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The Czech Republic in the European Defence Agency: the question of effectiveness¹

STUDIA I ANALIZY

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Abstract: *At a general level, the article focuses on the relation between states and international organizations. In current era, states and international organizations coexist in international system. Their relation has been researched many times, but the question which is still rather unanswered relates to the management of membership of states in international organizations. The states nowadays participate in hundreds of different organizations. The tricky part that remains to be examined more in details is how to analyse the effectiveness of the engagement of a country in a concrete international organization. The article investigates further the case of the Czech Republic and it analyses its performance and relevance in the European Defence Agency (EDA) applying the research design which was proposed in 2012². The team of researchers proposed four criteria: objective pursued, personal representation, cost/performance ratio and activities implemented. The analysis is based on the examination of the Czech policy goals and priorities in the EDA. It also explores the area in more details conducting semi-structured interviews with the representatives of different Czech state bodies and employees of the Agency.*

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² M. Kolmaš, Š. Kolmašová, M. Kořan and V. Bílková (et al.), *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích: mezi teorií a praxí*, Praha: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů 2015, p. 161.

Introduction

The relations between international organizations (IOs) and states, especially in case of international governmental organizations, have been part of the international relations (IR) debates for decades. The same is true for the performance of the IOs as independent actors in the international system. Both issues have been present in many different publications and have become widely debated in the IR research. But not many scholars focused on the effectiveness assessment of membership of states in the IOs.

States, including the Czech Republic, participate in various IOs, sometimes even in hundreds of them. It is generally accepted that governments are more willing to invest in maintaining membership in the IOs despite their current disadvantage, or if the reasons for entry have passed – precisely because they have already invested considerable capital in them in the past. This capital is not only material but also political or social. The other reason may concern the interdependence, especially in the European area, where a certain action under one regime (e.g. withdrawal from an organization) may have consequences in an entirely different organization or bilateral relation³.

To pinpoint the role and influence of any participant in an international organization requires, however, careful analyses. For the purpose of this article, I will examine four criteria (objective pursued, personal representation, cost/performance ratio and activities implemented) which have been designed to evaluate the country's membership in the IOs. They were developed specifically for the Czech case by the team of researchers (Kolmaš et al.) in 2015⁴. I will apply them to the case of the Czech membership in the European Defence Agency and thus examine the Czech policy priorities and the engagement in the EDA from the perspective of its performance and relevance.

Small states in international organizations

The topic related to multilateral cooperation in international organizations, as well as the promotion of interests and strategies of small

³ M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 78. T. Gutner, A. Thompson, *The politics of IO performance: a framework*, «Review of International Organizations» 2010, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 227–248.

⁴ M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 3.

states in international organizations, has been important research field of international relations for decades⁵. From the liberal perspective, the international organizations are viewed as tools to overcome obstacles and challenges for better and more efficient coordination or cooperation in the international system. The IOs are particularly valuable in cases when, for instance, a specific agreement could not be reached or could only be achieved at significant transaction costs. Moreover, the IOs may contribute to a more effective management of matters that go beyond national jurisdiction. They also have the ability to adapt to changing conditions and environments. Finally, the IOs may help reduce instability and unpredictability of the international environment or a specific political field, and thus limit conflicts between the actors.

The membership in various IOs is even more relevant for the small states. The small states are often not the decisive actors in the international environment, however, they can and do intervene and defend their national interests in international relations. Hence, although small states tend to have a deficit in an autonomous foreign policy decision-making, there are possibilities to reduce such power disparities and strengthen their significance in the international arena mainly through an active and systematic approach in IOs or through the means of multilateral diplomacy⁶.

The role of small states in international relations and international organizations has been of major focus in several generations of literature⁷. There was a vigorous theoretical debate in the late 1960s and 1970s about whether the foreign policy of 'small states' was generically different from that of large states (see for example R. Keohane)⁸. And it is of particular concern in current times because small states today enjoy more international prestige and visibility than at any other time

⁵ E.g. G. Moynier, *Les bureaux internationaux des unions universelles*, Cherbuliez Genève 1892.

⁶ P. Balík, *Role of small states in international organizations: the case of Slovakia in the United Nations Security Council*, Budapest 2008, p. 1.

