



2021 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

THE CZECH REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 2022

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For the Czech Republic
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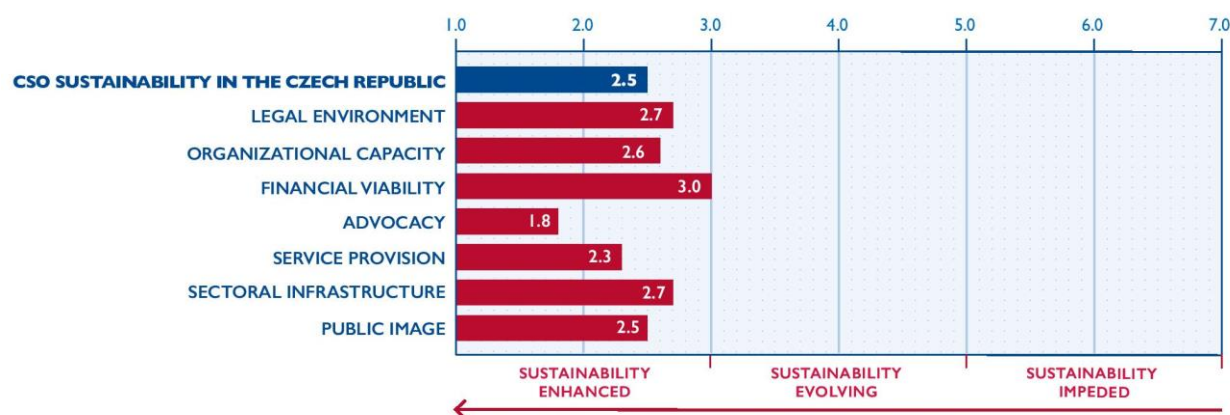
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CZECH REPUBLIC

Capital: Prague
Population: 10,705,384
GDP per capita (PPP): \$38,300
Human Development Index: Very High (0.889)
Freedom in the World: Free (91/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 2.5



As in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic heavily impacted Czech society as well as the civil sector in 2021. From the start of the year until late spring, strict restrictions were kept in place in hopes of limiting the continued spread of the virus. Travel between districts and social gatherings were restricted, schools and offices were closed, and face masks were mandatory across the country. These measures were lifted as cases dropped notably by June, only to then rise again in October, leading restrictions to be reimposed through spring of 2022.

CSOs continued to help manage the crisis in 2021, building on their experience from 2020. CSOs were also actively involved in helping the victims of a tornado that destroyed several South Moravian villages in the early summer of 2021. Because of the pandemic-related restrictions on movement, gatherings, opening hours, and occupancy for venues such as restaurants and theaters, CSOs were unable to hold in-person events and meetings for most of the year and had to terminate most of the public services that were an important source of income for many of them. Nevertheless, the majority of CSOs were able to cope with these challenges, and the civil society sector proved its resilience once again.

Economic growth in the country remained stalled, heavily impacted by the pandemic and the resultant mass closure of businesses. While the government directed large amounts of state funding to increase pensions, salaries for government employees, and subsidies to CSOs, this significantly worsened the state's debt burden. In early October, elections were held for the lower house of parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, and a new government coalition was formed. At the same time, an energy crisis began, leading to a sharp increase in electricity, gas, and heat prices and the collapse of some supply companies, while inflation rose sharply. The new government was forced to address these problems urgently, but simultaneously committed itself to stop deepening the state debt.

CSO sustainability improved slightly in 2021, driven by positive developments in the legal environment, financial viability, and public image. The legal environment improved slightly with an increase in tax benefits. The sector's financial viability improved slightly as more public funds were available and CSOs increased their fundraising efforts. The score for public image improved slightly in 2021 as a result of incremental changes over the past several years that were insufficient to justify a change from one year to the next but have led to a cumulative improvement in public image. Among these improvements was an increase in media coverage in recent years. Some media outlets, however, continued to circulate disinformation and damaging stories about CSOs and their work. Other dimensions of sustainability remained unchanged. Limited capacities forced many CSOs to make strategic decisions regarding the scope or focus of their activities during the year. In doing so, organizations with well-established decision-making processes and internal governance bodies had an advantage. In 2021, CSOs carried out several advocacy campaigns, focused primarily on taxation and public collections, and successfully advocated for stricter

rules for animal breeding. CSOs continued to provide a wide range of services and to receive critical support, including legal services, expert advice, and training, from the existing sectoral infrastructure.

