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Research Paper 2/2013

Partners and Allies of the Czech Republic in the European Union

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Alliances are an inherent aspect of international politics and examination of the principles of formation or of functioning of various coalitions between or among countries has become a logical part of the disciplines of International Relations and European Studies. It is mainly small and medium-sized countries that have to deal with the question of partnership, as in many cases they are not able to push their goals through on their own and they have to form coalitions. The disruption of the European institutional equilibrium over the recent years with the Eurozone crisis and implementation of the Lisbon Treaty has brought new dynamics also to the formation of partnerships within the EU. This fact should be noted and analysed especially by countries such as the Czech Republic, as institutional changes have had impact on the weight of small and, in particular, medium-sized countries in European politics.

In October 2013, the Association for International Affairs (AMO) in cooperation with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung presented results of [a research project](#) examining the views of elites on Czech European policy and on the country's role within the EU. An interactive questionnaire was used to address 440 individuals who take part in or actively influence the formation of European policy. The questionnaire, which contained 27 questions, was answered in 168 cases. A part of this research effort was devoted to the Czech Republic's partners and allies in the EU. The results obtained served as an inspiration for the preparation of this research paper, which focuses on the perception and reality of alliances in Czech European policy. Before presenting the methodology of this research paper, it is necessary to address several simplified notions of alliances in European politics.

Countries are not the only partners within the EU's institutional architecture. Even though the Member States convene in the Council of the EU and the European Council, other key institutions, especially the European Commission and the European Parliament, do not operate primarily on national basis. The Commission guards the interests of the EU as a whole and, therefore, should treat all countries equally, whether they are big or small, rich or poor, new or old. The European Parliament is another supranational institution where interests are not articulated on the basis of affiliation with the Member States. In the post-Lisbon institutional framework, both supranational (European Parliament), and intergovernmental (European Council) institutions have grown stronger. At the same time, other supranational and intergovernmental institutions have weakened (Council of the EU and European Commission).¹ Moreover, there are other institutions – especially the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Central Bank – that play a key role. It is

¹ See also MAHONY, Honor. European Council seen as winner under Lisbon Treaty. *EUobserver.com* [online]. 2010 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://euobserver.com/institutional/30142>., MONAR, Jorg. The European Union's institutional balance of power after the Treaty of Lisbon. In: *The European Union after the Treaty of Lisbon: visions of leading policy-makers, academics and journalists*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011, pp. 60-89., GRANT, Charles. Monnet loses to de Gaulle. *Centre for European Reform* [online]. 2011 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.cer.org.uk/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2011/monnet-loses-de-gaulle>., GRANT, Charles. What is wrong with the European Commission?. *Centre for European Reform* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.cer.org.uk/insights/what-wrong-european-commission>.



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these bodies, which do not have an a priori political nature, that are expected by the elites of Czech European policy to strengthen over the next ten years.² Thus, the perception of partners and allies in the EU at the level of the Member States is the ontological limit of this research paper, which, however, is not and should not be mirrored in the reality of Czech European policy.

Secondly, partners and allies in European politics cannot be viewed only in the light of voting coalitions in the Council of the EU, the reason being that the vote itself usually does not take place until after negotiating a number of compromises. Although voting coalitions may be an important indicator of the proximity of the Member States (this issue will also be analysed), it is necessary to take into account other factors as well. For example, the French-German alliance is perceived as the traditional motor of European integration. Despite the often diverging priorities of Paris and Berlin during the Eurozone crisis, their compromise solution became a fundamental building block of the subsequent agreements reached within the Eurozone or the EU as a whole. Although the voting and economic weight of France and Germany has been decreasing with the gradual enlargement of the EU, hardly anything can be achieved in European politics without their consent.³ David Král says that “the main determinants in the search for alliances of strategic nature should be as follows: intensity and quality of bilateral relations and contacts, economic interconnections, geographic, cultural and linguistic proximity.”⁴ It is this long-term perception of alliances within the EU that the CR should think about.

The third point also concerns the strategic nature of alliances. Partnerships should survive different political establishments and should not be forged on the basis of partisan interests, and still less in defiance of opposition.⁵ Although the current preferences may influence the character of the common positions reached (which also applies to the above-mentioned French-German motor of European integration), they should not determine who will be the partner to talk to about strategic issues. It is obvious that meeting this criterion necessitates the permanent interest of political elites in European politics so that the reflection on strategic interests does not start anew after every election.

This research paper aims to confront the findings of the survey *Trends of Czech European Policy* with other possible views on partnerships and alliances of the Czech Republic with the EU. This goal is reflected in the structure of this paper. First, we will analyse in detail and comment on the results of the relevant chapter of the survey among the elites of Czech

²DOSTÁL, Vít. *Trends of Czech European Policy: Study of European Policy Elites*. Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2013, p. 18 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publications/trends-of-czech-european-policy-study-of-european-policy-elites.html?lang=en>.

³GROS, Daniel. The Franco-German Alliance: Can it continue to serve as a motor for Europe?. *CEPS Commentaries* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.ceps.eu/ceps/dld/7631/pdf>.

⁴KRÁL, David. Česká politika v EU: Artikulace zájmů a taktika při jejich prosazování. *Europeum* [online]. 2013, pp. 1-6 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://www.europeum.org/images/paper/kral_artikulace.pdf.

⁵Ibid, p. 5.



European policy. The next part will break down the Czech Republic's alliances in the EU by opinion coalitions in which the CR participates and by factual integration differences that have impact on the Czech position in the EU. Third, we will take a look at the Czech Republic's voting statistics in the Council of the EU according to votewatch.eu. However, before analysing each part, we need to look at the perception of partners and allies according to Czech policy documents.

Partners and Allies of the Czech Republic in the EU According to Policy Documents

As opposed to other countries,⁶ bilateral relations and, in this context, their EU dimension, are not mentioned by government officials when introducing short-term plans in the field of foreign policy. The bilateral dimension was mentioned neither by Foreign Minister Jan Kohout⁷ at the most recent meeting of the heads of embassies, nor by Prime Ministers Petr Nečas⁸ and Jiří Rusnok⁹ in their speeches at the same forum. The only and important exception is neighbour relations and cooperation within the Visegrád Group, which was highlighted by both prime ministers and the minister Kohout for its role in coordination of European policies.

