
Chapter 15

Energy in External Relations of the Czech Republic

THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN THE CAPTIVITY OF ENERGY SECURITY

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Executive Summary: In 2017, the Czech Republic focussed mainly on the issue of strengthening energy security, both within the EU and the V4, and bilaterally in its relations with Germany, Austria, Russia, USA and France. In this context, the politicisation of the Czech discourse regarding the external dimension of energy security has been rather limited. Similarly, the polarisation of the Czech external dimension of the energy security discourse has also been limited. Despite this, the Czech government has relatively successfully tried to maintain a unified position in its energy policies, which is why in this case we can talk about a coherence within time, and across different players, as well as through the declared priorities of both the government and the EU. Last, but not least, the Czech Republic was supportive of creating common policies based on its proactive approach and co-operative position. The Czech Republic also adapted to external politics in the area of energy – which was the result of its reactive approach and neutral position.

BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

In 2017, the main agenda of the internal and external dimensions of EU energy policy has, just like in 2016, focussed on securing energy security – the most often spelled word in the EU energy discourse.¹ The process of strengthening European energy security has, similarly to previous years, manifested itself through the parallel influences of several events that are mentioned in the following part. First, it manifested itself through the ongoing supplies of US oil to the EU and also through further European imports of American liquefied natural gas (LNG) from shale, with the Netherlands, Poland and Latvia becoming new purchasers of it in 2017.² Secondly, it manifested itself through the continuing negotiations with Iran's representatives regarding energy co-operation and gas supplies.³ Thirdly, it manifested itself through Israel, Cyprus,

Greece and Italy signing a memorandum in December 2017 on the construction of the under-sea gas pipeline EastMed, which should carry up to 16 billion cubic metres of gas to the EU starting in 2025.⁴ Fourthly, it manifested itself through the energy talks – about energy efficiency and renewable energy sources (RES) development – with representatives of the African Union during the 5th EU-Africa Summit in November 2017.⁵ And finally, it manifested itself through the proposing and passing of a number of legislative measures and motions directed at energy efficiency, principles of closing international gas deals, reinforcement of gas supply security and the functioning of internal gas markets, all in pursuance of the EU Energy Union.

Just like in 2016, in 2017, almost all concerns regarding potential supply disruptions of oil and gas coming from Russia via Ukraine to countries of the EU have been eliminated. However, the energy relations between the EU and Russia remained deteriorated despite the fact that in March 2017, the Russian company Gazprom presented the European Commission (EC) with a proposal with measures to secure fair conditions for Eastern European countries in the gas trade – specifically by removing clauses restricting the reselling of gas to other countries from their contracts.⁶ Besides that, one of the most disputed issues in 2017 was the planned Russia-Germany gas pipeline project Nord Stream 2, which would go from the Baltic Sea to Germany, thus bypassing Ukraine.

The context of these events shaped the development of the internal and external dimension of the Czech energy policy, which accepted most of the EU's energy topics within its discourse. Furthermore, nuclear energy remained a big issue, particularly the question of the planned construction and financing of new blocks in the Dukovany Nuclear Power Station, in which 6 foreign companies showed an interest: the Russian state company Rosatom, the French EDF, the US-Japanese Westinghouse Electric Company, the Korean KHNP, the Chinese China General Nuclear Power, and Areva and Mitsubishi's shared project Atmea. All of the companies expressed their willingness to participate in the financing as well, but indicated that such a project is hardly feasible without the government's involvement.⁷ That is why the Government Special Envoy for Nuclear Energy Ján Štuller appealed in mid-December 2017 before the new government of Andrej Babiš (ANO) so that a prompt decision would be made regarding the potential investors in the new Dukovany blocks and the means of their financing, because the lack of clarity in this matter was pushing away the decision on a possible new nuclear power source for the country.⁸ At the same time, the Czech ČEZ company has been engaged in preparing a one billion CZK (0.4 bil. euros) tender for nuclear fuel supplies to the Temelín Nuclear Power Station after 2020, where the main contenders are the Russian company Tvel from the Rosatom Group and the American Westinghouse Electric Company from the Japanese Toshiba Group.

