—— (2011b) "A Kormány közleménye a Rehabilitációról szóló törvény szerbiai elfogadásáról," 5 December, available at: www.kormany.hu/hu/kulugyminiszterium/hirek/a-kormany-kozlemenye-a-rehabilitaciorol-szolo-torveny-szerbiai-elfogadasarol.

Hungarian Presidency (2010) "European External Action Service begins work," Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU Web site, 19 December, available at: www.eu2011.hu/news/european-external-action-service-begins-work.

Magyarics, T. (2004) "A magyar külpolitika új helyzete" [The new situation for Hungarian foreign policy], *Magyar Szemle*, XIII. 5. szám.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011) *Hungary's Foreign Policy after the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*. Budapest: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary.

Visegrad Group (2010) *Visegrad Group Ministerial Statement on the Western Balkans*, Bratislava, 22 October, available at: www.visegradgroup.eu/2010/visegrad-group.

—— (2011) *Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group and Slovenia on the Western Balkans*, Prague, 4 November.

4 Coloring it Europe?

The Europeanization of Czech foreign policy[1]

Michal Kořan

Introduction

Czech foreign policy has undergone significant changes related to the process of EU accession and subsequent EU membership. These changes have been far-reaching when it comes to the structure and process of policy-making, at the level of strategies and actions, and in some cases also in the very nature of Czech foreign policy preferences and perceptions of the outside world. However, as this chapter argues in the Conclusion, these changes do not necessarily mean the thorough Europeanization of Czech political elites in the form of an internalization of norms and values. Instead, the Czech case reveals a pragmatic adjusting of strategies and channels of influence in order to, first, better achieve nationally defined goals and interests, and second, become accepted as a member of the "family" of Western democracies.

EU-related changes at the level of structure and process of Czech foreign policy-making

The main Czech foreign policy actors are the Parliament, the Government, and the President, with their roles loosely characterized in the Czech Constitution and further explicated at the sub-constitutional and sub-legislative levels (Müller 2007; Kořan 2010). The Czech Constitution is relatively rigid and not easy to change. With respect to the theme of this chapter it says a lot that the most fundamental constitutional change so far was made precisely because of Czech EU accession (Syllová 2002: 38). This change radically reversed the relationship between Czech and international law. Throughout the 1990s, international law was superior to Czech law only in cases of international treaties related to human rights and basic freedoms. In November 2001, the Czech Parliament approved constitutional changes that granted superiority to international law in all cases in which a given international treaty was ratified by the Parliament.[2] Another constitutional change was made in order to enable a referendum on EU accession, with a special ad hoc constitutional law to this end adopted in November 2002.[3] But a different situation exists on the *sub-constitutional* and *sub-legislative* levels, where large numbers of legislative measures were adopted in order to secure the EU accession process.

As of today the structural and procedural development is far from over. This is because, first, the structure and process of Czech foreign policy-making find themselves in a continuous state of development, and second, this development is largely dependent on the political preferences of the actual power-holders as well as on the often troublesome relationships among them. This can be demonstrated when we look at the changes that occurred in the relationships among and within the institutions responsible for handling foreign and EU affairs. From the early 1990s until EU accession in 2004, it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that was at the helm of coordinating EU affairs. Accordingly, EU issues were largely perceived as a matter of foreign policy. In November 2001 the government decided to change the original Committee for European Integration (the leading inter-ministerial body coordinating EU policies) to the Council for European Integration. The then Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Kavan was appointed executive chairman of the new council. This act[4] further strengthened the MFA's role, as the new council began to effectively substitute for the regular inter-ministerial consulting procedure. The MFA retained this crucial role throughout the final years of the accession negotiations. In April 2003, the government created a new institutional framework which reflected the forthcoming EU accession. A new Committee for the European Union was established in place of the Council. Since then, the Committee has remained the main coordinating body for Czech EU policies. It involves cabinet ministers and is chaired by the Prime Minister. The Committee defines positions on important EU matters and pre-approves mandates for the Czech delegations to European Council meetings (Marek and Baun 2011: 54). The committee also convenes at a working level. At this level it consists of top ministerial officials and deputy ministers, and at its weekly meetings it discusses and approves instructions for the EU Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) as well as mandates for particular ministerial meetings of the EU Council. Until 2007 the executive secretariat of the EU Committee was managed by the MFA (Karlas and Beneš 2008: 73).