According to the Czech Statistical Office, 132,566 CSOs were registered in the Czech Republic at the end of 2021, a slight drop compared to the 135,465 recorded in 2021. This number includes 121,938 associations (including subsidiaries), 4,004 registered legal entities (i.e., religious organizations), 2,464 public benefit organizations, 2,230 endowment funds, 1,386 institutes, and 544 foundations. To make the sector more transparent, the Ministry of Justice has started to identify inactive associations in the public register (those that do not submit the legally required information and documents to the register), of which there are currently about 40,000. The decrease in the overall number of CSOs is likely due to the liquidation of inactive CSOs. In the Czech context, the terms CSO, public benefit organization, and nonprofit organization are used interchangeably.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 2.7

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



The legal environment governing CSOs in the Czech Republic improved slightly in 2021 as the limit for allowable tax deductions was increased.

The Czech Republic has a well-established legal framework for the registration and operation of CSOs. There are several legal forms of CSOs in the country. The regulations governing associations are more relaxed, while those for foundations and organizations providing services are more demanding. Most CSOs register with the courts, while religious organizations register with the Ministry of Culture. The registration process for CSOs is simple and usually quick and entails no or minimal costs. Registration is more complicated for CSOs that want to obtain special status that authorizes them to provide specific services, such as health or social services that are

regulated by other legislation. There are no constraints on the formation of unregistered organizations and informal initiatives, but they may not enter into contracts, apply for subsidies, organize public collections, or otherwise act as legal entities.

The authorities do not consistently enforce CSOs' legal obligations, and the penalties for non-compliance are limited or non-existent. Many CSOs take advantage of this fact and do not comply with legal obligations. Accounting regulations for CSOs are particularly burdensome, and even more complex than they are for commercial entities. The registration of public collections is also excessively bureaucratic.

Beginning in 2021, CSOs were required to submit data in the register of the actual (beneficial) owners. Most of the data for CSOs should be transcribed automatically from public registers, but the system is not designed to capture all of the specifics of CSOs and will need to be fine-tuned.

The laws only provide minimal restrictions on the possible activities of CSOs; for example, it is illegal to create armed associations to replace the activities of security forces. The authorities do not impose obstacles on CSOs carrying out their activities within the framework of the law. CSOs can only be abolished if they spread extremist ideologies, call for violence, etc. Such cases, which are quite rare, require court decisions and the courts are very restrained in this respect. While some CSOs do report harassment by the authorities, these incidents are usually based on personal disputes and are not a systemic problem.

Freedom of speech is guaranteed in the Czech Republic. CSOs express themselves publicly and are often very critical of the government. CSOs, like other legal entities, have the right to challenge official decisions in court. However, they rarely use this possibility because of the high costs and duration of court proceedings.

Anti-pandemic measures in 2021 limited the possibilities to organize gatherings, significantly complicating the activities of associations. Public protests and demonstrations were also restricted. Outside of these pandemic-related measures, CSOs are able to hold meetings, protests, and demonstrations.

CSOs are exempt from income tax under certain conditions, and neither donations nor grants are subject to taxation. Private donors can lower their income tax base by making donations for public benefit purposes. In 2020, the Tax Act was amended as part of the pandemic response to increase the total allowable deduction from 10 percent for legal entities and 15 percent for individuals to a uniform 30 percent on taxable income in 2020 and 2021. Negotiations on the possibility of further extending this arrangement began with the arrival of the new government at the end of the year.

CSOs can freely receive foreign funding and engage in fundraising activities, and they are permitted to charge fees for their services and products. CSOs should operate income-generating activities as a side activity and use the income to cover costs in the main (public benefit) activity. CSOs can bid for state contracts and contracts from local governments. An amendment to the Public Procurement Act in 2020 increased opportunities for CSOs as it requires the consideration of social and environmental impacts in such contracts. Though the new rules went into effect in January 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the use of these public procurement opportunities. Nevertheless, it remains an important possibility for CSOs in the future.

Several lawyers provide legal advice to CSOs in the capital city as well as in the regions. In addition, online counselling services run by umbrella organizations usually provide fairly reliable answers to CSOs' most common questions.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 2.6

Organizational capacity within the CSO sector remained largely unchanged in 2021.

