

---

## Chapter 8

# Russia in the Czech Foreign Policy

*Lukáš Tichý and Nikita Odintsov*

### **RUSSIA IN THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT**

In 2015, the Czech foreign policy in its relation to the Russian Federation (RF), as in the previous year 2014, was still influenced by the tense geopolitical situation between the Russian Federation and the western countries and the unresolved conflict in Ukraine. After the escalation of fights at the beginning of 2015, new agreements were signed in Minsk on 12<sup>th</sup> February, which were intended to supplement the Minsk Protocol from September 2014. These agreements represent the plan that, at the end of 2015, had to lead to the solution of the armed conflict in the eastern part of the country. However, the progress at the end of 2015 was only minimal. The sanctions imposed on Russia, the fate of which is tightly linked to the fulfilment of the agreements, were prolonged, but this did not cause such a debate in the Czech Republic as in the previous year.

Regarding this context, the Czech policy towards the Russian Federation can be divided into three levels: (1) political and security, (2) economic, and (3) domestic. The first level is based on the obligations of membership of the Czech Republic in NATO and the EU, where the main priority is to maintain the image of the Czech Republic as a reliable partner. The Government adopted the policy created by the European Union. So here we can talk about *the adaptation to the external policy*. There is no *proactive foreign policy*, with few exceptions of activities or rather statements of President Miloš Zeman because of which he is often criticized at home. On this level, the key strategic documents were adopted: *Bezpečnostní strategie ČR (The Security Strategy of the Czech Republic)*, *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR (The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic)*, *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu 2030 (Long-term Outlook for the Defence 2030)* and *Koncepce výstavby AČR 2025 (The Concept of Development for the Army of the Czech Republic 2025)*. On the second level, the Czech Republic tries to actively defend and promote its economic interests in Russia. The main actor is the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MPO) and the Minister Jan Mládek (ČSSD). There is an apparent effort to de-politicize this activity and move it from the highest political level to the level of cooperation between the Russian and Czech regions and the interest groups. Therefore, on this level, we can see the *proactive policy* in the context of economic diplomacy, with the effort to maintain the busi-

ness cooperation with Russia and minimize the losses caused by the economic sanctions and economic problems in Russia.

The third level of domestic policy is relatively *politicized and polarized* and largely influenced by internal political competition and the ideological basis of political parties. The other factors that influence this level include the historical experience, which is then reflected in the domestic political debate (either opportunistically or honestly). In principle, there is a collision of two opinions. Either Russia is perceived as a threat to the existing international order or the conflict of Ukraine is presented as a regional problem that must be resolved and it is necessary to renew the cooperation with Russia. There is no factual debate between these two contradictory opinions and the degree of polarization is quite high. This is associated not only with the different interpretations of the policy of the Russian Federation but also with the pluralistic political system, the long-term problem of policy coordination among the institutional actors (especially between the government and the president), and with a certain level of political culture of political parties, where personal verbal attacks are relatively common (at least on the level of public policy). Despite the domestic polarization, the Government of the Czech Republic successfully tried to maintain its unified position and to implement more pragmatic policy on the first as well as the second level.

The foreign-policy negotiations of the Czech Republic thus move between *the reactive adaptation to external stimuli* on the first level and the maintenance of the economic cooperation with Russia on the second level using a *proactive strategy*. In 2015, in connection with the adoption of the sanctions, the two planes came into a serious conflict, when the Czech Republic supported the approval of the sanctions package. But the effort of the Prime Minister, Bohumil Sobotka (ČSSD) to reduce the potential impact of sanctions on the Czech economy was, on the third level, accepted with rejection, not only by the right-wing opposition but also by the coalition partner, KDU-ČSL. According to them, this was a sign of the lack of solidarity with the Western allies and Ukraine. For this reason, the issue of sanctions moved to the EU level and this partially contributed to the de-politicization of this topic.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, the public debate in the press as well as in the Parliament remains highly politicized and we can also see securitization, not only of the Russian policy but also of the opposite views in the Czech Republic. The fact that the opponents of western policy towards Russia are either influenced by the Russian propaganda or they themselves are part of this propaganda is a relatively common argument in the public discourse. Likewise, there are accusations of spreading the western propaganda in the opposite direction.

## **RUSSIA IN THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: AGENDA AND EVENTS**

At the beginning of 2015, the fights in Donbas escalated and Russia was accused of them. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic issued a statement in which it called Russia “*to use its influence on the separatists, to end their financial, political and military assistance and to support the implementation of*

*the agreements from Minsk for the diplomatic solution to the crisis*".<sup>2</sup> According to the Minister Lubomír Zaorálek (ČSSD), "*Russia wants to create a frozen conflict in eastern Ukraine and, apparently, it does not want to implement the agreements from Minsk [from 2014]*".<sup>3</sup> L. Zaorálek, who holds a stronger position than the Prime Minister (but milder than the Minister of Defence, Martin Stropnický), warned that it was necessary to prepare for "the period of non-cooperation" between the EU and Russia. At the same time, he admitted that there were areas where it was necessary to achieve mutual cooperation of the EU and Russia, even in a limited format.

This applies mainly to the conflict in Syria, the fight against the Islamic State, the solution of the Iranian nuclear programme, and the preparation of the climate conference in Paris. He also called for the maintenance of the cultural and scientific contacts and he rejected the efforts to isolate Russia.<sup>4</sup> In his opinion, along with these, the sanctions are effective which is reflected in the state of the Russian economy. The aim of the sanctions is "*not to humiliate Russia or to get its domestic economy to its knees. The purpose is to show the disapproval of the Russian actions in Ukraine.*"<sup>5</sup> After the hard fights and partial loss of the positions, at night from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the Ukrainian army concluded the second Minsk agreement which finally led to the cessation of fights and to the definition of the procedure for the political "regulation" of the conflict. But soon the problem of their interpretation occurred – this means, who is really responsible for their implementation. This was also reflected in statements by the constitutional officials and they showed that in the Czech Republic there was no united position regarding the interpretation of the signed agreements. The position of Prime Minister Sobotka, in the long term, is that it is necessary that the agreements are fulfilled by both parties of the conflict – that is Russia and Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> According to Sobotka, their failure will cause "*the escalation of violence, the spiral of further economic problems and sanctions*". According to President Zeman, the agreements should be fulfilled "not only by the parties to the conflict but also by the EU and Russia, the parties that participated in the negotiations".<sup>7</sup> He thinks that the Ukrainian leadership, namely the President, Petro Poroshenko, and the former Prime Minister, Arsenij Jacenyuk, are really responsible for the success of the Minsk agreements. According to him, particularly A. Jacenyuk did not try enough to cease the conflict.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of January 2015, he called him "the Prime Minister of War", while he described the President Poroshenko as "the man of peace" who could cease the conflict. Conversely, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zaorálek, was sceptical about the willingness to fulfil the Minsk agreements by the Russian Federation and warned that Russia had already broken agreements in the past.<sup>9</sup>

In the second half of February, a coordination meeting of the President, the Chairmen of both Chambers of the Parliament, the Government, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Defence took place.<sup>10</sup> This meeting should resolve the problem of foreign policy coordination among the constitutional officials, which emerged in 2014, especially in connection with the statements of President Zeman. The analysed year shows that the problems of coordination were not solved at all (see the next section).

In the issue of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, there was a political debate at home, regarding the supplies of weapons to Ukraine. In this regard, the Government acted

jointly and rejected the supplies due to the threat of escalation.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, the leaders of the opposition party TOP 09 questioned this approach and supported the supply of weapons to strengthen the defence capability of Ukraine.<sup>12</sup>

The Czech Republic also had to respond to the murder of the Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in February 2015. Both B. Sobotka and L. Zaorálek disapproved of the murder. But L. Zaorálek was quite sceptical about the perspective of the capture of the guilty persons.<sup>13</sup> Then at the beginning of 2015, the Centre for Civil Society was established, which should support the activists from the countries of the former Soviet Union. The newspaper *Lidové noviny* wrote: “*This is a long-planned project of the US and Czech Governments, which will provide grants to non-profit organizations and civic initiatives, it will organize seminars and scholarships for democrats from Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia.*”<sup>14</sup>

Even KSČM did not object to this project, and according to them they were not interested in the Centre if it was not paid for by the Czech side (but the Czech Republic will co-finance it).<sup>15</sup> In 2014 as well as in 2015, the Prime Minister tried to avoid the securitization discourse. Despite this, he very sharply expressed himself against Russia at the end of March during the passing of the US convoy. B. Sobotka compared the Russian threat to the threat of the Islamic radicals and he discursively connected both these threats with the fate of Czechoslovakia in the 1930s: “*At the time when the security balance in Europe and in its neighbourhood is disturbed by the activities of the Islamic State on the one hand and the erratic behaviour of Putin’s government in Russia on the other hand, the importance of reliable national security is increasing [...] we cannot and we will not be alone as in 1938.*”<sup>16</sup> Later, on the anniversary of the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops, together with the Chairman of the Senate, Milan Štěch, he also connected the occupation of Crimea with the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.<sup>17</sup> The Chairman mentioned several times that the Russian Federation disturbed “*the basis of the security architecture in Europe*”<sup>18</sup> and he also emphasized that we should not succumb to “*the anti- Russian hysteria*”.<sup>19</sup>

One of the events politicizing the Czech debate on Russia was the passing of the Russian motor bikers from the club Night Wolves that was close to President Vladimir Putin; the ride should have brought to mind the victory over Nazi Germany. But L. Zaorálek and B. Sobotka said that it was a provocation.<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, the President undervalued the situation. According to *Lidové noviny*, the state even tried to find ways “*how to spoil the ride*” of the motorbike gang.<sup>21</sup> It was mainly about a high number of police checks (transport of weapons, drugs, and driving under the influence of alcohol).

The main topic that divided the Czech political scene dealt with the presidential visit to Moscow on the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Generally, as in the previous year, President M. Zeman was often criticized for his actions and poor coordination with the Government on issues that did not relate only to the Russian Federation. However, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, L. Zaorálek, mainly in his interview for the Russian media, tried to emphasize that despite the different statements of the President and the Government, “*in general, there is a consensus among the constitutional officials and everyone works together in any par-*

*ticular situation*”.<sup>22</sup> During the year, the Minister repeated several times that, despite the ceasefire, the Russian Federation was still sending heavy weapons and soldiers to the eastern part of Ukraine.

One of the points of the tension between Russia and the Czech Republic was the Russian sanctions list of the European politicians, with four persons from the Czech Republic who had supported “the coup in Ukraine”. These were Karel Schwarzenberg, Jaromír Štětina, Marek Ženíšek, and Štefan Füle. Around the same time, a show justifying the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1969 was broadcast on Russian television. Because of these two incidents, the Russian Ambassador, Sergei Kiselev, was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the Czech political representation was often criticized for the relatively late ratification of the association agreement with Ukraine too. Its approval in the Chamber of Deputies lasted until late night on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015 and the debate was quite sharp. The President finally signed the agreement in November and noted that this was not the guarantee for the accession of Ukraine to the EU.

The issue of the sanctions did not resonate as much as in the previous year. The future of sanctions is closely associated with the implementation of the Minsk agreements and has been transferred to the EU level.

On this level, they were also gradually prolonged because of the non-fulfilment of the Minsk agreements. This kind of “outsourcing” allowed the Government to partially depoliticize this issue. However, at the beginning of January 2015, the Russian media speculated that the Czech Republic was one of the countries supporting the cancellation of the sanctions, but the Czech Prime Minister refused this. But two weeks later, Sobotka together with the Slovak Prime Minister, Róbert Fico, and the Austrian Chancellor, Werner Faymann, met in Slavkov, where R. Fico and W. Faymann spoke against the tighter sanctions against the Russian Federation.<sup>24</sup>

On the political and security level, the year 2015 was important because strategic documents were adopted that defined the foreign and security policy of the country. They also reflected the challenges related to the policy of the Russian Federation. On the economic level, the main activity was carried out by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, headed by Minister Mládek, which tried to minimize the losses incurred in connection with the sanctions and economic crisis in Russia. As it is described below, the Government obviously tried to depoliticize the issue of the economic operation with Russia; therefore, the main emphasis was on the cooperation between the regions and the interest groups.

The Czech foreign policy towards Russia responded mainly to the external stimuli and took decisions prepared on the levels of the EU and NATO in political and security terms. This enabled it to depoliticize and actively implement practical policies on the economic level within the so-called economic diplomacy.

### ***The economic and business relations***

In 2015, the negative trend of the business relations between the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic went further. In addition to the sanctions, they were the main cause of problems with the Russian economy. In 2015, the gross domestic product in

Russia decreased by 3.7% (in 2014, there was a slight growth of 0.7%).<sup>25</sup> The main cause was the fall in the oil prices. According to the Russian Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Alexey Likhachev, in 2015, the losses associated with the sanctions were in the amount of approximately 25 billion EUR.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, in 2014, the share of Russia in the Czech export was below the long-term 3%, and in 2015 it fell to 2.0%.<sup>27</sup> Also, the other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had to deal with the economic problems, and in 2015 the volume of the Czech export decreased by 29.1% to 111.9 billion CZK. Only the volume of the export to Russia decreased by 30.8% to 78.3 billion CZK.<sup>28</sup> In 2015, within the compensation for the export losses to Russia, seven representative bodies and three foreign offices of the agency CzechTrade were supported. But despite the steep decline in the export to the Russian Federation and the CIS countries, the year 2015 “excelled” with the largest volume of export in the history of the Czech Republic.<sup>29</sup>

According to the estimates of the Confederation of Industry, as the result of the sanctions, the Czech companies could suffer losses in tens of billions CZK. In the long term, this can be up to hundreds of billions CZK.<sup>30</sup> By the third quarter of 2015, as the result of the decline in export, the Czech companies lost approximately 22 billion CZK. The most affected companies were the ones running their business in the field of machine industry, the products of which could have to be replaced by the Russian production or the cheaper import from Asia. For one-third of the companies that suffered losses, the Russian market is non-replaceable.