The preparations for the Czech Republic's EU Presidency (in the first half of 2009) brought about a transfer of coordinating powers from the MFA to the Office of the Government. The second Topolánek Government (a coalition of three parties – the rightist Civic Democratic Party [ODS], the center Christian Democrats, and the Greens) chose to fundamentally alter the way European affairs were coordinated. In January 2007 the government established the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs (Governmental Decree No. 57/2007) and appointed the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexandr Vondra to manage this office. This decision was motivated both by political reasons – the desire to counterweigh the power of the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg (appointed by the Green Party), and to accommodate Vondra himself – and administrative reasons – the need to concentrate the EU Presidency preparations directly under the Office of the Prime Minister. This step created certain controversies and room for institutional uncertainty (Karlas and Beneš 2008: 70). It is to the credit of the main protagonists of the new

institutional framework (Schwarzenberg and Vondra) that despite the legal vacuum, they were able to find an effective modus operandi.[5]

The MFA continued to play a crucial role in formulating the Czech position on EU external relations.[6] On the other hand, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs assumed the task of securing the preparation and execution of the Czech EU Presidency, negotiating the Lisbon Treaty, and the general planning and coordination of Czech European policy (Beneš and Braun 2010: 74–5). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister enjoyed its highest authority during the Czech EU Presidency. After the fall of the government in the middle of the EU Presidency (March 2009), Deputy Prime Minister Vondra had to step down and the office was degraded to the Office of the Minister for European Affairs. The informal influence of this office inevitably shrank somewhat after the end of the Czech Presidency, even though it kept most of its previous powers. As a consequence, on an informal level, the MFA gained back some of its previous influence over European affairs. This development continued after the new center-right government of Prime Minister Petr Nečas (ODS) was formed in July 2011. It took more than a year for the governing coalition to figure out how to establish a working relationship between the MFA and the Office of the Government. In July 2010, the new government decided to dismantle the Office of the Minister for European Affairs. In August 2010, the Prime Minister found himself in a fierce fight with his foreign minister (Schwarzenberg, of TOP09, a junior coalition party) over the actual powers to be ascribed to the office (Beneš and Braun 2011: 70). When, at the end of August 2011, the government agreed on creating the new post of State Secretary (despite the protests of TOP09) the Minister of Foreign Affairs appointed his first deputy minister to become the State Secretary for European Affairs at the MFA. Thus, at the end of 2011 the Czech Republic possessed a structure with two State Secretaries for European Affairs whose competencies and relationships were only very vaguely defined. Needless to say, this lack of clarity and the explosive relations between the two main coalition parties greatly hamper the performance of Czech EU policy.[7]

To sum up, there has been a tendency to adapt the foreign and European policy-making framework to the fact that European affairs have been more and more closely intertwined with Czech domestic politics and policies instead of making the framework a part of foreign policy, which was the case prior to the Czech Republic's EU accession. However, it is also obvious that this evolution only partly follows rational assessments of what is the best and most effective system. The development of the EU policy-making framework has been the subject of numerous political deals and controversies, and thus it reflects the often conflicting political interests and ambitions of various political actors. As a result, the system has not improved much over time. The growing level of experience and skills of the public sector and bureaucracy contribute to the improved performance of Czech European policies. However, the political context, bursting with politicization, polarization, and power politics, presents a strong hindrance to any attempts to better capitalize on the potential the state administration possesses.

