



Lines of (Re)Alignment: Czech Foreign Policy After the 2025 Elections

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Summary

- Despite potential government changes after the 2025 elections, Czechia's fundamental memberships in the EU and NATO are unlikely to be questioned. Similarly, no significant shift in relations with Russia is anticipated, as the ANO Movement lacks strong pro-Putin sympathies, pragmatic interests in closer ties, or appropriate tools in some sectors to do so.

- However, the new government's composition could endanger key partnerships and alliances through antagonistic rhetoric or insufficient attention. Critical areas potentially affected include state support for Ukraine against Russian aggression, contributions to military deployments abroad, and strengthening defence capabilities.

- If ANO forms a coalition with far-right or far-left parties (like SPD or Stačilo!) or relies completely on their backing with a minority government, these "Disruption by Design" or "Pragmatic Populism" scenarios would involve symbolic actions targeting foreign policy pillars. This could lead to strained Western relations, Eurosceptic rhetoric, and a lack of commitment to fulfilling NATO defence commitments.

- Conversely, a government with mainstream centre-right partners (e.g., STAN, Christian Democrats) or a professional diplomat as foreign minister would likely ensure more continuity and stability in foreign policy. These scenarios could mitigate disruptions and maintain a more consistent international image.

- A significant long-term risk arises from the main governing party accommodating far-right or far-left rhetoric for political support. Even without immediate action, normalizing these narratives can gradually undermine Czechia's international credibility, stability, and security.

- The president will remain an important player in foreign policy, overseeing certain issues, setting boundaries for the government when necessary, and seeking cooperative actors within it. Although the prime minister will assume the role of key foreign policy actor, day-to-day operations will be left to others. The conduct of foreign policy will thus remain fairly pluralistic and influenced by the civil service, business, pressure from civil society, and non-governmental political actors.



Introduction

It is very likely that the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic, which will take place in October 2025, will bring change. None of the polls conducted so far suggest that the parties of the current government coalition will have a chance of winning a majority in the lower house of Parliament. Everything points to the ANO Movement winning the elections and forming a new coalition government. The elections are taking place at a time when the international environment is undergoing the most profound shifts seen in decades, with significant implications for Europe's security, economic prosperity and overall stability. Meanwhile, over the past four years ANO, whilst retaining its populist features, has increasingly aligned itself with far-right parties, becoming a founding member of the Patriots for Europe. The stakes are high, both for Czechia and for the EU, whose unity and capacity to act could be undermined by the emergence of yet another member state led by a government that obstructs consensus and challenges common positions.

The aim of this policy brief is to sketch possible post-election scenarios for Czech foreign and European policy. Our initial assumption is that the strength of ANO's election performance and the program of its coalition partners will be decisive for estimating the future trajectory of the Czech Republic's international activities. For the purpose of the analysis, we work with several alternative options of government composition.

The text is not to be read as an attempt at a perfectly accurate prediction of future developments. Rather, the scenarios described below should serve as a framework, guiding further thinking about the future of Czech foreign policy. We identify key aspects, actors and mechanisms, and the way in which they might shape the outcomes, but necessarily omit a number of possible intervening factors such as the undisputable influence of the personalities in key positions, even if they come from the same party; the role of the administrative apparatus and standard operating procedures; the unpredictable international environment; and many others.

The text is divided into two parts. First, we outline the conceptual basis for our analysis. We then move on to describing four possible constellations of the future Czech government and its foreign and EU policy.

