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Migration and development policies: The state of affairs before the 2015 European migration crises in the Czech Republic and its current implications

Robert Stojanov ^{a, b, *}, Oldřich Bureš ^c, Barbora Duží ^d

^a Department of Informatics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic

^b Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

^c Center for Security Studies, Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic

^d Department of Environmental Geography, Institute of Geonics, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses attitudes of key stakeholders towards migration and development policies in the Czech Republic. It is generally understood that migration policy is a set of measures aimed primarily at handling immigration flows to developed countries, while development policy seeks to foster sustainable growth in developing countries. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 experts from the public decision-making, non-governmental, academic and private (legal) spheres to gather their opinions on the practice of, and relations between, the Czech migration and development policies. The findings of our research point to the lack of coherence between these two types of policies and they highlight several specific discrepancies across individual policy instruments. Moreover, albeit our research was conducted prior to the escalation of the EU migration crisis in 2015, several of our findings contextualize the Czech response to this crisis, both at the national and European Union level.

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1. Introduction

Migration of populations is an important socio-economic indicator of social processes. According to estimates by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD), the number of migrants in 2015 reached about 244 million internationally, which accounts for approximately 3.3 percent of the world's population (UNPD, 2015). Labor migration, in particular, is considered to be a potential factor in development. The reasons for the growing interest in studying the links between migration and development are varied, however the most important ones undoubtedly include the rising number (in absolute terms) of immigrants from developing countries who are based in economically developed countries; the increasing quantity of remittances sent over the last 10–15 years; and the ageing population in economically developed countries. Another key reason lies in disenchantment with the failures of traditional development interventions such as Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the ensuing search for alternative solutions which, for example, give the issue of remittances considerable

* Corresponding author. Department of Informatics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic, Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

E-mail address: stojanov@centrum.cz (R. Stojanov).

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attention and importance. In this respect, research by [Stojanov and Strielkowski \(2013\)](#) points to greater stability in the flow of remittances than that of ODA and to the more positive impact of remittances than of ODA on economic growth.

The links between migration and development policy have already been the subject of a number of studies, and it is not possible to offer even a succinct review of all of these publications. Instead, we want to point out the emergence of several key thematic areas in the research on migration and development. The first area includes studies that try to determine to what extent individual migration policies (or their tools) contribute to development. [De Haas \(2012:21\)](#), for example, poses key questions along the following lines:

- i) How can differences in migration policies and in investment environments explain why migration plays a more positive role in development in some cases and a less positive (or negative) one in other cases?
- ii) Can the target country of migration increase the development potential of migration by creating legal channels for qualified or non-qualified migration? Alternatively, can this be done by using integration policies that prevent the marginalization of migrants (for example, by giving them the same rights as the majority population in the fields of basic rights, education, health care, employment, and others)?
- iii) How can the migration policies of target countries support the personal growth of migrants (instead of exploiting them) and thus maximize their social and economic ability to contribute to the development of their countries of origin?

The second area of research includes recent literature devoted to the links between migration and development which focuses primarily on quantifying the economic impact of remittances (for instance, [Adams, 2011](#); [Ziesemer, 2012](#); [Bettin et al., 2012](#)). These studies examine, for example, effects on health care ([Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo, 2011](#)); the role of remittances in protecting households for natural disasters ([Mohapatra et al., 2009](#)); and the relationship between the determinants of migration and the motivation for sending remittances ([Garip, 2012](#)).

Some of the security-oriented literature, however, also highlights a serious security risk based on the lack of regulation of the informal banking systems (“hawalas”) through which a considerable portion of remittances flows due to their availability to illegal migrants and their lower charges compared to standard bank transfers ([Razavy and Haggerty, 2009](#)). Furthermore, [Sørensen \(2012:69\)](#) draws attention to the dangers of privatizing and outsourcing control measures in the field of migration, a concern closely related to the broader issue of the advantages and disadvantages of using the services of private military and/or security companies, which is now being discussed extensively within security studies ([Avant, 2004](#); [Bureš, 2014](#); [Jäger and Kümmel, 2007](#); [Ortiz, 2010](#); [Singer, 2003](#)). [Gammeltoft and Hansen \(2009\)](#), for example, examine the repercussions of the privatizing border controls in the UK since 2005 as well as the gradually increasing privatization of checkpoints between Israel and the Palestinian West Bank since the same year. Similarly, [Richey \(2006\)](#) investigates the unprecedented privatizing of US border controls with Mexico in terms not only of the scale of operations, but also of the rising prices which the US federal government pays to private companies.

In a recent study, [Saldivar and Price \(2015\)](#) explored the growing involvement of what they called “the prisons industrial complex” in immigration enforcement and in the running of immigration detention centers in the US, pointing out that companies operating private prisons have spent over 90% of their lobbying dollars in states that have proposed harsher and more stringent immigration laws, such as Arizona. Overall, therefore, the privatization of what have traditionally been understood as “inherently” governmental/state operations highlights the hitherto inadequate regulation and supervision of the private military and/or security companies which activities increasingly directly affect the lives, freedom and/or property of private persons ([Bureš, 2015](#)).

