

Intersections of Nationalism and Diplomacy in Central Europe

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Abstract

Nationalism has become nowadays a serious issue in Europe which has multiple and complex reasons. They include a large immigration wave but also a reconsideration and re-definition of national identity. In many ways the present time is perceived as a historical intersection of roads we know where they come from, but we do not know where they are heading.

Nationalism is one of the key phenomena which influence politics, cultures and identities of Central European countries of Austria and members of Visegrad Group (V-4) Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. Particularly the Visegrad group states are today criticized in the milieu of European Union for their increase of nationalism and decrease of liberal democracy and for their reluctance to participate at European Union quotas of distribution of immigrants.

The aim of my article is to reflect on what moments in the national histories of these Central European states were crucial in creating deep-rooted traumas and fears in national memory and identity, and to test the hypothesis of a possible reflection of these aspects in the perception of today's challenges, specifically in the negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018 within the context of official data on migration in the Czech Republic.

Keywords: Austria; Czechia; Slovakia; Poland; Hungary; identity; migration; United Nations; Marrakesh.

Introduction

Historical awareness in the countries of Central Europe has always been very strong, or, in other words, history has always formed a very strong, even predominant part of the national consciousness, memory and national identity of Central European nations. Reflections on the past have always been reflected in contemporary political struggles and in the formulation of political agendas, whether the history is ancient and even mythological, newer or recent.

Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, which are now considered the core of Central Europe, have gone through periods in the past when they had to fight for their existence, defend it against various pressures denying the right to their existence, or acquiesce with a substantial change in their position and concept assigned to them from the outside. The feeling that the essence of national existence is fragile, that there is no guarantee of its continuation, that the home is not always a safe security, is deeply rooted in the mentality of the peoples of Central Europe.

Although today's integration of Central Europe into the European Union that took place in 1995 (Austria) and in 2004 (V-4 countries) has a major impact on the position of the Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia Poland and Hungary in the community of European countries, the existence of this primordial fear and uncertainty about threats to one's own identity cannot be forgotten. These deep-rooted phenomena may still play their role today.

The relationship of causality between today's reserved approach of Central Europe to the United Nations' and European Union's policy to handle the wave of migration cannot simply be linked to historical consciousness and memory of the respective nations. The goal of this article is to open the issue that have not yet been studied from this point of view, and to open this topic for further investigation. It is therefore a pilot study, which should be followed by both empirical and historical- analytical comparative research.

Highlights and Trauma1

Since the early Middle Ages (and we could go even deeper into history), Austria has been associated with the Czech state and Hungary, but also Poland with innumerable ties, mutual coexistence and conflicts. In 1526, Louis Jagiellon, King of Bohemia and Hungary, died in the battle at Mohács trying to stop the advance of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent into Hungary and further into Central Europe. The Czech and Hungarian royal thrones became vacant and Ferdinand I Habsburg was elected King of Bohemia² and King of Hungary. In 1526 and 1527, these three countries – Grand Duchy of Austria and Kingdoms of Bohemia and of Hungary – formed the nucleus of a monarchy that became – for four centuries until 1918 – an extremely important European phenomenon.

During this very long period of history, the monarchy underwent a multifaceted development. It acquired other territories, went through wars – the Thirty Years' War and the Czech Estates Uprising in the 17th Century, it was involved in the Seven Years' War in the 18th Century, fought with the Ottoman empire, was one of the victors over Napoleon and lost the war with Bismarckian Prussia in the 19th Century, and as one of the Central Powers entered World War I, at the end of which it disintegrated. The empire gradually centralized, built a large bureaucracy, an army, experienced the end of the Holy Roman Empire at the behest of Napoleon, but the Habsburgs continued as emperors of Austria. The monarchy went through a period of Metternich and Bach absolutism.

In 1867, the empire dualized in a Compromise (Ausgleich) into two units – Austria-Hungary. The second half of the 19th Century until the First World War was a period of great development and a period of many struggles. For the Hungarian kingdom, now recognized at the same level as the Austrian part of the empire (Cisleithania), began famous “five happy decades”, fifty years of great prosperity of the Hungarian nation, culture and art and Budapest as a metropolis flourished.