Something similar occurs with the government's mission statements. While in Germany, for example, coalition agreements do mention specific countries, it is not the case in the CR. The mission statement of the cabinet of Jiří Rusnok only mentioned the support of the Visegrád cooperation "to promote common interests in EU decision-making bodies".¹⁰

No specific allies or coalitions are mentioned in the *Czech Strategy in the European Union*. The government has been actually criticised for this. In its response, the Office of the Government pointed at the nature of the document, claiming that the document should not mention any specific coalitions, because they variously change, arise or expire and are never

⁶ In Poland, for example, the minister of foreign affairs every year (usually in spring) informs the Sejm about the execution (performance) of foreign policy in the previous year and presents plans for the forthcoming year. His speech is followed by a debate between political parties.

⁷ Ministr Kohout v projevu k velvyslancům: Společným jmenovatelem je důvěryhodnost, spolehlivost a profesionalita. *Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/o_ministerstvu/archivy/clanky_a_projevy_ministra_kohouta_2013/x2013_08_26_ministr_kohout_v_projevu.html.

⁸ Projev předsedy vlády Petra Nečase na poradě vedoucích zastupitelských úřadů České republiky. *Vláda České republiky* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/clenove-vlady/premier/vyznamne-projevy/projev-predsedy-vlady-petra-necase-na-porade-vedoucich-zastupitelskych-uradu-ceske-republiky-98470/>.

⁹ Projev předsedy vlády Jiřího Rusnoka na poradě vedoucích zastupitelských úřadů. *Vláda České republiky* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/clenove-vlady/premier/projevy/projev-predsedy-vlady-jiriho-rusnoka-na-porade-vedoucich-zastupitelskych-uradu-109846/>.

¹⁰ DOKUMENT: Programové prohlášení vlády Jiřího Rusnoka. *IDnes.cz* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://zpravy.idnes.cz/programove-prohlasi-vlady-jiriho-rusnoka-fzx-/domaci.aspx?c=A130802_162135_domaci_hro.



entirely coherent or clearly defined. On the other hand, the government's response refers to the Visegrád Group as a "stabilized and formalized grouping".¹¹

Thus, any specific partners are mentioned only in the *Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic*.¹² Although it may seem at the first sight that, because of this fact, the document is in conflict with the argument of the Office of the Government that it is not appropriate to mention any specific coalitions of countries in selected areas, it should be said that the *Concept* was drawn up on the basis of a different logic. First of all, it mentions countries that are important for the Czech Republic in international relations and then the document mentions areas in which this importance is reflected. Thus, the document does not proceed from European policy to specific partners, but from listing specific partners to the key topics in mutual relations; and, in many cases, European policy – or a certain aspect of this policy – is one of these topics. Considering that the *Concept* has rather descriptive than planning character,¹³ it can be viewed as a mirror of reflection on foreign policy.

In total, the *Concept* mentions seven EU Member States: France, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Austria, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.¹⁴ France and the United Kingdom are included in a subchapter entitled "European Permanent Members of the Security Council" and the only reference to the European dimension is that both countries are "important economic and political partners in the EU". Germany is mentioned as a strategic partner. Further, the *Concept* states that "attention will be paid to (...) the key role [of Germany] in European politics [and] European security (...)." The Czech-German contacts in European politics are also widely supported as part of the Czech foreign policy strategy.

The relations with Poland are also viewed as strategic, thanks to "the intersection of foreign policy priorities and proximity of interests (...) in the EU (...)." Energy security at the European level and the policy towards countries of Eastern Europe are also mentioned as the key areas of cooperation. As regards relations with Austria, which are labelled as 'traditional', just as in the case of relations with Hungary, the document only contains a brief reference to cooperation within the EU. As for Austria, the document mentions the common interest in the stability of Western Balkans. Thus, Slovakia is the only country without any, even minor, reference to cooperation within the EU.

¹¹DOSTÁL, Vít. Trends of Czech European Policy: Study of European Policy Elites. Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publications/trends-of-czech-european-policy-study-of-european-policy-elites.html?lang=en>.

¹²Koncepce zahraniční politiky České republiky. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky [online]. 2011 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://www.mzv.cz/file/675937/koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_2011_cz.pdf.

¹³KORÁN, Michal. Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2011: analýza ÚMV. Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2012, pp. 15-19.

¹⁴Koncepce zahraniční politiky České republiky. Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky [online]. 2011, p. 15 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://www.mzv.cz/file/675937/koncepce_zahranicni_politiky_2011_cz.pdf.



Partners and Allies of the Czech Republic in the EU as Viewed by the Elites of Czech European policy

Four questions asked during the survey *Trends of Czech European Policy* were focused on the Czech Republic's relations with other Member States. In this chapter, the data obtained will be analysed and commented on in more detail. In the case of some questions, we will also look at differences in the answers given by different groups of respondents. Thus, we will try to find out, whether the perception of selected allies and partners is shared among various parts of elites of Czech European policy.

The first question dealt with the identification of allies within the EU. Respondents were openly asked to identify the three strongest allies of the Czech Republic in the EU. The highest frequency of occurrence was registered for Slovakia, which was mentioned in 72% of the responses. Germany and Poland finished second and third, mentioned by two-thirds and 61% of respondents respectively. United Kingdom was well behind with a frequency of occurrence of 21.5%. Quite surprisingly, Sweden (15.7%) finished ahead of Austria (12.4%). Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands were each mentioned at least five times.

Table 1: Allies of the Czech Republic in the European Union

Country	Frequency of occurrence
Slovakia	71.9%
Germany	66.1%
Poland	61.2%
United Kingdom	21.5%
Sweden	15.7%
Austria	12.4%
Netherlands	8.3%
Hungary	7.4%
Denmark	4.1%
Slovenia	2.5%
Finland	1.7%
Croatia	1.7%
Luxembourg	0.8%



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Question: Which three countries do you see as the strongest allies of the Czech Republic in the European Union?