⁷ A. Vandenbosch, *The Small States in International Politics and Organization*, «The Journal of Politics» 1964, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 293–312; M. Hong, *Small States in the United Nations*, «International Social Sciences Journal» 1995, vol. 47, pp. 277–287; S. Waltz, *Universalizing Human Rights: The Role of Small States in the Construction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, «Human Rights Quarterly» 2001, vol. 23, pp. 44–72; J.A.K. Hey, *Small States in World Politics. Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2003; C. Ingebritsen et al., *Small States in International Relations*, Washington: University of Washington Press 2003; P. Balík, *Role of small states in international organizations: the case of Slovakia in the United Nations Security Council*, Budapest 2008.

⁸ R.O. Keohane, *Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics*, «International Organization» 1969, vol. 23, pp. 291–310.

in history. In this regard, Corbett, Yi-Chong and Weller⁹, for instance, examine the participation of small states as an important means of generating 'throughput' legitimacy for operations of the IOs. Panke geographically limits her studies to the EU countries¹⁰. The same is done by Vestegaard¹¹ who explores Western European countries and specifically focuses on their activities within the World Bank. Particularly, the Czech Republic and its interests in the European Parliament is analyzed in the discussion article by Kasáková and Weiss¹². Unfortunately, these studies do not cover the question of effectiveness, but investigate only the performance of small states through their ability to promote interests in a particular organization without applying other relevant criteria.

In general, there is a relatively long tradition of evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency within the theory of international relations but related only to international organizations as such. Criteria developed by authors or research teams are increasingly used in practice by individual organizations, which try to find out to what extent they meet the goals, what are the limits of their performance and how these challenges could be removed. Thus, the criteria help to strengthen the effectiveness of organizations and at the same time they increase their legitimacy. Probably the most far-reaching effectiveness assessment was executed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). Despite these developments, the assessment of the performance of international organizations is not yet based on uniform and generally accepted criteria. Each organization develops their own rules that they consider in the evaluation process.

The criteria applied by states in assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of their membership in the international organizations deserve more attention than the criteria used to evaluate the activities of the IOs. Unfortunately, many states either do not have such criteria, or they are not willing to publish them¹³. The activities of the Czech Republic in the international organizations were analysed by the team of authors: Kolmaš, Kolmašová, Kořan and Bílková¹⁴. Their project as well as the

⁹ J. Corbett, X. Yi-Chong, P. Weller, *Small states and the 'throughput' legitimacy of international organizations*, «Cambridge Review of International Affairs» 2018, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 183–202.

¹⁰ D. Panke, *Small states in the European Union: Structural disadvantages in EU policymaking and counter-strategies*, «Journal of European Public Policy» 2011, vol. 17, pp. 799–817.

¹¹ J. Vestergaard, R.H. Wade, *Protecting power: How Western states retain the dominant voice in the World Bank's governance*, «World Development» 2013, vol. 46, pp. 153–164.

¹² Z. Kasáková, T. Weiss, *Ve správnou chvíli na správném místě: Prosazování zájmů České republiky v Evropském parlamentu*, UMV. Discussion Paper 2016.

¹³ M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 44.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

final analysis will be further examined in the article and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Czech Republic in the European Defence Agency.

Methodology

The article uses the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Various data sources (primary and secondary text sources and interviews) were used in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

First, the quantitative research using the content analysis was conducted. The research analysed both primary and secondary textual data (text corpus) published between 2012–2019. In this concrete time frame the article examined the content of main strategic documents published by ministerial bodies which identified the goals and priorities of the Czech policy and its involvement in the European Defence Agency (i.e. the Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy, the Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic). Additionally, the secondary sources, i.e. academic publications and newspaper articles, were also studied.

For a deeper understanding of the topics, a qualitative research method was used, namely conducting of semi-structured interviews. The interviews took the form of a questionnaire with pre-prepared questions, which were then freely developed depending on the respondent's answers. The questionnaire was prepared in accordance with the four criteria designed by Kolmaš et al. The examples of questions are mentioned below:

- The status and role of the Czech Republic in the EDA, the identification of its objectives and interests.
- HR policy of the EDA; activities of the Czech Republic in the secondment of its citizens, communication channels with Czech citizens seconded by the Czech Republic / willingness to promote the official goals of the Czech Republic?
- Personal experience with practices of other states – examples of best practices in secondment of their citizens in the EDA and their effective use for the promotion of the state goals / interests in the EDA?
- Which activities of the Czech Republic have been currently implemented in the EDA? Opinion?
- How do you evaluate current performance of the Czech Republic in the EDA?

Between February 2018 and July 2019 12 interviews were conducted with representatives from the Ministry of Defence and the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (with those who directly participated in the formulation of the policy in the EDA), as well as with some of the employees of the European Defence Agency.

