



Науково-теоретичний альманах «Грані»
Scientific-theoretical almanac «Grani»

«Grani». 2016. 138(10), 55-59.
doi:10.15421/1716105
www.grani.org.ua

УДК 35.07-048.74 (437.1/.2)

Central Executive Bodies in the Czech Republic during the Decentralization and Regionalisation Processes

Y.I. Haydanka¹

The processes of the level of political decentralization and regionalization by means of investigating administrative and government system of the central executive bodies in Czech Republic have been explained. It has been pointed out that in the structure of the central executive bodies, settlement of the most controversial issues connected with decentralization and national strategy implementation, lies within the competences of the Ministry for Regional Development.

High efficiency of state administration system, including decentralization processes at a central executive level in Czech Republic has been elicited. In the course of the period under study the Czech Republic demonstrates rather high efficiency level and state administration decentralization level.

The author points out that the contemporary system of the central executive bodies in the Czech Republic has occurred as a consequence of purposeful state policy aimed at public administration decentralization. Divaricate system of central executive bodies which operation is intended to support regional development operates in the country.

Keywords: transformation; central executive bodies; state government; local government; reform

Центральні органи виконавчої влади Чеської Республіки в процесах децентралізації та регіоналізації

Є.І. Гайданка²

Розглядаються особливості функціонування політичного рівня децентралізації та регіоналізації Чеської Республіки через аналіз діяльності центральних органів виконавчої влади. Відзначається, що у структурі центральних органів виконавчої влади розв'язання найбільш суперечливих питань процесів децентралізації та реалізації державної стратегії регіоналізації політичної системи належить до компетенції Міністерства регіонального розвитку.

З'ясовано, що протягом досліджуваного періоду Чеська Республіка показує високий рівень ефективності та децентралізації системи державного управління.

Відзначається, що сучасна система центральних органів виконавчої влади Чеської Республіки стала наслідком цілеспрямованої політики держави на децентралізацію публічного управління. В країні функціонує розгалужена система центральних органів виконавчої влади, діяльність яких, у тому числі, направлена на підтримку регіонального розвитку.

Ключові слова: трансформація; центральні органи виконавчої влади; державне управління; місцеве управління; реформа

Центральные органы исполнительной власти Чешской Республики в процессах децентрализации и регионализации

Е.И. Гайданка³

Рассматриваются особенности функционирования политического уровня децентрализации и регионализации Чешской Республики благодаря анализу деятельности центральных органов исполнительной власти. Отмечается, что в структуре центральных органов исполнительной власти решения наиболее спорных вопросов децентрализации и реализации государственной стратегии регионализации политической системы входит в компетенцию Министерства регионального развития.

Установлено, что в течение исследуемого периода Чехия показывает высокий уровень эффективности и децентра-

¹ PhD in political science, associate professor; Uzhhorod national university, 3, Universytets'ka Str., Uzhhorod, 88000, Ukraine

² Кандидат політичних наук, доцент; Ужгородський національний університет, 88000, Ужгород, вул. Університетська, 14

³ Кандидат политических наук, доцент; Ужгородский национальный университет, 88000, Ужгород, ул. Университетская, 14

E-mail: haydankayew@ukr.net

лизации системы государственного управления. Отмечается, что современная система центральных органов исполнительной власти Чешской Республики сложилась благодаря целенаправленной политике государства на децентрализацию публичного управления. В стране функционирует разветвленная система центральных органов исполнительной власти, деятельность которых, в том числе, направлена на поддержку регионального развития.

Ключевые слова: трансформация; центральные органы исполнительной власти; государственное управление; местное управление; реформа

Peer-reviewed, approved and placed: 05.09.2016.

The research is being carried out under the umbrella of the International Visegrad Fund



Problem Statement. The Czech Republic has been one of the leaders in the territorial democracy development in the respective region. Exploring its positive decentralization experience, especially its political and administrative aspects, it would be a useful example to follow for modern Ukraine, particularly in the light of extending territorial communities' autonomy. Also, a practical aspect of such positive decentralization experience is the following – political optimization of state administration bodies at a central level.