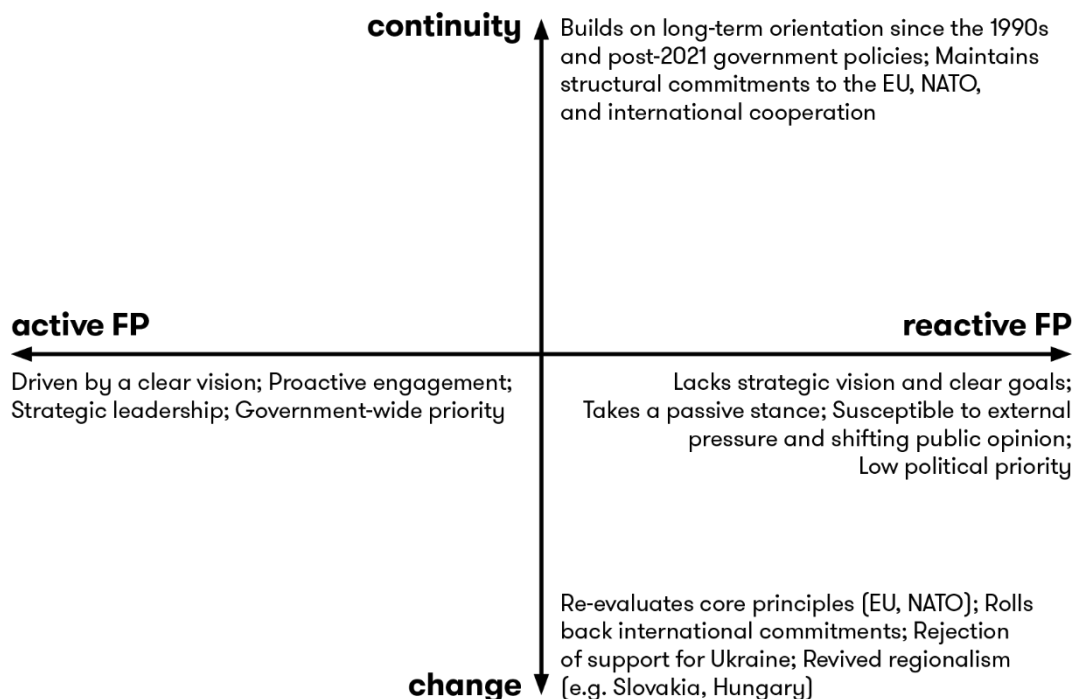


The Playing Field

In times of geopolitical upheaval, foreign and security policy becomes a subject of greater public interest and thus gains more prominence in the political discourse than in more peaceful times. This is so, too, in the Czech Republic. In the campaign ahead of the parliamentary elections, the relevant opposition parties (ANO, Freedom and Direct Democracy - SPD, Stačilo! (Enough!), and Motorists for Themselves) have been sharply criticizing the government's policies, including foreign policy. The current government has indeed been forced to deal intensively with foreign policy: it has responded to Russian aggression against Ukraine, led the Czech Republic during its EU Council presidency, supported Israel in its retaliation after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, recalibrated Czech Central European policy, and at the end of its term has had to deal with the cooling of transatlantic ties. All key dimensions of Czech foreign policy developed after 1989 have been through a difficult period of shake-ups and crises.

Although the opposition political parties are generally promising to break away from the current government's policies in many ways, the nature and extent of how they do so is crucial. A cursory reading of Central European affairs may create expectations that the Czech Republic will follow a similar path to that being trodden by Slovakia and Hungary. The most common reason for this assessment is Andrej Babiš's links to Eurosceptic and pro-Russian / anti-Ukrainian forces in the European Parliament within the Patriots political group and some of his statements. However, to better predict future developments, we need to take a more nuanced look at the Czech foreign policy environment and the interests of the actors involved.

As an analytical framework for considering possible constellations of future foreign policy, we use a matrix consisting of two axes: one spans from active to reactive foreign policy, while the other represents a spectrum from continuity to change.





We consider an active foreign policy to be conducted based on the actor's own clear and defined ideas about the desired reality of international politics, which the actor – in our case, the Czech Republic – deliberately shapes. Active foreign policy thus presupposes the development of proposals, the leadership of initiatives and international coalitions for various purposes, efforts to fulfill previous political commitments or, conversely, efforts to change such commitments. From the actor's perspective, it assumes that political leadership views foreign policy as one of the core instruments of achieving its broader policy goals: foreign policy is a key issue for the prime minister, whilst ministers of foreign affairs and defence play an important role, and other government ministers also consider foreign policy implications of their agenda.

Reactive foreign policy, on the other hand, assumes that the Czech Republic is not an initiator. It approaches the international environment with a lack of interest, without taking a clear stance, and without a clear idea of what a coherent result of Czech international action should be. In such a case, foreign policy is more susceptible to influence from external actors and the volatility of domestic public opinion. Key government figures consider foreign policy a secondary issue and do not devote significant attention to it.

We further distinguish between continuity and change in relation to post-1989 foreign policy. We implicitly consider Fiala's government to be a continuation of the foreign policy trend and the internationalist consensus¹ among the main political forces that have been shaping – with nuances pertaining to specific policy actors – foreign policy since the early 1990s.

Change – in its extreme form – presupposes a rethinking of the basic axioms of the Czech Republic's current position in the world, which include membership in the EU and NATO, general support for multilateralism, striving for good neighbourly relations, strong transatlantic ties and cautious to lukewarm relations towards Russia. It may also involve a revision of various international commitments (e.g. the Paris Agreement) or policies such as the promotion of human rights around the world. In a less extreme variant, this could involve rejecting some of Fiala's cabinet initiatives, such as the ammunition initiative for Ukraine. A return to a strong emphasis on V4 cooperation or joint government meetings with Slovakia could be seen as further deviation from the recent developments in Czech foreign policy.

Continuity presupposes broadly following the existing foreign policy concept,² both at the structural level—i.e., continuing foreign policy activities within the framework established in the early 1990s—and in relation to the policy shaped by the government since 2021.

Both axes must be understood as a continuum within which the next Czech government can manoeuvre. This is why, when representing the individual government options on this foreign policy "playing field", a box indicating the range within which they can operate was chosen, rather than a single fixed point (see diagrams of scenarios 1-4 below). In none of the cases considered will foreign policy be immune to external influences. However, including scenarios of international developments would go beyond the scope of this policy brief. We must therefore omit them or include them only in a limited and fragmentary manner.

¹ Michal Kořan, "Two decades of Czech foreign policy and hegemony of Internationalism," *Czech Journal of Political Science*, no. 3 (2012): 195-217. <https://czechpolsci.eu/article/view/34803>.

² "Foreign Policy Framework," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, https://mzv.gov.cz/file/5843527/III._Konceptce_zahranic_ni__politiky_sanitized_.pdf.