EU-related factors at the level of interests and preferences

EU accession and membership have affected Czech national identity and also Czech politics with regard to foreign policy. Both identity and politics create an important basis for the formulation of interests and preferences. The identity of communist Czechoslovakia was based on a positive identification with the Soviet Union and a negative demarcation of Czechoslovakia against the capitalist West. The Czechoslovak/Czech identity after 1989 has been constructed as the exact opposite – Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic delimited itself against the illiberal and chaotic post-Soviet space (Russia in particular) while identifying itself with the liberal, prosperous, democratic, and stable West (Drulák and Königová 2005; see also True 2004). The crucial point that linked all these different traits together was an urgent need to (again) belong to Europe (Marek and Baun 2011: 28). On a symbolic level this process has been portrayed as a "return to home – return to Europe," where the Czechs have always belonged (Fawn 2000: xi, 2004). It is of utmost importance to stress that the sought-after Czech EU membership was interpreted by many as mostly a confirmation of this Czech "west European" identity (Fawn 2000: 146; Bugge 2003: 181; Drulák and Königová 2005; Marek and Baun 2011: 28). This, however, does not suggest that the EU itself was an uncontested issue in Czech politics in the 1990s. On the contrary, the Czech Republic is referred to as the only country of all the CEE countries that manifested opposition to joining the EU in the form of organized interests (Grabbe 2006: 108). The perspective of an early accession to both NATO and the EU confirmed the governing elite's perception that the country was on the right track (Leigh 2003: 90). The dominant self-confident portrait of the liberal–conservative elite that ruled until 1997 presented the Czech Republic as making progress in its economic and political transformation, perhaps even in spite of the EU accession process (Bugge 2003: 182). True, the ODS was actively and openly supporting EU accession. However, on the level of politics, the ODS developed a critical position on European integration which was consistent with its ideological orientation (Kopecký and Učeň 2003: 166). As Rick Fawn eloquently said of the Czechs: "while desiring EU and NATO membership, they want them largely on Czech terms" (Fawn 2000: 164).

The governmental crisis of 1996–7, the change of government which followed and the subsequent strenuous and lengthy process of actual EU accession negotiations changed this confident self-perception. From this point on, the accession process was approached from a non-political (or even de-politicized) point of view dominated by the executive branch, which subsequently had a negative effect on the nature of the democratic political process (Marek and Baun 2011: 5). EU accession was interpreted as an undisputed goal that had to be attained in a technocratic way without much political discussion. Thus, as of 2012 there is no relevant and/or parliamentary party in the Czech Republic that would reject the idea of European integration. The Czech political mainstream has fully embraced the idea of European integration, yet Czech political thinking retains the distinctive features depicted above.

EU membership has also had an impact on preferences and interests at the level of the politics of foreign policy. Czech political thinking has for many years been sharply divided on philosophical and political grounds over the future of the EU. Lately, the debate has thickened and become polarized. With a certain amount of simplification, the main dividing line can be drawn between the leftist Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) and the rightist ODS. According to the ČSSD, the traditional nation-state is no longer able to cope with the challenges posed by the globalizing world. The only way of facing these challenges is widening and deepening the extent of global governance. For the Czech Republic, this process can be best dealt with at the EU level. Thus, for the Social Democrats, the EU is not an instrument for strengthening the Czech Republic as a "nation"; instead it is a source of legitimate governance itself (ČSSD n.d.; Kořan 2011: 16). In contrast, in complete defiance of this "neo-idealist" stance, the "realist" ODS perceives the EU as a platform for fulfilling nationally defined interests. The ODS accuses large and complex international organizations (such as the EU) of a continuous decline in their ability to manage and rule themselves, not to mention their ability to have a positive impact on world affairs. In other words, multilateralism is failing and the Czech Republic has to become more focused on its own destiny and economy. The Czech government cannot be responsible for the fate of the continent or European integration because the Czech Republic does not have the necessary potential (Ideová konference ODS 2008; *Vize 2020* 2010; Kořan 2011: 16).

What we are left with is the incongruity of the respective approaches of the two principal political forces in the Czech Republic. Interestingly enough, though, the two parties eventually joined forces in supporting the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (Matějková 2010). However, this fact can be explained only by the above-mentioned overriding determination to belong to the "West," which was described as the core element of Czech political and national identity after 1989. Still, the ODS had to go through the painful process of talking itself into supporting this document and to discover a discursive (normative) framework that would somehow put the Lisbon Treaty in harmony with the party's foreign policy reasoning. Eventually, the ODS found it more appropriate to support the Lisbon Treaty when it was interpreted as a tool to strengthen Europe in geopolitical terms (Beneš 2010; Braun 2010: 117, 140). The EU as a global actor later played a prominent role in the Czech EU Presidency program (Kaniok 2010: 125). Yet the particular normative reasons for backing the global role of the EU bear the unmistakable features of long-standing Czech foreign policy discourse and priorities, and these features are not necessarily shared by some of the other (namely the "old") EU members (one such feature being the deep Czech anxiety about Russia's neo-imperial ambitions) (Beneš 2010: 38–9). Thus, the (more-or-less) consensual Czech support for a strong Europe finds its roots in the Czech Republic's traditional perception of itself as a small and vulnerable country that seeks protection against certain potentially dangerous influences that it might be exposed to (e.g., those of China and/or Russia).

