

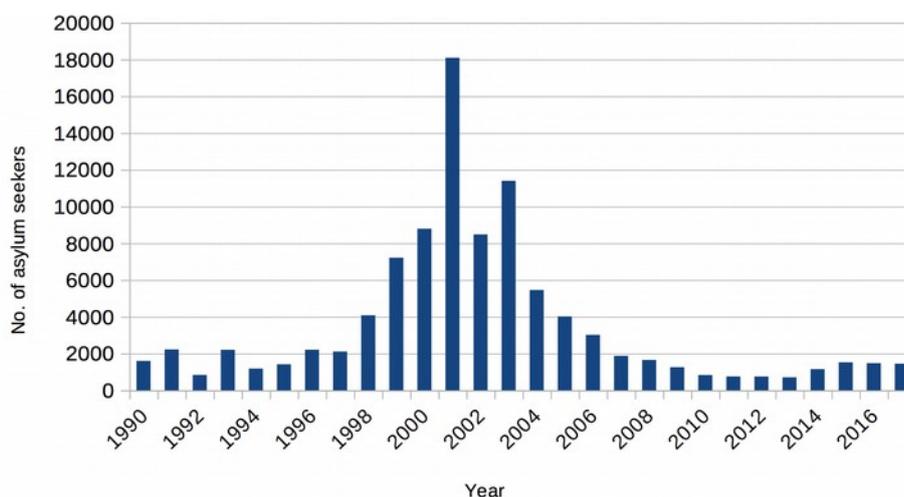
Report on negative social phenomena in the Czech society in the context of the Refugee Crisis

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General background

The Czech Republic has been experiencing a period of prosperity with GDP growing by more than 3 % in 2017 and unemployment rate holding below 4 %.¹ The country continues to receive high rankings in the fields of safety and peace² as well as freedom of expression.³ The 2015 Refugee Crisis has had a little factual impact on the country itself in terms of economy, security, or social situation. The year of 2015 was actually one of the weakest years in terms of immigration (see Chart no. 1), especially when compared to 2001 or 2003. There were about 1500 asylum seekers in the Czech Republic during that year, most of which came from non-Muslim countries, such as Ukraine, Russia or Cuba.

Chart no. 1 – No. of asylum applications in the Czech Republic since 1990 to 2017.



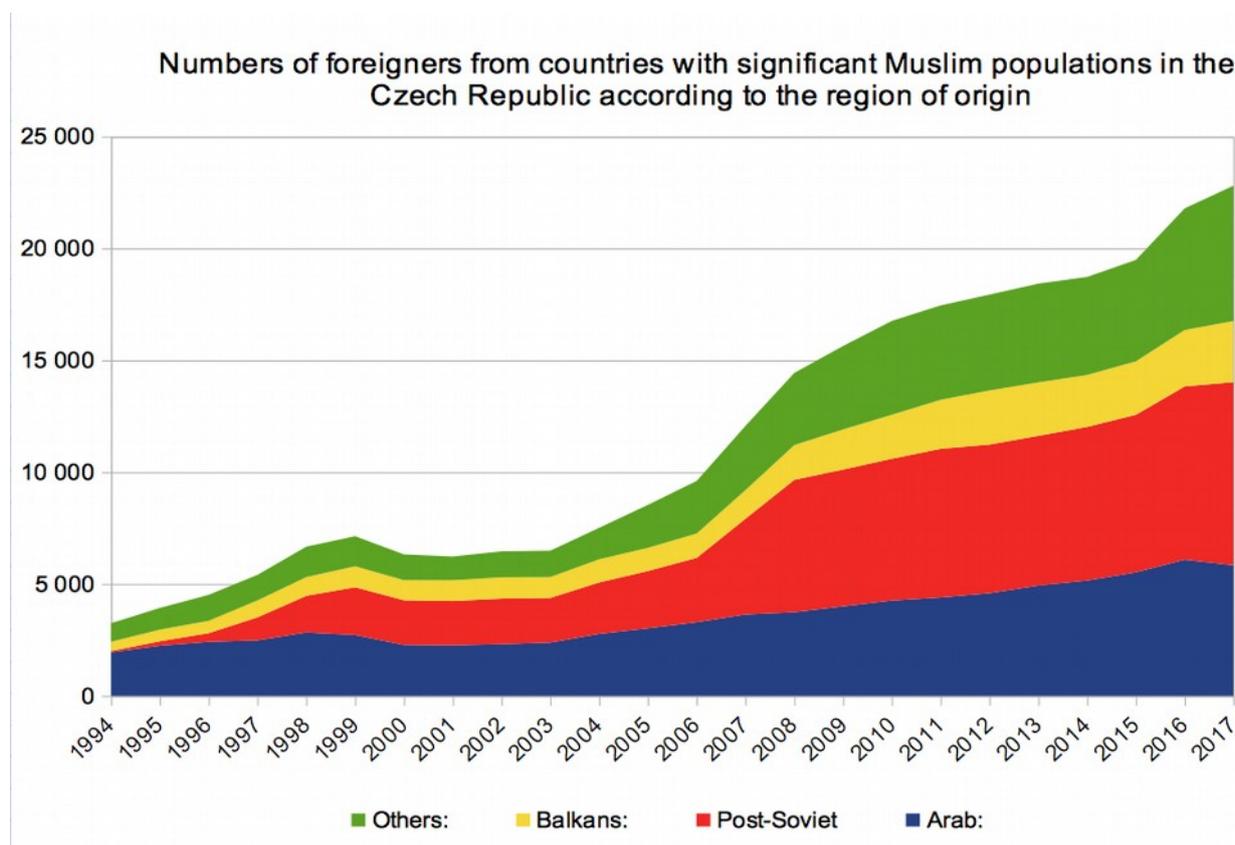
Source: “Statistical Reports on International Protection”, Department of Asylum and Immigration Policy, Ministry of Interior

The largest migrant groups in the Czech Republic are the Slovaks (107 251), Ukrainians (110 245), Vietnamese (58 080) and Russians (35 987).⁴ The largest “Muslim” country of origin would be Kazakhstan (where about 70 % of the population are Sunni Muslims) with about five thousand Kazakhis living in the Czech Republic under various residency types.⁵ According to the Czech Statistical Office from December 2017, there were more than 22 thousands foreigners from countries

- 1 Zaměstnanost, nezaměstnanost. Czech Statistical Office, available at: https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/zamestnanost_nezamestnanost_prace [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 2 Czech Republic ranked a #6 on the Global Peace Index. See: <http://www.czechcompete.cz/politics/macro-economic-indicators-economic-growth/2017-global-peace-index-czech-republic-remains-among-most-peaceful-countries> [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 3 Freedomhouse report on the Czech Republic ranks the country as „free“ with 94 points out of maximum 100: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/czech-republic> [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 4 Odbor azylové a migrační politiky Ministerstva vnitra, Statistické zprávy o mezinárodní ochraně. 2015. <https://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci/cizinci-v-cr-vcetne-azylantu> [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 5 R07 Cizinci s pobytem nad 12 měsíců podle státního občanství v letech 2008 - 2016 (k 31. 12.), available at: https://www.czso.cz/documents/11292/56594384/c01R07_2016.pdf/63ace08b-4092-4213-8993-a48eafeabb54?version=1.0 [cit. 27-1-2018].

that have dominant Muslim majorities and/or Islam as the state religion.⁶ The statistics include all kinds of residence status from asylum seekers, to long-term residence permit holders. This number is not final as there are non-Muslim countries with significant Muslim minorities (Russia, Israel, France, India etc.) and there are also Muslim countries with non-Muslim minorities (Egypt, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, pre-war Syria).

Chart 2 – Numbers of foreigners from countries with significant Muslim populations in the Czech Republic according to the region of origin.



Source: Based on data from the Czech statistical office, Public database

Even with a disclaimer about such potential inaccuracies, along with taking into consideration the several hundred Czech Muslim converts, it can be estimated that there might be approximately 22,800 Muslims currently living in the Czech Republic. This would mean an increase by about 3 700 from 2009 when Topinka et al. estimated the numbers of Muslims living in the country to 19,097.⁷ The timeline of migration reveals that the number of Muslim migrants in the Czech Republic has doubled since the mid-2000s, from about 10,000 to today's 20,000. However, Muslims still only represent about 4.95 % of the migrant population in the Czech Republic and about 0.22 % of the total Czech

6 This would include the following countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Indonesia, pre-war Iraq, Iran, pre-war Yemen, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, The West Bank & Gaza in pre-1967 borders, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, Sudan, pre-war Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

7 Daniel Topinka et al.: Muslimové imigranti v České Republice: Etablování na veřejnosti. In: Bomba, Lukáš – Kővérová, Estera – Smrek, Martin (eds.): *Fenomén moci a sociálně nerovnosti – nultý ročník konferencie pre doktorandov a mladých vedeckých pracovníkov*. Universita Komenského v Bratislave 2014, p. 244. Accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www2.tf.jcu.cz/~klapetek/janku2.pdf>.

population.⁸ Majority of this Muslim population are immigrants from the post-Soviet countries, namely Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The numbers of Kazakhis (5,600) are almost comparable to the total sum of all Arabs (Syrians, Iraqis, Egyptians, Palestinians etc.) in the Czech Republic (5,800, see Chart 2). The Arab population of the Czech Republic has increased by mere 3,000 since 1994 and has even declined by about two hundred individuals in 2016.

