

Policy analysis in the Czech Republic and the influence of supranational organisations

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Introduction

This chapter examines the impact of supranational organisations on policy making in the Czech Republic. The question to be answered is to what extent are national policy formulations influenced by international and national expertise – in the context of the direct influence of supranational organisations on national public policy making. We focus predominantly on the processes of problem identification and policy formulation; nevertheless, where necessary, implementation and evaluation of policies is taken into account as well.

After a theoretical outline, we present three case studies from different policy fields: social policy, educational po

licy and defence policy. All three policies consume a considerable part of the state budget.¹ They share the common feature of step-by-step adaptation of Czech politicians, civil servants, analysts, consultants, policy entrepreneurs, public and non-profit institutions to the need to identify and launch policies more ready to deal with (and make full use of) Europeanisation and globalisation. On the other hand, they differ in terms of both their content and the scale of the involvement of international actors and institutions on national policies. The European Union is the only institution which exercises considerable influence on all of them.

Even before the dramatic switch from a centralised state to a market economy and from an authoritarian political system to a political democracy in the 1990s, there was local scholarly expertise in policy analysis.² At the same time, there was a considerable deficit in understanding both the market's functioning and the democratic mediation of interests. Thus, support from outside prevailed during

The share of the state budget allocated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs represented 43%, to the Ministry of Education 11.6% and to the Defence Ministry 3.6% in 2013.

² Refer to Chapter Two, 'Public Policy in the Czech Republic: Historical Development and its Current State'.

the first decade after the fall of communism in 1989,³ sometimes with little understanding of the specificities of national culture, character and institutional legacies. Since the beginning of the third millennium, the national analytical capacities have become more professional in understanding policy making in new political and economic settings, and in their international contexts.

Based on the three case studies, we offer a tentative assessment on the developmental trends, shortcomings and prospects of the earlier mentioned processes at the end of the chapter.

Theoretical outline

Our approach is based on governance theory, as 'it has tremendous potential in opening up alternative ways of looking at political institutions, domestic-global linkages, trans-national co-operation, and different forms of public-private exchange' (Pierre, 2000, p 241).

On another occasion, we developed and applied the holistic concept of governance, consisting of three mutually dependent dimensions (Potůček, 2008a, 2008b):

- Public policies are no longer a matter of a single decision of a national sovereign. Governance is executed at several levels, acting and interacting simultaneously (Dančák and Hloušek, 2007). We will take into consideration just two levels – the supranational and national ones.
- This research field cannot be reduced to the government and its activities. Other regulators should also be taken into account, namely the market and the civic sector (Potůček, 1999).
- Contemporary governance cannot put its entire stake in hierarchies; it is vitally dependent on horizontal links as well as on informal policy networks.

Decision makers have to respect institutional regulations (laws, standards). They have to take into consideration tough fiscal restrictions. They have at their disposal programmatic documents, such as policy goals, strategies, Green and White books, and benchmarks. Last but not least, they may (or may not) consider the advice of international and national policy analysts and consultants.

³ Namely the EU's and OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) technical assistance programmes (such as PHARE [Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies] and SIGMA [Support for Improvement in Governance and Management]) and the tailor-made programmes of American foundations.

Case studies

Impact of EU policies on Czech social policy

EU policies with national relevance

The history of post-communist candidate countries' preparation for EU accession⁴ started with the launching of the Copenhagen criteria of accession (1993). These criteria were designed more as a technical (economic and political) instrument to be implemented from above than as an appropriate tool to steer people's living conditions in the candidate countries. Legal, economic and political issues prevailed.

Candidate countries were asked to reform their national economies to be able to compete, and be compatible with market economies. They had to build robust and reliable institutions of political democracy, and adjust their legal and administrative systems to the *acquis communautaire*.

On the other hand, genuine social goals were at the very bottom of the then list of priorities – limited to the preservation of individual human rights and the building of a loosely defined framework for social policy making. Most national social policies in the post-communist candidate countries in the beginning and middle of the 1990s consisted of the withdrawal of the state and the improvement of efficiency by the privatisation and marketisation of services. These steps were to be completed by the reduction of the coverage and standards of all social benefits except social assistance, a well-targeted safety net for the poor (Ferge, 2001).

The 1999 elections brought about a majority of left-of-centre political parties in the European Parliament. The European Council launched the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. It opened up new political initiatives, stressing the importance of human resources, social cohesion and quality of life. The Czech Republic was asked to accept the Lisbon Strategy after the 2002 Barcelona Summit, when the preparation of the new member states to enter the EU, until then organised within the logic of the Copenhagen criteria, had just been completed. Fully fledged participation in the Lisbon Strategy started only with the country's accession to the EU in May 2004. Thus, social policy moved to the top of the EU political agenda of enlargement as late as one decade after setting up the Copenhagen criteria of accession.