CSOs' constituency-building efforts were heavily impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the measures to contain it. In particular, direct contact with supporters and donors was limited throughout most of the year. CSOs countered this negative trend somewhat by becoming more active on social media. However, the impossibility of face-to-face interactions and gatherings was particularly detrimental for organizations with older members and supporters, who were more difficult to reach online.

Every CSO must state its purpose when registering. However, only a fraction of CSOs clearly defines their missions. Only a few CSOs—mainly larger organizations and those with a higher level of professionalization—engage in strategic planning. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most CSOs have revised their plans to adapt them to the current situation.

Most CSOs measure the success of their work in very simple ways, such as the mere fact that activities were held. In some cases, CSOs measure their impact using industry standards; for example, environmental CSOs use standards developed by the Ministry of the Environment.

Different legal forms of CSOs have different requirements in terms of governance structures. Associations, which are membership organizations, may decide on their own approaches, whereas foundations, endowment funds, and service-providing CSOs, including institutions and public benefit organizations, must have specific bodies such as boards of directors and supervisory boards. In practice, these bodies often exist only formally, with the burden of both operations and governance residing with the executive body. Basic organizational structures should be defined in a CSO's founding documents. CSOs develop internal guidelines according to need and the type of activities they are involved in. However, the quality of these guidelines is often low.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of CSO governance structures increased considerably as governing bodies had to make decisions about their organizations' future directions in the face of unexpected financial and social problems. Online voting became more common, which in many ways has streamlined management. Many organizations are therefore incorporating this option into their statutory documents.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



The number of people employed by CSOs remains relatively stable. In 2019, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 114,982 full-time employees, representing 2.16 percent of total employment in the country. Only a small number of professional CSOs have paid employees. CSOs often engage part-time employees, who can change more frequently. The number of employees in a particular CSO is often dependent on the funded projects, which are time-bound.

Maintaining qualified staff was difficult even for commercial entities during the COVID-19 pandemic, let alone for CSOs, which cannot compete in terms of salaries. Paradoxically, CSOs' ability to retain employees has been negatively affected by the increase in minimum wage in January 2020, as they are often unable to afford these higher salaries or hire new employees. Smaller CSOs often outsource certain functions, including accounting and payroll, legal services, information technology (IT) administration, and public relations services.

CSOs are committed to the development of their staff but had fewer resources for training activities in 2021. In the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, staff training has largely moved online, and CSOs had to learn to use different tools and approaches, including an increase in work-from-home arrangements. This did not have any evident impact on the quality of CSOs' work.

CSOs regularly integrate volunteers in their work. In 2019, the volume of volunteer work was valued at CZK 57.7 million (approximately \$2.4 million). However, preliminary data indicates that this decreased by about 20 percent in 2020 due to the pandemic. According to 2019 data from the Czech Statistical Office, over 40 percent of volunteers worked for CSOs regularly, approximately 48 percent worked irregularly, and around 10 percent engaged only once. One-off volunteering is thought to have increased in 2021 as many people stepped up to help the regions affected by the tornado. In terms of the type of work done by volunteers, 48 percent was administrative, 21 percent was management and other professional work, and around 30 percent of volunteers did unskilled and ancillary work. The transition of volunteers to employment positions is common in CSOs.

CSOs' access to technology remained unchanged in 2021. CSOs mostly use older but functional equipment. Employees who work from home often use their own personal equipment. CSOs can obtain office software at discounted prices. TechSoup has operated in the country for a long time and large companies such as Microsoft and Google also have programs to support CSOs. The internet is widely available and CSOs use social media and other applications that enable communication. CSOs have had to learn to use online conferencing software and equipment.

There are significant differences in the approaches to cyber and information security among CSOs: while most organizations are not very concerned about it, some, such as Pferda, have already been the targets of attacks. The Association of Public Benefit Organizations of the Czech Republic (AVPO ČR) has introduced a process to gauge organizations' cyber security measures when they apply for Seals of Approval, which provides donors and the public with a sense of assurance that a public benefit organization fulfils its mission and properly manages funds. The National Cyber and Information Security Agency also provides consultations.