The third important area of research into the migration–development nexus covers the diversity of migration policies that attempt to control immigration flows of residents to economically developed countries (especially from the perspective of European Union (EU) member states). In this regard, [Castles \(2004\)](#), for example, believes that European migration policies fail for three major reasons, which are paraphrased below

- i) the policy instruments used by governments in the EU do not consider that migration processes have their own dynamics (for example, transnational networks) which cannot be bound by the regulations issued;
- ii) migration is “dictated” by processes of globalization and the economic and technological division of the world into North and South;
- iii) migration policies are formed on the basis of national political systems that do not allow efficient interconnection of policies into one supranational whole.

In addition, various instruments related to migration policies are adopted in the short term and often do not exceed the term of office of particular politicians. For this reason, [Skeldon \(2008:15\)](#) is skeptical about the effectiveness of political interventions in the area of international migration and development.

The importance of the links between migration and development, and the numerous dilemmas of policies that aim to manage immigration flows, have recently become particularly apparent within the EU, which the Czech Republic joined in 2004. It is nonetheless important to note that immigration has not emerged as a new issue in 2015, when the EU experienced an unprecedented influx of approximately 1.3 million asylum seekers, one half of whom claimed to flee the countries affected by civil conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan ([Eurostat, 2017](#)). Asylum migration towards the EU, via the routes from West

Africa to Spain, from North Africa to Italy and Malta and from Turkey to Greece, had already been an issue at least since the early 2000s (Walters, 2008).

Prior to 2015 crises, however, the EU's response was piecemeal. Although the European Council called for a 'comprehensive approach to migration' and the 'need for more efficient management of migration flows' already in 1999 (European Council, 1999), the EU Member States initially decided to provide different institutional arrangements for conducting regular and irregular migration policies with the Treaty of Amsterdam (signed on 2 October 1997, and entered into force on 1 May 1999), while regular migration matters remained solely at the national level, irregular migration policies were communalized, granting the Commission the right of initiative, the European Court of Justice jurisprudence and the European Parliament a co-decision right and allowing for qualified majority (QMV) decisions in the Council (Peers and Rogers, 2006). Thus, prior to the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, when all migration policies uniformly fell under 'ordinary legislative procedure', the EU institutions were only able to influence the design of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

Completed in 2005, CEAS set out minimum standards and procedures for processing and deciding asylum applications, and for the treatment of both asylum seekers and those who are recognized as refugees. A crucial component of CEAS is the Dublin Regulation (No. 604/2013), which stipulates that the EU member state in which the asylum seeker first applies for asylum is responsible for either accepting or rejecting the claim (and thus this member state should also accommodate and care for the asylum seeker before his application is processed). While one of the principal aims of the Dublin Regulation was to prevent an applicant from submitting applications in multiple member states, it also allowed any EU member state to return asylum seekers to their country of first entry to the EU to process their asylum claims (as long that country has an effective asylum system). In practice, therefore, the EU member states in the north, the desired destination of most asylum seekers, have used the Dublin Regulation to their advantage, at the expense of the member states in the south, where most refugees first arrive (Marx, 2016).

In addition to CEAS, the establishment of a European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX) in 2004 introduced a new level of European coordination. However, while FRONTEX coordinated and implemented border protection missions on the Atlantic and Mediterranean migrations routes, a comprehensive EU approach in dealing with illegal migration was missing in the 2000s. Overall, the EU's pre-2015 response to migration prioritized fight against irregular migration and the externalization of EU's border controls via cooptation of transit countries in the "management" of migration, instead of being thought as a coordinated and collective solution of European and third countries (Wolf, 2015).

This is well apparent from several more recent EU-level policy initiatives in this area. At the end of 2011, for example, the European Commission (2011) devised a way to implement mobility partnerships with the EU's immediate neighbors as well as with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and other countries. These essentially provide a framework for dialogue about facilitating and organizing legal migration, effective measures against irregular migration and concrete steps to strengthen the development impact of migration. Part of the partnership related to visa facilitation and readmission policies and included steps to address the issues of asylum and refugee protection, which should help in the fight against the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking. The EU promised its partners that it will promote legal migration and visa policies and was planning the possible relaxation or cancellation of visa requirements for citizens of states which fulfill certain criteria, including in areas such as migration, asylum and border control (European Commission, 2011).

This new strategy, adopted partly in response to the events of the Arab Spring, was supposed to formally connect migration and mobility with EU foreign policy, development cooperation, education, economic growth and job creation. In our opinion, however, its real purpose was to convince the governments of partner countries to cooperate in combating the increasing threat of illegal migration to the EU. This has become more obvious in the EU's response to the 2015 migrations crisis following the de facto invalidation of CEAS, which proved unable to distribute roughly 2.5 million asylum seekers in 2015–2016 (Eurostat, 2017) among a population of more than 500 million people in the EU.

By the summer of 2015, some northern EU member states, most notably Germany and Sweden, recognized that the continued application of first entry principle of the Dublin Regulation was unrealistic, since the southern EU member states (especially Italy and Greece) were overwhelmed with the seemingly never ending flows of asylum seekers, and allowed asylum seekers to reach their territory in order to consider their claims. In addition, the EU decided to set so-called "hotspots" in Greece and Italy in order to identify, register, and fingerprint incoming migrants, and redirect them either towards asylum or return procedures. Even more controversially, in 2016, despite strong resistance from East European member states, including the Czech Republic, the EU Council decided to relocate 160 000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other EU member states, based on the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, among the member states (Rafaelli, 2017). Subsequently, the European Commission repeatedly proposed the setting up of a permanent and automatic asylum seekers distribution system, even though only a small percentage of the originally agreed relocations actually have taken place thus far – as of May 2017, only 18 418 persons have been transferred from Greece and Italy to other EU member states (European Commission, 2017).

