Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic
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About the report:

Czech deputies and senators regularly travel to Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, the regions that are suffering from the conflict with Pro-Russian separatists. When an invitation comes, they don't hesitate to travel to the Russian Federation (further on as ‘RF’) as well, especially when extraordinary events occur in the RF such as the celebration of the end of the so-called Great Patriotic War or in other occasions with the purpose to strengthen mutual relations.

There is one concrete goal in these trips and that is to legitimize the Russian foreign policy and their regime and not only for the Russian internal propaganda but to the international audience as well. Czech legislators behave this way with no matter how the official Czech or EU foreign policies are, precisely speaking of the sanction regime that was enforced on Russia in 2014 for breaking the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine by the RF. In Ukraine, no ceasefire was ever established and to enter Crimea is illegal from the standpoint of the Ukrainian laws.

All across Europe, Kremlin is seeking deputies, congressmen, senators or other public figures that would act as, for example, observers of elections that can be given legitimacy by them. On the other hand, Czech politicians become a source of trustworthy information for the Russian secret services - which sometimes happens even without their complete knowledge. There is no coincidence in the way how Kremlin chooses specifically those parties, that continuously support the views of the RF, which are especially people from the parties KSČM and SPD.

KSČM is a long-time supporter of the "eastern" orientation and all their actions are done in the interests of the Kremlin. In the case of SPD, their recent defense policy conceptions stated that “unlike Russia, Ukraine is an artificially created country”, the importance of the Slavic reciprocity or the “unreasonable” sanctions and embargos enforced on RF. Additionally, representatives of both parties regularly appear at events of Pro-Kremlin disinformers and actively participate in them as well. No less problematic are the meetings of Czech disinformers that are organized with the support of some deputies directly at the Chamber of Deputies. Opinions interpreted at these meetings are in direct conflict with the official Czech foreign policy. It's also important to state that both parties are long-time supporters of leaving the European Union and opponents to the geopolitical direction inclining to the “western” world. However, similar activities can be recently witnessed also with members of other political parties, officially supporting the Euro-Atlantic cooperation - typically the Czech social democratic party or some members of the party ANO.

This is an obvious sign for the Czech foreign policy, that the personal activities of the MPs of the Czech Republic can be focused on basically anything they want and that includes ignoring the official foreign policy of both the Czech Republic and EU as well. In addition, the diplomatic passport allows them to visit some countries with close to none visa obligations, including non-official trips not delegated by the Chamber of Deputies.

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The following report is about the travels of Czech MPs to the occupied territories in Ukraine by the RF, to Russia itself but also their other Pro-Russian activities in the Czech Parliament, which are in conflict with the official foreign policy of the Czech Republic.

Summary:

- Next to the traditional Communist party (KSCM), Tomio Okamura’s SPD became an equally pro-Kremlin voice on the Czech political scene, which can also be seen through the frequent actions in favor of Kremlin conducted by their deputies.

- Under the auspices of SPD deputies Tomio Okamura, Radim Fiala and Jaroslav Holik, in cooperation with the Institute of Slavic Strategic Studies the Artek magazine co-organizes events hosting various Czech disinformers.

- Many Czech parliamentarians are forbidden to enter the Ukraine due to their pro-Kremlin activities. This, however, does not prevent them from illegally entering through Russian territory. In doing so, deputies abuse their diplomatic passports for personal purposes.

- The deputies threaten the prestige of the Czech Republic as a reliable partner within the European Union as well as NATO, and they openly discuss that they will continue doing whatever they please, despite the official Czech position.

- The deputies plan to continue in activities serving Russian interests even in 2018
  - According to deputy Jaroslav Holik, SPD will organize a visit of representatives from Crimea, and they plan to propagate the annexation of Crimea on the grounds of the Chamber of Deputies.
  - Similarly, Zdenek Ondracek also stated that he will continue to travel to Crimea and to Russia.

- The activities of the Czech deputies are used by Russian propaganda, serving as vehicles for legitimization of Russian aggression against the Ukraine, recognizing self-proclaimed representatives and diplomats of separatist republics, for the purpose of domestic as well as international Russian propaganda, but also as a pro-Russian voice among Euro-Atlantic allies.

- Deputies and senators are among the weaker divisions of Czech security, as they open the doors to Russian influential operations.
## Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communist (KSCM) Deputies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zdeněk Ondráček</td>
<td>Mariupol</td>
<td>Winter 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mariupol</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>„DLR“ – observer of so-called elections</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>„DLR“ – observer of so-called elections</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volgograd – celebrations of the victory of the Battle at Stalingrad</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vojtěch Filip</td>
<td>Moscow – State Duma</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaroslav Borka</td>
<td>„DLR“ – observer of so-called elections</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanislav Mackovík</td>
<td>„DLR“</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josef Skála</td>
<td>Volgograd – celebrations of the victory of the Battle at Stalingrad</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severočeši.cz Senators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaroslav Doubrava</td>
<td>„LLR“ – observer of so-called elections</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crimea – meeting with its representatives</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia – observer of elections</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volgograd – celebrations of the victory of the Battle at Stalingrad</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPD Deputies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radim Fiala</td>
<td>Moscow – State Duma</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaroslav Holík</td>
<td>Russo-Ukrainian border – refugee camps</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crimea – meeting with its representatives</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaltské mezinárodní ekonomické fórum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volgograd – celebrations of the victory of the Battle at Stalingrad</td>
<td>February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Úsvit přímé demokracie</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan Šarapatka</td>
<td>Crimea – observer of the so-called referendum</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ČSSD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaroslav Foldyna</td>
<td>Russia – support of children traveling to the camp at Artek</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strana práv občanů</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miloslav Soušek (dříve člen ČSSD)</td>
<td>Crimea – observer of the so-called referendum</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANO Deputies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanislav Berkovec</td>
<td>Crimea – observer of the so-called referendum</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communist Deputies in the service of Kremlin

Communist deputies have long been among the primary pro-Russian political forces in the Czech Republic. Their presence in the Chamber of Deputies allows them to use the Senate grounds to organize conferences, where the Czech geopolitical direction is doubted and interests of various world powers are interpreted.

