
Chapter 11

The Czech Foreign Policy in the Asia Pacific

IMPROVING BALANCE, MOSTLY UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL

Rudolf Fürst, Alica Kizeková, David Kožíšek

Executive Summary: The Czech relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC, hereinafter referred to as China) have again generated more interest than ties with other Asian nations in the Asia Pacific in 2017. A disagreement on the Czech-China agenda dominated the political and media debate, while more sophisticated discussions about the engagement with China were still missing. In contrast, the bilateral relations with the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan did not represent a polarising topic in the Czech public discourse and thus remained largely unpoliticised due to the lack of interest and indifference of the public regarding these relations. Otherwise, the Czech policies with other Asian states in selected regions revealed balanced attitudes with both proactive and reactive agendas in negotiating free trade agreements, or further promoting good relations and co-operation in trade, culture, health, environment, science, academia, tourism, human rights and/or defence.

BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

In 2017, the Czech foreign policy towards the Asia Pacific¹ derived from the *Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic*,² which referred to the region as significant due to the economic opportunities it offered. It also stated that it was one of the key regions of the world due to its increased economic, political and security-related importance. Apart from the listed priority countries – China, Japan, and South Korea, as well as India – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the region of Central Asia are also mentioned as noteworthy in this government document.

While the *Concept* set out to fulfil strategic partnerships and enhance political dialogue on the higher level, in discussions, the officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also noted that they had a plan for 2017 to ensure a more visible participation

of Czech businesses and ministerial departments in the Asia Pacific, especially in the areas of energy, transportation infrastructure and tourism. They planned to use institutionalised dialogues, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the interactions with ASEAN to maintain high dynamics in interactions in the region.

In such a context, China, Japan and South Korea dominated the high profile contacts on several different levels in 2017. The prevailing Chinese agenda continued with the proactive China policy of President Miloš Zeman, although the momentum started by the 2016 visit by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in Prague was declining. The peak of attention of media and political debates in regard to this topic came with the parliamentary elections, which brought back into the public spotlight issues of values in politics and the Czech democratic identity. In contrast, Taiwan, which had an active and productive agenda and conducted political dialogue solemnly on the non-official level, displayed a more empathic public diplomacy, whereas the Chinese Belt and Road agenda showed a less communicative face, despite repeatedly claiming its win-win narrative.

The democratic and technologically advanced ROK and Japan displayed an interest in the Czech Republic on various levels. Their enterprises currently represent important sources of foreign direct investments (FDI)³ that directly benefit the Czech economy, and the business partnerships with them further present opportunities that enable Czech companies to penetrate the East Asian market. An important step forward was the conclusion of the EU-Japan free trade agreement in December 2017 after several months of negotiations.⁴ The Czech government fully supported the agreement, expecting further economic development, increased employment and increased competitiveness among European and Japanese enterprises as a result of it.

In 2017, the Czech Republic, being an EU member state, participated in the 50th anniversary celebrations of the ASEAN-EU relations. Within Southeast Asia, as in previous years, the Czech foreign policy actors paid the most attention to Vietnam; President Zeman demonstrated a proactive approach by visiting Hanoi on his official visit to Vietnam in June. The Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, recognised as an official ethnic minority in 2013, with estimates of there being roughly 100,000 of them, were active in keeping the focus on this traditional partnership; however, the first generation of Vietnamese vendors in the country had a tendency to isolate themselves from the majority society, and this trend might continue with a lack of their integration.⁵

Though the relations with India and Central Asia were listed in the strategic document as noteworthy, they still remained somewhat unfulfilled. The region of Central Asia does not constitute a Czech foreign policy priority, but this area has long offered a great potential for business, investment, and economic opportunities, and energy security for the Czech government and businesspersons. In 2016–2017, the inter-parliamentary relations grew in importance when the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamáček visited all the countries in Central Asia, and his parliamentary visits to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in 2017 were historically the first such visits to these countries since the establishment of diplomatic ties with them. In addition, President Zeman kept his promise from 2014⁶ when he visited Kazakhstan during EXPO 2017 in Astana.

The interactions did not stop at the highest level; the Czech Republic was a popular tourist destination with a visible increase of foreign travel from Asia in recent years.⁷ Prague, in particular, hit record figures in this respect in 2017, with tourists from South Korea and China taking up the top positions in the rankings.⁸ Prague City Tourism attributed the success to the increase of direct flights from Asia, especially from Seoul, Beijing and Shanghai, as well as to targeted promotional campaigns in the Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages.⁹

Some stimulus of this interest also came from Prague-set films shot by filmmakers from South Korea (*Lovers in Prague*, 2005) and China (*Somewhere Only We Know*, 2015).¹⁰ Arguably, the historical visit of President Xi Jinping, who came to Prague in March 2016 to promote the latest Belt and Road Initiative (also known as One Belt, One Road, or OBOR), also inspired Chinese tourists to visit the city.¹¹ Similar trends have been present in other European cities, which welcomed the Chinese president in recent years, such as Davos or Helsinki.¹²

AGENDA AND EVENTS

In 2017, President Miloš Zeman continued in his pro-active China policy by visiting Beijing in May for the third time during the last three years. He attended China's Belt and Road Initiative summit accompanied by three ministers (Jiří Havlíček, Karla Šlechtová and Dan Ťok), the Czech National Bank Governor Jiří Rusnok, and a large group of entrepreneurs (including the richest Czech businessperson Petr Kellner). Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister of Interior Milan Chovanec and Minister of Health Miloslav Ludvík, all Social Democrats, did not join the delegation, however, owing to the internal Cabinet crisis at the time, and thus they dispatched their deputy ministers to the summit instead.¹³ This international event attracted international media attention and received reserved coverage mainly from the US and EU member states. The list of attendees revealed the most pro-Chinese supporters of China "going global"; among those were, for example, the Polish, Greek and Italian Prime Ministers.¹⁴

