the analysed articles are based on the statements of the Czech politicians in which they express their ideas. There is an example of this in the official offer of Prime Minister Sobotka, which he made in Brussels: "We reject the refugee quotas, but we do not deny our responsibility. Therefore, we offer financial help, experts on migration, the CASA aircraft, and a thermograph as well as trained police dogs for the Mediterranean region."⁷² Or then there are the critical thoughts on the quotas from A. Babiš; in his opinion the best solution is "to establish a refugee camp in Turkey, where the refugees would be selected."⁷³ Then there is the quoted statement of M. Zeman, according to whom the relocation of refugees "should be voluntary, and the main assistance should be directed to the regions where the refugees come from".⁷⁴

The framework of "radicalization"

In exceptional cases, the mandatory quotas are also negatively framed as a possible cause of the strengthening of radical or populist movements: "In the last few weeks, the Czech anti-Islamists got a gift in the form of the EU quotas for the refugees; if they were approved, the Czech Republic would be ordered to provide asylum for hundreds of refugees, including those from the Muslim countries. 'What has happened there is just incredible. More than 33,000 signatures in three weeks! We had been collecting

them for the first petition for months,' says Robert Metelec about the event announced by IVČRN because of the quotas."⁷⁵

The framework of "dehumanization of migrants"

The monitored articles discussing the issue of the quotas see the refugees or migrants in general as a kind of quantified mass which leads to the obvious dehumanization of the issue. The emphasis is on the political negotiations, and the humanitarian view of migration is undervalued in connection with the topic of the quotas. Of course, there are a few exceptions to this pattern – e.g. one such exception is an article studying the opinions of the Africans residing in the Czech Republic on the quotas: "*Why is it necessary to talk about a particular number? The acceptance of refugees is, after all, a humanitarian obligation for the Czech Republic.*"⁷⁶

The dehumanization of the issue is closely connected with the fact that the refugees or migrants themselves, who are primarily related to the issue, do not get any space in the particular articles. The topic of the quotas is viewed solely through the perspective of Czechs, or through that of the EU. Any perspective from the position of the migrants themselves is completely absent.

CONCLUSION

The results from the analysis of the foreign affairs news reporting show that in 2015 the dominant events were related primarily to the negotiations about the relocation quotas for the distribution of asylum seekers among the countries of the European Union (September, October), the terrorist attacks in Paris (November), and the passing of the US military convoy across the Czech Republic (March). As for the numbers of the news reports about foreign affairs, the news reporting programme of Česká televize is the leading one in this respect, but we have to note that, as in the previous years, in 2015 its agenda did not differ thematically from the agenda of the other television stations. All three of the stations offered very similar images of the crucial events and topics of the Czech foreign policy to their viewers. The main actor of the television news reporting on foreign affairs was Prime Minister B. Sobotka, followed by the President of the Czech Republic, M. Zeman, and various particular members of the Government. Among the 10 most frequently mentioned actors of the news reporting we had only two non-governmental politicians (M. Kalousek and P. Fiala). The characteristics of the main actors in the television news reporting in 2015, particularly the dominant position of the Prime Minister, the President of the Czech Republic and the members of the Government of the Czech Republic, and at the same time the marginal mentions of foreign or non-political protagonists, confirm the trend observed in the previous years, which means that the persons who get some space in the television news reporting to express their own comments and interpretations of the meanings of foreign affairs, are mostly the representatives of the Czech political elite.

The chapter also included case studies of the media coverage of two specific foreign affairs from the last year, namely the passing of the US military convoy across the Czech Republic at the turn of March and April 2015 and the relocation quotas for

the distribution of migrants among the member states of the EU. The key news reporting framework for the passing of the US military convoy was the symbolism of the entire event, as it was seen partly as a symbolic act against Russia and partly as a demonstration of the power and unity of the NATO countries. In the media coverage of the negotiations about the relocation quotas it is evident that a distinctly negative and polarized scheme is used for the interpretation of the topic. In the media coverage of the relocation quotas there is an essential effort to interpret the topic as a clash between the free decision-making of the individual countries on the one hand and the external dictate of the anonymized European Union on the other.

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Endnotes

- ¹ The data matrix with the coded messages of the television news reporting for the purposes of this study was provided by the company Media Tenor, spol. s r. o. (www.mediatenor.cz). The applied methodology of coding and the multi-stage data control allowed us to achieve a conformity of up to 95% in the reliability tests (*Intercoder Reliability*). The database (N) mentioned in the individual graphs and tables denotes the total number of units from which the data are counted. The total number may not correspond with the sum of the values in the graph or table if it presents, for example, only the most important results.
- ² The two foreign affairs for the quantitative textual analysis were chosen, as in the previous years, on the basis of discussions with the main actors of this yearbook.
- ³ The event took place from 29th March to 1st April 2015. On-line: www.acr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/pres-cesko-projede-konvoj-americke-armady-107865.
- ⁴ Daily newspapers *E15*, *Hospodářské noviny*, *Lidové noviny*, *MF DNES* and magazines *Ekonom*, *Euro*, *Reflex*, *Reportér*, *Respekt* and *Týden*. Available through the media archive of the company NEWTON Media.
- ⁵ The analysed period is marked off by the day when the passing of the convoy was approved by the Government of the Czech Republic (16. 3. 2015) and the day following the end of the event (2. 4. 2015). All those texts that contain the words “American” and “convoy” (including all their possible lexical variations) were included in the sample.
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- ⁹ (map): *Spanilá jízda obrněnců USA*. Blesk, p. 5, 17. 3. 2015.
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- ¹⁴ Bartošek, Jan: *Jak moc škodí český odezdikezdismus?* Právo, p. 6, 24. 3. 2015.
- ¹⁵ For example Danda, Oldřich: *Armáda se připravuje na provokace*. Právo, p. 2, 21. 3. 2015.
- ¹⁶ Stratilík, Ondřej: *Ohroží konvoj? Policie zakročí*. Lidové noviny, p. 2, 19. 3. 2015.
- ¹⁷ Tománek, Tomáš: *Konvoj ukáže svaly Putinovi*. Lidové noviny, p. 4, 17. 3. 2015.
- ¹⁸ Danda, Oldřich: *USA ukážou u nás Rusku svaly*, op. cit.
- ¹⁹ For example Danda, Oldřich: *USA ukážou u nás Rusku svaly*, op. cit.; Petráček, Zbyněk: *Demonstrace síly*. Lidové noviny, p. 10, 18. 3. 2015; Brožová, Karolína: *Odpůrci konvoje svolali demonstraci na Václavák*. Právo, p. 3, 19. 3. 2015; či Kavalírová, Naděžda–Židek, Leo: *Nemají právo napadat průjezd sil NATO*. MF DNES, p. 12, 24. 3. 2015.
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- ²¹ Petráček, Zbyněk: *Demonstrace síly*, op. cit.
- ²² Kavalírová, Naděžda–Židek, Leo: *Nemají právo napadat průjezd sil NATO*, op. cit.
- ²³ Danda, Oldřich–Pavel, Petr: *Jsme jiní, konvoj USA berou v Pobaltí jinak než u nás*. Právo, p. 8, 21. 3. 2015.
- ²⁴ Mitrofanov, Alexandr: *Karavana*. Právo, p. 6, 21. 3. 2015.
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- ²⁶ Houda, Přemysl: *Ukázat zuby neškodí*. Lidové noviny, p. 1, 28. 3. 2015; Houda, Přemysl: *Ztratili jsme vůli bránit se silou*. Lidové noviny, p. 13, 28. 3. 2015.
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