Soon after the Ukrainian Euro-Maidan, and only a few days after the Russian annexation of Crimea, one of the first pro-Russian, “parliamentary” seminars organized by the Institute of Slavic Strategic Studies (ISSTRAS) took place on the grounds of the Chamber of Deputies on March 26, 2014. During the event, which took place under the auspices of the Communist deputy Sona Markova, and which was attended among others by the Russian ambassador to the Czech Republic Sergej Kiselev and the ex-deputy of the director of the Russian press agency ITAR TASS Alexander Klein, one of the main points of discussion was whether Russia is a victim of an information war, and who has the interest to share myths about Russia. The declared aim was a “demystification” of Russia. Oskar Krejci and Zdenek Zboril, both past collaborators of the STB, were the main speakers.3

The seminar on Contemporary Fascism in Europe followed in fall 2014. It was organized by the All-Slavic committee under the auspices of the Chairman of the Communist party Vojtech Filip and the Deputy Jaroslav Borka at the Russian House in Marienbad. During this seminar, supposed US support of fascism and neo-Nazism in the Ukraine and Novorossiya as well as “firing hatred towards Russia” was discussed.4 While the situation was escalating in Eastern Ukraine, while EU Member States were discussing common approach to Russian aggression, and while the European reporting agencies pointed to the Russian influential activities, the admirers of Vladimir Putin openly interpreted Kremlin narratives on the grounds of the Parliament.

The Communist party (KSCM) has been, however, conducting activities, which are in direct opposition to the official Czech foreign politics. For example, the chair of the party Vojtech Filip, accepted an invitation of the vice-chairman of the Russian State Duma Sergej Zeleznak, who is on the sanction list of both the EU and the US for the annexation of Crimea. Many members of the Chamber of deputies voiced their concerns. Firstly, about the fact that Filip’s trip could be used by the Russian propaganda, but also because of the fact that the ex-chairman of the Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamacek (CSSD) purposefully bypassed the organizational committee of the Senate and personally signed on to the trip, to the surprise of many members, who were not informed in advance.5 The senate consequently distanced itself from the approval of the trip. Furthermore, Hamacek became the new chairman of CSSD very recently. Jiri Zimola has newly become the second man of the CSSD. He previously visited Moscow alongside Zdenek Zbytek, and he considers Russia to be a completely normal state, with whom the Czech Republic cooperates.6 CSSD is currently considering to form a government with Andrej Babis

3 http://www.isstras.eu/cs/2014/02/23/demytizace-ruska-probehne-v-praze/
Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

(ANO); supported by KSCM, which would strengthen the governmental voices calling for the normalization of relations with Russia.

In an interview for Lidove noviny (newspaper), Filip apparently said that he was “going to Moscow to save two to three thousand jobs, to negotiate that ‘our’ (Czech) firms get subsidies from the Russian budget.” When the online daily news Aktualne inquired why did not the entire parliamentary delegation leave for Russia, as he originally suggested, Filip answered that he wanted it to be presented as an interest of the entire political scene. The foreign minister Lubomir Zaoralek, however, said that Mr. Zeleznak is on the sanctioned list a that it would be more appropriate to sort it out without a delegation. Nevertheless, he did not doubt it should be an official visit. There is no doubt—we need this meeting. Vojtech Filip thus interprets the visit his way, despite the resolution of the Senate, which made it clear, that it was not its delegation. According to him it was an official visit, despite the fact that he went to Moscow alone. According to his words, he left with tasks with which the planned delegation should have left.

The Russian media understandably also ascribed significant value to Filip’s visit. They introduced the chair of the Communist party as the vice chair of the lower chamber and as a highly situated constitutional agent. However, it was not the last time that Vojtech Filip became the star of Russian media. In March 2015, when the supporters of Milos Zeman gathered at the Prague castle for the occasion of the second anniversary of Zeman’s presidential inauguration, the Russian TV Rossija 24 lied about the event, presenting it as a demonstration against a war with Russia. The star of the reportage was no one else but Vojtech Filip, who got the most space.

Deputies can use other parliamentary benefits as well, for example the diplomatic passport, which makes crossing the borders easier. Thanks to it they have expedited customs clearance without waiting or luggage search. A special regime also applies to the visa obligations, when for example visits to Russia under 90 days do not require a visa thanks to a diplomatic passport. This is exactly the privilege that Czech deputies use abundantly, even for the purpose of traveling to the Ukrainian separatist territory, which they enter through Russia. Due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, The Kiev government lost control of about 400 km of borders with Russia, due to which they cannot realistically control illegal entrance to their territory.

One example, when Czech deputies circumvented Ukrainian authorities, in order to get to the separatist territories, was the visit of the so called Donetsk People’s Republic by Communist deputies Zdenek Ondracek and Stanislav Mackovik in January 2016. They entered the territory illegally. Furthermore, Ondracek was at that time banned from entering the Ukraine, which he previously visited twice as an observer of the elections. At the end of 2014 in Dnepropetrovsk and in the spring of 2015 in Mariupol. When he then wanted to visit the Ukraine once more that year, supposedly for the purpose of attending a conference regarding the elections, he was stopped at the Kiev airport and deported as an unwanted

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8 https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/politika/filip-k-ceste-do-moskvy-opozice-chtela-odvest-pozornost/r~875bb3b8667311e49b26002590604f2e/
11 http://www.vfsglobal.com
12 http://www.kas.de/wf/en/33.48639/
Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

person. In his own words, he never found out the official reason for his deportation, but the Ukraine’s move was more than logical.