Moreover, the ultimate, if possibly only temporary, solution to the EU's 2015 migration crisis was arguably a consequence of the shutting down of the Mediterranean migration route via a combination of border closures in the Balkans and the March 2016 agreement with Turkey. The latter was promised financial assistance, visa-free travel to the EU for Turkish citizens and faster negotiations for EU accession in return for stopping migrants from moving onward into Europe (Greenhill, 2016). Similar agreements are under negotiation with other countries in the Middle East and Africa, including Libya, Egypt, Sudan,

and Nigeria, under a new “Partnership Framework” proposed in June 2016 by the [European Commission \(2016\)](#). The EU therefore once again links development aid to commitments of these third countries to stem and manage the movements of people from their territory.

Our focus in this article is on analyzing migration and development policies from the perspective of the Czech Republic as a relatively “new” destination country for immigration, a “new” donor state (as defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee) and a “new” EU member state. The main objective of the article is to assess the coherence of Czech migration and development policies and the various instruments used with these policies. As such, this work also makes an empirical contribution to the aforementioned key thematic areas in the research of migration and development. Moreover, albeit our research was conducted prior to the escalation of the EU migration crisis in 2015, it offers a contextualization of the Czech response to this crisis, both at the national and European Union levels.

Specifically, the key research questions addressed in this article are as follows:

1. *What are the main strengths and main challenges (problems) of current Czech migration and development policies?*
2. *What are the areas of coherence and what are the key points of contradiction of current Czech migration and development policies?*

In order to answer these questions, empirical research was conducted in the period 2010–2011 among experts from the public decision-making, non-governmental, academic and private (legal) spheres engaged in the formulation, application and/or analysis of Czech migration and/or development policy. The research was conducted with representatives of all target groups that have an impact on the creation of migration or development policy apart from representatives of the employers of foreign workers. These employers were, however, indirectly represented through the Ministry of Industry and Trade, which is generally perceived as reflecting private sector views on migration and development issues because Czech migration labor policies are formed through its office.

This article has the following structure: The next section briefly discusses the development of Czech migration and development policy. We then provide a description of our methodology, an analysis of the in-depth interviews and a summary of the main findings of the empirical research. In the final section, we present our interpretations of the empirical results, including their relevance for understanding of the Czech response to the 2015 migration crisis.

2. The progress of Czech development and migration policies

Following [Drbohlav et al. \(2010: 74\)](#), we understand Czech migration policy as a set of laws, regulations and practices related to the movement of international migrants across national borders and their residence in the Czech Republic. Development policy is deemed to consist of public policies and social and economic strategies that aim to improve the economic and social situation of the population of developing countries. The provision of development aid is part of this policy.

The coherence of migration and development policies is defined as a situation in which the objectives, instruments and results of these policies are in line and complement each other. The purpose of coherence is to eliminate any contradictory action and align individual policies. According to the principal official Czech development policy document, “The Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2010–2017” ([MFA, 2010b](#)), the Czech Republic should emphasize the coherence of development policy at national and EU levels and ensure that the external effects of individual departmental policies do not undermine the aims and objectives of that development policy (specifically in the area of migration). However, as [Horký \(2008: 3\)](#) has pointed out, the Czech Republic lacks reliable data concerning the coherence of its policies, which is why the potential coherence (and incoherence) of immigration and development policies can only be estimated.

In terms of its evolution, modern Czech development assistance has a relatively short lineage as it was only re-launched in 1995 after the Czech Republic joined the club of OECD countries ([Horký and Lightfoot, 2013: 23](#)). One of this group's main official strategies was the transfer of experience from the political and economic transformation process in the 1990s to the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe. In practice, however, this was more of a myth than a reality ([Horký, 2012: 27–28](#)). This is also apparent from the poor outcome of Czech ODA in the Commitment to Development Index (CDI) in 2016; of the 27 richest countries in the world, the Czech Republic ranked 22nd ([CGD, 2016](#)). As a new member of the EU in 2004, the Czech Republic was supposed to increase its ODA to the levels of 0.17 percent of the ratio of ODA/Gross National Income (GNI) by 2010 and 0.33 percent by 2015 ([Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(MFA\) 2010b](#)). [Table 1](#) shows that this financial commitment was not met in both 2010 and 2015 and it is unlikely to be achieved in near future.

The main forms of Czech aid are multilateral—representing 65% of the 2015 Czech ODA budget; and bilateral assistance—35% ([MFA, 2016](#)). While much of this multilateral assistance is mandatory due to the Czech Republic's payment commitments related to its membership of various international institutions, including the growing Czech contribution to the EU budget, the bilateral aid is mainly intended for projects implemented by Czech entities. In line with the 2010 model of Czech ODA, these projects are primarily aimed at so-called “programme” and “project” countries. In 2015, these countries were located in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, representing 29% of the 2015 total budget for bilateral projects; Sub-Saharan Africa—9%; the Middle East—16%; South and Central Asia—13%; and other Asian countries—4% ([MFA, 2016](#)). Most projects related to

Table 1
Czech ODA amounts and ODA/GNI ratio (1999–2015).

