

Czech arms trade

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Peter Tkáč, Hana Zoor Svačinková (NESEHNUTÍ)

I. The issues surrounding the export of arms from the Czech Republic

From a global perspective, the Czech Republic is not one of the most important arms producers and exporters. Indeed, according to SIPRI¹ statistics, the country is in 20th place in terms of the number of arms sold. However, a large number of these weapons end up in states that we consider “problematic”. By this we mean non-democratic states, controlled by dictators, which are responsible for gross violations of human rights or are engaged in armed conflict. In some domestic situations, Czech weapons have played a significant role, e.g. the arming of the Egyptian junta, the massacre of the Tamil in the final phase of the civil war in Sri Lanka or, somewhat out of sight of human rights organizations, the poaching of rare and endangered rhinos in South Africa.²

Besides economic interests, the reason is also the lack of transparency in the arms trade and the lack of public control³. The responsibility for this area falls to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT CR), which grants export licenses, but primarily to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), whose role it is to assess the impact of exports on human rights and has the right of veto.

1.1 A brief history of the Czech arms industry

The tradition of the Czech arms industry dates to the 19th century, when several important armament factories operated in present-day Czech Republic. Factories like Sellier & Bellot and Škoda Plzeň were the heart of the Austro-Hungarian arms industry. The end of the First World War saw the establishment of other important arms producers, e.g. Zbrojovka Brno and Česká Zbrojovka Strakonice (later Uherský Brod). Loss of domestic markets caused by the fall of Austria-Hungary meant a moving away of the new Czechoslovakia's

1 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: Trends in international arms transfers, 2017, www.sipri.org. <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2017>

2 The New York Times: How Did Rifles With an American Stamp End Up in the Hands of African Poachers?, 25. 12. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/25/us/politics/rhinos-poachers-south-africa-czub.html>

3 Ústav mezinárodních vztahů Praha/ Institute of International Relations Prague: České zbrojní exporty potřebují silnější demokratickou kontrolu a vyšší transparentnost/Czech weapons exports require stronger democratic control and increased transparency, January 2019. http://www.dokumenty-iir.cz/Publikace/PB/2019/Policy_Brief_Eberle_leden19.pdf

economy to foreign trade. This also applied to arms production, whereby Czechoslovak weapons were sold to the so-called “Little Entente” of (Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia), but also to Latin America and China. It is estimated that in 1938 arms exports accounted for 7% of total Czechoslovak exports (by comparison, in 2015 the figure was 0.4%), and according to some sources, the CSR was in fact the largest arms exporter in the world between 1934 and 1935.⁴ Some of the weapons originally manufactured in Czechoslovakia were even licensed for production abroad, such as BREN and BESA machine guns in England.

Under German occupation during World War II, the workers in the occupied factories produced arms for Nazi Germany, such as tanks and self-propelled guns (ČKD, Škoda Plzeň), air machine guns (Česká Zbrojovka), as well as firearms and infantry machine guns (Zbrojovka Brno).

In the post-war period after the incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Eastern Bloc, arms production in Czechoslovakia was subject to joint planning from Moscow. Heavy arms technology and ammunition (tanks, howitzers) were moved to the territory of present-day Slovakia (ZŤS (Heavy Machinery Works) in Dubnica nad Váhom, Martin and Detva, ...), whereas the production of aircraft (AERO Vodochody), specialized technology (optics in Meopta Přerov) and handguns (Česká Zbrojovka, Zbrojovka Brno) were prioritized in the present-day Czech Republic. Czechoslovakian production peaked in the 1980s, when the country was the 2nd largest arms producer among members of the Warsaw Pact and the 6th largest in the world.

The 1990s saw a dramatic decline in the production and sales of arms. This was mainly due to the loss of markets after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the arms race in the wake of the Cold War. However, the sale of “old” armaments, i.e. weapons and ammunition from surplus stocks left over from the Cold War period, was successful.

The Czech arms industry did not recover until the new millennium. It can be said that the so-called “war on terrorism” has led to an increase in demand for weapons and security technologies, spurring another round of the arms race. Czech companies have managed to respond to this demand, and there has been a steady increase in arms exports since 2006. This has affected both companies producing specialized products (ERA which manufactures VERA radars) and traditional companies producing conventional weapons (Česká Zbrojovka, Seller & Belliot, ...).

Currently, the Czech arms industry employs over 9,000 people (data from 2014), with about 100 companies in the “Defense and Security Industry Association”⁵, a lobbying organization representing armament firms.

4 Škrivan, Aleš 2007: K charakteru, rozsahu a zaměření československého vývozu v meziválečném období/Czechoslovak arms exports in the post-war period. Acta Oeconomica Pragensia, roč. 15, č. 7. www.vse.cz <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjWhODOuaDgAhWK2KQKHamYDWEQFjABegQICBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vse.cz%2Fpolek%2Fdownload.php%3Fjni%3Daop%26pdf%3D219.pdf&usg=AOvVaw25VgRyLO9JQbeBJ2gzJul5>

5 Asociace obranného a bezpečnostního průmyslu/Association of Defence Industry, www.aobp.cz.

1.2 Main players in the current Czech arms market

Česká Zbrojovka Uherský Brod (“Česká Zbrojovka”, CZUB)

- production of small firearms (CZ 75 pistols, CZ Scorpion EVO submachine guns, CZ BREN 805 assault rifles, hunting rifles, shotguns, ...)

currently employs approx. 2,000 people

is one of the top ten producers in the world of handguns and one of the first five manufacturers of automatic weapons⁶

sold 300,000 weapons in 2017

licensed production in Peru, Egypt, Slovakia

largest customers: US, Mexico, Egypt, Brazil

Aero Vodochody

- production of light subsonic attack aircraft (L-159 ALCA) and trainer aircraft ((L-39NG)
- production of F/A-259 Striker attack aircraft in cooperation with Israel Aerospace Industries, owned by Israel
- In 2015, the Czech Republic sold 12 L-159 aircraft from surplus army supplies to the Iraqi army
- 21 L-159 are used by US private company Draken International

TATRA

- traditional manufacturer of trucks
- Army trucks, chassis for howitzers, ...
- more than 2,000 Tatra trucks are used in the armies of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia

Czechoslovak Group

- A holding of several companies, incl. Tatra, Excalibur Army (renovation of armoured vehicles, tanks, howitzers), MSM Group (Slovak holding that produces ammunition, armoured vehicles, pistols, radar equipment), ... (“radars”),...