Ondracek keeps repeating the Russian propaganda view regarding the situation in the Ukraine, and he criticizes anti-Russian sanctions, which were adopted in reaction to Russian aggression. He also often comments on the Ukraine, and he refused to vote for ratification of the Association Agreement with the European Union, which would lead to qualitative changes in relations between the two actors. For example, in 2015, the “Halo” newspaper that is linked to the KSCM stated that inhabitants of Mariopol live under constant pressure, especially from the Azov Battalion party, and that democracy in the Ukraine is in a dreadful state.13

Regarding his deportation, in response to a question posed by the Czech version of Sputnik, whether he was “harmed” because of his relations with Russia, he responded that it looks like it. According to his words, however, he doesn’t have a reason to not trust the Russian government, “whose actions in the international scene he views positively.”14 Ondracek was, however, not the only politician surprised by the actions of Ukrainian authorities. In addition to the chairman of the KSCM Vojtech Filip, Jaroslav Foldyn (CSSD) was also implicated, as he claimed that the Czech Republic should not accept this kind of treatment. Foldyna also stated that “the environment in the Ukraine is quite unusual, one that can hardly be called democratic…”15

If we come back to the actual visit of Donbas, which Ondracek undertook in the company of Mackovik, both politicians apparently traveled to the Ukraine to “search for the truth” and to assume documents about supposed crimes of the Ukrainian army. During the three-day long journey, which they financed by their own resources, they met with representatives of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic, among others with their “Minister of Foreign Affairs” Alexander Kofman and the “ombudsman”, but also with past war prisoners. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs protested against this trip of the Czech deputies and it asked the Czech government and the Parliament to distance themselves from similar activities, which doubt Ukrainian sovereignty and which are in opposition to foreign affairs of both the Czech Republic and the European Union.16

In an interview for Aktualne (online daily news) from January 2016, Mackovik stated that the trip to Donbas was initiated by his colleague Ondracek, who had experience from his previous observation missions. The trip was to be arranged by journalists, who Ondracek knew from Mariopol. According to Mackovik’s testimony, they entered the Ukraine through the Russian side, which they reached by flying to Rostov on Don, which is a border-crossing controlled by the Russian side. Apparently they didn’t have any business in Russia, and as deputies they don’t need visas for short-term visits. This applies even on obviously private trips, which have nothing to do with the mission of the Czech Chamber of Deputies.17

According to Mackovik, the so-called elections in Mariopol were under the watch of machine guns with swastikas. Responding to the question whether there are good Russian soldiers on Donbas, he

13 http://www.halonoviny.cz/articles/view/41176170
17 https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/komunista-po-navratu-z-donbasu-rusy-jsem-tam-nevidel-ukrajin/r~a9db20e8bdd111e5bb3a002590000a04/
responded that “whether there are or aren’t…we haven’t seen them.” However, according to him you would be naïve to think that they aren’t there, as there are many nationalities present at Donbas, including Czechs and Americans.18

During their trip to the so-called DPR, both deputies attended a press conference on the grounds of the local “Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” At the conference, they did not object to being referred to as the parliamentary delegation, despite the fact that neither the Czech Chamber of Deputies nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs knew about the trip in advance. At the press conference, it was mostly Mackovik who spoke, promising that he will inform the Czech public about what he saw in order for them to understand that they should not believe everything they see in the media. The self-proclaimed representatives of the DPR truly appreciated this kind of support. In the end the Czech deputies received a book about the “victims of Ukrainian terrorism in Donbas” and DPR badges, as an expression of admiration of the separationist representatives for their bravery. On YouTube channel of the news agency News Front the video from the press conference was titled “Deputies from the Czech Parliament: Kiev committed war crimes against the Donbas nation.”

They further doubted the territorial integrity of Ukraine on separatist channel Oplot TV, where they appeared side by side with Alexander Kofman. The presence of Czech deputies was naturally greatly echoed in other Russian and separatist media, for which their words were like music from Paradise. Upon their return, the interpreted Russian propaganda for the Czech audience. Among other things, Ondracek claimed that the Ukrainian government and army are responsible for the destroyed buildings in the Donbas area. Both deputies stated that the Ukraine is trying to cover the real situation in the area, especially the presence of fascists and frequent crimes, which the Ukraine commits on its citizens.19

Source: Информационное агентство Новороссия

18 https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/komunista-po-navratu-z-donbasu-rusy-jsou-tam-nevidel-ukrajin/r~a9db20e8bdd111e5bb3a0025900fe04/
Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

The deputies also promised that they brought back evidence and written materials, which they wanted to give to the representatives of Czech foreign politics with the goal of “opening their eyes,” in order for them to realize, that Poroshenko’s regime is responsible for the genocide of its own people.20 Nothing, however, suggests that they have done so to this day.21

According to Mackovik, the fact that the Ukraine shoots its own soldiers, as he claims to have seen in person, is unfathomable. Senator Doubrava repeated similar words after his visit of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People’s Republic in the winter of 2014. Mackovik blames the Ukrainian army for the unrest in Donetsk, while the Donetsk leadership is according to his words trying to solve its consequences as disturbances in water or energy supply. They also claimed that they spoke with captives from the Ukrainian side, and they described the experience as surreal, as if reading a book from World War II. Particularly the passages describing lives of the captives in concentration camps. According to Mackovik, Ukrainian forces use identical practices and they treat their captives just like the Wehrmacht. Just like Ondracek, he also didn’t see any Russians in the area. He also accused non-profit organizations focusing on human rights that they overlook these crimes on purpose and that they ignore the “fascist troops” of the Ukrainian government.22

In the communist daily paper, Mackovik expressed his surprise in reaction to the Ukrainian irritated response to the trip. Why does the free movement of people “bother” the Ukraine, when it wants to come closer to the European Union.23 He condemned European countries for supporting the military regime in the Ukraine with Poroshenko at the forefront. According to him, the “West” uses a double standard when evaluating various international conflicts.