Year	ODA (in millions of CZK)	Exchange rate CZK/USD	ODA (in millions of USD)	ODA/GNI (as a percentage)
1999	516	34.60	14.91	0.027
2000	624	38.59	16.17	0.032
2001	1007	38.04	26.47	0.047
2002	1486	32.74	45.39	0.065
2003	2556	28.23	90.54	0.101
2004	2780	25.70	108.17	0.106
2005	3236	23.95	135.13	0.114
2006	3637	22.61	160.86	0.120
2007	3633	20.31	178.89	0.110
2008	4245	17.04	249.21	0.124
2009	4077	18.99	214.70	0.120
2010	4342	19.08	227.57	0.127
2011	4426	17.67	250.46	0.125
2012	4291	19.54	219.63	0.124
2013	4125	19.56	210.88	0.114
2014	4403	20.76	212.15	0.112
2015	4894	24.59	199.02	0.115

Source: Stojanov (2006), MFA (2010a, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016), CNB (2017) and own calculations.

the environment, agriculture, social development (including education, social and health services) or economic development (including energy) sectors and entailed the promotion of democracy, human rights and social transformation.

According to the Commitment to Development Index (CDI) 2016, the Czech Republic's development policies have delivered the best results in the environmental sector due to the high taxes on petrol and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP, and in the finance components because of the 5th best score of the CDI countries in the Financial Secrecy Index. The country also has above average results in the fields of technology and trade where there are relatively low barriers to imports from developing countries reflects EU tariffs and quotas for products from developing countries. The Czech Republic is rewarded for its contributions to multilateral institutions, but its aid could be improved by providing greater support to poor countries. It provides some support to investment in developing countries, but has room for improvement in considering the public policy goals of its investment partners when setting up international investment agreements. Additional weaknesses can be found in the area of migration. It can improve its commitment to development by opening its borders to migrants, students, and refugees from developing countries and by enhancing its migrant integration policies (CGD, 2016). Moreover, the Czech Republic has repeatedly been criticized for its fragmented approach and limited efficiency in the delivery of international development assistance, as well as for this excessive promotion of national (security, economic and political) interests within a relatively low financial volume of Czech ODA (Majerová, 2012: 183).

The development of Czech migration policy has already been well documented in the literature. In particular, the now classic work of Baršová and Barša (2005) analyzed historical developments and contemporary trends in immigration to the Czech Republic and Czech immigration policy. The authors claim that although the Czech Ministry of the Interior (MI) was a motor in the areas of migration and integration throughout the 1990s, the initiative to change immigration policy only came in 2001–2002 within a Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA) project called “Active Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers.” The main aim of this project was to accelerate the lengthy process of obtaining permanent residence for selected high-skilled immigrants. The program did not, however, offer foreigners any help in obtaining either work or visa, which explains the relatively low level of interest in participation. The project was, thus, suspended in 2010.

Another retrospective appraisal of the development of Czech migration policy from the time of its inception in the 1990s until 2008 was offered by Drbohlav et al. (2010: 74–96), who found that this policy was rather unsystematic after 1989. Their study also pointed to several specific examples of the gradual centralization of decision-making about migration policy within the MI Department of Asylum and Migration Policy– DAMP (Drbohlav et al., 2010: 75). Similarly, Kušniráková and Čizinský (2011: 503) described the adoption of the Aliens Act of 1 January 2000 as an MI effort to strengthen its departmental powers and so increase its control over migrants and remedy the overly liberal approaches of the 1990s, which in the eyes of MI officials had caused undue chaos and risks to the security of the Czech Republic. In this respect, Drbohlav (2011: 414–415) believes that the latest trend in Czech migration policy is an assimilation strategy, which is supported by the majority of the public; among key changes, he notes a shift away from (an at least declared) multiculturalism to a model of “civic integration” and from passive approaches to active, systematic methods (including the introduction of recruitment programs) headed toward a strongly centralist model of management of migration/integration policy clearly dominated by the influence of the MI.

Nevertheless, little attention has been paid thus far to the relationship between migration and development in the basic conceptual documents about Czech ODA (MFA, 2010b) and its evaluation (MFA, 2013). The theme of migration is traditionally treated separately from development and associated with illegal immigration or security issues (MFA, 2010a; 2010b, 2013), approaches which confirm the significant influence of the MI and its DAMP. In this light, it is not so surprising that reducing unwanted migration is actually mentioned explicitly in official MFA documents as one of the purposes of Czech ODA provision

(MFA, 2010a). In practical terms, development projects addressing migration issues, which until 2011 came under the auspices of the DAMP, have focused in recent years on “strengthening migration management” in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. This includes return and reintegration policies and building migration and asylum infrastructure (MFA, 2010a; 2012, 2013).

As for number of immigration flows and specifically asylum seekers to the Czech Republic, it is important to note that they have remained relatively low in the last decade. Thus, the direct impact of key external factors that have driven immigration to other EU member states, such as the global economic crisis in the late 2000s and conflicts in Syria and Iraq in the 2010s, has been negligible in the Czech Republic. This is in contrast to the periods between 1999 and 2003, when the Czech Republic experienced high inflows of asylum seekers (with peaks in 2001 with 18 094 asylum seekers, and in 2003 with 11 400 asylum seekers) due to the external migration effects caused by the break-up of former Yugoslavia and several conflicts in post-Soviet countries (for details see Table 2). Ever since, however, the trend has been decreasing, with a record low of 707 asylum applications in 2013. In the crucial migration year of 2015, the Czech Republic received only 1525 applications for international protection, that is, an increase by a few hundreds, rather thousands or tens of thousands as in several other EU member states (MICR, 2015).