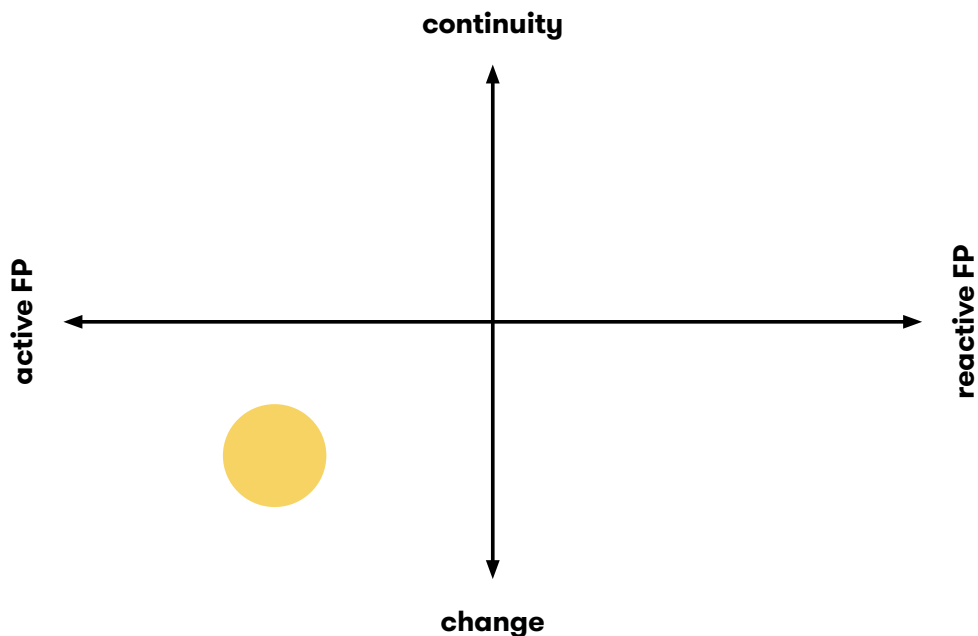


Scenario 1 - Disruption by Design

In the first scenario, we assume that ANO does win the election, but that other conditions are also met. First, ANO will not have enough power to form a single-party cabinet. Second, other political forces will seek direct participation in the government. Third, the parties of the current governing coalition will not want to support a minority government, or ANO will simply give preference to an alliance with the extreme right or left.

Figure 1:

Scenario 1: Disruption by Design



Source: authors

In this scenario, we therefore expect a coalition between ANO and SPD. There is also a possibility that the coalition could be joined by Stačilo! and/or Motorists for Themselves. However, given the pre-election polls and predictions, it is very likely that the alliance between ANO and SPD alone will give them a comfortable majority in the Chamber of Deputies.³

When forming the government, it can be assumed that the President will make his voice heard in foreign policy issues. He has already stated that being anchored in the EU and NATO is so important to him that he will require ministers to maintain this line.⁴ At the same time, it can also be expected that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may not be a priority for ANO when filling positions in the government and may therefore be handed over to a junior coalition partner. Of the ministries that have a significant say in foreign and security policy (foreign affairs, defence, and industry and trade), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seems most likely to be headed by one of ANO's coalition partners. The other listed ministries will be too valuable to the leading government party.

³ Michal Sirovy, "Pul roku pred volbami jsou karty prakticky rozdane. Kdo tedy bude vladnout v Cesku?", *Hospodarske noviny*, May 14, 2025, <https://archiv.hn.cz/c1-67725420-pul-roku-pred-volbami-jsou-karty-prakticky-rozdane-kdo-tedy-bude-vladnout-v-cesku>.

⁴ Ondrej Houska, "Po volbach budu sledovat, aby novi ministri nebyli proti clenstvi v EU a NATO, varuje prezident politiky," May 26, 2025, <https://domaci.hn.cz/c1-67739410-po-volbach-budu-sledovat-aby-novi-ministri-nebyli-proti-clenstvi-v-eu-a-nato-varoval-prezident-politiky>.



In this projection, it is thus the junior coalition partner or partners who are the key players introducing a strong element of discontinuity and change. The political programs of the SPD, Stačilo! and Motorists declare an interest in changing the Czech approach to foreign policy as it has been shaped since the early 1990s.

Regardless of whether the interest in such change is genuine or merely rhetorical posturing aimed at their own electorate, it would still manifest in practice. However, rather than a systematic effort with a well-thought-out plan, it would take the form of symbolic actions targeting the pillars of the Czech Republic's existing foreign policy canon.

Such activities would meet with resistance from the President, who would fight for influence in shaping the country's foreign policy. The same would be the case with the Senate, for example through its speaker, representatives of business and civil society, especially through non-profit organizations. The country's foreign policy orientation and concerns about its radical transformation would become one of the main reasons for civil protests against such a government.

The government would agree in its rhetoric that it is necessary to protect Czech citizens from the turbulent world events. While retreat and a more reactive policy would be sufficient for ANO, its coalition partner would pursue a more significant transformation of Czech commitments. Czech multilateral obligations would become the main casualties.

In terms of security policy, NATO membership will remain unaffected, as this is a condition for both ANO and the President. However, the practical implementation of Alliance commitments will be at stake. ANO's extreme political partner may make its participation in the government conditional on the Czech Republic not significantly increasing its military spending, and even the 2% defence budget may be subject to negotiation, not to mention higher figures. Similarly, deployment in foreign missions, for example on NATO's eastern flank, will be difficult for radical forces to concede. In practice, this means that the Czech Republic's fulfilment of its Alliance commitments in terms of capabilities will be even more difficult to achieve than it is today, and the Czech Republic's contribution to meeting NATO's essential defence planning goals will be minimal.

Given the need to balance extreme positions in security policy and the fact that the coalition partner will feed the ecosystem of disinformation narratives, it can be expected that the position of National Security Advisor will be retained in some form within the Office of the Government. His or her role would be to assist the prime minister with this agenda and coordinate the intelligence services. Rather than a political figure, this position could be filled by a professional with long experience in public administration.

