

# **Migration Narratives in Europe**

## ***A Social Media Intelligence Study***

*Country report for the Czech Republic*



**A Bakamo Public**  **Project for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung**

**- 2019 -**

## Context of Czech migration discourse

- **The Czech Republic** is a landlocked country in Central Europe with a **population of 10,538,275** as of 2015. At its peak, official **asylum seekers in the country made up 0.03% of the population**.\*
- Public social media conversation in the Czech Republic around migration in one year consists of **~353,600 posts**. Compared to population size, **the conversation on migration in the Czech Republic is the 15th largest in the EU**.
- The Czech Republic is a unitary parliamentary constitutional republic. **The President, Miloš Zeman** (elected in 2018), is the head of state, and **Prime Minister Andrej Babiš** (elected in 2017, representing the center-populist party 'ANO 2011') **is the head of government**. **ANO 2011 is currently the largest political party and takes an aggressively anti-migrant stance**. Most of the remaining parties in the Czech government are also anti-migrant.



\*Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>



## Introduction | CZ

# The Czech Context: *Politics & Migration*

The **topic of migration within the Czech Republic** must be understood **in the context of the country's history**, as well as the **recent role political groups have had in shaping the conversation**. **Czechs have little-to-no experience with migrants from regions outside the EU**, as the majority of its' migrants come from nearby Eastern European countries with relatively small language and cultural differences.

**During the 2015 migration crisis, politicians exploited this unfamiliarity** by stirring up panic and fear around migrants from Muslim-majority countries. **Consequently, the Czech Republic effectively refused to accept any migrants during the crisis.**

In recent years, **migration has continued to be used as a proxy issue** in public debates, especially those running up to the **2017 parliamentary and 2018 presidential elections**. The majority of candidates used anti-migrant platforms to express patriotism, and also used the topic as a way to defend Czech sovereignty from out of touch and incompetent EU elites.

**The popularity of this message is evident today, as the winners of both elections** (Andrej Babiš elected as Prime Minister in 2017, and Miloš Zeman re-elected as president in 2018) **both outmatched their opponents in their usage of anti-migrant rhetoric.**

\*Source: [https://www.zdravka-plzen.cz/sites/default/files/content/studie\\_migranti\\_final.pdf](https://www.zdravka-plzen.cz/sites/default/files/content/studie_migranti_final.pdf)

All images represented in this report appeared as attachments to posts on public social media platforms, and are used here as illustrations of the public online conversation.



Andrej Babiš, elected as  
Prime Minister in 2017



Miloš Zeman, re-elected as  
president in 2018



## Key Findings | CZ

# How and Where Do Czechs Discuss Migration On Social Media?

### Size of Pan-European Narratives

**Politicians have securitized the migration debate** by linking crime and violence to failed integration. Consequently, **security and identity and customs are the largest narratives**.

### Local Issues

In the presidential and parliamentary elections, **Czech politicians used the issue of migration as a proxy to reshape the country's political system**. The issues of sovereignty, security, and identity were linked.

### EU & Domestic Politics

While domestic politics does spur conversation within the Czech Republic, **international references are mentioned more frequently** due to a fear of the EU and other **international entities trying to influence local politics**.

### Conversation Tone

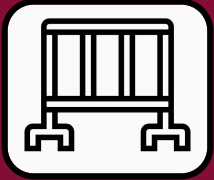
The migration conversation has a largely **conversation tone**, with politicians and media outlets shaping the conversation by **presenting primarily anti-migrant information in a factual manner**.

### Conversation Channels

The migration conversation was dominated by online news outlets, Twitter, and blogs. However, content from **online news sites tend to spark the most engagement**.



# Pan-European Narratives: *The Czech Context*



Security was the largest narrative within the Czech migration discussion. Candidates running in the 2017 legislative and 2018 presidential elections **focused primarily on the threat migrants posed to individual, national, and EU-wide security.**



Having very little direct experience with Islam, the identity and customs narrative contains a **common fear of losing local identity to Muslim migrants. Czech politicians** also used **Euroscepticism to create anxiety around the topic of Czech sovereignty.**



Pro-migrant voices emphasize the legal and **moral obligation the Czech Republic has in accepting migrants.** In contrast, **anti-migrant voices make a distinction between real and economic migrants.**



While **some Czechs are not concerned about the economic consequences** of migrants **due to a strong local economy and low unemployment rate,** others give voice to concerns about the impact of migrants on **rising economic inequality and debt.**



