

# The European Policies of the Czech Republic

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# Basic characteristics :

- ❖ **Landlocked** country, which is placed in the heart of Europe
- ❖ **Medium-sized** state by european standars
- ❖ Surrounded by **Germany/Poland/Austria/Slovakia**



# How does C.R. get affected by those factors

- ❖ The geographical location, in the heart of Europe functions as a **trade crossroad**, therefore it connects both eastern and western Europe
- ❖ C.R. roots for policies that facilitate the **common market** and finance trans-european infrastructure such as **railroads** and **road network**, especially when it comes to **Germany** which is the largest trade partner of C.R.
- ❖ **Visegrad group** (V4) an economic/military/security/cooperation of C.R., Poland, Slovakia and Hungary



- ❖ The V4 is a regional cooperation that aims to support the economy/ security and military affairs among the 4 states.
- ❖ Within the framework of EU, the group seeks to promote **common policies** especially about **immigration issues** that might blend the **national identity** of the states. Also, we should mention the need of those countries to resist in any further integration in order to protect their **national sovereignty**

# Historical background :

- ❖ After the events of WW2, **Czechoslovakia** became a part of the **eastern bloc** under the influence of **USSR**
- ❖ Ruled by an **oppressive regime** over 40 years → limited freedom of speech / political freedom and restricted economic activity
- ❖ Political uprising took place in Czechoslovakia "**Prague Spring**" in 1968
- ❖ The end of USSR influence collapsed in 1989 with the "**Velvet Revolution**"
- ❖ The state of C.R. is a product of the "**Velvet Divorce**" that led to the creation of C.R. and Slovakia



*Communist party of  
Czechoslovakia*

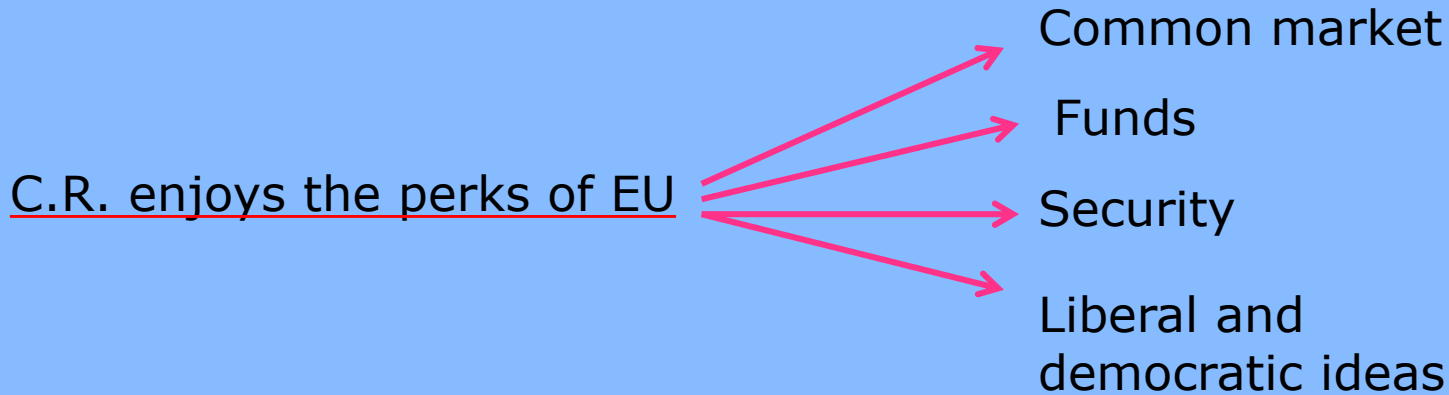


*Prague Spring 1968*



*Velvet Revolution 1989*

## Czech Republic is sensitive to national sovereignty issues due to its Soviet past



**BUT** C.R. is hesitant to modifications that boosts deeper EU integration and tries to keep protected it's **economic independence** and **national sovereignty**

## Czech koruna



❖ Czech's economy was developed rapidly since C.R. became a member-state of EU especially to the sectors of **automotive industry**, tourism and at **exports with Germany**

❖ C.R. would adopt euro in 2010, but this option was considered as **risky** and it could probably affect the **economical independence** according to Czech public opinion



# Political system:

- ❖ C.R. follows the system of **parliamentary republic** since 1993
- ❖ **2 legislative branches** ( parliament – senate )

Latest parliamentary elections : 8-9 October 2021

Results : a coalition of SPOLU: a **liberal** and **conservative** alliance (ODS/ TOP 09/ KDU-CSL) and Pirates and Mayors: liberal – **progressive- centrist** alliance ( Czech Pirate party / Mayors and Independents)