The 2004 elections changed the political map of the European Parliament by giving the majority to right-of-centre political parties. In 2005 the New European Commission under Chairman José Barroso redefined the Lisbon Strategy by prioritising economic growth, education, research and development, and fighting unemployment. The Czech government reacted by preparing the National Lisbon

⁴ The first wave of countries consisted of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. They joined the EU on 1 May 2004.

Programme 2005–08 (Office, 2005). Significantly, it consisted of three parts only: macroeconomic, microeconomic and employment.

The Czech scholarly community discussed the nature and implementation potential of the Lisbon Strategy in general and in the Czech Republic in particular. The whole spectrum of positions has occurred. Some economists (such as Václav Klaus, the long-term Chairman of the Civic Democratic Party, Czech Prime Minister from 1992 to 1997 and the Czech President between 2002 and 2013) have challenged the inclusion of social cohesion, environmental goals and the sustainable development concept. Even the scholars, who in principle agreed with the structure of the Lisbon Strategy goals and the usefulness of such a programmatic effort, have found it quite difficult to see it as a realistic document, namely its ambitious part that endeavours to make the EU 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010'.

Technical assistance

The influence of the European Union in supporting and mediating modernisation can be identified in various fields. Well worth noting was the EU's assistance in institution and capacity building (for example the PHARE and SIGMA projects), specifically designed modernisation efforts – reform of public administration, regulatory reform, training of professionals (including civil servants), implementation of new methods of public management and administration, collaboration in the field of education and so on.

National Action Plans of Social Inclusion (NAPSIs)

The European Commission asked all the candidate countries' governments to elaborate Joint Inclusion Memoranda in order to identify key problems and policy measures to combat poverty and social exclusion in 2002. The Czech version was approved by the representatives of the European Commission and the Czech government two years later (Ministry, 2004).

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2004–06 followed suit (Ministry, 2005). Though called a plan, it was simply a summary of programmes, plans and measures that had either already been implemented or were about to be launched. The new measures in favour of the disadvantaged and fighting poverty and social exclusion were set out in the programming document on tapping money from the European Structural Funds. The weak point of the document was the lack of explicit goals, poorly defined responsibility for implementation, and missing links to the budgetary process. Significantly, the Ministry of Finance did not participate in the preparation of this document (Beránková, 2004; Potůček, 2004; Atkinson et al, 2005). The second National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for 2006–08 (Ministry, 2006) and the third National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008–10 (Ministry, 2008) were elaborated, with specific

attention paid to selected policy fields and a more sophisticated methodology, but with similar negligible real life policy impact.

Various authors have described the process of 'Europeanisation' (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003); some positive effects of this process could also be recognised.⁵ The actors participating in NAPSIs were gradually honing their craft as to both the methods at their disposal and thematic cultivation of problems within this category. The plans brought about increasing public awareness of 'newly emerging' social problems. They legitimised some until then neglected social problems, namely the problem of rising homelessness (Hradecká and Hradecký, 1996).

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

The EU policies toward social policy making in member states relied predominantly on 'soft' instruments, such as the Open Method of Coordination.⁶ In the Czech case, operational and tactical tasks, short-term interests, lack of time and professional blindness severely limited the effects of its application (Potůček, 2012). Although the OMC was apparently toothless when it came to influencing strategic social policy choices, the elements of its positive, though incremental, impact on the overall culture of political discourse and decision making (such as the rising activism of non-profit services, advocacy organisations and epistemic communities) should not be neglected.

National initiatives

The elaboration of 'The Social Doctrine of the Czech Republic' (Sociální doktrína České republiky, 2002) represents an interesting example of the activity of a national epistemic community. Its aim was to build a broad national consensus concerning the future orientation, goals, priorities and corresponding instruments of Czech social policy. Five preparatory conferences in 1998–2000 were a 'joint venture' of the academic community concentrated around the non-profit Socioklub, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Senate (the Upper House of the Czech Parliament). The document, elaborated by a group of nine academicians from various fields and with various political affiliations, was mentioned in the coalition agreement statement of the political parties in power in July 2002, as the starting point for the further development of government social policy and its priorities and approaches. Nevertheless, until its resignation in 2004, the government failed to find sufficient capacity and motivation for the

⁵ Refer to Chapter Six for more detail.

⁶ The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is a form of EU soft law, a process of policy making which does not lead to binding EU legislative measures or require member states to change their law. It aims to spread best practices and achieve greater convergence towards the main EU goals.

consequent implementation steps: social policy decisions mostly stemmed from either urgent problems or strong demands articulated by various pressure groups.