Whichever party becomes ANO's coalition partner, whether it be SPD, Stačilo! or Motorists for Themselves, a revision of Czech human rights policy abroad can be expected in any case. For ANO, this would not be such a critical agenda that it would want to defend it. Given current global trends, it would also be impossible to cynically exploit this agenda as a means of opening certain doors, for example toward the United States,.

The coordination of European policies would remain in the hands of ANO, and the prime minister would choose the EU sherpa. Moreover, ANO would have a government majority for key decisions in this area. The government's rhetoric would be strongly Eurosceptic, including a rejection of any deepening of European integration. However, the possibility of a referendum on membership can be ruled out. Nevertheless, the junior coalition partner would give such voices greater strength and the debate on this issue could be revived. Since 2016 when support for membership reached its lowest point, the situation has changed and leaving the EU is now no longer an issue. Yet, if the public comes under pressure on that issue it could begin to change its opinion. Especially if linked with bad economic performance.



In sectoral policies, strong opposition can be expected to EU climate policy, both for new legislation and in the implementation of measures already adopted, given the prominent position of these issues in ANO's campaign. This risk would increase if Motorists for Themselves were to participate in the government, as this issue is a priority for them. The government would be strongly conservative in its views on the new long-term EU budget, which it would like to keep small. On the other hand, it would certainly strive to ensure that funds are prioritized for cohesion and agriculture. Any strengthening of conditionality mechanisms would be problematic to accept.

Relations with the European Commission and the European Parliament will be tense, and much will depend on how the government proceeds in its domestic policy towards public media and non-governmental organizations. Disputes can be expected in this regard. However, ANO will not want to jeopardize the flow of European funds to the Czech Republic by failing to comply with the rule of law.

Although there will be no radical change in other sectoral agendas, if any, it will be incremental. Such a government coalition will not have a ready-made plan of changes and will find it difficult to reach an agreement on one. However, it can be expected that the government will coordinate at the prime ministerial level with like-minded countries, notably Hungary and Slovakia. The prime minister may then adopt similar tactics in the form of blackmail and obstruction at European Council meetings as we have experienced in the past from Budapest.

The revival of contacts with Hungary and Slovakia will then be the main feature of bilateral relations and the result of an active foreign policy in the spirit of change. Contrariwise, other bilateral ties, especially with Western European countries and Poland, will fade away and focus on technical issues or, in the case of relations with Berlin and Warsaw, on the cross-border agenda.

Relations with Ukraine will also undergo a transformation. The government will declare that a quick peace is necessary, and its representatives will talk about the necessary concessions on both sides. Government activities to arm Ukraine will cease. If some vocal actors echo disinformation on Ukraine, it may end up with quarrels on social media with Ukrainian officials. Similarly, in this scenario, it is difficult to imagine any support for Ukraine's membership in the EU.

In relations with China, we can expect the rhetoric of pragmatism and openness to trade contacts. Representatives of - in particular junior coalition partners - may actively develop contacts with Beijing.

Czech-Russian relations will be in the slipstream of the overall state of relations between the West and Russia. The Czech state has little influence over whether energy supplies from Russia will flow into the country. Although there may be some contacts at the level of foreign ministers, a boom in friendship and trade on the Prague-Moscow axis is unlikely even in this scenario.

This government will find it difficult to navigate its relations with the United States. Although at least part of it will subscribe to Trumpism, it will likely fail to meet one of the key demands of the current US administration towards Europe - that it take care of its own security. Bilateral relations are therefore likely to become emptier and lose their security dimension. A possible revision of the purchase of F-35 fighter jets or at least some rhetorical balancing around this option would then be a significant and symbolic blow to relations with Washington.

According to this scenario, the government would be incoherent in its foreign policy. Snippets of active change, especially on symbolic issues resonating with its voters, would be complemented by the quiet maintenance of some status quo from ANO. Squabbling between coalition partners and between the government and the President or other foreign policy actors would be a recurring theme in Czech foreign policy. Rather than causing immediate damaging consequences for Czech alliances and security, such foreign policy would pose a medium- and long term threat by legitimizing extremist theses and opinions outlined above in the political and public discourse.