However, it was also a period of Hungarianization. Vienna became a center of science, art and culture at the top European level, and Prague and other cities also experienced a significant boom. However, the Compromise led to the dissatisfaction of the Slavic nations and the demands for the federalization of the monarchy and elimination of supremacy of German speaking Austrians became increasingly vocal.

1. Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary:

Gradually, manifestations of nationalism increased and unresolved national problems eventually led to the disintegration of the monarchy at the end of the World War I, in which Austria-Hungary belonged to the defeated states.

Austria was established as a republic. The Peace Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye, signed on September 10, 1919, identified the monarchy as the culprit of the war, along with Germany. Reparations had to be paid, and the territory of the former second largest European state was reduced to a size of a smaller state as we know Austria today which is the 20th state by its area in Europe. After World War I, it was not easy for Austria to find a new identity and to cope with the changes that were drastic for it. The economic situation was catastrophic, the social impact of the war as well, and the crisis of values very deep. In the spring of 1938, Austria was annexed by Hitler, himself of Austrian descent. Anschluss (annexation) was a disaster for the Jewish population in Austria and for many humanist and democratic people, but at the same time it led to the support of pro-Nazi tendencies in Austria.

After World War II, Austria as well as Vienna were divided into occupation zones just like Germany. In 1955, Austria declared neutrality and the occupying forces left. At present, Austria is a highly developed country with a very positive reputation in the international environment and an important center of world diplomacy.

Unlike the other states examined here, Austria did not fall into the Soviet sphere of influence and did not become a Soviet satellite. Thanks to this, it is perceived as a Western European country, while the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary sometimes still have the stereotypical label of Eastern European countries.

The beginnings of the Czech state date back to the 9th Century AD and are closely connected with the rise of Christianity on its territory. It was Western Christianity and its adoption meant the incorporation of the Czech state into the civilizational space of Western Europe. For centuries, the foreign policy, culture, art, religion and intellectual life of the Czech state was influenced by Western Europe. The Czech Kingdom was a member of the Holy Roman Empire and the Czech kings won the imperial crown several times or were strong candidates for this position.

In the 15th century, the Hussite movement took place named after the professor, dean and rector of Prague University and religious reformer Jan Hus. After his burning at stake as a heretic in Constance, there were decades of religious, social and ethnic wars between Czechs, mostly Utraquists – followers of Jan Hus, and Germans – mostly Catholics. The result of this period was the inclination of the vast majority of the Czech population to the Utraquism – a proto-Protestant faith. There were a number of other aspects related to this, including the fact that the Hussitism later became a key point in the discourse about the Czech national identity.

In 1526, the Austrian Habsburgs were elected to the Czech throne after the king Louis Jagiellon was killed in the battle at Mohacs. At that time, the Habsburgs were considered the best guarantee of defense of Central Europe against the Muslim Ottomans advancing through the Balkans. Thus, the Czech kingdom became one of the components of the Habsburg Empire, which then existed for four centuries until its collapse at the end of World War I in 1918.

In 1618-1620, an uprising of the Protestant Czechs ended in their defeat and victory of Catholic Habsburgs. This was followed by consistent re-Catholicization, including a forced exodus of a large number of Protestant elites – the nobility, intellectuals, artists and others who had to move out of their homeland.

Hussitism and re-Catholicism defined as two fundamental opposite phenomena of the Czech national identity took their origin here. In the 19th century, two main concepts of the interpretation of *www.psychologyandeducation*.

Czech history began to take shape. According to one, the Hussites were for many reasons the culmination of Czech history in religious, ethical, patriotic and social terms, while the re-Catholicization was seen as the greatest national catastrophe, the so-called Period of Darkness, which threw Czech language, Czech culture and Czech nation on the verge of extinction. The contradictory thesis states that the Hussites were a devastating period politically, economically and culturally and the Czech kingdom found itself in opposition to the main European trend.

Recatholicization was supposed to be a reversal of this unfortunate development.