The Czech Republic in the European Defence Agency

The European Defence Agency is an agency of the European Union which was established in 2004 (by the Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP¹⁵) “to support the Member States and the Council in their effort to improve European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the European Security and Defence Policy as it stands now and develops in the future”¹⁶. The Agency promotes cooperation, creates new initiatives and suggests ways to improve the defence capabilities of member countries. Within that overall mission are four functions: (1) development of defence capabilities in the field of crisis management, (2) promotion and enhancement of European armaments cooperation, (3) working to strengthen the Defence Technology and Industrial Base and for the creation of an internationally competitive European Defence Equipment Market and (4) enhancement of the effectiveness of European Defence Research and Technology. All EU member states take part in the Agency, except Denmark, which has opted out of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The EDA is headed by the High Representative (HR), and reports to the Council. The Head is responsible for overall organisation and functioning, ensures implementation of guidelines and decisions and chairs ministerial meetings of Steering Committee. The Steering Committee set priorities and guidelines of the Agency. Member States contribute to the budget of the organisation calculated with the GNP-based formula and approve the EDA’s working plan. Participation of states in projects is on voluntary basis. The Steering Committee elects the Director General

¹⁵ Common Foreign and Security Policy. Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP of 12 July 2004 on the establishment of the European Defence Agency, The Council of the European Union, 2004, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32004E0551&from=CS> (15.11.2019).

¹⁶ V. Kolín, *Evropská obranná agentura v šesti letech*, «Obrana a strategie» 2010, vol. 1, <https://www.obranaastrategie.cz/cs/aktualni-cislo-1-2010/clanky/evropska-obrana-agentura-v-vesti-letech.html> (20.03.2020).

(currently Jorge Domecq). The EDA's budget for 2018 was 33 million EUR¹⁷.

The functioning of the Agency is currently managed by the Council's Decision 2015/1835/CFSP¹⁸. This Decision is expected to be subject of revisions in the near future (in 2020) as a result of changes in the EU defence area and in connection with the measures taken due to the implementation of the EU Global Strategy. The Joint Decision of 12 July 2004 implies that the Agency's work is subordinate to the Council of the European Union (acting under its political supervision) and acts within the single institutional framework of the European Union to support the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It is an intergovernmental organization which supports the development of capabilities at the EU level in coordination with the European External Action Service, including the Military Staff and the EU Military Committee.

On one hand, the growing importance of the cooperation in security area among the EU member states (stressed by the EU Global strategy or by the development of PESCO) has led to raising attention to the existence of the Agency and its activities. However, the organization suffers also from several weaknesses. One of them is linked to its intergovernmental character which may be mirrored in the lack of willingness of individual states to give up sovereignty and support fully the implementation of decisions. The co-existence of the EDA and NATO was also questioned as 22 EU member states have been already engaged in the Alliance structures. It was argued, for instance, that fragmentation of defence budgets of organizations and programmes can dangerously undermine countries' security objectives¹⁹. Finally, the ownership structure of arms companies in Europe may be also problematic, as well as the voluntary participation of the member states in individual projects. Therefore, it seems that despite its growing mandate, the EDA has been still rather overshadowed in the constantly changing EU structures.

Although a small country, the Czech Republic tries to strengthen its role in the military sector and concentrate on its own military capabili-

¹⁷ V. Kolín, *Evropská obranná agentura v šesti letech*, «Obrana a strategie» 2010, vol. 1, <https://www.obranaastrategie.cz/cs/aktualni-cislo-1-2010/clanky/evropska-obranna-agentura-v-vesti-letech.html> (20.03.3020).

¹⁸ Council Decision (SZBP) 2015/1835, The Council of the European Union, 12 October 2015, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/CS/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02015D1835-20151013> (15.10.2019).

¹⁹ H. Laasme, *NATO and the European Defence Agency – not a zero-sum game*, NATO, 25.10.2015. <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2010/11/25/nato-and-the-european-defence-agency-not-a-zero-sum-game/index.html> (30.10.2019).

ties. It has several important industrial clusters in the area of aviation, armoured vehicles, small arms and light weapons and radar systems. At the same time, it possesses several unique technologies, particularly related to military training and simulators, information technology and services, or special materials²⁰.

However, the size of the state extremely matters in this particular sector. The Czech Republic needs to have partners and thus its active participation in the collective defence system of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its support in the development of the EU's crisis management capabilities, and the deepening of cooperation with partner countries constitute the basic guarantees and principles for safeguarding defence and strengthening national security²¹. The Czech Republic became a member of NATO in 1999 and fully supported the establishment of the EDA in 2004. Its membership in both organizations is crucial, but is it also effective? The analysis below focuses on the case of the Czech involvement in the EDA.