Other examples of concerted national efforts to analyse and design policies were two attempts to prepare consistent proposals for pension reform. A public discussion about pension reform was initiated by experts from international financial institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, who strongly recommended that the country opt for compulsory private co-insurance. This new type of old-age insurance would complement the pay-as-you-go public scheme that would gradually lose its importance in the total amount of redistributed resources. Another stimulus was the EU Green Paper on 'Confronting Demographic Change: A New Solidarity between the Generations' (Commission, 2005). Consecutive governments established cross-party task forces for pension reform in 2004–05 and again in 2010–11 in order to simulate the consequences of alternative pension reform options and thus contribute to rational discussion of the representatives of different ideological views. Nevertheless, neither of these attempts to reach a political consensus has materialised in successful pension reform implementation. The first attempt ended up in the House of Commons, which refused to pass the corresponding bill. The second attempt was a Pyrrhic victory, as the law establishing a fully funded private second pillar of pension system came into power in 2013, but it gained only negligible public support. The new coalition government decided to abolish it completely by 2015.

Conclusion: social policy

The EU's role in shaping certain domestic policy fields, namely social policy, should not be overestimated. The obvious discrepancy between the Copenhagen criteria of accession, covering a very limited part of the social welfare agenda and implemented in 1993, and the Lisbon Strategy, laid out as an explicit and balanced public policy programme for the candidate countries as late as 2002 and politically and administratively executed only since 2004, opened a considerable space for other, more active and influential international actors, namely the World Bank and International Monetary Fund led by the Washington Consensus' neoliberal ideology of the 1990s (Potůček, 2004). The European Union's political weakness created a sharp sociopolitical tension: the Czech Republic joined the EU with its health, social and employment policies not developed enough to cope with the demands of this strategic policy document.

The European Union did not communicate with the country in a single voice. One of its two Janus faces spoke about further trade liberalisation (including services of general interest), fiscal discipline, flexible labour markets, the need to make the European economy the most competitive in the world, whereas the EU's other Janus face spoke about social justice, social rights, the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The impact of supranational institutions on Czech educational policy

Making changes in education policy is a long process. Education systems typically have an internal inertia which works against efforts to change the system. After 1989, Czech policy makers tried to set up and implement new ideas and build a competitive education system for a market-oriented economy. During the time of the transformation of Czech society in the 1990s, there was a strong demand for policy recommendations from internationally respected organisations for transformation of the education system. Based on the analysis of political documents adopted during 1990–2012, it is possible to consider these three: the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the European Union and the IEA.⁷

These recommendations are expected to be adopted and adapted to the national conditions because the opinions of experts from supranational institutions constitute much stronger arguments for the Czech political representation than the opinions of national experts. The ideal approach is that the recommendations of supranational institutions pass through discussions between national experts and government institutions. There are many national expert groups in the Czech Republic which are involved in the education policy analysis process. Some of them have an academic background (that is the Education Policy Centre⁸), some of them were established as think tanks (that is ISEA⁹) and some of them are interested groups of experts from educational institutions (that is EDUin¹⁰) or associations of educational institutions (that is SKAV¹¹). These groups are involved in discussions about the direction of education policy and sometimes also in the creation of national policy documents.

OECD analyses of education policy

The analytical work of the OECD in the field of education policies can be divided into two types. The first is through reviews of national education policies and the second works on the basis of the review of a selected education area in several member states (*thematic review*). In the first, the country is the object of the analysis, while in the second the theme of education policy is taken as the key factor.

The recommendations of the OECD experts are usually taken seriously. These recommendations make up an institutional framework that enables national experts to participate in the process of policy making and provides a discussion platform on the future direction of national policies for civil servants, (in)dependent experts and the scholarly community. The role of experts and the scholarly community

⁷ The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, www.iea.nl

⁸ Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague, www.strediskovzdelavacipolitiky.info