From the end of the 19th century, a fundamental discourse, the so-called dispute over the meaning of Czech history, flared up for these concepts. A supporter of the "hussite-protestant" line, university professor T. G. Masaryk, became during the World War I the leader of the struggle for Czechoslovak independence, and in 1918 he became the first president of independent Czechoslovakia after the disintegration of Austria-Hungary. The concept that the Czech nation was on the verge of extinction in the Period of Darkness became the basis of a very charismatic "idea of the Czechoslovak nation," which significantly appealed to the Czech population and was largely accepted. This concept was so firmly ingrained in the Czech consciousness that even the results and a more objective and comprehensive professional interpretation have so far failed to bring a more balanced view of one's own history among the general public.

The argument that the ideas of the Catholic Enlightenment were much more important for the national revival and for cultural and political recognition of Czech nation than the Hussite traditions did not prevail, although it corresponds more to reality. In the end, an eclectic fusion of pride in the Hussitism, Hussite heroism, the struggle for truth and their resistance "against all," and the dominant Catholic faith, which has now acquired rather a cultural and historical value in a mostly atheist state, developed. The main phenomenon remains the feeling that the Czech nation has survived almost complete destruction.

There is another historical period when the Czech nation was threatened with destruction, and that was World War II. The Munich Conference and the associated trauma led to a widespread feeling that the Czech nation had again been betrayed and abandoned by its allies.³ The Czech lands are the westernmost Slavic area and in specific plans of the Nazis the Czech lands were to become a German Lebensraum, the local population was to be Germanized or disposed of.

At present, the Czech state has the smallest area and the smallest number of population in modern history it has ever had – its number of population is now 10 millions, before its division in 1993, as Czechoslovakia, it had 15 millions of people. The accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union has been the only possible alternative for the existence and prosperity of this small state, although it cannot be denied that the EU rightly deserves criticism in many respects. However, it is still the optimal framework for Czechia.

Unlike other states in this study, Slovakia did not have an old history of its own statehood, although its history was rich. For centuries, Slovakia was part of Hungary as the so-called Upper land with a Slavic population and Slavic language, which was subjected to Hungarianization and national oppression. Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia in 1918 on the basis of ethnic principles. There was a strong movement in Slovakia that rejected centralist Czechoslovakism⁴ and with a reference to Pittsburgh Agreement⁵ sought autonomy. Simultaneously with the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia declared an independent state, which was a satellite of Nazi Germany. After the fall of communism, the legacy of this state was a source of controversy, with the Czechs considering the Slovak Republic a Nazi collaborator state and a traitor, while for many Slovaks this state allowed their country to remain an unoccupied island of peace in Central Europe until an uprising broke out and the Nazi subsequently occupied Slovakia. The fact is, however, that Slovakia participated in the Holocaust. The division of

Czechoslovakia into two states from January 1, 1993 ended fruitless discussions. The Czechs supported the Slovak efforts for their own state as the culmination of the emancipation of the Slovak nation, and there are now excellent relations between the two states and nations.⁶

Poland has a much larger population than the Czech Republic or Hungary. It has almost forty million inhabitants, which is four times more than the Czech Republic, and its area belongs to medium-sized or larger European states. The Kingdom of Poland has a history going back similarly to Czech state to the early medieval period. With Czechs, the Poles are associated not only by similarities of their Slavic languages, but by many historical ties. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth was one of the largest states in Europe and included today's Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltics.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Poland played a role of *Antemurale Christianitatis*, a defensive bridgehead of Christianity against the constant invasions and threats posed by the Muslim Tatars who controlled Crimea and adjacent larger territory. Polish art and literature has been a strong bearer of patriotic and nationalist motifs based on this theme since the Romantic period.

Nevertheless, due to a number of domestic and foreign political circumstances this important state, which experienced the period of the so-called aristocratic republic and a famous "Golden Freedom" in the 16th and partly 17th century – still one of Poland's most famous periods – has completely disappeared from the map of Europe. In three subsequent partitions (1772, 1773 and 1795), Poland was occupied by three neighboring absolute monarchies, Austria, Prussia and Russia. These were coordinated attacks in which the attacking powers were aware of their aggressive approach, which Poland was unable to resist despite a series of uprisings. The historical awareness that the Polish kingdom, so large and strong, could have disappeared from the map of Europe remained one of the main historical traumas of the Polish nation.

