

# **Migration to the Czech republic after 2011 and its impact on the perception of Arab/Middle Eastern refugees by the majority of the population of the Czech Republic**

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## **History of Migration to the former Czechoslovakia until 1993**

Before the „Velvet Revolution“ in 1989, there was no massive migration to the former Czechoslovakia as a result of conflicts, wars, or political changes in the region or in the world. Much more common was the emigration of Czechs and Slovaks from Czechoslovakia to the western countries, before all to Germany, Austria, the USA and The Great Britain, especially around the years 1948, 1968-1969 and even after, until the above mentioned revolution in 1989. On the other hand, the immigration to the Czech Republic was limited and strictly controlled by the state during the Communist era. The immigrants used to come mainly from the countries, which were members of the so called Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, which means the Socialist Bloc Countries and also the developing countries of the so called third world, which used to have a leftist political orientation. The purposes of their arrivals were mainly work or studies or they were members of the family of a Czechoslovak citizen. The largest community of immigrants were the Vietnamese, who started to come to the former Czechoslovakia since the 50's and 60's of the 20th century, on the base of many Czechoslovak-Vietnamese Mutual Treaties, for example the Treaties of „Cultural cooperation“ signed in 1957 and 1977.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the the 80's there was a community of around 35 000 Vietnamese workers and students in Czechoslovakia. Beside that there were communities of workers and students from the German democratic republic, Poland, Cuba, and other countries of the Socialist Bloc. Their numbers are not exactly known, but they were we can say in thousands. As for the Arab immigrants to the former Czechoslovakia, the immigration started in the 60's of the 20th

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1 Přehled smluvních dokumentů ČSSR, ČSR, ČSFR a ČR s Vietnamem. *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*. 3.3.2018

century as the Czechoslovak government participated on the Programm of help and education of citizens of Arab countries with socialist political orientation. Most of them were students, who came to study universities in Czechoslovakia, some of them were workers who participated in training programs or courses, especially in the field of industry and production. The most of these Arab immigrants were originally from Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen popular democratic Republic and also from the occupied Palestine territories.<sup>2</sup>

Many of these Arab immigrants stayed in Czechoslovakia even after their studies, got married and established families. Although they were originally from allied countries, their official status wasn't stable even when they were married to a Czechoslovak citizen. Many of them had to face essential living problems such as:

- the legal residence permit, which was very difficult to get
- lack of job opportunities as foreigners
- no chance to get a job in a state administration
- The approach of the state was friendly as the foreigner was a student or a worker in a framework of the international treaties, but when he wanted to stay in the country for his own reasons, he used to face a strong bureaucracy, obstacles and in some cases a hidden racial discrimination of the public servants, no matter he had a family members with a Czechoslovak citizenship. A small example could be the existence of special car plate numbers for foreigners, which had a different colouring and letters for easy distinguishing.
- As for the perception of the people, they were not used to foreigners and relations to different cultures members. The Arabs were tolerated, but not integrated. They faced in many cases verbal insinuations, related to their origin, look, belief or habits.
- It's possible to state, that at the official field, the Arabs were welcome in

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<sup>2</sup> Hannová, D. (2011): Arabští studenti v Praze v padesátých a šedesátých letech 20.století. *FF UK v Praze*. 4.3.2018

the former Czechoslovakia in the framework of the international cooperation on the background of the Cold war, but its hardly to say, that they were welcome after the end of the purpose of their arrival and fully integrated in the Czechoslovak society.

## Foreigners in the Czech Republic in numbers

After the Velvet Revolution in 1990 there was only around 35 thousand foreigners living in the Czech republic who had a permanent residence or long-term residence in the country. The trend of the immigration to the Czech Republic was rising since 1993 and especially between 1994 and 1999 to the number of 200 thousand. It also means that between the years of 1992 and 2002 the growth of the foreigner was the highest in Europe. But still the number of immigrants didn't reach the average of the European countries, which is 8 % -10 %.

Around the year 2000 the numbers of immigrants decreased as the new strict law 326/199.9 related to the residence and movement of foreigners in the Czech Republic became valid.

Once more, in 2001 the immigration started to grow to reach 280 thousand foreigners living in the Czech Republic. The highest growth of immigration to the country was to observe between 2005 and 2008, when the foreigners became 438 thousand, 265 thousand with a long-term residence and around 172 thousand with a permanent residence.

