Czech Republic
Vanderbilt

The Czech Republic was one of two states formed on January 1, 1993, after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Though it is a mixed system, with both a President and a Prime Minister, the Prime Minister is the head of state (even though in the former Czechoslovakia, it was the President who was the head of state). The Czech Republic had its own functioning government before the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (as did Slovakia). After it became independent, the Prime Minister Václav Klaus, of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), who was in power before the split, continued in office. He ruled with a coalition of the Civil Democratic Alliance (ODA) and the Christian Democratic Union-Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL). This coalition continued in power until 1997. In 1996, the coalition failed to gain an absolute majority in elections, but managed to negotiate a return to power (Stroehlein, 1999).

In 1997, the Czech Republic suffered from several unfortunate events. Firstly, the economy was in a severe downturn. Second, there was widespread damage from flooding in Moravia. And lastly, the ODS was becoming increasingly divided. In November, after a corruption scandal involving the ODS and Klaus slowly losing popularity, he was forced to resign. President Havel then appointed the former chairman of the Czech National Bank, Joseph Tosovsky. Though Tosovsky's government was seen to be an interim one, it did enact several important policies, including the approval of the Czech Republic's entry into NATO. Tosovsky himself was nonpartisan, and his cabinet was chosen by Havel, but he was able to make policy decisions because he was not bound by ideological constraints (Stroehlein, 1999). His time in office is still considered "interim", therefore, he is not coded as a SOLS change.

Elections were held in 1998, and Milos Zeman, the leader of the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) won the office of Prime Minister. This is a SOLS change. Zeman was in office until he stepped down as the CSSD chairman in 2002. He was replaced by his First Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Spidla, who lead as coalition government with the KDU-ČSL and US-DEU. Spidla was in office until 2004, when he resigned and was replaced by his Deputy, Stanistlav Gross. This is not a SOLS change). Gross, in turn, left office in 2005 after a series of corruption scandals came to light. He was replaced by high-ranking party member Jirí Paroubek. This is not a SOLS change.

In the parliamentary elections of 2006, the CSSD finished second behind the ODS. The ODS then formed a minority government under Mirek Topolánek. This is a SOLS change. There was a minor SOLS change in 2007 when the ODS entered into coalition with the KDU-CSL and the Green Party (SZ). Topolánek remained in office until 2009

In 2009, Mirek Topolánek's government fell after losing a no-confidence vote (VOA 2009). In May, Jan Fischer was appointed by the president to head a caretaker government to lead the country through elections (Lazarova 2009; AFP 2009). In June 2010, Fischer resigned after elections in May and Petr Nečas was appointed as prime minister (Korselt 2010). Because Fischer was the head of a caretaker government and serves for less than 18 months, we consider him an interim leader. Accordingly, the transition between Topolánek and Fischer is not coded as a SOLS change. The transition from Fischer to Nečas is not coded as a SOLS change because

Nečas and Topolánek, the leader prior to the interim Fischer, were from the same political party (ODS).

Due to a corruption scandal, Nečas resigned as prime minister in 2013 (BBC News 2013a). Jiří Rusnok was appointed by the president to lead a caretaker government (BBC News 2013b). The government needed to pass a parliamentary vote of confidence, but failed to win the vote, resulting in Rusnok's resignation in August 2013 (BBC News 2013c). Parliament was dissolved, triggering early elections (AFP 2013). Rusnok stayed as prime minister in a caretaker capacity until the new government, led by Bohuslav Sobotka, from the CSSD party, took over in January 2014 (Lopatka & Muller 2014). We consider Rusnok an interim leader because he led a caretaker government and served for less than 18 months. As a result, the transition from Nečas to Rusnok is not coded as a SOLS change. The transition from Rusnok to Sobotka is coded as a SOLS change because Sobotka was from a different political party than Nečas.

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