In November, Prime Minister Sobotka attended the annual summit of the regional format of China and 16 Central and East European states (16+1) in Budapest. There he negotiated that two future summits of the 16+1 format on civil aviation and health care (drug control) would take place in the Czech Republic. Both of these sectors belong to the Czech strategic priorities in the relations with China. The Czech Prime Minister, who had previously acknowledged that the bilateral agenda with China outweighed the regional one,¹⁵ still lobbied for the hosting of the 16+1 summit in 2019 in Prague on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Czechoslovak-PRC official ties.¹⁶

Despite the rapid rapprochement with mainland China in the past three years, the more than two-decade Czech non-official agenda with Taiwan also continued in 2017. The Taiwanese Vice-President Chen Chien-jen met with the Deputy Speaker of the Senate Miluše Horská and a delegation of Czech senators in May. The representatives

from the Czech Republic, which has continually supported Taiwan in international multilateral affairs, were asked to back Taiwan's multilateral activities in the negotiation of the EU-Taiwan Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA), and to support Taiwan in its efforts to join international organisations such as the WHO, Interpol, the International Organisation for Civil Aviation, and the UN Convention on Climate Change.¹⁷

As for Japan and South Korea, the government continued to act proactively in reviving and advancing the senior-level political dialogue with them. In Japan's case, the ultimate goal was to carry out prime minister-level visits by deepening the contacts between the ministers or deputy ministers of the two countries.¹⁸ In January, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida visited Prague, where he met with his counterpart, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek, Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamáček.¹⁹ Kishida agreed on the necessity to co-operate on creating a world without nuclear weapons,²⁰ deepening of economic ties, and the upcoming celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Czech-Japanese mutual diplomatic relations.²¹ Prime Minister Sobotka's visit to Japan at the end of June was the highpoint of the bilateral relationship in 2017. During the visit, Sobotka met with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe to discuss the relations between Japan and Europe (particularly the V4 group), as well as the current security situation in East Asia, while sharing the Japanese view on the importance of maintaining international order.²² Subsequently, the two governments signed an agreement on working holiday visa policies. Sobotka then met with the Crown Prince Naruhito, and they discussed the political, economic, interpersonal and cultural aspects of Czech-Japanese relations.²³ During his visit, the Czech PM also attended business and investment forums in Tokyo and Kyoto, seeking a strengthening of the mutual trade and investments between the two countries.²⁴

The bilateral relationship with South Korea mainly focussed on fulfilling the 2016–2018 Strategic Partnership Action Plan (*Akční plán strategického partnerství s Korejskou republikou 2016–2018*). Its goals are to maintain top-level contacts and continue the political, economic, security and cultural co-operation with South Korea. At the end of June 2017, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamáček visited Seoul and attended the *Second Meeting of the Speakers of Eurasian Countries' Parliaments*. During this visit, he met with the newly elected President Moon Jae-in. Hamáček subsequently held talks with the Speaker of the National Assembly Chung Sye-kyun and visited the Demilitarised Zone.²⁵ President Moon then also met with Miloš Zeman in New York on the occasion of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September. President Moon praised the Czech Republic for its successful transition economy and also praised it for being an EU member state that provided consistent support to the South Korean Government's North Korea policy and played a constructive role in this respect, while expressing a desire for a continuing of the co-operation with and assistance from the Czech Republic and further maintaining of the two countries' high-level exchanges to boost their mutually beneficial co-operation.²⁶

During an official visit to South Korea of a delegation led by the Senate Chairman Milan Štěch in November, which also contained representatives of the agency Czech-

Invest, the Czech Republic was presented as a suitable destination for investments that was also fit for the development of a co-operation with South Korea in the area of research and development during seminars held in Seoul and Busan. What was also highlighted during these seminars was the new trends in the Czech automotive and pharmaceutical industries, as well as those in Czech life sciences.²⁷

During the only official visit from Seoul to the Czech Republic in 2017, which took place at the beginning of December, the Czech Minister of Industry and Trade Jiří Havlíček and the South Korean Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Ungyu Paik signed four Memoranda of Understanding.²⁸ Paik's delegation, consisting of representatives of Korean institutions related to nuclear energy, visited the Czech State Office for Nuclear Safety to reportedly discuss the possibilities of new developments in the field of nuclear power plant technology, as well as related security standards.²⁹

In stark contrast to the relations with Japan and South Korea stands the interaction between the Czech Republic and India. India acted as the Czech Republic's partner country at the International Engineering Fair in Brno in October. There President Zeman met with a delegation from the Indian Ministry of Industry and Trade. In his remarks, he appreciated the choice of making India the Czech Republic's partner country, highlighted the country's high economic growth and, in this respect, placed it side by side with China. He then made a joke that the Czech media would label him *India's agent* after he praised it so much in Brno.³⁰

The most prominent Czech visit to India took place in May. The visitors were a delegation of parliamentarians from the Health Committee led by the Deputy Speaker Radek Vondráček. The objective was to get to know the level of Indian healthcare, especially traditional medicine, which is becoming increasingly popular in the Czech Republic, yet lacking legislative regulation or certified educational institutions.³¹ Then in September, the Minister of Culture Daniel Herman met with the Indian Minister of State for Culture and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr Mahesh Sharma. This was followed by the October visit to India of the Chief of the General Staff of the Military of the Czech Republic, General Josef Bečvár. Nevertheless, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek spent three days on an official visit to India in December 2016, and used the opportunity to voice the Czech Republic's priorities for the Czech-Indian relations, mainly in trade and security, but also in resolving visa matters, and academic and science contacts, as well as police co-operation, migration issues and fighting crime.