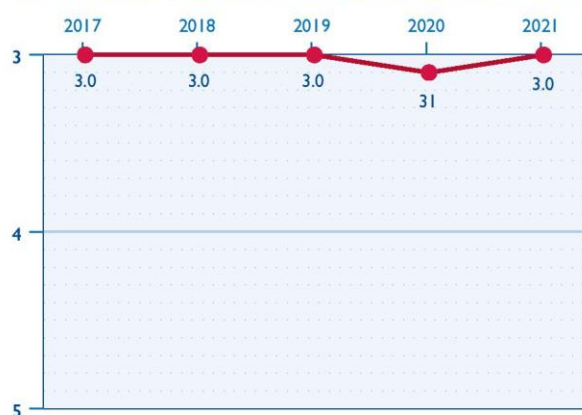
FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 3.0

The sector's financial viability improved slightly in 2021 as more public funds were available and CSOs increased their fundraising efforts.

CSOs increasingly seek to diversify their resources. However, their level of success in doing so varies, and organizations with expensive operations, such as service providers, cannot realistically compensate for shortfalls in public subsidies. The limited diversification of resources means that CSOs are usually unable to build up financial reserves.

CSOs receive funding from both public and private sources and also cover some of their costs with revenues from their activities. According to the latest figures from the Czech Statistical Office, in 2019, CSOs received CZK 6.2 billion (approximately \$255.4 million) from corporate donors, CZK 4.6 billion (\$189.5 million) from individual donors, and CZK 3.8 billion (\$156.5 million) from membership fees. Public sources of funding—including subsidies from EU funds, which amounted to about CZK 6 billion (\$247.1 million), as well as subsidies from public sources valued at CZK 30.2 billion (approximately \$1.24 billion)—account for the largest share of the sector's finances. According to preliminary data, the volume of domestic subsidies increased to CZK 33.2 billion (\$1.37 billion) in

FINANCIAL VIABILITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



2020. CSOs also earn some funds through the implementation of public contracts, but this was not an important source of funding in 2021.

Support from corporate donors has declined slightly for several years in a row (CSOs received CZK 6.5 billion, nearly \$268 million, in corporate donations in 2017). Rather than supporting CSO efforts, larger companies increasingly implement public benefit projects themselves as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. These are often environmental projects such as tree planting. On the other hand, small and medium-sized companies have shown increased interest in CSO activities.

Foreign donors are not a significant source of funding for CSOs, representing only around 1 percent of the

sector's total funding. Although little data is publicly available regarding foreign funding, most of it seems to come from international agencies and embassies and primarily supports humanitarian aid and human rights organizations. (EU funds are considered domestic funding, as they are co-financed by national budgets.)

Most organizations actively fundraise. For much of the year, COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible to hold public events, so many CSOs turned to online fundraising tools. Darujme.cz was the most used donation portal, but other portals such as DarujSprávně.cz and Znesnáze21 also saw large increases in donations.

The growth of regular long-term donations has been slow but steady. They are complemented by one-off donations, which jump dramatically whenever there is an acute need, such as the tornado that destroyed several communities in southern Moravia in the summer of 2021.

CSOs may earn income from both main and secondary economic activities, and earned income is increasing in importance as a source of CSO funding over the long term. In 2019, revenues from the sale of goods and services at market prices accounted for 9.7 percent (CZK 9.5 billion, approximately \$391 million) of total CSO funding, including 0.1 percent from renting out properties. CSOs increasingly offer products of high quality, and their supporters are happy to pay more for their products than for comparable products without charitable added value. However, income from CSOs' activities, such as admission fees and running cafés and shops, was severely limited in 2021 as a result of the pandemic measures, which prevented CSOs from organizing public events and having direct contact with their supporters and donors.

CSOs rarely receive contracts from the government. However, this could change in the coming years thanks to planned legislative amendments. Member organizations collect membership fees, which form a substantial part of their income.

Larger organizations generally have professional financial management systems, including financial managers, while in smaller organizations, financial management functions are often performed by directors or are outsourced. CSOs generally only conduct financial audits when required to by law or a donor.

ADVOCACY: 1.8

In 2021, CSO advocacy remained at largely the same level as it was in 2020.