Efficiency of membership of the Czech Republic in the European Defence Agency

In order to assess the membership of the Czech Republic in the EDA, certain criteria should be drafted. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, many states either do not have such criteria, or they are not willing to publish them. This may partly reflect the fact that different organizations, as well as different countries, have different needs and therefore cannot be evaluated similarly. It implies the need to use specific, separate criteria for the Czech Republic, considering both the general principles of any assessment and the specific conditions of the Czech state administration.

In the publication of Kolmaš et al., the authors first proposed two basic criteria: relevance and performance²². Relevance assesses the extent to which the focus of the organization corresponds to the foreign policy objectives of the state. This aspect is important for the state to define why it operates in an organization, how important it is for the state and

²⁰ Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Defence, 2017, <http://www.army.cz/assets/en/ministry-of-defence/strategy-and-doctrine/defencestrategy2017.pdf> (1.12.2019).

²¹ Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Defence, 2017, <http://www.army.cz/assets/en/ministry-of-defence/strategy-and-doctrine/defencestrategy2017.pdf> (1.12.2019).

²² M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 101.

what the state expects from it. The performance focuses on the results and outputs that the state achieves in an international organization. Specifically, it evaluates the degree of participation and the availability of knowledge and information provided by the organization, the impact of membership on access to services provided by the organization, and other membership benefits.

Kolmaš et al. later showed that deeper assessment requires setting of other criteria. They examined four criteria: objectives pursued, personal representation, cost / performance ratio and activities implemented²³. These criteria are further applied on the assessment of the Czech membership in the European Defence Agency.

Objectives pursued

The first criterion determines the extent to which the Czech Republic has a clear idea of why it joined an international organization and what it expects from membership and from participation in it. Objectives should be clearly defined, at least within the state administration, both in the long term and in the short term. The longer-term and short-term objectives should match, otherwise there is a risk that the Czech Republic, by pursuing a certain priority, will threaten the more general interests. Another important aspect is the constant definition of objectives. These should not change too often and too fundamentally. Otherwise, the Czech Republic would cease to be a credible partner on the international scene and, moreover, it would reduce the capacity of its representatives in international organizations to understand a rapidly changing environment.

Overall, rapid and / or frequent changes in the objectives pursued, especially (but not only) in the case of long-term changes, would have a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of Czech membership in a concrete organization. Furthermore, any inconsistency between the long-term priority and the lack of progress in an international organization would reduce the Czech Republic's external credibility and jeopardize the effectiveness of its actions²⁴.

The activities in the EDA are part of the activities of the Czech Republic in the Common defence and security policy (CDSP). The

²³ Ibidem, p. 116.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 119.

Czech Republic's positions and interests within the CSDP are defined in the Foreign Policy Concept and in the Czech Republic's Defence Strategy. But the clear articulation of its in priorities inside the EDA (and in the CDSP in general) is often missing. According to these official documents, it is in the interest of the Czech Republic that the EU should be able, if necessary, to respond and act independently. In practice, the general tool for ensuring the security of the Czech Republic is the prevention and suppression of security threats. To this end, the Czech Republic uses both the EU and the NATO²⁵. The Czech Republic therefore supports the development of a complex, effective and operational CSDP, however, under the condition that such cooperation would be complementary to NATO.

When closely studying the Czech Defence Strategy, the EDA is not mentioned even once²⁶. It demonstrates the attention paid to the EDA by the Czech representatives: the EDA is only considered as a part of the EU structures and a part of the CFSP (and CDSP). Moreover, the agenda of the CFSP (without clear differentiation) is managed by three ministerial bodies: dominantly by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), but partly also by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and by the Office of the Government. The main priorities and guidelines remained for a long time rather vague. Only with the adoption of the internal document (document entitled "Mandate for the involvement of the Czech Republic in the EDA activities and projects") of the Ministry of Defence, which defined the engagement of the Czech Republic in the EDA in 2015, the priorities became more specifically identified. Currently the involvement in the Agency's projects and initiatives are mainly coordinated by the Ministry of Defence at working level through the EDA Contact Working Forum.

Respondents confirmed such situation²⁷. According to some, the image of EDA in the Czech Republic is not always positive. The Czech Republic's approach to the agency seems often uncoordinated²⁸. An

²⁵ Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3.8.2015, https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/policy_planning/concept_of_the_czech_republic_s_foreign.html (31.08.2019).