⁶ E15: Česká zbrojovka: Where weapons are born, 28. 12. 2016. <https://www.e15.cz/byznys/obchod-a-sluzby/pribeh-firmy-ceska-zbrojovka-kde-se-rodí-pistole-1311359>

- using factories in Slovakia, this company supplied modernized howitzers to Azerbaijan
- in about 2015 the company sold 250 armored transporters to the Iraqi government⁷
- Sellier & Bellot
- the largest Czech manufacturer of small firearms ammunition
In 2016, it employed 1,500 people, and it exports 90% of its output
Revenues in 2015 amounted to CZK 3.5 billion (€ 135 million)⁸

ERA

- production of VERA radars and other tracking systems
- employs 400 people

Other companies

- Other companies produce military software, radars, communications equipment, chemical substances detectors, gas masks, optics, ammunition, ...
- The arms industry employed 9,000 people in 2014, with a further 30,000 working for subcontractors

1.3 Arms trade regulation

National legislation, licensing process and control

Export regulation or, as the case may be, Arms Trading is regulated by Act No. 38/1994 Coll.⁹

There are two steps to the licensing process in the Czech Arms Trade. First, the trader is required to apply for a trade permit to begin trading in order to be able to contact partners, prepare a portfolio, and so on. Then, the trader must provide the appropriate license for each planned contract. Permits and licenses are recognized or rejected by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT CR) or, in certain cases, by the Licensing Administration. The opinions of other ministries – the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – are also required. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must consider the impact

⁷ SverigeRadio: Swedish tanks being sold to Iraq despite government ban, 3. 3. 2015.

<https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=3437&artikel=6106970>

⁸ E15: The Ministry of defence to spend billions for ammunition from Sellier & Bellot, e15.cz, 4. 11. 2016.

<https://www.e15.cz/byznys/prumysl-a-energetika/obrana-koupi-za-miliardy-munici-od-ceske-firmy-sellier-bellot-1324953>

⁹ Zákon o zahraničním obchodu s vojenským materiálem a o doplnění zákona č. 455/1991 Sb., o živnostenském podnikání (živnostenský zákon), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a zákona č. 140/1961 Sb., trestní zákon, ve znění pozdějších předpisů (Act on Foreign Trade with Military Material and on Amendment of Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on Entrepreneurs, as amended, and act No 140/1961, the Criminal Code, as amended)

<https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1994-38>

of arms trade on human rights in the country of collection and has the right of veto.

Therefore, the authorization of arms exports is entirely in the hands of the government or, in certain cases, individual ministries, and Parliament has only limited capacity to control such exports. According to our information, individual parliamentary committees are informed about exports only in the form of a summary report prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic, with a delay of up to one year. For example, there are no controls such as in Germany, where the government is obliged to inform individual parliamentary committees two weeks following the decision. Furthermore, the annual reports of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic do not provide any justification for the basis on which individual exports were permitted¹⁰.

International documents regulating trade in conventional weapons and their implementation into Czech legislation

Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

The Czech Republic signed the ATT in 2013 and ratified it in 2016. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech legislation is stricter than the ATT, so Czech arms manufacturers are not set to experience any change. On the contrary, the ministry spoke highly of the introduction of the ATT insofar as its restrictions on “unfair competition”¹¹.

Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP

The Ministry of Industry and Trade, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have reported on the Common Position in their official materials. However, according to NESEHNUTÍ, these ministries do not adhere to the criteria stipulated in Article 2 to the extent that they would prevent exports to problematic countries.

Other

Some current action plans for the implementation of international documents, to which the Czech Republic have committed, also mention arms exports.

The implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals) in the Czech Republic ¹², adopted in 2018, only deals to a very limited

10 Ústav mezinárodních vztahů Praha/ Institute of International Relations Prague: České zbrojní exporty potřebují silnější demokratickou kontrolu a vyšší transparentnost/Czech weapons exports require stronger democratic control and increased transparency, January 2019.

http://www.dokumenty-iir.cz/Publikace/PB/2019/Policy_Brief_Eberle_leden19.pdf

11 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CR: The Arms Trade Treaty enters into force after ratification by the CR, 26. 4. 2014.

https://www.mzv.cz/un.newyork/cz/zpravy_a_udalosti/smlouva_o_obchodu_se_zbranemi_vstupuje_v.html

12 Ministry of the environment/Department of Sustainable Development: Implementace agendy 2030 pro udržitelný rozvoj (Cílů udržitelného rozvoje) v České republice, Government approved version, October 2018. <https://www.cr2030.cz/strategie/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/10/Implementace-Agendy-2030.pdf>

extent with the arms trade. Under the SDG 16 objective to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all and create effective, responsible and inclusive institutions at all levels”, the Czech Republic is committed “to supporting measures to prevent illegal arms trade at international and national level”; by 2030, it wants to “significantly reduce the flow of illegal financial resources and arms”. However, the document does not include any specific steps to this end.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights were approved by Human Rights Council Resolution 17/4 on 16 June 2011. The Czech Republic implements them through the National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights for the period 2017-2022.¹³ This document also includes a chapter on “Trade in Military Material”. It describes the production of military material and weapons as a traditional branch of Czech industry, the trading in which poses, however, a greater risk from the point of view of human rights and therefore must be regulated. It describes the licensing process and where it provides information on arms exports. It also states that a lack of transparency (resulting from the lengthy time lapse between actual exports and the notification of these exports), as well as arms exports to so-called high-risk countries, are criticized by civil society. One of the tasks is “to extend the six-monthly overviews issued by the Licensing Authority for additional information that can be provided in accordance with legislation and government resolutions” by the end of June 2019. Another is “to hold regular meetings between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the non-governmental sector on issues of transparency and human rights in trade in military material,” and finally to “offer all the necessary cooperation and assistance to the Parliament of the Czech Republic Subcommittee for Ministry of Defence Acquisitions, trade in military material and innovation of the army of the Czech Republic for the purpose of the regular evaluation of the human rights risks of the export licenses granted and exports of military material.” The objectives are relatively specific, but unfortunately, we are not yet aware that any regular meetings have been held between the MIT and the MFA of the CR and the non-governmental sector or, if so, we have not been invited.

1. 4 Statistics

One of the few sources of information on arms exports and other military material is Ministry of Industry and Trade statistics. That said, these statistics have their many shortcomings. They do not mention the types of exported weapons or military material, but only relatively broad “groups of military equipment”, from which it is unclear as to whether a tank or a truck has been exported. The report is also published late; exports statistics for 2017 were not published until the summer of 2018. This data is also inconsistent with the data provided by the Ministry of Industry and Trade to the European Union, rendering effective public control impossible.

Since 2003, when government statistics on arms exports were first published, most of the weapons and military equipment were destined for the US, Slovakia, and India. However,

¹³ Government of the CR: The Government to adopt the first national action plan for business and human rights, 23. 10. 2017. <https://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rlp/aktuality/vlada-prijala-prvni-narodni-akcni-plan-pro-byznys-a-lidska-prava-161702/>

problematic states such as Algeria (in 4th place), Iraq (5th), Saudi Arabia (6th), Egypt (8th) and Yemen ¹⁴ (13th) were also among the largest recipients of Czech weapons.