As for the ASEAN countries, two high profile visits of their politicians to the Czech Republic stood out: the official visit of the Chairwoman of the National Assembly of Vietnam, Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, in April and the visit of President Tony Tan Keng Yam from Singapore in May. Chairwoman Nguyen came on the occasion of the 67th anniversary of the Czech(oslovak)-Vietnamese diplomatic relations, and two years after the historically first ever visit of the Vietnamese president to the Czech Republic. One of the positives highlighted during her visit was that a number of Vietnamese nationals got much of their education and work experience in the Czech Republic. This ultimately provides a good base for the two countries' special people-to-people relations. Then during an official visit to Hanoi in July, President Zeman and

the Vietnamese president Tran Dai Quang discussed two points: the cancellation of short-term tourist visas for Czechs traveling to Vietnam (the opposite deal – cancelling Czech visas for Vietnamese citizens – is not possible without the EU’s approval), and setting up a direct flight connection between Prague and Ho Chi Minh City.³²

The visit of Singaporean President Tan in May was the second visit of a Singaporean president to the Czech Republic since 1998. Tan stated that for generations of Singaporeans, the name Bata was almost synonymous with schooling, since this Czech company has equipped Singaporean students with footwear for almost nine decades. Bata Asia Pacific and Africa, based in Singapore, was managing 3,000 shops in the region at the time of the visit. Although not having a Singaporean Embassy in Prague or vice versa, and despite long underestimating the importance of the Singaporean agenda, the Czech side made it clear that, as a highly advanced and politically stable country, Singapore is an important ally for the Czech Republic in dealings with ASEAN and also in coordinating the ties between ASEAN and China. Additionally, in spite of not having a formal agreement, Singapore was playing an important role in NATO’s agenda of global partnerships.³³

During the high profile visits of the Speaker Jan Hamáček to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in February and President Zeman’s visit to Astana for EXPO 2017 in June, both delegations built on the traditional Czech ties with these countries from the Czechoslovak era. The Czech Republic’s level of engagement with these countries was considered deeper than that of the majority of the EU member states.³⁴ The speaker and the president, accompanied by businesspersons, used the local business fora to connect the Czech and local companies. During his talks with the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Zeman noted that Czechs viewed Kazakhstan as a regional leader.³⁵ Apart from their business co-operation in 2017, the two governments managed to conclude an agreement on crime prevention, which became the foundation for law-enforcement agencies in spheres ranging from terrorism to drug and human trafficking and cybercrime. Kazakhstan’s proximity to Afghanistan makes it a vital ally in countering the regional threats directly, while eliminating possible consequences of undetected crimes directly in the Czech Republic.³⁶

The Economic Agenda and Trade

The Czech foreign policy toward the Asia Pacific in 2017 was mainly carried out through economic diplomacy. The country not only offers attractive investment incentives, but also boasts an educated and qualified, yet still affordable work force, as well as a strategic location in Central Europe and a relatively developed infrastructure. The Czech annual statistics of cross-border trade turnover with the 16 top selected non-EU states revealed a dominant share of China (No.1; 28.9% of the total volume), followed by South Korea (5.4%), Japan (4.6%), India (1.9%), Malaysia (1.8%), Thailand (1.8%), and Taiwan (1.6%).³⁷ The overall statistics of Czech foreign trade (turnover) included only China (No.2) and South Korea (No.15) from the Asia Pacific countries, as these two states made the list of the top 16 countries with the highest trade turnover rates, while the Czech exports to China reached only 1.5%.³⁸

The topic of Chinese investments still belonged to the most frequently discussed ones in 2017. Prague officially supported the Chinese OBOR project, even though the majority of the received Chinese investments and acquisitions, so far, had hardly anything to do with OBOR directly. Since there were no infrastructure and logistic projects available in the Czech Republic, the only completed agreements with China dealt with four direct flights from Prague (to Shanghai, Beijing, Xian, and Kunming). This acceleration of air connections together with other negotiated projects (licences for Czech small airplanes, and training courses for Chinese professional pilots) belonged among the Czech strategic sectors that were promoted for a long time. Interestingly, the Czech Republic did not join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which had received support from over sixty states all over the world. The Czech economy had no need for applying for financial credit for infrastructure projects from China; however, staying outside the AIIB could limit the Czech industries' access to bids for joint projects in third states co-financed by AIIB members.³⁹

The trend of the rapid growth in Chinese investments from the previous year, when the FDI (Rhodium Group) had increased fivefold, did not continue in 2017. The expected acquisition of a 50% stock in the J&T Finance Group (worth EUR 980 million) failed to receive the approval of the Czech National Bank,⁴⁰ and the CEFC appealed against the verdict. An expected second large deal between CRRC and Škoda Transportation surprisingly failed too after the PPF Group displaced the Chinese investor.⁴¹ The case of Chinese FDI (mainly acquisitions) revealed an unusual FDI concentration provided by a single investor. Otherwise, Chinese FDIs in Europe are much more diverse in the sectoral structure.⁴²

Japanese and South Korean enterprises operating on the Czech market in fields such as the automotive industry, electronics and engineering used CzechInvest as an important mediator and information provider. Currently there are more than 250 Japanese companies with investments in the Czech Republic, including Toyota, Panasonic, Daikin, and Mitsubishi Electric; also, other Japanese businesses operate substantial manufacturing plants and R&D facilities in the country. The Japanese manufacturers in the Czech Republic utilised imported Japanese technologies and components, the majority of which were subsequently re-exported.⁴³ Similarly, more and more Czech companies also managed to penetrate the Japanese market, particularly in the fields of machinery and advanced technologies, as well as ICT. Particularly Czech food products have been increasingly gaining popularity on the Japanese market.

At the end of March 2017, the Japanese beverage manufacturer Asahi Group completed a EUR 7.3 billion acquisition of the former SABMiller companies in Europe, including the Czech brewery group Plzeňský Prazdroj, establishing its regional headquarters in Prague,⁴⁴ while also pledging to treasure and maintain the traditional Czech beer culture.⁴⁵

In 2017, South Korea's National Pension Service reportedly purchased an office building in Prague for a discretionary co-investment mandate to further invest EUR 300 million in value-add investments in Europe.⁴⁶ Currently more than seventy Korean businesses operate in the country, bringing more than USD 3.7 billion in FDI

to it since 2005.⁴⁷ Furthermore, as both the Czech Republic and South Korea have similar stances towards nuclear energy, this field certainly represents further opportunities for co-operation and investment. Other future possibilities for them could be in the areas of cyber security, defence, infrastructure, and research and education.