In January 2011, when the so called Arab spring started, there were around 440 thousand foreigners, which means there was no increase compare to the year of 2008. Surprisingly, in August 2011 the number became even less, around 411 thousand foreigners. The rise of foreigners between 2011 until 2015, when they were around 465 thousand, could not be however linked to the stormy events which waged in the Middle East and are still lasting until nowadays.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Cizinci: Počet cizinců. *Český statistický úřad*. 7.4.2018

The most immigrants to the Czech republic used to come and are still arriving downwardly from Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam, Russia and Poland. Other nationalities, such as the nations of former Yugoslavia, who used to migrate to the Czech Republic in the first half of the 90 s, have mostly returned home or settled down in Germany, Austria or other European Countries. Small minorities such as Croatians, Serbians, Albanians, Kazakhians, Uzbekians and finally the Arabs and Kurds, who used to immigrate to the Czech Republic in the last 25 years still remain, even in 2018, in hundreds or several thousands.<sup>4</sup>

### **The purposes of the stay of the migrants are mainly:**

- Work possibilities (especially the Ukrainians, Slovaks, Vietnamese and Polish)
- Studies
- Marriage with a Czech Citizen
- Asylum as a result of war conflicts or political persecution in the home countries

As for the Arabs living in the Czech republic, the purposes of stay have changed, compare to the times of Communist era. Most of the Arabs used to come as enrolled students of Czechoslovak universities or were staying as members of political opposition in the homeland countries (Iraq). After the „Velvet revolution“, first, more Arabs started to come to the Czech Republic as the new business possibilities arose with the political and economical opening of the country and the advent of market oriented economy. Second, as for the Arab students, new agreements and contracts were signed, especially between Czech universities and mediatory agencies in the Middle east, who used to settle up participation of Arab students at the entrance exams and enrollement in the Czech republic. The students were mostly coming from the Gulf states of Saudi Arabia,

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4 Sňatky cizinců v ČR podle vybraných státních občanství v letech 1995-2016. *Český statistický úřad*. 7.4.2018

Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, but also from Palestine, Jordan, Libya, Syria and Lebanon and used to pay high university fees as they were studying in English language.

Third, Since 2004, when around 3 thousand foreign men have married Czech women, and 2 thousand Czech men have married a foreign woman, the numbers of marriages decreased to reach again in 2014 over 3 thousand marriages between foreign men and Czech women and around 1700 marriages between Czech men and foreign women.<sup>5</sup> Many Arabs, from already since second half of the 90's until now, especially Tunisians and Egyptians, have come to the country as members of family of a Czech citizen. In most cases, Arab men have married a Czech woman. Anyway their number did not reach hundreds.

### **Migration to the Czech Republic related to the so called Arab Spring**

As the wave of uprisings, the so called Arab spring, started in Tunisia, when Muhammad Buazizi set himself on fire in the city of Sidi Buzid at the end of 2010 and continued in Egypt, Lybia and Syria since January, February and March 2011, the living conditions of people of the mentioned countries have boldly changed. The revolt against the political, economical and social situation had however different forms and ways in every Arab country. The differences between particular countries regarding the structure of power, economic situation and life-chances of the people lead in different courses and consequences of the uprisings in each country. Nevertheless the turbulent events of Tunisia and Egypt did not result in a distinct migration of the local inhabitants. Totally different situation occurred in Libya and Syria, as the uprisings since 2011 transformed into cruel wars with an international involvement. An unbearable life circumstances resulted in a massive demographical changes in a form of massive migration, especially from Syria, Libya and Iraq, which was suffering from a long local conflict and instability. The desirable destination for the most of the refugees were, and still are, the countries of the European Union, especially Germany, Austria, Italy,

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5 Sňatky cizinců v ČR podle vybraných státních občanství v letech 1995-2016. *Český statistický úřad*. 7.4. 2018

Sweden and Great Britain, but in fact the largest number of refugees were accepted by the neighbouring countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

As for the situation of Libya, the massive migration started as a result of the conflict between the regime led by Muammar Qadhafi and the rebels in 2011. At the end of 2012 there were around 177 thousand Libyan refugees seeking for asylum, in Tunisia and the European countries (Italy, Malta), but the number quadrupled in 2013 as the conflict between two rival groups developed.<sup>6</sup>