Czechs and “the Others”

In response to the public debates surrounding the Refugee Crisis, there is an increasing amount of public opinion surveys, mapping the Czech attitudes and social distance to various social, national, religious or ethnic groups, including the domestic minorities. In general, these surveys point to a decrease of willingness to accept “Others” in the atmosphere of Refugee Crisis. Such surveys have to be, of course, interpreted with a great caution as framing of the question can significantly alter the results, be it often due to lack of knowledge by the respondents. For example, an older survey, performed by the private agency Factum Invenio in 2010 at the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of renewal of Czech-Israeli diplomatic relations, has shown that while 60 percent would refuse accepting an Israeli into a family, only about “one third” have expressed the same refusal about Jews in general. It means that “Jews” are seen more acceptable than “Israelis” despite the fact that Israel is a Jewish state with a significant Jewish majority and a close ally of the Czech Republic in the international arena. The agency explains this significant difference in attitudes by nativism – Jews are seen as a part of the Czech territory and its history, while Israelis fall into the category of “foreigners”.⁹

In a 2015 research by the private agency STEM on social distance to various ethnic and national groups with a base question: ‘How would you feel having a neighbor, who is ...?’, the most positive answers (“Very good, no problem”) were in 2015 given about Slovaks (94%), French (82%), British (81%), Americans (79%) and Germans (73%). Right after these Western nationalities, the Croatians were placed (66%), followed by the Jews (65%). The responses about the Jews were evaluated as neutral. Very negative attitudes, however, were expressed towards nationalities related to the Muslim world: Arabs (19%), Chechens (19%) and Afghanis (17%). The worst attitudes in 2015 were expressed towards Roma, where only 13% would feel “very good” about having a Romany neighbour.¹⁰

These results were independently verified by another survey from 2015, performed by the Center for Public Opinion Surveys of the Czech Academy of Sciences, where respondents were asked to express their attitudes towards the various groups by using “school grades” from 1 (most sympathetic) to 5 (most unsympathetic). Jews were given average grade of 2,83 by the respondents and in the scale of popularity, they were placed right after Germans (2,82), Greeks (2,72), Poles (2,47), Slovaks (1,79) and Czechs (1,59). On the opposite side of the scale, the Arabs (4,02) and Roma (4,30) were placed.¹¹

8 Cizinci podle státního občanství k 31.12.2014. *Český statistický úřad*. Accessed February 20, 2016, https://vdb2.czso.cz/vdbvo2/faces/index.jsf?page=vystup-objekt&evo=&str=&vyhltext=&pvo=CIZ08&udlident=&verze=-1&nahled=N&sp=N&nuid=&zs=&skupId=&pvokc=&filtr=G~F_M~F_Z~F_R~F_P~_S~_null_null_&katalog=all&pvoch=&zo=N&z=T

9 Arab vadí Čechům víc než Izraelec. Židé paradoxně lidem nepřekážejí. *Lidovky.cz* 9.2.2010, available at: https://www.lidovky.cz/arab-vadi-cechum-vic-nez-izraelec-zide-paradoxne-lidem-neprekazeji-1ca-/zprav-domov.aspx?c=A100209_163536_In_domov_mpr [cit. 27-1-2018].

10 Trendy 3/2015. *STEM* 27 April 2015. Summary of findings is available online at: <http://www.stem.cz/clanek/3052> [verified on 22 November 2015].

11 Červenka, Jan: “Tisková zpráva: Vztah české veřejnosti k národnostním skupinám žijícím v ČR – únor 2015.” *Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění*. 6 March 2015. [online], available at: <http://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/>

Before the Refugee Crisis, the Roma were usually considered to be the “pariahs” of the Czech society. In policy recommendations for the governmental anti-extremism strategy from 2012, the private agency STEM even suggested that the government should “*separate the expressions of anti-Gypsy attitudes (shared by the majority) from other expressions of racism, xenophobia and neo-Nazism (exhibited by a small minority of the population) and formulate the strategies for their solution separately.*”¹² While this policy recommendation was formulated three years before the 2015 Refugee Crisis, it still remains valid for its most part with one important addition. In 2012, when this conclusion was formulated, the issue of Islam and Muslims was only peripheral to the Czech discourse and even the far-right targeted mostly the Romanies. In the light of the recent Muslim refugee wave, however, the Czech government should formulate a new, separate policy for the anti-Muslim attitudes as well. In the current political climate, this will likely have to be done in combination together with measures against extremism and terrorism within the Muslim communities.

Next year’s survey by the same agency shows that while attitudes to Western nationalities and Jews have remained almost unchanged, attitudes to some Muslim nationalities have significantly worsened, with the Afghanis even replacing the Roma as the most despised group. Only twelve percent would feel “very good” about having an Afghani neighbor, according to the 2016 data, while sixteen percent would have similar feelings about having Romani neighbors.¹³ The same research has again documented, how perception of the “Other” changes depending on framing of the question. For example, while only 15 percent would feel “very good” about having an Arab neighbor, whole 33 percent would feel the same about an Egyptian neighbor, despite the fact that majority of Egyptians are ethnically and linguistically Arabs.¹⁴

According to the survey of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in 2018, there is a trend of growing negative attitudes against the Jews among younger people and also among citizens of large cities, such as Prague.¹⁵ When this rather surprising fact was published, it raised questions over efficiency of the anti-extremism and holocaust history education in the schools as most of the survey’s respondents have previously participated in these educational programs. In an interview for the Czech Radio, the chief researcher, Karina Hoření, explained that the actual situation might have been even worse without such anti-extremism programs and that the efficiency of education to tolerance is hindered by xenophobic expressions of teachers and politicians, who are supposed to provide examples.¹⁶

Compared to other V4 countries, the Czechs have been the least accepting to refugees, which might be surprising, considering the political atmosphere in Poland or Hungary. A survey from October 2015, which was the peak of the Refugee Crisis, has shown that while 65 percent of Hungarians would allow refugees from conflict zones to take at least a temporary shelter in the country, only 44 percent of Czechs have expressed the same opinion.¹⁷ Czechs would be more willing to accept possible refugees from Ukraine, although even here, the negative responses (55 percent in

com_form2content/documents/c1/a7352/f3/ov150306.pdf [verified on 22 November 2015].

12 STEM: “Zmapování postojů veřejnosti v ČR k pravicově extremistickým, rasistickým a xenofobním myšlenkám a jejich šířitelům s ohledem na integraci menšin a cizinců”, p. 57, available at: <http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/zaverecna-zprava-z-vyzkumu.aspx> [cit. 27-1-2018].

13 What attitudes do Czech citizens have towards various nationalities and ethnic groups? STEM 13.4.2016, available at: <https://en.stem.cz/what-attitudes-do-czech-citizens-have-towards-various-nationalities-and-ethnic-groups-2/> [cit. 27-1-2018].

14 Ibid.

15 Hoření, Kateřina et al. Co si myslíš o... Předsudky v české společnosti a jak s nimi účinně pracovat ve škole. Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů: Praha 2018, available at: http://stereotypy.cz/assets/pdf/co_si_mylis.pdf

16 Mladí Češi jsou méně tolerantní než jejich rodiče. Každý čtvrtý nemá rád Židy. *IRozhlas* 07.02.2018, available at: https://www.irozhlaz.cz/zpravy-domov/deti-mladi-netolerance-romove-zide_1802071350_mos

April 2018) outweighed the positive ones (37 percent in April 2018).¹⁸ These findings are only supported by another survey of the same agency that shows, how Czechs are becoming less accepting towards foreigners during the last ten years. Where 60 percent agreed in 2005 that “each ethnic group or minority should be able to live according to its own traditions and customs”, only 25 percent agreed with the same statement in 2016. From the 49 percent, who agreed in 2006 that “every person, who lives in the Czech Republic should be able to obtain the citizenship, irrespective of his/her nationality and ethnic origin”, only 25 percent agreed with the same statement in 2016.¹⁹ One quarter of Czech would reject the Muslims the right to vote, according to survey by the Median agency from 2018.²⁰

Paradoxes of the Czech “Refugee Crisis Without Refugees”

Refugee Crisis, or “migration crisis” as it is often referred to in the Czech mainstream media, has been very much present in the public discourse, creating a paradox of “Refugee Crisis without refugees”.²¹ Despite the low rates of immigration, there has been an increase of conflict perception vis-à-vis the foreigners among most Czechs during the Refugee Crisis. According to a 2016 survey by STEM, 67 percent of respondents consider the “*conflicts between Czechs and foreigners, between various national groups*” to be the most immediate ones, placed above other possible conflicts such as “between rich and poor”, “between age groups” or “between city and countryside”. Building on its previous surveys, the agency STEM noted that the degree of conflict perception vis-à-vis foreigners has grown significantly: from 54 percent in 2012 up to 67 percent in 2016. Certain correlations were identified with degree of education (the higher education, the lower conflict perception) or political affiliation, where the highest conflict perception (80 percent) was recorded among the voters of the Communist party.²² Comparison of the contents of the anti-immigration rhetoric with the actual immigration statistics reveals an interesting paradox – the most anti-immigration rhetoric is focused on migrant populations that are less significant in actual numbers, while the largest migrant populations, for which the Czech Republic is also a target country, are mostly overlooked in the anti-immigration rhetoric.

There have been several incidents during the Summer and Autumn of 2015, in which the panicking citizens reported alleged refugees to the police, only to find that the reported refugees are either fellow Czechs or legitimate visitors. These cases include forest workers gathering wood considered to be migrants building shelters,²³ Romanian tourists, who visited the country legally for

17 Buchtík, Martin and Pilecká, Jarmila: Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků - prosinec 2015. CVVM, available at: https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a1996/f9/pm160121.pdf [cit. 27-1-2018].