Analysis of the latest publications. Scholars have devoted a sufficient amount of attention to the issue of central executive bodies' structure in domestic political science, legal studies and history. However, while fulfilling our research we primarily took advantage of Czech scholars' legacy and methodological approaches. These are Wokoun R., Mates P., who investigated regional politics implementation during state administration reform [2], Valeš L., whose scientific interests concerned polyto-logical aspects of central authorities' operation [7], Vidláková O., who dealt with state administration decentralization [8], Průcha P., who analysed consequences and outcomes of state administration reforming at a regional level [4], Cibáková V., Malý I., who focused their attention on the Czech executive power decentralization while and after joining the EU [1], and others.

Objective. The main objective of our research lies in determining key features of the level of political decentralization and regionalization by means of investigating administrative and government system of the central executive bodies. With this purpose, laws on the central level of executive power, statutory enactments on the structure of government ministries and departments have been analyzed. As to the empiric level, the level of efficiency and state administration decentralization has been measured.

The main part. The Government in the Czech Republic has remained one of major stabilizers of democratic state administration form, being the indicator of conservative features in the Czech administrative system. On the one hand, a modern and common format of governmental bodies' activities has resulted from transformational processes of the late 1980s and the demise of Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. On the other hand, democratic reforms in early 1990s affected administra-

tive and legal status of the Government as the highest body of executive power within the framework of new conditions, caused by a newly-formed type of republic, i.e. parliamentary. In this light executive bodies at the central level have undergone insubstantial administrative updates.

A new Constitution of the Czech Republic (Ústava České republiky), adopted in December, 1992, dedicated the whole chapter entitled «Vláda» (Articles 67–80), to the issues of the Government structure and functions. According to the Constitution, the status of the Government is defined as follows: «the highest body of executive power» (Article 67) [6]. The remaining constitutional provisions define the administrative status of the Government, as far as its control and personnel authorities regarding the Parliament and the President of the Czech Republic are concerned.

At present (from the vantage point of 11.2016) governmental leadership of the Czech Republic consists of two administrative levels [9]:

1. Higher leadership: the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (Premiér), authoritative members of the Government: Government Ministers (Členové), including the First Deputy Prime Minister (1. místopředseda) and Deputy Prime Minister for the Science, Research and Innovation (Místopředseda). Both Deputy Prime Ministers head the separate central bodies of executive branch: the former is simultaneously the Minister of Finance, the latter being the Chairman of the Research, Development and Innovation Council. Apart from the abovementioned, the office of the Minister of the Czech Republic's Government for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation (Ministr pro lidská práva, rovné příležitosti a legislativu) also belongs to the higher leadership of the Government, although the very structure of the Government does not presuppose a separate respective Ministry. It is also necessary to point out another 13 Ministries, each of them being the head of the relevant Ministry.

2. The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (Úřad vlády) as a coordinative body with a responsibility to provide organizing functions concerning ministries and oversee other bodies of the executive branch. It is headed by the Director of the Office of the Government (Vedoucí Úřadu vlády).

Direct responsibilities to implement governmental policies in various spheres of public life lie within the authorities of the Government advisory and working bodies (Poradní a pracovní orgány). The structure and members of the central level of the executive branch are intended to fulfil the basic principles of home and foreign policy of the Czech Republic, taking into account the fact of its being a member of the European Union.

Nowadays in the Czech Republic operate 14 sectorial Ministries (Ministerstva), 20 independent central bodies of executive branch, named advisory and working bodies (PPOV – Poradní a pracovní orgány) under the Office of the Government, as well as 13 central authoritative bodies, accountable to the relevant ministry (Illustr. 1).