The turnover in foreign trade between the Czech Republic and the ASEAN countries dynamically rose until the end of 2015, when the Czech imports from them (CZK 102.5 billion) were five times higher than the Czech exports to them (CZK 22.9 billion).⁴⁸ As was traditionally the case, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines were the Czech Republic's biggest trading partners from these countries. Myanmar was also important in this regard in the past. As for Thailand, while it was often viewed by Czechs as a tourist destination in the past, there was more encouragement to see it as a business opportunity in 2017; this encouragement came, on one hand, from the Czech Embassy in Bangkok,⁴⁹ and on the other hand, from Czech companies participating in various expos, such as METALEX 2017⁵⁰ or Defence & Security in Bangkok.⁵¹ In 2017, both countries expressed an interest in establishing a direct flight between Prague and Bangkok, which would be an important connection to the whole Asia Pacific.⁵² It should also be mentioned here that the Czech Republic made a step forward toward expanding into new markets by signing a defence agreement of co-operation with the Philippines to boost their defence capabilities in May 2017.⁵³

In Central Asia, Kazakhstan is the primary trade partner for the Czech Republic. By 1 March, 186 companies with Czech capital were registered there. However, the balance of trade was passive for the Czechs for a long time due to the structure of imports, in which energy resources (mainly oil) dominated. On the other hand, the Czech Republic diversified its exports to Kazakhstan more, especially in manufacturing and chemical production. In 2017, the Czech investors viewed Kazakhstan as a certain gateway to Central Asia.⁵⁴ However, the trade relations with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were less dynamic. In Tajikistan's case, the situation was complicated by the country's inability to repay an outstanding debt linked to the loan provided by the Czech Export Bank and insured by the Export Guarantee and Insurance Corporation (EGAP) which was to be used to modernise the Dushanbe cement plant.⁵⁵

IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTIC OF KEY ACTORS

In 2017, we observed mixed modes of actorness related to the Czech foreign policy towards the Asia Pacific. They ranged from neutral or passive (e.g. the Czech political elites and public's lack of interest in the majority of the Asian nations) to cooperative (e.g. the negotiating of agreements of common interests between the countries) to somewhat reactive and offensive in cases where the bilateral relations dealt with areas considered to be *national interests* (e.g. investments in specific areas or the extraction of resources such as lithium).

Since the Asia Pacific usually does not stand high in the Czech foreign policy, in 2017, the most cooperative outcomes and the shaping of priorities in connection with

it depended on the individuals at the territorial departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and other ministries that are responsible for the daily monitoring of the relations and the preparations of the materials for the bilateral negotiations. The embassies, in close co-operation with the Czech Centres (CC), served as important hubs for implementing cultural diplomacy in the target countries. CzechInvest ultimately served as an important mediator and information provider for Asian enterprises operating on the Czech market.

President Zeman was ostentatiously pushing the Chinese agenda in 2017 despite the continuous dislike of it by the liberal media mainstream and the vocal criticism by some Sinologists and China experts in academia. Zeman's personal effort to be the leading political promoter of the Czech Republic and the leading prioritiser of China placed him into the unique role of a political leader who ignored the opposition and took upon himself the role of the only China-friendly leader in Central Europe, which he thus had a monopoly on. This led to his domestically unpopular image, which made the Czech president a target of allegations and decrying from his Czech political rivals and their massive media backing.

In spite of the governmental crisis in April, the president received an approval for travelling to Beijing for the Belt and Road Forum in May, while earning criticism from two Ministers from the People's Party, Marian Jurečka and Daniel Herman.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the government did not abandon its human rights policy regarding China when the Czech ambassador in Beijing signed the joint declaration calling out China for torturing human rights lawyers in February. The Czech Republic and Estonia were the only two EU post-communist member states who joined this initiative.⁵⁷

More reactive reactions came before the parliamentary elections when ANO, led by Andrej Babiš, called a special press conference to discuss their criticism of the memorandum signed between the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Australian mining company European Metals Holdings Company on 2 October. The aim of the memorandum was to start explorations of the lithium and tin reserves in Cínovec on the northern Czech-German border, but with the intention to keep as much processing and future jobs in the region as possible.⁵⁸ Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka of the Social Democrats criticised this step by stating that ANO needed to divert attention from their own problems, such as their leader being charged with subsidy fraud. Ultimately, the Chamber of Deputies passed a non-binding resolution asking for an annulment of the memorandum.⁵⁹ Still, the case opened up a broader discussion about the protection of international investments.

MEDIA AND PUBLIC SPACE

Due to the large geographical distance between the Czech Republic and the Asia Pacific, as well as the relative cultural differences between them, there was a general disinterest of the Czech public in the political scene and regional security of the region. Nevertheless, similar trends of underrepresentation were also present in the Asian countries' own media outlets. Because of these trends, in 2017 ASEAN, India, Japan

and South Korea remained largely under the radar in the Czech public space, as they were overshadowed by the polarising Czech stance on China.

In 2017, topics surrounding North Korea dominated the East Asian discourse on security. The Czech media reported related pieces of news but generally, the lack of involvement in and overall disconnectedness from the region were apparent. The Czech media thus seemed to focus more on reporting heavily popularised topics, and the reports were largely constructed so as to shock the domestic audience.⁶⁰ Rather than providing education about and raising the interest in the Asia Pacific, such orientalisering trends in the Czech discourse largely seem to mainly serve the purposes of entertainment and a ridicule of East Asian countries stemming from a low level of knowledge of them and a low awareness of their regional context and dynamics.