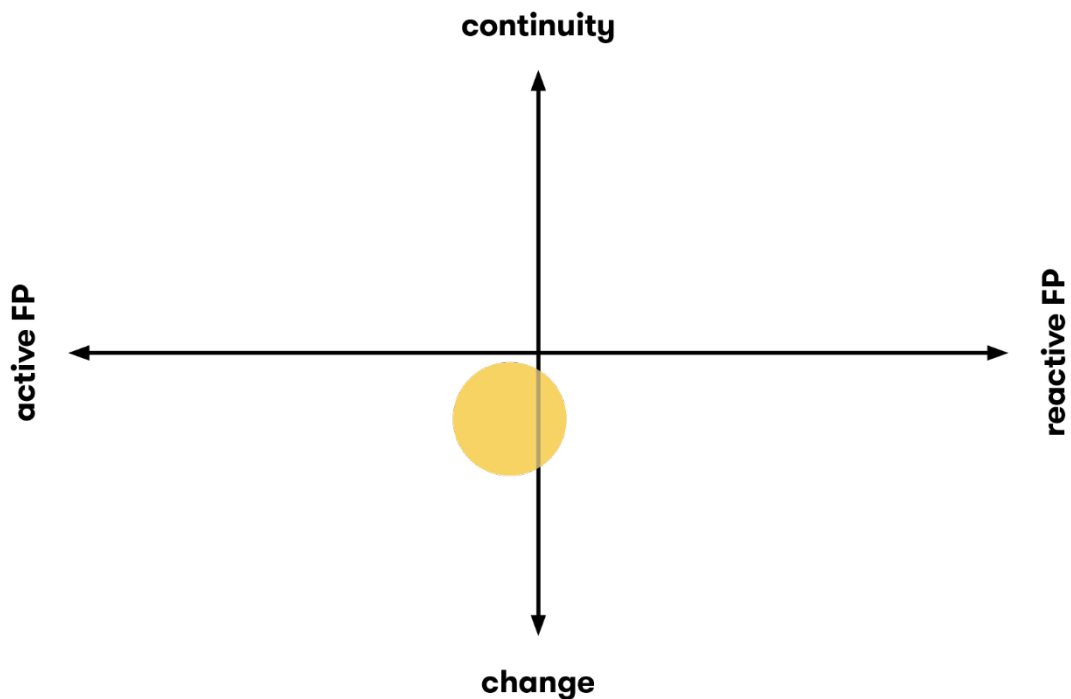


Scenario 2 - Pragmatic Populism

In the second scenario, ANO forms a minority government with parliamentary support from extreme parties on the left and/or right. At the same time, three other conditions are met. First, the parties backing the minority government insist on the fulfillment of certain foreign policy priorities, making this a condition for their support. Second, the mainstream opposition parties declare zero tolerance for the ANO government and refuse to support it even on foreign policy issues. They believe that the alliance between ANO and the extremists will not withstand the political pressure and that early elections will be necessary. Third, ANO will appoint politicians with strongly ideological views on international politics to certain foreign policy positions, particularly the post of foreign minister. This person will not be convinced by the foreign policy principles that have been in place since the 1990s and will deliberately strive for some changes.

Figure 2:

Scenario 2: Pragmatic Populism



Source: authors

However, the prime minister would retain an important role in shaping foreign and security policy and would also decide on key issues in European politics. The National Security Advisor and the European Policy sherpa would thus be important players. In this scenario, a prime minister with no ideological interest in fundamental changes to foreign policy could act as a filter against the minister's activism. At the same time, he or she would be responsible for securing support for the government and thus facing the demands of his or her minority cabinet's backers. The President would again be an important player, developing his own, often parallel foreign policy activities, for example in the form of foreign policy trips to countries where there would be less appetite for meeting representatives of a government supported by extremists. Coordination on key foreign policy and security issues would be difficult, but not impossible. The mainstream opposition would show no tolerance for the government and would constantly criticize its foreign policy. In this scenario, politics of foreign affairs would be dynamic, with actors constantly



delineating their spheres of influence and exerting various pressures and counterpressures. Foreign policy would be thus the subject of political struggle.

Foreign policy itself will be unpredictable, focused on sovereigntist rhetoric and spectacular actions without any significant tangible impact. This constellation will jeopardize commitments to NATO. Although the government may promise to move towards the pledges made at the NATO summit in The Hague, their actual implementation will be hampered by the need to secure the support of extremists during the annual budget approval process. As mentioned, in this scenario, we expect mainstream political parties to pursue a zero-tolerance policy towards the government. The question is therefore whether defence spending will be such a priority for ANO that it will come to the opposition with a sufficiently generous offer in another area in order to fix a trade-off. The same will apply to the deployment of the Czech army on NATO missions on the eastern flank.

European policy will be fully under the control of the prime minister. Of course, there will be some disputes between ministries, but these will be resolved in a technocratic manner within the European section of the Office of the Government, or by the prime minister himself only in the event of escalation.

As for green legislation, we can still expect sharp rhetoric, but discontinuity can be expected primarily in agriculture, and less so in energy or climate policies. In these latter areas, the approach of this minority government will certainly not be closer to the European mainstream. However, it will not deviate too much from that of Petr Fiala's government.

It can be expected that ANO will not want to jeopardize the flow of European funds to the Czech Republic. If there is a tendency in the EU to use rule of law conditionality instruments more actively and creatively—for example, in the context of the Hungarian elections or developments in Slovakia—this may result in a more cautious approach towards public media or civil society from the Czech government.

The priorities for the next long-term EU budget will be cohesion and agriculture. Greater emphasis may be placed on a conservative approach to certain aspects of agricultural policy.

A revival of relations with Hungary and Slovakia can also be expected in this scenario. In addition to coordination on certain EU matters at the prime ministerial level, it is also possible that the proactive foreign minister will be drawn into joint initiatives by his counterparts in Slovakia and, in particular, Hungary. Relations with Poland and Germany will become increasingly strained. Germany may have a greater interest in keeping the Czech Republic in its orbit for purely pragmatic reasons, namely to prevent a third impediment to European unity emerging in Central Europe. Other bilateral relations in the EU will be limited by support for the government from extremists and ANO's membership of Patriots for Europe. Partners will not seek contacts with the Czech Republic.

Ukraine will not be a priority for such a government. It will be another issue that the extremist opposition will exploit. To this end, it will use the approval of state budgets, and material assistance—with the possible exception of some humanitarian aid—will not come from the Czech Republic. However, relations with the Ukrainian government will not suddenly disappear, and consultations and some projects will continue. It will also depend on the pressure exerted by the business community in these matters.

Vague appeals for peace will be voiced by some ANO representatives. However, the government will not be very interested in conciliating Russia and will tend to react to international political developments rather than take an active role in this area. ANO will also have no reason to undermine the current sanctions against Russia.

Although it will be difficult to push for progress in EU enlargement to include Ukraine, given the security risks and economic costs involved – including



competition in agriculture, which is important to ANO – contacts with the countries of the Western Balkans will develop, with a particular focus on Serbia.