⁹ Institute for Social and Economic Analyses, www.isea-cz.org

¹⁰ A public benefit association, www.eduin.cz

¹¹ Standing Conference of Educational Associations, www.skav.cz

The first request of the Czech Republic for an OECD review was sent in 1990 and the work was done between the years 1990 and 1993. The review was focused on national tertiary education policies and although those recommendations were highly appreciated by national analysts and policy makers and marked as key factors for further development of the Czech higher education sector, most of the results have never been incorporated into the strategic documents (Pabian, 2007). Other levels of the Czech education system were reviewed by the OECD experts in 1995–96 and in 1999. Some of the recommendations resulting from those evaluations were included in the *National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic: White Paper* (Kotásek, 2001, p. 7), especially in the areas of finance, access to tertiary education, adult education, quality assurance, educational staff and so on. In 2005–08, the OECD compiled the *Thematic Review of Tertiary Education*, in which the Czech Republic participated. For many experts and policy makers it was a surprise that the OECD experts' recommendations were almost the same as in 1992. This may reflect the persistent weaknesses of the Czech higher education system (Pabian, 2007). Some recommendations were incorporated into the *White Paper on Tertiary Education* (Matějů et al., 2009), but only within the narrow specific view of participating national experts. This White Paper has never had strong support: firstly, there has never been a broad consensus even among policy makers or national experts, and secondly, representatives of public universities play a key role in tertiary sector governance in the Czech Republic. It is undisputed that it is difficult to enforce any reforms that could weaken the privileged position of public universities in the tertiary sector and in the decision-making processes dealing with them (Pabian, 2007). The adoption of both OECD recommendations on tertiary education, which were incorporated into the policy documents, was influenced by this factor.

The OECD and IEA surveys in many areas of education are a special case of the influence of supranational institutions on Czech education policy. Due to the lack of data in some areas (especially in the area of key competencies), these surveys are the only relevant source of information on these issues. Some of the problems of the Czech education system were revealed by the poor results of Czech pupils and students in these tests. Only then did Czech policy makers begin to be seriously interested in the problematic areas. For example, the deteriorating results of 15-year-old pupils in PISA¹² (OECD), pupils of the eighth grade of basic school

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The EU's influence on educational policy

The OMC, although not mandatory, is based on the assumption that the EU member states should adopt the European goals in their national policies. In practice, it leads to the Europeanisation of national education policies through facilitated coordination (Bulmer and Radaelli, 2004, p 7). It would seem that the OMC is an ideal platform for European governance, but this is not an accurate perspective. It is very difficult to include independent experts, who often have a critical view of the analyses prepared by the European Commission and the common European goals, within the European working networks. A similar issue can be found in the Czech policy-making process – usually there is no time or will to invite national experts to the consultations and transfer of the European recommendations or goals into Czech national strategies. The implementation process is, in the majority of cases, limited to government institutions. Consultation with national experts takes place in problematic cases only.

In 2007, at the European level it was already quite clear that in four of the five stated benchmarks it would not be possible to achieve the adopted target values. Therefore, the Council of Ministers of Education, Youth and Culture gave a mandate to the European Commission to prepare a new strategy (including a new set of benchmarks) which should be targeted on the period 2011-20: the 'Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020)' programme, which was adopted in

¹⁴ Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, www.iea.nl/pirls_2011.html

2009 during the Czech Presidency of the EU. At the same time, a new ten-year economic strategy, 'Europe 2020', was launched in 2010, following the Lisbon Strategy. Two benchmarks from ET 2020 were included in the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy: reducing the early school leaving drop-out rate (from the current 15% to 10%) and increasing the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40% (European Commission, 2010, p 9). Based on the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU member states should adopt their own national reform programmes (NRP), which should be coherent with the EU headline targets and updated annually. In response to the NRP and their annual updates, the Council of the European Union gives country-specific recommendations.

The two mentioned EU headline targets are included in the Czech NRP, which is updated and approved annually by the Czech government. For 2013, the national targets were set at 5.5% for the early school leavers' drop-out rate¹⁵ and 32% for completion of tertiary education (Office, 2013, p 9). Generally, in the field of education the Council recommended that the Czech government focus on increasing the availability of affordable and quality pre-school childcare in 2012 (Council, 2012, p 15). In 2013 the Council recommended taking action in the area of compulsory education (a comprehensive evaluation framework, supporting schools with low ranking educational outcomes), higher education (accreditation, funding) and funding of research institutions (Council, 2013, p 10). These recommendations are reflected in the updated Czech NRP as well as in the forthcoming strategic document that should incorporate all existing documents directly focused on education (Educational Policy Strategy of the Czech Republic to 2020¹⁶).

It must be stated here that it is somewhat difficult not to reflect the recommendations of the Commission or the Council in the national policy-making process, although these recommendations are not always in line with national priorities. Countries that do not accept the recommendations may be labelled as a 'bad example'. This negative assessment of course worsens the position of member states in further negotiations on the priorities of education policy in the EU.

Conclusion: educational policy

We can say that the analytical capacity of supranational institutions is quite well used for policy recommendations in the field of education because education is perceived as one of the key factors for successful development of a knowledge-based economy. The policy analysis documents of the OECD and the EU have

¹⁵ Early school leavers – persons aged 18 to 24 who have finished no more than a lower secondary education and are not involved in further education or training as a percentage of the total population aged 18 to 24.