The Czech elections, as could be expected, brought China back to public disputes as the Czech media highlighted themes of the Czech democratic identity being in danger and the Chinese takeover of Europe. It was not just President Zeman's ostentatious pro-China policy that raised disgust, but the main targets of the negative references of the Czech anti-China forces were the Social Democratic Party and its pro-Chinese lobby of the senior politicians Jaroslav Tvrdík, Jan Kohout, and Michal Hašek; the NSRI think tank, and the Czech-Chinese Chamber of Co-operation.⁶¹ Since the tame Czech-Chinese think tanks do not attract much attention – except for the occasional high-level political meetings connected with them, but there were no such meetings in 2017 – the main activities of Czech pro-Chinese and anti-Chinese voices (the latter being the majority) were concentrated on social media.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As was the case in the previous year, in 2017, China continued to serve as a constant theme of politicisation and polarisation in the Czech domestic and foreign policy. Even though this new emerging global stakeholder attracted the attention of other European states as well, the Czech case revealed a specific internal dimension and a specific bias rather than real circumstances, when in reality, China's Central and Eastern European agenda focussed mainly on Poland, Hungary and Serbia. The Czech domestic debates on China's involvement in Europe did not search for a broader regional or global context, and viewed the Czech Republic as a vulnerable state exposed to a hostile Asian power. This securitisation narrative, sometimes based more on emotions than real facts, won over the mainstream media. The positive bias, on the other hand, continued the tradition of overstating China's economic impact and massive investment potential. The Chinese global campaign called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as OBOR – One Belt, One Road) did not meet with positive perceptions in Europe, and the Czech Republic belonged to the group of more skeptical countries in the EU in this respect, regardless of the individual efforts of the Czech president.

The trends of the Czech foreign policy towards Japan and the Republic of Korea consisted of economic and cultural levels, and the relations were proactive and cooperative, as in both cases, the mutual interest was apparent on both sides. The govern-

ment should further focus on the definition and specification of the long-term goals, aims and priorities to be utilised in the foreign policy towards the Republic of Korea as well as Japan and followed in the future. The above-mentioned 2017 agreements with Japan are logical steps in deepening the bilateral relation, but they have yet to be finalised.

The potential in the remaining regions – Central, South, and Southeast Asia and the South Pacific – was mainly unfulfilled. It was clear that the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Trade and Industry found India increasingly important, not just bilaterally, but also as a vital regional player in South Asia. However, the Indian side might not equally share the sentiment when it comes to engaging more proactively with the Czech Republic. There is a clear imbalance of high profile exchanges in this case compared to those with countries such as China. Czech companies are interested in having more of a presence in Central and Southeast Asia. In this pursuit, knowledge of common practices is crucial, as is getting more guarantees that their investments will be protected. As for Australia and New Zealand, the Czech interactions with them are still limited due to their geographical distance. In 2017, the Czech Republic signed the planned Working Holiday Visa Agreement, which would allow Czech young people to temporarily work in Australia.⁶² Having more people-to-people interactions can bring better understandings of local customs and opportunities for co-operation in various sectors. In this regard, the Czech foreign policy should focus on engaging the expat communities in the given countries more for the sake of establishing constructive partnerships. In conclusion, a more individualised approach to the relations with the countries in the Asia Pacific can bring lasting outcomes.

Endnotes

- ¹ This chapter assesses selected countries from the MFA's Territorial Department 'Asia Pacific' by focussing on those listed as noteworthy in the strategic documents. The list of states in the Czech language can be accessed at https://www.mzv.cz/file/797015/Vymezeni_uzemni_pusobnosti_teritorialnich_odboru_1_2013.pdf. The department is included in the Organisational Chart, which is also available in English https://www.mzv.cz/file/1599709/Organigram_MZV_EN_26042018.pdf. Unlike in the previous yearbooks on the Czech foreign policy, this year's edition addresses a longer list of states to provide a more representative assessment of the Czech foreign policy activities with the countries in the Asia Pacific.
- ² Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015) *Koncepce zahraniční politiky České republiky. Usnesení vlády 563 [The Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy. Government Resolution No. 563]*, 13 July 2015 [online]. Available from: https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/analyzy_a_koncepce/koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_cr.html (Accessed 10 April 2018).
- ³ The amounts of FDI going to the Czech Republic are published by the Czech National Bank. The statistics for the year 2017 were not yet available in April 2018. However, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs evaluates the direct investments from Japan to the Czech Republic, and its figure for the cumulative amount of Japanese FDI as of May 2017 was USD 3.787 billion (see <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/czech/data.html>), making Japan the second largest investor in the Czech Republic.