One of the most complex and striking cases of the Europeanization of preference-building (but also of perception) can be found in Czech policy toward

Germany. Throughout the 1990s, Czech foreign policy toward Germany has been mostly informed by the realist-defensive perception which treated Germany as a potential threat and accentuated the huge asymmetry in mutual relations (Handl 1997, 2004). The approach of EU accession negotiations significantly contributed to agreement between the two countries on the Czech–German Declaration in 1997, which essentially cleared the burdens of mutual historical resentments from bilateral relations, at least at the political level. A second wave of Europeanization took place in 1998–2004, when the Czech Republic found in Germany a very close ally while the former was on its way to joining the EU and the bilateral agenda was gradually replaced by the EU agenda (Handl 2004: 76–9). Also, the EU and NATO memberships were seen as appropriate instruments for balancing the mutual asymmetry, which further contributed to the fact that a majority of the Czech political elite eventually dropped its immanent Germano-phobia (Handl 2008: 162). The third wave of Europeanization is more linked to strategies and actions and will be discussed below.

A unique blend of EU influence and traditional national preferences can be found in the Czech approach to the Eastern dimension of CFSP, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Throughout the 1990s Czech diplomacy virtually ignored the geographic east (Tulmets 2010: 213). The eastern dimension appeared on the radar of Czech foreign policy only after EU accession in 2004, and afterwards the Czech Republic sought to quickly bring its position on the Eastern neighborhood in line with that of the EU (Kratochvíl and Horký 2010: 71). This did not mean that Czech diplomacy did not wish to leave its own distinctive imprints on the Eastern dimension of ENP. Prague diplomats believed that, thanks to the particular Czech historical experience, they understood the eastern partner countries better than the older EU members (Kratochvíl and Horký 2010: 71). Also, the Czech Republic has a traditional tendency to design overall Eastern European policy while viewing it primarily through the lens of the Czech stance toward Russia (Kratochvíl 2008: 220, 228). In the Czech Republic's zero-sum, realist-fashioned geopolitical thinking, any progress of the eastern partner countries means a loss for Russia.

Lastly, it is also important to mention some cases which show that when there is no consensus on the EU level in regard to a particular issue, the politics of Czech foreign policy regarding the same issue tends to be extremely polarized. This was the case with the diplomatic recognition of Kosovo in 2009 (Tesař 2010), or discussion of the U.S. anti-missile radar in 2007–9 (Hynek and Střítecký 2010b). This point further supports the argument that the EU has a limiting, legitimizing, unifying, and molding effect on Czech foreign policy.

EU-related changes at the level of strategies and actions

The interests and preferences discussed in the previous section are the ideational sources for the formulation of particular policies. In this section, we focus on the foreign policy outcomes (strategies and actions) that have been influenced by Czech EU membership in a variety of ways.

Having said that Czech Eastern policy is one of the "new" EU-informed foreign policy interests, it is important to add that at the level of actual policy, as Kratochvíl and Horký (2010: 72) rightly observe, Czech diplomacy did little to critically assess the ENP. Instead, Czech foreign policy fully succumbed to the "orientalist" approach of the EU in its attempt to "Europeanise its neighbors and thus place them in a position of ideational dependence on the EU." Czech thinking only flavored this orientalist approach with its own geopolitical curry. By focusing on eastern enlargement, Czech diplomacy accentuates the fact that "Europe in transition" no longer finds itself in central Europe but in eastern and southeastern Europe (Kratochvíl and Horký 2010: 73–4, 77). Thus, through the Europeanization of its eastern policy, the Czech Republic further reinforces its feverishly sought-after Western European identity (Kořan 2012).

