

How AfD sets the pace here too

In a [German-language analysis](#) in Feb. of the security and defense policy of the government of Andrej Babiš entitled *From Expansion to Stagnation*, the Prague office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation wrote that the new Czech government appeared to be charting a course that was much different from the one of the Fiala government and that oscillated between aligning with the Coalition of the Willing and strengthening coordination with Hungary and Slovakia. "This raises the question," it said, "of to what extent the Czech Republic will remain a responsible partner in the EU and Nato, one that contributes to the security of its own country as well as to that of its allies."

It based this assessment on Babiš's "ambivalent" rhetoric, meaning mainly his contradictory statements about whether the country would meet its Nato commitments. Babiš was facing the challenge, the report said, of incorporating his contradictory announcements and priorities into the national budget. The main problem identified by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation was, in effect, the "pro-Russian, extreme-right" SPD, coupled with expensive campaign promises. Though it didn't say this directly, the report was implying that SPD was pushing Babiš off the course set by the previous government.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is the political think tank of CDU, the party of Chancellor Friedrich Merz. CDU is now under extreme pressure in the polls from AfD, which is SPD's partner in Germany. In a [YouGov survey](#) this week, AfD gained one percentage point compared to May, to 29%, and CDU/CSU lost two percentage points, to 20%. The nine-point lead over CDU/CSU is a new record for AfD. Far behind CDU/CSU in third place were the Greens, at 14%.

AfD's success in Germany isn't rubbing off on SPD in the CR. Tomio Okamura's party remains in the [6-8% range](#), after a [7.8% finish](#) in the 2025 parliamentary elections. That was in an alliance with other parties that aren't included in SPD's current poll numbers.

Okamura said in [MFD on Wed.](#) that his party is planning a nice campaign for the municipal elections. Part of it, he

said, will be a refresh of the SPD logo and of the design of its campaign material. "I'm curious to see the reaction," he said, "because we've reached out to a German graphic design studio that was recommended to us by AfD, which is currently leading in the polls in Germany."

Orban as his role models, but he is slowly learning from them. Especially in terms of making governing easier for himself and handling his critics."

Okamura told MFD that he isn't happy with SPD's poll numbers and wants to rise into the double digits. He didn't present a clear path for doing so, other than to continue to push the coalition's priorities.

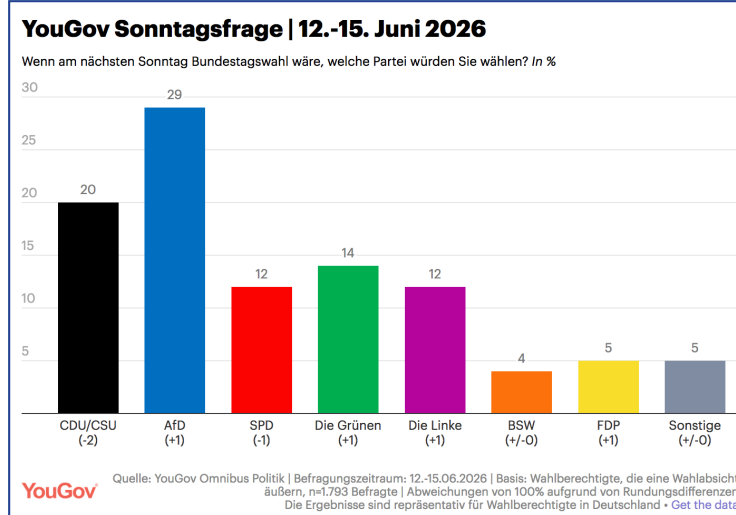
The bill for [changing the financing model](#) and cutting the budgets at Czech TV and Czech Radio is his party's idea, but it hasn't brought much benefit to SPD so far. There are clear reasons for SPD's inability to replicate AfD's success. Germany is in a much more advanced stage of general malaise, which gives AfD, as an anti-systemic party, a big advantage over CDU and the other traditional parties. Plus, AfD is in the opposition, whereas SPD is part

of the Czech government and must fight off constant criticism from the opposition and mainstream media. As the situation in Germany and Europe worsens, AfD will only get stronger.