18 Červenka, Jan: Postoj české veřejnosti k přijímání uprchlíků - duben 2018. CVVM, available at: https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a4643/f9/pm180608.pdf, p. 8.

19 Czech citizens are now less accepting of foreign nationals than before. STEM 25.04.2016, available at: <https://en.stem.cz/czech-citizens-are-now-less-accepting-of-foreign-nationals-than-before/> [cit. 27-1-2018].

20 Vztah a znalosti Čechů k muslimské minoritě - červen 2018. *Median*. available at: http://www.median.eu/cs/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Vztah_a_znalosti_Cechu_k_muslimske_minorite_web-1.pdf [cit. 27-1-2018], p. 17.

21 See, for example, the Google Trends results for keywords, such as “migrant”, “refugee”, “Refugee Crisis” etc, which well document the significant temporary growth of search frequency of these keywords. *Google Trends*, available at: <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2010-01-01%202018-07-08&geo=CZ&q=migrant,uprchl%C3%ADk> [cit. 27-1-2018].

22 Proportion of people who believe that tensions are high between Czechs and foreigners has risen substantially STEM 19.04.2016, available at: <https://en.stem.cz/proportion-of-people-who-believe-that-tensions-are-high-between-czechs-and-foreigners-has-risen-substantially/> [cit. 27-1-2018].

shopping,²⁴ a group of artists from Benin visiting the town of Uherské Hradiště for an art festival,²⁵ a group of Slovak hop harvesters²⁶ and even one case of a chimney sweeper considered to be an “armed refugee”.²⁷ The widespread panic led to several cases of verbal insults against women wearing headscarfs, including at least one case of a cancer patient, who used scarf to hide her bare head, after chemotherapy caused her to lose all hair.²⁸ The panic and false reports have led the police to issue a statement explaining that there are more than 450 thousand foreigners, residing in the country legally; that it is not possible to recognize an illegal immigrant by just seeing the person’s skin color and that false report leads to unnecessary harassment of ordinary visitors, while creating an undue load on the police force in the same time.²⁹

The ensuing panic created a fertile environment for various hoaxes, to which even the political and cultural elites of the Czech society have contributed. Instead of providing leadership and expert analyses, the elite of the Czech nation often proposes hoaxes and conspiracy theories. Numerous political elites contributed to the conspiracy theories, such as the Senate vice-chairman Přemysl Sobotka (ODS), who speculated about “suspicious coincidence” between the warning of the World Health Organization against the health risks of red meat and the 2015 Refugee wave – as if the WHO was preparing ground for the Muslim ban on pork.³⁰ The Czech President Miloš Zeman shared his views that the refugees are being organized by the Muslim Brotherhood.³¹ The famous singer and pop-star Karel Gott, who was previously known for his conspiracist worldviews, weighed in, claiming that the Refugee Crisis was created artificially by Illuminati in order to weaken the white Europe.³² In reaction to a case of food-poisoning from a local fast-food in Hradec Králové in June 2018, the Communist MP Zdeněk Ondráček, who presides the Parliamentary Committee for the Control of the General Inspectorate of Security Forces, came with a conspiracy theory that the meat used for the Kebab in this case was intentionally poisoned.³³ According to the Trade Register, the owner of the Kebab store in question (“Bistro Maxim”) is not an Arab, but rather Russian or Ukrainian by origin, judging from his name.³⁴ In her viral Facebook post from 26 May 2016, the later SPD MP Jana Levová wrote that she allegedly witnessed an incursion of about 30 people, whom she called refugees,

- 23 Uprchlíci si tu stavějí bunkr, volal policii. Šlo o dělníky. Aktuálně.cz 24.7.2015, available at: <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/regiony/pardubicky/chtel-nahlasit-imigranty-ale-spletl-si-je-s-lesniky/r~2982343031f011e5b4780025900fea04/>
- 24 Sedí tu uprchlíci, volali lidé na policii. Cizinci přitom jen nakupovali. iDnes.cz 7.8.2015, available at: https://praha.idnes.cz/lide-zavolali-policity-na-udajne-uprchliky-fme-/praha-zpravy.aspx?c=A150807_090435_praha-zpravy_nub
- 25 Policie zadržela umělce z Beninu, lidé je považovali za imigranty. iDnes.cz 1.7.2015, available at: https://zlin.idnes.cz/imigranti-folklorni-festival-straznice-benin-turiste-pp8-/zlin-zpravy.aspx?c=A150701_073806_zlin-zpravy_aba [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 26 Lidé panikaří, uprchlíky vidí všude. Novinky.cz 16.9.2015, available at: <https://www.novinky.cz/krimi/380724-lide-panikari-uprchliky-vidi-vsude.html> [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 27 Policie hledala v Domažlicích samopalem ozbrojeného uprchlíka. Byl to kominík. Lidovky.cz 14.9.2018, available: https://www.lidovky.cz/videla-jsem-ozbrojeneho-uprchlika-hlasila-tisnove-lince-policie-byl-to-kominik-gcm-/zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A150914_163202_In_domov_ELE [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 28 Panika z obyčejných šátků. Lidé už nadávají i Češkám. Novinky.cz 21.10.2015, available at: <https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/384101-panika-z-obycejnych-satku-lide-uz-nadavaji-i-ceskam.html>
- 29 Kominík, fotbalisté či brigádníci. Lidé vidí uprchlíky i tam, kde nejsou. Novinky.cz 15.9.2015, available at: https://zpravy.idnes.cz/oznameni-o-udajnych-uprchlicich-daj-/domaci.aspx?c=A150915_122718_domaci_pku
- 30 Přemysl Sobotka’s official Facebook page, 27.10.2015. Posts from 09:19 and 14:106.
- 31 Zeman: Uprchlíky řídí muslimské bratrstvo. IHNED.cz 05.01.2016, available at: <https://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-65054100-zeman-uprchliky-ridi-muslimske-bratrstvo> [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 32 Karel Gott: rozhovor o migrantech, iluminátech i posmrtném životě. Týden.cz 30.04.2016, https://www.tyden.cz/rubriky/domaci/karel-gott-rozhovor-o-migrantech-iluminacich-i-posmrtnem-zivote_378233.html [cit. 27-1-2018].

from a bus near the town of Rokycany. The police later announced that all the suspicious persons in question were in fact Czech passengers, who decided to walk on foot to their nearby homes, after their commuter bus had to stop due to a defect.³⁵

The ‘Refugee Crisis without refugees’ may even lead to a phenomenon of “terrorism envy” – as if the anti-immigration movements secretly desired a terrorist attack to take place on the Czech territory and if there was not any, their more radical supporters decided at least to imitate one. There has been no Islamist terrorist attack in the modern history of the Czech Republic, yet there have been at least two cases of false-flag terrorist attacks perpetrated by a far-right anti-Muslim activist³⁶ as well as happenings during which a “takeover of Old Town square in Prague by Islamic state” was simulated, causing dangerous wave of panic among tourists, who did not understand the nature of the event.³⁷

The excessive attention paid to the Muslim migration, however, leads to situation, in which the most radical anti-immigration parties actually miss their true targets. There are, for example, more Russian immigrants with Christian-Orthodox background than Muslims in the Czech Republic (more than 35 thousands at the end of 2016). Russia has also the largest ratio of Muslim population among European countries (almost 20 %). Yet, most of the anti-immigration parties and movements construct their worldview based on pro-Kremlin sources and voice their strong support of the Vladimir Putin’s establishment as if it was an ally against “islamization”.³⁸ The anti-Muslim rhetoric also focuses mainly on Arabs and Afghanis, while significant portion of the Muslim immigrants to the Czech Republic actually comes from the post-Soviet region.

Migration and integration in the election programs of the Czech Parliamentary political parties

An overview of the election programs for the 2017 Parliamentary elections shows that all of the parties included the topic of migration into their core agenda, even if they were not doing so before the 2015 Refugee Crisis. All of them felt it necessary to provide their answers to the looming humanitarian situation, but as the following overview shows, few have attempted to provide a more complex policy or outline their basic definitions of integration or conditions under which migration could be desirable (See Table 1).

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- 33 Poslanec Ondráček naznačil, že kebab někdo otrávil. ‚Sorry, že věřím médiím,‘ reagoval na svůj omyl. *iRozhlas.cz* 6.6.2018, available at: https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/zdenek-ondracekkebabhradec-kraloveotravababcenko_1806061708_ogo [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 34 Trade Register entry on Maxim Production, s.r.o. (IČO 02403706), available at: <https://rejstrik.penize.cz/02403706-maxim-production-s-r-o-v-likvidaci>
- 35 Radim Fiala: Jako poslanci SPD budeme žádat po vládě, aby nám objasnila, co je na tom pravdy a budeme vás informovat o tom, co se zde skutečně děje! *Svoboda a přímá demokracie* 26.5.2016, available at: <https://www.spd.cz/novinky/radim-fiala-jako-poslanci-spd-budeme-zadat-po-vlade-aby-nam-objasnila-co-je-na-tom-pravdy-a-budeme-vas-informovat-o-tom-co-se-zde-skutecne-deje> [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 36 Teror po česku: muž podle policie nechal srazit vlaky se stromy, aby se Češi báli muslimů. Je ve vazbě. *Lidovky.cz* 28.února 2018, available at: https://www.lidovky.cz/teror-po-cesku-muz-nechal-srazit-vlaky-se-stromy-aby-se-cesi-bali-muslimu-je-ve-vazbe-gmw-/zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A180227_123703_in_domov_jho [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 37 Hra konvičkovců na IS zažehla v Praze paniku, policie akci stopla. *Idnes.cz* 21.8.2016, available at: https://zpravy.idnes.cz/staromestske-namesti-konvicka-islamsky-stat-divadlo-p0y-/krimi.aspx?c=A160821_160228_krimi_bse [cit. 27-1-2018].
- 38 Zelenka, J.; Málek, T.; Šulek, M.; Korčíš, Š: “Češi v zajetí sociálních bublin”, *Lidovky.cz* 30 November 2016, available at: <http://www.lidovky.cz/bubliny.aspx>. See also: Tarant, Zbynek: “From Donetsk to Tel-Aviv: Czech Antisemitic Movements Respond to the Russian-Ukrainian war” In: Rosenfeld, Alvin H.: *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism The Dynamics of Delegitimization*. Indiana University Press 2019 (in print).