¹⁶ In Czech: www.vzdelavani2020.cz/clanek/12/aktualni-dokumenty.html

a relatively strong impact on policy making in the Czech Republic. While the recommendations of the OECD are mostly widely discussed among educational professionals, and national experts and the scholarly community are usually involved in transforming recommendations into national policy documents, recommendations of the EU are generally accepted at the government level and they are often not discussed at all.

Impact of supranational institutions on Czech defence policy

Paradox of the small allies' defence policy

Defence policy traditionally differs from other public policies in its potentiality. Most of its implementation in Europe consists of preparing for something that is actually never going to happen. Only recently has this 'missing' peacetime purpose been complemented with crisis management operations, supplanting the defence of one's own territory.

The defence policy of the Czech Republic as a small or midsize, non-neutral European country is deeply paradoxical. Its concept of national defence has been reformed into the concept of collective defence. Most European states simply cannot maintain the capabilities to defend themselves solely using their own resources and manpower; in principle they share the burden of defence with allies.¹⁷ The allied framework is predominantly represented by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1949 and to a much lesser extent by the European Union since the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. At the same time, this allied model of defence does not restrict full national sovereignty over the defence policy of any member state – in its goals, priorities, doctrine and, surprisingly, armaments and operations as well. Curiously enough, countries are basically not limited in doing what they want and can afford to build their armed forces, transform them and deploy them in legitimate international operations, and on the other hand in practice they have submitted their core task of self-defence to the command of the international organisation (NATO).

This disconnectedness has inevitably influenced the ways in which supranational expertise impacts on national policy making in the Czech Republic. Disregard the fact that NATO and the EU are actually international governmental organisations, with a very limited purely 'supranational' element.

From the Warsaw Pact into NATO and the EU

The pre-1989 Czechoslovak defence policy was formed within the Warsaw Pact (1955–91). This intergovernmental organisation was run by the Soviet hegemony,

¹⁷ There are only a few exceptions of those who at least aim at defence sovereignty and self-sufficiency: Finland and Switzerland among small states, and France and the United Kingdom among the big ones.

authoritarian and directive, not in a multilateral mode of operation. So, the flow of expertise was Soviet-controlled, unilateral and one-directional in questions of strategy, doctrine, operational planning, armament and military technology development.

When communism collapsed, the Cold War ended and the Warsaw Pact was dismantled, Czechoslovakia's sovereign defence policy was marked with gradually growing participation in international crisis management operations (the UN's Desert Storm 1990-91 in Iraq, peace enforcement missions in former Yugoslavia, led by the UN from 1992 to 1995 and NATO starting in 1996). A unique challenge took place in 1992 as the federation and its armed forces had to be divided into new states with two separate militaries. Then the armed forces of the Czech Republic went through a permanent transformation in the 1990s, consisting mostly of reductions in manpower and weaponry.

For the Czech political representation, NATO membership was the only viable prospect for future defence. NATO's Partnership for Peace programme and Study on Enlargement (1995) set up the accession agenda of 'NATO standards'. Five criteria were political (democracy, a market economy, a good neighbourhood, human rights and civilian control over the military), and only one military (minimum interoperability). The process accelerated in 1997 when the Czech Republic was invited to join the Alliance. Seven areas of standards had to be met (1997-99) with the support of intensively mobilised expertise:

- political (wide majority support for membership);
- institutional (adaptation of the public administration);
- legislative (NATO legal acquis, amendment to Constitution);
- defence (planning, interoperability, infrastructure for Allied reinforcement);
- resources (financial and human);
- information security;
- public support.

To achieve this, routine institutional structures within the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence had to be augmented with temporary expert committees. NATO accession brought about new permanent expert structures: the Security Council (BRS) with several committees and the National Security Authority to safeguard classified information protection (Borkovec, 2014).

On the military level, Czechs were concerned with adapting the armed forces, still manned with conscripts and equipped with obsolete weapons systems, to sufficient interoperability. Most of this was done through the 'learning by doing' method as the Czech troops were deployed in large numbers on NATO-led missions to Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, and later Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Czech Republic's accession to the European Union in 2004 was not significant as the EU at that point was a marginal actor in both security and defence. The high ambitions declared in the European Security Strategy of 2003 and in the Lisbon Treaty of 2007 were not supported by adequately robust

policies. Despite the Czech reservations regarding the EU's relevance for defence, the country put great effort into forming the EU Battle Group in 2009, with lesser contributions to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations.

Forms of supranational dissemination of expertise

Being a member of the Alliance since 1999 has naturally had a deep impact on Prague's defence policy formation and implementation. The guidance and steering 'from above' continues to be manifold, implicit and explicit, direct and indirect.