While Table 2 provides an overview of the numbers of asylum seekers in the Czech Republic between 1999 and 2015, Table 3 specifies the source countries. It shows that most asylum seekers have come from other post-communist countries, both in the near-by region (especially Ukraine) and from further-away countries (Russian Federation, Cuba, Mongolia, Vietnam), due to historical relations between the former communist countries and Czechoslovakia. In contrast, the numbers of asylum seekers from Syria (134 in 2015; 78 in 2016), Iraq (38 in 2015; 158 in 2016) and Afghanistan (24 in 2015; 37 in 2016) have been relatively small. Moreover, it is important to note that only 148 asylums were granted in the Czech Republic in 2016 (MICR, 2016). This is a consequence of the highly restrictive immigration policy of the Czech government, as well as the anti-immigration atmosphere in the Czech society at large.

3. Empirical research

3.1. Methods used

The empirical material used in this article is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews that were conducted between 2010 and 2011 with 21 respondents. The interviewees were experts from public institutions (the MI, the MLSA, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the MFA and government agencies), academia (universities) and the non-governmental sector (non-governmental organizations dealing with immigration to the Czech Republic) as well as solicitors in private practice. The representation of these institutions was approximately balanced, except in the case of the private sector. Here, however, the most well-known lawyers specializing in immigration to the Czech Republic were interviewed.

Interviews took place in Czech in Prague and Brno, which are the main centers of political and academic life in the Czech Republic as well as the primary venues for forming both migration and development policies. The main criteria for selecting respondents were their expertise, experience working in the researched areas and knowledge of the investigated policies, as well as their influence over the creation of those policies and ability to shape professional opinion. In most cases, the interviewees could be described as “top managers” within their organizations. In the academic sphere, they were generally senior lecturers. All respondents were university graduates. Their selection was done very deliberately, that is, we first chose

Table 2
Number of applications for international protection to the Czech Republic.

Year	Number of asylum seekers
1999	7218
2000	8794
2001	18 094
2002	8484
2003	11 400
2004	5459
2005	4021
2006	3016
2007	1878
2008	1656
2009	1258
2010	833
2011	756
2012	753
2013	707
2014	1156
2015	1525
2016	1478

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic (2015, 2016).

Table 3
Proportion of asylum seekers in selected countries in 2015 and 2016.

Source country	2015	2016
Afghanistan	24	37
Armenia	44	60
Belarus	19	12
China	40	68
Cuba	128	85
Iran	3	1
Iraq	38	158
Libya	10	3
Moldova	21	9
Mongolia	15	9
Nigeria	27	29
Russian Federation	43	61
Syria	134	78
Ukraine	694	507
Vietnam	81	67
Stateless	27	21
Other countries	177	273
Total	1525	1478

Source: MICR (2015, 2016).

experts based on their knowledge of the issues (approximately three-quarters of respondents were selected in this way) and then used a snowballing method based on the recommendations of these experts. As such, we are confident that interviews took place with all prominent experts in the public decision-making and management spheres at the time of the research, excluding representatives from the workplaces of the authors of this text. This was the first research project of this nature and scope carried out in the Czech Republic.

Regarding the gender characteristics of the respondents, women constituted a minority: the ratio of women to men was 8–13. Neither the gender nor the age of the respondents was a main criterion when selecting interviewees; this data is therefore not presented in Table 4, which provides basic information about the interviewees. To ensure their greater openness, all respondents were guaranteed anonymity in ensuing scholarly publications.

In order to find answers to our two key research questions, we have asked our respondents questions falling in one of the following four thematic areas:

- 1) What are the main characteristics of recent Czech development and migration policies?
- 2) What are the fundamental contradictions and potential harmonies between these two policies?
- 3) What is the role of circular migration and remittance outflows from the Czech Republic to migrants' countries of origin?
- 4) Do Czech development projects abroad reflect the objectives of Czech migration policy?

Table 4
List and characteristics of experts.

Code	Expertise	Sector	Work position
01	International migration and development	Non-governmental organization	Project staff
02	International migration and development	Non-governmental organization	Director
03	International migration and development	Non-governmental organization	Project staff
04	Migration and development	Non-governmental organization	Project staff
05	International migration	Non-governmental organization	Director
06	International development	Academic	Researcher
07	International development	Government organization/office	Project manager
08	International migration	Academic	Senior lecturer
09	International migration and development	Academic	Associate professor
10	International migration	Academic	Senior lecturer
11	International migration	Academic	Senior lecturer
12	International migration	Academic	Senior lecturer
13	Migration and law	Non-governmental organization	Director
14	Migration and law	Private	Lawyer
15	International migration	Government office/organization	Director
16	Migration and economics	Government office/organization	Director
17	Migration and law	Private	Lawyer
18	Migration and economics	Government office/organization	Director
19	Migration and economics	Government office/organization	Director
20	International development	Government office/organization	Project manager
21	International development	Government office/organization	Director

Source: Composed by the authors.