This is also proved by the results of the survey, conducted by the Confederation of Industry among its members, where approximately two-thirds of company representatives acted for the cancellation of the sanctions against Russia.<sup>31</sup>

The Ministry of Industry and Trade has been actively trying to solve the problems with negative dynamics of the mutual trade. During the year 2015, it promoted and organized a series of business missions to Russia but also to Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. There has been an intensification of activities of the mixed inter-governmental committees and working groups with the CIS countries and the prospective regions of Russia.<sup>32</sup> The cooperation on the regional level has become one of the key directions of the policy of the Ministry of Industry and Trade in relation to Russia. This form of cooperation offers the possibility to de-politicize the mutual business relations and allows minimizing the negative impact of the geopolitical conflict in Ukraine.

In this regard, the agency CzechTrade has prepared “a concept of regional activities on the Russian market.” This activity was coordinated with the Czech Embassy in Moscow and the regional consulates-general. In 2015, there was a clear strategy formulation of the inter-regional cooperation (on the local level of self-governments and administration), which should be fully implemented in 2016. The selected Russian regions, where the activity of the agency CzechTrade was directed, included the Sverdlovsk Region, Samara Region, and Krasnoyarsk Region. There were presentations of the companies operating mainly in the engineering and energy industries.<sup>33</sup> The active counterparts include the Moravian-Silesian Region, Zlín, South Moravia Region, South Bohemia Region, and the Capital City of Prague.

Another strategy that crystallized in the course of 2015 was the creation of partnerships in the Russian state programme of import substitution. The business opportunities associated with it were also mentioned by the Minister of Industry and Trade, Mládek, on the Business Day of Russia in Brno.<sup>34</sup> The Czech companies try to obtain contracts for the construction of large industrial plants in Russia, where the transfer of technology and know-how is needed. Among other things, further action on the creation of joint ventures will be negotiated, which could then export to other member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and other developing countries. In this regard, the fall of the Russian currency can serve as a competitive advantage (but there is still the problem of the volatility of the rouble, which complicates the long-term planning).

The examples of the successful joint Czech-Russian enterprise include for example MTE KOVOSVIT MAS in Azov (Rostov Region), which was founded in 2013; it focuses on the production of high-tech working machines.<sup>35</sup> Another similar enterprise is GRS Ural in the Sverdlovsk Region, co-owned by the Czech company TOS Varnsdorf, and the Russian company KR Group, focusing on the production of high-tech machining tools.

The synergy of the development of regional cooperation and the focus on import substitution programmes should be achieved by establishing Joint Working Groups that provide support for Czech companies on the regional level and are supported by the Ministry of Industry and Trade.<sup>36</sup> There has been a fairly intense cooperation with Bashkiriya, Kaluga, Leningrad, and Sverdlovsk regions, with Moscow and Tatarstan.<sup>37</sup> Particularly Tatarstan belongs to the major partners, where several projects are implemented in the fields of aviation, pharmaceuticals, energy, and engineering. But *“the attempt of the Minister of Industry and Trade, Jan Mládek, to push through the intense communication in the Cabinet with the Russian politicians and officials, according to information of LN, was not approved by the Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka”*.<sup>38</sup> It can reflect reluctance to politicize the foreign trade with Russia and the attempt to work mainly on a lower political level.

Other active entities in the field of economic relations between the Czech Republic and Russia include the CIS Chamber, which promotes the Czech business in Russia and other CIS member countries. It actively promotes the cancellation of sanctions and it participated in the organization of fairs and conferences (e.g. the Business Day of the Russian Federation at the International Engineering Trade Fair in Brno, which was also attended by representatives of Russia and the Czech Republic, including the Minister of Industry and Trade, Mládek).<sup>37</sup> Another actor is the mixed Russian-Czech Chamber of Commerce, which began its operation in 2014 in order to promote economic relations.

In any case, according to the Chairman of the Chamber for Economic Relations with the CIS, František Masopust, the number of signed contracts fell dramatically, despite the efforts to keep the market after the imposition of sanctions. According to the Economic Chamber, the much bigger problem than the sanctions concerns the internal economic problems of Russia but also the lack of trust. At the same time, with respect to trust, the role of President Zeman, as a connecting ele-

ment between Russia and the Czech Republic, is often appreciated in the Russian Federation.<sup>40</sup>

According to *Hospodářské noviny*, in 2015 some Czech companies were relatively successful in Russia. These companies include Hamé or Škoda Transportation, which won the contract for eight sets for the underground in St. Petersburg. But the Group PPF of Petr Kellner has some problems. Its Home Credit Finance Bank got into big losses. But at the same time, its RAV Agro-Pro, which manages over 100,000 hectares of land, may even profit due to the Russian agricultural sanctions. Škoda Auto then faces problems with the production of vehicles in the Russian Federation due to the more expensive imported parts, which is connected with the declining purchasing power of the Russian customers.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the economic downturn and sanctions in 2015, the Czech Republic had to deal with the unsuccessful investment in the power plant Poljarnaja for 9 billion CZK, which had been built by the company PSG International and the construction of which was interrupted. The loan to finance the project, insured by EGAP in the volume of 6.8 billion CZK, was provided by the Czech Export Bank (Česká exportní banka). The project failed, despite the negotiations of President Zeman with his Russian counterpart in Moscow in May 2015.<sup>42</sup> In 2015, EGAP lost 5.45 billion CZK, mainly due to the unsuccessful business exactly in Russia and Ukraine. In addition to the power plant Poljarnaja, the unsuccessful projects include the skyscraper in Kazan and the problem with the payments of the Russian wagon works UralVagonZavod.<sup>43</sup>

In the portfolio of the Czech Export Bank, the biggest share still belongs to Russia (32.26%) and in 2015 the CEB supported several projects there. For EGAP, the Russian projects represent about 30% of its portfolio, which is a substantial decrease from the previous 50%.<sup>44</sup> The paying ability of the Russian companies generally deteriorated due to the limited access to financing in foreign currency.<sup>45</sup> The total volume of the loans insured by EGAP in Russia exceeds 44 billion CZK. In 2015, EGAP insured exports to Russia in the amount of almost 5 billion CZK, of which almost 3 billion CZK belonged to the project of the company Chemoproject Nitrogen, which had to modernize the chemical plant for the production of fertilizers of the Russian company PhosAgro in Cherepovets in the Vologda Region, where the company Chemoproject had been active for a longer period of time.

Meanwhile, the imports from Russia to the Czech Republic decreased by 18.6% (an annual decrease of 24 billion CZK).

Of course, in the first place, it is caused by the drop in the prices of raw materials, which constitute the main export article of Russia. Also, the general demand for Russian commodities decreased. Due to the much larger decline in the export to Russia (the annual decline by 30.8% or 34 billion CZK), the trade balance remains negative (-27 billion CZK in 2015 compared to +16 billion CZK in 2014). The total turnover in the trade with Russia decreased by 58 billion CZK (or by 24.2%).<sup>46</sup> In 2015, there was an ongoing negative trend from the previous year when the turnover from 2014 decreased by 14.6% compared to 2013.

As for the Russian food sanctions, the total loss, when taking into account “*the unrealized export and the halt of the increasing trend in the export from the Czech*



*Republic to the Russian Federation*”, may vary within the range of 300-350 million CZK, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. The sector of dairy products was most significantly hit by the sanctions.<sup>47</sup>

The Russian economic crisis also affected the tourism sector. The number of Russian tourists fell, in comparison with 2013, almost by half (435 thousand compared to 803 thousand). The fall, compared to 2014, is almost 260 thousand people. After Christmas and New Year holidays at the turn of the years 2014 and 2015, the Czech Airlines had to decrease the number of regular flights to Russia.<sup>48</sup> Despite this, the total number of tourists in the Czech Republic grew by 1.5 million, when the Czech Republic was visited by over 8.5 million people (the data expresses the number of guests in collective accommodation facilities).<sup>49</sup>

### ***The new conceptualization of the Czech foreign and security policies***

In terms of the formulation of the Czech foreign and security policies, the year 2015 was important, regarding the fact that the Government of the Czech Republic adopted new conceptual documents. Of course, their formulation was significantly influenced by the geopolitical situation of the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The security strategy, *Bezpečnostní strategie ČR*, from 2015 repeats the previous version in many aspects. The vital, strategic and other significant interests remained unchanged, with the exception of “*the strengthening the intelligence protection and defence of the Czech Republic*”,<sup>50</sup> which probably reflects an increase in the activity of the Russian (and also Chinese) intelligence services. On the contrary, the analysis of the security environment and the strategic context was greatly restored. It reflects both the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and the conflict in Ukraine as well as the Russian foreign policy.

The low probability of a direct threat to the Czech Republic “*by a massive military attack*” is still emphasized. However, it has recently been stressed that “*it is not possible to completely rule out a direct threat to the territory of some member countries of NATO and the EU*”.<sup>51</sup> This threat is directly associated with “*the unclear method of hybrid warfare*”.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, we cannot exclude the threat “*of a traditional military nature*”.<sup>53</sup> Russia, although not explicitly mentioned, is, for the first time, presented as a real military threat to the NATO and EU member countries. “*The essential tool to eliminate these risks is the membership of the Czech Republic in NATO and the EU, and the good relations with the neighbouring countries.*”<sup>54</sup> Such vague and very general tool paradoxically questions the seriousness (or acuteness) of the Russian threat. The membership of the Czech Republic in these organizations has never been doubted and the effort to have good relations with the neighbours has also been a long-term objective of all governments. Certainly, it is not “a tool” to minimize the Russian threat, as it was described.

Besides the asymmetric threats, arising from terrorism and the security situation in the Middle East, we mention “*the power aspirations of some countries, which cease to respect the international order and the basic principles of international law to an increasing extent*”.<sup>55</sup> Here again, we can see a clear reference to the Russian annexation of Crimea and to the support of the rebel groups in eastern Ukraine. Russia belongs

to the group of states that are prepared “to enforce their interests and to use military force or the threat of using it”.<sup>56</sup> In this context, the strategy points to “the ongoing erosion of political and legal obligations relating to the European security”.<sup>57</sup> In the previous version from 2011, we spoke only about “the risk” of this erosion. Furthermore, new Russia is indirectly accused (it is not explicitly mentioned) that it misuses its dominant position in the energy markets, whereby “it endangers the political cohesion of NATO and the EU”, and this trend “can be described as an asymmetric threat of a strategic nature”.<sup>58</sup>

In 2011, terrorism was in the first place in the list of threats but in the present strategy, the first place is occupied by the Russian Federation. The main threat is then presented by “some states” seeking “the revision of the existing international order”; they are ready to use “the methods of hybrid warfare” that “combine the conventional and unconventional resources with non-military tools” (from propaganda to economic pressure).<sup>59</sup> As a result of the deteriorating situation in the security environment, “the Czech Republic has increased its overall defensive effort”.<sup>60</sup> In this respect, by 2020 the Czech Republic should gradually provide for an increase in the defence budget to 1.4% of GDP.

The Concept of the Development of the Army, *Koncepce výstavby armády České republiky 2025*, prepared by the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, characterizes the security situation much more pessimistically. According to the document, “the Czech Republic and its European allies are in the worst security situation for the last twenty years”.<sup>61</sup> This document also highlights a direct threat of an inter-state conflict. It talks about the revisionism of some countries that “cause armed conflicts in the neighbouring countries”.<sup>62</sup> In terms of the set-up of the Army of the Czech Republic, it emphasizes the need to reduce the dependence on the supplies of Russian spare parts for the maintenance of the serving-out military equipment from the Russian Federation.

In the document about the long-term outlook for defence, *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu 2030*, the Ministry of Defence draws attention to the growth of military spending of the Russian Federation and it links it to the possible “increase of aggression”<sup>63</sup> with the increasing amount of military means. Also the topic of “the hybrid warfare”, which manifests itself in the use of “unidentified militants”, is repeated again.<sup>64</sup> It is quite interesting that the Ministry of Defence speaks about the competition for raw materials and about the restriction of supplies from Russia or about their failure, among others, due to “the political causes or conflicts”.<sup>65</sup> It is still not clear how the Ministry of Defence or the Army of the Czech Republic should respond to such a situation (if they have to at all).

The concept of the Czech foreign policy, *Koncepce Zahraniční politiky ČR*, reflects a shift towards multi-polarity and “the increase of the military capabilities of many countries and their more assertive behaviour with the ambition to delimit the areas of influence with major strategic implications”.<sup>66</sup> The result of this is “the increasing risk of weakening the current world order” that is based on “multilateralism and international law”.<sup>67</sup> The concept of the Czech foreign policy clearly states that “Russia is currently a major destabilizing element in the European security architecture”.<sup>68</sup>

The policy of the Czech Republic towards Russia will depend “on the respect of the Russian Federation to the international law and territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighbours”.<sup>69</sup> And in this way, in fact, it declaratory adapts reactive policy. Prague will actively act for the strengthening of “*the constructive cooperation*”, especially in “*the economic and cultural areas*”, and it will seek “*the widest possible contacts with the Russian civil society*”.<sup>70</sup> In any case, “*the long-term objective is to overcome the current problems and achieve partner relations*”.<sup>71</sup>

The final version of the concept of the Czech foreign policy has undergone a number of changes compared to the original draft, which was obtained by the Czech media. The debate about the upcoming conceptions was relatively politicized; the resulting from avoided most of the controversial points. This was mainly about “*the declination from Havel’s support of human rights*”. Also, the original version lacked the explicit mention of the “*Russian threat to the West*”.<sup>72</sup> In contrast to criticism of the original version, the new concept was received quite positively. Generally, all conceptual documents have to reflect the changing security environment but they failed to avoid the adoption of certain “cliché” from the public discourse. It was related mainly to “the hybrid warfare”. This term often expresses all the possible confrontations, from the use of propaganda to the use of military and economic tools. Such a broad definition means that any quarrel and the active promotion of the interests of one country at the expense of the other country may be designated as “hybrid warfare”. So it is not clear how to proceed against it or if to fight and who is to be actually responsible for this fight. It is not clear either to what extent the safety of the Czech Republic or other NATO member countries is threatened. If the term was limited only to the use of “*unidentified militants*”,<sup>73</sup> it is still not clear why the unmarked soldiers should be immediately considered to be “hybrids”. Despite this, in Ukraine, there has been a classical conventional conflict with tank battles and duels of rocket systems. Even the support for the rebel movement is not a new practice. Because of this, the emphasis on the hybrid methods of the fight can make the defensive planning harder. In the conceptual documents, the ongoing securitization discourse is reflected there first of all.