Referring to Slovakia as the strongest ally of the Czech Republic in the EU may be surprising. Slovakia does not rank among the most important countries in the EU – its significance in terms of population and economy is even smaller than that of the Czech Republic. Both countries have lots of identical characteristics: both countries have been EU members since 2004, they support integration of the Western Balkans and the countries of the Eastern Partnership, they are and will continue to be net recipients of funding from the EU budget, they are export-oriented economies with a dominant percentage of total exports flowing to EU countries and they are advocates of deepening the internal market. Nevertheless, they differ in a category which has registered the biggest growth in significance over the recent years. As opposed to the Czech Republic, Slovakia is a member of the Eurozone and thus perceives differently a number of topical problems of European integration (e.g. the question of financial transfers within the Eurozone for the bailout of debt-laden countries). The only joint initiative of significance is the European Nuclear Forum, the plenary sessions of which take place alternatively in Prague and Bratislava.¹⁵ For these reasons, among other, it is necessary to view the perception of Slovakia as the strongest ally of the Czech Republic in the EU mainly as the result of the past and present closeness of both nations and their trouble-free relations. The question is, whether Slovakia will score so high in similar surveys in the future, as Czechoslovakia becomes more and more a thing of distant past.

Germany's second position is not surprising. In a survey entitled *Trends of Czech Foreign Policy* which took place in 2011, Germany was actually mentioned in each of the answers to a question asking about the Czech Republic's most important partners.¹⁶ However, we should take into account that the respondents could mention up to five countries, while in the survey on Czech European policy the respondents were limited by three options. Germany is the most important trading partner of the Czech Republic, the strongest economy in the EU and the most significant player in the Eurozone crisis. Moreover, Czech-German relations in European politics are free of any highly publicised conflicts and, for example, during the Czech presidency of the Council of the EU, it was highlighted that the Czech Republic was provided with support from Berlin.

The third place of Poland, compared to the survey of opinions held by foreign-policy elites, is also not surprising. In this survey, Poland achieved a high score again, with three-quarters

¹⁵Nuclear energy: European Nuclear Energy Forum. *European Commission* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/forum/forum_en.htm.

¹⁶DOSTÁL, Vít. *Trends of Czech European Policy: Study of European Policy Elites*. Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2013, p. 15 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publications/trends-of-czech-european-policy-study-of-european-policy-elites.html?lang=en>.



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of the respondents mentioning it as the most important partner.¹⁷ Although it has been possible to observe divergence in preferences in the recent years, especially in institutional issues, in negotiations on the multiannual financial framework or in the area of agriculture,¹⁸ the conviction of the importance of the Czech-Polish alliance in European matters remains strong.

The next two places were occupied by the United Kingdom and Sweden. Both countries share liberal views on free market and, although they have been EU members for a long time, they have not yet adopted a single currency. The UK negotiated an opt-out and Sweden refuses to adopt the euro in spite of a binding contractual obligation. However, the UK's reluctance against the deepening of European integration is more significant and has escalated with post-Lisbon integration projects and the arrival of the Conservative-Liberal coalition government. For instance, in 2012, the UK (just as the Czech Republic) did not join the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union and has not participated in other initiatives such as the Euro Plus Pact. In addition, if he succeeds in the 2015 election, the British Prime Minister David Cameron plans to modify the position of the United Kingdom in the EU and hold a referendum on a newly negotiated treaty with the EU. The attitude of the Conservatives to European integration is close to that of the Civic Democratic Party, whose representatives welcome the current political developments in the UK.¹⁹ Since 2009, they have been also jointly convening in the political group European Conservatives and Reformists in the European Parliament.

Other central European partners – Austria and Hungary – finished sixth and eighth. Austria was mentioned by one in eight respondents, which can be regarded as a solid result. There are only a handful of joint initiatives and it was Vienna who before the enlargement threatened to block the Czech Republic's accession because of the Temelín Nuclear Power Plant. The position of Hungary can be viewed as the result of Visegrád cooperation and its growing European dimension. The North European countries of the Netherlands and Denmark, which share the Czech Republic's liberal view on free market, were mentioned more than five times.

The countries mentioned in the answers given by elites of Czech European policy can be divided into two groups: (1) neighbours and (2) Member States with a liberal view on the functioning of the internal market. The ranking of three neighbours in the first three places, Austria's sixth position and Hungary's finish in the eighth place shows the stability of neighbourhood policy. The elites of European policy are convinced that it is neighbours who are partners in the largest integration project in which the Czech Republic participates.

¹⁷Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁸DOSTÁL, Vít. Evropské politiky České republiky a Polska a důsledky pro vzájemné vztahy. Praha: Česko-polská analytická platforma, 2012. *Unpublished*.

¹⁹ZAHRADIL, Jan. Cameronův projev k EU. *Blog.aktualne.cz* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: <http://blog.aktualne.centrum.cz/blogy/jan-zahradil.php?itemid=18963>.



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Although it can be argued that in the case of Slovakia or Austria this perception does not reflect the real cooperation in European politics, this perception is also important on its own. When making a comparison with the neighbour relations of inter-war Czechoslovakia or with the fears existing in early 1990s and concerning mainly Germany and Austria, this result can be interpreted as a victory of the rational perception of reality over historical prejudices.

The second group, which is represented by the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark, has close opinions to those of the Czech Republic rather than being close geographically. These are countries that emphasize a liberal attitude to the internal market, that are more cautious about further deepening of integration and that pointed out budgetary responsibility during the Eurozone crisis.

As regards the Member States mentioned in the *Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic*, almost all of them were mentioned in the answers: Germany, Slovakia, Poland, United Kingdom and Hungary. The only exception was France, which wasn't mentioned by any respondent. Overall, only less than a half of the Member States were included in the answers and, when interpreting the results, it is therefore important to take into consideration also the countries that the elites of European policy did not mention at all. Besides France, the second largest European economy and one part of the so-called 'integration engine', also missing are two of the six largest Member States – Spain and Italy – or other South European countries. Those who define or influence European policy do not see any important allies in the southern part of the EU.

When taking a more detailed look at the opinions held by individual respondent groups, we can draw a conclusion that elites have a relatively coherent view of allies. Slovakia, Germany and Poland finished in the first three places in all cases and with a substantial lead over other countries despite the fact that the ranking within the top three varied.