Mackovik’s anti-Americanism can also be seen prominently seen in his profile in the Parlamentni listy (manipulative webpage). According to him, the Czech Republic is an American liege and NATO is a threat to peace, an organization without any moral constraints, unafraid to join forces even with ISIS. Mackovik also keeps repeating Kremlin narratives about going against Russia. He considers the Ukraine to be a space where a war against Russia is being plotted. He also noted that it is not by accident that NATO is training its troops for work in Russian-speaking environments.24

Zdenek Ondracek revisited the so-called DPR in October 2016 in order to observe local “elections”. He was accompanied by his communist colleague, a deputy and representative of the town Karlovy Vary, Jaroslav Borek. According to Ondracek the primary goal of the encounter was to establish contacts with the communists of the so-called DPR. The situation at Donbas supposedly interests the Czech communist party (KSCM), especially in regards to the court ruling regarding the banning of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, because apparently it involves violating the political rights of local citizens and an expression of anti-democratic tendencies.25

20 http://www.halonoviny.cz/articles/view/42311490
22 https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/komunista-po-navratu-z-donbasu-rusy-jsem-tam-nevidel-ukrajan/r-a9db20e8bdd111e5bb3a0025900fee04/
23 http://www.halonoviny.cz/articles/view/42311490
Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by
the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

In interviews for the Parlamentní listy (manipulative webpage), Mr. Ondracek commented on his visit to eastern Ukraine saying that the Ukraine decided to massacre its own citizenry, and to do so under the expert supervision of OSCE and the US, who are interested in a war with Russia.26 According to Ondracek, people in Donbas have for 3.5 years been living in “everyday fears from being under fire and Ukrainian murdering of civil society.” The conflict in the Ukraine has not been caused by Russia, but the West, the US and the EU including the Czech Republic, in particular. According to him, the eastern part is occupied by patriots rather than separatists.27 Ondracek also told the editors of Parlamentní listy that if he wants to, he will go to Crimea, South Ossetia, or Nagorno-Karabakh. In other words, under the guise of private activities he will keep doing practically whatever he wants, despite the position of his home institution—the Parliament of the Czech Republic, which does not have any legal instruments or rights to stop this kind of behavior.

The Communist Borka explains the conflict similarly. He stated that Russia annexed Crimea because it felt threatened by the far-right, which attempted to separate itself from both the Ukraine and Russia, which are more connected than Slovakia and the Czech Republic.29

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28 From the public profile of the communist deputy Ivo Pojezeny
“The Journalist Passion” of Senator Jaroslav Doubrava

In November 2014, the Senator and member of the Severocesi.cz movement (previously a member of the Czech Communist parties, 1967-1990 in KSC and then the KSCM) Jaroslav Doubrava traveled to the unrecognized Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR), where he attended the unlawful elections as an “observer”. He claimed to not have known who invited him, and he didn’t bother examining it. According to his words it was someone from Czechia. He found out about the opportunity to observe the elections through a friend and colleague, who asked him to go, which “spurred a journalist passion in him”. Additionally, it was an opportunity for him to “visit the locations of battles and all the happenings”. To the IDNES reporters he added that he was only told to meet someone who would have plane tickets for him at the airport at a certain time. However, he entered the Ukraine illegally, by a bus from Rostov on Don through the border crossing controlled by the Russian side. The Ukraine can thus prosecute him for illegal border crossing, because he went through an unofficial Russian passport control.

He was not the only Czech among the election observers. There was another person with him in Luhansk—a journalist from Parlamentni listy. Lubomir Zemanek, the vice president of the far right party National Democracy also participated in the mission. The Czech Senate could not stop Doubrava’s trip, as it was not aware of it in advance. Despite that, in Luhansk he presented himself as a senator and he communicated with local media. The Ukrainian side then added Doubrava and Zemanek on the list of unwanted persons for their activities legitimizing the existence of separationist republics.

Doubrava later defended the annexation of Crimea in an interview for Lidove noviny newspaper. Among other things, he claimed that Ukrainian soldiers in Luhansk cut off heads of multiple local citizens and that they committed other war crimes. According to him not even Hitler committed the crime of shooting out his own cities during World War II. He also criticized the fact that the Czech media don’t inform about the situation in the Ukraine truthfully. On the other hand, he praised the administration of Crimea for organizing a “free referendum”.

Jaroslav Doubrava was also one of the politicians who warmly accepted the visit of a pro-Putin motorcycle gang “Night wolfs” in the Czech Republic in May 2015, on the occasion of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet army victory over Nazi Germany. Doubrava welcomed the bikers with a hug, saying “Molodci, vy prijechali” and giving them crosses commemorating the 200-year anniversary from the Battle at Chlumec and Prestonov of 1813.

In September 2015, Doubrava spent four more days in the occupied Crimea, which he visited as a private person attending a folklore festival. The organizer of the trip was supposed to be the Russian minority of the Czech Republic, but he covered the expenses himself. However, the senator did not travel solely to celebrate and chat with the local population, as he presented the trip. During his visit he sat at the table (off-record) with the “Prime minister” Sergey Aksyonov and the “vice-premier” Mikhail Sheremet of the unrecognized Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The event was presented on the official portal of the Crimean administration as a “Czech delegation” in the presence of a Czech senator. The website also mentioned that the participants discussed questions including universal cooperation between Czechia and Crimea. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, distanced itself from Doubrava’s activities in Crimea.36

Sergey Komkov, a Russian entrepreneur from Marienbad, who nominated Milos Zeman (for supposedly balanced approach towards the situation in the Ukraine) and Vladimir Putin (for his activities in Syria and the Near East) for a Noble Prize for Peace, was in Crimea with him. In the Czech Republic, the activities of Sergey Komokov provoke fears related to potential espionage and infiltration of the highest political circles, especially due to his ties to the Russian Embassy in Prague.37

Source: Official website of the Crimean Administration

Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

Upon his return to the Czech Republic, he talked about his trip to Crimea to the Czech Sputnik, whom he told that “the citizens of Crimea are interested in our help in reconstructing tramways and trolley-buses of Czech origins, which run within the Republic, and in setting up appropriate repair-shops throughout its territory. And also an exchange of groups of war veterans who could recover in Crimean and Czech spas.” However, in the interview, he did not say that he only went there for the festival. Apparently he had a solid reason for visiting Crimea. Doubrava added: “These days, mass media has been disseminating information about thousands of people protesting and asking for the return of Crimea under Ukrainian jurisdiction. I wanted to see those masses and ask them what pushes them to return to the Ukraine.” According to him, people welcome to annexation of Crimea to Russia, because thanks to it they finally started living.

In September 2017, Doubrava went to Russia, for a change, which we found out about from an interview he did for Sputnik. He was supposedly invited to the country to oversee the Russian regional elections. Specifically, he observed the so-called elections in the Perm Krai, where the primary candidate for the United Russia party Maxim Reshetnikov retained the post of governor with 82% of the votes. The high percentage of votes that this candidate received did not surprise Doubrava, and he did not notice any cheating during the elections. According to him, Reshetnikov won because of all the things he has done for the region.

