

# Civic space in the EU: Mapping of national approaches to civic space monitoring, participation and protection

Czechia

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# 1. MONITORING AND REPORTING ON CIVIC SPACE

## 1.1. Monitoring initiative from the side of the State

*Has there been any initiative from the side of the State (government/parliament) to observe/monitor the restrictions/challenges/threats for civic space actors in your country in the last three years?*

The most relevant monitoring activities in relation to the civic space are conducted by the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations, which is a permanent consultative body of the Government of the Czech Republic in the area of non-governmental non-profit organisations.<sup>1</sup> The Council is, among other things, tasked with monitoring legislation that regulates the status and activities of non-governmental organisations and monitoring, analysing, and publishing information on the position of NGOs within the European Union.

The broader issue of civic space monitoring is done by the Ministry of Interior, which publishes biannual reports on the state of extremism in the Czech Republic,<sup>2</sup> including information on media that spread hateful and prejudicial information and on various extremist and xenophobic groups. The report does not focus on NGOs specifically, but it looks at social movements and media freedom.

## 1.2. Other monitoring initiatives

*Has there been any other actor/body/mechanism that has observed/monitored civic space restrictions/challenges/threats in your country in the last three years?*

- Síť k ochraně demokracie (Network for the Protection of Democracy): This non-governmental network includes business companies, non-profit companies, informal groups, and individuals. Since 2019 the network has published biannual reports on the state of Czech democracy, which includes the conditions for civil society.<sup>3</sup> The reports are structured into eight thematic chapters (including the conditions for civil society) and summarise the main developments, trends, and

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<sup>1</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Statute of the Government Council for Non-State Non-Profit Organisations ([Statut Rady vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace](#)), 30 October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Czech Republic, Ministry of the Interior (2024), Bi-annual Reports on Extremism of the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of Interior ([Pololetní zprávy o extremismu Odboru bezpečnostní politiky MV](#)), 25 July 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Network for the Protection of Democracy (2022), [Report on the State of Czech Democracy: Confluence of Crises Stretches Democracy to Its Limits](#).

recommendations. In 2024, the network launched a project funded by the European Commission titled 'Empowering the Ecosystems of Civil Society Organisations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, and Slovenia', which seeks to monitor and analyse the civic sector and its resilience and to present good practices. The project connects over 1,000 local NGOs and 50 of their umbrella networks in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, and Slovenia.<sup>4</sup>

- Glopolis - non-governmental organisation: The organisation implements several projects in the field of the civic space and publishes or participates in publishing monitoring reports on the topic.<sup>5</sup> The only repeated monitoring conducted by Glopolis is their contribution to the Civic Space Reports put together by the European Civic Forum.<sup>6</sup> The monitoring activities are funded by various donors, including A Philanthropic Initiative for Democracy and Solidarity in Europe, the US Embassy in Prague, and the Open Society Foundation.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information see the organisation's [webpage](#) on the project to protect the civic space.

<sup>5</sup> For more information see the organisation's [webpage](#) on its publications.

<sup>6</sup> European Civic Forum (2024). [Civic Space Report: Czech Republic](#).

## 2. PARTICIPATION

### 2.1. Rules on participation

*Are there any binding rules in place in your country for the participation/consultation of civil society organisations for developing/implementing/monitoring laws and policies?*

The only document on the participation of civil society organisations that the government has adopted is the Methodology for Public Participation in the Preparation of Government Documents from 2009.<sup>7</sup> The Methodology is accompanied by a manual that recommends various participatory techniques.<sup>8</sup> However, neither of these documents have been actively promoted and their applications have not been evaluated (although they are only of a recommendatory nature). Considering when they were created, information on new and innovative tools is lacking.<sup>9</sup>

In 2021, the government adopted a general Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations for the years 2021 to 2030.<sup>10</sup> The Strategy falls under the responsibility of the Government Commissioner for Human Rights. The Strategy is overseen by the Government Council for Non-Profit Organisations and its Secretariat: the Department of Cooperation with Civil Society. One of the measures proposed by the Strategy was the adoption of the Methodology for the Participation of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations in Advisory and Working Bodies and in the Drafting of State Administration Documents.<sup>11</sup> The Methodology is yet to

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<sup>7</sup> Czech Republic, Ministry of the Interior (2009), Methodology for Public Participation in the Preparation of Government Documents ([Metodika pro zapojování veřejnosti do přípravy vládních dokumentů](#)), 7 September 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Czech Republic, Ministry of the Interior (2009), Manual of Public Involvement in the Preparation of Government Documents ([Manuál pro zapojování veřejnosti do přípravy vládních dokumentů](#)), April 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Czech Republic, Ministry of Justice (2023), Action Plan of the Czech Republic: Partnership for Open Government for the period 2023 to 2024 ([Akční plán České republiky Partnerství pro otevřené vládnutí na období let 2023 až 2024](#)), 15 February 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2021), Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations for the Years 2021 to 2030 ([Strategie spolupráce veřejné správy s nestátními neziskovými organizacemi na léta 2021 až 2030](#)), 12 July 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2022), Methodology for the Participation of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations in Advisory and Working Bodies and in the Drafting of State Administration Documents ([Metodika participace nestátních neziskových organizací v poradních a pracovních orgánech a při tvorbě dokumentů státní správy](#)), 11 July 2022.

be submitted for formal adoption by the government after it was piloted in several ministries.<sup>12</sup>

At present there is no one-stop-shop website where it is possible to access all current processes aimed at supporting participation.