The reform of the armed forces in 2001-03, an ambitious modernisation project to recast their profile into smaller, mobile, fully professional and fully interoperable forces, was a milestone in the permanent transition of the Czech military. However, this project was not motivated, or directed by any request from the Alliance. NATO never prescribes what a member state must do with its forces and resources. The overall shape, structure, size and equipment of the national military rest solely upon the member state's sovereign choice, competence, responsibility and affluence. Similarly, documents like *Long-term Vision of Defence* (2008) or the *White Paper on Defence of the Czech Republic* (2011) display only a loose, declaratory link to NATO's key policy document, the Alliance's strategic concept (the last one adopted in 2010). Nevertheless, in regular cycles NATO staff formulate specific targets identifying the contribution each ally is expected to make towards the overall capabilities of the Alliance. NATO expertise is also available upon request by any ally to provide recommendations on what lines of capability development would provide the greatest benefit to the Alliance.

The following categories, ordered from tacit to voiced, may be utilised to trace the flows of expertise between the national and supranational levels:

- socialisation;
- standardisation;
- certification;
- NATO defence planning process.

Socialisation refers here to the 'soft' process of moving people within the national defence establishment toward sharing, accepting and disseminating the values and skills from the international governmental organisation, here mostly NATO. Gheciu (2005) found that this cultural interchange took the form of teaching and persuasion at least during the accession process. NATO representatives assumed the role of educators; Czech politicians, diplomats and officials were students, adopting the set of liberal democratic norms and also navigating into the lifeworld of shared values and Western security culture. However, this process can also be denoted as self-socialisation, as NATO interacted only with decision makers, with limited intensity, and let the Czech elites and experts persuade the domestic public on their own, with the modest but sophisticated support of NATO public diplomacy. In 1999 NATO's Secretary General George Robertson assessed that

the Czech armed forces still had a lot of work to overcome communist-inherited habits and attitudes (Gheciu, 2005, p 987). Nowadays the Alliance culture is a fully internalised routine within the Czech defence establishment, creating a large enough pool of 'NATO-positive' officers and civilian experts to maintain the enduring goodwill of the domestic political representation and public.

Inside the NATO HQ (headquarters), the Czech experts are concentrated within the national delegation; the military is also represented in the international military staff and in the NATO Command Structure. These national representatives are usually posted for two to three years; the rotation distributes the income benefits of foreign deployment among larger numbers of personnel. Hence, the concentration and continuity of expertise and knowledge is limited, if not undermined repeatedly. However enthusiastic, short-term rotated interns cannot attain the same level of experience as freelancers hired by NATO HQ (international staff and international military staff). The bad news for the Alliance is that its pool of independent experts is shrinking due to budget cutbacks, and their contracts are shortened (no longer eight or ten year contracts).

Standardisation is the least visible, often neglected form of supranational expertise. 'Standards' in general were the adaptive instrument in the process of accession. Due to their particular technical meanings, they present an on-the-ground, explicit tool for routine cooperation. NATO standardisation covers an extensive scope of technologies, techniques and procedures – from classified information management, training, procurement, requirements for weapons and arms, and so on. The standards developed by Alliance structures and agencies have to be followed by member states' militaries and public administration bodies, and by private suppliers and contractors. The impact of standardisation is ubiquitous in the Czech Republic, since for example standards for classified information protection are used routinely – not only by everyone who interacts with the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces, but the ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior as well.

Certification is a tool enhancing interoperability on the tactical level. The member states' units from battalion level above need to undergo the CREVAL (ground forces) and TACEVAL (tactical air force) certification before deployment in NATO operations. In the Czech army, the mechanised battalions have passed CREVAL certification repeatedly.

The *NATO Defence Planning Process* (NDPP) is the most pronounced and prominent vehicle of expertise. Its major purpose is to coordinate the member states' contributions to the Alliance's total pool of forces and capabilities. Generally the NDPP consists of five steps:

- 1 Establishing political guidance.
- 2 Determination of total requirements needed, and their breakdown into minimum capability requirements.
- 3 Apportionment of requirements to member states in the form of capability targets.

- 4 Facilitation of implementation.
- 5 Review of results, capability review.