2017

The most recent data currently available is from 2017. However, this data indicates that most weapons and military equipment were exported to the US, Iraq and Slovakia in 2017. Furthermore, the largest beneficiaries were countries that could be described as problematic in terms of the protection of human rights – Saudi Arabia (4th place), United Arab Emirates (7th), Israel (10th), Vietnam (15th) and Egypt (16th). For the first time since 2011, the value of exports did not increase, but decreased, from CZK 18 billion in 2016 to CZK 14.7 billion in 2017.

When comparing the countries that bought Czech weapons with the Freedom Index of the US-based Freedom House organization, it follows that in 2017 some 32% of the value of Czech weapons ended up in *non-free* countries and another 13% in *partly non-free* countries. Thus, more than half of exports – 55% – ended up in countries designated as *free* by this index. This is a slight improvement on the previous year, when only 48% of Czech weapons went to *free* countries.

The fact that states that we call democratic such as the US and Slovakia are among the three largest recipients of Czech weapons may sound positive. However, it is worth asking whether the Czech weapons actually ended up where they were declared. In 2017, the Czech Center for Investigative Journalism found out that the US handed over a large number of Czech weapons were to various groups of Syrian insurgents.¹⁵ It is not known whether this happened with the knowledge of the Czech authorities. However, what it does show is that it is not possible to rely solely on official statistics. The same is true for Slovakia. Despite the OSCE embargo, Czech howitzers and launchers were exported to Azerbaijan. According to Czech Television, they were probably exported through Slovakia and Israel.¹⁶

1.5 Cases

Egypt

The Czech authorities responsible for authorizing arms exports can by no means be accused of not having a sense of continuity. An illustrative example is Egypt, where Czech exports have been consistently on the increase, regardless of who is in power at the time. Thus, the Czech Republic armed the dictator Mubarak until he was overthrown and replaced by another

¹⁴ The export of arms to Yemen ended in 2015; in 2017, there was one relatively small shipment worth EUR 400 thousand (Vehicles)

¹⁵ Investigace.cz: Czech Arms Shipments for Syria, 12. 9. 2017.

<https://www.investigace.cz/dalsi-dodavky-cesky-ch-zbrani-do-syrske-vaiky/>

¹⁶ ČT24: Arms Strnad to continue arms shipments to Azerbaijan. Weapons sent via Israel, authorities allegedly unaware of any such shipments, 18. 6. 2018.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/2513533-zbrojar-strnad-dal-dodava-do-azerbajdzanu-zbrane-posila-pres-izrael-urady-pry-o-nicem>

dictator, Morsi, who was also armed by the Czech Republic until he was toppled by the military junta during the coup and replaced by the dictator el-Sissi, whom the Czech Republic still arms today. Over the past 12 years, we have sent over € 90 million of weapons and military equipment to Egypt.

The largest exports to Egypt took place over the past two years, when the Czech Republic received huge orders for armaments for the local police – Česká zbrojovka (129,000 CZ-75 pistols) and Sellier & Bellot (10 million rounds of 9mm ammunition)¹⁷. It was not until the summer of 2013 that the Czech Republic stopped the export of arms to the country, when the European Union decided to abolish “... export licenses to Egypt for any equipment that may be used for internal repression...”¹⁸ following the August 2013 massacres.

However, the Czech Republic ceased to adhere to this “embargo” some six months ago. Indeed, as early as February 2014, there were reports that the Czech Republic would send further pistols and ammunition to Egypt¹⁹, although the human rights situation had not improved but, on the contrary, had deteriorated.

Czech arms manufacturers continue to expand. In Egypt, Czech Zbrojovka is building a factory for the licensed production of pistols and assault rifles, with plans to further rearm the Egyptian Interior Ministry.²⁰ TATRA was also successful, winning a “contract of a military nature” for the delivery of 200 chassis to the Egyptian Ministry of Defense.²¹

Azerbaijan

The case of the most modern Czech howitzers and rocket launchers, which were sold through intermediaries to Azerbaijan, also illustrates the indifference of the Czech authorities well. However, the OSCE’s “non-binding” arms embargo has been imposed on Azerbaijan since the 1990s, and the Czech Republic has committed to it. Following media coverage of the case,²² the Czech authorities denied that they would have allowed the export of arms to Azerbaijan, but the media managed to reconstruct the way in which the Czech arms factories were able to circumvent the arms embargo.²³ The howitzers and launchers were from Czech entrepreneur Jaroslav Strnad’s company Czechoslovak Group, which owns businesses in Poland and Slovakia. The weapons were transported from the Czech Republic to one of the

17 Armádní noviny: Egypt to buy 129,000 Czech pistols CZ 75 P-07 Duty, 18. 7. 2014.

<http://www.armadninoviny.cz/129-000-ceskych-pistoli-pro-egypt.html>

18 European Council, Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on Egypt, 21. 8. 2013.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138599.pdf

19 E15: Češi dodají egyptské policii desítky tisíc pistolí, 17. 2. 2014. <http://zpravy.e15.cz/byznys/prumysl-a-energetika/cesi-dodaji-egyptske-policii-desitky-tisic-pistoli-1061249>

20 iDnes: Our weapons sold to George W. Bush as well as the King of Jordan, say the director of Česká zbrojovka, 4. 3. 2017.

https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/evropska-unie-zbrane-sef-zbrojovky-zakaz.A170227_2308590_domaci_hro

21 Novinky.cz: Tatra Kopřivnice wishes to produce 1,300 vehicles next year, 1. 12. 2015.

<http://www.novinky.cz/ekonomika/388003-koprivnicka-tatra-je-pri-chuti-pristi-rok-chce-vyrobic-1300-aut.html>

22 Hospodářské noviny: Strnad’s weapons sold to embargoed Azerbaijan via Israel with the help of Slovakia, 27. 9. 2017. <https://zahranicni.ihned.cz/c1-65896130-strnadovy-zbrane-se-dostaly-do-embargovaneho-azerbajdzanu-pres-izrael-kam-je-dodalo-slovensko>

23 ČT24: Strnad continues supplying Azerbaijan with his weapons. The weapons are delivered via Israel, the authorities allegedly unaware of any such shipments, 18. 6. 2018.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/2513533-zbrojar-strnad-dal-dodava-do-azerbajdzanu-zbrane-posila-pres-izrael-urady-pry-o-nicem>

Slovak companies, where they were dismantled, repaired, the most modern communications technology from Israel was installed and after this modernization they were exported from Bratislava airport to Tel Aviv and only then were they transferred to Azerbaijan. With the exception of Czech Television, Czech media interest in the case faded since it wrongly believed that the Czech Republic was not responsible for these exports because Israel sold the weapons to Baku. However, under Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP²⁴, EU Member States must not authorize arms exports if there is a risk that these weapons will end up elsewhere than with the declared user. The Czech Republic should now demand that Slovakia not export its technology to Israel because it is proving to be an unreliable partner for arms trading. According to our information, Slovakia has not yet done so.