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Table 2: Allies of the Czech Republic in the European Union by respondent groups

Politicians		Civil servants		European institutions' staff	
Slovakia	85.71%	Germany	71.15%	Slovakia	81.25%
Poland	78.57%	Slovakia	57.69%	Poland	50.00%
Germany	57.14%	Poland	50.00%	Germany	43.75%
Austria	14.29%	Sweden	28.85%	United Kingdom	25.00%
United Kingdom	7.14%	United Kingdom	25.00%	Austria	18.75%
Hungary	7.14%	Netherlands	9.62%	Netherlands	12.50%
Slovenia	7.14%	Hungary	9.62%	Sweden	12.50%
Finland	7.14%	Austria	7.69%	Hungary	6.25%
		Denmark	7.69%	Croatia	6.25%
		Croatia	1.92%	Slovenia	6.25%
		Slovenia	1.92%		
Academics		Journalists			
Poland	72.73%	Germany	84.62%		
Slovakia	63.64%	Slovakia	84.62%		
Germany	54.55%	Poland	61.54%		
Austria	27.27%	Austria	15.38%		
United Kingdom	18.18%	United Kingdom	15.38%		
Finland	9.09%	Netherlands	7.69%		
		Sweden	7.69%		

Question: Which three countries do you see as the strongest allies of the Czech Republic in the European Union?

The following two questions of the survey concentrated on the quality of relations in the matters of European policy and on expectations about the development of relations in the next decade. The respondents were asked about six selected countries: the neighbours – i.e. Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia – and the other two largest EU Member States, i.e. the United Kingdom and France. The quality of relations was evaluated by the respondents by using the Czech school grading scale (i.e. 1 being the best mark and 5 being the worst mark).

The results matched the values obtained in the previous question. The best mark was given to relations with Slovakia. Poland came in the second, this time finishing ahead of Germany. A '2-' mark was awarded to the United Kingdom. Austria received an average grade of 2.8, while France scored '3-'. A similar question was asked during the survey *Trends of Czech Foreign Policy* in 2011. The respondents were asked to assess the quality of relations with selected countries. The first three places were also occupied by Slovakia, Germany and Poland, but with a higher score. Slovakia was given a '1.2', while both Germany and Poland



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received a grade of 1.6. Even Austria fared better in the 2011 survey, scoring a mark of 2.6. The United Kingdom and France were not included in this survey. Considering the different group of respondents, we could say that the elites of European policy see the relations with these countries in European politics as more complicated than the elites of foreign policy in bilateral relations. Last, but not least, it is necessary to take into account the two-year time difference between the two surveys, which can explain certain dynamics observed in individual relations.

Table 3: Relations with selected countries in the EU

Country	Average
Slovakia	1.58
Poland	2.05
Germany	2.14
United Kingdom	2.34
Austria	2.83
France	3.53

Question: How would you rate the Czech Republic's relations with selected countries with regard to European policy issues?

The question focusing on the developments in relations regarding European policies brought no surprise in the first three positions. Elites expect further improvements in the case of Slovakia, Germany and Poland. The relationship with Austria will improve according to three-quarters of the respondents. Elites of European policy are also moderately optimistic about France, with 55% of the polled believing in a positive development of relations. Only the relationship with the United Kingdom is anticipated to deteriorate, according to more than a half of the respondents.



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Table 4: The future of the Czech Republic's relations with selected countries in the European Union

Country	Improvement	Likely improvement	Likely deterioration	Deterioration
Slovakia	20.50%	76.20%	3.30%	0%
Germany	28.20%	59.70%	12.10%	0%
Poland	13.90%	73%	13%	0%
Austria	8.30%	68.60%	22.30%	0.80%
France	7.50%	47.90%	44.60%	0%
United Kingdom	1.70%	43.20%	52.50%	2.60%

Question: What developments do you expect in relations regarding European policies over the forthcoming ten years with the countries listed?

The Czech-British alliance within the EU deserves a more detailed analysis. As stated above, in the recent years, the Czech Republic's position in the EU has been close to the British one in many aspects (this phenomenon is addressed in more detail in the next chapter). This is one of the reasons why the expected deterioration in the relationship with the UK may be surprising, given the currently solid rating and the UK's fourth position among the strongest allies. We can get closer to answering this question if we look at the declared common and opposing interests in the EU, as viewed by the respondents.

Table 5: Common and opposing interests in the EU – United Kingdom

Common interest	Frequency of occurrence	Opposing interest	Frequency of occurrence
internal market	41.8%	deepening of integration	12.1%
economic policy	11.0%	EU future	9.9%
institutional issues	9.9%	Eurozone crisis	7.7%
EU future	9.9%	exit of the UK from the EU	7.7%
		institutional issues	5.5%
		EU budget	5.5%

Question: What do you think are the main common and opposing interests with the United Kingdom in the EU?



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The only significantly accentuated common interest in the relationship with London is the internal market, which was mentioned by two-fifths of the respondents. For the open Czech economy, the deepening of the internal market is important and the UK is a traditional advocate of this approach. Nevertheless, even here we can find complications that have political consequences. For example, the reflections of Cameron's cabinet on the restriction on free movement of workers even resulted in a joint declaration by foreign ministers of the Visegrád Group.²⁰ The question of economic policy may be related to the Czech and British restraint over unification of economic policies of the Member States. Common interests are also seen in institutional issues and in questions concerning the future of integration. However, these topics are perceived as problematic with regard to the United Kingdom. The respondents are strongly convinced that the UK's exit from the EU would not be beneficial for the Czech Republic. This opinion is shared by 95% of elites of European policy.²¹

Thus, even though the UK is regarded as a close ally of the Czech Republic in the EU with a central common interest in the internal market, elites think that the current European policy of Cameron's cabinet increases rather than closes the divide between the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic and the so-called 'Brexit' is viewed as a potential problem in Czech-British relations. In Central European context, this trend was actually anticipated²² and for example Poland expressed its stance on the issue through its foreign minister.²³ Also, the arrival of a new Czech cabinet after elections in October 2013 will cut off the link between the British Conservatives and the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) on the executive level of European policy.

