

Czech Priorities within the Foreign, Security, and Defense Policy after the 2025 Elections

The current international situation is characterized by considerable dynamism and the redrawing of previously unshakeable paradigms. In such an uncertain environment, a combination of stability, but also flexibility, the capacity to build coalitions, political realism, and openness/non-ideological approach is essential for a country the size and importance of the Czech Republic.

Multilateral formats

Strengthen the security of Czechia through active membership in **NATO**, fulfillment of allied commitments, in particular, the gradual increase in defense spending, and other steps to support transatlantic ties, including the US military presence in European countries. Support a unified EU and NATO response to Russian aggression in Ukraine and strive to maintain the US as the key military, political, and economic power needed to end the war.

European Union: build 'coalitions of the willing' or blocking coalitions with like-minded countries to obtain the necessary majority to push through measures that will increase the EU's competitiveness, in particular deregulation, reduction of bureaucracy, and reassessment of the Green Deal (including the postponement of the EU ETS 2 system or the ban of combustion engines until a majority is reached so they can be abolished). Consistently opposing changes to the fundamental treaties and express the Czech Republic's supportive stance on preserving the right of veto in the foreign policy and security matters. Actively fight against EU measures that weaken transatlantic cooperation, particularly in the field of defense industry and technology. Maintain and strengthen the restrictive migration policy regarding migrants from different cultural backgrounds.

Central European cooperation/V4: cooperate with neighboring countries where we have common interests, or where it is possible. Take advantage of changes in the current German government's policy (investment in defense, weakening of the ideological approach to climate policy) to draw Germany more into Central European cooperation. The renewal of the V4 is unlikely during this government's term - parliamentary elections will be held in three V4 countries in the next two years, the results of which, and especially the future coalitions, are difficult to predict. Greater cooperation in the region can draw on EU policies (climate policy, migration, EU accession conditions) and the strengthening of infrastructure connectivity (motorways, high-speed railways), as infrastructure connectivity is a necessary condition for increasing the region's resilience. The new Czech government should seek to establish enhanced relations especially with Poland and redefine its approach to other initiatives—particularly the 3SI (Three Seas Initiative) project, whose focus on strengthening connectivity makes it possible to bypass differing perceptions of the Russian - Ukrainian conflict.

UN (United Nations): Strengthen cooperation and coordination among the countries of the transatlantic axis with other like-minded nations to maintain the influence of the West within the UN system.

Key bilateral relations

US: United States will continue to be the Czech Republic's most important political and security relationship. At present, the Czech Republic is not exploiting its full potential for a variety of reasons. Through coordinated cooperation, achieve a visit by the US president to the Czech Republic, or the reception of the Czech president or prime minister at the White House. Improve conditions for US investors in the Czech Republic and for Czech companies' access to the US market.

The Czech Republic's stance on the war in **Ukraine** (managing the wave of refugees, the ammunition initiative) has significantly raised the country's international political standing and moral capital in recent years. Continue support for Ukraine and for efforts for a ceasefire that will lead to a sustainable and stable situation and do not further strengthen Russia. Aid to Ukraine, whether during the war (through the arms industry) or after its end, represents a significant opportunity for Czech industry.

Continue support for **Israel** (including in multilateral forums, especially in the EU. This continuous support must then be leveraged more effectively for our business. Consider moving the Czech embassy to the capital (Jerusalem) with the participation or backing/ support of Washington. Use close relations with Israel to support bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and the US.

In Central Europe, promote one enhanced partnership – with **Poland**. Cooperation with Poland should be one of the pillars of Czech security and defense policy (it is necessary to consider the possibility of formalizing the bilateral relationship through a new strategic agreement). Coordination with Poland is essential in key anticipated disputes concerning European policies (ETS 2 and other areas of the Fit for 55 agenda, and the implementation of the migration pact). Better utilize Poland's potential as another partner for energy diversification (access to Baltic LNG terminals) and as an important pillar of the 'pro-nuclear' coalition (together with Slovakia).

Leverage the shift in **Germany's** perspectives on key economic and security issues to deepen the strategic dialogue between both governments aimed at maintaining industrial competitiveness, strengthening European defense capabilities, and energy security. This should be primarily manifested in the realization of key transport and energy infrastructure projects.