Nowadays, and especially after the European Union cut a deal with Turkey in March 2016 to resettle one refugee for every „irregular migrant“ and entering Greece from Turkey was no longer possible, Libya started to be the popular point of departure for refugees. In 2016 in Libya it was expected around 700 thousand to 1 million refugees to be within the country. They came mainly from Niger, Mali, Somalia, Senegal, Kenya, Sudan, Nigeria, Syria, Bangladesh and also Egypt. From this number, around 278 thousand migrants arrived to Europe only in 2016.<sup>7</sup>

The situation of Syria, which is the biggest driver of migration, inspired a wide wave of migration even from the countries where direct conflicts or wars doesn't wage. The registered number of Syrian refugees themselves in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt was in the beginning of November 2016 nearly 4 mil. 797 thousand persons.<sup>8</sup>

In European Union in 2015 around 1, 321, 000 refugees were seeking asylum, of whom Syrians were around 370 thousand. The second largest number of refugees were the Afghans, who were around 170 thousands, the third were Iraqis, around 125 thousands, after them downwardly refugees from Kosovo, Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran and Ukraine.<sup>9</sup>

As for the Czech Republic, since 2011, when the so called Arab Spring started in the Middle East and the wave of migration slowly but increasingly started, was never a final destination of refugees. In spite of a wide ongoing debate in the Czech society and politics, the number of refugees, who intended to come and live in Czech Republic can

6 UNHCR Global Report (2013): UN High Commissioner for Refugees. *Refworld*. 15.4.2018

7 Libya. *International Organisation for Migration*. 16.4.2018

8 Syrian Regional Refugee Response. *UNHCR*. 18.4.2018

9 Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts. *BBC*. 18.4.2018

be counted in 10's. Those who planned to seek asylum in Czech Republic, mostly Syrians and Iraqis, are in most cases those who had relatives in the country already before 2011. Some of them arrived in the Czech Republic based on an official invitation from their relatives and received visa from the Czech Embassy in Damascus, later Beirut, or in Baghdad. Its important to mention, that Czech Republic, as for the Arab refugees after 2011, was always mostly a transit country.

Many of the Arab refugees who where asking or are still demanding an asylum in the Czech Republic were cougth by Czech immigration police in the area of the country, as they were trying to get to other European countries in the west, especially to Germany. Most of those were transported from Hungary or from Austria by smugglers mostly in closed mid-range vans or trucks under inhuman conditions. As the refugees were paying to smugglers for the way from Istanbul or from Greece to central Europe even 5000 Eur per person, the way from Budapest to Germany via Czech republic was evaluated by smugglers for 1000-1500 Eur. In most cases, the smugglers forced the transported refugees and their families to get off the cars 30 km or 40 km before the Czech-German Border, so that the smuggler didn't risk an arrest by German or Czech police. The refugees were commonly told they are already in Germany. In most cases the refugees were cougth by the police and placed in refugee camps, where some of them asked for an asylum. Others continued trying to get to Germany or other countries were their relatives stay.

Just to show that a big difference between the reality and the wide-range discussed topic of immigrants from the Middle East coming to Czech republic occurs, lets see the statistics. In 2011 a total number of applications for international protection in Czech Republic was 756, of whome 13 were Iraqis, 11 Libyans, 23 Syrians, 3 Tunisians, 10 Algerians, 3 Egyptians, 1 Moroccan and 1 Yemeni.<sup>10</sup> In 2012 there were in total 753 asylum applications, of whome 5 were submitted by Iraqis, 7 by Libyans, 68 by Syrians, 3 by Tunisians, 20 by Algerians, 4 by Egyptians, 2 by Moroccans and 1 by a Jordanian. In 2013 the number of asylum applications was surprisingly decreasing to total 707 and the citizenships of the Arab submitters were the following: 11 Iraqis, 3 Libyans, 69 Syrians, 3 Tunisians, 6 Algerians, 6 Egyptians and 7 Yemenis. In 2014 the