### **RUSSIA IN THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY: THE ISSUE OF POLITICIZATION AND POLARIZATION OF THE AGENDA AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KEY ACTORS**

The domestic political scene is largely politicized and polarized in regard to the Russian issue. In the light of the armed conflict in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea, the politicization of the Czech policy towards Russia is directly linked to issues relating to war and peace, the world order, and the relations with the Western Allies. The polarization of the Czech foreign policy towards the Russian Federation is then influenced by the institutional framework of pluralist democracy; it reflects a different interpretation of the motives of Russia, and the long-term opinion preferences of the Czech politicians, and it also reflects the particular political development that requires an immediate response. The politicization of the Czech-Russian relations

on the level of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the political parties often corresponds to the domestic competitive policy. So it is about long-term attitudes of specific individuals, whether with respect to the Russian Federation or to its political opponents. This can be seen both on the level of political parties (ODS and TOP 09 vs. ČSSD and KSČM) and, for example, between the former rivals of the presidential elections (Zeman vs. Schwarzenberg). Nevertheless, even inside some parties, there are certain evident dissonances.

### ***Political discourse about Russia***

Like in 2014, also in 2015, the Government of the Czech Republic tried to speak coherently, and it was relatively successful in it. But we can see different opinion streams also within the Government. It is about the different interpretation of the motives of Russia or the severity of the threat to the Czech Republic. This also corresponds to the department that is headed by the particular members of the Government. The Minister of Defence, M. Stropnický, (ANO) expressed relatively great concerns over the policy of Russia. Also, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, L. Zorálek, (ČSSD) relatively criticized Russia. On the contrary, with respect to the Minister of Industry and Trade, J. Mládek, (ČSSD) the prospects of trade after the imposition of sanctions and the crisis of the Russian economy are much more important topics for him than the Russian threat. The Minister of Finances, A. Babiš, (ANO) spoke about the topic a bit more actively than in the previous year but he still had a sceptical attitude to the sanctions and he doubted their effectiveness. Under these circumstances, Prime Minister B. Sobotka (ČSSD) tried to promote a rather compromising position between these opinion streams. However, the Government was united in the fundamental issues. Only the Christian Democrats had slightly stronger opinions.

In any case, the coalition partners and the Prime Minister managed to ensure the consistent position of the Government, which should reflect the consensus reached within the EU. And exactly this European consensus and the stabilization of the situation in Ukraine in 2015 (but not the settlement thereof) allowed the government to overcome the conflicts that we had seen in 2014 in the Government, especially when the KDU-ČSL had a more radical position towards the Russian Federation. Thus, the reactive adaptation of the common EU policy allowed the Czech Government to maintain a unified position and to avoid contradictions among the coalition partners. The intensification of the debate is usually linked to certain events that require a clear attitude of the politicians. This happened in the case of President Zeman's journey to Moscow to celebrate the Victory Day and with the associated quarrel of the President and the US Ambassador, Andrew Schapiro, or with the voting about the association agreement with Ukraine in September 2015.

The Government linked the fate of the sanctions firmly, in accordance with the agreed position on the EU level, with the implementation of the Minsk agreements, and the decision on their prolongation has been moved to the Union level. The subject of the sanctions has become more the matter of the technical decisions in "Brussels". In the previous year, the issue of the sanctions related to the overall attitude of the Czech Republic towards Russia, which led to a high degree of politicization and

---

disagreement among the coalition partners, when KDU-ČSL strongly criticized Sobotka's "oscillating" attitude, when he reserved the right to comment on the package of measures at the end of August 2014.<sup>74</sup> In the previous year, the attitude of the Government of the Czech Republic towards the sanctions was associated with the issue of solidarity of the Czech Republic with the Western Allies and Ukraine. The move of the issue of sanctions to the European level helped to achieve the significant de-politicization of this topic. But the de-politicization was not seen in the attitudes of the Czech President, who still loudly questioned the effectiveness of the sanctions and supported their cancellation as soon as possible, for which he was criticized not only by the right-wing opposition but also by the Prime Minister, B. Sobotka, and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The inconsistency in the interpretation of the effectiveness of the sanctions has a direct impact on the practical foreign policy. If the sanctions are really effective, the chosen target course is correct. But in contrast, if the sanctions have only minimal impact on the Russian foreign policy, it is necessary to review the existing policy towards the Russian Federation on the level of the Government of the Czech Republic as well as on the EU level. This is the reason why the different attitudes of the President and Government are caused not only by the objective constitutional or institutional structure of the Czech Republic but also by the different interpretations of the effectiveness of current policy (in the case of the sanctions) as well as the causes that had led to the conflict. Compared to the Government, the President assigns some responsibility for the conflict to the new "post-revolutionary" leadership in Ukraine and to the representatives of the European countries who were unable to ensure the agreement between the then President Viktor Yanukovich and the representatives of the Ukrainian opposition.<sup>75</sup> The practical policy of the President might seem depart from the policy of the Government, which is based on different assumptions than the one on which the agreement had been reached on the level of the European Union. The constitutional and institutional structure of the Czech Republic leads to the fact that these different interpretations come to the surface and then there is a disagreement in the practical policies of the Government and the President.

It is interesting that both the members of the government and the President, when defending their own attitudes, refer to the EU or Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is relatively active in the effort to solve the Ukrainian crisis. On the one hand, it can be interpreted in such a way that, despite the different attitudes, the declination from the common EU policy is inadmissible. On the other hand, from the position of President Zeman, there may be an attempt to show that "his" policy or attitudes are not very "deviant".

As regards the public debate, this is quite polarized, both in the Parliament and in the media. Also, the non-governmental sector (including the professional public) often contributes to that. There are always discussions about topics related to the fact if the Czech Republic belongs "to the East or to the West", there are fears that the Czech attitude may question the "solidarity" with the allies, or that the Czech policy may seem to be uncoordinated and illegible. It is normally referred to the historical parallels from 1938 and 1968. This happens at least on three levels. Firstly, the threat

to the Czech Republic, resulting from the activity of the Russian Federation. Secondly, whether explicitly or implicitly, the fate of Ukraine is associated with the fate of Czechoslovakia, which lost its sovereignty several times, and this should encourage the solidarity of the Czech Republic and Ukraine. Or thirdly, the “overcautious” policy of the Czech Government (as it is often criticized by the right-wing opposition) moves the country to the role of an unreliable ally that recedes the aggressor. The public debate is often not about the issue of Ukraine itself and about the violations of its sovereignty by Russia, but it is about the world order, the changes of which have a fundamental impact on the security of Europe and the Czech Republic. As emphasized by Czech political scientist Michael Romancov, “*it is the fundamental issue of what kind of ground rules will be used in the Euro-Atlantic area. Russia savaged these principles and this must not be forgiven.*”<sup>76</sup> This also explains the high degree of politicization or even the securitization of the debate as well as the polarization of the public and politicians. The constitutional officials, who look at the policy of Russia as a local issue without a wider geopolitical context, basically threaten the security of the Czech Republic. It is thus a conflict between two mutually exclusive perspectives: a regional issue vs. the world order.

In the long term, the position of TOP 09 has been based on certain ideological values actively promoted by it. In its view, Russia is a clear threat to the world (or European) order. In contrast to the Government, it supports the supplies of weapons to Ukraine, and its leadership strongly attacks the opponents of the strong attitude towards Russia. There were also accusations of the political opponents of subservience to Russia or V. Putin (“*You compete, who has a bigger brown nose for Putin,*” said Miroslav Kalousek to address the communists and the Deputy of ČSSD, Jaroslav Foldyna, during the negotiations on the association agreement in the Chamber of Deputies).<sup>77</sup> The position of TOP 09 is close to the position of ODS. From the other side, there are accusations of a servility towards the West (or the US or Germany) and a lack of defending their own interests in the name of “solidarity”.

But despite this, there are also debates inside the parties. Inside ČSSD, there is no opinion unity, such as in TOP 09. The alternatives to Zaorálek’s line are presented, for example, by Jaroslav Foldyna, Stanislav Huml or Zdeněk Škromach. This fact was visible for example during a meeting in the Chamber of Deputies on the association agreement with Ukraine in September 2015. On this occasion, Deputy Foldyna tried to enforce an accompanying provision (but unsuccessfully), according to which Ukraine would move closer to the EU only after the implementation of extensive economic and political reforms, and there would be limitations of “*the influence of the corrupt oligarchs with their private armies.*” According to him, the expressions of extreme nationalism should be suppressed too.<sup>78</sup>

The attitudes of KDU-ČSL are somewhat stronger than the ones of the other members of the coalition, which moves the party closer to the right-wing opposition. Although the party agrees with the position of the Government and the Prime Minister, it emphasizes that, in case of the renewal of the conflict, the EU and NATO should be prepared “*with all their means, including military ones, to provide assistance to*

*Ukraine*".<sup>79</sup> This means the supplies of weapons for the Ukrainian army. For example, the Board of KDU-ČSL manifested its own initiative and strongly objected the Russian sanctions list where four Czechs were listed. According to it, it is "*another demonstration of the Russian propaganda*", and it announced a boycott to trips to Russia.<sup>80</sup> Then, for example, according to Deputy Ondřej Benešík, the aim of Russia is "*to acquire new territories – either directly or in the form of vassal regions*". In his opinion, the conflict is not perceived as a reaction to the overthrowing of the President V. Yanukovych but it is "*a long-planned action*".<sup>81</sup> According to the Chairman of KDU-ČSL, Pavel Bělobrádek, the impact of the sanctions on the Czech Republic are not marginal, but "*it concerns a price that we can and have to bear*".<sup>82</sup> According to him, the sanctions are effective and allowed peace negotiations. There is a very frequent statement that "*Russia understands what strength is*"; therefore, it is necessary to maintain the unity of the West. Bělobrádek also expressed concerns about the dependence on the imported oil and gas from Russia, because, according to him, it is necessary to promote the establishment of the energy union within the EU, which will improve the negotiation position of the Czech Republic.

In the movement ANO, the Minister of Finance, A. Babiš acts most carefully. He still expresses scepticism as regards to the effectiveness of the sanctions, but he strongly denies that he is a pro-Russian politician, of which he was accused for example by the Deputy Chairman of TOP 09, Kalousek.<sup>83</sup> According to Babiš, there is a much greater threat than Russia and this is represented by the refugees and the Islamic State.<sup>84</sup> On the contrary, M. Stropnický, from the position of the Minister of Defence, sees that the situation is much more serious.

According to him, the Russian Federation appreciates the strength and talks only to strong partners, and the passing of the US soldiers is intended to provide "*a proof of unity, preparedness, and certain strength*".<sup>85</sup> Stropnický, as well as other members of the Government, opposed the supplies of weapons to Ukraine, he also said that the Ministry of Defence supports Ukraine by increasing its qualification, especially in the field of logistics, and by providing military equipment.<sup>86</sup> According to him, one of the greatest threats today includes "*the revisionist superpowers*". From the perspective of the department led by him, such statements are reflected in the Czech conceptual documents.

Like the Minister of Defence, the then Chief of the General Staff, Petr Pavel, who has chaired the Military Committee of NATO since June 2015, pointed out the Russian danger. According to him, Russia, using the help of the separatists, wants to create a buffer zone in Ukraine. But the direct confrontation with NATO would be "*self-destructive*" for Russia and Moscow is aware of this. Regarding the common security threats (which primarily include the Islamic extremism), it is necessary to maintain a dialogue. General Pavel also pointed to the possibility of hybrid wars, by which Russia could destabilize many countries – not just the neighbours. He called Russia "*an opponent*" [not an enemy], "*that you can hardly believe.*" He also sees a problem in the Russian propaganda, which effectively distorts the facts in order to destroy the unity of the Alliance.<sup>87</sup>

***The role of the President in shaping the political discourse about Russia***

The position of President Miloš Zeman in 2015 was not very different from his attitudes in 2014. The President was convinced that there would not be a further escalation of the situation in Ukraine and he expressed hope for the early cancellation of the sanctions.<sup>88</sup> Zeman, due to his statements and practical actions, often became a target of criticism, not only for the right-wing opposition and his former opponent from the presidential elections, K. Schwarzenberg, but also for the members of the Government. President Zeman often faced domestic pressure and, despite his uncompromising rhetoric targeted onto his opponents, he had to make concessions.

Already at the beginning of January 2015, he said for the newspaper *Právo* that there was a civil war in Ukraine. And a few days later, the director of the Foreign Department at the Castle, Hynek Kmoníček, emphasized that “*the President had never denied the fact of the Russian volunteers [...] in Ukraine and he had always said that there was an aggression from the side of the Russian Federation*”. Even in the coming months, Zeman compared the conflict in Ukraine to the civil war in Spain, when the external forces had also encouraged the fighting parties in the national conflict.<sup>89</sup>

Other two similar concessions are associated with the President’s visit to Moscow on 9<sup>th</sup> May at the celebration of the Victory Day. In addition to the right-wing opposition, Zeman’s s trip to Moscow was also criticized the Christian Democrats, who, at their meeting of the national committee of the party, “*asked President Zeman to reconsider his participation in the military parade in Moscow*”.<sup>90</sup> The Minister of Defence, M. Stropnický, expressed a similar opinion. The Deputy of ODS, Miroslava Němcová, then asked the Government not to pay the travel expenses of the President’s journey. This possible participation in the parade has also become the subject of a quarrel between the US Ambassador Schapiro and the President.