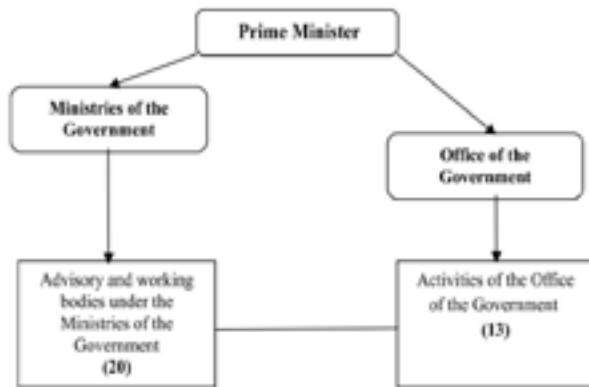


Illustration 1. Administrative structure of the system of central executive bodies in the Czech Republic.

Systemic transformation in the Czech Republic that dates back to the late 1980s touched the state administration system, established the central axis of the executive power on the conservative institutional basis. A contemporary model of the executive branch in the country has been a blend of centralization tendencies in state administration on the one hand, however, facilitating the public administration decentralization on the other hand.

Specific features of the central bodies of executive power against the background of transformation and decentralization of public administration in the Czech Republic are as follows:

1. The Structure and activities of the central executive bodies is regulated by the Law «On Establishment of Ministries and Other Executive Bodies of the Czech Republic» (Zákon «O zřízení ministerstev a jiných ústředních orgánů státní správy České republiky») of January, 8, 1969. [11]. It is undeniable that rising demands to reform and updates both at the state administration system and the central executive level have caused a range of amendments to the abovementioned law for the past couple of decades. In the context of the executive power democratization we cannot but mention that on the whole there have been made 84 amendments to the Law within the following chronology: 8 amendments in Post-Social period (1979–1989), 18 – in the period of the Czech and Slovak federalization model (1990–1992), while the rest 58 amendments were adopted during the period of the independent Czech Republic (1993–2016). In terms of this the operation of the central executive bodies within the framework of Social legislation of 1969 was mainly of ostensible nature, although it serves as a proof of pragmatism and conservatism while reforming the executive power.

2. All-national policy to depoliticize and provide independence to governmental bodies was adopted at the

beginning of 1990s. Despite the Post-Social character of transformation and a shift from federalism to the unitarian form of government, since having gained its Independence in 1993 the Czech Republic can be characterized by the previous model of central executive bodies with a slight modification. Thus, in 1993 in the Czech Government operated 16 ministries, factually preserved from the period of Czech and Slovak republican federalism. Czech republicans found it more significant to preserve the existing structure in favour of making rapid reforms in conditions of a new conjuncture. Moreover, the new Constitution of 1993 strengthened the administrative and legal status of the Czech Government as the key body of executive power. As it is laid out in the Constitution, it operates on the basis of the current legislation, not affected by demands of individual politicians or parties.

3. Sustainable character of the executive bodies' structure. In the course of transformation and stabilization of the Czech administrative system this structure did not undergo appreciable changes. Such tendency has been most noticeable on the example of the structure of separate ministries. The three former Governments of the Czech Republic (2010–2013, 2013–2014, 2014 – up till now) were made up of absolutely identical number of ministries, it being 14. Structural altering was made merely in conformity with the change of external vector and the level of domestic economic reforms' efficiency.

4. Modernization, dissolution or inclusion of new structural units to the central executive bodies due to internal and external needs of the country's operation. In particular, the 1996 reform led to the establishment of the governmental units: the Ministry for Regional Development (Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj) as a consequence of decentralization policy; liquidation of the Ministry of Economic Competitiveness (Ministerstvo pro hospodářskou soutěž), resulting from efficient market economy reforms; establishment of the Ministry of European Integration (Ministerstvo pro evropska integrace) following the intensification of the Eurointegration policy.

5. Rearrangement of governmental units, connected with Eurointegrational vector of external policy and obtaining the EU membership. For the time being the system of central executive bodies it comprises several working executive bodies, responsible for various aspects of the European policy in the Czech Republic, such as: the Committee for EU (Výbor pro Evropskou unii), the Czech Commission for UNESCO (Česká komise pro UNESCO). The Section for European Affairs (Sekce pro evropské záležitosti) also belongs to administrative institutions in charge of governmental program realization. The Section, established by the Czech Government and performing administrative functions, is additionally responsible for elaboration and adoption of the Czech Republic's propositions in the European bodies of authority.