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<sup>10</sup> Central Europe. *UNHCR*. 2.5.2018

number of submitted applications increased up to total 1156 and the Arab submitters were: 22 Iraqis, 5 Libyans, 108 Syrians, 2 Tunisians, 10 Algerians, 1 Yemeni. In 2015, the total number of applications was a little more, 1525, of whom 134 were Syrians and 38 Iraqis, other Arab refugees were only individuals. In 2016 the trend seemed to be decreasing with total 1478 applications as the Euro-Turkish treaty is already valid and the Czech republic is still only a transit country for middle-eastern refugees. It is important to realise, that most of the applicants for international protection in the Czech Republic were from countries like Ukraine, Russia and other former Soviet Union Republics, China etc. The number of successfully given international protection regarding the Middle Eastern refugees was during all the years of the so called Arab spring in tens, or even individuals. In 2016, it was 148 receivers of the international protection of whom 101 were Iraqis and only 5 Syrians and no other Middle Eastern refugees.<sup>11</sup> No other data from the following years are available until now.

As we can see, the number of refugees, who submitted an asylum applications in the Czech Republic since 2011 is negligible compare to the situation in Germany, Italy or Sweden. At the same time, the refugee crises opened a wide-range debate between the Czech politicians, in media and also between the local citizens as for the question of reception, integration and possible threat, related to Arab and muslim refugees arrival to the country.

## **The perception of Arabs, Kurds and other nationalities from the Middle East in the Czech Republic after 2011**

### **The Approach of the Czech official institutions towards the migration crisis**

As for the approach of the official institutions, it must be said that the Czech foreign policy, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained a pragmatic approach to the events of the so called Arab spring in the Middle East. The traditional

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<sup>11</sup> Azyl udělen – počet rozhodnutí v jednotlivých letech (1.1.1997 -31.12.2016). *Český statistický úřad*. 3.5.2018

commercial and diplomatic relations with the Middle eastern countries were preserved. For example the Czech embassy in Damascus is still operating and even adopted the agenda of other European countries and the USA, which closed their offices in Syria. Czech Republic is also intending to play a role of conflict mediator, as examples could be seen the discussed peace treaty between the parties involved in the Syrian conflict, which could take place in Prague, or the successful release of 5 Czech citizens kidnapped in the Lebanese region of Beqaa by unknown offenders.

As for the refugees arriving to Czech Republic, the main institution responsible for their affairs is the Czech Ministry of Interior. Since 2011 it became more complicated for the Arab, especially Syrian and Iraqi applicants to receive a Czech visa in their homelands. On the other hand, it must be stated, that vast majority of the Arab refugees, who arrived from the war bothered countries, received an asylum in Czech Republic, as well as accomodation, social support and assistance and free Czech language courses. Once the refugee receives the asylum permittance, he has a full support led by the Ministry of Interior. The approach of the official institutions was and still is positive towards the refugees who arrived even illegally, but themselves.

On the other hand, the Czech government, as the other central european members of Visegrad 4 did not repeatedly approve in 2015 the European plan of redistribution of 120 thousand refugees, later only 66 thousand refugees located mainly in Greece, Italy and Hungary to other European countries.

In september 2015 23 of 28 EU countries approved the plan during the voting of EU Ministers of Interior, 4 EU members refused the plan, namely Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary.

The reasoning of the Czech government was based on principal refusing of the EU dictate and insisted on sovereignty of decision-making in the issue of refugees. In any case, the EU decision was done and the Czech Republic was obliged to accept in total 1591 refugees.<sup>12</sup>

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12 Evropští ministři schválili uprchlické kvóty, Slovensko je ostře proti. *iDNES*. 15.5.2018

As a consequence, the Czech government was, beside other V4 member governments criticized by the EU institutions and ministers, and also by the United Nations Organisation:

*„The V4 States were hosting some 25,000 refugees in 2015, 0.125 percent of the nearly 20 million global refugee population. Hungary received 177,000 asylum-seeker applications in 2015, but the vast majority of them left within a few days. The other three V4 countries combined received some 14,000 asylum claims.“*

*“While UNHCR fully understands that public opinions can sometimes be apprehensive about the unfolding situation in Europe, it is important to give both relocation and resettlement a chance to work. These tools of solidarity create an alternative to smuggling and trafficking and could reduce dangerous onward movements.“*

*„It is time for the leadership in Central Europe to set a strong example and commit to help families fleeing war and human rights violations, irrespective of their nationality or religion,” said Montserrat Feixas Vihé, UNHCR’s Regional Representative for Central Europe.“<sup>13</sup>*