In April, the Government finally approved the President’s trip to Moscow, but only at the second attempt. But before that, Zeman had had to give in the pressure and to refuse the participation in the parade; probably Minister Zaorálek had spoken fair to him, even though it was a sovereign decision of the President according to the Castle.<sup>91</sup> The second concession related to the quarrel with the American Ambassador. After Ambassador Schapiro had heard that the participation of the president in the parade could be “*precarious*”, the President responded with the statement that the Ambassador “*had closed door to the Castle.*” The President did not find support from the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister so he gave in. According to H. Kmoníček, the President had thought of only one particular meeting and, in general, he then tried “to smooth out” the incident.<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, Zeman’s trip to Moscow was criticized also by the composition of the delegation, which included Martin Nejedlý (who, at the time, was the managing director of the Russian LUKOIL Aviation Czech), and due to the fact that the Czech Ambassador was not present at the meeting with President Putin. Due to Zeman’s policy towards Russia, K. Schwarzenberg asked for a meeting with Prime Minister Sobotka. According to him, “*the statements of the President are incredible. And they are harmful to the Czech Republic.*” It was mainly about the President’s cautious attitude to-



wards the annexation of Crimea, the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the promotion of the cancellation of the sanctions.<sup>93</sup>

The trip of M. Zeman to Russia was legitimized in the Czech political discourse in two ways. Firstly, it was about the need to pay tribute to the soldiers who had died during the liberation of Czechoslovakia. The second argument consisted in the effort to promote the Czech economic interests. According to the Prime Minister, the trip to Moscow should help the Czech enterprises in Russia and it should “maintain at least minimal political relations”.<sup>94</sup> During his visit to Moscow, the Czech president talked with his Russian counterpart on the issues of economic cooperation and the Czech liabilities in Russia, which reached the amount of 9.1 billion CZK, but, as it turned out later, without much success.

Just as in the previous year and during 2015, there was an indirect polemic between President Zeman and the Chairman of TOP 09, Schwarzenberg. In principle, this may also be a sort of continuation of the election struggle. According to Schwarzenberg, Russia wants to achieve hegemony in Europe, with the help of the control over Ukraine.<sup>95</sup> On the contrary, according to Zeman, it is necessary to have Russia as a partner in the fight against international terrorism.<sup>96</sup> K. Schwarzenberg insists that the sanctions are effective.<sup>97</sup> On the contrary, M. Zeman insists that the sanctions are counter-productive and increase the tensions between Russia and the West, strengthen Putin’s regime and evoke the feeling of being in a besieged fortress.<sup>98</sup> Zeman, for the Russian newspaper *Kommersant*, commented quite positively on the state of the Russian democracy, which is in contradiction with the dominant narrative about “Putin’s regime”.<sup>99</sup> Of course, such attitudes of the Czech President are very welcomed in Russia. And exactly the fact that Miloš Zeman is used by the Russian Federation for its propaganda is one of the main reproaches against the Czech President.<sup>100</sup>

Despite the efforts at the beginning of the year to better coordinate the policy between the Government and the President, there were still some dissonances. However, in this case, the polarization is somewhat overestimated. The positions of both the President and the Prime Minister agree in the fact that the fate of sanctions is linked to the implementation of the Minsk agreements. But if the President perceived the situation more optimistically and assumed the fulfilment of the agreements by the end of 2015 (which was largely the *deadline* set in the agreement itself), the Prime Minister did not want to get ahead of the events.

There were also some conflicting views about the future of Russia and the EU, when President Zeman repeated his long-standing view that in the perspective of twenty years, Russia would join the EU, and in the meantime, it takes part in the Eastern Partnership. Prime Minister Sobotka refused such a prospect and talked for the creation of new relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation, supported by the Euro-Asian Economic Union. The effort to prevent an economic war between the two integration groups is expressed in Sobotka’s attempt to move the whole debate into a specific pragmatic policy with the aim to solve clear objectives.<sup>101</sup>

The opponents, either political ones or those from the public or even expert communities, often accuse President Zeman (or only criticize him) of supporting “pro-

Kremlin opinions”, being “a supporter of the Kremlin”, and “promoting the Russian propaganda”, and argue that his behaviour is harmful to the Czech Republic. The criticism is also directed to his attitude towards the refugee crisis or the Islamic State etc.

One of the main reasons why the policy of Miloš Zeman leads to such polarization is the fact that the President, unlike the Government, does not have the necessary bureaucratic apparatus that would allow him to formalize his activity and move it onto the level of practical policy, as it is for example at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. President Miloš Zeman compensated the absence of the necessary apparatus by his strong personal commitment. Regarding the fact that there have been no gaps in the coordination of policy between the Government and the President so far (again due to the missing institutional background, but also because of the personal conflicts of the President and the Prime Minister), the relation of the President and the Prime Minister is, to a certain extent, polarized; hence, on the domestic political ground, President Zeman is almost alone. However, as already mentioned before, the contradiction between the position of the President and the Government is more in the form of the statements than in their content. Although the President questions the effectiveness of the sanctions, they should be cancelled only after the fulfilment of the Minsk agreements. Moreover, the opinions of the President are close to some members of the ČSSD, including the Minister of Industry and Trade, Mládek.

### ***Foreign policy in relation to the Russian Federation in Czech political discourse: the issue of polarization***

Like in 2014, also in 2015, Russia and the related issues in the foreign policy of the Czech Republic presented an important topic of the political discourse of the opposition parties, i.e. of ODS, TOP 09 and KSČM. Also, for these opposition parties, like for the governmental parties, in 2015, the debate on the issue of Russia in relation to the Czech foreign policy reached a high degree of politicization, which, in some cases, moved to a discourse of securitization, where Russia is considered to be a serious threat to the security of the Czech Republic. And, last but not least, as in the case of the governmental parties, also in ODS, TOP 09 and KSČM, the issue of Russia led to polarization, not only among these opposition parties but also inside the parties themselves.

An example of such a party is especially ODS. On the one hand, in 2015, inside ODS primarily Petr Fiala, Miroslava Němcová, Alexandr Vondra, as well as the Deputy of the European Parliament, Jan Zahradil, belonged to the great critics of Russia and the Government of the Czech Republic for its moderate policy towards the Russian Federation. Among other things, he drew attention to the fact that among the invited participants at the Prague conference called “Let My People Live!”, held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at the Castle, there was also Vladimir Jakunin, who was on the US sanction list and because of whom the Czech President had had problems already last year, when he had headed to the island of Rhodes to the conference “The Dialogue of Civilizations”, on the invitation of V. Jakunin.<sup>102</sup> On 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015, J. Zahradil called on the Czech government to adopt an uncompromising attitude towards the decision of the Russian Federation to place ballistic missiles in the Kaliningrad region,

because it was an unacceptable confrontational action, which “*could not remain without a response*” and which could “*directly threaten the security of the Czech Republic*”.<sup>103</sup> Then, according to Zahrádil, Sobotka’s Government had to insist on the maintenance of the anti-Russian economic sanctions because: “*It is necessary to actually achieve any visible action by the Russian Federation, which will mean the end of its involvement in Ukraine.*”<sup>104</sup>

Similarly, on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2015, M. Němcová called on the Czech Government to reject, in a significant manner, “*the Kremlin’s foreign policy*” which made threats with nuclear weapons against Denmark, by which the Russian Federation intentionally caused a conflict with a country that was part of NATO, and, in this way, it “*escalated the tension and threatened the security in Europe*”.<sup>105</sup> Like in 2014, in 2015, M. Němcová was a strong critic of the foreign policy of the Czech President in the relation to the Russian Federation. Firstly, the Deputy negatively opposed the participation of the President at a military parade in Moscow during the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II, and she repeatedly called on M. Zeman “*not to support the aggressive policy of contemporary Russia*” with his participation in the military parade and on Sobotka’s Government “*not to approve the trip and not to pay*” for the President’s trip.<sup>106</sup> Simultaneously, M. Němcová criticized M. Zeman for the visible inclination of the Czech Republic to the East that is particularly supported by the attitudes of the President, who was considered “*to be one of the key European allies of Putin*”, and his “*statements were often used as a part of the Kremlin propaganda.*”<sup>107</sup> According to Němcová, this is very dangerous, because “*the security interest of the Czech Republic are concerned*” and threatened by “*the imperial policy of the Russian Federation*” that still viewed Eastern and Central Europe “*as its sphere of influence*”.<sup>108</sup>

In 2015, within ODS one of the significant creators of the securitization discourse with respect to Russia, in addition to M. Němcová, was the Chairman of ODS, P. Fiala, who repeatedly warned that the Czech foreign policy was riskily leaving the emphasis on the Euro-Atlantic ties and its attitude to the Russian Federation, because of the immediate economic interests, generally threatened the Czech Republic because “*the West did not threaten us, it was a guarantee of our security, but Russia potentially did*”.<sup>109</sup> In other words, according to Fiala: “*Today, Russia is a big security threat*” that “*renewed its traditional imperial ambitions and the rhetoric of the Cold War and tests how far it can go and what the West is able to bear. We do not have to fear anybody, including Russia, but we should and have to take care of the security of our country.*”<sup>110</sup> In this regard, on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015, P. Fiala blamed Sobotka’s Government because of the illegible foreign policy of the Czech Republic and pointed to contradictions in the statements of constitutional officials towards the Russian Federation; for example, President Zeman and the Minister of Industry and Trade, Mládek, had “*pro-Russian statements*”, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zorálek, “*supported the sanctions*”.<sup>111</sup>

In 2015, there was a number of members in ODS who rather supported the pro-Russian policy of the Czech Republic. For example, the ODS Senator, Tomáš Jirsa, after attending the International Engineering Fair INNOPROM in Yekaterinburg, Rus-

sia, in the first half of July 2015, stated that, in his opinion, the EU should make maximum effort to end the war in Ukraine and should settle the relations with Russia because *“everything the Russian Federation had not been provided by the EU could be provided by China. And it is not interested in Crimea or the Ukrainian crisis at all.”*<sup>112</sup> At the same time, T. Jirsa also pointed out that the European Union was not able to decide about the fundamental decision if to completely isolate the Russian Federation and establish one-hundred percent sanctions, and it would not be probably good because *“the sanctions, along with the crisis of the Russian economy, might cost the Union up to 100 billion Euros, in addition to the loss of millions of jobs”*.<sup>113</sup> The former members of ODS, for example Václav Klaus, Ivo Strejček, Petr Paulczyński or Josef Myslín, who repeatedly criticized ODS and its current leadership for its ambivalent and wrong policy towards the Russian Federation, while, according to I. Strejček *“the attempt to destabilize Russia, to create the state of chaos within was a risky game for the West”*.<sup>114</sup>

In 2016, besides ODS, the party TOP 09 and its members, for example, Karel Schwarzenberg, Miroslav Kalousek, Member of the European Parliament Jaromír Štětina, Marek Ženíšek, Jan Vitula, and others, contributed significantly to the securitization of the Russian issues and the related topics in the political discourse. Like in 2014, also during 2015, the Chairman of TOP 09, Schwarzenberg, repeatedly warned against the aggressive policy of Russia, which could once again send *“the little green men trying to push out some countries from NATO, to divide Europe, and to gradually restore the supremacy over Central and Eastern Europe. We have to be prepared to oppose it vigorously.”*<sup>115</sup> In this context, Schwarzenberg called for the supplies of weapons to Ukraine, which *“possessed weapons from Soviet times”*,<sup>116</sup> criticized the Czech Government, which *“failed to respond to the Russian aggression in Ukraine”*, and highlighted the ambivalence of the Czech foreign policy that was *“confused and neglected the bilateral diplomacy with most European countries”*.<sup>117</sup> At the same time in 2015, the Chairman of the TOP 09 repeatedly criticized President Zeman, who *“was a vain populist and his statements were a major burden on the Czech foreign policy”* because *“he unilaterally sided with Russia”*.<sup>118</sup> According to Schwarzenberg, an example of this included the President’s trip to the military parade in Moscow to commemorate the end of World War II, with which TOP 09 disagreed because *“the participation of the President in the parade underlines Russia’s status as a superpower and worshipped only the Russian Federation”*.<sup>119</sup>