Table 1 – Migration and integration in the 2017 election programs of the Parliamentary political parties.

Party Title	Election gain total	Election gain – percentage	Migration – attitude	Integration – is it defined?
ANO 2011	1500113	29,64	Negative only	Not defined
Občanská demokratická strana	572948	11,32	Negative only	Not defined
Česká pirátská strana	546393	10,79	Negative & Positive	Defined
Svob.a př.dem.-T.Okamura (SPD)	538574	10,64	Negative only	Not defined
Komunistická str.Čech a Moravy	393100	7,76	Negative & Neutral	Defined
Česká str.sociálně demokrat.	368347	7,27	Negative only	Not defined
Křesť.demokr.unie-Čs.str.lid.	293643	5,8	Negative & Positive	Not defined
TOP 09	268811	5,31	Negative & Positive	Not defined
STAROSTOVÉ A NEZÁVISLÍ	262157	5,18	Negative & Positive	Not defined

Source: Political programs of the respective parties. Analysis mine

ANO 2011

The current leading political party in the Czech Republic is the *Action of Unsatisfied Citizens* (Akce nespokojených občanů, ANO 2011), which received about 30 percent in the last parliamentary elections. The party can be defined as a centrist “catch-’em-all party” with populist tendencies. In an introduction of the ANO’s program for the 2017 elections, Andrej Babiš outlined the four program pillars, out of which, “Security”, was named as no. 1.: “*In the light of the continuing migration crisis and terrorist attacks in Europe is security of citizens the prime concern. Protection of national identity is our priority.*”³⁹ Wording of the introduction was much stronger than the formulations from the actual program, which calls for better security coordination within the EU and NATO. Integration is not mentioned anywhere in connection to migration. Focus is centered around protection of external borders of the EU, where “*integration of defensive capabilities*” is mentioned as one of the priorities. Other than that, the term “integration” appears in different contexts, such as “European integration”. Migration itself is mostly mentioned in negative contexts – rejection of refugee distribution quotas, illegal migration, human trafficking etc. Reading of the program could also create a false notion that the most significant source of migration to the Czech Republic are African and Middle-Eastern countries as Vietnam is never mentioned in the program and Ukraine is mentioned only once – in connection to the EU Eastern Partnership. In short, the political program of the leading Czech political party, at the time defines migration only in terms threat and lack any strategies or proposals for integration and naturalization of foreigners, or improvement of the relevant infrastructure.

Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS)

The second strongest party, by a large margin of almost 20 percent behind ANO, was the Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS). It is a traditional right-wing party with certain conservative and eurosceptic attitudes, established in the early 1990s. The party’s program

39 Ted’ nebo nikdy. Ten jediný program, který potřebujete. ANO 2011, available at:

<https://www.anobudelip.cz/cs/volby/program/>

does not contain any specific section dedicated to migration and the issue is split in between the “Foreign affairs and European Policy” and “Internal and External Security”. In the “Foreign affairs...” section, the program calls for: “*Responsible and consistent immigration policy: it is important to ease the conditions to those, who could become a benefit [to the society], but to restrict those, who have no respect to our laws, values and customs and seek only to abuse our social welfare system.*”⁴⁰ The section on “Internal and External Security” contains one measure related to migration and that is: “*Rejection of the refugee quotas proposed by the EU*”.⁴¹ The party has no program for integration of foreigners and, just like ANO, uses the term “integration” mostly in the context of “European integration”. The websites of the party dedicate several dozens of articles to the issue of Islam, calling for a “more self-confident approach to the Muslim world”, including increased state control over the Muslim communities, but also rejecting populist proposals, such as issuing a ban on Islamic religion as such.⁴²

Pirate Party (Pirátská strana)

The Pirate Party (Pirátská strana) is usually considered to be a representative of the so-called New Left with the “Pirate” originally referring to “software piracy” as an expression of its “copyleft” ethos as opposed to copyright. Its contemporary program is focused on the issues of modern technologies, privacy, transparency, environmentalism and pacifism. It does not contain a specific section on migration. The party’s official statements on migration and integration can be found in supplementary documents, such as the “Position of the Pirate Party vis-à-vis the Refugee Wave”, published in late 2015.⁴³ The document contains a detailed information on the composition of the migrant population in Czechia at the time, using the data from Ministry of Interior and other sources. Ukrainians are properly listed as the largest migrant group in Czechia and the issue of migration is not limited to Middle-East and Africa only. When dealing with the Middle-East, the amounts of refugees, residing in Middle-Eastern states are mentioned. The party rejects the very idea of imposed “refugee quotas”, but, in the same time, calls for voluntary solidarity with other European countries dealing with the refugee wave. Accepting the 1500 refugees as discussed in the context of the quotas is suggested, together with “*transparent evaluation of how many refugees can Czechia afford to accept.*”⁴⁴

As one of the few parties, the Pirate Party provides a definition of how it sees “integration”: “*Czechia should integrate those refugees, who have succeeded with their asylum application. i.e.: Teaching them language, including them into schools and providing them assistance in search for an employment. The new incomers should be made familiar with the basic civic rights, freedoms and social norms in the Czech Republic. Equality of all people, regardless of religion or gender, is to be demanded. We insist on maintaining of the secular character of the Czech state and reject any attempts to establish parallel legal systems.*”⁴⁵ This definition reflects a wider spectrum of domains that constitute integration, including language, education, employment and acceptance of cultural values. On the other hand, it limits the issue of integration to refugees only, excluding other cases of legal immigration. It also sees integration as a one-way process – the immigrant is expected to fully adjust to the host society. In a second paragraph on integration, the party calls for “*individual*

40 Zahraničí věci a Evropská politika. *Občanská demokratická strana*, available at: <https://www.ods.cz/volby2017/program/zahranicni-politika> [cit. 27-1-2018].

41 Vnější a vnitřní bezpečnost. *Občanská demokratická strana*, available at: <https://www.ods.cz/volby2017/program/bezpecnost> [cit. 27-1-2018].

42 For example: Alexandra Udženija: Zákaz islámu: proč a jak? *Občanská demokratická strana*, available at: <https://www.ods.cz/clanek/14668-zakaz-islam-u-proc-a-jak> [cit. 27-1-2018].

43 Postoj České pirátské strany k vlně uprchlíků. *Česká pirátská strana*, 22.10.2015, available at: <https://www.pirati.cz/tiskove-zpravy/stanovisko-k-uprchlikum.html> [cit. 27-1-2018].

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

*integration plans according to the Scandinavian model” and stresses out that “benefits for the new immigrants should not exceed those for citizens in social need”.*⁴⁶

Freedom and Direct Democracy (Svoboda a přímé demokracie, SPD)

Freedom and Direct Democracy (Svoboda a přímá demokracie, SPD) is widely considered as right-wing populist party with strong focus on nativism, anti-immigration rhetoric and the concept of direct democracy. Migration is mentioned in the party’s program only in the context of “illegal immigration”, which is further mentioned only in the context of Muslim immigration. Without mentioning any sources, the program warns against “*organized islamization of Europe*”. The same Program proclaims: “*We consistently reject the multicultural ideology, which is the tool of islamization. We say it openly that it is not our duty to open the door to anyone, who says, he wants to settle in our midst, but that the residency in our homeland is to be regarded as privilege for the foreigners.*”⁴⁷ There are no legal or desirable migrants in the SPD’s political program, nor there is any definition of “integration” anywhere on the SPD’s websites. It can be argued that discussions about such policies is mostly seen as redundant by the party – once immigration is rejected as such, there is no need for further theoretical discussions on integration, because the total ban on immigration solves it all. The Party’s program officially denounces “hatred of race, culture or religion”, yet the party also defines Islam as an “ideology”, not as a religion.⁴⁸

Representatives of the SPD have published insults against Czech citizens of foreign origin only for their skin color – voicing an opinion that Czech cannot have a dark skin. The most notorious cases were Vítězslav Novák⁴⁹ and Věra Maříková.⁵⁰ Antisemitism may be present at the personal level. While the party is not officially antisemitic, some of its members are influenced by conspiracy theories, such as “Chemtrails”, “Illuminati”, “New World Order” or “vaccination conspiracy”.⁵¹ According to multiple testimonies, on November 10, 2017, SPD member, MP Jaroslav Staník, voiced a desire to „*gas the gays, Jews and Romanies*“. The party never apologized for these remarks, which the MP himself has denied.⁵² In 2015, Tomio Okamura gave several speeches at the rallies of the small

46 Ibid.

47 Politický program SPD. *Svoboda a přímá demokracie*, available at: <https://www.spd.cz/program> [cit. 27-1-2018].

48 Tomio Okamura: Sněmovna odmítla návrh SPD na oficiální stanovisko k legálnosti islámské ideologie v ČR. *Svoboda a přímá demokracie*, available at: <https://www.spd.cz/novinky/tomio-okamura-snemovna-odmitla-navrh-spd-na-oficialni-stanovisko-k-legalnosti-islamske-ideologie-v-cr> [cit. 27-1-2018].