Nuclear energy and energy security were then a part of most Czech political parties' election programmes for the parliamentary election held on 20 and 21 October 2017; this was particularly the case for ANO, ODS, TOP 09, SPD, KDU-ČSL, STAN, and the Czech Pirate Party. The external dimension of the Czech energy policy, on the other hand, was not an important issue for most parties and was not even mentioned in their election programmes.

Just like in the previous year, in 2017 the most active players of Czech external relations were, above all, the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment and also the Czech President. From the perspective of the external dimension of energy security and policy on multilateral level, the EU space and co-operation with other Central European countries within the Visegrad Group (V4) were essential for the Czech Republic in 2017. The bilateral energy relations of the Czech Republic were oriented towards Germany, Austria, the USA and France. At the same time, the Czech Republic-Russia energy co-operation also continued, despite the ongoing sanctions imposed on Russia by the EU.

AGENDA AND EVENTS

The Multilateral Dimension of the External Energy Relations of the Czech Republic

Energy Security of the Czech Republic and the EU

The activity and position of the Czech Republic both in the process of negotiating energy issues on the soil of EU institutions and in relation to particular goals of the EU energy policy remained unchanged in 2017. This signifies a certain coherence in time and with regard to the government's declared goals from both the *Updated State Energy Policy* and the EU's priorities under the Energy Union. The Czech Republic actively promotes the fulfilment of energy security goals – such as the Member States' right to decide on the composition of their national energy mix, the use of nuclear energy, diversification of transport routes, energy sources and suppliers and the goals of competitive abilities (including issues such as completing the liberalisation of the EU's internal energy market or connecting transport routes and transmission systems between individual Member States). By contrast, issues such as the energy sustainability goals (supporting RES, energy efficiency, decreasing CO₂ emissions, etc.) are approached with scepticism and the Czech Republic openly expresses its objections towards them both independently and together with other states, especially the V4. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic does not veto decision-making regarding the main environmental goals in this area. The country actually tries to be consistent in this respect, which it (in most cases) really is.

A good example is the Czech Republic's position represented by the Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Lenka Kovačovská during the negotiations of the Energy Council. She took this position on 27 February and then on 18 December 2017 in negotiations regarding measures of the *Clean Energy for All Europeans* winter package with the goal of maintaining the competitive ability of the EU in terms of energy in times when the clean energy transition is transforming the global energy markets. The legislative proposals within the winter package refer to energy efficiency and savings, renewable energy, the concept of the electricity market, securing the electricity supply, the rules managing the Energy Union and securing fair conditions for consumers. The Czech Republic defended fair rules for the functioning of energy markets

and the reliability of energy transmission systems, and suitable conditions for further development of the European energy sector while still respecting specific Czech requirements.⁹

Even before the latter negotiations, on 26 June 2017, the Council of the European Union agreed to the goal of a 30% increase in energy savings by 2030, which was a higher figure than that in the anticipated scenario. The Czech Republic together with other Member States pressed for the alternative goal of 27%. The Council of the EU also adopted a stance on a proposal to revise the guidelines for the energy efficiency of buildings, which would also apply to the Czech Republic, since their share in the final energy consumption of the EU is almost 40%.¹⁰ A compromise of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament (EP) regarding the energy performance of buildings was eventually reached on 19 December 2017. The result of this compromise is that instead of concrete national goals for the years 2030, 2040 and 2050, only indicative national strategies will be created, and after 2025 all buildings should be equipped with automation and control systems, though only if it will be technically and economically feasible.¹¹

On the other hand, no compromise was reached with regard to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which was a friction point (just like in the previous year) of the 2017 EU-Russia energy relations and which divided the Member States into two camps. On the one hand, there was Germany, Austria, France and Great Britain – countries that were supposed to be potential purchasers of Russian gas and whose companies are supposed to participate on the pipeline's construction and are thus supportive of the project's realisation. Against them were, on the other hand, the Baltic states, Poland and Slovakia, because the pipeline will bypass them. The European Commission with its vice-president Maroš Šefčovič, who is responsible for the Energy Union, opposed the construction. At the end of June, the Commission asked the Member States to approve its mandate to negotiate with Russia and Gazprom about the rules of the operation of the pipeline on the Baltic seabed.¹² While Gazprom emphasises that Nord Stream 2 will strengthen the EU energy security, the EC strives to diversify its suppliers and transmission routes, thus reducing its energy dependency on Russia and preserving gas transit via Ukraine. Russia, on the contrary, wants to reduce Ukraine's transit importance as much as possible after 2019. However, the EC stated in October 2017 that it will try to find support for debating about its objections towards Russia regarding the construction plans for Nord Stream 2.¹³