The worse the situation gets, the more the Babiš-led government will likely try to blame the domestic Czech problems on the EU. Remember, [Babiš](#) said in the [Financial Times](#) this month that, "The EU is now probably on the same road as the end of the Roman empire." If Okamura is the "idea leader" of the coalition, he's probably the one who will understand first when to ratchet up the rhetoric.

This, in turn, will force Babiš to do the same. Babiš won't under any circumstances want ANO's poll ratings to drop below 30%, and things will have to get very bad in Europe before many voters of the current opposition cross over to ANO, SPD or the Motorists. So Babiš will likely increasingly become more like Okamura, just as he has by backing Okamura's public-media law.

The only way, then, to assure that the Babiš government and the country in general "remain a responsible partner in the EU and Nato" is to get Europe in order. In which case AfD's ratings will start to fall, CDU will regain its dominant position in Germany, and some form of the previous Fiala coalition will return to power in the CR. The ball, therefore, is much more in Merz's court than in Babiš's.



Februar 2026
Länderbericht
Auslandsbüro Tschechische Republik

KONRAD ADENAUER STIFTUNG

Vom Ausbau zur Stagnation

Tschechiens Verteidigungs- und Ukrainepolitik unter der neuen Regierung Babiš - ein erster Eindruck

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Die sicherheitspolitischen Rahmenbedingungen, in denen sich die Tschechische Republik seit dem russischen Angriffskrieg gegen die Ukraine befindet, haben in den vergangenen Jahren zu einer Veränderung der Verteidigungsplanung geführt. Unter der Regierung von Petr Fiala (ODS) war Tschechien bereit, die Verteidigungsausgaben schrittweise zu erhöhen und sie ließ keinen Zweifel an der Unterstützung für die Ukraine. Doch die neue Koalitionsregierung von Andrej Babiš, die durch die populistische Partei ANO, die rechtsextrémistische Antisystempartei SPD (Freiheit und Direkte Demokratie) und die populistisch-konservative Partei der Motoristen gebildet wird, schlägt in vielen Bereichen einen neuen Kurs ein.

Die Vorgängerregierung von Petr Fiala war bereit, die Ausgaben für Verteidigung im Einklang mit dem auf dem NATO-Gipfel in Den Haag vereinbarten Ziel bis 2035 auf fünf Prozent des Bruttoinlandsprodukts anzuheben, davon 3,5 Prozent für militärische Fähigkeiten und 1,5 Prozent für sicherheitsrelevante Infrastruktur wie Logistik oder Cyberabwehr. Dieser Ansatz wurde durch ein bereits 2025 beschlossenes nationales Stufenmodell ergänzt, das jährliche Aufwüchse um 0,2 Prozentpunkte bis 2030 vorsah, sodass der Verteidigungshaushalt bis dahin auf drei Prozent des BIP steigen sollte. Fiala verstand diese Entscheidung nicht nur als sicherheitspolitische Notwendigkeit, sondern auch als Chance für Innovation, Forschung und wirtschaftliches Wachstum. Parallel dazu wies Generalstaatschef Karel Řehka wiederholt darauf hin, dass die Struktur der tschechischen Armee den aktuellen Bedrohungen nicht gerecht werde. Insbesondere angesichts der aggressiven russischen Außenpolitik und der anhaltenden Kriegshandlungen müsse die Armee von aktuell etwa 28.000 auf 37.500 Soldatinnen und Soldaten anwachsen und umfassend modernisiert werden.

Ambivalente Rhetorik der neuen Regierung unter Premierminister Babiš

Mit dem Regierungswechsel Ende 2025 hat sich jedoch die strategische Ausrichtung verändert. Die Regierung unter Premierminister Andrej Babiš diskreditiert sich von den o.a. tschechischen Verpflichtungen zur Erhöhung der Verteidigungsausgaben. Babiš erklärte am

SPD, unlike its role model AfD, isn't moving up in the polls, but it is indeed moving Czech politics. Political analyst Lukáš Jelínek said this week that Okamura is the "idea leader" of the Babiš-led coalition. "Spreading hate and the cultural wars are his [Okamura's] domain," Jelínek said. "Babiš sometimes frowns, but he backs him up. He [Babiš] doesn't have the courage to name Robert Fico and Viktor