- ⁴ Reuters (2017) EU, Japan Conclude World's Largest Free Trade Agreement. *Reuters.com*, 8 December 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-eu-trade/japans-pm-abe-says-agreed-with-eu-on-free-trade-pact-media-idUSKBN1E21BT> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁵ Prague Daily Monitor (2017) Czech Vietnamese Community Isolates Itself Despite Integration, Study Shows. *Prague Daily Monitor*, 6 February 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://praguemonitor.com/2017/02/06/czech-vietnamese-community-isolates-itself-despite-integration-study-shows> (Accessed 24 March 2018).
- ⁶ ČT24 (2014) Zeman chválí Kazachstán jako „zemi hospodářského zázraku“ [Zeman Praises Kazakhstan as a 'Country of Economic Miracles']. *ČT24.cz*, 24 November [online]. Available from: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/ekonomika/1007974-zeman-chvali-kazachstan-jako-zemi-hospodarskeho-zazraku> (Accessed 13 April 2018).
- ⁷ According to the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), based on information on people with registered tourist accommodations in the Czech Republic, in 2017, China, South Korea and Taiwan were the three Asian countries with major increases of tourists travelling to the Czech Republic. The statistics do not include figures from online hospitality services such as Airbnb. See <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/ari/tourism-4-quarter-of-2017>.
- ⁸ Johnston, R. (2017) Asian Tourists to Prague Hit Records. *Prague TV*, 24 September 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://prague.tv/en/s72/Directory/c207-Travel/n10963-Asian-tourists-to-Prague-hit-records> (Accessed 24 March 2018).
- ⁹ See the Official Tourist Website for Prague, <https://www.prague.eu/en>.
- ¹⁰ CzechTourism (2017) The Czech Republic in Film. *CzechTourism.com*, 31 August 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.czechtourism.com/n/czech-republic-in-film/> (Accessed 13 April 2018); Strbova, D. (2017) South Korean TV Series Wraps Shooting in Karlovy Vary. *Film New Europe.com*, 15 September 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://www.filmneueurope.com/news/czech-news/item/115123-south-korean-tv-series-wrapped-shooting-in-karlovy-vary> (Accessed 13 April 2018).
- ¹¹ The terms 'Belt and Road Initiative' and 'One Belt, One Road' have been used interchangeably and there is no agreement on their use. From the start of the initiative, the Chinese have used the term *Yi Dai Yi Lu* 一帶一路 (literally 'One Belt, One Road') for it; however, the Chinese government started using the term 'Belt and Road Initiative' for it in its official English-language statements. In Europe, the term 'New Silk Road' (or 'Roads' or 'Routes') has been used by officials, academics, experts and media. The term refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road connecting Asia, Europe and Africa.
- ¹² Jing, F. (2017) Tourists Flocking to Cities that Xi Visited. *China Daily*, 12 August 2017 [online]. Available from: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/cn_eu/2017-08/12/content_30492240.htm (Accessed 13 April 2018).
- ¹³ Pražský deník (2017) Chovanec a Zaořálek a Ludvík do Číny se Zemanem nepojedou [Chovanec, Zaořálek and Ludvík Are Not Going to China with Zeman]. *Pražský deník.cz*, 9 May 2017 [online]. Available from: https://prazsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/chovanec-do-ciny-se-zemanem-nepojede-20170509-keu5.html (Accessed 13 April 2018).
- ¹⁴ Xinhua (2017) Joint Communique of Leaders Roundtable of Belt and Road Forum. *Xinhua*, 15 May 2017 [online]. Available from: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/15/c_136286378.htm (Accessed 13 April 2018).
- ¹⁵ Sobotka, B. (2016) *Opening Remarks by the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Mr. Bohuslav Sobotka, at the Discussion Seminar 'New Silk Road and the Czech Republic' on 19 January 2017*, Senate of the Czech Republic.
- ¹⁶ ČTK (2017) Česko uspořádá summitu 16+1 pro civilní letectví a léčiva [CZ to Host 16+1 Summits for Civil Aviation and Pharmaceuticals]. *ČeskéNoviny.cz*, 27 November 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/cesko-usporada-summitu-16-1-pro-civilni-letectvi-a-leciva/1555549> (Accessed 27 April 2018).

- ¹⁷ Taipei Office in Prague (2017) *Delegation Led by Miluše Horská, First Vice-Chairperson of Czech Senate, Visits Taiwan*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan [online]. Available from: https://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=1EADDCFD4C6EC567&s=16C18FC1E88C927F (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ¹⁸ A Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official. Interviewed by: Kizeková, A. (16 February 2017).
- ¹⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017) *Ministr Zaorálek jednal se svým japonským protějškem [Minister Zaorálek Met with His Japanese Counterpart]* [online]. Available from: https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/udalosti_a_media/tiskove_zpravy/x2017_01_08_ministr_zaoralek_a_japonsky_ministr.html (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁰ Asahi Shimbun (2017) 原爆ドームの破片見学 プラハ訪問中の岸田外相 [Minister Kishida Views Fragments of the Atomic Dome During His Visit to Prague]. *Asahi Shimbun*, 10 January 2017.
- ²¹ Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (2017) *Předseda sněmovny přijal japonského ministra zahraničí Fumia Kišidu [The Chamber of Deputies Speaker Welcomed the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida]* [online]. Available from: <http://www.psp.cz/sqw/cms.sqw?z=9711> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2017) *Japan-Czech Summit Meeting* [online]. Available from: http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/c_see/cz/page1e_000161.html (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²³ Government of the Czech Republic (2017) *The Second Day in Japan: the PM Meets Crown Prince Naruhito and Talks with Czech and Japanese Businesspeople About New Investments* [online]. Available from: <https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/the-second-day-in-japan-the-prime-minister-meets-crown-prince-naruhito-and-talks-with-czech-and-japanese-businesspeople-about-new-investments-158080/> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁴ Japan External Trade Organisation (2017) *The Czech Republic-Japan Business Investment Forum and Exchange of Action Plan 2017 in the Presence of Prime Minister of the Czech Republic* [online]. Available from: https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/jetro/topics/2017/1706_topics7.html (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁵ Embassy of the Czech Republic in Seoul (2017) *Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Visited the Republic of Korea* [online]. Available from: https://www.mzv.cz/seoul/en/bilateral_relations/news_and_announcements/speaker_of_the_chamber_of_deputies.html (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁶ Office of the President of the ROK (2017) *The President Meets with Czech President Zeman* [online]. Available from: http://english1.president.go.kr/activity/briefing.php?srh5Bview_mode5D=detailsrh5Bseq5D=19766srh5Bdetail_no5D=100 (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁷ CzechInvest (2017) *CzechInvest and a Government Delegation Present the Czech Republic in South Korea* [online]. Available from: <https://www.czechinvest.org/en/Homepage/News/November-2017/CzechInvest-and-a-government-delegation-present-the-Czech-Republic-in-South-Korea> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁸ Prague Monitor (2017) IndustryMin: Czech Organisations Signed Memoranda with South Korea. *Prague Monitor.com*, 4 December 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://praguemonitor.com/2017/12/04/industrymin-czech-organisations-signed-memoranda-south-korea> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ²⁹ Atominfo.cz (2017) Korejský ministr obchodu, průmyslu a energetiky Ungyu Paik navštívil SÚJB [The Korean Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Ungyu Paik Visited the State Office for Nuclear Safety]. *Atominfo.cz*, 7 December 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://atominfo.cz/2017/12/korejsky-ministr-obchodu-prumyslu-a-energetiky-ungyu-paik-navstivil-sujb/> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³⁰ Parlamentní listy (2017) Miloš Zeman promluvil na veletrhu v Brně [Miloš Zeman Spoke During a Trade Fair in Brno]. *ParlamentníListy.cz*, 9 October 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/monitor/VIDEO-Milos-Zeman-promluvil-na-veletrhu-v-Brne-Jedine-PL-zajimal-jeho-nazor-na-vybusne-deni-kolem-kauzu-lithium-A-zde-jsou-jeho-slova-507362> (Accessed 27 April 2018).