Nord Stream 2 has been a disputed issue in EU-US energy relations as well, since the United States also rejects the project. In July 2017, the American president Donald Trump signed a law on new anti-Russian sanctions, the so-called *Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act* (CAATSA), which is directed at the Russian energy sphere, the financial sector, railway and sea transport and the extraction sector. The law in question gives President Trump the power to impose sanctions on any companies (including those of European states) participating in the construction or operation of gas pipelines such as Nord Stream 2, and oil pipelines located on the Russian territory or routing from Russia to other countries.¹⁴ Apart from some Mem-

ber States (namely Germany, France and Austria), the EC is also strongly opposed to these sanctions. Its president Jean-Claude Juncker specifically stressed that “Brussels was ready to retaliate within days if the measures hurt EU economic interests.”¹⁵

The Czech Republic maintains a rather balanced position regarding Nord Stream 2. According to the Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security Václav Bartuška, Nord Stream 2 would be economically beneficial because it would mean a larger volume of gas flowing through the Czech Republic and then further south to Slovakia, Austria and Italy. On the other hand, it is in the Czech Republic’s interest to maintain the current transition routes via Ukraine and Poland, purely from the security perspective, since it is better “*to have three major transmission systems than just one.*”¹⁶

On 2 March 2017 the EP has approved a decision introducing mechanisms for information exchange on intergovernmental agreements and non-binding instruments in the energy sector between Member States and third parties in an attempt to strengthen the security of energy supplies (especially oil and gas). Based on the new rules, Member States will have to inform the EC about progress in third party negotiations concerning oil and gas supplies. Member States will also not be able to close any oil and gas deals until the EC expresses its opinion about them, considering mainly the contract’s compatibility with the European law.¹⁷

Afterwards, in autumn 2017, first the EP (on 12 September) and then the Council of the EU (on 9 October) passed a revised proposal on energy security of gas supplies with the intention of supporting the competitive abilities of the gas markets and their resilience in cases of supply interruption. That should be achieved also by increasing the overall transparency of the gas markets. The EC specifically proposed to replace the current intrastate approach to security of supply with a broader approach, at least on the regional level. According to the proposal, individual Member States should also create joint plans of prevention and crisis measures within thirteen specific regional groups. The Czech Republic should form a similar regional plan together with Poland, Germany and Slovakia. A solidarity principle ensuring interstate assistance in cases of supply interruption in order to maintain supplies for households and for basic welfare services (such as health care) was also adopted. Besides that it will be mandatory to report gas supplies with volumes exceeding 28% of the state’s yearly domestic consumption.¹⁸

And finally, on 8 November 2017, the EC published a proposed reform of directives on the internal gas market with the aim of improving its functioning and increasing solidarity between Member States. The main goal of this proposal is to apply the EU internal market rules even to transmission routes between a Member State and a third party. This legislative proposal clearly follows from the dispute over Nord Stream 2. The new rules would pose a considerable threat to this project, since other Member States than those connected to it would then have to have access to the European part of the pipeline as well, namely Poland and the Baltic states – thus invalidating the original aim of the project. The new rules would also delegate a decision-making role to the Commission in every other negotiation concerning gas pipeline construction between the EU and a third party.¹⁹

Energy Security of the Czech Republic and the V4 Countries

Apart from the EU space, the Czech Republic also presents its activities, opinions and interests within the cultural and political alliance of the Central European countries – the V4. This activity is specific in that it deals with the countries' shared interests and emphasis on energy security and the questions related to it within the Energy Union, as well as the V4's determination to act in a united way when enforcing their energy interests and critical objections on the European level, even though their opinions differ on a number of issues.