Similarly, Zeman’s trip to Moscow was repeatedly criticized for example by M. Ženíšek, according to whom *“the trip of President Zeman was an embarrassment itself”*,<sup>120</sup> and by Helen Langšádlová, according to whom *“our President was trying to get back into the servitude to Russia”*,<sup>121</sup> but also by M. Kalousek, who pointed out that President Miloš Zeman did the wrong thing, when he went to Moscow because *“the Czech Republic itself called again negative attention to itself. We would be glad if we were exceptional in other areas than slouching in front of a dictator who threatens the sovereignty of Ukraine”*.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, Kalousek, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015, warned Sobotka’s Government and the Chamber of Deputies to realize that *“the greatest security risk of the Czech Republic is the expansion of the Russian Fed-*

eration and its inability to come to terms with the results of the Cold War”, and it did not turn away its attention “from our greatest danger, which is the expansion of the Russian imperialism”.<sup>123</sup> The Deputy Chairman of TOP 09, Kalousek, together with M. Ženíšek and other members of TOP 09, in this context, supported the rearming of Ukraine because, if the international treaties guarantee the borders as untouchable then we “should also allow the citizens of the countries, whose borders are guaranteed, to defend themselves. And to give them weapons is the minimum”.<sup>124</sup> Also the Member of the European Parliament for TOP 09, Luděk Niedermayer, stressed that if it turned out that the conclusion of the second Minsk agreement on ceasefire did not work, “the West, not only the United States, to begin militarily support Ukraine and to make the sanctions against Russia stricter”.<sup>125</sup> Exactly the Western sanctions, which, according to Red Ifrah (TOP 09), “work very well, and Russia is on its knees”, together, “with the toughest action against Vladimir Putin”, should force the Russian President to sit down at the negotiating table and “to resolve the situation through diplomatic channels”.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, according to R. Ifrah, it is important for the EU to remain united, because the fragmentation of the European Union is exactly what the Russian President wants. On the contrary, the Member of the European Parliament for TOP 09, J. Štětina, called for the demonstration of military power; according to him, the so-called soft power directed at the country attacking the neighbouring countries appears to be ineffective. “While we use ‘soft power’, people in Ukraine are dying. Therefore, I welcome the demonstration of the NATO military forces, which was launched by the military naval exercise in the Baltic Sea. Therefore, I welcome any sign of willingness to defend our democracy and the Euro-Atlantic values in the Black Sea. Russia respects tough opponents.”<sup>127</sup>

In the criticism of Russia, the South-Moravian Chairman of TOP 09, J. Vitula, went probably the furthest when he asked the Region to stop the donation at the amount of 200,000 CZK for the Week of the Russian Culture. According to Vitula, at the time when the Western world adopts economic sanctions against Russia, the Russian artists should forget any support from the Czech public budget, and the best is not to come to the Czech Republic at all. “The rejection of the Russian culture is mainly a clear signal to the Russian public that the support of President Putin has its consequences.”<sup>128</sup>

On the contrary, in 2015, the members of KSČM, e.g. Vojtěch Filip, Pavel Kováčik, Jiří Dolejš, the Member of the European Parliament Miloslav Randsdorf, Petr Cvalín etc., tried to achieve the de-securitization and de-politicization of the Czech foreign policy in the relation to Russia, and they, at the same time, opposed the ideas and opinions of the representatives of ODS and TOP 09 on the Russian Federation, and in this way they contributed to the further polarization of the political discourse on Russia. For example, the Chairman of the Deputy Club of KSČM, P. Kováčik clearly appreciated the participation of the Czech Zeman in Moscow on the celebrations of the victory over Nazism. According to him, it is correct that the President linked his visit with the negotiations on economic issues. “It is good also because Russia is a very important partner; whether one likes it or not, both in the political and economic fields.”<sup>129</sup> J. Dolejš expressed a similar opinion; according to him, Zeman’s trip is a good deposit

to the future Czech-Russian relations. *“For me, it is quite clear and I marvel a bit at those who want to ban this. It should not be banned at all.”*<sup>130</sup> According to Dolejš, it is nonsense that M. Zeman supported President Putin by his visit because *“I think that those who go there do not go there to bow to Putin, they even do not go there to bow to Stalin, who had some relation to this historical event; they go there to bow to the millions of dead.”*<sup>131</sup>

In 2015, KSČM and its members were repeatedly against the sanctions of the EU against Russia. For example, the Central Committee of KSČM, on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2015, called on the Czech Government to oppose the prolongation of the sanctions in the decision-making processes at the EU institutions, because it was proven that they were harmful to our country. *“The real facts show that the restrictions, which were intended to humiliate the Russian economy, do not have the expected effect. On the contrary, they lead Russia to counter-measures and finding alternatives in the global supply with other than European partners.”*<sup>132</sup> The sanctions then notably affect the EU countries, including the Czech Republic, where *“the anti-Russian sanctions cause losses that cost billions”*, therefore *“the Czech Republic, in its own interest, should protect its economy and refuse the sanctions”*.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, according to KSČM, the escalation of sanctions is very dangerous in connection with the spread of the war atmosphere, which *“is beginning to remind the cold-war period”*.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, Soňa Marková refused the sanctions against the Russian Federation because *“they had not brought any results”*; she is one of seven Czech representatives in the Parliamentary Assembly at the European Council.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, according to Marková: *“In Ukraine, there is a civil war and it is not clear if all the evil comes from Russia.”*<sup>136</sup> Finally, the importance of the EU sanctions against Russia was also questioned by the Member of the European Parliament, M. Ransdorf, who, in June 2015, visited Crimea annexed by the Russian Federation. According to him, the EU sanctions prevent Crimea from taking advantage of the special zone and *“the investment from abroad practically has not come, even though they would benefit both sides”*.<sup>137</sup>

KSČM also opposed the signing of the association agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, when on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015, its deputies clearly showed that they intended to block the discussions on this issue and, according to the Chairman of KSČM, Filip *“they would use all available means to spoil the plans of the Cabinet”*.<sup>138</sup> KSČM does not like the alleged persecution of their comrades and for example Leo Luzar (KSČM) in the resolution written by him points to the manifestations of extreme nationalism, xenophobia, and fascist sympathies among the Ukrainians.<sup>139</sup> KSČM was criticized for this attitude by the governmental parties when for example Prime Minister Sobotka said that communists only *“mechanically copied the attitudes of the Russian Federation”* and such conduct was not in conformity *“with our national and European priorities”*,<sup>140</sup> as well as by the opposition parties. According to M. Němcová, *“KSČM is under the influence of the Kremlin”* and supports its policy of *“violations of the international law, the rearming directed against the West and NATO”*.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, according to Peter Gazdík (TOP 09 and STAN), KSČM has always implicitly followed the Russian opinion and *“they have always liked the dictatorial regimes in Russia and the united Soviet Union”*.<sup>142</sup>

Then P. Cvalín (KSCĎM) asked for the renewal of cooperation of the West and Russia, according to which Western Europe, but also the USA, in consequence of recent terrorist attacks by radical Muslims in France, should understand that, without the active mutual cooperation with the Russian Federation, they cannot defeat global terrorism. *“The Russian Federation is a country that cannot stand aside in the fight against this threat. Also, those countries that, in consequence of the Ukrainian crisis talk about the Russian Federation as a terrorist country, which should stand aside from the European course of events, have to understand this. I certainly refuse this.”*<sup>143</sup>

In 2015, the polarization of the political discourse was supported by the different opinions of a number of political officials, such as Tomio Okamura (SPD) who, in his Facebook profile, clearly emphasized that he agreed with the trip of President M. Zeman to Moscow to celebrate the anniversary of the end of World War II because the war was mostly fought by the Russian Red Army, and *“in my opinion, it was an absolutely standard gratitude for the 140 thousand victims among the Russian soldiers during the liberation of Czechoslovakia from the Nazis”*.<sup>144</sup>

Similarly, according to Jiří Paroubek (LEV 21), President M. Zeman logically decided on his participation in the celebrations of the victory over fascism on 9<sup>th</sup> May in Moscow, and the demand of the Deputy Němcová that the President should pay for his trip to the celebration in Moscow himself, *“was disgusting and rude towards for victims of World War II”*.<sup>145</sup> An example of a radical pro-Russian attitude in 2015 included the opinions of Jiří Vyvadil, the former Senator for ČSSD and the founder of the social-democrats association Friends of Russia in the Czech Republic (*Přátelé Ruska v České republice*), who wrote for example in one of the articles in *Parlamentní listy* from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015: *“so Russia should finally start it. It has 700,000 soldiers permanently in arms [...]. I would be really glad to see dirty Němcová with Kalousek, Fiala [...] crowding into a shelter and quickly repeating some Russian words.”*<sup>146</sup>

## THE CZECH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS RUSSIA IN THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SPACE

In 2015, besides the political discourse, the Russian issue and the related issues were the most discussed topics also of the public as well as the media discourse. Like in 2014, also in 2015, all Czech printed media, such as *Hospodářské noviny*, *Právo*, *MF DNES*, *Lidové noviny*, *E15* and *Haló noviny* and their online versions, but also other Internet portals such as *Euractiv*, *Euroskop*, *Česká pozice*, *Echo24*, *Aktuálně.cz* or *Parlamentní listy*, paid increased attention to a wide range of issues related to the Russian Federation in the Czech foreign policy. Similarly, Russia and its relation to the Czech Republic represented a very frequent topic of various public events, conferences, round tables etc. The discussions about Russia in 2015 in the public and media discourse, as well as in the political discourse, were characterized by strong polarization and the presence of many opposing opinions and attitudes. During the year 2015, this situation in the public and media discourse was really evident, with an example discussion of the Russian Federation in connection with the issues of “conflict” or

“war” and “security”. On one side of the opinion spectrum, there is the attitude according to which “*Russia cannot be trusted*” and it represents a “*threat to the security in Europe*” because “*it leads a hybrid war in Ukraine*” and plans “*to attack the Baltic States*”. According to representatives of this opinion stream, the West, i.e. the USA, NATO and the EU, should respond “*by demonstrating their military forces*” and “*thus threatening*” Russia. On the other hand, then there is the opinion that these statements about the threat of Russia and its war plans are “*untrue*”, “*exaggerated*” and “*deliberately false*” and their aim is “*to harm Russia*” that should never “*attack a NATO state*”. At the same time, this “*vicious and reckless*” behaviour could “*worsen the economic and energy relations and interests of the EU in Russia*”. And finally, according to representatives of another opinion spectrum, there is a very dangerous decision of the West “*to demonstrate the military force*” against Russia or even “*to show the effort on destabilization*” of Russia, which had its pride restored by V. Putin. This conduct may then, in consequence “*of inadvertent raising tensions*” cause “*hot war*” between the West and Russia and thus lead to “*the unleash of the Third World War*”.

This opinion differentiation in relation to for example the engagement of the Russian Federation in Ukraine was confirmed by the eleventh wave of the survey *Trendy Česka* that was prepared by the agency TNS Aisa for Česká televize. In the relation to Russia and its decision to send its soldiers or weapons to Donbas, 29% of the respondents firmly believe in this, other 33% rather agree with this idea, while 16% of the Czechs think that Russia did not enter this conflict, and 6% of the respondents firmly believe that Russia is not engaged at all. In relation to the Russian engagement in the conflict, particularly the liberal voters are convinced – the supporters of ODS, TOP 09, SZ and especially of Piráti where there is a very strong belief in the engagement of Russia (86%). The supporters of Úsvit and mainly of KSČM have the opposite opinion – 39% of the supporters of KSČM believe that the Russian Federation does not support the separatist militarily.

Regarding the solution of the Ukrainian crisis, the Czech public sees it mostly in the negotiation “*on the level of the representatives of all EU countries*” (62%).<sup>147</sup> “*The next steps, which are seen as a suitable way to solve the conflict by more than 50% of the respondents, include the possibility of elections under international supervision and the previous talks in Minsk, which took place immediately before the survey.*”<sup>148</sup> The tightening of the anti-Russian sanctions is supported by 1/3 of the public. 36% of the citizens see them as a way to solve the Ukrainian crisis.<sup>149</sup> In 2015 in the Czech Republic, this opinion differentiation and the different attitudes in relation to the Russian Federation were supported, among others, by the pro-Russian misinformation campaign in certain media, especially through pro-Russian websites, informal groups, and communities on social networks, in several printed periodicals, radio, and non-profit organizations. According to Ivana Smoleňová of PSSI, “*the pro-Kremlin messages are intensified by the extensive communication activity on social networks and by organizing public gatherings. The Russian propagandist network is sophisticated, using their officials, journalists, commentators and the internet ‘trolls’ to spread their messages*”.<sup>150</sup> According to the analyst, the goal of this disinformation campaign is primarily the effort to demoralize the society, to turn the public opinion against the



Western institutions, against the US and NATO, and to violate the unity of the European Union. Another goal is to portray the politicians and the mainstream media as corrupted ones and working on behalf of the corporations and thus undermine their credibility and authority. *“In such a situation, Russia comes as a saviour and a moral value, someone who will bring order to chaos.”*<sup>151</sup>

In this context, during the year 2015, the Czech media pointed to two illustrative examples of the influence of the pro-Russian disinformation campaign, which also confirmed the divergence of opinions and diversity of the political representation and the public in the Czech Republic. The first example was the planned passing of the US military convoy from 29. 3. to 1. 4. 2015 through the Czech Republic from the training in the Baltic Region to the base in Germany, which, according to the spokesman of the US Army in Europe, Craig Childs, had to *“visibly demonstrate the American assistance to its allies in NATO, and to demonstrate the ability of NATO to move across the borders and territories of the allied countries”*.<sup>152</sup> While one part of the society, supported by a number of political officials of the Czech Republic, headed by Prime Minister Sobotka, welcomed the convoy as a sign of international cohesion of the NATO forces responding to the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the other part, supported by KSČM, condemned the convoy and compared it to the occupation by the Warsaw Pact troops in 1968. The opponents of the passing of the convoy were attacked by strong criticism for their attitude, not only from the political leaders but also from a number of artists. For example, the songwriter Jaroslav Hutka called the protesters *“paid spies and pathological fools who had fallen from Mars”*,<sup>153</sup> while the actor Jiří Lábus had a similar opinion: *“they are people who are either paid or are insane”*.<sup>154</sup>

The second example was the planned journey of the members of the Russian motorbike club Night Wolves to Berlin through a number of European states, including the Czech Republic, between 25<sup>th</sup> April and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015, to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany. The members of the group are ideologically close to the Russian Orthodox Church and V. Putin. While for example L. Zaorálek or B. Sobotka marked the passing as *“the response of the Russian government to the recent passing of the US convoy”*,<sup>155</sup> in contrast, for example, J. Vydvil from the civic association Přátelé Ruska v České republice sent an open letter to the Prime Minister, in which he urged him *“to allow the passing of members of the motorcycle club Night Wolves, who wanted to visit memorable places where their ancestors had died for us...”*<sup>156</sup>