Unlike the Czech state, which for all its history has had basically the same position and shape of its territory, Poland has undergone tremendous territorial shifts. The latest shift occurred after World War II when large areas in eastern Poland were occupied by the Soviet Union for national, but especially strategic reasons. As compensation, Polish territory was "shifted" west on the line of the Oder and Neisse rivers line by moving to the territory of East Germany. The newly acquired territory was inhabited by the Polish population, compulsorily relocated here from the territory occupied in the east by the Soviet Union.⁷ This is how we meet the position and shape of the Polish state today.

Hungary is comparable in size to the Czech Republic and has a slightly smaller population. There are several very strong factors in Hungarian history that have had a key influence on the formation of Hungarian national identity and have contributed to the self-perception of the Hungarian nation.

Unlike the surrounding nations, Hungarians are not Slavs, and unlike the vast majority of other European languages, their language is not Indo-European, but Ugro-Finnic.

A key phenomenon for the formation of the Hungarian national identity was the fact that for centuries Hungary was one of the buffer states against the Ottoman Empire's advance into Central Europe. Hungarian history from the Middle Ages until the 17th century is filled with wars with the Ottomans. In the Hungarian National Gallery, there are large canvases by leading Hungarian masters depicting famous battle scenes - the defense of Eger, the final conquest of the castle in today's Budapest, which was a bastion of Turkish rule, and others. There are many cases of heroism and self-sacrifice in the Hungarian narrative of national history. In most Hungarian noble families, there used to be a history of participation in the Turkish wars. One of the most tragic moments in Hungarian

history was the conquest and destruction of the city of Székesfehérvár by Ottomans in 1543.

Székesfehérvár was the first seat of the Hungarian kings and the capital of the kingdom since the King Stephen the Great in 1000 AD. This city was a place of coronation of Hungarian kings and traditional place of graves of Hungarian kings. Ottomans demolished the cathedral and the royal palace, and pillaged the graves of kings. This irreplaceable loss has always been felt as a deep blow to the historical identity of the Hungarian nation.

Another Hungarian wound has been the so-called Trianon trauma. Trianon treaty was a peace treaty concluded by the victorious powers with Hungary in 1920 as part of the Paris Peace Conference after the end of World War I. Hungary - before the war part of Austria-Hungary, was significantly reduced territorially by the decision of the victorious powers. Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia, Transylvania became part of Romania, Croatia became part of Yugoslavia. Kingdom of Hungary lost 72% of its land and 3.3 million people of Hungarian ethnicity. Not all detached territories were inhabited by ethnic Hungarians, however, the trauma of this loss affected Hungary so much that in the interwar period Hungary became involved in attempts to achieve a revision of Versailles system. It was one of the main reasons why Hungary became an ally of Hitler in World War II.

Hungary is currently a member of the European Union and is not seeking to review its borders. Nevertheless, national policy in Hungary is strong. In 2010, citizenship law granted voting rights to ethnic Hungarians living abroad, which more than one million non-domestic Hungarians have signed up for. They currently make up about 10% of the electorate and votes for Fidesz at a 95% rate.

Orbán's government declared "a crisis situation due to mass immigration" in 2015 and built a fence topped by razor wire along the country's southern border with Serbia to prevent the immigrants the entry on Hungarian soil.⁸

2. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

The attitudes of the five countries towards The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration of December 2018 offers a very instructive insight into the topic of our examination.

The text of the Compact was finalized in New York on 13 July 2018 and was welcomed as "an all-encompassing Global Compact to better manage international migration, address its challenges, strengthen migrant rights and contribute to sustainable development."⁹ In Marrakesh, Morocco, this document had to be formally adopted.

The intergovernmental Conference of Heads of State and Government and High Representatives to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was held in Marrakesh on 10 and 11 December 2018. The Conference was convened under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly and was held pursuant to resolution 71/1 of 19 September 2016, entitled "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants". The New York Declaration decided to launch a process of intergovernmental negotiations leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration and was adopted by 193 UN's member states.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration sets out 23 objectives to deal with international migration. 164 states voted in favor of this Compact in Marrakesh, however, not all the UN member states. This Compact provoked diverse reactions and controversies in parliamentary and government circles. All Central European countries examined in this article took a negative position toward this document: Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, and further the European countries Bulgaria, Latvia, Slovakia and Switzerland did not attend the conference in Marrakesh to adopt the agreement. Estonia initially had a negative position but eventually decided to support the

document, Switzerland and Italy postponed their decisions and decided to wait for a debate in their parliaments after the Marrakesh summit.