Implementation and tools in foreign policy

It is necessary to establish an effective format for communication between the government and the president from the outset, to maintain coordination on fundamental foreign policy decisions and a unified voice for the Czech Republic on the world stage.

Clearly define priorities and strengthen human and financial capacities to implement them. Invest in information and analytical tools (diplomacy, intelligence services, information processing technologies, etc.) and human resources that advance foreign policy priorities. Amend the Civil Service Act and, in connection with this, fundamentally revise the Foreign Service Act to make it more flexible.

A significant increase to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) budget cannot be expected; savings must be sought internally. The MFA still has many redundant properties abroad; initiate their sale

and, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, agree to redirect the proceeds to the MFA budget. Fundamentally reassess membership in international organizations and/or groupings.

Security and defense policy

Membership in NATO is the cornerstone of the Czech Republic's defense policy. It must therefore meet its commitments regarding defense spending and the development of military capabilities. The basis for this will be the implementation of the key commitment made at the NATO summit in The Hague (2025): a gradual increase in defense spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2035. Only in this way will the Czech Republic acquire the necessary military capabilities, recruit and retain a sufficient number of professional soldiers, build up larger military reserves, and develop the necessary infrastructure. The shortage of military personnel and the under-staffing of the Czech Armed Forces is currently the most serious challenge facing the Czech Republic's defense. All available tools must be used for the recruitment and retention of soldiers to increase their numbers to around 40,000 active-duty soldiers. To this end, it is advisable to employ unorthodox measures, including the possible construction by the government of service housing for soldiers.

NATO Capability Development Targets (CT25), adopted in June 2025, must form the core of the Czech Republic's national defense planning. By mid-2026 at the latest, the Czech Ministry of Defense should submit to the government a detailed plan for the implementation of CT25 by 2044. This plan must outline how and in what timeframe the individual capabilities will be developed. Within the CT implementation, there is enough room for prioritization based on national preferences. The Czech Republic's priorities should be as follows: (1) completing the heavy brigade, (2) developing robust ground-based air defense capabilities, (3) implementing economic and legislative conditions for increasing the number of Czech Armed Forces personnel to the required level, (4) procuring sufficient stockpiles of "consumable" military equipment, in particular ammunition, (5) acquiring unmanned systems (drones) and counter-drone defense systems, preferably as a 'service' capable of continuous development and adaptation rather than as a traditional weapons system.

It is also necessary to amend the legislative framework for defense, particularly in the following areas: (1) the Crisis Management Act and the Military Service Acts, to enable better preparation for defense and the timely implementation of deterrence measures even before the formal declaration of emergency states; (2) laws enabling defense against hostile or unidentified unmanned vehicles; (3) the Act on Foreign Trade in Military Materiel, which will allow for a full-fledged government-to-government regime of defense equipment sales.

It is needed to create, and to support by adopting appropriate legislation, a functional mechanism for cooperation between the state and the defense industry, in order to ensure the maintenance of the necessary production capacities in peacetime, and flexible supplies of sufficient volumes of defense materiel in times of crisis and conflict (including mobilization supplies, lifecycle support and management, and supply chain security). The defense industry must be turned into a full-fledged part of the Czech Republic's defense system. Both parties (the state and the industry) must obtain a predictable and mutually beneficial position within this relationship. In addition to the Ministry of Defense, other ministries and government agencies (Ministry of Industry and Trade, State Material Reserves Administration) must participate in this mechanism. This comprehensive

mechanism must be enshrined in a newly developed and government-approved 'Strategy for Cooperation between the State and the Defense Industry'.

The procurement process at the Ministry of Defense must be revised (accelerated and simplified). In the current security environment and in the context of rapid technological change, it is unacceptable for acquisition projects to take so long and be so complicated.

At the EU level, the Czech Republic must push for a level playing field and equal treatment for the Czech defense industry. It must also work with other like-minded countries to strive for the lifting, to the maximum extent possible, of the EU regulatory restrictions imposed on the defense industry. In the current security environment, where enhancing defense capabilities takes precedence, certain other public interests (such as environmental protection) may be restricted to achieve this goal.