49 Lidl čelí kritice rasistů kvůli černochovi v letáku. Ustupovat nehodlá. *iDnes.cz* 4.1.2017, available at: https://zpravy.idnes.cz/lidl-reklamni-letak-cernoch-rasiste-facebook-f3g-/domaci.aspx?c=A170104_102151_domaci_jw [cit. 27-1-2018].

50 Černošská holčička na reklamu na trdelník nepatří, tvrdila politička SPD. *iDnes.cz* 8.6.2018, available at: https://vary.idnes.cz/reklama-trdelnik-cernoska-politicka-vera-marikova-spd-kritika-rasismus-1ak-/vary-zpravy.aspx?c=A180608_145839_vary-zpravy_ba [cit. 27-1-2018].

51 Zelenka, Jakub: Podívali jsme se pod ruce Okamurových poslanců. Jejich stopa je dlouhá. A Rusko je opravdový Přítel. *Aktualne.cz* 30.10.2017, available at: <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/chteji-z-eu-i-nato-a-fandi-putinovi-seznamte-se-s-okamurovym/r~e979ebb8bb2111e7811f002590604f2e/> [cit. 27-1-2018].

52 'Střílet po narození.' Tajemník SPD urážel ve sněmovně gaye, Židy a Romy, tvrdí Marksová a Černoch. *iRozhlas*. 10 November 2017, available at: https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/strilet-po-narozeni-tajemnik-spd-urazel-ve-snemovne-gaye-zidy-a-romy-tvrdi_1711101320_kro [cit. 27-1-2018].

far-right antisemitic political party National Democracy,⁵³ although the two organizations have later parted ways.

Communist party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, KSČM)

The Communist party of Bohemia and Moravia is as a post-Stalinist left-wing party and a direct successor to the pre-1989 Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Its today's political program is a combination of socialist concepts with certain nationalist and nativist motives together with geopolitical views that bring it close to the far-right. The first section of the Party's "Concise Election Manifesto" focuses on Security. Refugee Crisis is mentioned at the very first point: "*Let us solve the causes of the migration crisis, we reject imposed refugee distribution quotas.*"⁵⁴ When discussing the solution to the "causes of the migration crisis", the Communists prefer to put blame on others, when calling for: "*stabilization of the situation in the source region and increased responsibility of the states, who are either co-responsible or directly responsible for the destabilization of the local regimes*".⁵⁵ In the discourse of the Communists "states responsible for instability" usually refer to the NATO, the United States and/or Israel.⁵⁶

The discourse of the Communist party on migration reveals the duality between the conservative, Stalinist wing and the more progressive, new-left wing within the party. While the party rejects immigration quotas and the public rhetoric of the party's conservatives contains elements of nativism, it has also formulated its policies for immigration and integration of foreigners in a document from early 2016. The document was written by Jiří Dolejš, who is considered to be a representative of the more progressive wing within the party. The document rejects racism and xenophobia and calls for "*solidarity with the victims of imperialist aggressions*". Integration is defined there as a: "*dynamic process of creation of appropriate systemic conditions of the host society for the economical, social, cultural and political participation of the migrants.*" This definition is interesting due to its focus on the host society. The document further criticizes the "*obstructive administrative barriers to legal life in the Czech Republic that are intended to complicate settlement of migrants.*" and stresses out that "*integration policy has to focus on all migrants, regardless of their residence status.*" Additional policy recommendations include "*equal access to labor market*" for asylum seekers, "*enforceability of law in cases related to migration*" and calls for "*increased participation of the migrants on the public life*".⁵⁷ In September 2017, one month before the Parliamentary elections, the party published its detailed analysis of the "migration crisis" in Europe, focusing mainly on the Middle-Eastern and African countries of origin and European responses to the situation, while very briefly mentioning the situation of expat workers in the Czech Republic and the issue of job agencies, where the Communist "solidarity with the working class" resonates. Most of the practical policy suggestions have remained unchanged, ranging from the staff increase at the governmental institutions dealing with migration, call for speeding up the asylum process and

53 For example, at the rally "Tábor lidu" that took place at the Wenceslas square in Prague on September 8, 2015. (Personal observation).

54 Volební program KSČM pro volby do Poslanecké sněmovny Parlamentu České republiky 2017. KSČM. Available at: https://www.kscm.cz/sites/default/files/soubory/Program%20KSČM/volebni_program_kscm_pro_volby_do_ps_pcr_2017.pdf [cit. 27-1-2018].

55 Ibid.

56 V. Filip: Vraždní a bezmoci uprchlíků nelze přehlížet. Je potřeba radikálně zakročit! KSČM 9.7.2015, available: <https://www.kscm.cz/cs/aktualne/medialni-vystupy/komentare/v-filip-vrazdeni-bezmoci-uprchliku-nelze-prihlizet-je-potreba> [cit. 27-1-2018].

57 Přístupy KSČM k problematice a příčinám migrace. KSČM 26.1.2016, available at: <https://www.kscm.cz/cs/aktualne/stanoviska/pristupy-kscm-k-problematice-pricinam-migrace> [cit. 27-1-2018].

increasing its transparency, up to the rather ideological call for accountability of the responsible powers (meaning the US and NATO in this context) for the “migration crisis”.⁵⁸

In contrast to these thought-out analyses and policy suggestions, the “hard-liners” of the Communist party tend to share a very similar conspiracist worldview with the far-right. Social media research on the Facebook activities of the party’s supporters revealed that the Communist supporters share the same “social bubble” with the Direct Democracy Party and even with the neo-Nazi Workers’ Party (Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti, DSSS) by reading, sharing and commenting the same content as the two far-right parties, originating mostly from the pro-Kremlin conspiracist websites (“fake-news”).⁵⁹ Shared geopolitical views may on some occasions even bring the Communist party to the same stage with the neo-Nazis, such as in the case of European Solidarity Front for Syria – a pro-Assad initiative, established by a neo-Nazi, Patrik Vondrák, I

n which the Communist party representatives have participated.⁶⁰ Unintended side-effect of this Communist affinity to the far-right was the fact that, according to a poll from November 2017, the Communist party lost almost 120 thousands of its voters to Tomio Okamura’s Freedom and Direct Democracy.⁶¹

Česká strana sociálně demokratická (Czech Social Democratic Party, ČSSD).

The history of the Czech Social Democrats can be traced back to the Czech workers’ movements of the late 19th century and to the “Czechoslovak Socialist Democratic Labour Party” of the 1920s. The Social Democratic party, which has been one of the leading political forces of the post-1989 Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic is a traditional center-left party, today torn between progressive, social democratic wing, represented by Přemysl Sobotka or Lubomír Zaorálek and a rather conservative, nativist wing, represented by Jan Hamáček and Jaroslav Foldyna.

The political program of the ČSSD is mostly in line with the Czech mainstream. It discusses migration only in negative terms and contexts (“illegal immigration”, “non-regulated work migration from non-EU countries” etc.). Integration is not defined in the program, nor are there any policy suggestions directly within the program. The term “integration” itself appears in other unrelated contexts, such as “European integration” or “Integrated transportation systems”.⁶² The same can be seen at the party’s websites, where “integration” again mostly refers to “European integration”. Other documents, blog posts and press releases of the party reveal that the Czech Social Democratic solutions to the Refugee Crisis focus on protection of external borders of the EU, full national sovereignty over the asylum process and humanitarian relief in the source countries.

Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party (Křesťansko-demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová, KDU-ČSL)

58 Aktualizace přístupu KSČM k problematice a příčinám migrace. KSČM 18.9.2017, available at: <https://www.kscm.cz/cs/aktualne/medialni-vystupy/temata/aktualizace-pristupu-kscm-k-problematice-pricinam-migrace> [cit. 27-1-2018].

59 Zelenka, J.; Málek, T.; Šulek, M.; Korčíš, Š: “Češi v zajetí sociálních bublin”, *Lidovky.cz* 30 November 2016, available at: <http://www.lidovky.cz/bublinary.aspx> [cit. 27-1-2018].

60 Personal observation, ESFS Seminar “Contemporary Situation in Syria”, Prague, May 27, 2013 [cit. 27-1-2018].

61 Beníšková, Alena, [Škop, Michal]: Babiš a Okamura vysáli levici, od TOP 09 se přebíhalo k ODS, míní analytik. *iDnes.cz* 23.10.2017, available at: https://zpravy.idnes.cz/presuny-hlasu-volici-strany-volby-2017-ekologicka-inference-pac-/domaci.aspx?c=A171023_153934_domaci_ale [cit. 27-1-2018].

62 Dobrá země pro život – Program ČSSD pro volby 2017. *Česká strana sociálně demokratická*, available at: <https://www.cssd.cz/data/files/program-210x210-seda.pdf> [cit. 27-1-2018], pp. 11 and 29.