3.2. Analysis of in-depth interviews

In this section, we focus on individual interviewees' perceptions and evaluations of the coherence of recent development and migration policies. This analysis of the in-depth interviews with experts is broken down according to the above-stated thematic areas:

3.2.1. What are the main characteristics of recent Czech development and migration policies?

Respondents described Czech development policy as still trying to find "its own feet" as well as a more effective system. Among the main positive points, they noted a reduction in the number of recipient countries and the establishment of the relatively independent Czech Development Agency, which is responsible for distributing grants for bilateral projects, taking over from particular ministries. Turning to the major shortcomings of development policy, they identified issues such as the basic disregard for international commitments in relation to ODA provision (for example, financial requirements based on UN or EU recommendations) primarily in order to ensure, that is, control and increase, the efficiency of bilateral development projects (see details below) and the general unwillingness to adapt to current international trends in ODA provision. As Respondent 7 put it

Overall, I think that the main negative side of those development policies is the weak awareness of those international obligations. To put it simply, the MFA presents itself as an entity that is struggling with the finance people [at the Ministry of Finance] over the budget, and fighting the Ministry of Industry [Ministry of Industry and Trade] over development philosophy.

A very significant limitation of Czech ODA lies in the failure to properly assess the effectiveness of Czech development projects over the long term so that many stakeholders and experts believe bilateral projects generally have very little impact and low efficacy. The reasons for this include inaccurate targeting and poorly executed work. To quote Respondent 7 again: "... I think they do not dare do an impact evaluation because they are afraid of the results ... efficiency is not monitored. The only thing that they keep track of is whether we spend the money. As for what we did with it, it does not matter." Overall, the mainstream view of Czech migration policy emerging from our interviews confirmed key insights from the aforementioned academic literature concerning the unsystematic, overly centralized and at times excessively security-focused nature of Czech migration policy.

Some of the interviewed experts went so far, however, as to express skepticism about the existence of any genuine concept behind Czech migration policy. Others argued that piecemeal measures are undertaken in the context of EU development efforts without any vision. They pointed out that there is no longer term or clearly articulated concept in the form of an official document or legislation. Respondent 12, for example, stated that:

... the Czech Republic is still waiting for something like an immigration policy. There are some programs, some action, but not in a way that is dealt with by anyone really deeply ... basically I see this as far more like fragmented action than any coherent policy.

Alternatively, according to Respondent 5:

The reality that there is no a long-term migration policy here showed up in a big way in 2008/2009 in my opinion, when the financial crisis came in, and [it is clear] during a time of economic growth when on the one hand, foreigners are brought here and there is a connection to integration. On the other hand, when the job ends, we really get into voluntary returns and send them back, and I think we should not approach migration in that way ... people do not come here just to stay for seven months and work in a factory and go back, ... but mostly they just want to stay and get involved in some way in the community.

Other respondents pointed out that the issue of migration has not yet become political, and it is perceived as a "technical topic" which can only be addressed by the MI. Attempts to find "technical" solutions to what are primarily political problems were also criticized in the above-mentioned international literature, which warns especially against exaggerating the potential security threats of immigration in the context of the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

Another set of concerns targeted the lack of transparency of the entire system for obtaining visas and work permits for foreign workers, leading to their dependence on various entities, including some dubious employment agencies. As Respondent 13 noted:

The whole system is very non-transparent. The result is that foreigners are often used and abused from the beginning of their migration routes, so this starts somewhere in Hanoi or perhaps even in villages in Vietnam and villages in Ukraine where the person is kind of captured and enticed and their stay in the Czech Republic is sorted out through various acquaintances, good contacts either here at the employer's end or among the people at the embassy who should be arbitrating. From the beginning, the person becomes dependent on someone who arranges everything for them, and that continues for them for the whole time.

Others also highlighted the disproportionate system of accountability, which means that private companies (whether real employers or employment agencies) can take advantage of cheap immigrant labor, and the potentially negative impacts of

immigration are borne only by the state and, of course, the immigrants themselves, for example, in the case of an accident or injury.

3.2.2. *What are the fundamental contradictions and potential harmonies between the two policies?*

The view that there is no coherence when it comes to current Czech development and migration policies was quite widespread among the respondents. One of them (Respondent 6) gave his opinion using the example of Vietnam's exclusion from the list of priority countries for the provision of Czech ODA, arguing that "if there is any policy coherence, it is absolutely minimal." Institutional problems and the inability or unwillingness of public institutions' employees to change their thinking were mentioned as some of the most negative connections between Czech migration and development policies. The lack of understanding of the potential impact of labor migration in the Czech Republic and its use for development purposes was also mentioned as a specific problem.

Proposed options and ideas for embedding development aid in migration policy focused mostly on education in the source countries. According to the respondents, the aim of this policy is to stop or slow migration flows to the Czech Republic from certain source countries while also promoting economic development, supporting small business and building civil societies through training courses. They also suggested that if people do eventually decide to migrate to the Czech Republic, they should have sufficient information about the realities in the country along with key legislation and their rights, thus enabling them to make their own independent migration journey without the need to resort to different intermediaries.

Paradoxically, if there is any place where almost perfect agreement between Czech development and migration policies can be found, this is their failure to focus on developing countries, and emphasis instead on the Czech Republic. According to Respondent 9:

... the purpose of development assistance is just ... besides the pragmatic interests of our own country, to give some help to others, and if a project is called preventative, that kind of a priori suggests to us that we want them to leave us out of it ... [S]pending state money on that seems ridiculous.