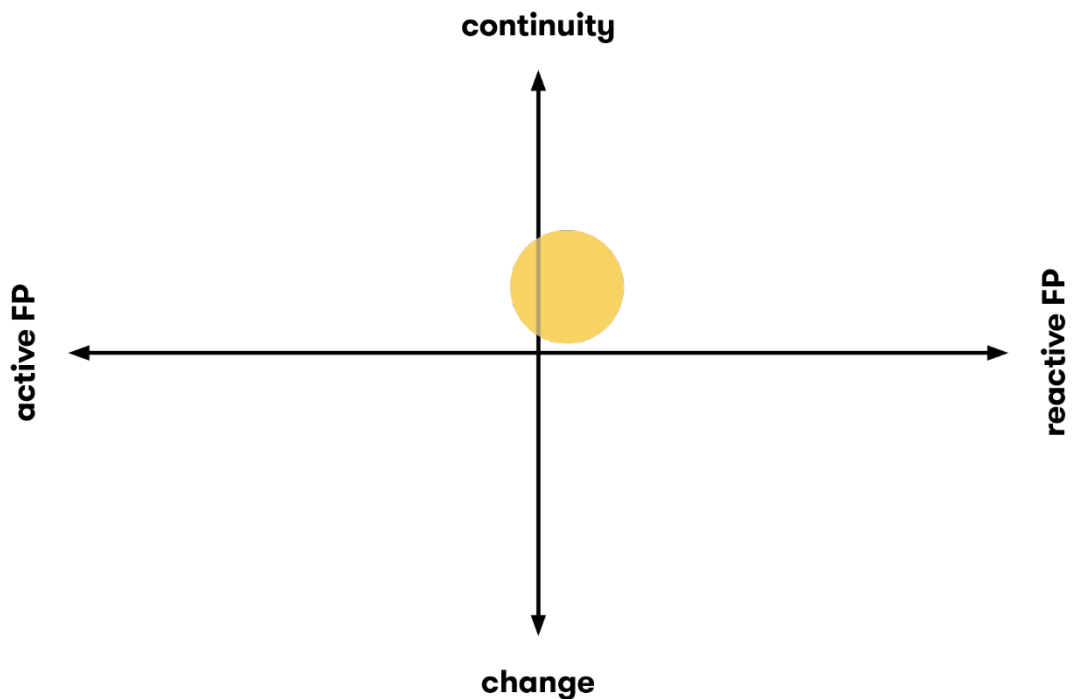
In general, we can expect minimal support for human rights internationally, as in this scenario we anticipate that the minister of foreign affairs will be someone who wants to at least revise this policy, if not remove it from the Foreign Ministry's portfolio. At the same time, we cannot expect the prime minister to champion such an agenda.

Scenario 3 - Protecting the Core

The third scenario also assumes ANO forming a one party minority government, necessitating indirect support from the opposition parties on the fringes of the spectrum (Stačilo, SPD, Motorists). ANO would then have to agree to adjust the government's foreign policy to the requirements of the far left or the far right. It is unlikely that ANO will seek or receive support from the mainstream opposition parties, as this would make little political sense for them.

Figure 3:

Scenario 3: Protecting the Core



Source: authors

A key difference from Scenario 2 is in the person of the minister of foreign affairs. Whereas Scenario 2 assumes a proactive politician with an agenda in this position, in Scenario 3, the MFA is run by a professional diplomat, appointed by the prime minister with the goal of covering general day to day foreign policy issues, with key strategic issues regarding EU policies handled by the prime minister and the Office of the Government, including the national security advisor. Although the conduct of the role would obviously be crucially dependent on the specific person, we assume that he or she would put more priority on keeping Czechia as much in the European mainstream as possible and preventing risks of alienating key allies.

With a prime minister upholding the parliamentary stability for his government by accommodating certain elements of foreign policy to the far left or



the far right (mostly when it comes to the support of Ukraine, defence spending or questions concerning deployment of the Czech military abroad), a person with diplomatic experience in the office of the minister of foreign affairs thus functions as a “muffler” of the steps that Czechia’s allies might find potentially most antagonizing. He or she would work towards ensuring basic continuity on key issues. Such a role would require delicate balancing between the prime minister’s requirements and a vision of the long-term stability of Czech anchoring in the international community thus maintaining mutual trust. In this scenario, a more developed relationship is to be expected between the minister and the President, facilitating smoother cooperation between the President and the government and thus a more coherent image of the Czech foreign policy.

A reserved, transactional approach towards the EU, including an unequivocal rejection of any sort of deepening of the integration, remains constant, given that the EU agenda is in the hands of the ANO prime minister and the EU sherpa nominated by him or her, including the EU budget negotiations and the green transition agenda.

Whereas the prime minister might be inclined, however lukewarmly, to join other political voices sceptical to further support of Ukraine, the minister of foreign affairs would attempt to soften the rhetoric and facilitate a more constructive position, including some extent of material and financial assistance, leveraging the value of the long term trust of Czechia’s allies. Ukraine’s EU accession will remain largely hypothetical in the upcoming four years, should it however become subjected to a political discussion, a rather reserved position is to be expected on the part of the Czech government. More priority will be given to the accession process of the Western Balkans candidate states, following the lead of Hungary.

Depending on Fidesz staying in power in Hungary after the 2026 parliamentary elections, a revival of mutual bilateral relations between the two countries are to be expected, together with a normalisation of relations with Slovakia. The foreign minister will try to prevent a complete 180 degree turn in Czech bilateral partnerships and focus on maintaining/ developing as strong relations as possible - or at least working ones - with others too, particularly Germany and Poland.