²⁶ Although NATO is mentioned 28 times. Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Defence, 2017, <http://www.army.cz/assets/en/ministry-of-defence/strategy-and-doctrine/defencestrategy2017.pdf> (1.12.2019).

²⁷ Employee (1) of the Ministry of Defence, Prague, 9 October 2018. Employee (4) of the EDA, Prague, 16 October 2018. Employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 23 February 2019.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

employee of the Ministry of Defence in an interview also confirmed that NATO remained a priority for the Czech Republic in the area of defence cooperation. The EDA's agenda and its environment are thus a new field of activity for Czech representatives, and the goals and priorities of the Czech Republic and formal procedures have been defined only recently and are still in the process of their implementation²⁹.

Furthermore, the discrepancy exists not only in the priorities and their articulation, but the role of the Czech Republic it is not sufficiently reflected in the objectives linked to the internal development of military capabilities of the Czech Republic and to the relation with the relevant industry. It mostly concerns active involvement in EDA's projects, reassessment of the Czech acquisition practices, as well as its R&D priorities, production of new defence technologies, including potential participation in cooperative programs.

Personal representation in the EDA

The second criterion focuses on the personnel of the Czech Republic in international organizations. One dimension to be considered in this respect is the overall transparency of the system. Transparency refers to the extent to which it is clear who specifically is responsible for the agenda associated with membership of an international organization. The information should concern both the headquarters (i.e. the MFA and other Czech central state administration bodies) and embassies abroad (or consulates, permanent missions, etc.). Transparency is important as it reduces transaction costs by allowing government officials to verify that they do not duplicate the activities and to easily identify those with whom it would be appropriate to coordinate the activities.

Another dimension of personal representation is adequacy and continuity. The number of employees should always be proportionate to the nature and importance of the agenda and should reflect the needs and capabilities of the Czech Republic³⁰.

The third dimension of personal representation concerns the competences of those in charge of the agenda related to the international organization. Certainly, these competencies may vary depending on

²⁹ Employee (1) of the EDA, Prague, 9 October 2018.

³⁰ Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3.8.2015, https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/policy_planning/concept_of_the_czech_republic_s_foreign.html (31.08.2019).

whether the person is at headquarters or at the embassy and whether he or she has an organization on its agenda exclusively or together with other tasks. Of course, competence should go hand in hand with a moral profile guaranteeing that an employee in an international organization defends the interests of the Czech Republic.

At present, the Czech Republic has the highest number of personnel in the Agency. The EDA employs 5 persons. They work in different positions – two people are seconded directly by the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic as national experts (SNE), one person joined the administration as a contractual employee and two persons work in audit and in the IT departments as temporary staff. At the same time, two Czech auditors were nominated in May 2019 to a group of external auditors of the EDA.

It seems that the improvement is mainly due to the approval of the internal document in 2015. Prior to that year, the MoD personnel policy towards the EDA operated more or less on an ad hoc basis. Later, the Ministry of Defence has started to deal with the issue more systematically. In the structure of the MoD, the Central Point of Contact (CPoC) plays an important role. Among other tasks, the CPoC monitors job vacancies in the EDA, publishes offers on the Ministry's website, consults the selection of potential candidates with the relevant bodies, and coordinates their national support³¹. The Ministry also provides background information to potential candidates. Unfortunately, the selection procedures are rather long and often may take a year or more³². The positions are often announced for narrowly specialized professions that are important for the development of military capabilities in the EU. Especially, the selection of candidates for SNE positions is relatively complicated. Each candidate must pass a selection procedure at the Agency. Moreover, they must also pass a selection procedure within the Ministry of Defence. The final word and final confirmation of the candidate comes from the State Secretary, who is responsible for the HR policy of the Ministry³³.

The Ministry also lacks systematic preparation for people who may be potentially suitable for the Agency's positions in future. It thus proves to be very difficult to select an expert who would meet the requirements of the selection procedures and would be able to succeed. Moreover, there are relatively few suitable candidates who are experts in the field and know foreign languages. In addition, military experts may have compli-

³¹ Employee (2) of the Ministry of Defence, Prague, 18 September 2019.

³² Employee (1) of the Ministry of Defence, Prague, 9 October 2018.

³³ Employee (2) of the EDA, Prague, 10 October 2018.

cations caused by their military service. In order to be admitted, they must be suspended from their service and leave their departments. Such action is not always welcome and approved by their superiors³⁴.