Prime minister: Petr Fiala

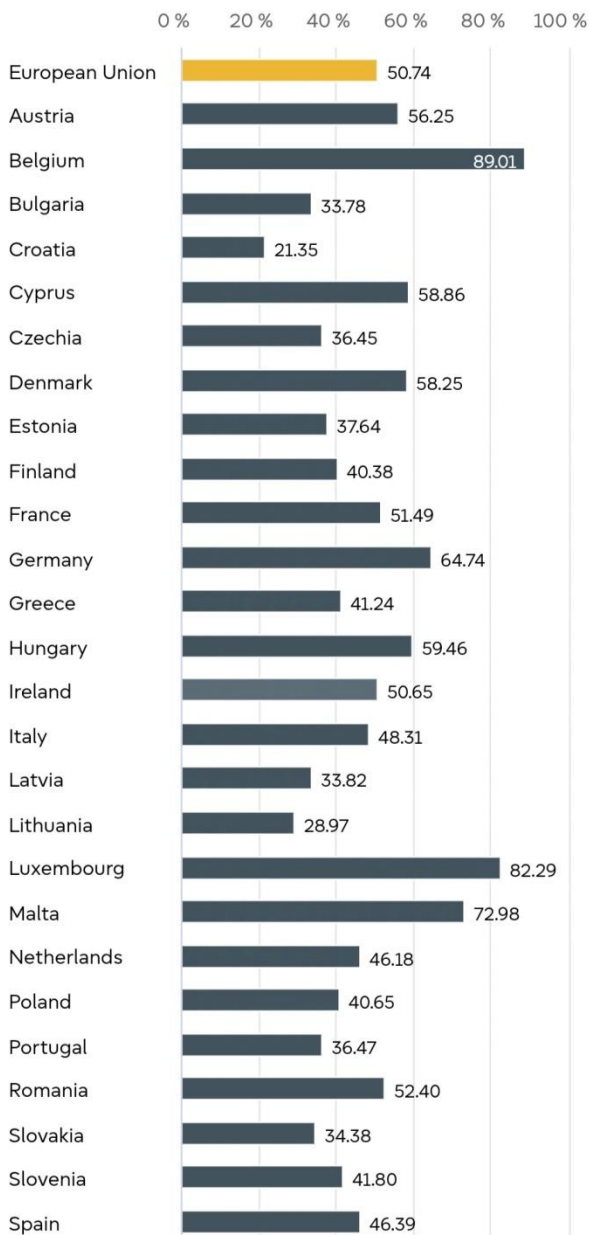


# Representation in European parliament:



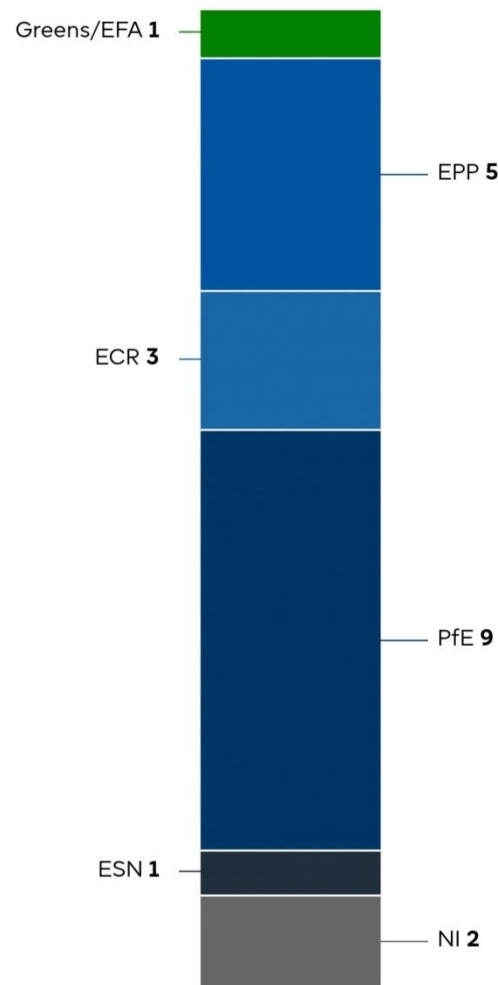
- ❖ European elections of **2024**: 21 members were elected for the European Parliament
- ❖ The participation of Czech citizens was **quite low**
- ❖ The **PfE** party came first by gathering 9 members
- ❖ Greens/EFA and ESN came last by gathering only one member each party

## Low participation from the Czechs



## Representation in the european parliament

Seats by political group  
Czechia - Constitutive session



Total 21 seats

# Why & What Europe?



C.R. joined EU in the  
**2004 enlargement**  
which is also known as  
**BIG BANG** enlargement

# WHY?

## **Economic development:**

- 1) Single market without barriers
- 2) Freedom of movement of people and goods
- 3) Structural and investments funds