Intensifying relations with China can be expected, pursuing trade and business opportunities. Depending on how the communication of these attempts is conducted, this might lead to changes in the quality of the relationship between Czechia and Taiwan.

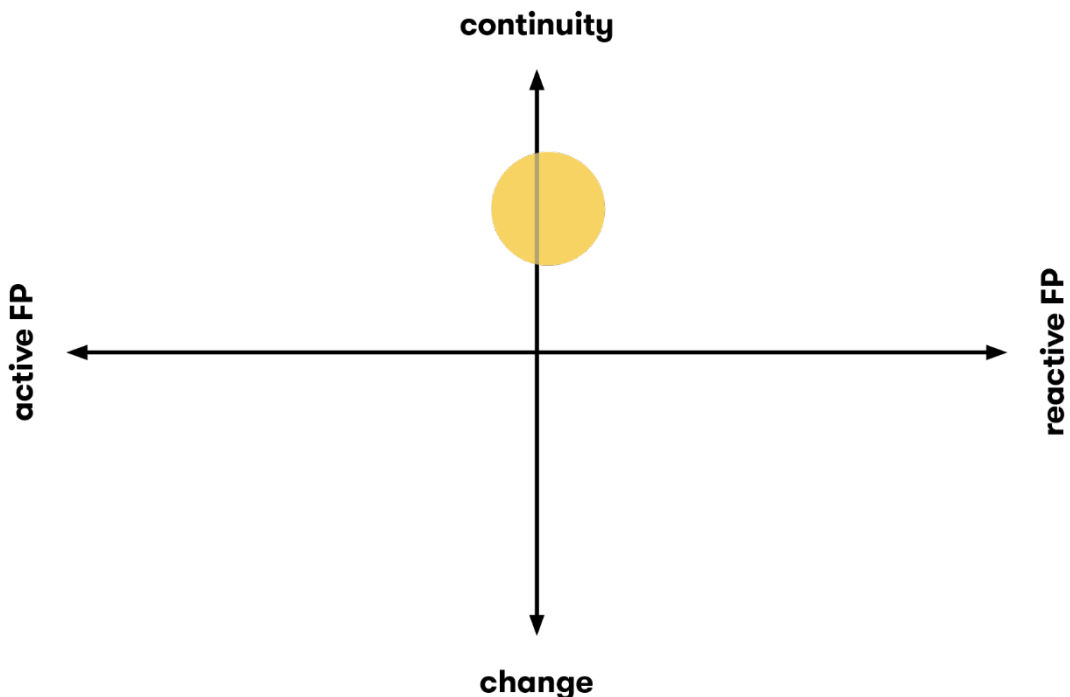


Scenario 4 - Contested Direction

In the last scenario, ANO wins the elections but finds a junior partner in one of the mainstream centre-right parties, currently participating in the government. The most likely candidates for a coalition with ANO are either STAN, or the Christian Democrats. While the latter especially has a history of pragmatic alliances across the political spectrum, even the former might be motivated to join the government in an attempt to prevent ANO from diverting Czechia off its Western-aligned foreign policy course. Forming a government might pose a reputational risk for both STAN and KDU-ČSL, but might also gain them a constructive and statesman-like image. Participation in the government would require the junior coalition partner, be it STAN or KDU-ČSL, to tread carefully the thin line between acquiescing to ANO's positions too much on the one hand, and causing ANO too many headaches on the other. While threatening to leave the government might give them certain leverage, ANO might eventually come to prefer the fallback scenario of arranging for the support of the far-right or far-left in the minority government parliament. Should the junior partner prove to be unable to assert themselves in key matters of principle, they would risk following the destiny of the Social Democrats in the second Babiš government - looking weak and ultimately losing the trust of their own voters.

Figure: 4

Scenario 4: Contested Direction



Source: authors

Partnering with either STAN or the Christian Democrats would mean that ANO would dodge the necessity to adjust to the requirements of extremist parties but, on the other hand, might be impeded in implementing some of their own preferred changes to foreign policy. Including a centre-right junior partner would contribute to the government having a better reputation in the eyes of foreign partners and make maintaining the current level of relations with Western partners easier. Either of the parties would likely be aligned with the President on foreign, EU and security issues.



According to custom, the junior partner would likely get to nominate the minister of foreign affairs, i.e. reflecting their priorities in the agenda. At the same time, like in the previous scenarios, ANO's prime minister will keep strategic decision-making on key issues, including EU policies, in his or her hands. Apart from that, ANO will be able to keep decisive influence in key areas, e.g. on the agenda of human rights promotion, by adjusting the budget allocated to them. Different priorities in the parties' foreign policy programmes will lead to intragovernmental and likely public discussions on the extent and form of support for Ukraine, the possibility of deploying troops in some kind of a peace-keeping mission on Ukrainian territory, the pace of increasing the GDP rate of defence spending or military acquisitions. The involvement of either STAN or KDU-ČSL will lead to more compromising policies, maintaining more continuity with the post-1989 tradition and the Fiala government than in the previous scenarios.

A continuous clash, spilling over into the public debate, will occur especially if STAN is the junior coalition partner, over the broader issue of values like democracy, rule of law, human rights and Czechia's pro-Western geopolitical orientation. Conflicts would arise particularly in the context of the likely reinvigoration of bilateral relations with Hungary and Slovakia at the prime ministerial level, but also ANO's expected warmer approach to China.

