

## Summary of the Roundtable on Global Development for VNR 2025

**When:** January 29, 2025

**Where:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Format:** World Café

**Representation:** private, public, and nonprofit sectors; experts in global education

### Purpose of the roundtable:

The aim of the roundtable was to evaluate the current state and challenges of the Czech Republic's global development cooperation and to identify key trends from 2021 to 2025 that will inform the assessment in the National Voluntary Review (VNR). The discussion focused on the Czech Republic's role in the international development framework, foreign policy, the position of the nonprofit and private sectors, financing of sustainable initiatives, and the communication of development projects to the public.

### Methodology:

To identify the main successes and challenges in global development between 2021–2025, a roundtable was held with representatives from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The objective was to cover the broadest possible range of experts and perspectives on global development.

The roundtable was organized in a World Café format, enabling open debate on the topic simultaneously at four different tables. The process was facilitated by one professional facilitator and four table facilitators who summarized the main outputs from the discussions.

### Main outputs

#### 1. State of Foreign Development Cooperation (FDC)

- *Limited resources:* In 2021, the Czech Republic allocated 0.13% of its GNI to development cooperation (the lowest in the OECD). In 2022, support for Ukrainian refugees was included, raising the amount to 0.38%. In 2023, ODA decreased to 0.24% of GNI, but still remained above the Czech long-term average.
- *Increasing quality:* The Czech Republic is a traditional actor in development cooperation, with a noted shift towards more technologically advanced areas.
- *Financial tools:* National Development Bank, Ukraine support instruments, EU funding, and support for entrepreneurs through favorable financing.
- *Public communication:* Communication of development projects to the public should continue to improve. Progress is visible (e.g., National Development Day is positively

rated). Information should be more detailed and presented in a more attractive form.

- *Partnerships*: Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and partners from the nonprofit and corporate sectors is positively evaluated.
- *Personnel stability*: Limited personnel capacity and staff turnover at the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) and MFA are seen as weaknesses.
- *Evaluation*: Greater emphasis should be placed on project evaluation during planning, not only retrospectively.
- *Quotes*:
  - “The volume of foreign development cooperation has stagnated, but its quality has improved. We are modernizing and updating the topics we focus on.”
  - “Since 2021, communication between actors in foreign development cooperation has improved. We are moving forward together.”

## 2. Ukraine

- *Czech foreign policy*: Russian aggression in Ukraine since February 2022 has become the dominant topic of Czech foreign policy and development aid. Participants agreed on the significance of this issue within the sustainable development agenda.
- *Good initial response*: The response to the first wave of Ukrainian refugees—of which a record number were received—was generally positively assessed. The preparedness of the state and nonprofit sector was high.
- *Quotes*:
  - “The way the nonprofit sector mobilized was incredible. Great cooperation from the MFA, although support has since declined significantly.”
  - “The reaction to events in Ukraine showed that the Czech system was well prepared.”

## 3. The Czech Republic in International Organizations

- *Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU*: Generally rated very successful, but the significance of the Czech role in the EU was not sufficiently communicated domestically. One success was the negotiation of the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund.

- *Czech Commissioner and Global Gateway:* Positively noted that the Czech Republic secured the global development portfolio for Commissioner Šíkel.
- *Spillovers:* The Czech Republic currently lacks the ability to measure or monitor spillover effects, which is a shortcoming.

#### 4. Global Education

- Integration of Ukrainian children into the Czech education system contributed to greater cultural diversity understanding, but support is not always systematic.
- Funding for global education has decreased since 2018, complicating the long-term sustainability of initiatives.
- The nonprofit sector plays a crucial role in sustainability education.
- *Quotes:*
  - “NGOs continue to play a significant role in informal education of children and youth on sustainable development.”
  - “Children receive much more information from informal education than from formal education.”

#### 5. Role of the Nonprofit Sector

- Issues with unpredictable and insufficient funding.
- Important role of the academic sector.
- Člověk v tísni (People in Need) is very active globally, including in Ukraine.
- Youth volunteering is strong but hindered by administrative complexity.
- Examples of good practice: Moje Moringa (CZU), Pepperfield (Cambodia).
- *Quotes:*
  - “Younger generations consider volunteering more important than previous ones.”
  - “Unpredictability of funding and changing rules are obstacles to better functioning of nonprofits in development cooperation.”

- “Young people are very engaged but face administrative difficulties and then move to the private sector.”

## 6. Role of the Private Sector and ESG

- *ESG standards:* Since 2021, companies are required to report on social and environmental standards, but there is no clear overview of how many companies actually implement them.
- *Private sector in development cooperation:* Several tools have been developed to involve companies in development cooperation, but interest remains stagnant. Grant programs often offer limited amounts relative to administrative burden. Better linking of companies with development initiatives is needed.
- *Development financing:* There is limited information on the private sector's share in financing development and climate activities.
- *Good practices:* SDG Awards promote dialogue between private and public sectors; companies like IKEA and banks are implementing ESG.
- *Quotes:*
  - “SDG Awards contribute to raising awareness about sustainable development.”
  - “ESG helps connect the private and public sectors.”
  - “Networking companies within development cooperation is problematic. Public funding for support is insufficient.”

## 7. Climate Finance

- Since 2024, the Czech Republic has committed to contributing to the Green Climate Fund.
- Data on private sector participation in climate finance is insufficient; ESG reporting offers potential for evaluation.
- *Quotes:*
  - “The Czech pledge to contribute CZK 22 billion from 2024 to climate finance is a key step and progress compared to previous years when the Czech Republic did not contribute.”

- “Companies are obliged to work with sustainable financial tools, motivating them to be more sustainable.”
- “It is not well communicated that we are a significant polluter, so it is appropriate that we contribute.”

## 8. Recommendations

- Improve the visibility of the Czech Republic in international development cooperation and overall communication.
- Enhance integration of the private sector into development cooperation.
- Support long-term sustainability of global and informal education on the SDGs.
- Begin monitoring spillover effects.
- Evaluate new opportunities brought by ESG reporting.
- *Quote:*
  - “To increase attractiveness for private and nonprofit sector engagement, SDG labelling should be considered.”

## Conclusion:

The roundtable provided valuable insight into the current state and challenges of the Czech Republic’s global development cooperation from 2021–2025. The main event during this period was clearly the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the related assistance to a large number of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic, as well as humanitarian aid directed to affected areas. The successful management of the initial phase by both the state and nonprofit sector was very positively evaluated.

The discussion also highlighted that although the volume of development cooperation has stagnated, its quality has not declined. It identified key shortcomings and emphasized the need for better coordination among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors and more effective public communication. A positive change was noted in the linking of sectors through the introduction of ESG reporting. Key recommendations include strengthening the long-term sustainability of global education, improving the connection of companies with the development agenda, and emphasizing the measurement of real benefits of Czech cooperation in the international context.

The outputs of the roundtable provided an important basis especially for the VNR chapter dedicated to SDG 17, as well as other sections such as the integration of the SDGs into national frameworks and the international context.

Ministry of the Environment  
of the Czech Republic



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