3.2.3. *What is the role of circular migration and remittance outflows from the Czech Republic to migrants' countries of origin?*

Another important topic is circular migration and its potential on development. Quite common among respondents was the view that this type of migration basically already exists in the Czech Republic in the form of Ukrainian labor migration. As regards the introduction of legislation and practices to assess this migration through some government instrument, respondents had different views. Those who liked this idea emphasized the positive elements, particularly the potential for repeated legal returns to the Czech Republic and the receipt of work permits for any period. There was also a belief that any policy on circular migration should include a flexible tool to deal with an economic crisis and conversely incorporate options to enable permanent settlement under certain conditions. According to Respondent 13, for example:

[C]ircular migration itself is not a bad concept. I think that often it really reflects people's wishes so they must allow for the fact that they will be here for 3–4 years and then go back. Why not allow them to do? So I would say that this is probably the way to go.

In contrast, critics raised objections to the ethical implications of circular migration, highlighting the need to leave the Czech Republic after some years when people are already settled in a familiar environment and have children attending Czech schools, and so on.

Remittances were mostly described as a useful tool to develop the countries of origin; interviewees said that the Czech Republic should either support remittances (by sending them itself), let them flow naturally or at least provide information about how they can be sent safely: "About the possibility of sending remittances, somehow I think that the state should let this take its course and allow people to do it rather than trying to control it The state should give information." (Respondent 3) The positive effects of remittances (development and poverty reduction) were seen as outweighing the negative effect of "brain drain." Some respondents noted that remittances can have a more positive effect than aid on the development of source countries: "[If] we give people who want to work here the opportunity, and if the market somehow accepts them so they have freedom of movement and can work, then it's well-known that their remittances contribute more to domestic development than central state-controlled aid ... " (Respondent 9) Major problems, however, lie in the actual transfer of remittances to the home country and the means of conveyance. One respondent also believed that illegal activity is a substantial concern. In the past, remittances could not be transported by bus because armed groups waged attacks on the vehicles or at the pick-up point in the home countries.

3.2.4. *Do Czech development projects abroad reflect the objectives of Czech migration policy?*

Development projects involving migration, which fall primarily under the control of the MI, were criticized because of their low (or "zero") efficiency. Only some projects that focused on social aspects of poverty or marginalization were viewed positively although their impact on migration was quite unclear to say the least. It was also pointed out that the MI was one of three ministerial departments to receive an exemption from transformation requirements, which meant that even after the centralizing of the budget for development cooperation under plans for implementing bilateral projects, the MI was able to finance projects to improve the situation in potential source countries of migrants to the Czech Republic. The primary aim of these projects has been to stabilize the situation in these countries so that the risk of population migration does not increase.

The MI spends this money more or less according to its own plans with the intention to use these funds according to the ODA rules set by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC/OECD). The project themes are mainly preventing migration, establishing migration management especially in East Europe and the South Caucasus and reintegration. Empowerment of people at the place of origin is highlighted in the context of migration prevention, that is, with the aim of ensuring that it is not too easy to emigrate. According to one of the respondents, the MI's migration projects are realized in geographic areas outside Czech ODA priority countries, and ODA should in turn address countries that are economically poorer than Vietnam:

[So] there you can really see the way the Ministry of the Interior uses those development policies because they are full of tiny projects and it is absolutely clear that they cannot have a valid impact. They themselves now have about 10 priority countries which have no connection at all to development, and they use them as some kind of “intelligence” so that thanks to these projects, they can find out about the migratory pressures which exist and things like that. But this can be directed to development, so why not use the money from development on this stuff? I feel like the Ministry of the Interior makes things go its way and does not feel the need to discuss this with anyone. (Respondent 6)

Migration projects have different objectives, instruments, geographic foci and meanings than those set by the “global” objectives of Czech ODA. As such, Respondent 9 argued they should not be included in Czech ODA if they are to stand any chance of making a meaningful impact:

How can the development aid of one not very economically strong and quite small country contribute to preventing migration from another country to a statistically relevant degree ... ? It would have to be helped in the form of, say, the Marshall Plan, where we pour huge amounts of money into a disadvantaged country that absolutely restructures it and changes its economy ...

Regarding the ideal of a coherent set of migration and development policies, there were many opinions. One expert believed that projects supporting the arrival of skilled migrants in the Czech Republic should be cancelled because they amount to a brain drain, and business initiatives should instead be supported in the countries of origin by way of micro-credit. Another idea was to improve employment opportunities for women in states such as Moldova where women often remain in large numbers after the men emigrate.

One respondent also noted that when talking about immigration to the Czech Republic, it is actually more appropriate to speak about a “brain waste” in a number of cases where skilled migrants are living in the country and performing low-skilled jobs. In his opinion, this is a sign of economic globalization, which will continue to grow, and he compared this process to the exploitation of natural resources. He also mentioned the possibility of a knowledge-based economy, which Czech universities could offer to foreign students, and which would essentially represent a “brain gain”.