Supranational expertise is first present in the second step – that is, determining the minimum capability requirements, or in other words what capabilities NATO countries must generate collectively in order to meet the Alliance's level of ambition. Then the third step – that is setting the capability targets (former force goals) – takes place, in which the NATO staffs proposes the targets for each member state. Quite often the member states refuse some of the proposed targets; then the Defence Planning and Policy Committee decides whether the target is or is not 'a reasonable challenge' for that particular ally. It is important to say that the member state in question has no vote in this case. In the fifth step member states are requested to submit their replies to the Defence Planning Capability Survey (former Defence Planning Questionnaire). These national replies are evaluated by experts from the NATO staff who then elaborate an assessment from NATO's perspective of individual nations' capability development plans and other contributions to the Alliance's efforts. The assessment also includes an indication, again from the NATO perspective, of where the major shortfalls are and what the focus of National Capability Development Plans should be. This is essentially the only institutionalised NATO feedback on national defence efforts which is regularly brought to the attention of defence ministers (Stejskal, 2013, pp 72-73).

In 2013, the Czech Republic accepted all 44 capability targets, including the provision of supersonic fighters and teams for post-conflict reconstruction. It had also faced questioning by international staff experts about some of its intentions, which were broadly not coherent with NATO's interests. For instance, the Czech plan to purchase anti-ground precision-guided munitions only for light combat aircraft and basically only for training purposes (since the use of these aircraft in operations outside of national territory is highly unlikely) was questioned as the required heavier aircraft had not yet been fitted for operational use of such munition. In another example from 2007-08, NATO recommended abandoning a number of rescue battalions which were not deployable outside the national territory, and reinvesting the freed resources in development of capabilities usable in NATO operations. In this case the Czechs followed the advice (Stejskal, 2013, pp 79-80).

Besides the regular design of the NDPP, a substantial part of defence policy (and relevant expertise) is articulated through 'initiatives', mostly launched based on diverse political motives. They consume a huge amount of the political and expert energy of the Alliance, like the 'NATO Response Force' concept launched at the 2002 Prague Summit or more recent initiatives 'Connected Forces' and 'Smart Defence'. These initiatives undergo a process from glorious political initiation through becoming a flagship of joint endeavour, to attracting less attention and, in some cases, fading away.

Institutions facilitating national expertise

The ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs are the primary organisations facilitating the penetration of supranational expertise. Most of the routine expert exchange belongs to the Defence Policy and Strategy Division (SOPS) and Division of Capabilities Development and Planning (SRPS) of the General Staff. Interestingly enough, the University of Defence does not play any visible role. Outside the public administration several academic think tanks and non-governmental organisations constitute the security and defence community, which provides independent expertise, public diplomacy, dialogue and, sometimes, consultancy in the field of defence policy. The impact of this non-state expert community is limited and varies in time according to the actual openness and receptivity of the government. Even think tanks with close ties to the defence establishment do not record any remarkable success in policy formulation.

Conclusion: defence policy

The reception of supranational expertise is subject to change. This can be illustrated by the altered attitude of the Czech political elite and defence establishment towards the EU CSDP. The acceptance and will to participate in the CSDP is currently much greater due to the settled division of labour between NATO and the EU and progressive sharing of standards for capabilities planning and development in NATO and the EU. The Czech Republic supports the civilian dimension of the CSDP, deeper integration and equal access to the European defence market.

From the military point of view, during the last two decades the Czech armed forces gained full ability to participate in Allied missions. This excellent tactical experience is, however, matched with eroded experience at the operational and strategic level of warfare (Spišák, 2011). This dichotomy is present in most comparable NATO and EU countries.

Due to sustained national sovereignty over defence planning and force development, membership in such strong organisations as NATO and the EU cannot guarantee efficiency and transparency in the national defence sector. The Czech Republic has gone through decades of resource wasting and corruption because even international commitments do not prevent chaos, abuse, the lack of vision and ideas in domestic policy. The result has been a drastically decreased defence budget in the last few years followed by erosion of armed forces' capabilities.

The Alliance has almost no instruments to enforce fulfilment of the member states' commitments. In this respect, the Czech Republic has become a partially atrophied but still reliable partner. Unlike some other Allies, Czechs generally have retained the culture of transparency and consultations prior to any decision on changing or reducing their contribution to collective efforts. However, this approach of resolution more in words than in actions cannot stop the gradual cannibalising of the Alliance's overall capabilities.

Conclusions

Our analysis revealed interesting facets of the incorporation of Czech national policy-making processes into supranational contexts. Since we paid attention to just three policy fields in a time span of 25 years, there is not much space left for generalisations. Nevertheless, some tentative conclusions can be submitted for further scholarly discussion.

The concept of governance represented our theoretical starting point of reference (Pierre, 2000, p 241; Potůček, 2008a, 2008b). Both the supranational and national levels of governance proved to be relevant (Dančák and Hloušek, 2007), even though with various explanatory potentials for the different policies in question. Interestingly enough, supranational organisations played a more influential role in times of political ruptures (for example, the switch from an authoritarian to a democratic political system and from a command to a market economy) or when significant events happened or robust structural changes were prepared (such as joining NATO or the EU). National decision makers regained some of their previous political power in politically, economically or socially more stable periods – namely when the country became a full member of NATO in 1999 and of the EU in 2004.

