

The International, Foreign and Social Policies of the Czech Republic

Czech international and foreign policy

- Promotes and protects national interests
- Ensures the security of the state and citizens
- Values-based foreign policy: promotes democracy, human rights, rule of law
- Wants to boost economic security and resilience by minimising strategic dependence
- Focused on Euro-Atlantic integration (EU, NATO)
- Recognizes that there is a changing international environment

Identity and interests

- See foreign policy framework:
https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/policy_planning/foreign_policy_framework.html
- "Czechia, a medium-sized country, grounds its foreign policy on its identity, which has been shaped by **historical, value-based, geographic, economic, and alliance-based factors**. Its system of values is built around democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law; alliances within the EU and NATO provide shared stability and prosperity.
- Czechia has thrived in the globalised international environment: it has an open economy that is integrated into international supply chains, and its industry and trade are well developed. However, it is a landlocked country with limited raw resources; finished goods account for only a low proportion of its exports. Czechia has its vulnerabilities, so **its security, stability and prosperity are contingent on the international environment and trade conditions.**"

Commitment to democracy

- Czechia has survived two totalitarian regimes, this is why human rights and the importance of international law and a rules-based international order is so important to them
- This is also why the support of Ukraine against Russia is such an important part of their foreign policy
- As a result they see the role of cooperation of countries within NATO and between the EU and NATO as key

EU relations

- Supports the enlargement of the EU to include the countries of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans
- Supports the EU membership of Ukraine but emphasizes the necessity of adhering to standard requirements for joining the EU – they have to meet all conditions
- They are providing ammunition to Ukraine, however they recently rejected financial backing for a EUR 90 billion loan to support Ukraine's economy through 2026-27 (Hungary and Slovakia also refused)
- The loan will go through nevertheless but the refusal to share the risk creates political conflict – "Czech Republic First" rhetoric

Foreign policy goals

- Czechia does not feel secure. The main source of insecurity is the deteriorating international environment
- Therefore strong alliances are important as well as creating new partnerships
- People-to-people contacts, diplomacy is important (supporting the arts, culture, research and student exchange programs)
- It will work toward securing energy and critical raw materials
- Czechia wants to secure a seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2032-33 term
- Prevention of illegal migration and terrorism

International development/aid programs

- Provides humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, helps with political transitions
- Development Cooperation Strategy focuses on protection of the environment, climate and biodiversity
- Runs programmes to help forcibly displaced people
- Assistance aims to prevent illegal migration – supports programmes to reintegrate returnees in their country

Social policy

- Comprehensive social security system: insurance (mandatory health, sickness and pension insurance) and assistance (benefits and social services)
- Standard of medical care is high, there are both public and private providers
- Emphasis on supporting families: maternity leave 28 weeks (37 with twins), usually starts 6-8 weeks before birth, provides 70% of pay, employers must keep the position for the mother, paternity leave 1-2 weeks after birth, paternal leave (both for moms and dads, can be shared) until age 4 (usually taken for 3 years) provides state allowance
- The social system tries to combat poverty and support marginalized groups such as the Roma population
- Employment policy focuses on flexibility, job-sharing, making it easier for parents, senior citizens and people with disabilities to work
- Pension system two-pillar system: mandatory, state run (Pay-as-you-go) and voluntary state supported savings based run by private companies