The relationship with France was rated as relatively bad, although a slight majority of the respondents expect this relationship to improve. Moreover, the respondents think that energy issues are basically the only common interest shared by the two countries. The Czech Republic and France are advocates of nuclear energy in the EU. Still, the two countries have not developed any close bilateral cooperation in this area, with the French-based Areva being excluded from the tender to build new blocks of the Temelín Nuclear Power Plant. One of the accentuated opposing priorities is agriculture. France is a traditional supporter of the Common Agricultural Policy, while elites of Czech European policy do not see this area as a

²⁰Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – on the Free Movements of Persons. *Website of Hungarian Government: Ministry of Foreign Affairs* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: <http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-foreign-affairs/news/joint-statement-by-the-foreign-ministers-of-the-visegrad-countries-on-the-free-movements-of-persons>.

²¹DOSTÁL, Vít. Trends of Czech European Policy: Study of European Policy Elites. Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2013, p. 32 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publications/trends-of-czech-european-policy-study-of-european-policy-elites.html?lang=en>.

²²VALÁŠEK, Tomáš. What Central Europe thinks of Britain and why. *Centre for European Reform* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: <http://www.cer.org.uk/insights/what-central-europe-thinks-britain-and-why>. VALÁŠEK, Tomáš. The UK-EU split: The impact on Central Europe. *Centre for European Reform* [online]. 2011 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: <http://www.cer.org.uk/insights/uk-eu-split-impact-central-europe>.

²³The Blenheim Palace Speech (on the UK and Europe): Speech by HE Mr Radek Sikorski, Foreign Minister of Poland. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: <http://www.ms.gov.pl/resource/ff80e9c3-19f6-460c-9921-c73bbb089c54:JCR>.



priority. Agriculture is an area where they do not see any significant positive effect of EU membership and in their opinion the funds from the European budget should not be spent on the support of agriculture.²⁴

Table 6: Common and opposing interests in the EU – France

Common interest	Frequency of occurrence	Opposing interest	Frequency of occurrence
energy	48.4%	agriculture	54.9%
common security and defence policy	8.8%	internal market	18.7%
agriculture	8.8%	social policy	15.4%
common foreign and security policy	6.6%	tax policy	8.8%
		institutional issues	7.7%

Question: What do you think are the main common and opposing interests with France in the EU?

On the contrary, as regards the relations with Germany, which are rated as one of the best and with a positive outlook, elites identified surprisingly many shared interests, with the internal market and economic policy coming on top. The perception of Germany as a partner in the area of the internal market is probably not based on Berlin's specialisation in this area – as is the case of the UK or the Netherlands – but on high trade volumes between the two countries. Germany has been the main trading partner of the Czech Republic for a long time, with one-third of Czech exports flowing to this country. This also explains similar views on economic policy or industry. As regards fiscal policy, both Germany and the Czech Republic place emphasis on sustainability and long-term stability. Therefore, both countries mainly highlighted a need for budget cuts as a precondition for transfers of funds to struggling countries.²⁵ However, Prague and Berlin have a different view on how much the resolution of problems should be delegated to the European level, with the Czech Republic being more restrained on this issue. A proof of this difference is that the Czech Republic has not joined the Fiscal Compact. On the other hand, energy is the only accentuated opposing interest, which can be attributed to Germany's decision to cease electricity production from nuclear energy. Shortly after it was announced that Germany would turn its back on nuclear energy, concerns were raised that this step might result in higher electric power prices in the CR and

²⁴DOSTÁL, Vít. Trends of Czech European Policy: Study of European Policy Elites. Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2013, pp. 12, 24 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publications/trends-of-czech-european-policy-study-of-european-policy-elites.html?lang=en>.

²⁵PARKES, Roderick. From Integration to Competition: Britain, Germany and the EU's New Group Dynamics. *EPIN Commentaries* [online]. 2012, no. 10 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.ceps.eu/ceps/dld/6874/pdf/>.



thus impair the competitiveness of the Czech economy²⁶ or that German companies operating in the Czech energy sector would withdraw back to Germany and sell their Czech subsidiaries. The sale to new owners might have negative impact on the Czech Republic's energy security.²⁷

Table 7: Common and opposing interests in the EU – Germany

Common interest	Frequency of occurrence	Opposing interest	Frequency of occurrence
internal market	37.4%	energy	39.6%
economic policy	29.7%	institutional issues	6.6%
energy	12.1%		
industry	9.9%		
science and research	8.8%		
fiscal policy	8.8%		
infrastructure	7.7%		
trade policy	5.5%		
Eurozone future	5.5%		
political cooperation	5.5%		

Question: What do you think are the main common and opposing interests with Germany in the EU?

Similarly, in the case of Poland it can be observed that a wide range of common interests has been identified by elites of European policy, which reflects the established character of European policy in Czech-Polish relations. However, even here we can find some controversies. Even though the internal market is a common priority of the two countries, the Czech-Polish cooperation may be affected by the highly publicised problems with foodstuffs imported from Poland and the emphasis on domestic production by the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) and the ANO movement. A similar divergence can be found in the field of energy. Although the Czech Republic and Poland are closely cooperating in this area, especially in the case of nuclear energy and gas, the future of Unipetrol, a company owned by the Polish state-owned giant PKN ORLEN, is a permanent issue in Czech-Polish relations. The question is how the position of Unipetrol will be affected by the ANO movement's entry into the Czech government. In the chemicals industry, Unipetrol is a

²⁶ Nečas: Německý odklon od jádra zdraží elektřinu v Česku o 30 procent. *IDnes.cz* [online]. 2011 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://ekonomika.idnes.cz/nemecky-odklon-od-jadra-zdrazi-elektrinu-v-cr-fn5/ekonomika.aspx?c=A110601_124746_ekonomika_vem.

²⁷ PARKES, Roderick. From Integration to Competition: Britain, Germany and the EU's New Group Dynamics. *EPIN Commentaries* [online]. 2012, no. 10 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.ceps.eu/ceps/dld/6874/pdf/>.



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competitor of Agrofert, a company owned by the chairman of the ANO movement Andrej Babiš. Like for France, agriculture was mentioned as a significant opposing priority. And the reason is similar: the importance of this topic in Poland and, conversely, the Czech Republic's belief that the EU's Common Agricultural Policy is not beneficial. A question remains as to how the issue of agriculture will be influenced by the introduction of the food safety issue and the related emphasis on domestic production into the public debate.