His findings, however, stand in contrast with the conclusions of other foreign observers. For example, in one of the voting districts, the Reuters News Agency counted up to seven times more votes for “Putin’s party” United Russia than there were voters who made it to the ballot box. The Agency even published a video of an unidentified male, who threw multiple votes into the ballot box. The non-governmental organization Golos monitoring the elections also reported some discrepancies, particularly fake increasing of the voter turnout and repeated voting.

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38 https://cz.sputniknews.com/ceskarepublika/201509091101736/
How the SPD deputies took over the organization of pro-Kremlin events on the grounds of the Chamber of Deputies

Tomio Okamura’s party SPD took over the tradition of organizing pro-Russian conferences organized by ISSTRHAS with the representation of Czech conspirators and desinformers. Apparently, deputy Jaroslav Holik, the first member of SPD, stood behind the beginning of the cooperation between SPD and pro-Russian organization and took patronage of the events in the Chamber of Deputies.

Holik himself supposedly doesn’t want to promote anything, but he will give space to experts. The deputy doesn’t recall how exactly the cooperation began—apparently it somehow “materialized”. He points to the fact that about a third of Czech blood is Slavic. According to his words, he didn’t know the “experts”, who participate in his events, well in the past, because he has only been working in politics for a short while. As an expert on the environment, he took advice from Mrs. Zemanova-Kopecka (author’s note: she used to be the advisor to president Milos Zeman and she has been close to lobbyists and supporters of the communist regime Miroslav Sloufa and Zdenek Zbytek). In an interview for the server Euro, responding to the question whether he is aware that his events present mostly pro-Russian opinions, he said that he doesn’t know what is pro-Russian and what is anti-Russian. Yet he lived in Russia for six years.43

In February 2016, an “expert seminar” called ‘Myths about Syria’ was organized under the patronage of Holik. There, the former director of the foreign section of the President’s office Hynek Kmonicek spoke alongside Zdenek Zboril, Ilona Svihlikova, Oskar Krejci and Tereza Spencerova. For its big success, in May, this event continued in the form of ‘Myths about Syria II’, but some of the speakers changed. Among them were for example the editor in chief of the conspirator server Protiproud Petr Hajek, the commentator Erik Best or Petr Zantovsky. The Russian magazine Artek recently joined the collaboration. In the past, Artek has published statements about the fascist junta in Kiev and genocide of Russian speaking inhabitants.44 This has been represented by the representation and presentation of the attendees. The conclusion of the debate was clear, stating that the US is interested in chaos, while Russia is the stabilizing factor within the territory.45

45 http://www.halonoviny.cz/articles/view/43496853
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konaný pod zaštitou pana poslanca Jaroslava HOLÍKA

«Mýty o Sýrii»

Válka v Sýrii, její skutečné příčiny průběh a důsledky. Rozdíl mezi ISIL a umírněnou opozicí.

Hry zpravodajských služeb. Jak může zahýbat výsledek války s geopolitickým uspořádáním?

S hlavními příspěvky vystoupí mj.:

PaeDr. Hynek Kmoniček, Doc. Ilona Švihlíková, prof. Oskar Krejčí,
doc. Zdeněk Zbořil, gen. v.v. Andor Šándor, Mgr. Tereza Spencerová, a další

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S hlavními příspěvky vystoupí mj.:

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Mgr. Petr Žántovský; vojenský analytik Martin Kolier, zástupci velvyslanectví v ČR, a další mili hosté.

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In April 2016, Tomio Okamura and Radim Fiala joined the organizer Holik. This time, just like when the ISSTRAS events were organized by the communists in 2014, the event focused on discussing “myths about Russia”. Frequenters such as Martin Koller, Zdenek Zboril, Oskar Krejci and Jan Petranek also participated in the conference. During the event, many controversial statements were made, including multiple disinformation. The chair of SPD Tomio Okamura himself talked about how historical knowledge is affected by Western propaganda manipulation, that the US supported Adolf Hitler through financial means and that people are under the influence of “lying anti-Russian propaganda” coming from mainstream media. Radim Fiala talked about Russia as a guarantee of stability. He accused Czech media from leading an anti-Russia information war. In November 2016 SPD continued with a conference titled Quo Vadis Europe. On its website it accused media from censoring opinions that were voiced during the seminar.

48 http://www.spd.cz/novinky/politicka-stanoviska-spd-pro-tento-tyden-34
Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

The eastern mission of Tomio Okamura’s SPD deputies

Activities of Jaroslav Holik

In September 2014, Jaroslav Holik, the ex-independent for KSCM and current SPD deputy, referred on the website of Usvit and server of Parlamentni listy about his trip to the Russo-Ukrainian border, where he was supposed to visit local refugee camps. The reason for his trip was reportedly the fact that Czech media present Russia as a mean aggressor. According to his words he likes to verify information himself. To the Parlamentni listy, Holik said that in Krasnodar town he stopped by every car with a Ukrainian license plate. Reportedly they were usually citizens of Luhansk and Donetsk, who emigrated to Russia, because they did not trust President Poroshenko, whose soldiers were shooting their own compatriots. According to Holik they did not even spare kindergartens and cars with humanitarian aid. The interviewees supposedly also claimed that there are no Russian soldiers in Ukrainian territory and that it is not Russian aggression, but rather a conflict between the Ukrainian army and protectors of freedom. Holik also stated that the refugees wish nothing but to return to their maternal homes and live as well there as they do in Russia. According to Holik, there every working hand is welcomed. According to him, migrants have housing, food and jobs provided.

In April 2017, he accepted an invitation from the Just Russia party and he visited occupied Crimea with the aim to “get familiar with the local situation, which has been lied about by mainstream media.” There were other deputies that participated in the unofficial delegation, specifically from the UK (members of UKIP party), Serbia (members of the Serbian radical party), Montenegro (members from the Movement for neutrality of Montenegro), Kyrgyzstan and Brazil. Overall, mostly personas representing the far-right and pro-Russian scene.