The Czech Republic is struggling with the impact of an **aging population on the labour market and social- and healthcare systems.** Pro-migrant voices see incoming **migrants as a solution** whereas anti-migrant voices believe **Eastern European migrants provide a sufficient supply of new labour.**



# + *Pan-European Narratives in the Czech Republic*



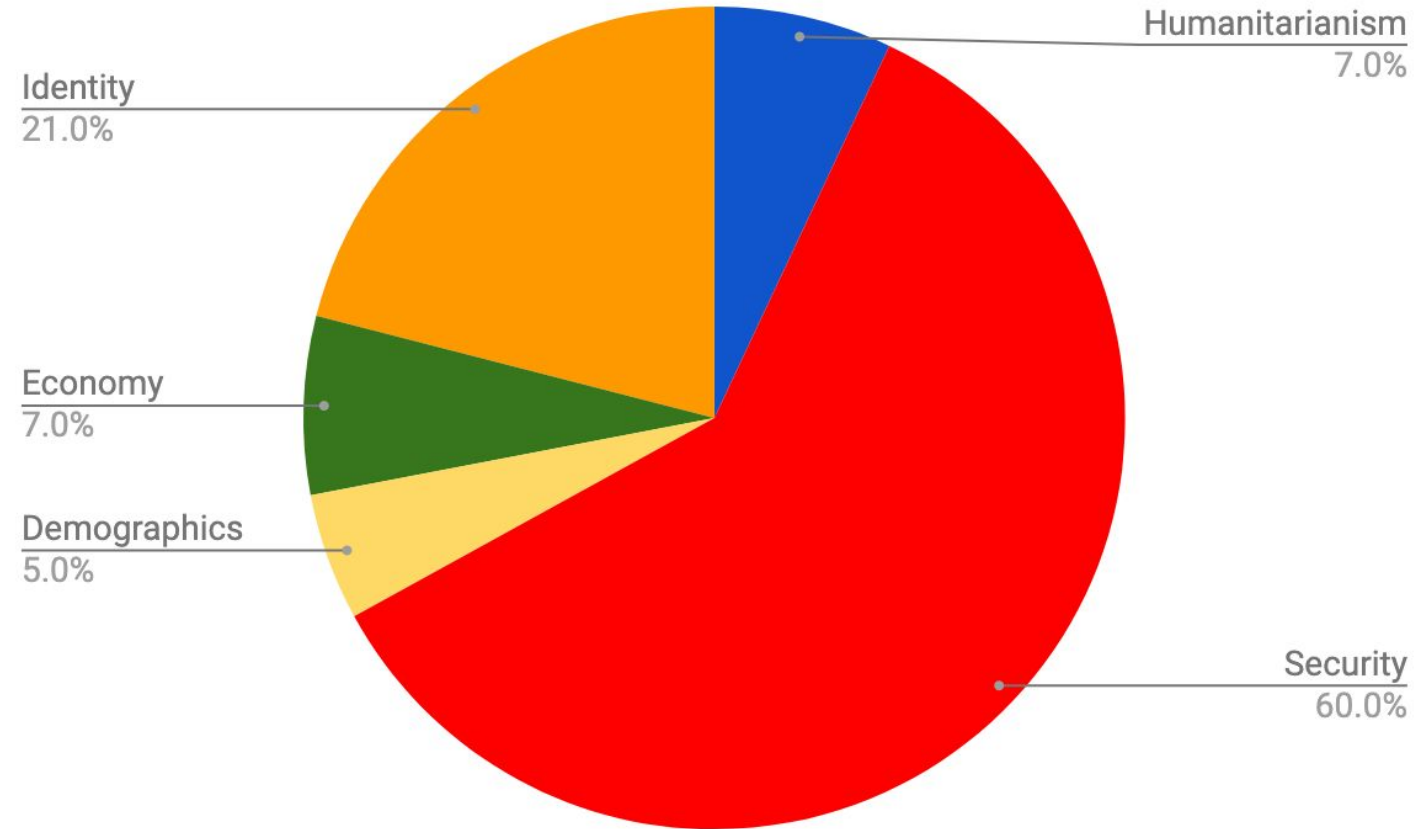
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# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Narrative Size in the Czech Republic

The Czech migration discussion focuses on the securitization of migration. Incoming migrants are not only seen as a national security threat, but the topic is also used to voice considerable criticism of both past and current action plans proposed by the EU “elites.”