In response to the actions and behaviour of these followers and supporters of the Russian Federation, which include some political leaders and members of ČSSD, KSČM and ODS, but also ordinary citizens and supporters of various organizations and movements, this group of people started being described in the Czech media during 2015 as *“the fifth convoy”* of Russia’s superpower interests, or as *“the useful idiots”* of President Vladimir Putin. The Deputy of TOP 09, L. Langšádlová, in one her interviews for *Zprávy.tiscali.cz* on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, suggested that *“the paid Russian agents in the Czech media were subjected to a trial for treason”*.<sup>157</sup>

Furthermore, in 2015, all the Czech media paid great attention to the support of Russia by some Czech politicians. For example, the internet daily *Echo24.cz* pointed

out on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015 that the Minister of Industry and Trade, Mládek, at the time when the EU acted on the toughening of the sanctions against Russia because of the worsened situation in eastern Ukraine, repeatedly proposed to “*strengthen the Czech-Russian economic relations*” and he tried to ensure that the “*Government paid attention and provided financial support to the Czech export to Russia*”.<sup>158</sup> The Minister also proposed a document, called *Ekonomická dimenze rusko-ukrajinské krize – hledání východisek*, which proposed, for example, sending other diplomats to Moscow, establishing a new office of the agency CzechTrade in Kazan or “*better work with the media and also highlighting the positive themes about Russia*”.<sup>159</sup> The opposition criticized Mládek for this attitude and the support of Russia. For example, the Member of the European Parliament, Niedermayer, pointed out that in the present situation talking about Russia as a perspective partner was “*completely mistaken, even regardless of the moral and political aspects associated with today’s Russia, and this Minister was not very perceptive to these issues*”.<sup>160</sup>

An even greater attention of all the Czech printed and internet media was drawn by the Czech President, Miloš Zeman, and his strongly pro-Russian policy. In 2015, the media took notes of some of the President’s “controversial” statements, for example, “*Russia will become a member of the EU in the future*”,<sup>161</sup> or “*The Union should cancel the sanctions against Russia already this year*”,<sup>162</sup> or “*Russia should enter the Eastern Partnership*”,<sup>163</sup> as well as his meeting with the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, during the visit to Moscow to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World World War II, which divided the Czech political and civil society into two imaginary camps: the supporters and the opponents of the trips of the Czech president to Russia. It is interesting that while a large number of the Czech political representatives from ODS, KDU-ČSL, ANO, TOP 09 and ČSSD were quite critical to the Moscow visit of President Zeman, according to the survey of the company SANEP from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the absolute majority of the domestic population (53.3%) agreed with the President’s participation in the May celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II in Moscow. The survey also highlighted the fact that although M. Zeman would not attend the celebrations at the Moscow summit, meaning the military parade on Red Square, as it was originally planned, in the opinion of 31.7% of respondents the Czech President should take part in this military parade. Conversely, 16.1% of respondents agreed with the decision of the President not to participate in the military parade. The opinion that the decision not to take part in the military parade is the sign of the Czech smallness, is shared by 7.8% of respondents. But 29.1% of respondents think that M. Zeman should not go to Moscow at all.<sup>164</sup> Last but not least, in 2015, some Czech media also noted the media image of M. Zeman in the foreign press that was fundamentally different in the opinion of the Czech President and his policy of supporting Russia. While the Western media rather criticized M. Zeman for his pro-Russian policy, when for example *The Financial Times* wrote that “*Zeman is an astute populist and goes hand in hand with Russia*”,<sup>165</sup> in contrast, the Russian media praised Zeman: “*Miloš Zeman is a fighter for the truth. he is an independent politician and not a puppet of America and [...]. His opinions are objective, independent and truthful*”.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, in 2015, the Czech media followed the issue of sanctions

between the EU and the Czech Republic on the one hand and the Russian Federation of the other hand. Although the limitations of the sanctions against the Russian Federation are directly related to the (un)fulfilment of the Minsk agreement by Russia, the internet portal *Novinky.cz*, on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015, drew attention to the expression of Russian news agency TASS, according to which seven of the 28 member countries of the EU (Austria, Hungary, Italy, Cyprus, Slovakia, France, and the Czech Republic) supported the cancellation of the anti-Russian sanctions. But the Czech and the Slovak Ministries of Foreign Affairs denied this fact.<sup>167</sup>

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015, all the Czech media reported on the publication of the list of 89 European politicians, whom the Russian Federation banned from the entry into its territory. The list included also the names of four Czechs, the former foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs and the leader of TOP 09, Karel Schwarzenberg, his party colleague, Deputy Chairman M. Ženíšek, the Member of the European Parliament, J. Štětina, and the former Minister for European Affairs of Fisher's Government and a European Commissioner for Enlargement, Š. Füle, who have unanimously declared that for them "*the ban on the entry into Russia is rather an award*".<sup>168</sup> Prime Minister B. Sobotka then called the sanctions list to be a response to the anti-Russian sanctions, introduced by the EU due the procedures of Russia in Ukraine, and urged the EU to unified actions.<sup>169</sup>

A day earlier, i.e. on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the Czech media paid attention to the Russian document on the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968, which was broadcast by the Russian state television Rossiya 1 in May. According to the creators of the document, the Warsaw Pact protected the Soviet allies against the "aggressive" NATO that was preparing to invade Czechoslovakia, and therefore the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 was necessary. The document, which, according to historians, distorts the history and suggests the return to the propagandist methods of the Soviet Union, was condemned also by the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Foreign Affairs. For example, according to the Member of the European Parliament, Pavel Telička (ANO): "*The film, in a rude and propagandist way, distorts the then actual events and manipulates the reasons for the invasion of the troops to our country.*"<sup>170</sup> Similarly, according to the observations of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the document is "*trying to rewrite the history and falsify the historical truth...*".<sup>171</sup>

Another great topic that was highlighted by the Czech media in 2015 was the identification of three Russian spies, who had to leave the Czech Republic, by BIS and the subsequent measures of the Russian Federation against two employees of the Czech Embassy in Moscow,<sup>172</sup> but mainly the alleged effects of a large number, approximately 30 Russian spies in the Czech Republic, who were working under diplomatic cover at the Russian Embassy.<sup>173</sup>

For example, in the context, Deputy Ivan Gabal (KDU-ČSL) demanded the reduction of the large number of diplomats, approximately 80, working at the Russian Embassy in comparison with 15 Czech diplomats in Russia, because: "*The activities of the Russian Embassy are in contradiction with the quality and credibility of the relations. It is obvious that they interfere with our internal political life far more than*

*into qualified reporting.*"<sup>174</sup> This proposal subsequently provoked contradictory reactions among the political parties.

In 2015, the Czech media also worked on a range of issues related to Russia. For example, they focused on the murder of the Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov, the attack on

a Czech diplomat in Moscow and the detention of the Czech delegation, led by the Deputy Chairman of the Chamber, P. Gazdík, at the airport in Moscow, who flew to the Russian Federation to honour the memory of the Czech legionaries and to reveal their monument.

## CONCLUSION

Like in 2014, also in 2015, the Czech foreign policy in relation to Russia developed under the influence of the crisis in the relations between the EU and the Russian Federation as a result of its military engagement in Ukraine. Due to these facts, in 2015, the Czech political, but also the public and media discourse was created about the Russian Federation and on the related issues, which was characterized by a strong *politicization*, in some aspects moving to securitization, and manifested itself on several levels. Firstly, on the economic level in connection with the discussion of the impact of the EU sanctions against Russia, and vice versa, on the Czech economy. Secondly, on the energy level, the main topic of the discussion was the possible effect of disruption of gas supplies from Russia to Ukraine on the energy security of the country. Thirdly, on the political level in connection with the strong support of Russia in the action and performance of the selected political leaders at the expense of the security of the Czech Republic, where this debate achieves the degree of securitization. Fourthly, on the security level, where, in the securitization discourse, the main attention was devoted mainly to the Russian influence in Ukraine and other possible military involvement in the Baltic region by the Russian Federation, which was perceived as a serious threat to the security of the EU and the Czech Republic. Finally, the issue of Russia was politicized in a number of strategic documents, which were issued by the Czech Government in 2015.

In 2015, as well as in the previous year (2014), these themes related to Russia contributed, within the political discourse, to a significant polarization of opinions, which manifested itself on several levels. Firstly, it was on the level of the institutional actors of the Czech Republic, e.g. between President M. Zeman, with his strongly pro-Russian policy on one hand, and Prime Minister B. Sobotka, who had a neutral position towards Russia on the other hand. At the same time, it was between the Ministry of Industry and Trade, led by the Minister J. Mládek, who promoted the strengthening of the Czech export to Russia in 2015, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its Minister, L. Zaorálek, who was rather critical to this action. Secondly, it was on the level of political actors of the Czech Republic, both between the government parties, i.e. ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and ANO, where there is no fully unified attitude towards Russia, and between the opposition parties, where on the one hand ODS and TOP 09 are

strongly critical to the Russian Federation and on the other hand KSČM supports the policy of Russia, but also within the parties themselves, such as ODS.

In 2015, the polarization in the relation to the Russian Federation and its related issues was evident, also in the media and public discourse of the Czech Republic.

Like in 2014, also in 2015, the Czech foreign policy towards Russia was developing on two levels. On the first, international level, the Czech Republic, as the member of the EU and NATO, tried to keep the image of a reliable partner and, therefore, the Government in the foreign policy towards the Russian Federation approved *the adaptation to external policy* in an effort to proceed in accordance with the commitments of its partners. On that level, the foreign policy of the Czech Republic towards the Russian Federation was not very *proactive*, with the exception of the statements and partial activities of President M. Zeman, for which he was criticized at home. On the second, national level, the Czech Republic tried to actively defend and promote its economic interests in Russia. On this level, the Czech Republic, within its economic diplomacy, adopted a *proactive foreign policy* in order to maintain the trade cooperation with the Russian Federation and to minimize the business losses associated with the sanctions and economic problems in Russia. In 2015, the foreign policy of the Czech Republic moved between *the reactive adaptation to external stimuli* on the international level, and *the proactive strategies* on the national level.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Kuchyňková, Petra (2015): Rusko v české zahraniční politice. In: Kořan, Michal a kol.: *Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2014. Analýza ÚMV*. Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, p. 169.
- <sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: *Prohlášení MZV k obnově bojů na jihovýchodní Ukrajině*, 25. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/EWfZOE](http://goo.gl/EWfZOE).
- <sup>3</sup> *Zrušení sankcí proti Rusku není na pořadu dne, tvrdí Zaorálek*. Novinky.cz, 19. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/v6q4mN](http://goo.gl/v6q4mN).
- <sup>4</sup> *Zaorálek: Rusko se stalo strategickým sousedem*. Euroskop.cz, 20. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/zhJUDH](http://goo.gl/zhJUDH).
- <sup>5</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: *Ministr Zaorálek pro Týden: Válku s Ruskem nechceme*, 5. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/Tma2R7](http://goo.gl/Tma2R7).
- <sup>6</sup> *Minská dohoda je jediná cesta, shodl se prezident se Sobotkou a Zaorálkem*. IHNED.cz, 17. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/W8HQx9](http://goo.gl/W8HQx9).
- <sup>7</sup> *Zeman: Rusko je už nyní převážně demokracií*. Sputnik.cz, 12. 5. 2015. On-line: [sptnkne.ws/keV](http://sptnkne.ws/keV).
- <sup>8</sup> *Zeman pro TASS: Rusko do 20 let splyne s Unií*. ČT 24, 4. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/6x0Rv1](http://goo.gl/6x0Rv1).
- <sup>9</sup> *Rusko už dohodu jednou porušilo, varuje ministr Zaorálek*. iDNES.cz, 12. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/9eDUFg](http://goo.gl/9eDUFg).
- <sup>10</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: *Prohlášení ústavních činitelů ke koordinaci zahraniční politiky*, 17. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/D1gQcr](http://goo.gl/D1gQcr).
- <sup>11</sup> *Zaorálek: Rusko mírovou misí OSN na Ukrajině nikdy nepodpoří*. ČT 24, 19. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/pKKj0x](http://goo.gl/pKKj0x).
- <sup>12</sup> *Schwarzenberg: Jsem pro dodání zbraní Ukrajině*. Aktualne.cz, 7. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/qfFhvB](http://goo.gl/qfFhvB).