- ³¹ Embassy of the Czech Republic in New Delhi (2017) *Visit of Czech Parliamentarians to India*. 16 June 2017 [online]. Available from: https://www.mzv.cz/newdelhi/en/bilateral_relation/India/visit_of_czech_parliamentarian_to_india.html (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³² Česká televize (2017) Český a vietnamský prezident se dohodli na přímé lince i zrušení víz [The Czech and the Vietnamese President Agreed on a Direct Flight and the Visa Cancellation]. *ČT24.cz*, 7 June 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/2143929-cesky-a-vietnamsky-prezident-se-dohodli-na-prime-lince-i-zruseni-viz> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³³ Dr Alica Kizekova was present at the talks with President Tan at the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic on 25 May 2017.
- ³⁴ Hospodářská komora ČR (2017) České firmy láká Střední Asie: Podnikatelé budou jednat v Kazachstánu, Tádžikistánu a Uzbekistánu [Czech Companies Are Intrigued by Central Asia: Entrepreneurs Will Confer in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan]. *BusinessInfo.cz*, 3 February 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/ceske-firmy-laka-stredni-asie-podnikatele-budou-jednat-v-kazahstanu-tadzikistanu-a-uzbekistanu-86468.html> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³⁵ Inform.kz (2017) *Мы рассматриваем Казахстан в качестве регионального лидера – президент Чехии* [The Czech President: 'We View Kazakhstan as a Regional Leader'], 10 June 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://informburo.kz/novosti/my-rassmatrivaem-kazahstan-v-kachestve-regionalnogo-lidera-prezident-chehii.html> (Accessed 22 April 2018).
- ³⁶ The Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (2018) *Smlouva mezi vládou České republiky a vládou Republiky Kazachstán o spolupráci v boji proti trestné činnosti* [The Agreement Between CZ and Kazakhstan on Fighting Against Crime Together] [online]. Available from: <http://www.psp.cz/sqw/text/tiskt.sqw?O=8&CT=53&CT1=0> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³⁷ Czech Statistical Office (2017) *External Trade with Selected Non-EU Countries* [online]. Available from: <https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/45964030/241013171208.pdf/49a1489d-ee03-400e-8101-5ada13cd816a?version=1.0> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³⁸ Czech Statistical Office (2017) *External Trade with Main Countries* [online]. Available from: <https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/61165718/241013-180211.pdf/2a1c7510-642d-48ae-afc3-9325c3f26693?version=1.0> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ³⁹ An Official from the Czech Embassy in Beijing. Interviewed by: Fürst, R. (17 November 2017).
- ⁴⁰ Mikulka, M. (2018) ČNB zatím zamítla, aby CEFC ovládla bankovní skupinu J&T. Číňané se snaží rozhodnutí zvrátit [For Now, ČNB Rejected the Option of CEFC Controlling the J&T Bank Group. China Is Trying to Reverse the Decision]. *IHNED.cz*, 3 January 2018 [online]. Available from: <https://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-66007030-cnb-zatim-zamitla-aby-cefc-ovladla-bankovni-skupinu-j-t-cinane-se-snazi-rozhodnuti-zvratit> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁴¹ ČTK (2017) Krsek: PPF převezme Škodu Transportation ihned po souhlasu ÚOHS [PPF Will Take Control of Škoda Transportation Directly After It Receives the Approval of ÚOHS]. *ČeskéNoviny.cz*, 29 November 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/krsek-ppf-prevezme-skodu-transportation-ihned-po-souhlasu-uohs/1556453> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁴² Seaman, J., Huotari, M., and Otero-Iglesias, M. (eds.) (2017) Chinese Investment in Europe. A Country-Level Approach, *ETNC Report*, December 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://www.ifri.org/en/european-think-tank-network-china-etnc> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁴³ CzechTrade (2017) *Japonsko: Obchodní a ekonomická spolupráce s ČR* [Japan: Its Trade and Economic Co-operation with CZ] [online]. Available from: <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/japonsko-obchodni-a-ekonomicka-spoluprace-s-cr-18634.html> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁴⁴ Asahi Groups Holding (2017) 国際事業 事業案内 企業情報 アサヒグループホールディングス [International Business, Business Information, Corporate Information – Asahi Group Holdings] [online]. Available from: <http://www.asahigroup-holdings.com/company/business/overseas.html> (Accessed 27 April 2018).