## 2.2. Consultative/participatory bodies

*Are there any consultative/participatory bodies in your country that ensure the participation of civil society in developing/implementing/monitoring laws and policies?*

The government has the following consultative bodies:

a) A general civil society advisory board or similar structure: The Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations<sup>13</sup> is a permanent advisory, initiatory, and coordination body of the Government of the Czech Republic in the area of non-governmental non-profit organisations. It was established in 1992. The Council has several committees and working groups (e.g. Working Group for the Elaboration of a Methodology for the Participation of Civil Society Representatives in Participatory Processes).

b) Related to civil society funding specifically: The Committee on Legislation and Financing of the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations monitors, initiates, and elaborates the creation of and amendments to legislation regulating the status and activities of non-profit organisations. In doing so, the Committee cooperates with central government bodies, local government bodies, the professional community, and other institutions that have issues of the non-profit sector on their agenda.<sup>14</sup>

c) Children and young people: The Committee for the Rights of the Child is a permanent body of the Government Human Rights Council.<sup>15</sup>

d) Older people: The Committee on the Rights of the Elderly is a permanent body of the Government Human Rights Council. The Committee focuses on various aspects of the rights of older people in society. It focuses on the equal treatment of older people, on their social

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<sup>12</sup> Information obtained in an interview at the Office of the Government on 3 February 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations ([Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace](#)) 9 April 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Committee on Legislation and Financing ([Výbor pro legislativu a financování](#)) 2 November 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Committee for the Rights of the Child ([Výbor pro práva dítěte](#)), 8 January 2025.

inclusion and recognition, and on society's positive response and preparedness for an ageing population.<sup>16</sup>

e) Ethnic and/or religious minorities: The Government Council for National Minorities advises on the preparation of government measures concerning the rights of members of national minorities in the Czech Republic.<sup>17</sup>

f) Asylum and migration: The Committee on the Rights of Foreigners of the Government Council for Human Rights acts as an advisory body on the rights of foreigners living in the Czech Republic. The Committee discusses current issues and makes suggestions to the Council for the protection of the rights and the standard of living of foreigners.<sup>18</sup>

g) LGBTQI+: The Committee on the Rights of LGBTQI+ People of the Government Council for Human Rights follows up on the work of the Working Group on Sexual Minorities, which was established to coincide with the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007).<sup>19</sup>

h) Persons with disabilities: The Government Council for Persons with Disabilities is a permanent coordinating, initiatory, and advisory body of the Government of the Czech Republic focused on the topic of support for persons with disabilities.<sup>20</sup> The Public Defender of Rights also has an advisory body for the rights of people with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

i) Victims of crime, including hate crime: none

j) Economically deprived persons/communities: The Committee on the Rights of People at Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion focuses on the protection and implementation of social rights in the Czech Republic. It focuses mainly on the position of the poor and socially

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<sup>16</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Committee for the Rights of the Elderly ([Výbor pro práva starších lidí](#)), 18 June 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Government Council for National Minorities ([Rada vlády pro národnostní menšiny](#)), 8 February 2026.

<sup>18</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Committee on the Rights of Foreigners ([Výbor pro práva cizinců](#)), 20 February 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Committee on the Rights of LGBTQI+ People ([Výbor pro práva LGBT+ lidí](#)), 1 August 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Government Council for Persons with Disabilities ([Rada vlády pro osoby se zdravotním postižením](#)), 1 January 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Czech Republic, Public Defender of Rights (2024), Advisory Body for the Rights of People with Disabilities ([Poradní orgán pro oblast práv lidí s postižením](#)), 10 February 2025.

excluded, on welfare support, on persons in execution and insolvency, on social counselling, and on other aspects of social support and assistance.<sup>22</sup>

k) Other: other consultative bodies include the Government Council for Gender Equality<sup>23</sup> or the newly established Government Council for the Historical Memory Agenda, which discusses materials relating to various aspects of historical memory concerning totalitarian regimes and participates in communicating to the public the importance of resistance to totalitarian regimes, especially communism.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.3. Awareness raising and capacity building on participation

*Does your Member State fund or carry out meaningful awareness raising and/or capacity building to support participation in your country?*

The Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations<sup>25</sup> focuses among other tasks on awareness raising about the role of NGOs in the public policy cycle. In 2024, the Council, together with the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, organised a Round Table on the role of civil society in the strengthening of democracy.<sup>26</sup> The debate was framed by arguments about a close link between modern liberal democracy and a functioning civil society and benefited from the exchange of experiences with guests from Slovakia. The topic discussed was the sustainability of the functioning of the civil sector through cooperation and private donations. Each department that administers the relevant government advisory bodies (councils and their committees) has a grant programme, which also includes capacity building for organisations.