- <sup>13</sup> *Zaorálek: Je vůbec šance vyšetřit vraždu Němcova?* TÝDEN.cz, 28. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/TXTDI7](https://goo.gl/TXTDI7).
- <sup>14</sup> Šafaříková, Kateřina: *Zakládejme Rusko Zítřa, ne Rusko Dnes*. Lidové noviny, 20. 2. 2015, p. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> *V Česku by se měly školit opozice z totalitních zemí. Nápad z USA se prý líbí i Zaorálkovi*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 8. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/yL87cW](https://goo.gl/yL87cW).
- <sup>16</sup> *Sobotka u Američanů: Jsme ohroženi islamisty i Putinem*. Echo24.cz, 31. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/hFPfHT](https://goo.gl/hFPfHT).
- <sup>17</sup> Štěch a Sobotka: *Mezi obsazením Krymu a okupací Československa je paralela*. E15.cz, 21. 8. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/CHYw09](https://goo.gl/CHYw09).
- <sup>18</sup> *Sobotka a Babiš se v Bakalových novinách zamysleli nad tím, zda se máme bát Ruska*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 2. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/EuV8rS](https://goo.gl/EuV8rS).
- <sup>19</sup> Leinert, Ondřej–Bartoniček, Radek: *Sobotka: Koordinace s Hradem zatím úplně nefunguje*. MF DNES, 10. 4. 2015, p. 3.
- <sup>20</sup> *Sobotka: Motorkáře k nám Rusko posílá kvůli Američanům*. MF DNES, 1. 4. 2015, p. 4.
- <sup>21</sup> *Dechové zkoušky i jízda v řadě. Policie průjezd Nočním vlkům znepríjemní*. Lidovky.cz, 24. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/Jqy9bT](https://goo.gl/Jqy9bT).
- <sup>22</sup> *Rusko do Donbasu posílá zbraně a vojáky, tvrdí Zaorálek*. Aktuálně.cz, 16. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/QCsZzM](https://goo.gl/QCsZzM).
- <sup>23</sup> *Ysvětlete seznam i film o srpnu 68, pozval si Zaorálek ruského diplomata*. iDNES.cz, 1. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/ct158Q](https://goo.gl/ct158Q).
- <sup>24</sup> Palata, Luboš: *Slavkovský trojúhelník se může stát Spolkem přátel Ruska*. MF DNES, 31. 1. 2015, p. 9.
- <sup>25</sup> Валовой внутренний продукт, Федеральная служба государственной статистики. On-line: [www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/vvp/vvp-god/tab3.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/vvp/vvp-god/tab3.htm).
- <sup>26</sup> Volkova, Olga: Санкционное падение. РБК Газета 080 (2336) (1205), 11. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/hokFss](https://goo.gl/hokFss).
- <sup>27</sup> The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic: *Hlavní tendence průmyslu a zahraničního obchodu v roce 2015 a úvahy o dalším vývoji*, 2016.
- <sup>28</sup> The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic: *Zpráva o plnění Exportní strategie České republiky pro období 2012–2020: Exekutivní shrnutí za rok 2015*, 2016.
- <sup>29</sup> *Český export do Ruska se dál propadá. Firmy letos přišly o 22 miliard*. iDNES.cz, 14. 9. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/uBIwd1](https://goo.gl/uBIwd1).
- <sup>30</sup> The Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic: *Průzkum mezi firmami k dopadům sankcí EU vůči Rusku*. On-line: [goo.gl/fkyyXB](https://goo.gl/fkyyXB).
- <sup>31</sup> *Anketa SP ČR: Exportéři by přivítali zrušení sankcí na Rusko*. Businessinfo.cz, 11. 4. 2016. On-line: [goo.gl/JJfIHv](https://goo.gl/JJfIHv).
- <sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic: *Zpráva o plnění Exportní strategie České republiky pro období 2012–2020: Exekutivní shrnutí za rok 2015*, 2016.
- <sup>33</sup> *Regionální aktivity CzechTrade v Rusku jako reakce na aktuální situaci (2015)*. BusinessInfo.cz, 3. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/D2XL4m](https://goo.gl/D2XL4m).
- <sup>34</sup> *Zaznělo na Business dni Ruské federace v Brně*. Komora SNS, 24. 10. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/r16wuw](https://goo.gl/r16wuw).
- <sup>35</sup> *Český export do Ruska se dál propadá. Firmy letos přišly o 22 miliard*. iDNES.cz, op. cit.; MTE KOVOSVIT MAS: Компанияю. On-line: [goo.gl/Q0kfRz](https://goo.gl/Q0kfRz).
- <sup>36</sup> *Český byznys chce v Rusku pokračovat. Komora SNS*, 24. 10. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/AVNOq4](https://goo.gl/AVNOq4).
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Trejbal, Václav: *Unaveni rublem: velké očekávání českých firem na východě vystřídala kocovina*. Hospodářské noviny, 1. 4. 2015, p. 7.
- <sup>39</sup> *Český byznys chce v Rusku pokračovat*, op. cit.
- <sup>40</sup> *Obchod s Ruskem drhne, nejen kvůli sankcím*. Komora SNS, 24. 9. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/cctnWt](https://goo.gl/cctnWt).
- <sup>41</sup> Trejbal, Václav: *Unaveni rublem: velké očekávání českých firem na východě vystřídala kocovina*, op. cit.

- <sup>42</sup> Českou banku odradily ruské finanční machinace. *Elektrárna na Sibiři nebude*. iDNES.cz, 31. 8. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/G0f9qw](https://goo.gl/G0f9qw).
- <sup>43</sup> Lukáč, Petr: *Pojišťovna EGAP loni prodělala 5,45 miliardy korun. Může za to hlavně Rusko a Ukrajina*. IHNED.cz, 28. 4. 2016. On-line: [goo.gl/moSyX3](https://goo.gl/moSyX3).
- <sup>44</sup> RČSKO: *Katalog 2015*, 2015, p. 77.
- <sup>45</sup> The Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic: *Průzkum SP ČR: Český export a Rusko*, 1. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/THbRCl](https://goo.gl/THbRCl).
- <sup>46</sup> The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic: *Hlavní tendence průmyslu a zahraničního obchodu v roce 2015 a úvahy o dalším vývoji*, op. cit., p. 9.
- <sup>47</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic: *Ruské sankce*. On-line: [goo.gl/FNTbWY](https://goo.gl/FNTbWY).
- <sup>48</sup> ČSA výrazně zredukovaly provoz linek na klíčovém trhu v Rusku. *Planes.cz*, 4. 2. 2015. On-line: [www.planes.cz/cs/article/9612](http://www.planes.cz/cs/article/9612).
- <sup>49</sup> ČSÚ: *Počet hostů v hromadných ubytovacích zařízeních podle zemí v ČR*.
- <sup>50</sup> The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic: *Bezpečnostní strategie České republiky*, 4. 2. 2015. On-line: [www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/brs/dokumenty/bezpecnostni-strategie-2015.pdf](http://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/brs/dokumenty/bezpecnostni-strategie-2015.pdf), p. 7.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>61</sup> The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic: *Koncepce výstavby Armády České republiky 2025*, 21. 12. 2015. On-line: [www.mocr.army.cz/ministr-a-ministerstvo/odkazy/odkazy-46088](http://www.mocr.army.cz/ministr-a-ministerstvo/odkazy/odkazy-46088).
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>63</sup> The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic: *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu 2030*, 15. 6. 2015. On-line: [www.mocr.army.cz/ministr-a-ministerstvo/odkazy/odkazy-46088](http://www.mocr.army.cz/ministr-a-ministerstvo/odkazy/odkazy-46088), p. 6.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- <sup>66</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: *Koncepce zahraniční politiky ČR*, 13. 7. 2015. On-line: [www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni\\_vztahy/analyzy\\_a\\_koncepce/koncepce\\_zahranicni\\_politiky\\_cr.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/analyzy_a_koncepce/koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_cr.html).
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>72</sup> Šafaříková, Kateřina: *Koncepce zahraniční politiky: návrat lidských práv a Drulákova prohra*. Lidové noviny, 31. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/5a8gkL](https://goo.gl/5a8gkL).
- <sup>73</sup> The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic: *Dlouhodobý výhled pro obranu 2030*, op. cit.
- <sup>74</sup> Kuchyňková, Petra (2016): *Rusko v české zahraniční politice*, op. cit., p. 169.
- <sup>75</sup> *Hovory z Lán*. *Zemanimilos.cz*, 22. 6. 2014. On-line: [www.zemanimilos.cz/cz/clanky/hovory-z-lan-312783.htm](http://www.zemanimilos.cz/cz/clanky/hovory-z-lan-312783.htm).
- <sup>76</sup> *Romancov: Zeman škodí Česku i Unii, Rusku se nedá věřit*. ČT 24, 13. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/FWhwMt](https://goo.gl/FWhwMt).
- <sup>77</sup> *Slova o Putinově zadku a pak schválení smlouvy, na niž čekala Ukrajina*. iDNES.cz, 17. 9. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/NZlgFw](https://goo.gl/NZlgFw).
- <sup>78</sup> *Sněmovna schválila asociační dohodu mezi EU a Ukrajinou. Padala ostrá slova*. *Lidovky.cz*, 18. 9. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/XXPhhh](https://goo.gl/XXPhhh).

- <sup>79</sup> KDU-ČSL: *Ukrajina musí být svobodná, mírová a jednotná*. Press release, 10. 3. 2015. On-line: [www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/ukrajina-musi-byt-svobodna,-mirova-a-jednotna](http://www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/ukrajina-musi-byt-svobodna,-mirova-a-jednotna).
- <sup>80</sup> KDU-ČSL: *KDU-ČSL bojkotuje cesty do Ruska*. Press release, 9. 6. 2015. On-line: [www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/kdu-csl-bojkotuje-cesty-do-ruska](http://www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/kdu-csl-bojkotuje-cesty-do-ruska).
- <sup>81</sup> KDU-ČSL: *Ondřej Benešík: Máme-li konflikt na východě Ukrajiny řešit, musíme nazývat věci pravým jménem*. Press release, 23. 2. 2015. On-line: [www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/ondrej-benesik-mame-li-konflikt-na-vychode-ukrajin](http://www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/ondrej-benesik-mame-li-konflikt-na-vychode-ukrajin).
- <sup>82</sup> Bělobrádek, Pavel: *Nebojme se Ruska, bojme se naší slabosti*. Hospodářské noviny, 3. 4. 2015. On-line: [www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/nebojme-se-ruska,-bojme-se-nasi-slabosti](http://www.kdu.cz/aktualne/archiv/2015/nebojme-se-ruska,-bojme-se-nasi-slabosti).
- <sup>83</sup> Kalousek: *Babiš neumí vysvětlit původ svých peněz*. Svobodné fórum, 26. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/Tazmqa](http://goo.gl/Tazmqa).
- <sup>84</sup> Kopecný, Josef: *Babiš: Uprchlíci jsou největší ohrožení Evropy, větší než konflikt s Ruskem*. iDNES.cz, 1. 7. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/MwXjxw](http://goo.gl/MwXjxw).
- <sup>85</sup> Kubík, Jiří: *Ministr Stropnický: Budeme-li slabí a nerozhodní, pak se Ruska bojme*. Hospodářské noviny, 30. 3. 2015, p. 3.
- <sup>86</sup> Stropnický: *Ukrajinu můžeme podpořit třeba ve vojenské odbornosti*. E15.cz, 26. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/OdZw32](http://goo.gl/OdZw32).
- <sup>87</sup> *Generál Pavel na ČT: Rusku se nedá věřit, neštítí se ničeho...* ParlamentniListy.cz, 9. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/Fj2bGK](http://goo.gl/Fj2bGK).
- <sup>88</sup> Zeman pro TASS: *Rusko do 20 let splyne s Unii*. ČT24, 4. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/hu7B6K](http://goo.gl/hu7B6K).
- <sup>89</sup> Zeman chce po schůzce s Putinem konec sankcí pro Rusko, válka prý skončila. Svobodné fórum, 10. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/AI1694](http://goo.gl/AI1694).
- <sup>90</sup> Lidovci: *Zeman by měl zvážit účast na přehlídce v Moskvě*. Aktualne.cz, 20. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/AYHBLI](http://goo.gl/AYHBLI).
- <sup>91</sup> Leinert, Ondřej: *Zeman si ruskou přehlídku neobhájil. Nakonec se jí vyhne*. MF DNES, 12. 4. 2015, p. 2.
- <sup>92</sup> *Přestřelka se Schapirem dělá Zemanovi čest, reagovalo ruské ministerstvo*. iDNES.cz, 6. 4. 2015. On-line: [zpravy.idnes.cz/zahranicni-media-o-prestrelce-zeman-schapiro-fn1-zahranicni.aspx?c=A150406\\_070517\\_zahranicni\\_cen; Hrad couvá ze sporu s USA. Zákaz vstupu pro velvyslance se prý týkal jen jedné schůzky](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/zahranicni-media-o-prestrelce-zeman-schapiro-fn1-zahranicni.aspx?c=A150406_070517_zahranicni_cen; Hrad couvá ze sporu s USA. Zákaz vstupu pro velvyslance se prý týkal jen jedné schůzky). Lidovky.cz, 7. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/gpglIX](http://goo.gl/gpglIX).
- <sup>93</sup> *“Neuvěřitelný Zeman škodí.” Schwarzenberg si stěžuje Sobotkovi*. Echo24.cz, 24. 5. 2015. On-line: [echo24.cz/a/wxRqZ/neuveritelný-zeman-skodí-schwarzenberg-si-stezuje-sobotkovi](http://echo24.cz/a/wxRqZ/neuveritelný-zeman-skodí-schwarzenberg-si-stezuje-sobotkovi);
- Nachtmann, Filip: *“Neuvěřitelný Zeman škodí.” Schwarzenberg si stěžuje Sobotkovi*. Echo24.cz, 12. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/g8mAOY](http://goo.gl/g8mAOY).
- <sup>94</sup> Břešťan, Robert: *Sobotka: Zemanova cesta do Moskvy je snahou udržet aspoň nějaké vztahy*. Hlídací pes.org, 16. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/ncS7A6](http://goo.gl/ncS7A6).
- <sup>95</sup> Karel Schwarzenberg: *Řveme, jako by nám uprchlíci řezali krky*. E15.cz, 14. 9. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/dOiE5Z](http://goo.gl/dOiE5Z).
- <sup>96</sup> Zeman: *Islámský stát je větší hrozbou než Rusko*. E15.cz, 4. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/OcF8qB](http://goo.gl/OcF8qB).
- <sup>97</sup> Šafr, Pavel–Jandourek, Jan: *SCHWARZENBERG: S čím kdo zachází... Národ zvolil Zemana*. Svobodné fórum, 18. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/lgyFA7](http://goo.gl/lgyFA7).
- <sup>98</sup> Zeman pro TASS: *Rusko do 20 let splyne s Unii*. ČT 24, 4. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/9rKfio](http://goo.gl/9rKfio).
- <sup>99</sup> Zeman: *Rusko je už nyní převážně demokracií*, op. cit.
- <sup>100</sup> Votápek, Vladimír: *KOMENTÁŘ: Nevhodné Zemanovo rozhodnutí navštívit Rusko*. iDNES.cz, 6. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/HTK4Rz](http://goo.gl/HTK4Rz).
- <sup>101</sup> Jansová, Lenka: *Zrušení sankcí EU vůči Rusku do konce roku nelze očekávat, míní Sobotka*. Český rozhlas, 11. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/N61O2X](http://goo.gl/N61O2X).
- <sup>102</sup> *Na Hradě se objevil Jakunin. Putinův muž, na nějž USA uvalily sankce*. iDNES.cz, 26. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/5YwrBX](http://goo.gl/5YwrBX).
- <sup>103</sup> Zahradil (ODS): *Rozmístění balistických raket v kaliningradské oblasti nemůže zůstat bez reakce*. ParlamentniListy.cz, 18. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/peyCcJ](http://goo.gl/peyCcJ).