*“Leaders in the region need to offer safety to people fleeing persecution. They cannot be bystanders during this unprecedented humanitarian situation. The world expects them to contribute to saving lives and restoring hope for those who have lost everything“<sup>14</sup>*

This paradoxical situation, when at the same time the refugees acceptance quotes were obligatory for the EU states and the Czech Republic with other Visegrad 4 states have insisted on refusing it, lasted for 2 years (2015-2017). Finally, in October 2017, the EU states under the leadership of the President of the European Council Donald Tusk in Brussels agreed, that it is not possible to set up the obligatory acceptance refugee quotes unilaterally, it means without the agreement of the Visegrad 4 states. The EU suggested that there should be in the future a new system of refugees redistribution, but at the moment the Visegrad 4 states can still refuse the refugees from the other states of the

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13 Europe. *UNHCR*. 17.5.2018

14 Ibid

EU without being pursued by EU laws.<sup>15</sup>

We can say, that the Czech government and namely the Ministry of Interior provided the war refugees with a maximum attention, which can be seen on the example of well-targeted several relocations of needy refugees from Iraq, Lebanon or Turkey to Czech Republic. At the same time the Czech Governments position used to prefer its own decision-making rather than common EU immigration policy.

### **The preception of Arab, Kurdish and other middle-eastern refugees by the majority of the Czech society and popular models of thinking**

Since the migration wave started to strengthen during 2012 and 2013, a wide-range debate on the topic of refugees and their arrival to Europe started in Czech media and between the politicians. Later the debate expanded to be the number one topic in the Czech society during 2014, 2015, 2016 and even 2017. As for the politicians, there is a wide scale of opinions related to the reception of refugees in Czech Republic. Besides rational ideas of treatment of the refugee crisis there are several movements and politicians, who had a negative impact on a nonnegligible part of the Czech society as for the overall view of migration crisis and acceptance of refugees, namely Islám v ČR nechceme party (We don't want Islam in the Czech Republic <https://www.ivcrn.cz/>) or Svoboda a přímá demokracie party (Freedom and Direct Democracy <https://www.spd.cz/>). As I mentioned before, some media in Czech republic played also its negative role and sometimes supported intolerant opinions, either when it often used to relate, unconsciously or knowingly the middle-eastern refugees crisis to some other negative news, such as terrorist attacks in Europe, or giving intolerant politicians or activists an immoderate space.

It is suitable also to focus on the popular models of thinking related to the refugees in the Czech Republic:

- 1) The terminology related to the Arab, Kurdish or other refugees from the

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<sup>15</sup> 15 S povinnými kvótami na přijímání uprchlíků je konec. Bez souhlasu Česka je nebude možné schválit. *Aktualne*. 18.5.2018



Middle East, which is wrongly used even between the politicians and in media, is wide-spread in Czech Society. All the refugees are commonly labeled as „Moslems“. First, this term is surely not suitable, when we realise that not every Arab or Kurd is a Moslem, there are even atheists between the refugees. Second, in the era of modern states, the identity of an individual in public area is based on his citizenship, not on his belief. Third, the term „Moslem refugees“ could, in some situations evoke a relation between them and the „islamic“ terrorism, which is itself a wrong term, but commonly used in Czech republic. Syrians, Iraqis or Afghans can simply not be labeled as „Moslems“. Fourth, the term „Moslems“ could evoke also a supposed conflict of „Islamic world“ with the „Christian world“.

- 2) The mistrust of many people in Czech society towards Middle eastern refugees is common. There is a lack of compassion and mercy towards the refugees between many. In many cases its beleaved, that the refugees in fact don't need help so necessarily. An example could be statements like. „*They wear brand new clothes and use advanced mobile phones and tablets.*“ or „*All of them are young men, who left their families there.*“ or „*Why dont they fight and protect their families there.*“ In fact, its nearly impossible for a Syrian or an Iraqi who wants to escape from war, to get a legal visa for all the members of the family, especially, when he doesn't have a valid passport.

- 3) The fear of the Arab, Kudish or Afghan people between many Czechs is split-leveled.