Currently, the Czech representatives occupy rather lower positions in the EDA. The highest position is the position of an IT department manager. The candidates for higher positions in the management must gather the qualifications as well as a strong support of the member state. The lobbying among member countries and the state's ability to gain the support of others play an important role. In the past, the Czech Republic tried to get the post of Deputy Executive Director of the Agency. It gained support from the V4 countries and from the Great Britain, unfortunately Germany and France lobbied for the counter-candidate in this procedure, and thus the attempt failed.

Attention is also paid to persons who work as interns in the EDA. This happens even though the trainees enter the EDA without the knowledge or recommendation of the Ministry. In some cases, Czech representatives – former EDA trainees – may be employed directly at the Ministry, where they can further develop their skills and the Ministry uses their experience gained at the Agency³⁵. So far, there is no mechanism to make this process more systematic. These are mainly ad hoc cases, where again the Central Point of Contact plays a significant role.

The communication with Czech representatives in the EDA depends on the specific sector and agenda in which individual persons are employed. The Ministry primarily focuses on communication with its national experts who have been sent directly from the Czech institutions. In this case, communication is regular. SNEs usually communicate with the CPoC or with their former colleagues / superiors³⁶. Finally, the human capital lies heavily in the active participation in the working groups of the EDA. Not to mention that the contact with the EDA through these working groups is a great advantage for the positive evaluation of potential candidates applying for a position in the Agency.

Cost / performance ratio

Membership and participation in an international organization is normally associated with certain costs. The financial costs are regular

³⁴ Employee (4) of the EDA, Prague, 16 October 2018.

³⁵ Employee (3) of the EDA, Prague, 9 October 2018.

³⁶ Employee (4) of the EDA, Prague, 16 October 2018.

contributions, extraordinary contributions and possibly other costs. While a regular contribution usually serves to finance the organization's day-to-day operations and its stable agenda, extraordinary contributions can contribute to specific initiatives and projects. This difference should be considered when evaluating the return on costs.

Another criterion is the actual ratio between costs or inputs and results or outputs. Obviously, while the cost side is dominated by simple figures, it is not easy to quantify the results in this way. Membership and participation in international organizations not only bring economic benefits to the Czech Republic, but also political benefits, strengthened prestige, valuable information and many other outcomes that are of key importance for foreign policy, although they are not easily measurable. In this context, emphasis is often placed on the political capital gained by working in organizations and on the possibility of exchanging experience and expertise. These types of results should not definitely fall out of the evaluation, but their assessment requires experience and thorough knowledge of the work in an international organization³⁷.

To know the cost / performance ratio is very important due to the intergovernmental nature of the EDA. Simply put, the amount of contribution to the Agency's budget matters much. It is not a surprise that the main contributors are the member states with higher influence inside. The cost / performance ratio is thus an important information which enable to the member state to set a balance between the inputs (including the contribution to the main budget) and outputs (including political capital). But basically, two challenges appear. First, this criterion is difficult to be calculated due to the lack of data and the fact that the Agency is closely monitor only from 2015. Second, despite some ambitious priorities in the security areas, the Czech Republic's contribution in security cooperation are rather small in comparison to other member states. In 2016, the Czech Republic invested only 0.97% of GDP in defence area and spent 10.52% on investment³⁸. It represented the third worst result in NATO, far below 2% of GDP or beyond 20% threshold recommended by NATO and the European Defence Agency for investment expenditure. The financial contribution to the EDA budget which

³⁷ M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 117.

³⁸ V. Kolín, *Evropská obranná agentura v šesti letech*, «Obrana a strategie» 2010, vol. 1, <https://www.obranaastrategie.cz/cs/aktualni-cislo-1-2010/clanky/evropska-obranna-agentura-v-vesti-letech.html> (20.03.2020).

amounted in total to 32.5 million EUR³⁹ in 2018 is calculated based on the GNI formula⁴⁰. The Czech Republic currently contributes 1.16% to EDA budget⁴¹. To manifest readiness for further cooperation in security area, the increase of the contribution in the following years is thus a key priority. Moreover, due to the intergovernmental nature of the Agency, the Czech Republic's position in the EDA, including its personnel representation, largely depends on the Czech Republic's interest in participating in individual activities and projects of the Agency. On the other hand, the rising number of Czech representatives in the EDA shows a promising potential. Growing human capital and experiences the Czech Republic obtains in the EDA strengthens the output side of the equation.

Activities implemented

The fourth criterion relates to activities that the Czech Republic carries out in international organizations. First, it is necessary to assess whether these activities correspond to the goals set by the Czech Republic in the relevant organization. Specifically, the analysis should evaluate whether its activities correspond to the ideological setting of its foreign policy.