Table 8: Common and opposing interests in the EU – Poland

Common interest	Frequency of occurrence	Opposing interest	Frequency of occurrence
internal market	24.2%	agriculture	45.1%
energy	19.8%	EU future	5.5%
cohesion policy	16.5%	institutional issues	5.5%
infrastructure	14.3%	regional rivalry	5.5%
economic policy	11.0%		
Eastern Partnership	9.9%		
agriculture	8.8%		
common foreign and security policy	7.7%		
common security and defence policy	5.5%		
political cooperation	5.5%		
climate and energy policy	5.5%		

Question: What do you think are the main common and opposing interests with Poland in the EU?

For a number of the above-mentioned areas (i.e. interests), there exist more or less formalized opinion coalitions. The next chapter is devoted to the analysis of these coalitions and the Czech participation in them.



Partners and Allies of the Czech Republic in the EU by Interest Coalitions and Degree of Integration

Besides identification of allies on the basis of subjective perception of elites of European policy or the documents of Czech foreign policy, it is also possible to identify the Czech Republic's main partners in the EU by using other criteria. In this section, the Czech Republic's allies in the EU are identified by degree of integration and by membership in various interest coalitions among Member States. Interest coalitions are defined as a long-standing grouping of several countries that promote one or several goals. For this purpose, these countries meet and publish joint declarations or letters addressed to European institutions and other Member States. The differences in the degree of integration are judged based on the degree of participation in projects where the full involvement of all Member States is not a matter of course. The below-mentioned and analysed list of observed coalitions and integration projects has been chosen authoritatively and attempts to cover opinion differences which are either important with regard to the current developments in the EU, or with regard to the long-term goals of Czech European policy. We will look for interest coalitions and degree of integration mainly in institutional and economic matters.

Shortly after the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, people started considering a reform of the new – mainly legal – framework. These considerations were triggered mainly by the continuing crisis in the Eurozone. However, the modifications considered go beyond the issue of the single currency or coordination of Member States' economic policies and revive some of the ideas that were dismissed during talks on the Treaty Establishing the Constitution for Europe. Documents that are discussed by all 28 Member States are the Communication of the Commission – A Blueprint for a Deep and Genuine Economic and Monetary Union: Launching a European Debate and a report by the Presidents of the European Council, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the Eurogroup entitled “Towards a Genuine Economic and Monetary Union”, which were published in the final version at the end of 2012.²⁸ Nevertheless, there were meetings in a smaller group of foreign ministers which was called the ‘Westerwelle Group’ after its main creator, the German foreign minister, or the ‘Group for Future of Europe’. These

²⁸VAN ROMPUY, Herman. Směrem ke skutečné hospodářské a měnové unii. *European Central Bank* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ssm/pdf/4preport/fourpresidentsreport2012-12-05CS.pdf>, SDĚLENÍ KOMISE Návrh prohloubené a skutečné hospodářské a měnové unie: zahájení evropské diskuse. *Eur Lex* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0777:FIN:CS:PDF>.



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negotiations, which resulted in the publication of a joint document in the autumn of 2012, were attended by 11 ministers. Karel Schwarzenberg did not participate in this group.²⁹

The Westerwelle Group can be ranked among interest coalitions. The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (The Fiscal Compact), which was negotiated and signed at the turn of 2011/12, represents a shift in the integration process. The only countries that did not take part in this Treaty were the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. If the proposed changes were not rejected by Prague and London, the changes included in the Fiscal Compact would be probably incorporated into the individual provisions of primary law. Although the Fiscal Compact mainly aims to increase the fiscal responsibility of the participating countries, it also has important institutional implications. It grants additional powers to the Court of Justice of the EU and creates a format for the meetings of the Fiscal Compact signatories, who will discuss, among other, competitiveness issues.³⁰

Today, the main dividing line in EU integration lies between members and non-members of the Eurozone. Economic problems in some Euro countries have led to the growing importance of the Eurogroup as a coordination and consultation body and to the creation of tools aimed at dealing with critical situations. These tools were given permanent character in the provisions of the European Stability Mechanism. In the future, this mechanism is to deal with the problems of Eurozone members who are not able to service their public debts. A logical concern arising from accentuation of this dividing line – which is not emphasised in the Czech Republic as much as in Poland, for example³¹ – is too strong coordination among Eurozone countries without regard to other countries' opinions. This situation need not be caused by an endeavour to eliminate countries not taking part in the 3rd phase of Economic and Monetary Union, but simply by a different perception of certain problems, which, however, may lead to antagonism between members and non-members of the Eurozone. This was the case, for example, during negotiations on some aspects of the Banking Union.

In the recent years, there have been two EU economic policy initiatives that brought together a significant number of Member States – the Euro Plus Pact and “A Plan for Growth in Europe”. The Euro Plus Pact³² was signed by Eurozone member states and other six countries and its goal is to coordinate economic policies of member states. The Czech

²⁹Final Report of the Future of Europe Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain of the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, the Group. *European Commission* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do;jsessionid=HqcfSgwBkWlnhjFLrBQTsqplSqywxWkpQZ3bwcHGg62rQGIGVH!-392000037?docId=1275686&cardId=1275685>.

³⁰DOSTÁL, Vít; KNUTELSKÁ, Viera. Fiskální smlouva – stará pravidla v novém hávu?: Co přináší návrh fiskální smlouvy a proč se Česká republika nepřidala. [online]. Praha: Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky, 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publikace/fiskalni-smlouva--stara-pravidla-v-novem-havu.html>.

³¹DOSTÁL, Vít. Evropské politiky České republiky a Polska a důsledky pro vzájemné vztahy. Praha: Česko-polská analytická platforma, 2012. *Unpublished*.

³²Závěry Evropské rady ze dne 24. a 25. března 2011. *Consilium Europa* [online]. 2011 [cit. 2013-12-11]. Available: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/cs/11/st00/st00010-re01.cs11.pdf#page=14>.



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Republic does not take part in this initiative and neither do the United Kingdom, Sweden and Hungary. “A Plan for Growth in Europe” deals with the deepening of the internal market.³³ This letter was signed by most of the countries associated in the opinion group aiming for the deepening of the internal market, which was launched in July 2011 in London.³⁴

Two coalitions were also formed during negotiations of the EU multiannual financial framework. One coalition consisted of countries aiming for the preservation of sufficient funding for the EU cohesion policy. The second coalition, called “Friends of Better Spending”, was formed by Member States that wanted to push the Union’s budget below 1% of the EU’s GDP. In spite of disputes between individual ministries, the Czech Republic eventually became a member of both of these coalitions.³⁵ Although the debate on the 2014-2020 financial framework is over, we can suppose that as early as around 2016 we will start seeing formation of coalitions on the budgetary framework after 2020. The Czech position will mainly depend on whether the CR becomes a net payer to the EU budget.