In Crimea, the group of politicians met with Remzi Ilyasov, the “vice chairman of the State Council of Crimea” and the leader of the pro-Russian group of Crimean Tatars. Ilyasov tried to convince his guests that local Tatars are doing well and that they are allowed to use their rights to education, religious freedom and cultural freedom to the full extent. According to Anton Shekhovtsov, an expert on extremist movements, the parliamentary visit was timed precisely, only a few days after the European Parliament accepted the resolution regarding Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia and the situation in Crimea, which brought attention to the cases of systematic intimidation, torture and kidnapping of inconvenient persons.

According to the vice chairman of the foreign committee of the Russian Duma Alexey Chepkov, it was an opportunity for colleagues from abroad to find out about the actual state of affairs, especially the fact that the so-called referendum, which took place in Crimea three years ago “is fully legitimate.” The aim of Russian representatives was thus nothing else but to gain support for the recognition of the annexation of Crimea and to recruit public life personas to interpret the Kremlin perspective of the Ukrainian happenings in the ‘Western world’. This aim was well achieved, as many of the participants later talked about the fact that the anti-Russian sanctions should have been removed and about the legitimacy of

51 https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/foreign-politicians-visit-to-crimea-is-russias-latest-disinformation-failure-57569
the so-called referenda in the Ukraine. The issue of political prisoners and intimidation of opponents of the unification with Russia was, as usual, not on the agenda of the meeting.\footnote{https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/foreign-politicians-visit-to-crimea-is-russias-latest-disinformation-failure-57569}

Holik then later described his trip to the Czech Sputnik. In the opening of the text the aim of his trip is described as an effort of the parliamentarians to “put together an image of local life.”\footnote{https://cz.sputniknews.com/nazory/201703234971376-poslanec-holik-lide-krym/} Holik fulfilled the tasks of Russian propaganda with good conscience. Among other things, he mentioned that he spoke with locals in the streets—not just with Russians, but also with Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, who according to his words have been happy with their return to Russia. Even though local population is affected by electricity and water shortages, the main thing is that they “feel safe and they don’t have to worry about their children’s’ future.” According to Holi, grocery stores are fully stacked. The deputy also noted that there don’t seem to be any human rights violations, in fact quite the contrary. The citizens of Crimea enjoy various social benefits in healthcare as well as education.\footnote{https://cz.sputniknews.com/nazory/201703234971376-poslanec-holik-lide-krym/}

Ukrainian democracy complained about Holik’s international voyage, banning him from entering the country in the next five years and asking the Czech Chamber of Deputies to comment on the situation.\footnote{https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/okamuruv-poslanec-odjel-na-krym-je-to-smutne-sami-vite-co-je/?redirected=1518168168} The Ukrainian embassy commented Holik’s trip by saying that “the Kremlin government transported a handful of foreign politicians with a lower threshold of political hygiene to the peninsula in order to participate in the ‘celebration’ of the third anniversary of the theft of Crimea. The Ukrainian embassy stated that it is very sad that Mr. Jaroslav Holik, a deputy of the Czech Parliament—a country that knows from its own experience what occupation and annexation mean, found himself among them.

In an interview for the Russian Sputnik in the Czech Republic, Holik denied attending the celebrations on occasion of Crimean annexation, which were happening in the area at the time of his visit. Reportedly he visited the Livadia palace—the place where the Yalta conference took place—bringing together representatives of main global powers at the of World War II. He also took part in a discussion at the University in Simferopol.\footnote{https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/okamuruv-poslanec-odjel-na-krym-je-to-smutne-sami-vite-co-je/?redirected=1518168168} According to Chepkov, at the university the deputies met also with representatives of the Crimean administration and with the public. For example, they met with the chairman of the Crimean Parliament Vladimir Konstantinov, a person on the sanction regime of the EU.\footnote{https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/okamuruv-poslanec-odjel-na-krym-je-to-smutne-sami-vite-co-je/?redirected=1518168168}

The Russian media again reacted with minimal delay. According to the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestija, “the Czech communist deputies for the SPD party support the recognition of Russian annexation of Crimea and they consider it to be a done deal, which occurred in compliance with international law.” The newspaper reportedly got its information from the press room of the KSCM and words of several deputies including Jaroslav Holik and Stanislav Berkovec. Jaroslav Holik reportedly said that the sanctions do not make any sense, and therefore they will work on their cancellation in the Parliament. Berkovec supposedly told Izvestija that within the ANO party there is an agreement regarding the sanctions.
specifying that the sanctions seriously hurt Czech entrepreneurs and that their cancellation would be an action of the right mind.\footnote{58}

According to Vojtech Filip, KSCM is not planning anything like this. Holik, however, stated that so far this has only been an idea, which will be considered by his fraction. In 2018, he wants to put the issue of Crimea on the agenda of the Chamber of Deputies. Based on his personal experience, he wants to defend the annexation of Crimea in front of other deputies, in order to gain support for the official recognition of the legality of the annexation within the Chamber of Deputies. According to Holik there is agreement within the SPD party regarding the Crimean question. The party is currently organizing a visit of the Crimean delegation to Prague with the aim to support cooperation.

Similarly, Stanislav Berkovec, presented as a representative of the ANO party, told the newspaper that recently there have been opinions stating that the process of annexation occurred in compliance with legal norms. Izvestija has referred to a supposed “analysis” by the chairman of the Association of accredited attorneys for the relations with organs of public power of the EU (AALEP) Christian de Fouloy, who supposedly recognized the legality of the events.\footnote{59}

However, the lobbyist group AALEP is not directly connected to the EU and they are not EU lawyers, as has been mistakenly stated in the past. It is impossible to find all the members on the website of the association; however, one of the first names to catch attention is the lobbyist Oleg Rumyantsev. Rumyantsev is a public advisor of the federal service for mental ownership of the Russian Federation (Rospatent). He also works in the elite diplomatic school of the ministry of foreign affairs—the State institute of international relations in Moscow (MGIMO), whose Czech alumni can still be found in the Russian embassy in Prague.