The non-European countries which did not attend the conference were the United States, Israel, Australia, Chile and Dominican Republic. 10

Hungary was first country which announced, already in 2nd half of July 2018, that it will not accede to the Compact. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's policy is directed against immigration, and Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said that the pact was against the country's security interests and posed a threat to Hungary because it supported migration. 11

Austria has more direct experience with the migration than any other Central European country. During the migration crisis of 2015, more than 90,000 people applied for asylum in Austria, more per capita than any other EU member state. 12 Austria announced that will not join the Compact. In Austria, a coalition of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), which profiles itself against immigration, is in power. The FPÖ in addition warned that, according to its interpretation, the migration under the Compact could become a human right and the cabinet declared that will argue against the concept of migration as a human right. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and vice Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache articulated fundamental content reservations as a reason of Austria's position: The document does not help to solve the migration issues, threatens Austrian sovereignty in the area of migration policy, does not differentiate legal and illegal migration, mixes up the rights of asylum seekers with those of economic migrants and the concept of migration is interpreted vaguely.

A European commission spokeswoman said: "We regret the decision that the Austrian government has taken. We continue to believe that migration is a global challenge where only global solutions and global responsibility sharing will bring results." Austria had played "an extremely constructive and key role" in the negotiations, she added. 13

The Czech Republic first participated in the preparation of the Compact which was adopted in New York in July. The Czech Minister of the Interior, Jan Hamáček (Czech Social Democratic Party) stated in September 2019 that the Czech Republic is participating in the work on this document and is trying to achieve that the document reflects the Czech Republic's commitments and does not demand new commitments. Hamáček declared that "The agreed text corresponds to what our country was promoting." However, the government then changed its position. The most outspoken critic of the Compact was the Prime Minister Andrej Babiš (party ANO).

Babiš said that "we want to help, but migration cannot be a human right. This is incompatible with our migration policy, it threatens our sovereignty and blurs the distinction between legal and illegal migration. That is why I am against this pact.....I will propose my partners in government that we act in the same way as Austria or Hungary..... We are already fighting illegal migration, we do not need a global pact for that." And he said also, that "If it wasn't so much arms and part of the money would be spent on the fight against poverty, then there would be no tendency to move to Europe and the United States, which is now defending its border with the military..... The United Nations should help people where they were born, where they live and where they have ties and roots. They grew up in a certain culture and in my opinion it is not possible to change it forcibly." 14

Then in November 15, 2018, the Czech government rejected the Compact on the grounds that it lacked a distinction between legal and illegal migration and that the designation of illegal migration as undesirable was omitted. 15

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The situation in Slovakia added another context to the opinions. Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák served as President of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly during which the text of Compact was negotiated and adopted. He was one of the leading personalities responsible for preparation of this document. When the text of the Compact was adopted in July 2018, Lajčák declared this to be a "historic moment". "It does not encourage migration, nor does it aim to stop it. It is not legally binding. It does not dictate. It will not impose. And it fully respects the sovereignty of States," he stressed. "Instead," he said, "it can guide us from a reactive to a proactive mode. It can help us to draw out the benefits of migration, and mitigate the risks. It can provide a new platform for cooperation. And it can be a resource in finding the right balance between the rights of people and the sovereignty of States." 16

However, on 29 November, the Slovak parliament rejected the Compact, and the Slovak government rejected it on December 5. In this situation, Miroslav Lajčák resigned, but later withdrew his resignation under the explanation that he received a strong political support. Yet, the Compact was rejected by some who supported Lajčák in office, such as Slovak Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini.