Both STAN and the Christian Democrats' participation in the government would likely prevent big disruptions in relations between Czechia and Brussels. For one, they would participate in formulating the governmental positions on key policies, including preventing potential measures against civil society or public media. Both of them are also either members of the European People's Party (KDU-ČSL) or the EPP group in the European Parliament (STAN), which might alleviate potential conflicts between EU institutions and Czechia. STAN rather than KDU-ČSL is likely to challenge ANO's attitude towards EU climate policies and push for a more constructive / cooperative approach towards the green transition and forthcoming relevant legislation. However, given the importance of this agenda in ANO's campaigning, they are likely to keep the ministry of environment to themselves and show little willingness to compromise in this matter.



Conclusions

Following an analysis of possible constellations of the Czech government after the 2025 parliamentary elections, it is unlikely that the very basics - membership in the European Union and NATO - will be seriously questioned. Also, considering the scenarios outlined in this analysis, no substantive change is to be expected when it comes to Czech relations towards Russia. In spite of alignment with the Patriot's for Europe, ANO in itself has neither significant sympathies for Putin's regime, nor any pragmatic interest in closer relations. Some other long term features of Czech foreign policy will remain constant, notwithstanding a change of government - among them e.g. an emphasis on stable relations with Israel or unwillingness to undertake practical steps toward accessing the Eurozone.

However, depending on the particular composition of the government, key partnerships and alliances might be endangered by antagonizing rhetoric, uncooperative behaviour or simply as a result of not enough attention being paid to them by the new political leadership. Raising uncertainty about Czechia's positions on key issues in the eyes of partners might have harmful consequences for Czechia's security but also for the image and external policies of a unified EU and NATO (particularly its European part). Among those key issues, support for Ukraine to defend itself against Russia's aggression and a willingness to potentially contribute to peace-keeping efforts in its territory is prominent, together with an acknowledgement of the need to strengthen defence capabilities.

A potential long-term risk to Czech foreign and EU policy lies in the main governing party accommodating the rhetoric of a far-right or far-left junior coalition partner - or making similar concessions in exchange for parliamentary support for a minority government. Even if such rhetoric is not followed up by concrete action, normalizing these narratives can gradually shift public and political discourse in a way that undermines Czechia's credibility, stability, and security in the international arena.

This text does not cover all possible aspects of the scenarios presented. Other possibilities are also conceivable, such as a coalition between ANO and the Civic Democrats or a minority ANO government supported by the ODS. However, given the personal antagonisms between the representatives of these parties, we consider such a scenario to be only the fifth most likely. Although they would probably find common ground in some matters of EU politics, the dispute over the continuity of Petr Fiala's government's legacy in foreign policy would be reflected in the government's work. Similarly, a victory for the current government coalition and the Pirate Party cannot be completely ruled out, in which case we would see clear continuity in foreign and European policy.



Table 1: Scenarios for Czech Foreign Policy After 2025 Elections

Topic	Scenario 1: Disruption by Design	Scenario 2: Pragmatic Populism	Scenario 3: Protecting the Core	Scenario 4: Contested Direction
Government Structure	ANO + SPD coalition (possibly Stačilo!/Motorists).	ANO minority government with extreme party parliamentary support.	ANO single-party minority government with indirect fringe party support. MFA run by professional diplomat.	ANO + mainstream centre-right junior partner (STAN/KDU-ČSL).
EU Policy	Strongly Eurosceptic rhetoric, rejects deeper integration & EU climate policies. Tense relations with EC/EP, but avoiding EU funds jeopardization. Coordination with HU/SK.	PM controls EU policy. Reserved, transactional EU approach, rejects deeper integration. Sharp rhetoric on green legislation with some deviation mainly in agriculture. Cautious on rule of law.	Reserved, transactional EU approach, rejects deeper integration. EU agenda managed by PM. MFA ensures basic continuity in relations with partners.	Junior partner prevents major disruptions, participates in policy formulation. EPP membership may alleviate EU conflicts. STAN likely to challenge ANO on EU climate policies. PM retains strategic EU decision-making.
Defence & Security Policy	NATO membership unaffected, but risk of hampered implementation of defence spending. Hardly any foreign mission deployments.	Defence spending hampered by extremist support. NATO mission deployments difficult.	PM accommodates fringe parties on defence spending/deployments. MFA (professional diplomat) acts as “muffler” for continuity.	Intragovernmental disputes on defence spending/acquisitions. More compromising policies, maintains continuity. Junior partner aligns with President on security.
Key Bilateral Relations	Revival of HU/SK ties. Other Western European/PL ties decline. Difficulty navigating, relations with US. Intensified relations with China.	Revival of HU/SK ties. Strained relations with PL/DE. Limited other EU bilateral ties. Intensified relations with China.	Revival of HU/SK ties. MFA aims to maintain strong/working ties with DE/PL and other allies. Intensified relations with China.	Junior partner improves foreign reputation, eases Western ties. Reinvigoration of HU/SK ties and warmer China approach conflict with junior partner. Continuous clash over values.
Ukraine & Russia	Cessation of state arms deliveries to Ukraine, calls for quick peace/concessions.. Russia relations follow West-Russia relations with any improvement unlikely.	Ukraine not a priority, material aid (except humanitarian) ceases. Vague peace appeals; no interest in conciliating Russia or undermining sanctions.	PM lukewarm on Ukraine support, but MFA softens rhetoric, facilitates aid.	Intragovernmental disputes on Ukraine support and potential peacekeeping deployments.

Source: authors



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