Analysis of the interplay between the government, market and civic sector as regulators (Potůček, 1999) revealed the dominant regulatory power of the national government; the civic sector institutions influenced the policy processes only occasionally and accidentally. The role of networking was raised in characterising some grassroot programmatic initiatives, explicitly in the sectors of education and social policy. Since all three case studies dealt predominantly with the public sector, the regulatory power of the market was mentioned only in the context of socially pathological forms of regulation such as incidences of corruption in the defence sector, enabled due to inadequate laws and unethical behaviour of civil servants. The government proved to be both the leading actor, and the dominant institutional vehicle of policy changes. A more accurate conceptualisation of the role of the European Union in national policy making was coined by concepts such as 'facilitated coordination' (with its instrument, the Open Method of Coordination) and 'cultural interchange'. By the same token, the concept of 'socialisation' (Gheciu, 2005) was applied to analyse the process of moving people within the national defence establishment toward sharing, accepting and disseminating the values and norms maintained within NATO.

The influence of supranational expertise in setting specific agendas in national policy making may be illustrated using the issues of life-long learning and testing of pupils in the fifth and ninth grades of basic school in the educational policy field; politicians were awakened by poor national outcomes whereas previously they had not taken the warning voices of national experts seriously. In general, educational policies were considerably influenced by supranational expertise. In social policy less so: a mixture of supranational and national expertise was typical in this area (such as in pension reform or in fighting homelessness). Defence

policy represented a special case as neither international nor national expertise had any direct impact on it.

The role of national experts and institutions in policy analysis and design should not be overestimated. Decision makers were sometimes prepared to listen to experts' advice and recommendations; sometimes they seemed to be completely deaf. Robust scientific expertise as a basis for evidence-based public policies was more an exception than a rule in post-1989 Czech policy making.¹⁸

Our research exercise cannot give conclusive answers for obvious reasons. There are other interesting policy fields such as economic policy, health policy and labour market policy which might deserve research attention, and their exploration might contribute to a deeper understanding of the studied processes. Comparative analysis with the developments in other countries experiencing similar structural changes to the Czech Republic might shed light on these issues as well.

Acknowledgement

The chapter was written with the financial support of PRVOUK programme P17 'Sciences of Society, Politics, and Media under the Challenge of the Times' and with the financial support of the project 'Adaptation of the Security System of the Czech Republic to Changing Economic, Social, Demographic, and Geopolitical Realities' (VG20132015112).

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¹⁸ A similar conclusion was drawn in the analysis of the development of strategic governance in the Czech Republic (Potůček, 2009).

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Europeanised policy making in the Czech Republic and its limits

Ivo Šlosarčík

Introduction

This chapter, primarily from the perspective of new institutionalism, analyses the impact of European Union membership on the institutional and public law framework for policy making in the Czech Republic. In particular, it covers the shift from passive 'transplantation' of EU norms during the association and accession negotiations to active formulation of EU policies after the accession and the development of new Czech structures responsible for the EU agenda, including institutional competition within the Czech administration. It also explains the limits of the Europeanisation of policy making in the Czech Republic, for instance due to the lack of stability of Czech administrative structures, the dominance of the domestic political context and the limited expertise and/or self-confidence of Czech policy makers.

This chapter first maps the transformation of policy making in the Czech Republic during the pre-accession period. Afterwards, the analysis shifts to the institutional aspects of policy making after the accession to the EU and the last segment of the text focuses on three short case studies (the 2003–04 European Convention, 2009 Czech Presidency and 2010–13 Eurozone crisis) to demonstrate selected aspects of the Europeanisation of Czech policy making in practice. The chapter covers the situation in the Czech Republic until the end of 2013. Therefore, the analysis does not deal with the activities of the new government led by the social democratic leader Bohuslav Sobotka inaugurated in January 2014.

Asymmetric Europeanisation before EU accession

The Czech accession process to the EU was relatively straightforward. The Czech Republic applied for EU membership in 1996, the accession negotiations started in 1998 and were finalised at the Copenhagen summit in December 2002. After ratification of the accession treaty signed in Athens in 2003, the Czech state joined the European Union on 1 May 2004.

Due to the character of the accession negotiations (screening of Czech legislation, regular evaluation by the European Commission) the Europeanisation of Czech policy making commenced several years before the EU accession. During this period, policy making in the Czech Republic was framed in a specific