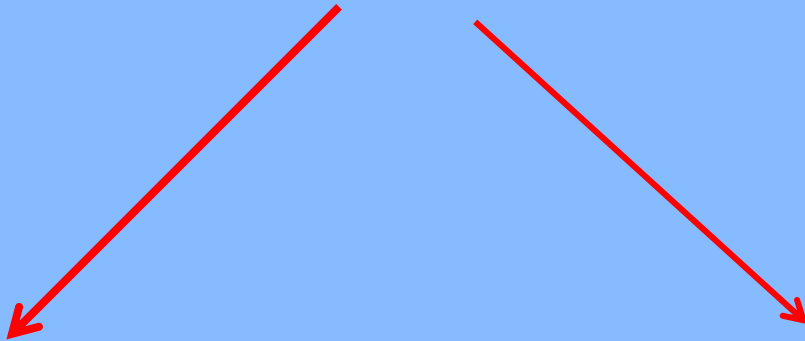
## **Peace and security:**

- 1) Organization that offers protection , especially from Russia and in general geopolitical dangers
- 2) CSDP as the main policy in EU regarding to safety and security

## **Political stability and democratic ideas:**

- 1) EU ensures democracy and rule of law
- 2) Charter of fundamental rights

# C.R. as a net beneficiary member-state



Utilize **EU funds**  
for: *regional  
development /  
infrastructure works  
/ education*

These projects are  
financed by:

- ❖ **Cohesion Funds**
- ❖ **(ESIF)** European  
Structural and  
Investment Funds



# What kind of Europe C.R. dreamed for?

C.R. hoped for:

ECONOMIC  
EUROPE

EUROPE OF  
NATIONS



## *FACTS:*

- 1) GDP has increased from **80%** of the EU average to **91%**
- 2) Over 400.000 Czechs have studied abroad since C.R. EU entry
- 3) Unemployment was at 9,7% in 2004 and now it fell at **3%**

# Did anything change since 2004?

EU has to deal with a more **eurosceptic** C.R. now

C.R. still enjoys the benefits it receives as a member-state of EU

**BUT** C.R. became quite hesitant to any deeper integration of EU , mostly because of the **Migration crisis** (2015- 2016)

Generally, C.R. is a state that emphasizes the importance of its **national sovereignty**

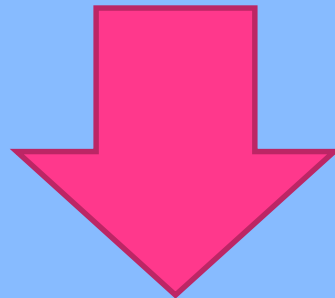
C.R. doesn't seem willing to adopt the euro , even though its economy has increased rapidly since the state's entry in EU





# The impact of Migration crisis (2015)

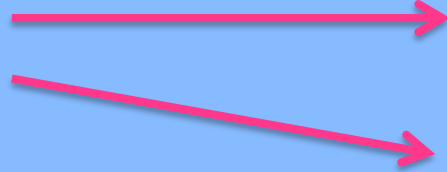
- ❖ C.R. was against the proposed EU quotas
- ❖ According to **Eurobarometer**: More than 80% of Czech respondents were opposed to refugees
- ❖ Against the idea of all EU members accept equal numbers of refugees



**As a result:** Rise of **anti-immigrant** political parties & movements

# Visegrad 4 VS European Union

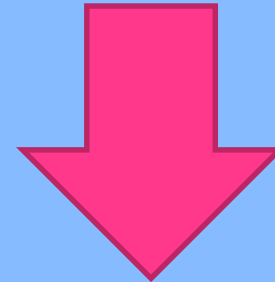
**Visegrad 4  
(V4)**



**Anti- immigration positions**

**Denied accepting refugees**

Czech Republic is sensitive to issues that violate its national sovereignty



**Lawsuit by European  
comission**

# Czech Republic & War at Ukraine

Petr Fiala's government

- 1) Signed EU **sanctions** against Russia
- 2) Humanitarian **aid**
- 3) **Military** equipment

Czech Republic hosted more than **400.000 refugees**

- ❖ A lot of Ukrainians were able to find job
- ❖ Children enrolled in schools
- ❖ Generally, Ukrainians could integrate into Czech society

# Czech population actions:

Czech citizens took initiatives in order to:

Collect money for  
***military  
equipment***

***Humanitarian aid***



Non- governmental  
organizations / charities /  
social media


Czech population pressured to  
government in order to maintain  
an tough stance against Russia



Anti- war protest in Prague

# What about Euroscepticism?

**Czech Republic** can be characterized as one of the **most eurosceptic** member-states

- 
- ❖ Against any further integration
  - ❖ Migration crisis (2015-2016)
  - ❖ Crisis in Eurozone (2009)
  - ❖ Not willing to adopt euro
  - ❖ Against the European measures to deal with climate change



# Discussions about “Czexit”

June  
2016



Brexit Referendum affected Czech Republic:

- ❖ Czech president Milos Zeman proposed a **referendum** equivalent to Brexit , even though he made a statement of not being in favor of C.R. leaving EU.
- ❖ Czech Government **didn't accept** Zeman's proposal , since the proposal was considered as risky and it could probably put in danger C.R.'s both stability and security , which is provided by EU



*Thank you for your  
attention*