- 104 *Evropská unie by měla prodloužit sankce proti Rusku, požadují europoslanci.* Zpravy.rozhlas.cz, 15. 1. 2015. On-line: [www.rozhlas.cz/\\_zprava/1444051](http://www.rozhlas.cz/_zprava/1444051).
- 105 *Němcová (ODS): Vláda musí reagovat na výhrůžky Ruska proti Dánsku.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 22. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/La4YWU](http://goo.gl/La4YWU).
- 106 *Němcová: Zeman oslabuje naši pozici v Evropě i NATO.* TÝDEN.cz, 22. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/XucO7X](http://goo.gl/XucO7X).
- 107 *Jedná prezident Zeman více v zájmu Ruska než Česka?* TÝDEN, 23. 3. 2015, p. 27.
- 108 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 109 *Předseda ODS: Západ nás neohrožuje, Rusko ano.* TÝDEN.cz, 21. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/erJ8US](http://goo.gl/erJ8US).
- 110 *Předseda ODS Petr Fiala: Mír Evropě zajišťuje spojenectví s USA.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 29. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/4jSZtZ](http://goo.gl/4jSZtZ).
- 111 *ODS viní vládu po roce vládnutí ze tří základních selhání.* Deník.cz., 28. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/20FdrQ](http://goo.gl/20FdrQ).
- 112 *Tomáš Jirsa (ODS): Co Rusku neprodá EU, dodá Čína. Krym je jí ukradený.* Deník.cz., 16. 7. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/uElzp3](http://goo.gl/uElzp3).
- 113 *Ibid.*
- 114 *Exposlanec ODS: Putin vrátil Rusům hrdost. Pokusů oslabit Rusko se děsím. Teprve z takového Ruska půjde hrůza! A tyto úchylnosti a odpudivost...* Euportal.cz, 23. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/sYH7ED](http://goo.gl/sYH7ED).
- 115 *Schwarzenberg (TOP 09): Strach je nejhorší rádce.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 4. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/HISXS9](http://goo.gl/HISXS9).
- 116 *Schwarzenberg je pro zbraně Ukrajině. Povstalci je mají z Ruska, říká.* iDNES.cz, 11. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/OjTIXq](http://goo.gl/OjTIXq).
- 117 *TOP 09: Zahraniční politika ČR je zmatek, u Ukrajiny selhala.* Aktualne.cz, 12. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/SV4XJ3](http://goo.gl/SV4XJ3).
- 118 *Schwarzenberg: Zeman je ješitný.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 7. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/B5hA3p](http://goo.gl/B5hA3p).
- 119 *Schwarzenberg (TOP 09): Cestou na vojenskou přehlídku prezident uctívá pouze Rusko.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 7. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/8zl0uC](http://goo.gl/8zl0uC).
- 120 *Ženíšek (TOP 09): Cesta prezidenta do Moskvy je ostudou.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 22. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/FaWSSA](http://goo.gl/FaWSSA).
- 121 *Placené ruské agenty v médiích bych soudila za velezradu, říká Langšádlová z TOP 09.* Zpravy.tiscali.cz, 23. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/xFikK0](http://goo.gl/xFikK0).
- 122 *Zeman se v Moskvě hrbil před diktátorem, míní Kalousek.* iDNES.cz, 10. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/85cBJn](http://goo.gl/85cBJn).
- 123 *Kalousek (TOP 09): Největším rizikem pro nás je rozpínavost Ruska!* ParlamentniListy.cz, 12. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/JQN34Z](http://goo.gl/JQN34Z).
- 124 *Kalousek: Stojíme-li za Ukrajinou, jedněme o dodávkách zbraní.* Novinky.cz, 17. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/JeUkkZ](http://goo.gl/JeUkkZ).
- 125 *Luděk Niedermayer: Absolutně nepřichází v úvahu řeč o zmírňování sankcí proti Rusku.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 15. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/JPjPSF](http://goo.gl/JPjPSF).
- 126 *Sankce fungují, Rusko je na kolenou, jásal v ČT expert TOP 09.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 5. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/rzbIFM](http://goo.gl/rzbIFM).
- 127 *Štětina (TOP 09): Zatímco EU uplatňuje "měkkou sílu", lidé na Ukrajině umírají.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 11. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/luRJMC](http://goo.gl/luRJMC).
- 128 *Ruské umělce tu nechceme. Měli bychom občanům Ruska jasně říct, že nejsou zváni, sdělil politik TOP 09.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 19. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/hsWe5W](http://goo.gl/hsWe5W).
- 129 *Zeman se v Moskvě hrbil před diktátorem, míní Kalousek, op. cit.*
- 130 *Zemanova návštěva v Moskvě. Kam míří česká zahraniční politika.* ČT24, 18. 3. 2015. On-line: [www.vystrcil.cz/zemanova-navsteva-v-moskve-kam-miri-ceska-zahranicni-politika-c2791](http://www.vystrcil.cz/zemanova-navsteva-v-moskve-kam-miri-ceska-zahranicni-politika-c2791).
- 131 *Ibid.*

- <sup>132</sup> *KSČM striktně odmítá obchodní válku s Ruskou federací*. Haló noviny, 14. 9. 2015, p. 5.
- <sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>135</sup> *EU prodlouží sankce proti Rusku*. Lidové noviny, 30. 1. 2015, p. 6.
- <sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>137</sup> *Ransdorf (KSČM): Moje návštěva Krymu vzbudila u některých rozhořčení i nevoli*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 22. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/CrTvuw](http://goo.gl/CrTvuw).
- <sup>138</sup> *Dohoda s Kyjevem zablokuje KSČM*. Lidové noviny, 18. 6. 2015, p. 2.
- <sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>143</sup> *Cvalín (KSČM): Západní Evropa a USA potřebují Rusko v boji proti světovému terorismu*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 12. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/dFIa2k](http://goo.gl/dFIa2k).
- <sup>144</sup> *Okamura, Tomio, Facebook.com*, 9. 5. 2015. On-line: [cs-cz.facebook.com/tomio.cz/photos/a.185333081477515.45875.179497582061065/992361420774673](https://www.facebook.com/tomio.cz/photos/a.185333081477515.45875.179497582061065/992361420774673).
- <sup>145</sup> *Paroubek: Ostudný požadavek poslankyně Němcové z ODS*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 18. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/raDEL4](http://goo.gl/raDEL4).
- <sup>146</sup> *Jiří Vývadil: Jen ať ANO dál oslabí TOP 09, ODS či KDU-ČSL*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 28. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/b9Gqzj](http://goo.gl/b9Gqzj).
- <sup>147</sup> *Dvě třetiny Čechů si myslí, že Rusko vojensky podporuje boje na Donbasu*. ČT24.cz, 1. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/JslUng](http://goo.gl/JslUng).
- <sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>151</sup> *Ruské dezinformace zaplavují Česko a zamlžují pravdu, tvrdí analytička*. iDNES.cz, 20. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/ugsHJK](http://goo.gl/ugsHJK).
- <sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>152</sup> *Průjezd amerického konvoje přes ČR – Dragoon Ride*. Armyweb.cz, 22. 3. 2015. On-line: [www.armyweb.cz/clanek/prujezd-americkeho-konvoje-pres-cr-draagoon-ride](http://www.armyweb.cz/clanek/prujezd-americkeho-konvoje-pres-cr-draagoon-ride).
- <sup>153</sup> *Rusové jsou větší hajzlové, než Američani. Rázná slova českých umělců k Rusku, americkému konvoji a jeho odpůrcům*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 31. 3. 2015. On-line: [www.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/kauzu/Rusove-jsou-vetsi-hajzlove-nez-Americani-Razna-slova-ceskych-umelcu-k-Rusku-americkemu-konvoji-i-jeho-odpurcum-368743](http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/kauzu/Rusove-jsou-vetsi-hajzlove-nez-Americani-Razna-slova-ceskych-umelcu-k-Rusku-americkemu-konvoji-i-jeho-odpurcum-368743).
- <sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>155</sup> *Sobotka: Motorkáře k nám Rusko posílá kvůli Američanům*. MF DNES, 21. 4. 2015, p. 4.
- <sup>156</sup> *Jiří Vývadil: Přátelé Ruska píší Otevřený dopis premiéru Sobotkovi*. ParlamentníListy.cz, 17. 4. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/VOsrHT](http://goo.gl/VOsrHT).
- <sup>157</sup> *Placené ruské agenty v médiích bych soudila za velezradu, říká Langšádlová z TOP 09*, op. cit.
- <sup>158</sup> *Posílit export do Ruska? Pomýlenost, říká opozice*. Echo24.cz, 30. 1. 2015. On-line: [echo24.cz/a/wYg33/posilit-export-do-ruska-pomyleneost-rika-opozice](http://echo24.cz/a/wYg33/posilit-export-do-ruska-pomyleneost-rika-opozice).
- <sup>159</sup> *Mládek s proruskou koncepcí neuspěl*. Lidové noviny, 18. 3. 2015, p. 2.
- <sup>160</sup> *Posílit export do Ruska? Pomýlenost, říká opozice*, op. cit.
- <sup>161</sup> *Zeman pro TASS: Rusko do 20 let splyne s Unii*. ČT24, 4. 5. 2015. On-line: [www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/1525598-zeman-pro-tass-rusko-do-20-let-splyne-s-unii](http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/1525598-zeman-pro-tass-rusko-do-20-let-splyne-s-unii).
- <sup>162</sup> *Unie by mohla ještě letos zrušit sankce proti Rusku, řekl Zeman v Moskvě*. iDNES.cz, 10. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/vxdtqF](http://goo.gl/vxdtqF).
- <sup>163</sup> *Zeman perli: Ať Rusko vstoupí do Východního partnerství*. Echo24.cz, 22. 5. 2015. On-line: [echo24.cz/a/weru6/zeman-perli-at-rusko-vstoupi-do-vychodniho-partnerstvi](http://echo24.cz/a/weru6/zeman-perli-at-rusko-vstoupi-do-vychodniho-partnerstvi).
- <sup>164</sup> *SANEP: S cestou prezidenta Miloše Zemana do Moskvy souhlasí většina Čechů, stejně tak má většinovou podporu Slováků s cestou do Moskvy premiér Robert Fico*. ČTK Protex, 4. 5. 2015. On-line: [www.protex.cz/zprava.php?id=23020](http://www.protex.cz/zprava.php?id=23020).

- <sup>165</sup> *The Financial Times: Zeman je protřelý populist a jde na ruku Rusku.* iDNES.cz, 9. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/g9UWmR](https://www.google.com/search?q=g9UWmR).
- <sup>166</sup> *Analýza: Mediální obraz Miloše Zemana v ruských médiích.* Neolivni.cz, 6. 10. 2015. On-line: [neolivni.cz/analiza-medialni-obraz-milose-zemana-v-ruskych-mediich/](https://www.google.com/search?q=neolivni.cz/analiza-medialni-obraz-milose-zemana-v-ruskych-mediich/).
- <sup>167</sup> *Zrušení sankcí podporuje podle Moskvy sedm zemí EU včetně ČR, Praha to popírá.* Novinky.cz, 15. 1. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/XUAJJ4](https://www.google.com/search?q=XUAJJ4).
- <sup>168</sup> *Nesmím do Ruska? To je čest, reaguje Schwarzenberg na zákaz.* Echo24.cz, 30. 5. 2015. On-line: [echo24.cz/a/wuS3C/nesmim-do-ruska-to-je-cest-reaguje-schwarzenberg-na-zakaz](https://www.google.com/search?q=echo24.cz/a/wuS3C/nesmim-do-ruska-to-je-cest-reaguje-schwarzenberg-na-zakaz).
- <sup>169</sup> *Rusko zakázalo vstup i čtyřem Čechům. Jeho hranice nesmí překročit Schwarzenberg či Füle.* Novinky.cz, 30. 5. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/iUkOlt](https://www.google.com/search?q=iUkOlt).
- <sup>170</sup> *Rozhořčený ministr Zaorálek si pozval velvyslance Ruska. Kvůli seznamu a filmu.* TÝDEN.cz, 1. 6. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/hvog1N](https://www.google.com/search?q=hvog1N).
- <sup>171</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>172</sup> *BIS odhalila v Praze tři ruské špióny, museli opustit Česko. Naštvaný Kreml se hned mstil...* Ahaonline.cz, 12. 3. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/fCikTc](https://www.google.com/search?q=fCikTc).
- <sup>173</sup> *Česká republika, ráj pro špióny.* Blisty.cz, 13. 3. 2015. On-line: [blisty.cz/art/76791.html](https://www.google.com/search?q=blisty.cz/art/76791.html).
- <sup>174</sup> *Je to trojl. Má pravdu, Rusko příliš ovlivňuje naši politiku. Ivan Gabal z KDU-ČSL navrhl postup proti ruské ambasádě. My jsme pro něj zkoumali terén.* ParlamentniListy.cz, 9. 2. 2015. On-line: [goo.gl/NUOq1S](https://www.google.com/search?q=NUOq1S).