However, in 2017, the issue of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline divided the V4 countries much more than in 2016. Whereas Poland is the most critical opponent of this project and does not hesitate to use legislative measures against it on both the national and the EU level, the Czech Republic does not oppose it. Slovakia calculated that it will lose 700 million euros worth of transit fees if Russian gas flows to Europe through Nord Stream 2 instead of Ukraine, which is why the country is also a critic of the project. However, both in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic Gazprom reserved (during an auction of transit gas pipeline operators on 6 March 2017 with Net4Gas auctioning for the Czech Republic) capacities for a future transit of billions of cubic meters of gas from Nord Stream 2.²⁰ This means that Gazprom bought up the currently existing and also the planned long-term transmission capacities directed from Germany via the Czech Republic to Austria up to the year 2039.²¹

The Bilateral Dimension of the External Energy Relations of the Czech Republic

Energy Relations of the Czech Republic with Austria and Germany

In contrast to the energy relations between the Czech Republic and the other V4 countries, where a mutual agreement on nuclear energy exists, radically different opinions remain at the heart of the energy interactions between Austria and the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic promotes nuclear energy on a long-term basis and expects Austria to respect its decision to further develop it.

That is why in 2017, nuclear energy (especially the Dukovany Nuclear Power Station) was again the main disputed issue between the Czech Republic and Austria. At the end of the year, all nine of the Austrian federal republics declared their intention to articulate a statement against the prolongation of the operation licence for two blocks of the Dukovany Nuclear Power Station. This dispute was present during the Austrian president Alexander Van der Bellen's visit to the Czech Republic. During his meeting with the Czech president Miloš Zeman on 26 June 2017 Zeman himself pointed out that if "*the Czech Republic had Alpine rivers, nuclear energy would possibly not have his support to such an extent.*"²²

Similarly as in the case of the Czech Republic-Austria energy relations, different opinions on multiple issues exist between the Czech Republic and Germany as well. Whereas the Czech Republic defends the importance of nuclear energy and demands that Germany accept that, Germany rejects nuclear energy and criticises the Czech Republic for using it. Furthermore, Germany relies much more on the use of renewables in electricity generation and promotes their usage on the EU level. The Czech

Republic, on the other hand, has a more critical stance towards the use of RES, mainly because the overflows of electricity from German wind farms have long troubled the Czech transmission system. However, such problems should be avoided in the future by the main transformers of the distribution point in Hradec near Kadaň. First, two transformers were put into operation there by the Czech energy transmission system company ČEPS in January 2017, and then another two have been pilot-operated there since July.

In the context of these realities, the Czech Republic had to deal with Germany and Austria's decision to separate their electricity trade zones, as proposed by local regulators on 21 May 2017. ČEPS stood up against this decision, as did other operators from Hungary (MAVIR), Poland (PSE), Slovakia (SEPS) and Romania (TRANSELECTRICA). All of them disagree with the form of dividing the Germany-Austria electricity trade zones. According to ČEPS, this situation respects neither the transmission capabilities inside both of the countries, nor the network limitations of their neighbouring states. The Czech Republic thus made an effort to divide the trade zone itself. Yet in a proposal criticised by ČEPS Austria and Germany only set the limit for their long-term mutual capacities at 4900 megawatts (MW).²³

By the end of June 2017, the EC finally agreed with the proposed way of dividing the Germany-Austria electricity zones.²⁴ However, even before that, at the end of May, an Austrian energy regulator filed a complaint against this plan to the Court of Justice of the European Union – its decision is expected in mid-2018.²⁵

Energy Relations of the Czech Republic and Russia

Compared to the previous year, there was a slight intensification of the Czech Republic-Russia energy interaction in 2017, which was influenced by the EU sanctions towards Russia for its military activities in Eastern Ukraine. The main topics of the countries' energy relations were the planned construction of the Russia-Germany gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 and also Russian companies' interest in two Czech tenders concerning nuclear energy.