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<sup>22</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Committee on the Rights of People at Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion ([Výbor pro práva lidí ohrožených chudobou a sociálním vyloučením](#)), 18 July 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Government Council for Gender Equality ([Rada vlády pro rovnost žen a mužů](#)), 5 August 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Government Council for the Historical Memory Agenda ([Rada vlády pro paměťovou agendu](#)), 15 July 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations ([Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace](#)), 9 April 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Round Table on the Role of civil society in the strengthening of democracy ([Kulatý stůl na téma Role občanské společnosti při posilování demokracie](#)), 17 June 2024.

### 3. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTION

#### 3.1. Civil society strategy

*Does your country have a general civil society strategy / civil society development strategy in place?*

There is no general civil society strategy. However, in 2021, the government adopted a general Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Non-Governmental Non-profit Organisations for the years 2021 to 2030.<sup>27</sup> The adoption of the Strategy falls under the responsibility of the Office of the Government and specifically the Department for Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities. Its implementation is divided among the Office of the Government and individual ministries according to their competences. The measures are divided into three strategic areas: improving the social climate for non-governmental organisations, supporting effective partnership and cooperation between public administration and the non-profit sector, and ensuring and maintaining adequate conditions for the existence and activities of non-governmental organisations.<sup>28</sup> Implementation is supported through the adoption of three consecutive action plans; the first and so far the only one is annexed to the Strategy. The implementation of the Strategy and the monitoring of the action plans<sup>29</sup> are the responsibility of the Department of Cooperation with Civil Society, which serves as the Secretariat of the Government Council for Non-Profit Organisations. There is no dedicated budget for the Strategy and its Action Plans. Its implementation is funded through the budgetary means of individual ministries.

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<sup>27</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2021), Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations for the Years 2021 to 2030 ([Strategie spolupráce veřejné správy s nestátními neziskovými organizacemi na léta 2021 až 2030](#)), 12 July 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2021), [Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations for the Yyears 2021 to 2030: Logical Framework](#), 12 July 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Non-Profit Organisations for the Years 2021-2023 ([Monitorovací zpráva o plnění Akčního plánu Strategie spolupráce veřejné správy s nestátními neziskovými organizacemi na léta 2021 až 2030 za roky 2021-2023](#)), 31 December 2024.

### 3.2. Protecting an enabling environment

*Is there a dedicated policy/framework (or support measures) in place in your country to enhance and protect an enabling environment for civil society to work on fundamental rights?*

There are no other measures beyond those mentioned above. The agenda of human rights defenders is not officially a part of any specific department or ministry at the national level.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.3. Law on recognition and protection of defenders

*Is there a dedicated law (and/or guidelines) in your country dealing specifically with the recognition and/or protection of human rights defenders?*

The Czech Republic does not have a specific law or policy on human rights defenders.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.4. Support and funding for protection of defenders

*Is there any dedicated support/funding by the State for the protection of (individual) human rights defenders in your country?*

The Czech Republic does not have any dedicated support/funding for the protection of (individual) human rights defenders. The only programme available targets foreign human rights defenders and their relocation to the Czech Republic.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Information confirmed in an interview at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic on 24 January 2025.

<sup>31</sup> Information confirmed in an interview at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic on 24 January 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Czech Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024), Civil Society Programme ([Program občanská společnost](#)), 10 April 2024.

## 4. PROMISING PRACTICE (OPTIONAL)

The Department for Cooperation with Civil Society alongside the non-governmental organisation Glopolis are implementing a project focused on the participation of NGOs in the governing bodies of various grant programmes funded from the Operational Programme on Technical Assistance. The two projects build on the Methodology for the Participation of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations in Advisory and Working Bodies and in the Drafting of State Administration Documents<sup>33</sup> and will serve as a basis for the creation of a Methodology for the Coordination of Partnership Cooperation and for the Involvement of NGO Partners in the Process of the Implementation of EU Funds.<sup>34</sup> While the Office of the Government focuses on methodological guidance in relation to the governing bodies of EU funds, Glopolis provides support to people from the non-profit sector in their membership of governing bodies and focuses on the transfer of information and expertise within the non-governmental sector.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2022), Methodology for the Participation of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations in Advisory and Working Bodies and in the Drafting of State Administration Documents ([Metodika participace nestátních neziskových organizací v poradních a pracovních orgánech a při tvorbě dokumentů státní správy](#)), 11 July 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Working meeting 'Partnership between Public Administration and Civil Sector in the Implementation of EU Funds' ([Pracovní setkání „Partnerství mezi státní správou a občanským sektorem při implementaci fondů EU“](#)), 28 August 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Czech Republic, Office of the Government (2024), Project 'Methodological Support for the Involvement of NGO Partners' ([Projekt „Metodická podpora zapojení partnerů NNO“](#)), 22 April 2024.