In addition to coherence with objectives, the evaluation of implemented activities should consider the level of involvement of the Czech Republic. Given the diversity of international organizations and their activities, there is no simple equation that the more engagement the better. It always depends on the specific context, the importance of the organization for the Czech Republic and the current needs of the Czech Republic. Moreover, the form of activities must be also considered. The Czech Republic has several tools that can be used in international organizations, from behind-the-scenes negotiations to tabling resolutions, voting on them, to project proposals that the organizations should focus

³⁹ Annual report 2018, European Defence Agency, <https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-annual-reports/eda-2018-annual-report> (15.11.2019).

⁴⁰ Council Decision of 4 August 2016 concerning the financial rules of the European Defence Agency and repealing Decision 2007/643/CFSP, Council of the EU, 216, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016D1353&from=FR> (15.11.2019).

⁴¹ Employee of the Ministry of Defence, Prague, 18 September 2019.

on. The choice of the appropriate instrument is again a matter of in-time assessment, no uniform and abstract criteria can be applied here⁴².

Speaking about current activities implemented and tools applied, the main tool for ensuring the security and defence of the Czech Republic is the NATO. The country is committed to increasing defence spending to 1.4% of GDP by 2020 and will aim to move towards the defence spending threshold of 2% of GDP in the long-term. The Czech Republic further develops its military capabilities in line with the NATO defence planning. It strives to increase the level of interoperability of the Czech armed forces with the NATO and the EU forces and to strengthen the complementarity of both organizations in ensuring defence and security. Part of this effort is also to put greater pressure on European allies to accentuate responsibility for their own security. The Czech Republic also supports NATO's open-door policy towards those states that show interest in membership and who meet the necessary conditions⁴³.

The EDA thus play second fiddle. Its role coincides with the priorities which remained until 2015 rather vague, also the amount of activities implemented by the Czech Republic inside the Agency is not high. Czech companies which are active in the defence sector, mostly export to less technologically demanding markets outside the EU. These decisions lead to significant challenges. First, the ability to penetrate these markets may gradually decrease as many current customers of the Czech companies build their own industrial capacities (often offsets from large European companies). The capacities may in the future not only saturate domestic demand but, in addition, the foreign producers may as well become competitors to the Czech industry. Second, such behaviour does not push the Czech defence industry to invest in research and development and in innovations. Finally, the ministerial bodies and the representatives from the Czech industry miss the opportunities from a collaboration in international programs offered by the Agency. Moreover, the lack of innovations may lead to the fact that the Czech Republic will not have even the potential players with the ability to participate in these programs in the future.

The Czech Republic should thus monitor and support specific projects coordinated by the EDA with regards to the specifics of its own defence industrial base and with an emphasis on innovation and sub-

⁴² M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 119.

⁴³ Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3.8.2015, https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/policy_planning/concept_of_the_czech_republic_s_foreign.html (31.08.2019).

sequent unification of armaments among the EU countries. This may help to expand export opportunities for the Czech companies (namely to Western markets). At the same time, the Czech Republic should also motivate the representatives of the domestic defence industry and provide adequate support for their involvement in the European defence industry complex. This in turn increases the competitiveness of the whole sector and may have positive effect on the country's strategic position in the EDA and on foreign policy interests in general⁴⁴.

Challenges faced

The analysis of criteria in relation to the Czech foreign policy and to the involvement in the EDA showed several challenges which weakened the actual feasibility of the efficiency assessment. The mixture of research methods (content analysis and interviews) revealed that the responsible ministerial bodies are still not able to define properly the purpose and the priorities for their involvement in individual organization. Is the purpose rather political, economic or is it the exchange of expertise and information that matter the most? In most cases, the answers of the respondents were unclear⁴⁵. Unfortunately, if a given department is unable to clearly define the purpose of membership, then membership in such organization cannot be considered as adequate.

Moreover, the definition of the security policy strategy seems to be confusing as it is conducted by the Ministry of Defence, but other ministerial bodies (especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Government) interfere as well. This incoherence leads to the fact that the actual definition of the goals and priorities is often only vaguely linked to the involvement in concrete organization. Also, several interviews confirmed⁴⁶ that major preparation of the strategical foreign and security policy concepts happens “off the table” (based on the data supplied) without knowing the activities of an organization more thoroughly – the main reason being the lack of official communication chan-

⁴⁴ Programové prohlášení vlády, the Office of the Government, 27 June 2018. <https://www.vlada.cz/cz/jednani-vlady/programove-prohlaseni/programove-prohlaseni-vlady-165960> (23.09.2019).