4. Main findings

Our research identified several key challenges concerning the coherence of the Czech migration and development policies. The view that there is no consensus among Czech politicians when it comes to formulating and implementing development and migration policies was quite widespread among the Czech experts whom we interviewed. They argued that the potential that labor migration to the Czech Republic offers for development purposes is misunderstood, and this includes the development potential of circular migration (whether controlled or already functioning “naturally”), support for sending remittances to the countries of origin and the impact of the migration of highly skilled residents of those countries. Where there is a perfect agreement between Czech development and migration policies is, ironically, in their failure to focus on the interests and needs of developing countries instead of those of the Czech Republic. Possible future challenges include the negative consequences – in the form of a brain drain – of migration programs that aim to attract highly skilled workers to the Czech Republic and inefficient bilateral development programs which seek to prevent migration.

There were a few notable positive exceptions in interviewees' testimonies about some projects which goals are reintegration into the countries of origin. Nevertheless, short-term voluntary returns programs do not resolve the huge debts incurred by immigrants because of the high costs associated with travel and with acquiring the documents needed to obtain employment and residence in the Czech Republic. These factors mean that a significant number of migrant opt to remain in the Czech Republic, sometimes even with an illegal status. Additionally, these programs do not address the liability of the employment agencies that lured the foreign workers to the Czech Republic. Responsibility for these people – including the costs – is instead largely transferred to public institutions.

Connecting the migration policies of the source and destination countries also requires coherence across the immigration and security policies and foreign relations priorities of the target country. Sometimes these policies overlap due to cooperation between ministries; at other times, however, the interests of one ministry may directly conflict with those of another. Several respondents explicitly named the Ministry of the Interior, which in their opinion has an exaggerated perception of the security threat posed by immigration the Czech state based on unspecified “mafia” structures among immigrants. Others singled out the Ministry of Industry and Trade, whose liberal approach to immigration is due to its representation of the interests of the private sector and its demand for a cheap labor force from abroad. Other divisions at this level are shown in [Table 5](#).

Table 5
Matrix of (Lack of) Policy Coherence across Czech Ministries.

Individual Ministry and Its Policies	Ministry of the Interior	Ministry of Industry and Trade	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Czech Development Agency
Ministry of the Interior	–	NONE (security versus cheap labor)	SOME (security and unemployment) NONE (integration methods and competences)	NONE (security versus good international relations) FULL (prevention of brain drain)
Ministry of Industry And Trade	NONE (cheap labor versus safety)	–	NONE (cheap labor versus labor market protection) FULL (encouragement of skilled immigration)	NONE (cheap labor versus brain drain)
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	FULL (unemployment and security) NONE (integration methods and competences)	NONE (labor market protection and cheap labor) FULL (encouragement of skilled immigration)	–	SOME (labor market protection and good international relations) NONE (encouragement of skilled immigration versus brain drain)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Czech Development Agency	NONE (security versus good bilateral relations) FULL (prevention of brain drain)	NONE (cheap labor versus brain drain)	SOME (good bilateral relations and labor market protection) NONE (encouragement of skilled immigration versus brain drain)	–

Source: Authors' own research. NONE indicated no coherence, SOME indicates little to some coherence, FULL indicates substantial to complete coherence.

On the other hand, we also met some examples of policy convergence. This was the case with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, which appear to take mutually reinforcing approaches due to reasons of internal security (the Ministry of the Interior) and fear of rising unemployment (the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs). Another quite surprising synergy came in the attempt by Czech Development Agency, acting under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to prevent the brain drain from developing countries and the Ministry of the Interior's efforts to curb immigration as a whole. Similarly, we found a surprising harmony between the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade when it came to support for the arrival of highly skilled migrants in the Czech Republic.

It is also important to note that some discrepancies were not only present across different ministries, but across different sectors. For example, respondents showed substantial differences in their views of the extent of the Czech government's role and options when it comes to regulating or controlling immigration flows to the Czech Republic. While the average government organization/agency representative is convinced that the Czech government's response should be the main determining factor, the average academic sector respondent rejects this view as odd and dysfunctional in practice.

5. Concluding remarks

Our findings indicate that while linkages between migration and development have been at the top of the agenda at the EU level at least since the 2015 migration crisis, this has not been the case in the Czech Republic thus far. In our research, we identified several contradictions between Czech development and migration policies on several levels. Specifically, we found that these policies and their instruments are incoherent because of a) different approaches of particular ministries; and b) different interests of individual departments under the framework of some ministries. The incoherence of development projects and migration programs highlights the ineffective, and at times even useless, spending of scarce funds and human effort. This suggests that greater coherence of Czech migration and development policies and their instruments is needed in order to increase their own efficiency, as well as to maximize the possible positive synergetic effects and/or minimize the negative side-effects stemming from their numerous linkages.

However, the findings of our research also suggest that some aspects of the EU level response to the 2015 migration crisis represent additional major complications for the already problematic coherence of Czech migration and development policies. Although the available data clearly shows that the Czech Republic has not been a favorite destination country for asylum seekers from either Syria or Iraq, both the political elite across the political spectrum and the general population have strongly opposed all EU-level mandatory relocation mechanisms. Moreover, in line with its past trajectory, the Czech ODA still primarily targets countries Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, rather than those Middle Eastern countries, whose conflicts and/or instability have arguably been the root cause for the unprecedented migration flows to Europe in 2015, or their neighbors in the region, where the largest numbers of people have actually fled from violence. As such, it appears that as in the past, the prioritization of the fight against irregular migration and the externalization of EU's border controls via co-optation of transit countries in the "management" of migration are likely to remain the sole areas of agreement between the Czech and EU-level migration and development policies in the foreseeable future.

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