Lajčák argued repeatedly that the Compact is not legally binding and only proposes a global framework, that it does not interfere in the competences of states and that the topic is abused by populists, xenophobes and nationalists in order to increase their own popularity. 17 The compact in fact states that nations have the sovereign right to "determine their national migration policy and their prerogative to govern migration within their jurisdiction.....Within their sovereign jurisdiction, states may distinguish between regular and irregular migration status." 18

In the beginning of October, Polish Minister of Interior Joachim Brudziński said that he intends to propose to the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki to withdraw from the Compact which supports an illegal migration. On November 20, the Polish government said it would not support the Compact because it would worsen the migration crisis. 19

Even in states that endorsed the Compact disagreements and controversies occurred. On 29 November 2018, the German parliament approved a resolution in support of the Compact, proposed by the ruling parties CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union) and SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany), emphasizing that the pact was non-binding and calling for a fairer distribution of refugees. As expected, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) was against the Compact and there were also critical voices in other parties, including the Chancellor Angela

Merkel's CDU. In Belgium, for example, the ruling coalition disintegrated because of the Compact and the largest coalition party left the government, while the liberal Prime Minister Charles Michel decided to support the Compact with a minority government. Then Croatian President Kolinda Grabar - Kitarović spoke out against the Compact, while the Croatian government decided to sign it.

After approval in Marrakesh, the Compact had to be definitively confirmed at the UN General Assembly on 19 December. 152 of countries voted in favor, 5 countries were against, 12 members were in abstention and 24 didn't vote.

Just two days earlier, on 17 December 2018, the General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees, after two years of work under the leadership of UNHCR. It extends the current international legal framework on refugees. 181 countries voted in favor, only the United States and Hungary voted against, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea and Libya abstained. The Czech Republic supported this legally non-binding document supporting international cooperation. In the end, the Czech Republic voted differently than Prime Minister Babiš wanted. 20 The international response to this document shows that the attitude towards refugees is much less controversial and generally more supportive than towards migrants in general.

3. Data on migration in the Czech Republic, 2018.

The main responsible authority in charge of the immigration issues is the Department of Immigration and Asylum Policy of the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic. The key policy document for this agenda is Strategy of the migration policy of the Czech Republic which was approved in 2015.²¹

In 2018, when the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Compact was on the agenda, the migration situation in the Czech Republic was as follows (abstract, abbreviated): ²²

“At the end of 2018, 566,931 foreigners²³ were registered in the Czech Republic, which represents 5.3% of the total population of the Czech Republic. The structure of foreigners residing in the Czech Republic has been stable for a long time in terms of nationality. Most foreigners come from Ukraine, Slovakia and Vietnam.

The growth of the number of foreigners in the Czech Republic in the last few years (since 2015, the number of foreigners in the Czech Republic has increased by 100,000) is associated with enormous demand of Czech employers for foreign workers in response to labor shortages in the domestic labor market.

The regular significant increase in the volume of economic migration is also documented by the fact that 60%,

i.e. 32,453 applications for long-term residence permits²⁴ submitted to the Embassies of the Czech Republic in 2018 were for employment activities, business,²⁵ which is two-thirds more than in the previous year.

In 2018, the range of countries whose citizens can participate in projects and schemes was extended (extension of the project for highly qualified workers from India, introduction of new schemes for skilled workers from the Philippines, Mongolia and Serbia), and an increase in the annual quota for skilled workers from Ukraine (from 9,600 to 19,600 employees per year).

Even in the area of illegal migration in the Czech Republic, there were no dramatic changes in 2018. A slight increase of over 5% was reported in the number of detected illegal migrants; a total of 4,992 foreigners were detected during illegal migration in the Czech Republic. There was an increase in both the category of illegal residence and the category of illegal migration across the Schengen area external borders.²⁶ The illegal stay mainly concerned citizens of Ukraine and Moldova, and the most frequently detected transit migrants were citizens of Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. Illegal migration across the external Schengen borders were mostly citizens of Georgia. Despite the recorded increases (+165 illegal residence, of which +19 transit illegal migration; +89 external Schengen border) in comparison with other European countries, the Czech Republic is not a country through which significant routes of illegal migration would pass.

In 2018, a total of 55,900 foreigners applied for long-term residence permits when entering the Czech Republic (40% year-on-year increase). There were 21,263 applications for long-term visas registered, similarly to the previous year, most frequently submitted by nationals of Ukraine (3,779), the United States of America (3,686) and Russia (3,219). Citizens of Ukraine have replaced citizens of the United States in the first place. Two thirds of the applications concerned educational activities.