Several CSOs are involved in the development of policies and strategic documents. Cooperation takes place both formally through advisory and working bodies and informally. At the national level, the Government Council for Non-Governmental Nonprofit Organizations, chaired by the prime minister, serves as an advisory body bringing together CSOs and officials from various ministries. In addition, CSOs have opportunities to comment on draft laws and policies. CSO involvement is regulated by several documents which, although they do not usually have the weight of law, are binding for the public administration. The most important of these is the Strategy for Cooperation between the Public Administration and NGOs for 2021–2030. However, CSOs lack the capacity to take advantage of all the opportunities offered, which are generally unpaid and quite demanding in terms of both

time and expertise. The Methodology for Civil Society Participation is currently being developed, but no funds have been allocated for its implementation so far. The new government has declared its interest in deepening cooperation with CSOs.

In accordance with legislation, CSOs can ask the public administration for information and file complaints. Some municipalities have also increased their use of social networks, and the Pirates Party, for instance, has an online forum available to the public. These additional platforms, however, have not had a significant impact on the level of communication between CSOs and the public administration.

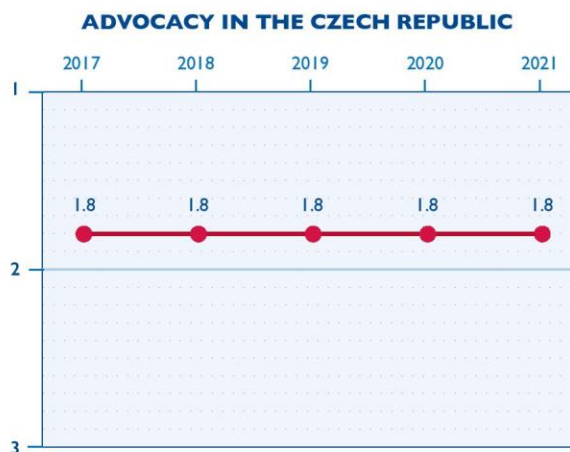
CSOs routinely establish formal and informal coalitions and initiatives, such as Reconstruction of the State, Million Moments for Democracy, and Alliance of Responsible Organizers of Public Collections, to promote certain ideas and changes. CSOs advocate for change with various degrees of success, often through processes that take many years. For instance, for several years, CSOs have advocated for amendments to the Public Collections Act to lessen the administrative burden on CSOs collecting donations, allow them to use those collections to pay for activities and operations, and simplify the rules for holding collections.

The influence of CSOs that attack liberal democracy and promote radical and undemocratic ideas has grown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination campaign. Some of these groups undermine democracy by questioning fundamental values and spreading fake information. They also routinely attack other CSOs and question their usefulness.

In the past year, CSOs have influenced the shape of many laws. For example, environmental and animal rights CSOs successfully advocated for an amendment of the Animal Welfare Act to define and prohibit breeding farms, end cage breeding, and prohibit dressage of wild animals. The so-called Summer of Grace Bill was also a significant achievement in 2021, helping hundreds of thousands of individuals with unpaid debts to public sector institutions, including hospitals. The regulation allowed the debtors to pay only the original debt and a low flat fee, forgiving fees from debt collectors and significant interest rates. Several business associations, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Czech Bar Association, and the Chamber of Tax Advisors, named this the second most important law of the year. Among CSOs, People in Need, Charity of the Czech Republic, and Rubicon were the most active in promoting it. Partial data show that the law has already resulted in several tens of thousands of foreclosures being stopped, including those of more than 14,000 people indebted to the health insurance company alone.

CSOs engage in direct lobbying through meetings with legislators, representatives, and officials.

Although the legal framework governing CSOs in the Czech Republic is quite functional, various CSO groups routinely seek changes that are specifically related to their field of activity. On intersectional issues, CSOs lobby for legislative changes in the areas of taxation, public collections, and financing. With high expectations of the new government, CSOs' efforts to modify some laws (such as the Law on Social Services and the support system for people with disabilities) or to advocate for new laws (such as on social entrepreneurship) are growing.



SERVICE PROVISION: 2.3

CSO service provision remained largely unchanged in 2021.

CSOs continue to provide a wide range of services and are the dominant providers of social services. In the social area, CSOs focus mainly on smaller and cheaper services, which include outreach and preventative services. CSOs are not afraid to experiment and come up with new approaches to services.

CSOs continued offering all possible services online in 2021, including education, early care, crisis management, and therapy. On the other hand, activities in the cultural sphere were not well-suited to online formats and therefore were offered at a much smaller scale in 2021.