In 2017, as well as the year before, the Russian company Tvel showed its interest in a one billion CZK tender for nuclear fuel supplies to the Temelín Nuclear Power Station. At the same time Rosatom repeatedly stated their interest in the then upcoming tender for the construction of new blocks in Dukovany. In this context, the Czech president Miloš Zeman clearly supported Rosatom when stating (during his visit to Dukovany on 29 June 2017) that he would not mind if the Czech Republic assigned the completion of the construction to Russia without an open competition, as Hungary intended to do that with their power plant Paks.²⁶

Besides that, President Zeman held talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and later with the Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev regarding energy co-operation (including nuclear energy co-operation) between 20 and 24 November 2017. During his visit to Russia in the same year, President Zeman gave his support to the Nord Stream 2 project, which will be economically beneficial according to him. He also stated that he was "*happy that the Czech Republic preserves its independent stance and defends its economic interests.*"²⁷

Additionally, the Minister of Industry and Trade Jiří Havlíček (ČSSD) held energy talks with his Russian ministerial counterpart Denis Manturov during his visit to Moscow between 29 and 30 May 2017.²⁸ Less than two months later, on 12 July, the two ministers also met at the International Industrial Trade Fair INNOPROM in Yekaterinburg.²⁹

Energy Relations of the Czech Republic with the United States of America and France Very similar, that is, without any major changes, has been the development of the Czech Republic-US energy relations. In 2017 the principal topic of their energy interaction has been the negotiating of supplies of American shale gas in the form of LNG to the EU, as well as their nuclear energy co-operation.

The Westinghouse Electric Company repeatedly proclaimed its interest in the competition for the construction of new blocks in Dukovany and in ČEZ's tender for nuclear fuel supplies for Temelín's reactors. The news about Westinghouse declaring bankruptcy and asking for protection from creditors at the end of March 2017 was a slight complication in this regard. However, according to the American media, Westinghouse's parent company Toshiba wants to continue with profitable nuclear fuel production and other services connected to maintenance and liquidation of nuclear reactors. Even if Westinghouse potentially withdrew from the tender, five other participants still remain. A much worse situation would occur with regard to the nuclear fuel tender, since if Westinghouse withdrew from that, there would only be one real applicant left – the Russian company Tvel.³⁰

Finally, the energy relations between the Czech Republic and France continued without any major changes as they did in the previous year, focussing mainly on strengthening the energy co-operation and mutual activities. The principal issues were related to nuclear energy (specifically the interest of the French state company EDF in the future tender on two new Dukovany blocks), the fight against global climate changes and strengthening energy security.

Energy within the economic co-operation between the Czech Republic and France was one of the topics discussed during the meeting of the Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (ČSSD), the French Minister of Defence Sylvia Goulard and the French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian on 9 June 2017. During their meeting they all appreciated the high quality of the Czech Republic-France relations and the success of the countries' strategic partnership. The Czech Prime Minister also discussed with the French ministers the potential for a further deepening of the Czech Republic-France economic co-operation.³¹

IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF KEY ACTORS

Energy has represented an intensely discussed topic in the Czech political discourse in the long term, and the year 2017 has not been an exception in this regard. Just like in the previous year, in 2017, all of the above-mentioned issues and topics of exter-

nal energy relations significantly influenced the decision making of individual institutional players in the Czech Republic. Key political officials within these institutions (as well as the intensity of the institutions' activities) have been greatly influenced by the energy relations too, as manifested in their outputs, speeches and dealings with their foreign counterparts.

With regard to these realities, the Czech government, through the agency of the prime minister (Bohuslav Sobotka and, later, Andrej Babiš), has been the most active participant of the Czech external energy relations. Energy issues were discussed with representatives of the V4 countries, Germany, Austria, Vietnam, Moldova and Japan. Active roles in this respect were also played by the Ministry of Industry and Trade – through the agency of its ministers (Jan Mládek, later, Jiří Havlíček and, finally, Tomáš Hüner), who further discussed energy matters with Iran, China, Ukraine and Japan, for example; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – through the agency of its ministers (Lubomír Zaorálek and then Martin Stropnický), who held talks with representatives of Denmark, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus, and then primarily through the Ambassador At-Large for Energy Security Václav Bartuška and his secretary Magdaléna Stanzelová; and partly also by the Ministry of Environment. Its minister Richard Brabec and his deputy Jan Kříž also negotiated with the V4 countries regarding energy issues. Last but not least, President Zeman has also been active in the Czech external energy relations, dealing with representatives of Vietnam, Germany, China and the V4 countries in the process.