Saudi Arabia

Despite the European Parliament calling for an embargo on Saudi Arabia in 2016, the Czech Republic exported EUR 28 million in weapons and military material to the monarchy in 2017. Thus, over the past five years, the value of Czech weapons exported to Saudi Arabia has reached EUR 144 million. Indeed, in 2014, Saudi Arabia was the largest recipient of Czech weapons. The biggest share of this was an order for several hundred TATRA trucks intended for the army. However, ammunition and handguns were also exported.

In the Czech public domain, arming this absolute monarchy is justified by the need to “maintain stability” in the region, pointing to Libya and Iraq as deterrents. The Czech authorities have also been trying to downplay the situation by the not entirely truthful assertion that “non-lethal” military material is being exported to Saudi Arabia. However, official statistics reveal that the Czech Republic has, for instance, exported ammunition to Saudi Arabia.

Israel

Growing military cooperation with Israel is also a cause for concern. This is not only reflected in the increasing number of arms sold between the two countries (in 2016, the Czech Republic exported EUR 12 million in arms to Israel, with EUR 20 million worth in 2017, and Israel was the third largest importer of arms to the Czech Republic last year). There are also joint arms projects coming into existence between Czech and Israeli companies. One of the latest examples is cooperation between Aero Vodochody and Israel Aerospace Industries, which is owned by the Israeli state.²⁵ The “defense/industry diplomat” at the Czech Embassy in Tel Aviv, who has been “contributing to a greater awareness of companies operating in the arms and defense industry” since last year, is also supposed to result in increased cooperation between the two countries.²⁶ Some units of the Czech army travel to Israel to participate in joint military exercises with the Israeli army, which passes on the

24 EU Official Journal: Joint Position of the Council 2008/944/SZBP of 8. 12. 2008.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/CS/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32008E0944&from=CS>

25 Reuters: Czech Aero Vodochody, Israel Aerospace to cooperate on jets, 24. 4. 2018.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-aero-vodochody-il-aerospace-ind/czech-aero-vodochody-israel-aerospace-to-cooperate-on-jets-idUSKBN1HV117>

26 Aktuálně.cz: The CR to send a new diplomat to Israel to cover defence cooperation, 6. 6.

2017. <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/cesko-bude-mit-v-izraeli-nove-diplomata-pro-obrannou-spolupr/r~7c9d87684aef11e7898e002590604f2e/?redirected=1504476613>

experience they have acquired during the long years of occupation and pacifying the Palestinian population.²⁷ The Czech Embassy in Tel Aviv, in cooperation with CzechTrade and the Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic, organized a joint exhibition of companies from the Czech Republic at the ISDEF defense trade fair in 2017.²⁸

Sri Lanka

The Czech Republic has also been selling weapons for a long time to Sri Lanka, where a bloody civil war has been underway since 1983 between the Sinhalese, who formed the majority on the island and the Tamil minority ethnic groups or the rebel group, the Tamil Tigers. Exports from the Czech Republic rose sharply in 2008 when we sold weapons (e.g., vz. 58 assault rifles,) and ammunition to the tune of € 10 million to the Sri Lankan government (as against € 23,000 in 2007, Figure 4).²⁹ The Sri Lankan army also used Czech rockets. The following year, the Sri Lankan government launched a brutal offensive against the remaining Tamil Tigers in the northeast of the island, and it almost undoubtedly used Czech weapons bought only a few months beforehand in the attack.

1.6 State of public and political debate on the arms trade in the Czech Republic

The way in which trade in military material is emphasised in public debate in the Czech Republic is largely influenced by political discussion in relation to foreign policy and a real effort by politicians to increase the turnover of armaments companies. For the most part, the Czech media focuses exclusively on the economic aspect of these deals. Therefore, generally speaking, the arms lobby is successful in the Czech Republic, as illustrated by the acknowledged good relations of leading politicians with entrepreneurs in the arms industry and the increase in arms exports from the Czech Republic in recent years. Compared to examples of a positive approach to arms manufacturers, the issue of the arms industry in relation to human rights is neither a political issue nor a topic covered by the media.

The Defense and Security Industry Association (AOBP),³⁰ of which most of the companies involved in the export of military material from the Czech Republic are a member, is the primary tool used by the armament industry lobby in the Czech Republic. The president of

27 iDnes: The Czechs trained in Israel with the special forces to handle Palestinians
18. 8. 2017

http://zpravy.idnes.cz/duvdevan-izrael-palesinci-ceska-armada-dyd-zahranicni.aspx?c=A170818_144433_zahranicni_aha

28 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CR: ISDEF 2017 – The Czech defense industry to present to the Israeli market, 12. 6. 2017.

https://www.mzv.cz/telaviv/cz/obchod_a_ekonomika/aktualni_informace/isdef_2017_uspechy_ceskeho_obranneho.html

29 Ministry of Trade and Industry of the CR: Výroční zpráva o kontrole exportu vojenského materiálu a ručních zbraní pro civilní použití v České republice za rok 2008 (Annual Report on military export control). <https://www.mpo.cz/assets/dokumenty/35863/64318/658525/priloha005.pdf>

30 Asociace obranného a bezpečnostního průmyslu, www.aobp.cz.

AOBP is Jiří Hynek, who ran for the President of the Czech Republic in 2018 and, when he was unsuccessful in the first round, went on to support Miloš Zeman in the second round.³¹

The President of the Czech Republic, Miloš Zeman, has long been in favor of trade in military material. In 2017, at the IDET arms trade fair in Brno, he expressed his views on weapons as being goods like any other goods and that as such, should be freely traded. He questioned what is, in his view, too strict a licensing policy against them.³² In the same year, the company, owned by one of the leading Czech arms manufacturers, Jaroslav Strnad, donated CZK 2 million (approx. EUR 74,100) to Miloš Zeman's presidential campaign.³³ In October 2018, Jaroslav Strnad was honoured by the President for his achievements in the economic sector.³⁴ Subsequently, he flew to China with the president, a country to which he would like to sell radars and Tatra chassis.³⁵ Jaroslav Strnad built the holding, Czechoslovak Group, and in 2018 he signed the entire holding over to his son, Michal Strnad. Firms connected to Jaroslav Strnad are accused of illegal trading in ammunition in Albania.³⁶

Prime Minister Andrej Babiš (ANO) also supports the development of the arms industry. He welcomes, for example, the investment of arms companies in Hungary.³⁷ In 2018, Česká

31 Novinky.cz: Hynek to support Zeman in the elections, 25. 1. 2018.

<https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/461633-hynek-podpori-ve-volbach-zemana.html>

32 iDnes: Zeman defended arms manufacturers against pacifists and bureaucracy. Exports to peak,

31. 5. 2017.

https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/zeman-idet-zbrojari-zbrojovky-byrokracie.A170531_115135_domaci_jw ;

Novinky.cz: Let's sell weapons wherever they buy them. It's none of our business where they go, says Zeman, 31. 5. 2017.