⁴⁵ Employee of the Ministry of Defence, Prague, 25 May 2019.

⁴⁶ Employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 23 February 2019. Employee of the Office of the Government, Prague, 25 March 2019. Employee of the ministry of Defence, Prague, 25 May 2019.

nels between the Czech representatives employed in the Agency and the ministerial bodies.

Another serious issue is the link between the security policy goals and priorities and activities which are implemented. A more detailed analysis shows that the vagueness in identification of main priorities leads to problematic implementation of specific activities and actions of the Czech Republic in the EDA. Moreover, it is the unclear definition of the goals that prevents the Czech representatives to promote interest of the states inside the Agency. This unfortunately leads again to the inefficiency of the membership.

Finally, the cost / benefit ration maybe a well-defined criterion, but it does not reflect the reality of how the system is currently implemented in the Czech Republic. A prerequisite for any financial evaluation of costs and benefits is a comprehensive and detailed record of all costs. According to respondents⁴⁷, the records of costs are practically non-existent. And there is still not enough political will to prepare these. And thus, transparency in the field, which should be one of the criteria for assessing the efficiency of membership is very problematic.

Conclusion

The international organizations are recognized actors in international system. The number of them is growing. This leads to the fact that states, including the Czech Republic, participate in various IOs, sometimes even in hundreds of them. Theoretical assumptions say that the smaller countries tend to value more the membership in international organizations.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, there is not many sources which would provide more details on how in reality the countries manage the involvement in them.

In 2015, a team of authors set four criteria which were designed specifically for the Czech Republic to assess the efficiency of its membership in IOs. The criteria included objectives pursued, personal representation, cost/benefit ratio and activities implemented. These criteria were applied on the assessment of the engagement of the Czech Republic in the European Defence Agency. The analysis of the strategic documents accompanied by interviews with different representatives of the relevant

⁴⁷ Employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 23 February 2019.

⁴⁸ M. Kolmaš et al., *Česká republika v mezinárodních organizacích...*, p. 125.

ministries showed that the NATO remains priority and the engagement in the EDA plays a secondary role. For more than a decade, no systematic approach was designed in order to gain more positive outcomes. It led to low performance of the Czech Republic in the EDA, vague definition of goals and uncoordinated actions. Since 2015, the situation has started to change thanks to a pressure of individuals inside the Ministry of Defence. The changes are so far namely visible in the growing number of Czech representatives employed in the EDA. The Czech Republic's representation in the EDA is historically the highest. The newly set procedures has shown first positive results. But other weaknesses remain, such as the identification of suitable candidates especially for SNE positions, support of these candidates, preparation of candidates for selection procedures, existence of formal channels of communication between Czech representatives employed in the EDA and the Czech ministerial bodies or often passive participation in the EDA working groups.

Looking on the current state closely, there are two main reasons why the engagement of the Czech Republic is still not effective enough. First, the strategic documents that should define primary security policy goals and priorities still tend to be rather vague. It is thus very difficult to link them with concrete activities which should be implemented in the Agency. The task becomes even less clear in case of cost / benefit ratio. This important area remains almost untouched, there is no systematic approach, nor policies or rules for its evaluation. These challenges not only prevent the Czech Republic from successfully assessing the effectiveness of its involvement in the organization, but also, they may question the attitude of the Czech Republic towards the Agency in general.

What follows from the study of the Czech Republic? When assessing the membership of the Czech Republic in a given organization, the Czech Republic should carefully monitor whether the organization fulfils the above mentioned conditions, especially the reduction of transaction costs, which would be higher in the case of bilateral approach, the reduction of costs for obtaining information with regards to the intentions and goals of other actors, the improved efficiency of negotiations and coordination in the organization, as well as predictability and stability of the political arena.

Table 1. EDA – List of interviews

Respondents	Venue	Date
Employee (1) of the Ministry of Defence (the Czech Republic)	Prague	9.10.2018, 25.5.2019
Employee (2) of the Ministry of Defence (the Czech Republic)	Prague	18.9.2018, 27.5.2019
Employee of the Office of the Government (the Czech Republic)	Prague	25.3.2018
Employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Czech Republic)	Prague	23.2.2019
Employee in EDA (1)	Prague	9.10.2018
Employee in EDA (2)	Prague	10.10.2018
Employee in EDA (3)	Prague	9.10.2018
Employee in EDA (4)	Prague	16.10.2018, 27.5.2019
Employee in EDA (5)	Prague	10.10.2018, 28.5.2019

Source: own elaboration.

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