When it comes to Czech policy toward Russia, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the changes in it have been caused by "Europeanization" or other factors. Russia has always been used as the "other" in Czech foreign policy discourse. In the 1990s Russia was pictured as a potential source of threat and instability. Lately, however, Russia has been perceived mostly through the lens of geopolitics and security concerns, and more particularly through the prism of NATO enlargement (Kratochvíl 2008: 220; Kratochvíl and Kuchyňková 2010: 196). Only very recently (2010–11) has the Czech–Russian relationship undergone a process of pragmatization and de-securitization (Kuchyňková 2011).[8] This process can be ascribed to the overall moderation of Western relations with Russia after the "US–Russian reset" in 2009. But one cannot leave unnoted the fact that the pragmatization, economization, de-securitization, and overall improvement of Czech–Russian relations that became palpable especially during and after the Czech EU Presidency in 2009 falls well within the (Western) European mainstream (Kuchyňková 2010). True, with regard to many important multilateral issues (Russia's WTO entry, EU–Russian affairs, NATO–Russian ties, and visa regime liberalization) the Czech Republic continues to be a hardliner. But even this tougher line falls within the limits set by the CFSP. It is also important that there is no strong European consensual position on the way the EU–Russian relationship should be managed. Thus the Czech Republic enjoys a relative liberty of choices.

A clearer case of the penetration of EU affairs into the realm of foreign policy actions and strategies is Czech policy toward Germany. The extent of this penetration was already evident during the German EU Presidency in 2007. Germany's ultimate presidency mission was to drag the EU out of the fatigue caused by the rejection of the so-called Constitutional Treaty in 2005. The Czech coalition government was bitterly divided over this issue, but after an unusually intensive dialogue in 2007 the Czech Republic and Germany found a common ground and the Czech Republic decided to back Germany in this matter (Handl 2008: 138–41). An even deeper intertwining of the Czech–German relationship in the context of EU affairs materialized before and during the Czech EU Presidency (2008–9). Indeed, Germany was the single most important bilateral partner during the Czech EU Presidency, and without systematic German cooperation

and support the outcomes of the Czech Presidency would have been much poorer (Handl 2010: 135). Besides, as much as 70 percent of the Czech Presidency priorities matched German interests (Handl 2009: 143). It is also important that what might divide the Czechs and Germans at present are not bilateral political and historical issues, but the fact that there are now some significant Czech political currents that adhere to views on the future of the EU that fundamentally oppose those that are dominant in Germany. On the other hand, literally in every case where a strong and consensual position has been formed within the EU (and NATO), the Czech Republic has adhered to that consensus, and this is also a crucial feature in Czech–German relations.

The issue of energy policy demonstrates the way in which the bearers of Atlanticist ideas (that is, those who advocate strong Czech–US ties even at the expense of EU cohesion) principally adopted a Europeanizing discursive strategy when legitimizing the rapid politicization and securitization of Czech external energy policy (Střítecký 2010: 163). The Czech EU Presidency (under the leadership of the Atlanticist ODS) embraced energy policy/security as one of its top priorities. The original Czech energy policy/security discourse contained all the ubiquitous discursive elements of Czech geopolitics – the perception of Russia as a threat, the geopolitics of EU Eastern enlargement (Hynek and Střítecký 2010a), and the vulnerability of the Czech Republic as a small, resource-poor and landlocked European country. The key step for the securitization of energy policy was the successful introduction of this priority in EU-wide terms, which happened during the Czech EU Presidency. The Czech government, in fact, did a surprisingly good job in "communitizing" its energy security program. The energy security concept was presented as a tool for enhancing and strengthening European defense and security, and it was further related to the overall EU liberalizing spirit of the Czech Presidency (Střítecký 2010: 175). This was a rational pragmatic strategy of framing a particular priority in EU-accepted terms while keeping the strong and distinctive features of Czech geopolitical thinking (Střítecký 2010: 180). Thus, while EU membership influenced the policy strategy, the basic political preferences remained essentially the same.