<https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/439413-prodavejme-zbrane-kamkoliv-kam-zamiri-nas-trapit-nemusi-tvrdi-zeman.html>

33 Aktuálně.cz: Zeman to receive two million for his non-existent campaign. Funds sent by Strnad, 21. 12. 2017. <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/zbrojar-strnad-poslal-zemanovi-dva-miliony-na-kampan/r-423ad30ce65611e794dbac1f6b220ee8/>

34 Lidovky.cz: Zeman to decorate 41 people, including Krúpa and Strnad, 28. 10. 2018.

https://www.lidovky.cz/domov/zive-kdo-dostane-statni-vyznamenani-zacina-slavnostni-ceremonial-na-hrade.A181028_170520_in_domov_pev

35 Hospodářské noviny: President Zeman on his trip to China: Strnad, who sponsored his campaign, is on board. He will be offering his radars 2. 11. 2018. <https://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-66323100-do-ciny-s-prezidentem-zemanem-leti-i-zbrojar-strnad-ktery-mu-sponzoroval-kampan-bude-nabizet-radary> ;

iDnes.cz: 72 hours with the president. Zeman in China

8. 11. 2018.

https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/zahranicni/zeman-navsteva-cina-veletrh-sanghaj-prezident-si-tin-pching.A181107_201940_zahranicni_pmk

36 OCCRP: Czech President's Main Donor on Balkan Arms Shopping Spree, 24. 1. 2018.

<https://www.occrp.org/en/wardogmillionaire/czech-presidents-main-donor-on-balkan-arms-shopping-spree>

37 Hospodářské noviny: VIDEO: We will be cooperating in the arms industry and we shall build on mutual support in the migration policy, agreed Babiš and Orban. Zeman apologised for Petříček, 30. 11. 2018.

<https://domaci.ihned.cz/c1-66366760-primy-prenos-babis-jednal-v-praze-s-orbanem-podivejte-se-na-brifink-obou-premieru>

zbrojovka entered into a contract for the commencement of the manufacture of firearms for security forces in Hungary; from the beginning of 2019 all the firearms components are to be produced there. Under the license, 200,000 firearms components will be manufactured there within the next ten years.³⁸

Representatives of Czech arms manufacturers have also travelled with other Czech leading politicians on visits to countries in which there have been gross human rights violations. In 2012, they traveled to Vietnam with the then Defense Minister Alexandr Vondra (ODS).³⁹ In 2016, they traveled to Egypt with Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Zmoravík (ČSSD).⁴⁰ Defense industry representatives were also part of a 70-member business delegation that travelled to Israel with President Miloš Zeman at the end of November 2018.⁴¹

The export of arms and military material should be assessed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in terms of human rights, and yet the Czech MFA itself encourages the sale of arms to problematic areas. The Fifth Edition of the Global Industry Opportunities Map of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for 2018 and 2019⁴² encourages the arms industry to establish favorable business contacts in the world.

One opportunity for arms manufacturers is the arming of the army and police of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to which the ministry does not hesitate to encourage exports of explosives and firearms. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic also believes that the arms embargo on Yemen, a country currently crippled by a humanitarian crisis, will soon be lifted, immediately after which it recommends the export of firearms and bombs.

Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Morocco, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Bangladesh are among the other countries in this handbook that Czech arms manufacturers are supposed to attract. The possible threat to human rights by Czech weapons is not mentioned in the Map of Industry Opportunities. Indeed, in this over 700-page publication there is not a single mention of human rights. The economic position clearly prevails.

38 Česká zbrojovka, czub.cz: Česká zbrojovka a.s. to start manufacturing in Hungary, 6. 4. 2018.

<https://www.czub.cz/cz/blog/2018/04/06/ceska-zbrojovka-a-s-zahaji-vyrobu-v-madarsku/>

39 ČT24: Vondra travels to Vietnam and India with arms manufacturers , 29. 3. 2012.

<https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/svet/1181910-vondra-vyrazil-se-sefy-zbrojovek-do-vietnamu-a-indie>

40 iDnes.cz: Česká zbrojovka interested in Egypt; plans to start manufacturing pistols there, 1. 2. 2016.

https://www.idnes.cz/ekonomika/zahranicni/ceska-zbrojovka-usiluje-o-zakazky-v-severni-africe-a-blizkem-vychodu.A160201_073536_eko-zahranicni_rts

41 České noviny: Zeman's delegation to Israel to include 70 scientists and representatives of Czech companies, 23.11.2018. <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/zemana-do-izraele-doprovodi-70-zastupcu-firem-ci-vedcu/1690774>

42 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CR: ,Mapa globálních oborových příležitostí 2018/2019/Map of global sectoral opportunities , 10. 7. 2018.

https://www.mzv.cz/ekonomika/cz/udalosti/mapa_globalnich_oborovych_prilezitosti_1.html

1.7 Anti-arms trade activism

Traditionally, critics of the arms trade in the Czech Republic have been non-governmental organizations Amnesty International⁴³ and NESEHNUTÍ.⁴⁴ These organizations alert us to arms exports to countries that are problematic in terms of adherence to human rights or to countries in armed conflict.

The initiative group Odzbrojovka devotes itself to anti-militarism in NESEHNUTÍ. NESEHNUTÍ is a member of Social Watch Czech Republic,⁴⁵ European Network Against Armstrade⁴⁶ (ENAAAT) and War Resisters International⁴⁷ (WRI). The group was based for a long time on volunteering. It was not until September 2018 that it managed to obtain a one-year Civil Society Development Grant from the Open Society Foundations to finance two part-time staff on a job-sharing arrangement, (slightly less than 0.5 FTE). The aim of the project is to recruit and educate new volunteers and to ensure the further development of the group. Since its establishment in 1997, NESEHNUTÍ has been trying to provide the public with information about the issue of arms exports through leaflets, press releases and protests against the IDET arms fair, held in Brno every two years. In recent times, NESEHNUTÍ's views have obtained media coverage in the context of arms exports to Saudi Arabia in connection with the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, especially after the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the autumn of 2018. NESEHNUTÍ activists also commented in the media on the issue of youth militarization as part of the International Week of Action Against the Militarization of Youth, which they organize in conjunction with WRI. The issue of the European Defense Fund, which NESEHNUTÍ has been focusing its attention on thanks to cooperation with the ENAAAT, is a topic that has thus far failed to obtain coverage in the Czech media.