The roots of the Christian democratic parties reach far back to the First Czechoslovak Republic of the 1920s. The contemporary political party KDU-ČSL was born out of a bloc of multiple smaller parties with similar Christian democratic program that have joined together into a single political movement after 1989. The election program of the party contains a brief section on solutions to the “migration wave”. This included “elimination of illegal migration”, “increase of funding for relief and development programs”, “increased cooperation of the EU countries on protection of external borders”, “reform of common asylum policies” and “stabilization of countries neighboring Europe, aimed to improve return policies.”⁶³ The same political line can be seen in other party’s documents, including the entire specialized section on migration on its websites. A special topic of the Christian democrats’ rhetoric on migration is the polemic with “migration as a solution to demographic crisis”. The party argues that immigration cannot solve the low birth rate of the Czech population as it would require millions of new immigrants to actually reverse the negative demographic trends.⁶⁴ This line of argumentation is important from the Christian democratic point of view, where support of families and increase of birthrate is seen as a priority. Most of the documents on migration, published by the Christian democrats respond specifically to the Refugee Crisis, although Ukrainians are also briefly mentioned as a group that could become more significant, should the Russian-Ukrainian war escalate.

TOP 09

TOP 09 is a right-wing party established in 2009 by Miroslav Kalousek and Karel Schwarzenberg. The party’s ideology combines both liberal and conservative elements with a right-wing economical concepts of austerity, however with a much less eurosceptic agenda than the Civic Democrats. There is an entire sub-section dedicated to the “migration crisis” in the party’s program for the 2017 Parliamentary elections, put into the chapter 3.1. “We Are the European Union”. Migration policies are formulated there on the background of the Refugee Crisis and as responses to it. These policies include “using the common power of the EU” for “establishment of security zones” in the source countries. Refugees and economical migrants are distinguished in the program and this difference is associated with call for humanitarian relief *in situ* for the first group and national sovereignty over the selection process for the latter. Titled: “Controllable Migration”, the sub-section calls for preservation of the Schengen system and its strengthening by means of increased exchange of information among the member states and protection of external borders in order to stop “illegal economic migration”.⁶⁵ Humanitarian dimension of refugee aid is stressed out: “*The Czech Republic and other European countries must provide international protection to persons from the most persecuted and most vulnerable groups at the individual basis (according to the Geneva conventions). We will fulfill our humanitarian obligations.*”

Legal work migration is reflected in the program and seen as a “*necessity for an open economy, such as ours, but it has to be well planned in order to avoid immigration and integration policy mistakes of the Western allies*”.⁶⁶ While “integration” as such is not defined or discussed in the program, there are some hints, such as the reference to the ability of the European society to “*manage the new challenges, including migration, without making concessions from its values.*”⁶⁷

63 Volební program 2017-2021, KDU-ČSL, available at: <https://kdu.cz/o-nas/dokumenty/volebni-programy> [cit. 27-1-2018].

64 Svoboda, Pavel: Migrace – Zpravodaj Pavla Svobody. KDU-ČSL. Available at: https://kdu.cz/getattachment/Temata/Uprchlíci/Dokumenty/MIGRACE_zpravodaj-Pavla-Svobody.pdf.aspx [cit. 27-1-2018].

65 Volební program. TOP 09, available at: https://www.top09.cz/files/soubory/volebni-program-2017-doposlanecke-snemovny_1717.pdf [cit. 27-1-2018], p. 18.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

Mayors and Independents (Starostové a nezávislí)

The political party Mayors and Independents was established in 2009, originally for the purpose of regional elections in the Zlín region, but later expanded for national coverage with aspirations to enter the high politics. It unites contemporary or former representatives of regional and local politics. It can be defined as pro-European centrist party with strong focus on regional affairs in their agenda. In the elections of 2010 and 2013, the Party created a joint list with TOP 09. In the November 2017 elections, the party compiled a candidate list of its own and crossed the five-percent minimal threshold for entering the Parliament by only 0.18 %. Current polls show that the party has fallen below the minimal threshold.

The party's program sees migration: *“as a consequence, not a cause of the international instability”*. Priority is given to *“conflict prevention”* and *“effective targeting of development aid”*. In the case of conflict escalation, *“crisis management”*, including *“peace missions”* and *“post-conflict reconstruction”* is preferred. In other words, the main focus is given to *in situ* relief and assistance. *“Protection of external borders of the EU”* is stressed out as a standalone point.⁶⁸ The party seems to be preferring a calm and moderate language and has issued several condemnations of what it sees as *“fearmongering”*. While it does not formulate its own definition of integration in the program, it was discussing it long before 2015, when its vice-chairman asked whether *“integration into the host culture”* also means taking over the negative traits of the host culture (such as the rate of divorce) and how are the migrants expected to fulfill the requirement of work integration and stable income if the only work available for migrants are the short-term contracts and low-qualified manual labour.⁶⁹

Far-right extremism and extremist crime-rate

The Refugee Crisis has had a very little impact on the election results of the *“traditional”* far-right political parties (see Table 2). The Czech far-right is paralyzed by internal conflicts and grievances, in which any unification attempts usually leads to even more conflicts due to excessive ambitions and incompatible personalities of the far-right leaders. While this scene could be expected to flourish in such a political atmosphere, the parties and movements seem to be unable to escape its political isolation and are forced to observe the mainstream taking over their topics, which in effect even deepens their isolation as without these core topics, the far-right has little more to offer.

Table 2 – Election results for the Czech right-wing populist and far-right parties during the past five years

Type of elections	Party title	Results – percentage, where counted (total amount of valid votes)
2018 Municipal elections	Workers' Party of Social Justice	(34 361)*
	National Democracy	(8 257)*
2017 Parliamentary elections	Freedom and Direct Democracy	10.64 % (538 574)
	The Reasonables (incl. National Democracy)	0.72 % (36 528)

68 Program STAN 2017. *Starostové a nezávislí*, available at: <https://www.starostove-nezavisli.cz/program> [cit. 27-1-2018], p. 73.

69 Polčák, Stanislav. Je správné ztížit získání českého občanství? *Starostové a nezávislí*, 15.11.2012, available at: <https://www.starostove-nezavisli.cz/info-a-media/komentare/je-spravne-ztizit-ziskani-ceskeho-obcanstvi> [cit. 27-1-2018]

	Workers' Party of Social Justice	0.2 % (10 402)
	Republican Party of Miroslav Sládek	0.19 % (9 857)
	Order of the Nation	0.17 % (8 735)
	Bloc against Islamization – Home Defense	0.10 % (5 077)
2016 Regional Councils elections	Freedom and Democracy & Citizens' Freedom Party	5.02 % (144 058)**
	Dawn of Direct Democracy with Bloc against Islamization	0.84 % (21 378)**
	Workers' Party of Social Justice	0.76 % (22 732)**
	Republican Party of Bohemia and Moravia	0.18 % (4 747)
	National Democracy	0.15 % (3 934)
	Republican Party of Miroslav Sládek	0.04 % (1 225)
2014 European Parliament elections	Dawn of Direct Democracy	3.12 % (47 306)
	Workers' Party of Social Justice	0.52 % (7 902)
	National Democracy	0.46% (7 109)
	Czech National Socialist Party	0.03 % (502)
2014 Municipal elections	Workers' Party of Social Justice	(63 794)*
2013 Parliamentary elections	Dawn of Direct Democracy	6.88 % (342 339)
	Workers' Party of Social Justice	0.86 % (42 906)

Source: Czech Statistical Office (www.volby.cz)

* No national percentage is given for Municipal Elections

** Results for the entire coalition

In its Report on Extremism from 2015, the Ministry of Interior concluded, among others that the anti-Romany rhetoric and rallies of the late 2000s and early 2010s were to some extent replaced by anti-immigration agenda since 2014: “There are no records of protest events in the so-called socially excluded neighborhoods or against national minorities. This topic was fully replaced by responses to the so-called Refugee Crisis.”⁷⁰ Judging from the reports of the Ministry of Interior, as well as from the author’s own monitoring, the extremist activity in the Czech Republic seems to be fluctuating with periodical increases and decreases, often influenced by internal dynamics of the scene, as well as by the time and resources available to the scene at the moment. About 270 events are organized by various extremist groups on annual basis (see Table 3), ranging from right-wing extremists up to left-wing extremists and other groups, such as environmentalists, religious fundamentalists etc.). By “event”, the reports usually consider either a gathering (rally, protest) or cultural event (typically concert).

Table 3 – Recorded activities of extremist groups (concerts, rallies and others)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total events – left-wing	x	x	x	x	x	49	176	156	140	146	141	133	235*
Total events – right-wing	x	x	54	73	94	126	130	252	132	145	106	129	99*
Total events – other extremist groups	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	28	x	34	46	x

Source: Compilation of Annual reports on extremism from 2005 to 2016, Ministry of Interior

70 Zpráva o extremismu na území České republiky v roce 2015. Ministerstvo vnitra Odbor bezpečnostní politiky a prevence kriminality. Prague 2016, p. 8. available at: <http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/extremismus-vyrocní-zpravy-o-extremismu-a-strategie-boje-proti-extremismu.aspx> [cit. 27-1-2018].

(x – no data available, *preliminary reports)

There are multiple sources of information about the extremist crime rate that can be roughly divided into two sections: governmental (Police, Ministry of Interior, Secret Services) and non-governmental (NGOs, journalists, street activists, witness accounts, victim testimonies etc.). There are also different and often overlapping categories of crimes, such as “crimes with extremist background” or “hate-crimes”, which do overlap in some points, but are different in others. Not all hate-crimes are committed by extremists and not all crimes with extremist background can be labeled as hate-crimes (such as in the case of neo-Nazi Skinheads damaging public property etc.). Because of that, statistics from different institutions do not exactly match and have to be used in their combination to construct a more detailed image.