6. Dual nature of the system of control over other central executive bodies:

1) control on the part of the Office of the Government, including 15 central executive bodies, for example: National Security Council (Bezpečnostní rada stá-

tu), the Government Anti-Corruption Committee (Rada vlády pro koordinaci boje s korupcí), the Government Council for Human Rights (Rada vlády pro lidská práva), Government Council for Non-Governmental Organizations (Rada vlády pro nestátní neziskové organizace), etc.);

2) control, fulfilled by the relevant ministries, made up of 12 working executive bodies, such as: Government Council for Sustainable Development (Rada pro zdraví a životní prostředí) – Ministry of the Environment (Ministerstvo životního prostředí), Commission for the Reconciliation of Relations between the State and Churches and Religious Societies (Komise pro narovnání vztahů mezi státem a církvemi a náboženskými společnostmi) – Ministry of Culture (Ministerstvo kultury), etc.

In the structure of the central executive bodies, settlement of the most controversial issues, connected with decentralization and national strategy implementation lies within the competences of the Ministry for Regional Development. This executive body was established in 1996 and included to the Government with the aim of strengthening the significance of the regional politics in the Government programs implementation. The Ministry for Regional Development acts on the basis of the «Law on Support of the Regional Development» of 2000 (Zákon «Zákon o podpoře regionálního rozvoje») [10], which outlines basic principles of state administration system's decentralization with the purpose to intensify regionalization processes in the country.

The Law states that the national administrative decentralization policy is projected at administrative units, i.e. regions (region). The term in question refers to territorial division into «regions» (kraje) and «districts» (okresy) (§2). Thus, the activities of the respective Ministry is intended to offer support primarily to regional development as well as delegate relevant authorities to local administrations (§1) [10].

The content and main directions of the Czech regional policy are defined within the framework of the all-national Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic («Strategie regionálního rozvoje») and the regional development strategies of particular regions. It should be noted that the development strategy of the Czech regions correlates with the timeframe of the EU regional programmes. Currently the Ministry of Regional Development is implementing the 2014–2020 Regional Development Strategy (Strategie regionálního rozvoje ČR 2014–2020), adopted by the Government. A characteristic feature of the adopted Strategy is leveling of social and economic inconsistencies at a regional level, specifically under the circumstances of extended autonomy of municipalities. Implementation of the Strategy at a regional level will contribute to the state control functions' optimization, monitoring and coordination at both central and local levels of politics. It is notable that 2014–2020 Strategy has started to be discussed and elaborated since 2011, engaging all stakeholders and interested parties to facilitate decentralization processes (14 regions (kraje ČR), municipalities (Svaz měst a obcí ČR) and governmental bodies, i.e. central executive bodies, entitled to regulate decentralization and regionalization

processes) [3]. Practical implementation of basic regional policy principles by the Ministry presupposes essential cooperation with other state administrations at the central level, as well as with regional administrative bodies. The key task of the Ministry is in providing dynamic and well-balanced development of the regions in the Czech Republic at a background of territorial unity via the relevant government policy implementation channels. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to emphasize purposeful state policy to provide the regions with socio-economic, financial and institutional support («státem podporované regiony»).

Key activities of the Ministry of Regional Development in the domain of intensification of regionalization and decentralization processes are as follows:

1. Allocating funds, intended for state policy implementation in the regions. With such a purpose the Ministry for Regional Development coordinates and delegates activities of respective central executive bodies.

2. Being the National Coordination Authority (Národní koordinační orgán), the main task of which is to establish the sole system of regional financial support within the funds, allocated by the state.

3. Providing the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Czech Republic («Kohezní politikou EU v ČR»), aimed at reducing the gaps in the regional development and convergence of the Czech Republic's state within the EU.

4. Providing advisory and coordinating aid to the higher territorial authorities, local government bodies, along with engagement of local government bodies to European regional bodies [3].

