

Key words:

Vote of confidence

Chamber of Deputies

Secret ballot

Polls

Turnout

Czech political system:

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy. The President of the Czech Republic is the formal head of state, he is also Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. The President is elected in a direct presidential election for a term of five years. **The Czech Republic's supreme legislative body is Parliament**, which consists of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house, and the Senate, the upper house. The Chamber of Deputies is made up of 200 Deputies elected on party tickets by secret ballot based on proportional representation for four-year terms. **The Senate is comprised of 81 senators elected in individual electoral districts for six-year terms** using a majority-wins system. To be elected to the Chamber of Deputies, a candidate must be at least 21 years old, for the Senate, the minimum required age is 40. Every citizen, upon reaching the age of 18, has the right to vote.

The supreme executive body is the Government . It is led by the Prime Minister and appointed by the President of the Republic. The President also appoints other Government members - deputy ministers and ministers based on the Prime Minister's recommendations. Before it is instated, the Government must win a **vote of confidence** in the Chamber of Deputies.

Political parties:

The parliamentary political parties in the Czech Republic are following (English title, Czech title, abbreviation in Czech):

ANO (Yes, ANO, bude líp)

Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS)

Czech Pirate Party (Česká pirátská strana, Piráti)

Freedom and Direct Democracy (Svoboda a přímá demokracie Tomio Okamura, SPD)

Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, KSČM)

Czech Social Democratic Party (Česká strana sociálně demokratická, ČSSD)

The Christian Democratic Party (Křesťanská a demokratická unie – Československá strana lidová, KDU-ČSL)

TOP 09 (Tradice-Odpovědnost-Prosperita, TOP 09)

Mayors and Independents (Starostové a nezávislí, STAN)

Ministries:

Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior is a central authority of the state administration for internal affairs, in particular for: public order and other matters relating to internal security within its defined scope of competence, including supervision of road traffic protection, first names and surnames, registers of births, marriages and deaths, nationality, identity cards, residence reporting, register of inhabitants and personal identification numbers, the right of association and the right of assembly, registration of organizations with international links, public collections, maintaining archives, firearms and ammunition, fire protection, travel documents, granting residence to foreign nationals and refugee status, the territorial structure of the state, national borders, their surveying, maintenance and documentation, state symbols, state, economic and service secret.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

The Ministry of labour and Social Affairs is a authority of the state administration for social and labour relations, safety of labour, employment and retraining, collective bargaining, wages and other remuneration for work, pension security, health insurance, sickness benefits, social care, working conditions of women and youths, legal protection in maternity, family and children care, care for citizens with special aid requirements and other wage and social policies.

Ministry of Regional Development

The ministry was established and started its activities on 1 November 1996. Its activities are focused on the areas as follows: regional policy including regional business support, housing policy, housing and business accommodation development, territorial planning, housing-related legislation, investment policy, tourism.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health is a central authority of the state administration for the health care, public health protection, health research activities, directly controlled health facilities, handling with drugs, preparations, and other agents, search, protection and use of natural health resources, natural spas and mineral water resources, medicaments and technical equipment for prevention, diagnostics and treatment of people, health insurance and health

information system. Part of the Ministry of Health is also the Czech Spa Inspectorate. The organizational part of the Ministry of Health is also the Inspectorate of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is a central authority of the state administration for the state budget of the republic, the final state account, the state treasury of the Czech Republic, financial market with the exception of the security market supervision in the scope of activities of the State Securities Commission, taxes, fees and customs, financial management, financial control, audit and tax consulting, foreign currency affairs including state obligations towards other countries, foreign investments protection, for raffles, lotteries and other games, state property administration, state property privatization, affairs related to insurance companies, pension funds, and for prizes awarded for activities against legalization of revenues resulting from criminal activities.

Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence is a central authority of the state administration for ensuring the defence of the Czech Republic; it controls the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic and administers the military training areas. As an authority for ensuring the nation's defence, it contributes to the formation of a strategy for the military defence policy of the country, prepares concepts for operations planning of the state territory's defence, and suggests necessary defence arrangements to the government, to the Defence Council of Czech Republic, and to the President of the Czech Republic. In addition to other duties related to the defence of the country it calls up citizens of the Czech Republic to military service. It organises co-ordination with the armed forces of other countries within the framework of European security structures.

Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is a central authority of the state administration for courts and public prosecutor's offices. The Ministry of Justice issues legal judges concerning credit and guarantee agreements in which the Czech Republic is one of the agreement parties. The Ministry of Justice is a central authority of the state administration for penitentiary system; the Prison Service of the Czech Republic is subordinated to the ministry. The Ministry of Justice acts for the Czech Republic in the course of complaints settlement concerning breach of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols. The ministry fulfils tasks connected with the legislative activities of the government.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a central authority for the area of foreign policy, in the scope of which it prepares concepts and coordinates the development assistance and external economic relations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains relations of the Czech

Republic with other states, international organizations and integrative blocks; it coordinates activities resulting from bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Ministry of Industry and Trade

The Ministry of Industry and Trade is a central body of the state administration involved in: the national industry policy, trade policy, foreign economic policy, integrated raw material policy, use of mineral resources, energy, gas and heat production, mining, crude oil, natural gas, solid fuels, nuclear materials, ores and non-ore treatment and conversion, metallurgy, machinery, electrical engineering and electronics, chemical industry, crude oil processing, rubber and plastic materials industry, glass and ceramics industry, textile and clothing industry, leather and print industry, paper, cellulose and wood-working industry, building materials production, building industry production, medical production, waste, domestic trade and the protection of consumers' interests, foreign trade and supporting exports, small and medium-sized companies' issues with the exception of regional business support and trading issues, technical standardization, metrology and state quality control, industrial research, engineering and technology development, electronic communication and postal services. The Ministry of Industry and Trade is a central body of the government administration responsible for commodity exchange, except of issues relating to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Ministry of Transport

The Act no. 2/1969 Coll. on establishing ministries and other central bodies of the Czech Republic as amended lays down in the Article 17 that the Ministry of Transport is a central authority of the state administration for transport issues; it is responsible for the preparation of the state transport policy and, within its competence, for its implementation.