In cooperation with the Social Watch coalition, NESEHNUTÍ, managed to organize two meetings of pro-peace initiatives in the Czech Republic that were held in 2017, with further meetings planned for 2019. However, the peace movement as such does not have a great tradition in the Czech Republic and some of the organizations perceive anti-militaristic or peaceful activities only as a marginal part of their overall activities.

Although Amnesty International deals with the issue of arms exports somewhat marginally, the media continues to turn to the organisation on this issue. Its website has a memorandum for signature, which is intended for the Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomáš Petříček (ČSSD/Social Democrats) and calls for a consistent and responsible assessment of human rights risks in arms exports.

The issue of arms exports in relation to human rights is not an important topic in academia. However, in January 2019, Jakub Eberle, Head of the Center for European Integration of the Institute of International Relations (founded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic), published a policy brief calling for greater public scrutiny and transparency

43 Amnesty International Česká republika. <https://amnesty.cz/zbrane/>

44 NESEHNUTÍ, Odzbrojovka. <http://zbrane.nesehnuti.cz/>

45 Social Watch Czech Republic. <http://www.socialwatch.cz/>

46 European Network Against Armstrade. <http://enaat.org/>

47 War Resisters' International. <https://www.wri-irg.org/en>

following the German model.⁴⁸

II. Other aspects of militarism in the Czech Republic

Other aspects of militarism in the Czech Republic are the growing trends in arms expenditure and the increase in the numbers in the Czech army. This is also related to the efforts of some politicians to include so-called military training in school curricula. Since 2013, the topic of national defense has been re-introduced to the curriculum for primary schools, and its implementation is supported and sponsored by the Army of the Czech Republic itself, a topic that escaped wider public debate when it was introduced. On the contrary, there was very lively debate among members of the Czech public on the issue of weapons after the adoption of the new EU directive on the possession of weapons. Indeed, the misgivings of political representatives across the political spectrum to implement this directive culminated in a proposal to amend the Constitution, which was not, however, adopted in the end.

2.1 Expenditure on arms and defense – trends and public debate

From the foundation of the state until 2005, the Czech Republic spent approx. 2% of GDP on defense. However, from 2005 onwards expenditure began to fall, reaching 0.91% in 2014. Since then it has remained stable at around 1% of GDP.⁴⁹ Andrej Babiš's government has committed to changing this trend by promising to increase arms expenditure to 1.4% of GDP by 2020, later postponing this commitment until 2021. At the same time, the Czech Republic has made a commitment to NATO to spend 2% of GDP on defense by 2024. The trend is to increase investment in arms, but it is unclear whether promises will be kept. Defense expenditure in 2018 was 1.11% of GDP.⁵⁰

Some 1.17% of GDP, i.e. CZK 65.6 billion, is earmarked in the defense budget for 2019. The fact that the Czech Republic is not meeting its NATO defense spending targets quickly

48 Ústav mezinárodních vztahů Praha/ Institute of International Relations Prague: České zbrojní exporty potřebují silnější demokratickou kontrolu a vyšší transparentnost/Czech weapons exports require stronger democratic control and increased transparency, January 2019.

http://www.dokumenty-iir.cz/Publikace/PB/2019/Policy_Brief_Eberle_leden19.pdf

49 Ministry of defence of the CR: Resortní rozpočet, Základní ukazatele státního rozpočtu v kapitole Ministerstvo obrany ČR v letech 1993 – 2018 (Defence budgets in the CR in 1993 to 2018).

<http://www.mocr.army.cz/finance-a-zakazky/resortni-rozpocet/resortni-rozpocet-5146/>

50 iDnes.cz: Europe to increase defence spending, 11. 7. 2018.

https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/nato/vydaje-obrana-nato-hdp-cesko-armada-trump-aliance-summit.A180711_060431_zpr_nato_inc

enough has been subject to criticism by opposition parties, especially by centre-right parties, TOP 09 and ODS.⁵¹ In general, both opposition and government parties agree that defense expenditure should be 2% of GDP but differ in their views on how quickly this optimum level of spending should be achieved. The proposal to spend 4% of GDP on defense in 2018 by US President Donald Trump does not have support across the political spectrum in the Czech Republic.⁵²

Another commitment is that 20% of defense spending be invested in upgrading and increasing the country's military capability – the current level for the Czech Republic is roughly 11%. The army has drawn up a modernization plan, which involves investment of over CZK 100 billion in the purchase of new technology by 2027. The most expensive items will be 210 tracked infantry fighting vehicles, 12 helicopters, 52 artillery guns, short-range anti-aircraft missiles and two new CASA aircraft. The plan is also to upgrade tanks and fighter planes and to purchase drones.⁵³

Even though the military has adequate funds to modernize according to plan, the purchase of new equipment has dragged on, mainly for administrative reasons. The year 2019 is set to see the largest investment in the history of the army of the Czech Republic. For instance, the purchase of Israeli MADR radars has been the subject of negotiation for the past two years.⁵⁴ There are also plans this year to start the purchase of 71 Tatra trucks.⁵⁵

Významný je také příslib zvýšení počtu vojáků a vojaček. Armáda ČR na začátku roku 2018 spustila náborovou kampaň, která by měla zajistit zvednutí stavů armády z asi 24 tisíc na konci roku 2017 až na 30 tisíc v roce 2025. The promise to increase the number of soldiers is also significant. At the beginning of 2018, the army of the Czech Republic launched a recruitment campaign to raise the number of soldiers from about 24,000 at the end of 2017 to

51 Echo24.cz: Military budget to increase? TOP 09 proposes 13 billion more for the military, 15. 12. 2018.

<https://echo24.cz/a/SbAhv/zvednou-se-vydaje-na-obranu-top-09-navrhuje-pro-armadu-13-miliard-navic>

52 České noviny: Czech politicians refuse to increase the military spending to 4 percent of GDP, 11. 7. 2018. <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/cesti-politici-odmitaji-zvyseni-vydaju-na-obranu-na-4-pct-hdp/1641716>

53 Echo24.cz: The military to spend 100 billion for transporters, drones and CASAs, 18. 6. 2018.

<https://echo24.cz/a/S7CwW/armada-chysta-nakupy-za-100-miliard-chce-transportery-drony-i-letouny-casa>

54 deník.cz: The Czech military goes shopping. Dozens of billions to spend this year, 25. 1. 2019.

https://www.denik.cz/z_domova/armada-na-nakupech-letos-utrati-desitky-miliard-korun-20190123.html

55 Lidovky.cz: The military to buy 71 Tatrás. The Ministry of defence to spend CZK 720 million, 2. 12. 2018.

https://www.lidovky.cz/domov/ministerstvo-obrany-hodla-nakoupit-nove-vozy-az-za-720-milionu-korun.A181202_111257_In_domov_ele

30,000 in 2025.⁵⁶

2.2 Militarization of youth – the army in schools

Militarization in education is a relatively new topic. The topic, “defense of the state”, has been part of the curriculum in the Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education⁵⁷ (RVP ZV/FEP EE) since 2013 when, at the request of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports incorporated the topic into the curriculum without a broad public discussion. Teachers are therefore forced to grasp the topic and implement the programme. As a teaching resource, teachers turn primarily nowadays to the POKOS⁵⁸ (Preparation of Citizens to Defend the State) programme. This organisation, created by the Ministry of Defense, has published methodical materials, trains teachers and visits schools to give presentations on the army. In addition, it organizes public presentations of the military at events targeting children, including Children’s Day events.

