



Weekly Briefing

**Czech External Relations briefing:
The Czech Foreign Policy in 2018**
Zuzana Stuchlíková

China-CEE Institute

Kiadó: Kína-KKE Intézet Nonprofit Kft.

Szerkesztésért felelős személy: Chen Xin

Kiadásért felelős személy: Huang Ping



1052 Budapest Petőfi Sándor utca 11.



+36 1 5858 690



office@china-cee.eu



china-cee.eu

OUTLOOKS FOR 2018

After general election in October 2017 the new minority government was formed by the winning party ANO, which was a junior partner in previous governing coalition. In January 2018, the Andrej Babiš's government did not pass the confidence vote in the Chamber of Deputies. ANO started another round of political negotiations aiming at forming a stable new government. As for the foreign policy priorities, the caretaker government stresses the self-confident representation of the Czech interests within the European Union and further promotion of Czech economic diplomacy.

In January 2018, the Prime Minister Babiš assured foreign diplomats in the Czech Republic that the Czech Republic will *“continue to remain a reliable member of the international community and an active participant in the debate regarding the future of the European Union”*. It seems that the European agenda will be dominated by the issue of immigrations policy. The Czech Republic has faced a legal procedure before the European Court of Justice due to not-implementing the redistribution quota for immigrants. The Czech Republic will also defend its interests during the negotiation of the next multi-year financial framework of the European Union after 2020.

According to the Prime Minister, the Czech Republic should support the integration of Western Balkans states into the European Union; promote a strategic dialogue with the USA and Israel as well (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017a).

President Miloš Zeman has been stressing the need for improving economic relations with Russia and China, which has raised fears from some political parties (especially Cristian Democratic Party, KDU-ČSL) and Western-oriented Czech citizens. Mr. Zeman has been supporting cancelling EU sanctions against Russia; he is sometimes criticized for departure from advocating for human right in Czech foreign policy.

In November 2018, the Czech Republic is expected to participate in the annual 16+1 Summit of Leaders in Sofia. Bulgaria will host the 7th summit of political leaders of China and Central and Eastern Europe countries. The summit in Budapest in 2017 looked back at the last 5 years of cooperation, and opened the new stage of the initiative. The summit in Bulgaria will make possible to evaluate the progress and specify the next steps of cooperation.