Another 34,637 foreigners from third countries applied for a long-term residence permit at the Embassies of the Czech Republic (a year-on-year increase of more than 65% due to the enormous demand for employment cards for foreign workers). In addition to Ukrainian nationals (17,485 applications), most applications submitted citizens of Serbia (1,685 applications) and the highest year-on-year increase of + 158%, 1,471 granted), and Russia (1,454 applications, 1,283

granted). A total of 30,166 long-term residence permits were granted, mostly to nationals of Ukraine (14,966), Serbia (1,471) and Mongolia (1,434).

In the area of Illegal migration, in 2018, a total of 4,992 persons were detected during illegal migration in the Czech Republic (a year-on-year increase of 5.4%). Of this number, 339 persons were detected during illegal migration across the external Schengen border of the Czech Republic and 4,653 persons during illegal residence. During illegal migration across the external Schengen border, most were nationals of Georgia (51), Albania (39), Ukraine (28), refugees under the 1951 Convention (21) and Yemen (21). 94 people used an irregular travel document at the external Schengen border; most often citizens of Albania (34 people).

During illegal residence, most nationals of Ukraine (1,470), Moldova (567) and Vietnam (312) were detected. During the illegal stay, 143 persons proved themselves with an irregular travel document; most often citizens of Ukraine (59 people) and Moldova (32 people).²⁷

The report registers the Czech Republic's involvement in negotiations on key migration issues at EU level, documents the difficult path to achieve a consensus and a number of questions that have not yet been answered within the EU by the end of 2018. The common position of the European Council has not yet been found on a number of important points. The Czech Republic has already provided EUR 10.4 million to the EU Trust Fund for Africa whose total budget is EUR 3.9 billion. This makes the Czech Republic one of the largest donors among EU member states.

Although most of migrants in the Czech Republic come from Ukraine and Russia, their presence does not worry the Czechs. The largest number of foreigners are Slovaks and they are not even perceived by Czechs as foreigners.

Nevertheless, roughly two thirds of the Czechs is afraid of migrants who would settle in the Czech Republic, but they see these primarily as migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. Czechs are even more afraid that Islam will spread in the country with their arrival. 86 percent of citizens are afraid of that. Compared to 2015, when the migration crisis culminated in Europe, their views have not changed. This was according to an October survey by the STEM agency.²⁸

There are at least 42 political parties, movements, associations and initiatives in the Czech Republic that profile themselves as patriotic or define themselves against the migration. Most of them did not get into parliament, except for the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party, which is strongly against the EU and against immigration. The chairman of this party is Czech-Japanese Tomio Okamura, who is Deputy Speaker in the Chamber of Deputies.

Conclusion

In the first part, this article summarizes key moments in the history of five Central European countries – Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary – that have significantly contributed to the formation of their national self-perception, national memory and identity. Austria did not belong to the states of the Soviet bloc and since 1955 it has been a neutral democratic state, the other countries have been ruled from the second half of the 1940s to 1989 by communist parties and were Soviet satellites. Another specific features were that Austria and Hungary formed until 1918 Austria-Hungary, including a number of other countries that were part of the Habsburg monarchy, and that until 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia formed one state - Czechoslovakia. However, in the past, all these countries have lost or significantly threatened their territory, culture, language and identity, which has already been overcome. The article suggests that these traumas may have become a source of primordial fear. This is still a hypothesis and needs to be examined interdisciplinary, particularly in cooperation with cross-cultural psychology.

The second part of the article summarizes the attitudes of the studied

countries towards the process of adopting the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. These Central European countries have taken essentially the same position, criticizing the lack of distinction between legal and illegal migration and warning against the inclusion of migration among human rights. The vague nature of the document was also criticized.

Finally, the article provides official data on the situation in the Czech Republic from the same period, i.e. from 2018. The Czech Republic is a destination country especially for immigrants from Ukraine, Moldova, Russia and Serbia, who are looking for work in the country and were in high demand by employers in the period under review. For migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, the Czech Republic represents a transit country, as they try - either legally or illegally - to get to Germany. Slovaks, who represent the largest number of foreigners in the Czech Republic, are not perceived by the Czechs as foreigners, which is a legacy of our common history in Czechoslovakia and of even deeper roots of coexistence. However, it must be assumed that the current Covid-19 pandemic will certainly change the migration situation globally and in the examined countries as well.

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