The United States has traditionally been seen as the single most important actor for Czech diplomacy after 1989. It is now widely accepted, however, that in reaction to the relative decline of US engagement in Europe, the entire Central-Eastern European region is undergoing a significant reformulation of its relationship to the United States (Gati 2008; CEPA 2010; Ditrych 2011). Czech diplomacy also currently finds itself in the situation of building a new framework for its US policy now that the (merely perceived?) "special relationship" era of the 1990s has passed. Why is this turn so important for a chapter on Europeanization? One of the Central European reactions to the recent shifts in US transatlantic policy has been a growing tendency to work on strengthening the EU as a global player. This can be seen in the most recent turn in political thinking in the Czech Republic. For example, as explained above, Czech foreign policy lately has come surprisingly close to that of Germany on many occasions. This stands in a stark contrast to the situation in 2003, when the Czechs (albeit

hardly enthusiastically) gave their support to the US-led Iraq operation, which was harshly condemned by Germany. Certainly, it is important to bear in mind that the transatlantic gap that cracked open around the time of the Iraq invasion has now been largely covered. The more pro-European leaning of the Central European countries has probably been caused primarily by the US shifting its attention away from Europe to other, more demanding geopolitical hotspots (for more on this, see Brzezinski 2012a, 2012b). Still, it is fair to say that deepening experience with the EU progressively affects the reactions of Central European countries to this US strategic shift. It seems that there is a growing acknowledgment that the time is ripe to accept the new reality of transatlantic relations, and that it will be the EU framework instead of the special symbolic Czech–US relationship that will be the defining element in this new reality (perhaps with the exception of hard security matters). At least this is the spirit echoed in the latest *Conceptual Basis* of Czech foreign policy (MFA 2011).

An interesting case of policy trimming at the level of strategies can be found in a long-time Czech priority – *the active support for global human rights advocacy and for democratic transitions*. This priority owes much to important traits of the country's post-1989 identity, which was characterized at the beginning of the chapter. Indeed, human rights promotion served as one of the key identity-building elements in Czechoslovak/Czech foreign policy. For nearly two decades, the Czech Republic was one of the most assertive promoters of global human rights, even though it was rather selective in terms of which countries were included in its focus. In recent years, the Czech strategy has gradually come closer to the more moderate course that is characteristic for the majority of EU members (Veselá 2010: 167–9). This is not to say that Czech diplomacy has given up on asserting its own approach to human rights promotion, only that it has become more careful and thoughtful in looking for other partners, and the fact that it has to find a common ground with its new EU partners is an important consideration. Thus, at the level of strategies, the Czech Republic is now more conscious of other important channels for promoting its priorities in the area of human rights and support for democratic transitions, and it focuses more on searching for support (and consensus) within the EU rather than carrying out exclusively bilaterally conceived projects (Bílková and Matějková 2010; Bílková 2011: 330).

Conclusion

It is widely held that the EU's influence on the Central and Eastern European region worked principally through conditionality. Because there was little conditionality in the sphere of foreign policy to speak of, we can tell that changes in the foreign policy realm were largely the consequence of other processes (Grabbe 2006: 3). Similarly, it is often argued that an important factor in the "success rate" of the conditionality principle is the level of certainty about the EU's expectations and/or direction in a given policy area (Dimitrova 2004; Grabbe 2006). Should this be the case, the foreign policy arena would probably

be a prime example of not living up to the EU's expectations. Yet it has been demonstrated in this chapter that the prospect of EU membership had a considerable effect on Czech foreign policy preferences as well as strategies. The explanation of this paradox offered here is based on the notion of identity. The post-1989 Czech political elite desperately strove for acknowledgment of the Czech Republic's identity within the larger European family. In order to secure this acknowledgment, the Czech Republic was ready to conform to whatever the EU requirements might have been. However, does this necessarily lead to the conclusion that Czech foreign policy underwent a process of thorough Europeanization in the form of a deep internalization of the roles, values, and interests found at the EU level? This is hardly the case. Instead of a thorough socialization, the foreign policy adjustments that were made rather resemble a pragmatic adaptation to an EU-wide compromise and/or consensus (in those cases where such a consensus actually appears) for the sake of securing acceptance of the Czech Republic's belonging to the European community. In most cases, what we are looking at is a dual pragmatic process of coloring Czech preferences with the EU discursive framework and/or coloring adaptation to the EU consensus with Czech preferences.