\footnote{58}{https://iz.ru/662643/dmitrii-laru/cheshskii-parlament-sobiraet-golosa-protiv-antirossiiskikh-sanktcii}
\footnote{59}{https://iz.ru/662643/dmitrii-laru/cheshskii-parlament-sobiraet-golosa-protiv-antirossiiskikh-sanktcii}
Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

Holik’s activities in the past almost four years show diligent work in favor of Kremlin. While in 2014 he claimed that he cannot distinguish what is pro-Russian and what is not, because he is new to the field, in 2018 we can call him a matador, especially in terms of promoting the Kremlin vision of the world. Holik also participated in the celebrations of the Russian army victory at the Battle of Stalingrad, which will be described later. On this occasion, he told the Parlamentní listy (online manipulative platform) that he will also likely attend the monitoring mission of Russian presidential elections, in which he is favoring Vladimir Putin. According to him, Putin, as opposed to Jelcin, did not sell Russia in pieces, but rather “started looking after it and he moralized the worst oligarchs.”

Radim Fiala n the Russian Duma

At the end of June 2017, deputy for SPD Radim Fiala, alongside other representatives of the nationalist fraction within the European Parliament Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF), visited the Russian ministry of foreign affairs and the state Duma. Apart of the visiting group was among other people also Marine Le Pen, a member of the far-right French party Front Nationale. On his Facebook profile, he boasted that with his Russian colleagues, the discussed the questions of relations between European Member States and the Russian Federation. “I must say that we have similar opinions regarding the problems which concern fighting terrorism and for a long time we discussed the issue of sanctions, which the EU and the US imposed against Russia,” said Radim Fiala on the SPD site.

Radim Fiala, who was a member of ODS in the past is one of the prominent members of SPD. Along with Tomio Okamura, he was expelled from the Usivit prime demokracie party and witnessed the founding of SPD. In the 2017 parliamentary elections, he even helped the party get into the Parliament, as he used his personal property to guarantee the loan needed for its pre-election campaign.62 Fiala then managed to defend his mandate and become the chairman of the parliamentary club of his party. Within SPD, he is not the only propagator of strengthening relations with countries to the East. The chairman of the party himself (Tomio Okamura) is a leading critic of the sanctions against the Russia, but also the EU as a whole. That is why his party belongs to the most vocal proponents of the so-called Czexit, meaning a referendum about the Czech Republic exiting the EU. He considers all arguments of his opponents against this move as activity against direct democracy.

According to Fiala the current Russian regime is an authoritarian form of presidential democracy. According to his words, however, it does not present a threat to the Czech Republic. On the contrary, he considers Russia as an element of Czech economic and geopolitical stability. He thus deems the continuation of good relations with Russia as a precondition to Czech sovereignty.63 He also appreciates that Russia helped defeat the Islamic state.64 He considers the fact that Czech politicians and some media “started an information war with Russia” to be against Czech interests, because supposedly it is important to trade, not fight with Russia. According to Fiala it is an effort to rob the Czech Republic of its sovereignty and to swallow it into the European superstate. He has blamed Czech media from supporting the “rehabilitation of fascism and Nazism in the Baltics and in the Ukraine.”65

In the past Fiala has expressed his worries about the supposed efforts of certain EU and US politicians to push the Czech Republic into a conflict with Russia. Furthermore, he has long been blaming the EU for following a confrontational course in its relations with Russia, which according to him conflicts with Czech interests.66 As early as 2005 he claimed on his Facebook profile that anti-Russian sentiments, which would lead to geopolitical suicide, have been calculated with in Eastern European countries. According to him, certain “treacherous” political elites have been among the primary actors in this “nourished hatred” towards Russia.67

The deputy sees it clearly regarding the circumstances of the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts. According to him, Syria is a place of confrontation, because it stands in the way of oil and gas pipelines of fundamental, Islamist monarchies. He blames the escalation of the relations with Russia on the “anti-governmental state putsch in the Ukraine, where the legally elected president was overthrown. The uprising in eastern Ukraine and separation from Crimea on the basis of the so-called referendum were only subsequent steps.”68

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63 https://www.facebook.com(radimfiala.cz/videos/1155493484469457/
65 https://www.facebook.com(radimfiala.cz/videos/1155493484469457/
Observatory mission of deputies from Usvit, ANO and SPO parties of the so-called referendum in Crimea

In March 2014, a so-called referendum about the annexation of Crimea to Russia took place in the Crimean territory. According to the results, the annexation to Russia was supposedly supported by 96.85% of the votes. Neither OBSE nor the European Union sent observers to Crimea and the so-called referendum was not recognized by Western countries. The mission of the OBSE was according to news not admitted into the territory, as it was prevented by Russian occupational soldiers. However, three Czech politicians took part in the illegal “referendum”: the former deputy of Usvit prime demokracie Milan Sarapatka, the deputy of ANO Stanislav Berkovec, and the former deputy for SPO-Zemanovci and former mayor of Vysoke Myto Miloslav Sousek.

According to all three deputies, the so-called referendum fulfilled usual standards. The claim that the so-called referendum took place in accordance with democratic processes can be rightfully doubted for multiple reasons. During the occurrence of the event, the peninsula was occupied by Russia and pro-Russian militants, who thus supervised the voting. It was also in conflict with the Ukrainian constitution.

The observational mission in Crimea was not paid by money from any individual state, but rather from private donations, some from Russia. The Crimean parliament was supposed to play for the hotel accommodations. At least according to the Belgian, far-right extremist Luc Michel, whose Eurasian organization for democracy and elections organized and financed the trip. He is a person who supports...

world dictators “against Western imperialism.” In the past he has had ties with Hussain’s Iraqi embassy and Muammar Kaddafi’s regime. The website of his organization regularly publishes articles about the Ukraine, which are created in cooperation with RT. Michel also admitted that a supposed predisposition of joining the trip was disagreement with the official alliance politics in regards to relations with Crimea, which was however denied by Berkovec. Similarly to Sarapatka, he explained that he only wanted to see the so-called referendum with his own eyes, which, however, did not connect to his opinion of its legality.71