- ⁴⁵ Patterson, D. (2017) Pilsner Urquell Beer Is Now Officially Japanese. *Prague Morning* [online]. Available from: <http://blog.praguemorning.cz/pilsner-urquell-beer-now-officially-japanese/> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁴⁶ IPE (2017) *LaSalle Buys in Prague for South Korean Investor*. IPE Real Assets [online]. Available from: <https://realassets.ipe.com/news/investors/lasalle-buys-in-prague-for-south-korean-investor/10019315.article> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁴⁷ CzechInvest (n.d.) *South Korea – CzechInvest in Seoul* [online]. Available from: <https://www.czechinvest.org/en/Contacts/Foreign-Offices/South-Korea> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁴⁸ BusinessInfo (2017) Mezivládní dohody pomáhají obchodu Česka se zeměmi jihovýchodní Asie [Intergovernmental Agreements Help in the Czech Business with SEA Countries]. *BusinessInfo.cz*, 14 February 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.businessinfo.cz/cs/clanky/mezivladni-dohody-pomahaji-obchodu-ceska-se-zememi-jihovychodni-asie-87183.html> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁴⁹ Týden (2017) Českým firmám se otevírají možnosti v Thajsku, tvrdí velvyslanec [‘Czech Companies Have More Possibilities in Thailand Now, Says the Ambassador’]. *TÝDEN.cz*, 30 August [online]. Available from: https://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/byznys/cesko/ceskym-firmam-se-oteviraji-moznosti-v-thajsku-tvrdi-velvyslanec_444094.html (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁰ Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic (2017) *České firmy se prezentovaly na největším mezinárodním veletrhu obráběcích strojů na území jihovýchodní Asie METALEX 2017 v Bangkoku [Czech Firms Presented Themselves at METALEX 2017 in Bangkok, the Biggest International Cutting Machine Trade Fair on the Territory of Southeast Asia]* [online]. Available from: <https://www.mpo.cz/cz/zahranicni-obchod/podpora-exportu/vystavy-veletrhy/2017/metalex-bangkok-thajske-kralovstvi--227855/> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (2017) *České firmy z obranného a bezpečnostního průmyslu se představily na předním veletrhu v Bangkoku [Czech Defence and Security Firms Presented Themselves at a Prestigious Fair in Bangkok]* [online]. Available from: https://www.mzv.cz/bangkok/cz/obchod_a_ekonomika/ceske_firmy_z_obranneho_a_bezpecnostniho.html (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵² Prague Airport (2017) *Thailand Wants a Direct Flight to the Czech Republic* [online]. Available from: <https://www.pragueairport.co.uk/thailand-wants-direct-flight-czech-republic/> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵³ ABS-CBN News (2017) Philippines Signs Defense Agreement with Czech Republic. *ABS-CBN News*, 5 June 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/05/17/philippines-signs-defense-agreement-with-czech-republic> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁴ Marková, O. (2017) *Kazachstán: příležitosti a výzvy pro český byznys ve Střední Asii [Kazakhstan: Opportunities and Challenges for Czech Business in Central Asia]*. *IHNED.cz*, 12 December 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-65986770-kazachstan-prilezitosti-a-vyzvy-procesky-byznys-ve-stredni-asii> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁵ Ergasheva, E. (2013) Dushanbe Cement Plant Now Owes \$2.5 Million to Czech Insurance Company. *Asia-Plus Media Group*, 13 May 2013 [online]. Available from: <https://news.tj/en/news/tajikistan/economic/20130513/dushanbe-cement-plant-now-owes-25-million-czech-insurance-company> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁶ Deník.cz (2017) Vláda Zemanovi cestu do Číny schválila. Náklady přesáhnou 5,6 milionu [The Government Approved Zeman’s Trip to China. The Expenses Will Exceed 5.6 Million CZK]. *Deník.cz*, 10 May 2017 [online]. Available from: https://www.denik.cz/z_domova/vlada-nakonec-zemanovi-cestu-do-ciny-schvalila-20170510.html (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁷ Cao, Y. (2017) China’s Extraordinary Response to the 11-Nation Letter on the Torture of Human Rights Lawyers. *Hong Kong Free Press*, 4 April 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2017/04/04/chinas-extraordinary-response-11-nation-letter-torture-human-rights-lawyers/> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁸ Johnstone, C. (2017) Czech Pre-election Battle Plugs into War of Words over Lithium Mining Deal. *Czech Radio*, 9 October 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/>

- czech-pre-election-battle-plugs-into-war-of-words-over-lithium-mining-deal (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁵⁹ Lazarová, D. (2017) Lithium Mining and Czech National Interests Take Centre Stage in Run-Up to General Elections. *Czech Radio*, 17 October 2017 [online]. Available from: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/lithium-mining-and-czech-national-interests-take-centre-stage-in-run-up-to-general-elections> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁶⁰ For examples of such sensationalised reports from the Czech media see: Aktuálně.cz (2017) Uvnitř fanclubu KLDK. Mladí Japonci se fotí u portrétu Kima a převlékají se za jeho vojáky [Inside the NK Fanclub. Young Japanese Take Selfies with Kim's Portrait and Dress Up as NK Soldiers]. *Aktuálně.cz*, 19 November 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/zahranici/obrazem-uvnitř-fanclubu-kldr-rozesmate-divky-se-foti-u-portr/r~f19fb0b2ca1111e79704ac1f6b220ee8/> (Accessed 27 April 2018); Novinky.cz (2017) Severokorejský zběh má tělo zamořené parazity. Nejdelší červ měl 27 cm [A North Korean Refugee's Body Is Infested with Parasites. The Longest Worm Was 27 Cm Long]. *Novinky.cz*, 17 November 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://www.novinky.cz/zahranicni/svet/455250-severokorejsky-zbeh-ma-telo-zamorene-parazity-nejdelssi-cerv-mel-27-cm.html> (Accessed 27 April 2018).
- ⁶¹ iDNES.cz (2017) Exhejtman Hašek radí Tvrdíkovi, Číňanům pomáhá s další evropskou expanzí [The Former Chief Hašek Advises Tvrdik, and Helps the Chinese with Their Further European Expansion]. *iDNES.cz*, 16. May 2017 [online]. Available from: https://zpravy.idnes.cz/michal-hasek-poradce-jaroslav-tvrdik-cinska-firma-cefc-pf9-/domaci.aspx?c=A170516_062710_domaci_ale (Accessed 18 April 2018); Sinopsis (2017) *Český tisk: Zemanovy trampoty v Číně* [The Czech Press: Zeman's Misadventures in China], 19 May 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://sinopsis.cz/cesky-tisk-zemanovy-trampoty-v-cine/> (Accessed 18 April 2018); Sinopsis (2017) *Český tisk: Sešíváný prezident a čínští „šarlatáni“* [The Czech Press: The Stitched Up President and the Chinese 'Charlatans']. 5 May 2017 [online]. Available from: <https://sinopsis.cz/cesky-tisk-sezivany-prezident-a-cinsti-sarlatani/> (Accessed 18 April 2018).
- ⁶² Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials. Interviewed by: Kizeková, A. (13 December 2017).