SERVICE PROVISION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



CSOs have well-mapped needs of their target groups. Many service providers are small organizations that are in direct contact with their target groups. Collecting and working with data is costly and requires expertise, so most CSOs only collect the information and data they need to meet the requirements of subsidy providers or donors. Those that do collect data rarely have the capacity or resources to use it effectively to inform their operations.

CSOs' ability to respond flexibly to community needs in 2021 was evident, for example, in the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations: CSOs were able to provide people with vaccinations in a short period, while the public administration required several weeks to do the same.

CSOs routinely provide services beyond their membership base in a non-discriminatory manner. CSOs also provide services to other CSOs, as well as companies, public administrations, and churches, with room for collaboration with universities.

CSOs can charge for their services and raise additional funds through secondary economic activities. CSOs often price their products and services not according to the real costs but the ability of their beneficiaries to pay. CSOs that are less dependent on subsidies typically must have a stronger understanding of the market, and therefore are better able to price their products and services.

The public administration takes CSOs' services for granted and often treats them as inferior, an opinion that is reinforced by the use of subsidies that subordinate CSOs to the government. CSOs expect the new government to improve these relationships, especially as several politicians now in the government previously worked with CSOs.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 2.7

The infrastructure supporting CSOs did not change notably in 2021.

A network of organizations, including Impact HUB, NROS, neziskovsky.cz, and Open Society Foundation, offer training and other services to CSOs. Associations that bring CSOs together, such as AVPO ČR and the Association of Non-Governmental Non-profit Organizations in the Czech Republic (ANNO ČR), also offer such services. Some of these services are subject to fees, but these are generally much cheaper than similar services offered in the commercial sphere. Commercial organizations also offer CSOs services, but they often fail to take into account the specifics of CSOs as they do not have experts focused on this sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CSOs' access to capacity-building services improved, as many training and consultation activities were conducted online, eliminating the need to travel.

Foundations and endowments provide grants for CSO activities, with corporate foundations and endowments distributing the largest amounts. Though 2021 data is not yet available, foundations and endowments seemingly increased their support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the tornado in South Moravia. However, focusing on current acute needs often means that there are fewer resources left for long-term activities.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

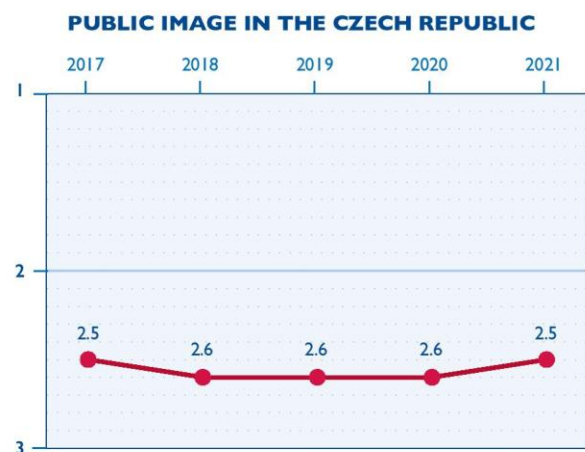


There is no unified network of CSOs, but CSOs communicate and coordinate with each other when necessary. Although emergency measures impeded the transfer of information between CSOs in 2021, there was growing interest in this type of cooperation over the past year. Examples of this include the This Is Who We Are campaign, which covered a wide scope of CSO activities; the post-tornado aid coordination group; and a campaign to compare CSO wages with those in other sectors to demonstrate how undervalued CSO work often is. Communication within the sector is facilitated by membership in associations such as AVPO ČR and ANNO ČR. Membership in working and advisory bodies set up by the public administration on various topics is also beneficial.

The number of CSO management experts has gradually increased. Training is available in the capital city and the regions and is also available online. While available training covers a wide range of topics, the quality of instructors varies widely, with some people with no real work or training experience providing such support. The range of textbooks and publications on the topic of CSO management is not very wide.

CSOs are gradually learning to build partnerships with companies, the media, and state authorities, and environmental and social enterprises have been particularly successful in this regard. Public administrations declare partnership with CSOs, but the level of cooperation and responsiveness varies. At the regional level, local action groups bring together representatives of businesses, local governments, and CSOs in more than 90 percent of the country's territory. These stakeholders also cooperate through the CSR Stakeholder Platform, the Social Responsibility Association, and other frameworks. Partnerships between the media and CSOs are also emerging. For example, public television's viewers' council includes CSO representatives.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 2.5



The score for the public image dimension improved slightly in 2021 as a result of incremental changes over the past several years—including increased media coverage—that were insufficient to justify a change from one year to the next but have led to a cumulative improvement in public image.