MEDIA AND PUBLIC SPACE

In 2017, issues of the internal and external dimension of energy security and Czech policies were pursued not only by the Czech authorities, but by all the domestic media as well. Most Czech newspapers (*Hospodářské noviny*, *E15*, *Právo*, *Lidové noviny*, *Mladá fronta DNES* and *Haló noviny*), and even some web portals (*Česká pozice*, *Euroskop*, *Euractiv*, *Parlamentní listy*, etc.) paid special attention primarily to the following topics: the planned gas pipeline project Nord Stream 2, the rivalry of Russia and the USA over the European energy market and supplies of gas to the EU, the planned construction of new nuclear reactors in the Dukovany Nuclear Power Station, the division of the German and Austrian power zone, and President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation.

Besides that, the Czech media also brought attention to the fact that in May 2017 Gazprom began the construction of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline (also called Turk-Stream), which should bring 31.5 billion cubic meters of gas from South Russia to Turkey and then transport it through the Black Sea further to Europe. Russia has appealed to the EU for securing specific guarantees concerning the realisation of Turkish Stream's second branch in order to avoid a similar scenario as the one connected with the terminated project South Stream.³²

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Similarly to 2016, the year 2017 displayed a *limited politicisation* of the Czech debate on certain issues related to the external dimension of energy security. Whereas external energy policies and other matters related to them were present in the political debates of Czech institutional players (namely the President, the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment), most of the political players (that is, political parties and movements) did not focus on the issue of external energy relations, as was demonstrated during the fall parliamentary election. We can also talk only about a *limited polarisation* of the Czech discourse, since the institutional and political players had very similar (or only slightly different) opinions on a number of energy topics related to Czech external relations. In spite of this, the Czech government has relatively successfully managed to maintain a unified position in energy policies, demonstrating a coherence in this position in time, throughout all the players and with regard to the declared national and EU priorities. This significantly affected and determined the Czech Republic's foreign policy position and actions in external energy relations in 2017 – with the need to distinguish between the multilateral and the bilateral level.

On the multilateral level – within the EU and the V4 – the Czech Republic continued to support two stances. First, it advocated the *creation of a common policy* based on a *proactive approach and a co-operative position*. In this respect the Czech Republic, for example, repeatedly supported the Energy Union project, urged (together with other Member States) for each state's right to develop nuclear energy and independently decide on the composition of its energy mix, criticised some propositions of the so-called Winter Package, and stressed the importance of strengthening energy security through diversification of suppliers and transmission routes and the importance of completing a fully liberalised and interconnected European energy market. Secondly, it accepted an *adaptation to external policies* as a result of its *reactive behaviour and neutral position* when in 2017 the Czech Republic (together with the other V4 countries) assumed its traditionally critical attitude towards further support of RES, decreasing CO₂ emissions and some measures regarding energy efficiency and energy savings included in the Winter Package. The Czech Republic, however, never blocked the negotiations by means of its actions.

On the bilateral level, just like at the multilateral level, the Czech Republic adopted a *proactive approach and a co-operative position* and sought to create *common policies*. This was probably most evident in the case of the issues of strengthening the Czech Republic-EU energy security, for example, by using a higher share of nuclear energy – something that the Czech Republic actively promoted in its relations with Austria and Germany in 2017. Attempts to co-operate with the USA and France were also visible in this respect, but the Czech Republic never imposed its opinions on others. Concerning energy relations with Russia, in 2017, the Czech Republic took up an *adaptation to external policies* as a result of its *reactive approach and neutral position*. The Czech Republic accepted the EU's external energy policy towards Russia, supported the strengthening of EU energy security and the lowering

of the EU's dependence on Russia. The country also agreed to the economic sanctions against Russia. On the other hand, the Czech Republic clearly emphasised that it will continue its energy co-operation with Russia and that their mutual relations are slowly intensifying.

In the context of these realities, the Czech Republic should focus on taking several steps in order to strengthen its energy security in its external energy relations. The Czech Republic should try to convince Poland of the necessity of a mutual gas connection between them in order to gain access to the Polish LNG terminal and further diversify the gas supplies going to the Czech Republic from the North. The country should aim towards building a similar gas connection with Austria in order to get access to gas supplies from the South as well. It should strive for the preservation of the Ukrainian gas transit, thus ensuring the continuation of the gas supplies from the East and maintaining the transit fees from this gas flow.

Endnotes

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