Crimes with extremist background

According to the Ministry of Interior, the extremist crime-rate constitutes a tiny fraction (0.07 – 0.1 %) of the general crime-rate in the Czech Republic. Recorded extremist crime-rate seems to have been paradoxically decreasing during the peak of the Refugee Crisis in 2015 and 2016 (see Table 4), according to the Ministry of Interior statistics, despite the worsening attitudes of the general society to foreigners, reported by the above-mentioned social surveys. There is no simple answer to this paradox. One possible explanation could be the decrease of activity on part of the “traditional” far-right, which is usually the main culprit behind the violent attacks, but other factors such as changing degree of reporting, could be involved as well. Hate-crimes constitute a marginal portion of the recorded crime-rate, usually below 0.1 %. Only minority of the recorded hate-crimes are violent. Most of them are verbal, such as “founding and supporting of a movement aimed at curbing the human rights (§ 403 of the Penal Code)” or “instigation of hatred against group of persons or to curbing of their rights (§ 345 of the Penal Code)”. The decreasing trend was reversed in 2017 according to the preliminary reports.⁷¹ Publication of official versions of the reports, most important of which is the Interior Ministry’s Annual Report on Extremism are delayed due to the objections of the right-wing populist parliamentary party SPD. The party threatened by a legal action in response to multiple occasions, in which the text allegedly mentions SPD in connection or comparison to extremist movements.⁷²

Table 4 – Extremist crime-rate in the Czech Republic and Pilsner region, 2005-2016 according to the Ministry of Interior

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Extremist crimes in the Czech Republic	253	248	196	217	265	252	238	173	211	201	175	143	153*	
Percentage of overall crime-rate (%)	0,1	0,07	0,05	0,06	0,08	0,08	0,08	0,06	0,06	0,07	0,07	0,07	x	
Cases solved	191	196	119	126	186	168	157	116	144	132	114	99	x	
Numbers of defendants	269	242	181	195	293	231	246	208	198	157	154	x	x	
Extremist crimes in the Pilsner region	17	9	14	8	11	29	5	4	11	7	7	9	x	
Hate crimes targeting specific groups (out of the extremist crimes at the	Anti-Romany	x	x	59	75	77	65	69	52	42	53	33	25	x
	Anti-Muslim	x	3	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	5	7	x	

71 Extremisté v ČR byli loni aktivnější, stalo se víc trestných činů. *Czech Press Agency* 18.5.2018, available at: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/extremiste-v-cr-byli-loni-aktivnejsi-stalo-se-vic-trestnych-cinu/1622755> [cit. 27-1-2018].

72 Vnitro čeká s vydáním zprávy o extremismu. SPD je občas radikálnější než extremisté, píše se v ní. *Lidovky.cz* 30.5.2018, available at: https://www.lidovky.cz/vnitro-ceka-s-vydanim-zpravy-o-extremismu-spd-je-obcas-radikalnejsi-nez-extremiste-ge4-/zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A180530_131250_In_domov_rsa [cit. 27-1-2018].

national level):	Anti-Arab	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	5	8	x
	Antisemitic	23	14	18	27	48	28	18	9	15	45	47	28	x

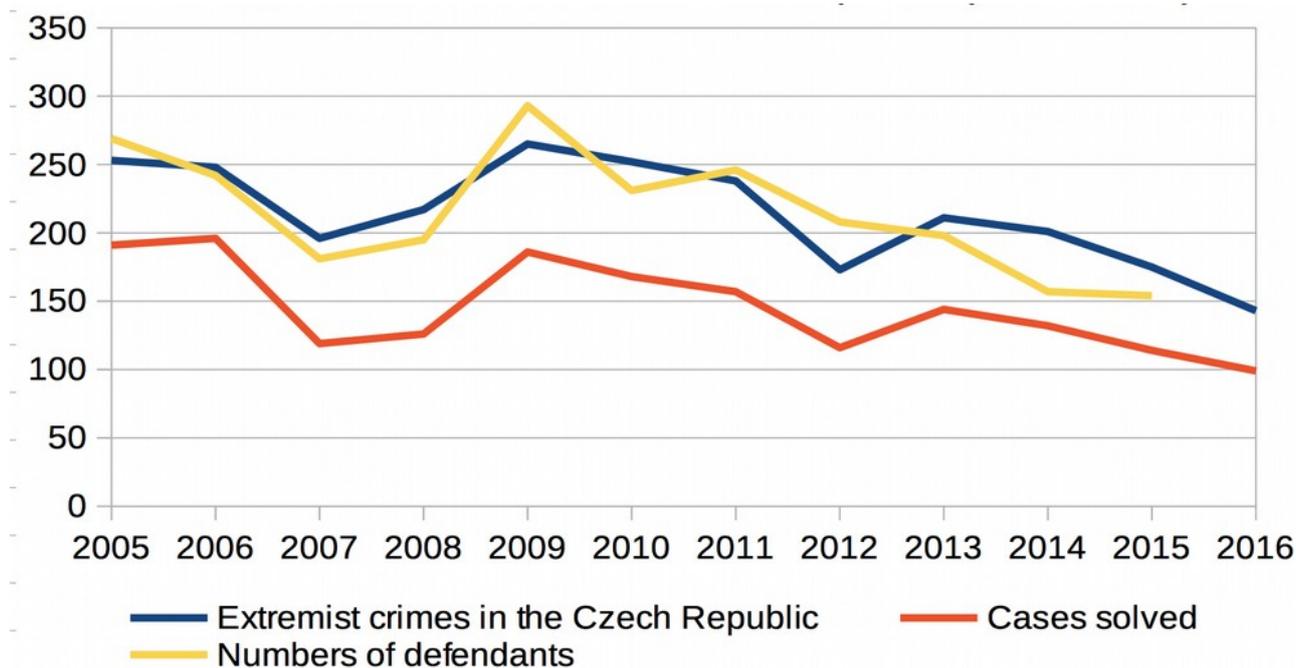
Source: Compilation of Annual reports on extremism from 2005 to 2016, Ministry of Interior

(x – no data available, *preliminary reports)

Extremism in the Pilsner region

During the 2000s the Pilsner region was usually seen as a territory that is the least burdened by extremist activity, while high burden was seen in North Bohemia (namely the districts of Varnsdorf, Most and Karlovy Vary), Silesia (namely the district of Karviná) and Brno (district Brno-City). This trend has changed in the last years, during which the Pilsner region has seen periodical increases and declines of extremist activity, some of which put the region above the national average.⁷³ There is currently an active branch of the neo-Nazi Workers' Party, as well as an active branch of the fascist National Democracy as well as several anti-Muslim and anti-Immigration groups, such as Bloc against Islam, Bloc against Islamization, National Militia etc. It is not uncommon to see these group organizing joint events, such as on the May 1, 2018 in Pilsen or April 2, 2017 in Rokycany.⁷⁴

Chart 3 – Extremist crime-rate in the Czech Republic (2005-2016) according to the Ministry of Interior.



Source: Compilation of Annual reports on extremism from 2005 to 2016, Ministry of Interior

Hate-crimes in the Czech Republic targeting specific groups of victims

According to the data obtained under the Free Access to Information Act from the Police Presidium, majority of the hate-crimes that were investigated and solved by the Police in the last eight years targeted Romanies, Jews and Asians, but there was also a substantial portion of hate-crimes, in which people belonging to majority were targeted (either as representatives of “White Race” or “Czechs”).

73 Mapy související s extremismem. Ministry of Interior, available at: <http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/mapy-souvisejici-s-extremismem.aspx> [cit. 27-1-2018].

74 Personal observation.

Most of the hate-crimes are of verbal character, where the damage caused consists of ‘moral damage’, but there are about a dozen of violent attacks each year, including rape or murder. The data from 5 do not exactly match the Ministry of Interior’s data on extremist crime-rate, possibly due to differences in methodology, definitions or time-frame, where reports on extremism are published immediately the next year, while the statistics of Police Presidium are being constantly updated according to the results of investigation and court decisions. They do, however, roughly match in the magnitude of tens with the Interior Ministry data. According to these, attacks on Muslims and Arabs have appeared since 2014 as a quite new phenomenon with only few precedents from the past. The years of ‘Refugee Crisis’ were also marked by increased attacks against Jews. Attacks on Romanies have decreased, although this could be a temporary phenomenon only.