Activities of the Visegrád Group span various areas. During the Czech presidency in 2011 and 2012, the Visegrád countries³⁶ strengthened coordination and consultation mechanisms in European policy and recently have taken a joint stance on a number of issues spanning from the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and negotiations on the multiannual financial framework to the reform of the internal market.³⁷ One of the regular activities of the Visegrád Group is ministerial meetings with the countries of Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans, which support the convergence of these countries to the European Union.

The following table shows the Member States that are perceived by elites of European policy as the Czech Republic’s closest allies and participation or non-participation in the same interest coalitions or integration groups.

³³ David Cameron and EU leaders call for growth plan in Europe: full letter. *The Telegraph* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/9093478/David-Cameron-and-EU-leaders-call-for-growth-plan-in-Europe-full-letter.html>.

³⁴ Future of EU internal market to be decided in Vilnius. *Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://www.ukmin.lt/web/en/news/press_releases/future_of_eu_internal_market_to_be_decided_in_vilnius.

³⁵ Rozpočet EU: z vítězí přátelé koheze či úspor?. *EurActiv* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.euractiv.cz/print-version/clanek/rozpocet-eu-staty-se-formuji-do-skupin-nazory-maji-ale-rozdilne-summit-evropska-rada-vicelety-financni-ramec-2014-2020-010407>.

³⁶ DOSTÁL, Vít. Trends of Czech European Policy: Study of European Policy Elites. Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2013 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.amo.cz/publications/trends-of-czech-european-policy-study-of-european-policy-elites.html?lang=en>.

³⁷ KORAŇ, Michal. The Visegrad Group on the Threshold of Its Third Decade: A Central European Hub? In ŠABIČ, Zlatko a Petr DRULÁK. *Regional and international relations of Central Europe*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.



Table 9: The closest allies of the Czech Republic in the EU by perception of elites and by common position in interest coalitions and integration groups

Country	Frequency of occurrence in survey of elites	Group for Future of Europe ³⁸	Fiscal Compact	Eurozone	Euro Plus Pact	Plan for Growth in Europe ³⁹	Group for Internal Market ⁴⁰	Friends of Cohesion Policy ⁴¹	Friends of Better Spending ⁴²	V4	No. of concurrences
Slovakia	71.90%	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	5
Germany	66.10%	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	2
Poland	61.20%	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	5
United Kingdom	21.50%	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	7
Sweden	15.70%	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	6
Austria	12.40%	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	1
Netherlands	8.30%	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	3
Hungary	7.40%	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	4

The above summary indicates that the Czech Republic most frequently featured in the same coalitions or had the same degree of integration as the United Kingdom. The second highest number of concurrences was registered for Sweden, followed by Slovakia and Poland. It is noteworthy that only two concurrences were registered in the case of Germany. As for coalitions, they were mostly formed around projects that were launched during the reign of Petr Nečas's cabinet. Therefore, a question remains whether there wasn't some influence from the above-mentioned proximity between ODS and the British Conservative Party.

³⁸Final Report of the Future of Europe Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain of the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, the Group. *European Commission* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do;jsessionid=HqcfSgwBkWlnhjiFLrBQTsqplSqwWkPQZ3bwcHGg62rQGIGVH!-392000037?docId=1275686&cardId=1275685>.

³⁹David Cameron and EU leaders call for growth plan in Europe: full letter. *The Telegraph* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/9093478/David-Cameron-and-EU-leaders-call-for-growth-plan-in-Europe-full-letter.html>.

⁴⁰Future of EU internal market to be decided in Vilnius. *Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: http://www.ukmin.lt/web/en/news/press_releases/future_of_eu_internal_market_to_be_decided_in_vilnius.

⁴¹Rozpočet EU: vítězí přátelé koheze či úspor?. *EurActiv* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-12-10]. Available: <http://www.euractiv.cz/print-version/clanek/rozpocet-eu-staty-se-formuji-do-skupin-nazory-maji-ale-rozdilne-summit-evropska-rada-vicelety-financni-ramec-2014-2020-010407>.

⁴²Ibid.



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Partners and Allies of the Czech Republic in the EU by Voting in the Council of the EU

The last empirical chapter is devoted to a lower level of coalition formation: voting in the Council of the EU. We will examine the Czech Republic's voting pattern compared to those of other countries – i.e. the number of times when the Czech Republic voted identically with other countries. We will also look at with which Member States the Czech Republic was outvoted and whether there is a coherent group of countries that have a permanently dissenting opinion. Third, we will focus on areas where the Czech Republic is outvoted. In our analysis we relied on data from the website votewatch.eu in the period from 1 July 2009 to 1 December 2013.

When looking for the answer to the first question, the votewatch data indicate that the Czech Republic's voting pattern was the most similar to that of France and Lithuania: the voting was the same in 474 instances out of 485 (98%). On the contrary, the Czech Republic voted least frequently with the United Kingdom. However, even here the number of identical votes is high – 410 out of 465 (92%). The second lowest concurrence was registered for Germany, with the two countries voting identically in the Council in 445 cases out of 485 or in 92% of all cases. The high figures recorded for Lithuania and France are attributed to the two countries' full agreement in all the votes taken. Conversely, the very low agreement with the UK reflects the often dissenting position of London.

Overall, in five cases the Czech Republic voted against a proposal supported by the Council of the EU. The Czech Republic was outvoted two times with the Netherlands and one time with each of eleven other Member States (Austria, Denmark, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Belgium and Malta). If we included all of the six situations where the CR abstained from voting and apply the same logic to other Member States, the concurrences with other Member States would look as follows: overall, the Czech Republic did not vote for any legislative act – i.e. voted against or abstained from voting – most frequently along with Austria (4 times). Three times, the Czech Republic did not vote for a proposal along with Denmark, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Some Member States are often outvoted in one of European policies. For example, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands often voted unsuccessfully against a budgetary proposal. The Czech Republic three times abstained or voted against on environmental and public health issues and two times in the matters of agriculture, civic liberties and justice and



on interior or legal issues. Thus, no dominant area or issue has been identified in the above list.