First, there is a vision, that the Middle eastern refugees are going to take job opportunities designated to Czechs. At the same time there is an opinion, that the middle-easterners are not able to work steadily, effectively and responsibly, or they dont want to work at all. Along with that there is a general rumor, that Arab, Kurdish or Afghan refugees will





be trying to misuse the Czech system of social assistance. Second, with the arrival of refugees, there is a fear of proliferation of terrorism between many Czechs. Unlogic in combining the refugees topic with Islam and terrorism is common. Third, the fear of refugees in a sense of the threat of criminality spreading can be also observed. An example could be the refusal of the presence of refugees between the inhabitants of the cities and villages, where the refugee camps are, or would be placed. The common argument of locals is: „*I have children, of course I am afraid.*“

- 4) There is a general catastrophic vision between many Czechs, that along with the low natality in European societies and high numbers of arriving Arab, Kurdish or Afghan refugees, the demografic structure of the European society would dramatically change. As the consequence, many Czechs are afraid of future domination of „Islamic civilisation“ and Islam over the „Euro-American Christian civilisation“. The fear is based on supposed loss of the „European-christian values“ and the possible of hegemony of Islamic religion and culture over the European societies. As an example could be seen a repetitious statement between some Czechs: „*After 20 years our women will be forced to wear hijab.*“

## Conclusion

Finally we can state, that the migration crisis and the Middle-eastern refugees are a very topical issue in the Czech republic, which is discussed on the political and public level as well as between the laic public. The number of refugees who arrived to the Czech Republic in conjunction with the migration wave from the Middle East and Northern Africa is negligible compare to the situation in Germany, Sweden, Italy or Greece. The Approach of the Czech official institutions, especially the Czech Ministry of Interior towards the refugees could be perceived positively. Nearly all Syrian and Iraqi refugees who applied for an asylum in the Czech Republic received a residence permit in the Czech republic. When the refugees refused to apply for an asylum in the

Czech republic, in some cases, especially in the case of Syrians, they were released by the Czech police and allowed to continue their journey. There are also programs for controlled resettlement of the refugees from Iraq, Turkey or Jordan and Lebanon to the Czech Republic.

As for the perception of the Arab, Kurdish and other Middle-eastern refugees in the Czech Republic, in the public life there is a minor political stream or individuals, who misuse the migration crisis in a populist way for achieving its own political goals. The mentioned often use a wrong terminology related to the refugees question, which negatively influences the perception of the needy people coming from the places of war conflicts.

Unfortunately, these politicians or movements are able to influence a part of the Czech society. Those see the arriving Arab, Kurdish or Afghan refugees as:

- a threat for the Czech society in sense of endangering the job market and social assistance system
- a source of possible terrorism and increasing criminality threat
- a general threat for the „Euro-American christian society and cultural values“, which could lead to the future hegemony of the „Moslems“ over Europe.

The important think to mention is, that the intensity of the public debate on refugees and migration crisis in Czech republic (in case of some, a panic), doesn't correspond to the real number of refugees, who arrived to the Czech Republic since 2011, when the so called Arab spring in the Arab countries started. We are still talking about tens in the context of the Czech Republic and the Czech Republic was in 2017 the 23. country of the |EU as for the number of asylum applications.<sup>16</sup>

The intolerant approach of some Czechs has probably the following causes:

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<sup>16</sup> Pohostinná Evropa? *European Parliament*. 22.6.2018

- a lack of education in the field of social sciences and Middle eastern/Islam issues
- a long-time ethnically and religiously homogenous society, caused by the circumstances of the Cold war and isolation during the Czechoslovak socialist era since 1948
- uniformity of thinking over and in perceiving anything foreign and strange, including other cultures, probably also caused by the decades of the above mentioned isolation
- distrust in religion and believers inflicted by the former communist regime in general
- an uncritical accepting of media information without own analysis
- acceptance of the stereotypes related to the Arabs, Kurds and other Middle-eastern nationalities without a critical consideration (terrorists, oppressors, no women rights, fanatics etc.)

On the other hand we can state, that many Czechs, especially the educated can understand or analyse the Middle-eastern issues and are active in a positive way to help the refugees. Many students and volunteers are involved in refugee-help programs through NGO's, such as Člověk v Tísni or Lékaři bez hranic even in Syria, Iraq or the neighbouring countries. Many volunteers and organisations also help the refugees in the Czech republic to find their new homeland.

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