Empiric monitoring data will serve as a proof of high efficiency of state administration system, including decentralization processes at a central executive level. As an empiric basis of the Czech administrative system efficiency level we selected Management Index, elaborated within Bertelsmann Transformation Index. Management Index methodology is aimed at the assessment of democracy and administrative efficiency level in the country under consideration. According to the selected methodology, it is necessary to analyze the period of transformational changes in the Czech Republic, with the reference scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is the lowest indicator of decentralization and administrative efficiency, whereas 10 serves as the highest one. Empiric indicators of the Management Index are listed below:

- 1) level of difficulty;
- 2) management performance;
- 3) steering capability;
- 4) resource efficiency;
- 5) consensus-building;
- 6) international cooperation [5].

In the course of the period under study the Czech Republic demonstrates rather high efficiency level and state administration decentralization level. According to the Index value, the Czech Republic belongs to the group of countries with «Good Management Index» (6,99–5,60), characteristic of those with the status of consolidated democratic regime (Illustr. 2).

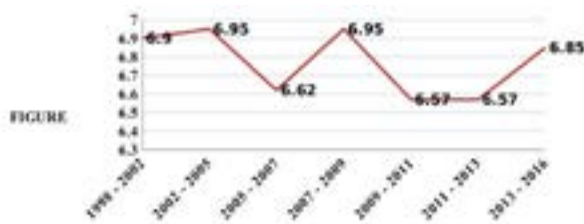


Illustration 2. Management index in the Czech Republic during the period of postsocialist transformation.

In the world rating the Czech Republic was listed the twentieth in 2005–2007, this period being the worst in the sense of democracy. The years 2007–2009 appear to be the best with the country occupying the 9th position. Also, it should be noted that the country is characterized by 2 different groups of empiric indicators:

1) administrative progress – consensus-building, international cooperation, management performance, level of difficulty;

2) insubstantial administrative problems – steering capability, resource efficiency.

Interim Conclusions. A contemporary system of the central executive bodies in the Czech Republic has occurred as a consequence of purposeful state policy, aimed at public administration decentralization. In the country operates a divaricate system of central executive bodies, which operation is intended to support regional development. On the other hand, a comprehensive approach to the decentralization analysis requires attention to characteristic features of the strictly Czech model of regional government. First of all, it is necessary to contemplate state policy, aimed at the reorganization of administrative-territorial division and providing local communities with more autonomy.

REFERENCES:

1. Cibáková, V., Malý, I., 2009. Veřejná správa v kontextu přípravy a vstupu státu do eurozóny. Brno, Masarykova Univerzita, 231 (in Czech).
2. Management regionální politiky a reforma veřejné správy, 2006. Wokoun, R., Mates, P. (eds.). Praha, Linde, 2006, 351 (in Czech).
3. Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj. Strategie regionálního rozvoje ČR 2014–2020. Retrieved from: <http://www.mmr.cz/cs/Uvodni-strana> (in Czech).
4. Průcha, P. Aktuální otázky reformy veřejné správy. Brno, ESF MU v Brně (in Czech).
5. Transformation Index BTI, Management Index – Czech Republic Country Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/cze/itr/ecse/>.
6. Ústava České Republiky ze dne 16. prosince 1992. Parlament České republiky, Poslanecká sněmovna. Retrieved from: <http://www.psp.cz/docs/laws/constitution.html> (in Czech).
7. Valeš, Lukaš (et. al.), 2006. Politologické aspekty veřejné správy. Plyen, Aleš Čeněk, 246 (in Czech).
8. Vidláková, O. Decentralizace veřejné správy ČR. Týdeník Veřejná správa. Číslo 51-52/2007 (in Czech).
9. Vláda České Republiky. Retrieved from: <https://www.vlada.cz/> (in Czech).
10. Zákon č. 248/2000 Sb. Zákon o podpoře regionálního rozvoje, Zákony pro lidi – Sběrka zákonů ČR v aktuálním konsolidovaném znění. Retrieved from: <http://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2000-248/zneni-20151125> (in Czech).
11. Zákon č. 2/1969 Sb. Zákon o zřízení ministerstev a jiných ústředních orgánů státní správy České republiky, Ley.cz – Zákony online. Retrieved from: <http://zakony-online.cz/?s147&q147=all> (in Czech).