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

The Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports is a central authority of the state administration for pre-school facilities, school facilities, elementary schools, secondary schools and universities, for science policy, research and development including international cooperation in this sphere, for science degrees, for the state policy related to children, youths, sports, tourism and sport representation.

Ministry of Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture is, pursuant to acts no. 2/1969 Coll. and no. 272/1996 Coll., a central authority of state administration for agriculture with the exception of the preservation of the agricultural land fund, for water management excepting preservation of natural water accumulation, preservation of water sources and preservation of water quality, and for food industry. It is also a central state authority administrating forests, hunting, game management, and fishing outside the territory of national parks.

Ministry of the Environment

Ministry of Environment is a central authority of the state administration for: natural water accumulation, water resources protection, ground and surface water quality protection, air protection, nature and landscape protection, farmland protection, activities of the state geological service, mineral resources and ground water protection, geological activities and environmental supervision over mining, waste management, assessment of activities and their impact on environment including cross-boarder activities, hunting, fishing and forest management in national parks, and the state environmental policy.

Ministry of Culture

Pursuant to the Article 8 of the Act on Establishing Ministries and other Central Bodies of the State Administration of the Czech Republic, as amended, the Ministry of Culture is a central authority of the state administration for the arts, cultural and educational activities, cultural monuments, matters relating to churches and religious societies, matters relating to the press, including publication of non-periodical press and other information means, for the preparation of bills and other legal regulations in the area of radio and television broadcasting, for implementation of the Copyright Act, and for production and trade in the culture area.

Elections

Presidential elections

Any citizen aged 40 or over can stand for president, unless they have already served two terms in the office or have been found guilty of treason by the Constitutional Court. From 1993 to 2008, presidents were elected by both houses of the Parliament in three rounds of voting. Since the 2013 election the president is elected directly by the people in two rounds, where the top two candidates from the first round face each other again in the second round. Presidents are elected for five-year terms.

Chamber of Deputies elections

Any citizen aged 21 or over can stand as a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies, which consists of 200 members elected for four-year terms. The Chamber of Deputies elections do not necessarily take place at fixed intervals as the Chamber of Deputies can be prematurely dissolved by the president, under conditions set by the Constitution. The president also decides the date of the elections, thereby starting the official election campaign, during which political parties' spending is capped by the law.

There are 14 voting districts for elections to the Chamber of Deputies, which correspond to the regions of the Czech Republic. Each of these voting districts has a different number of seats available, and parties submit ranked lists of candidates for each district. Candidates of a political party can only win a seat if their party received at least 5% of all valid votes nationally. Voters must choose only one political party to vote for, but they may use up to four preferential votes for particular candidates of that party, which affect the final order of the candidates on the party list. After the elections, the president nominates somebody (usually the head of the winning party) to form a new Cabinet.

Senate elections

Any citizen aged 40 or over can become a senator. The Senate consists of 81 members, elected for six-year terms. Elections are held every two years, with one third of Senate seats contested each time. The country is divided into 81 senate constituencies with roughly the same number of voters. The elections consist of two rounds, in which the top two candidates from the first round face each other again in the second round. The Senate elections – and especially the second rounds – have had the lowest voter turnouts of all Czech elections.

European elections

Any citizen aged 21 or over can represent the Czech Republic as a member of the European Parliament. The Czech Republic is assigned 22 out of 736 mandates in the European Parliament. Members of the European Parliament are elected for five-year terms. There is only one constituency and one list of candidates for the entire Czech Republic. Voters must choose one political party to vote for, but can use up to two preferential votes for particular candidates of that party, which affect the final order of the candidates on the party list.

Regional elections

Any citizen aged 18 or over can become a regional councilor. There are 13 regional councils, one for each region of the Czech Republic except the capital, Prague. The City Council of Prague has a special status and acts as both regional and municipal council. Members of regional councils are elected for four-year terms. Their number varies across the regions from 45 to 65. Candidates of a political party can only win a seat if their party gained at least 5% of all valid votes. Voters must choose one political party to vote for, but they can also use up to four preferential votes for particular candidates of that party, which affect the final order of the candidates on the party list. Voters can only vote in the region where they have registered their permanent address.

Unlike in the case of the national cabinet, there is no individual person nominated to form a new regional cabinet. Whichever coalition forms a majority in the regional council chooses the president of the regional cabinet. Political parties can switch sides, end their support for the current president of the regional council and form a new regional cabinet without the need for early elections.

Municipal elections

Any citizen aged 18 or over can become a municipal councilor. Municipal councilors are elected for four-year terms. Voters can only vote in the municipality where they have registered their permanent address. The number of councilors for each municipality varies from 5 to 55. Each voter has a number of votes corresponding to the number of seats in that particular municipal council, which can be distributed freely across candidates of all political parties.

For a party to be eligible for representation, the total number of votes for a party divided by the number of seats in the municipal council and multiplied by the number of candidates nominated by that party must exceed 5% of the total number of valid votes cast in the municipality. The number of votes for a candidate of a party in proportion to the number of all votes cast for that party affects the final order of candidates on the party list.