CSOs appear in the media and have gained more media coverage in recent years. Several factors influence this: the increased activity of CSOs themselves, cooperation with specific media hosts, and social changes. Public media are particularly interested in cooperating with CSOs and provide quality coverage of issues in which CSOs have a natural role. CSOs have also gained coverage in some commercial media, particularly related to efforts around the COVID-19 pandemic and the South

Moravian tornado. Media attention toward CSOs is mostly positive. While some negative stories are published—for example, about the abuse of subsidies—this is largely balanced out by positive stories, such as coverage of the Vičkovi Family Foundation's sizable pledge to open a children's palliative care center.

However, some outlets linked to extremist groups or with politically biased and opaque ownership structures also spread disinformation about CSOs. Negative stories about CSOs that are anti-democratic have also had a notable impact on public perceptions of CSOs, especially once the stories are circulated on social networks. Further, though professional media distinguish between news and advertising, some outlets do not follow proper journalistic standards and therefore do not distinguish between news and paid content. This issue was particularly evident in the form of “news” articles attacking democracy and CSOs, produced by sites like Parlamentní Listy and Aeronet, which are known to promote disinformation.

The perception of CSOs in society did not change fundamentally in 2021. CSOs continue to be seen in a predominantly positive light and their usefulness in dealing with crisis situations is recognized. To the extent that there is mistrust, it is often because people do not understand the importance and benefits of CSOs or the principles on which they operate. Some people use services provided by CSOs but do not realize that the provider is a CSO.

The Festival Svobody initiative, an open group of independent civic initiatives and organizations, hosts events every year to commemorate November 17, the Day of Freedom and Democracy and International Student Day—most known in the Czech Republic for sparking the Velvet Revolution in 1989. In 2021, the initiative launched the This Is Who We Are campaign to increase public confidence in the CSO sector. However, according to one evaluation, the campaign did not have significant impact, possibly due to the fact that public attention was largely focused on the pandemic and the upcoming elections.

The government recognizes the value of CSO services and often considers CSOs a source of expertise. However, some individuals both within and outside of the government perceive CSOs as a source of trouble and unrealistic visions, a waste of money, and unaccountable actors. Perceptions of CSOs in the business sector vary. Some corporations cooperate with CSOs as part of their CSR strategies.

CSOs increasingly try to make themselves visible. Many organizations have contacts with journalists. In addition, some media actively express interest in the activities of CSOs. In recent years, *Deník Blesk* newspaper, Česká televize (Czech Television), and Český rozhlas (Czech Radio) have added charity episodes to programs such as *Where's My Home*, *On the Hunt*, *Advent Concerts*, and *StarDance*.

Since the pandemic started, the use of social media in Czech society has increased. While CSOs actively use social media, only a few are able to reach the wider public in this way, as CSOs usually do not have the capacity to communicate professionally via social media. However, a growing number of people from nonprofit organizations have received training on how to effectively use Twitter or write for the internet.

More professional organizations have developed codes of ethics for their activities or fundraising. There are also more general codes developed by umbrella or professional organizations to which other organizations subscribe, such as the Fundraiser's Code developed by the Czech Fundraising Center.

CSOs that are concerned with their reputation aim to be transparent. Most legal forms of CSOs are obliged to publish annual reports or at least financial statements. However, there are large differences in the quality of these documents. Some organizations do not fulfil this obligation at all, while others do so only formally, in a way that does not contribute meaningfully to transparency. On the other hand, many CSOs, especially those that are active in fundraising, produce high-quality annual reports.

Several competitions recognize high-quality CSO reports. For example, Via Foundation's annual report won the Golden Semicolon 2021, awarded by the PR Club. The Donors Forum also awards prizes for annual reports. The Alliance of Responsible Collections continued to operate in 2021. There is increased interest in the Seal of Approval (managed and granted by AVPO ČR) and the NGO of the Year competition (organized by NROS Foundation).

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the panelists and other project researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or FHI 360.

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