Still, there is more to this line of reasoning. It was argued that Czech Europeanization can be explained by the Czech Republic's need to be accepted as a member of the European family, among other things. It was also demonstrated that this need forced the divided Czech political elites to arrive at a consensus despite their deep mutual differences. This ability to reach a consensus owes everything to the fact that the consensual solution was presented as a "European" one. However, let us remind ourselves that the overriding Czech tendency to accept anything "European" stems from the value-based and identity-based need to belong to the value-based and identity-based Europe. Otherwise, the entire identity-building story of the Czech transformation after 1989 would make no sense.

This is of a crucial importance. If the European story ceases to be framed in normative and value-based terms, its Europeanizing power inevitably pales. In many respects, an alarming lack of value-based debate is precisely what characterizes the state of affairs in today's crisis-ridden Europe. The discursive framework of the EU in recent years is an economical, problem-solving, and technocratic rather than a normative one. Yet it was the normative and value-based appeal of the EU that exercised such an immense centripetal power. As a consequence of this de-normativization, the attractiveness of the European model has been fading. This decline contributes to the thinning of the Czech pro-EU consensus. Important parts of the Czech political elite once again seem prone to seek specifically "Czech solutions" as opposed to "European" ones.[9]

If these arguments are correct, what does it finally say about the Europeanization of Czech foreign policy? Above all, it says that the Czech Republic's Europeanization, however far-reaching at the level of institutions, strategies, and actions, was mostly a formal and shallow one. While adapting to the notions of European values, the Czech political elite did not seem to try to understand

where these values come from, what they actually are, or why they appeared. Also, there is no evidence to suggest that the majority of Czech politicians attempted to contribute to an articulation of these values in times of crisis. The Czech political landscape enjoyed the idea of Czechs becoming Europeans after 40 years of communism, and for this it was able to submit to anything that came from the EU. But Czech EU membership remains precisely what it was in the 1990s – a formal confirmation of the Czech Republic belonging to wealthy Western Europe without actually appreciating what is at stake or what it takes to be a member of a larger community.

Notes

1 The completion of this chapter was made possible by the research support of the Institute of International Relations, Prague, and by the generous support of the Fulbright Commission, which granted the author's research stay at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge. The author would also like to express his thanks for the many valuable comments of the editors of this volume.

2 Ústavní zákon [Constitutional Law] č. 395/2001, 18 November 2001, available at: www.sagit.cz/pages/sbirkatxt.asp?cd=76&typ=r&zdroj=sb01395 (accessed 20 December 2011); see also Lukášek (2002).

3 Ústavní zákon [Constitutional Law] č. 515/2002, 14 November 2002, available at: www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2002–515 (accessed 20 December 2011).

4 Government Decree no. 1161/2001, available at: http://racek.vlada.cz/usneseni/usnweb.nsf/0/2FB9D332BC6692F9C12571B6006BC71B (accessed 11 January 2012).

5 However, certain tensions prevailed on the administrative level among officials from both institutions, especially during 2007 and 2008 (Karlas and Beneš 2008: 70).

6 This role was reflected in the way the inner organization of the MFA was restructured. Since the early 1990s the principal body responsible for handling EU affairs has been the Section for the EU. The evolution of the European section at the MFA since 1999 shows the efforts to tailor the institutional design of the MFA to suit the growing EU agenda. In 2002 a new department responsible for CFSP was established (interestingly enough, this department belonged not to the EU section but was directly under the office of the political director). The most important changes in the EU section itself included the establishment of two departments responsible for handling particular common policies, which is a process that began around 2003. This process crystallized in 2008 (in relation to the upcoming Czech EU Presidency) when the EU section was reorganized so that it now included two departments that were exclusively responsible for handling Community policies and a new department that was responsible for what is today called General Affairs. The CFSP department remained under the political director's office. The last important change occurred in 2010 when, after wrapping up the EU Presidency, the European section ceased to function as an exclusively EU-oriented body. Instead, several other departments that were responsible for handling all bilateral relations with European countries were moved into the European section. Besides this, the MFA remained in charge of the Permanent Representation in Brussels.

7 This argument was confirmed by several of the author's interviews with officials from both the MFA and the Office of the Government throughout the fall of 2011.

8 This more pragmatic tone is also reflected in the new *Conceptual Basis of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic* of July 2011 (MFA 2011).

9 There are already some signs that can serve as evidence of this tendency. It is no accident that the Czech government refused to join the intergovernmental – but Europe-