Supposedly, none of the Czech participants were aware of the financing details of the trip in advance. Deputy Sarapatka admitted that he travelled for free. However, he stated that he doesn’t find it crucial who financed the entire trip, because according to him it was not about who paid for the plane ticket, but to find out how a so-called referendum proceeds. The Usvit website, however, stated that he “accepted the invitation (author’s note: nonexistent) of a Brussels-based NGO—the European organization for free monitoring.” Berkovec, who reportedly covered the expenses of the trip himself, told the online publication Denik.cz that the organizer of the trip was (also impossible to be found) European organization for democracy and elections. According to him it was most likely an organization that cooperates with Brussels (he shared the fact that the trip to Crimea was organized from Brussels with Parlamentni listy as well), because deputies from Cyprus, France, Poland and Bulgaria also went to Crimea.72

Upon looking at the statements of individual deputies following their return to the Czech Republic, according to Berkovec Europe has its own share of blame in the Crimean conflict. According to him it would be possible to trade with Russia and to cooperate within the cultural sphere, as he doesn’t consider Russia as a country with antagonistic, politically disputed regime. According to Berkovec, the majority of people in Crimea see the annexation to Russia as a guarantee of a better future.73 According to him, both Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars incline towards Russia, because they remember the times of the USSR as secure. Czech media supposedly fuel hysteria and blow up the extent of the conflict, despite the fact that the local population remains completely calm. According to Berkovec the media should also find out about the opinions of the other side and present them objectively, without a commentary.74

Deputy Sarapatka claimed that the Ukrainian opposition decided to change the situation after the non-signing of the Association Agreement with the EU with force, with the support of certain Western politicians. Right before his departure for Crimea, he claimed that the government in Kiev was brutally overtaken by Ukrainian nationalists. According to him the situation was caused by the underlying geopolitical conflict, where the US is trying to break the balance in Eurasia and push Russia away from Europe.75 Sarapatka also factually doubted the role of Russia in the Ukrainian crisis, as according to him

the main reason was the US effort to separate the Ukraine from Russia, due to which Russia would lose its superpower standing. According to him the country is run by anti-Russian, anti-Semitic and anti-European ultra-nationalists, whose goal it is to escalate the situation. After Sarapatka was not admitted into the Ukraine as an unwanted person in 2017, he requested that the Czech Republic react to the incident in a reciprocal manner, forbidding “tens of Ukrainian deputies, who subscribe to the nationalist-fascist ideology of Stepan Bandera” from entering Czech territory.76

Miroslav Sousek (SPO) stated that the results of the so-called referendum correspond to what he saw in Crimea. According to Sousek, Czech media has been lying about the local situation, as he did not see any militia effect on the so-called elections.77

How the deputies wanted to send children to the occupied Crimea in cooperation with Kremlın

The delegation composed of three representatives of the Ustecky kraj (region), attended by deputy for CSSD Jaroslav Foldyna,78 the leader of the candidate list of SPO-Zemanovci in Ustecky kraj in the parliamentary elections in 2017 and the unsuccessful candidate to the senate Jaroslav Dubsky, went to Russia for the tourism expo in March 2017. During their trip they met with the deputy minister of education of the Russian federation. The topic of the meeting was among other things the implementation of Russian language classes into certain Czech schools and the potential participation of Czech pupils in pioneer camps of the International children’s center Artek, which is located in the occupied Crimea.79 Nonetheless, Czech children with As in Russian used to travel there with the support of the Ukrainin ministry of foreign affairs even before the annexation of Crimea.

Artek, which in the ages of the USSR used to function as the model display of socialism, was taken out of the Crimean administration and given to Moscow after the annexation of the peninsula. This act was not overthrown even by the protests coming from Kiev, which has currently almost no say in what happens in Artek. The main part of decision-making has been moved to Kremlın, which stated reconstructing the entire complex. Currently, Artek is again a place where prominent children can come on vacation for approximately 29,000 CZK. The second option to attend the ‘camp’ is as a reward for great results. This option should fill almost 90% of the spots available. The first children (selected Russian pupils) were supposed to come to Artek for the 70th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War in 2015.80

76 http://bleskove.cz/politika/8153-sarapatka-diplomaticky-incident-na-ukrajine
78 Jaroslav Foldyna has long been a member of the pro-Russian wing of CSSD. In the past, he has among other things stated that “who follows world politics at least to some degree cannot but agree with Mr. Putin.” In March 2015 he was one of the main orators at the event in Prague organized on the occasion of the publication of “White night: the truth about the Ukraine” book, which was published by the ministry of foreign affairs of the Russian federation.
How Czech deputies celebrate in Volgograd

In February 2018, Czech deputies travelled to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Red army victory in the Battle at Stalingrad during World War II. As part of their private trips funded by private funds, senator Jaroslav Doubrava (Severočeši.cz), vice chairman of KSCM Josef Skala, Jaroslav Holik (SPD) and MEP Jaromír Kohlicek (KSCM) attended the multi-day celebration, which included a military parade, a meeting with veterans and a speech by Vladimir Putin. The Czech delegation included other people such as the pro-Russian activist Zarko Jovanovich, a long-term admirer of Milos Zeman Jelena Vicanova, the ex-member of ODS Radim olecka, the chairman of the Czech federation of Warriors for freedom Jaroslav Vodicka and the deputy director of the Usti regional office Jaroslav Pikal. The official Czech diplomacy was not represented, as the ministry of foreign affairs was, according to the information available, not invited.81

Similarly to previous cases, some of the participants of the trip offered their observations to the Parlamentni listy. Holik, who apparently travels to Russia quite often, stated that Russia is abundant with cultivated lawns and flowering gardens. Reportedly, Russia was not harmed by the sanctions, but they instead resulted in the European Union playing the role of a “useful idiot”. According to Holik, without Russia we would probably have to make it up, so that we could blame everything on it. He himself is proud that he was able to attend the celebrations in “Stalingrad”.

Senator Doubrava reacted to the statement that it was a trip of collaborators. According to him "only a person of ‘mute spirit’ can talk about collaborators, because there has been a turn in the war and the first step to becoming a free nation was the arrival of the Red Army. He also said that to bow to the commemoration of the defenders of Stalingrad was a pure expression of gratitude." Doubrava considers Putin a god’s gift for Russia, just like Zeman for the Czech Republic. According to him, Zeman “sees that we have allies in the West, but friends in the East, which is much more important”.

Legitimization of the Russian Federation regime by the Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic

82 https://www.facebook.com/zdenek.ondracek.56
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