It is difficult to grasp the concept of the army and handle weapons without a proper context – being a member of the army is presented unequivocally as heroism, with the use of weapons presented as a form of entertainment. Meanwhile, according to the Czech School Inspectorate, the level of xenophobia and extremism is on the rise in schools, and the topics of human rights and solidarity receive little attention.⁵⁹

In 2016, a documentary film *Výchova k válce* (Education to War)⁶⁰ was aired by the national broadcaster Czech Television on *Český žurnál*, which also included POKOS lessons in schools. The form of the lessons aroused public debate. After criticism from the Standing Conference of Educational Associations (SKAV),⁶¹ POKOS acknowledged that certain

56 iDnes.cz: The military to launch a new recruitment web. 2,000 professionals to be recruited
19. January 2018.

https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/nato/armada-nabor-profesional-vojak-rekrutace-web-internet.A180119_140319_zpr_nato_inc

57 Ministry of education of the CR: Upravený Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání platný od 1. 9. 2013. (Framework education programme for elementary schools as of September 1st, 2013)

<http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/upraveny-ramcovy-vzdelavaci-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani>

58 Příprava občanů k obraně státu. <http://www.pokos.army.cz> (Ready to defend the country)

59 Czech School Inspection: Tematická zpráva - Občanské vzdělávání v základních a středních školách/Report on teaching of the government in elementary and secondary schools, 30. 11. 2016.

<https://www.csicr.cz/cz/Aktuality/Tematicka-zprava-Obcanske-vzdelavani-v-zakladnich>

60 Czech Film Center: Teaching War (*Výchova k válce*), 2016.

<https://www.filmcenter.cz/en/czech-films-people/52-teaching-war>

61 Stálá konference asociací ve vzdělávání/Permanent conference of associations in education: Stanovisko SKAV k současnému způsobu naplňování

tématu výchovy k obraně státu na českých školách, 10. 3. 2017. <http://www.skav.cz/?p=2076>

mistakes had been made and promised to remedy them, for example, not to allow children to handle weapons at school presentations. Changes were also made to the methodological manual, where diplomatic conflict solutions have been reincorporated as one of options. However, during the POKOS presentations given in schools, the recruitment line in attracting new recruits is still evident.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports leaves education on topics related to state defense fully to the Ministry of Defense. However, it also does not in any way guarantee that schools will not invite other parties to teach state defense. Indeed, POKOS is unable to cover all the demand for presenting this topic. This opens the way in schools for various paramilitary groups to visit. It is not easy to find out what they do in schools. However, the example of the Czechoslovak Armed Reserves for Peace says it all. This demonstrably pro-Russian and anti-state extremist organization organized “military days” for children in primary schools in the Moravian-Silesian Region as part of their lessons.⁶²

According to the BIS, there are about two thousand so-called militias in the Czech Republic,⁶³ whose links to extremist or nationalist political parties present a serious security risk for democracy.

For more information on the topic of militarism and nationalism in the V4 countries visit the investigative magazine Vsquare’s website.⁶⁴

2.3 Personal possession of weapons – European legislation and the Czech response

The Weapons Directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (91/477/EEC)⁶⁵ was adopted by the European Parliament on 14 March 2017. From the outset, the position held by Czech political representatives across the political spectrum on the proposed directive was considerably negative. The main concern is that the measures affect exclusively legal arms holders and do not address illegal weapons used to commit terrorist attacks. In its analysis⁶⁶, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic identified the measures as presenting a risk to internal security, defense capabilities, including preparing citizens for the

62 novinky.cz: NATO is a terrorist organisation, says the association which teaches children how to defend their country, 15. 5. 2018. <https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/472093-nato-je-teroristicka-organizace-hlasa-spolek-ktery-uci-zaky-brannou-vychovu.html?sznhp%3Drss>

63 iDnes.cz: The voluntary militia wishes to have their own troops teams up with the Police, warns BIS, 2. 9. 2018. https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/domobrana-policie-bis-cesko.A180831_205038_domaci_ane

64 Vsquare.org: Czech military marketing starts in schools, 21. 1. 2019. <https://vsquare.org/czechs-and-militarization-ethical-approach/>

65 European Parliament: Position of the EP, 2017. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TC+P8-TC1-COD-2015-0269+0+DOC+PDF+V0//CS>

66 Ministry of the Interior of the CR: Analýza možných dopadů revize směrnice o kontrole střelných zbraní, 2016 (an impact analysis). <http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/analyza-moznych-dopadu-revize-smernice-o-kontrole-nabyvani-a-drzeni-strelnych-zbrani-pdf>

defense of the state, but also as they impact on employment and the state budget, and pose a threat to cultural wealth and hunting. The most problematic measure is the discussed banning of the possession of weapons with high-capacity cartridges or of rifles with folding or telescoping stock. According to the analysis, the directive is set to have a negative impact not only on individual gun-holders, but also on arms manufacturers.⁶⁷

The Czech Republic sought to alleviate the effects of the directive,⁶⁸ and the proposal was rejected by the government and both chambers of parliament in the Czech Republic.⁶⁹ In response to the final adoption of the directive in the European Parliament, the Czech Republic filed an action with the EU Court of Justice at the beginning of August 2017, requesting it be revoked and its deferral.⁷⁰ It considers the directive to be discriminatory. The decision is not expected until 2019.⁷¹ The directive was to be implemented into the Czech legal order by September 2018, but this did not happen.⁷²

On the basis of the ongoing discussion, at the beginning of 2017 a group of deputies headed by Roman Váňa of the Social Democrats (ČSSD) and, with the support of the then Interior Minister Milan Chovanec (ČSSD), submitted a proposal for an amendment to the constitutional law,⁷³ which was to incorporate the right to hold firearms directly into the constitutional order.⁷⁴ The change would have explicitly anchored the possibility of using weapons in the case of national defense. The submitted proposal was approved by the Chamber of Deputies at the end of June 2017⁷⁵. However, on 6 December 2017, the Senate rejected the bill in accordance with the recommendations of the Constitutional and Legal