Table 5 – Target groups of hate-crimes in the Czech Republic, 2010 – 2017, according to the Czech Police Presidium

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Roma	37	43	0	27	31	17	19	16
Jews (by nationality)	8	9	37	9	22	25	10	13
Other nationalities	17	18	17	23	24	17	7	10
“White race”	31	23	7	14	12	10	12	19
Czechs	9	8	9	13	4	3	6	7
Asians, Native Americans, Native Australians	13	5	1	6	4	2	5	0
“Black race”	2	3	2	1	3	0	4	0
Vietnamese	0	3	7	1	1	0	0	0
Jews (by religion)	2	0	1	0	2	3	2	1
Arabs	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	1
Muslims (by religion)	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2
Atheists	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Catholics	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Other religions	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Germans	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0
Poles	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0
Ukrainians	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Moravians and Silesians	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Slovaks	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Russians and Galicians	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Police Presidium 2017 (obtained under the Free Access to Information Act)

The non-governmental organization In Iusticia (IU), which specializes in providing of legal advice to the victims of hate-crimes has noted, based on its own monitoring,⁷⁵ that, despite the decrease of hate-crimes in general, the portions of hate-crimes motivated by anti-Muslim hostility in 2015 has increased as compared to the previous year of 2014 (see Table 6). Almost half of the hate-crime incidents recorded in 2015 by the IU can be considered as directly influenced by the Refugee Crisis. While most of the hate-crimes in Czech Republic targeted Romanies as the most endangered group, the numbers of anti-Muslim attacks in 2015 became almost comparable to the number of anti-Romany ones, according to the IU’s own monitoring. The NGO claims that total 30 out of the 141 hate-crimes recorded in 2015, (i.e.: almost one quarter) were evaluated as explicitly islamophobic. There were other hate-crimes within the remaining 111 ones, in which Arabs or Muslims were targeted, but not

75 See the In Iustitia’s quarterly reports on hate-crimes for more details and information about the methodology: <http://www.in-ius.cz/ke-stazeni/zprava-o-nasili-z-nenavisti/> [cit. 27-1-2018].

directly for their religious, islamic identity, but rather due to their refugee status, homeless status, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc. The IU has also noted that most of the violent cases hate-crimes have taken place in two cities, namely Teplice in North Bohemia and Brno in South Moravia, both of which have visible Muslim minorities.⁷⁶

The 30 islamophobic incidents recorded in 2015 by the IU can be further divided into 47 forms of attack (one incident can involve multiple forms of attack, just like it can involve multiple motivations). In comparison to other hate-crimes, there are certain characteristics typical for the islamophobic ones: women are more likely to become victims (possibly due to them wearing scarfs), there is a higher percentage of foreigners as victims (given the fact that most Muslims in Czechia are foreigners), the attacks are more likely to take place in larger cities and there is a slightly higher ratio of verbal forms of attack in comparison to other hate-crimes.

Table 6 – Comparison of hate-crimes with Muslim as victims according to the motivations of perpetrators in 2014 and 2015 (In Iustitia)

Year / Motivation	2014	2015
Political persuasion	1	18
Refugee/Migrant status	1	14
Arab (or Iraqi) nationality	0	6
Muslim religion	10	30

Source: Kalibová – Petruželka – Walach 2017⁷⁷

Judging from the later IU's statistics, there seems to have been a certain decline in the total amounts of hate-crimes during the 2017 and 2018 (see Table 7). In its quarterly reports, the IU notes that majority of the victims of hate-crimes are in fact Czech citizens, who are considered "different" due to their ethnic background, religious beliefs or political affiliations. Most incidents take place in Prague, usually in public spaces. Such public spaces in large cities, together with internet are seen as the most hazardous environments for hate-crimes. There are about half a dozen incidents recorded from the Pilsner region every year. In the last months of 2017 and early 2018, In Iustitia noted that the wave of attacks on Muslims seems to be decreasing, while attacks on Romanies are becoming the most frequent cases of hate-crimes again.⁷⁸

Table 7 – Hate-crimes recorded by In Iustitia in 2016 – 2018 in the Czech Republic and Pilsner region.

	04-06/2016	07-09/2016	09-12/2016	01-03/2017	04-06/2017	09-12/2017	01-03/2018
Total hate-crimes recorded	38	20	17	22	13	17	16
Pilsner region	1	1	2	2	0	2	2

Source: Summary of In Iustitia's quarterly reports on hate-crimes in the Czech Republic

76 Kalibová, Klára – Petruželka, Benjamin – Walach, Václav: Islamofobie a násilí z nenávisti v České republice. In: Ostřanský, Bronislav (ed.): *Islamofobie po česku* (Vyšehrad: Praha 2017), p. 249–267.

77 Kalibová – Petruželka – Walach 2017, p. 258.

78 See the In Iustitia's quarterly reports on hate-crimes for more details and information about the methodology: <http://www.in-ius.cz/ke-stazeni/zprava-o-nasili-z-nenavisti/> [cit. 27-1-2018].

Conclusions

The situation of ‘Refugee Crisis without refugees’ uncovered certain negative trends in the Czech society and contributed to the growth of populism and conspiracism in the mainstream discourse. While some of these trends can be only temporary, the years of Refugee Crisis have led to an increase of an already high level of hostility against the Muslim religion as well as certain nationalities and ethnic groups that are usually connected with Islam in the popular thought. For a period of time between 2015 and 2017, Arabs, Afghans and Muslims in general became viewed even worse than the Romanians. Reports from 2018 indicate that this temporary trend seems to be ending and Romanians are again replacing the Muslims as the most despised group.

The atmosphere of panic after 2015 led to situation, in which false sightings of refugees were reported and various hoaxes flourished. The intense debate about the Refugee Crisis often missed the point and concentrated on refugee groups, for which the Czech Republic is not a target country, while overlooking the actual sources of immigration. Fruitful discussion about the topic is further hindered by oversensitivity on the one hand and conspiracist worldview on the other. Conspiracy theories are often put in place of proper analyses, even by leading politicians, which hinders formulation of appropriate practical security measures that would be both effective and humane.

Most of the political parties that could be labeled as “traditional” or “mainstream” have given up on their ambitions to lead the nation by offering a comprehensive migration and integration policy. More than 75 percent of voters in the Czech Republic are represented by political parties, which have put migration as an important topic into their political program, but in the same time, do not attempt to formulate policies or requirements of integration. Despite the importance of “migration” as a political topic, only 2 out of 9 parliamentary parties (the Pirate party and the KSČM, both left-wing) have provided any definition or vision of “integration” in their programs. Integration is often not discussed, nor even mentioned in the context of migration. While most of the parties called for the right of every nation to decide its immigration policy, there does not seem to be an actual ambition to set concrete outlines for such a policy. Speeches about protection of national values fail to define what these values actually are and why are they important.

All of the parliamentary political parties reflected the issue of migration and Refugee Crisis in their programs and most had a section dedicated to “migration” on their websites. None of the Parliamentary parties supported anything that could be labeled as an “open-door policy”, despite various mutual accusations and hoaxes claiming the opposite. While the wording of the political responses to the Refugee Crisis was different – from prudent and politically correct voices up to populist emotional expressions – the measures suggested in the political programs are mostly various degrees of the similar policy, which is strict refusal of refugee quotas, focus on humanitarian relief *in situ* and protection of external borders of the EU. There are differences in the opinions about the EU and the Schengen system, where the populists and Eurosceptics, such as SPD or KSČM, demand “taking over control of national borders” (i.e. dismantling the Schengen or even leaving the EU), while centrists, liberals and pro-Western parties call for increased cooperation of the EU states in protection of the external borders.

There seems to be a notion among the more populist oriented politicians that rejection of immigration altogether “solves it all”. Talking publicly about dislocation of detention facilities, capacity of asylum shelters or availability of translators, for example, is seen as politically dangerous. Even the most moderate parties avoid talking about these issues in their election programs, although some do mention them in other places. There is also a strong over-focus on the Middle-East and Africa in the “migration” sections of the political programs under the influence of the “migration crisis” discourse, while the Czech Republic is mostly a transit country for these groups of immigrants, unlike the immigrants from Ukraine or Vietnam, for whom the country is a target destination. Only some of

the parties have actually managed to recognize this fact and it were usually the more moderate ones (or more moderate politicians within the radical ones, such as in the case of KSČM). This leads to paradox – the stronger the anti-immigration rhetoric, the less prepared the party seems to be to deal practically with a real humanitarian crisis on the ground.

Interestingly enough, the political extremists have mostly failed to utilize the Refugee Crisis for their own goals. While there were attempts to use the atmosphere of fear for political mobilization of the far-right, the extremists have failed to escape their political isolation, while migration as their core topic was hijacked by the right-wing populists (SPD) and to some extent also by the political mainstream, leaving the extremists, such as the fascists or neo-Nazis, empty-handed. Decreasing numbers of events, organized by the right-wing political extremists may also point to a continuing internal crisis of the scene, which had been struggling for almost half a decade to unite itself. Extremist political parties have not managed to gain substantially more votes in the context of the Refugee Crisis. This opportunity was utilized by a somewhat less radical, yet still right-wing populist Freedom and Direct Democracy, led by Tomio Okamura. Its non-violent right-wing populism is likely seen as a more acceptable alternative to the violent neo-Nazi and other far-right groups. Interestingly enough, the SPD drained votes both from the far-right and the far-left, namely the Communist party.

Criminological statistics suggest that the crime-rate with extremist background was actually decreasing during the peak of the Refugee Crisis, although NGOs in the same time point to a temporarily higher portion of anti-Muslim hate-crimes within these total numbers between 2015 and 2018. The discrepancies between the numbers given by the governmental and non-governmental organizations, however, can also point to a high degree of latent crime (i.e.: “unreported” crime). A rather surprising fact might be the high amount of hate-crimes and crimes with extremist background in the large cities, especially in combination with the results of the survey by the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, according to which the youth in large cities shows less tolerance to otherness than the ones from smaller cities. These conclusions somewhat defy the notion of intolerance as a “disease of the impoverished periphery”. The simple explanation that large cities are more populous, which then leads to higher absolute numbers of crimes, is not sufficient in this context. It can be further argued that while the large cities are usually considered “cosmopolitan”, their “cosmopolitan” nature actually makes them the most common places of friction between majority and various minorities. There might be active neo-Nazi groups in the smaller towns of South Bohemia, but their target victims do not live there. On the other hand, there can be also a higher degree of hate-crimes in places with low extremist activity. While extremism will continue to exist as a fringe phenomenon, the hate-crimes of the non-extremist majority (i.e.: ordinary citizens, who are not members of an extremist group) are the most alarming.