When interpreting the above data, it is necessary to take into consideration the specifics of voting in the Council of the EU. This intergovernmental institution has a significantly consensual character and there are frequent efforts to reach a compromise that would be acceptable for as many Member States as possible.⁴³ This is one of the reasons why all countries register a high degree of identical voting. The dedication to continue negotiating until the very last doubts of any Member State are removed applies mainly to legislative proposals that have far-reaching consequences or that are very sensitive for any of the countries. Moreover, the efforts to remove the existing differences go all the way through from the lowest working groups up to the political level. The voting itself is therefore often only a formality after intensive multi-level negotiations. Thus, especially the finding that the Czech Republic was most frequently outvoted along with Austria should not be overestimated.

Conclusion

From an analysis of the Czech Republic's partners and allies in the EU based on strategic documents (in fact only based on the *Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic*, because the *Strategy of the Czech Republic in the EU* does not mention any allies), perception of elites of European policy, long-standing interest coalitions and integration blocks and voting in the Council of the EU, we can draw several interesting conclusions. First, it has turned out that the triangulation of the chosen methods and data sources brings only a partial concurrence in results. Both the *Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy* and elites of European policy regard the Czech Republic's neighbouring countries as the country's important allies in the EU. However, elites add other countries of the EU's northern wing to the list. On the other hand, according to the participation in interest coalitions and the degree of non-involvement/involvement in integration projects that go beyond the framework shared by the EU-28, we have identified the United Kingdom as the closest ally of the Czech Republic in the EU. The UK, though, is on the opposite end of the spectrum according to voting in the Council of the EU. Nevertheless, these data have to be taken with a grain of salt, as already mentioned above.

The UK's result is very interesting. Elites of European policy expect the relations with London to deteriorate in spite of the fact that the Czech Republic was along with the United Kingdom a member of seven out of nine of the identified coalitions or was in the same

⁴³ See also ZBÍRAL, Robert. *Teorie a praxe vyjednávání v Radě Evropské unie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Mezinárodní politologický ústav, 2008.



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position with regard to selected integration projects. Germany ended up on the opposite end of the spectrum. Despite being perceived as the second strongest ally of the Czech Republic in the EU, Prague and Berlin featured only in two out of nine interest coalitions. This contrast should not be overestimated given the day-to-day functioning of the EU, which is underscored by the result of the analysis of voting in the Council of the EU, where both countries appeared at the end of the ranking of the Czech Republic's allies. However, it is worth considering how the alliances declared in policy documents and in elites' opinions can be translated to the reality of Czech European policy. Based on our analysis, we have not found any consistent or sophisticated way of finding partners in European politics. Improving the current situation should be one of the tasks of the new government and its European policy.



Resources

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ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (AMO)

Association for International Affairs (AMO) is a preeminent independent think-tank in the Czech Republic in the field of foreign policy. Since 1997, the mission of AMO has been to contribute to a deeper understanding of international affairs through a broad range of educational and research activities. Today, AMO represents a unique and transparent platform in which academics, business people, policy makers, diplomats, the media and NGO's can interact in an open and impartial environment.

In order to achieve its goals AMO strives to:

- formulate and publish briefings, research and policy papers;
- arrange international conferences, expert seminars, roundtables, public debates;
- organize educational projects;
- present critical assessment and comments on current events for local and international press;
- create vital conditions for growth of a new expert generation;
- support the interest in international relations among broad public;
- cooperate with like-minded local and international institutions.

RESEARCH CENTER

Founded in October 2003, the AMO's Research Center has been dedicated to pursuing research and raising public awareness of international affairs, security and foreign policy. The Research Center strives to identify and analyze issues crucial to Czech foreign policy and the country's position in the world. To this end, the Research Center produces independent analyses; encourages expert and public debate on international affairs; and suggests solutions to tackle problems in today's world. The Center's activities can be divided into two main areas: first, it undertakes [research and analysis](#) of foreign policy issues and comments on [AMO blog](#); and second, it fosters dialogue with the policy-makers, expert community, and broad public.

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KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG, OFFICE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The main principles of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) are freedom, justice and solidarity. The KAS is a German political foundation, which is closely associated with the Christian-Democratic Union (CDU). The aim and commitment of the foundation is to preserve the intellectual heritage of the first German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, which is mainly characterised by the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the vision of a united Europe, an orientation towards the social market economy, and the firm alignment of foreign policy with the Transatlantic system of values. An important part of the legacy of Konrad Adenauer is also the emphasis on Christian-democratic values both in politics and in society. Therefore, the foundation strives for such social conditions, that guarantee inalienable dignity to every individual, as well as the liberties, rights and duties given by the constitution. The individual is the starting point of social justice, free democratic law and sustainable economic growth.

The KAS is not only active in Germany, but all around the world. There are two main offices in Germany, in Berlin and St. Augustin. Furthermore, the foundation is represented in Germany by sixteen regional educational institutes and two educational centers. Beside these, the foundation has more than 80 offices abroad, which organize projects in more than 120 countries worldwide. The office in Prague was opened in 1991 and in cooperation with significant representatives of the Czech state administration, politics, universities and civil society; it organizes about 150 projects every year.

The focus of the Czech office lays on the development and maintenance of a free and democratic society as well as a social and ecological market economy, integrated in the European Common Market. In this context, strengthening the bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, as between partners in unified Europe, is also one of the aims of the KAS. In addition, the foundation endorses integration of the Czech Republic in the EU and strives for an active role of the country in the community of European states. Pluralistic socio-political dialog and civic education are the cornerstones of the projects, organized by the foundation together with its Czech partner organizations. The purpose of this activity is to raise the interest in politics throughout the society, to strengthen the engagement of citizens in the democratic processes and to develop civic competence, which is necessary for such democratic participation. In order to achieve this, the foundation supports conferences, workshops, summer schools, roundtables, lectures etc. Scholarships for university study or internships abroad are also granted by the foundation. These forms of education and publishing activity represent the main activities of the Czech office of the KAS.