67 Novinky.cz: *Czech arms manufacturers fear the EU Directive*, 10. 5. 2016.

<https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/402986-ceske-zbrojare-strasi-smernice-eu.html>

68 ČT24: *Chovanec to trael to Brussels to convince his EU colleagues to refuse the ban on semi-automatic weapons*, 8. 6. 2016. <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/1810463-chovanec-pojede-presvedcovat-unijni-kolegy-aby-odmitli-zakaz-poloautomatickych-zbrani>

69 Ministry of the Interior of the CR R: *The CR continues to refuse the EU Directive*, 2016. <http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/ceska-republika-i-nadale-odmita-evropskou-smernici-o-zbranich.aspx>

70 Ministry of the Interior of the CR: *The CR to file a motion to the EU court for invalidity of the EU Weapons Directive*, 2017. <http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/cesko-podalo-k-soudnimu-dvoru-eu-zalobu-na-neplatnost-smernice-o-kontrolu-zbrani.aspx>

71 Euractiv.cz: *The decision on the Weapons Directive to be expected next year*, 10. 5. 2018. <https://euractiv.cz/section/vnitro-a-spravedlnost/news/rozsudek-ohledne-sporne-zbranove-smernice-lze-ocekavat-az-pristi-rok/>

72 České noviny: *The CR to enforce the EU Weapons Directive as of today, the deadline not met*, 14. 9. 2018. <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/cr-mela-do-dneska-zavest-smernici-eu-o-zbranich-nestihla-to/1662671>

73 Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu ČR/Parliament of the CR: *Návrh ústavního zákona, kterým se mění ústavní zákon č. 110/1998 Sb., o bezpečnosti České republiky*, 2017. <http://www.psp.cz/doc/00/12/07/00120753.pdf>

74 iDnes: *Members of the EP to adopt the EU Weapons Directive*, 14. 3. 2017. https://zpravy.idnes.cz/smernice-omezujici-poloautomaticke-zbrane-fkl/zahranicni.aspx?c=A170314_094052_domaci_lva

75 Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu ČR/Parliament of the CR: *Sněmovní tisk 1021: Novela ústav. z. o bezpečnosti České republiky*, 2017. <http://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?T=1021&O=7>

Committee and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security.⁷⁶ While politicians agreed across the political spectrum on the European directive, they held contradictory views on the amendment to the Constitution, especially in light of the existing legislation on the possession of weapons, which is considered to be first-rate and thus sufficient, and based on the argument that civilians should not take the place of the state when it comes to protecting the population.⁷⁷

The power of a militarized civil society has manifested itself in the promotion of a petition drawn up by retired colonel, Pavel Černý, and published on 10 February 2014, against the regulation and control of arms and self-defense resources by the EU⁷⁸. Partners in promoting the petition were Lex – the association for the protection of the rights of owners of firearms, the Association of the Defense and Security Industry of the Czech Republic, the Association of Producers and Sellers of Arms and Ammunition and the Czech-Moravian Hunting Union, and received the support of other initiatives, such as the Armyweb.cz and Policejninoviny.cz interest sites. For example, Česká zbrojovka, a Czech firearms manufacturer came out in support of the activities against the European directive.⁷⁹ More than 100,000 signatures were handed over to the leadership of the Senate in connection with forthcoming talks on an amendment to the constitutional law, which was regarded by some politicians and the public as a potential safeguard against the implementation of the European directive⁸⁰ or at least as sending a clear signal to the EU.⁸¹ After the change to the Constitution was not passed in the Senate, Pavel Černý launched a new petition for “preserving the rights of law-abiding Czech citizens in the area of legal weapons” at the beginning of 2018.⁸² The authors of the two

76 Senát Parlamentu ČR/Senate: *Senátní tisk č. 165: Návrh ústavního zákona, kterým se mění ústavní zákon č. 110/1998 Sb., o bezpečnosti České republiky*, 2017. <http://www.senat.cz/xqw/xervlet/pssenat/historie?action=detail&value=4154> ;

Deník Referendum: *Senate to refuse the constitutional amendment enabling possession of weapons for national defence*, 7. 12. 2017. <http://denikreferendum.cz/clanek/26668-senat-neschvalil-ustavni-novelu-umoznujici-drzet-zbran-pro-potreby-obrany-statu>

77 ČT24: *Stropnický, Minister of Defence: We remained inactive; other countries to negotiate exceptions in respect to the Weapons Directive*, 23. 9. 2017.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/specialy/volby-2017-programove-postoje-stran/2242393-ministr-obrany-stropnicky-kdo-u-nas-v-pripade>

78 Petice CzechForGuns: *Petice proti regulaci zbraní a sebeobránných prostředků ze strany EU/Petition against regulation of weapons and self-defence tools*, 2014.

<https://www.peticezbrane.cz/cs/>

79 Česká zbrojovka: *Protest proti směrnici Evropské komise/Protests against the EC Directive*, 16. 3. 2017. <https://www.czub.cz/cz/blog/2017/03/16/protest-proti-smernici-evropske-komise/>

80 ČT24: *Petition to refuse arms regulation; it is a dictate from abroad*, 5. 10. 2017.

<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/2264062-petice-odmita-regulaci-zbrani-na-diktaty-ze-zahranici-jsou-cesi-velmi-citlivi>

81 iRozhlas: *The Parliament to adopt an amendment of weapons possession; the state doesn't fear its citizens, says Chovanec*, 28. 6. 2017. https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-domov/drzeni-zbrani-jako-zakladni-pravo-novela-o-drzeni-zbrani-dostala-od-snemovny_1706281212_kro

82 Liga LIBE: *Nová petice 2018 ze dne 18. ledna 2018 „Za zachování práv bezúhonných českých občanů v oblasti legálních zbraní“/LIBE league: New petition of 18.1.2018 to uphold right of the law obedient Czech citizens in respect of legally possessed weapons.*

above-mentioned petitions founded the LIBE League in 2018, a “human rights platform against absurd disarmament”, under which they continue to lobby top Czech politicians against the adoption of the European directive.⁸³

There are currently over 303,000 firearms license holders in the Czech Republic who, together, own over 800,000 weapons. It is reported that this increase in the interest in firearm licenses occurred after 2014, until when their number had declined or stagnated. Between 2015 and 2018, the number of firearms license holders increased by 11,000 people.⁸⁴

<https://ligalibe.cz/ke-stazeni/nova-petice/>

83 Liga LIBE. <https://ligalibe.cz/>

84 ČT24: Number of weapons in the CR to reach one million. More people to be licensed 24. 8. 2018. <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/domaci/2575498-pocet-zbrani-v-cesku-miri-k-milionu-drzitelu-zbrojniho-prukazu-pribyva>