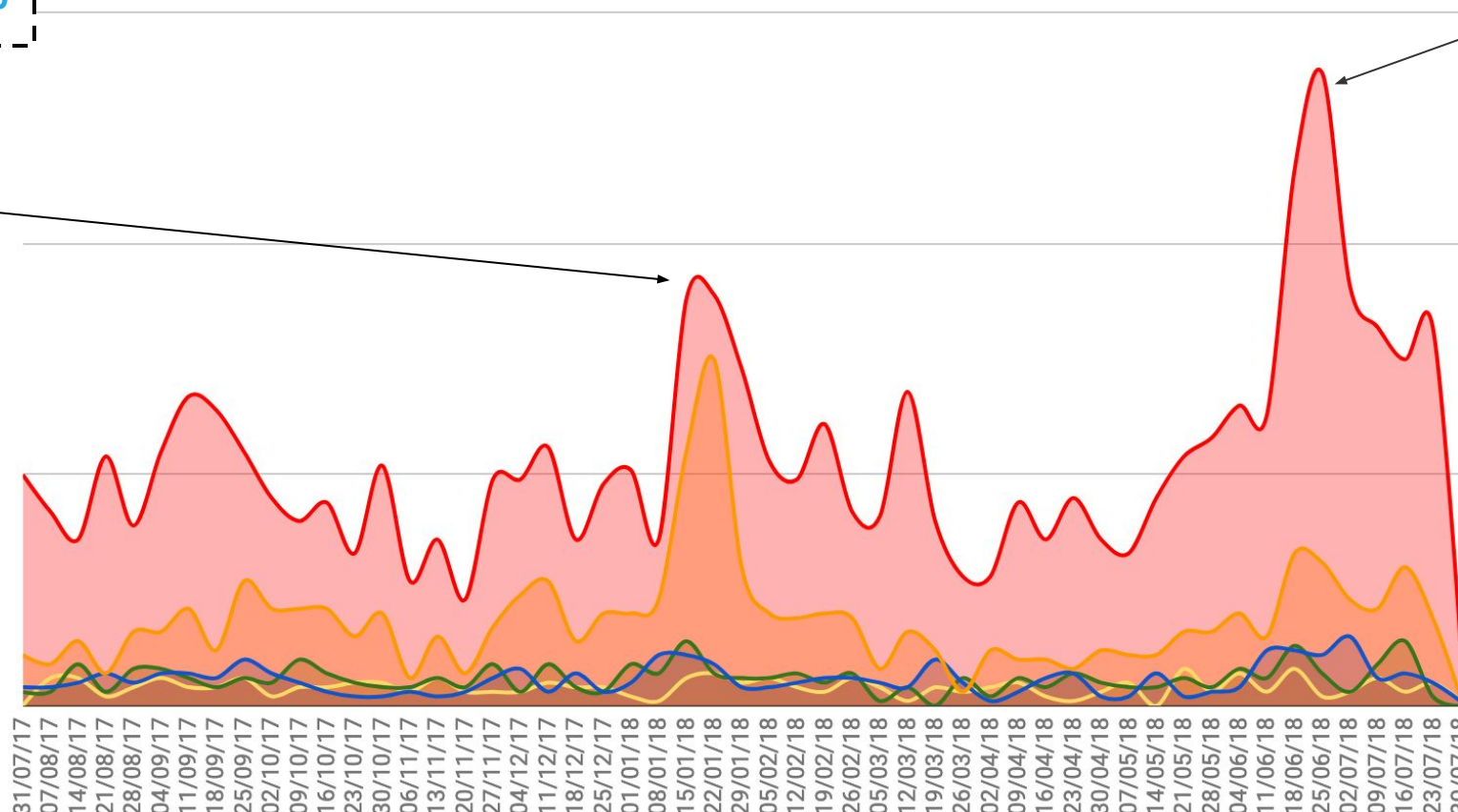
# The shape of the migration discourse

The majority of narratives tend to spike when Czechs engage in conversations about specific politicians and various stances on migration.

Overall Results: ~354,000

■ Demographics ■ Economy ■ Humanitarianism ■ Identity ■ Security

**Miloš Zeman:** “*The solution to the arrival of migrants to Europe has three points...[1] is the consistent protection of the EU’s borders from illegal migration...[2] the consistent deportation of those who have not been granted asylum...[3] helping migrants [by providing assistance to them] in their countries of origin.*”



**Discussions around the June EU summit on migration:**  
“*According to Babis, it is also important that everyone in the EU abandons the idea of relocating migrants by quota...[and also insisted] any agreement on the reform of the EU asylum system must be reached by consensus, with the agreement of all the bloc countries.*”





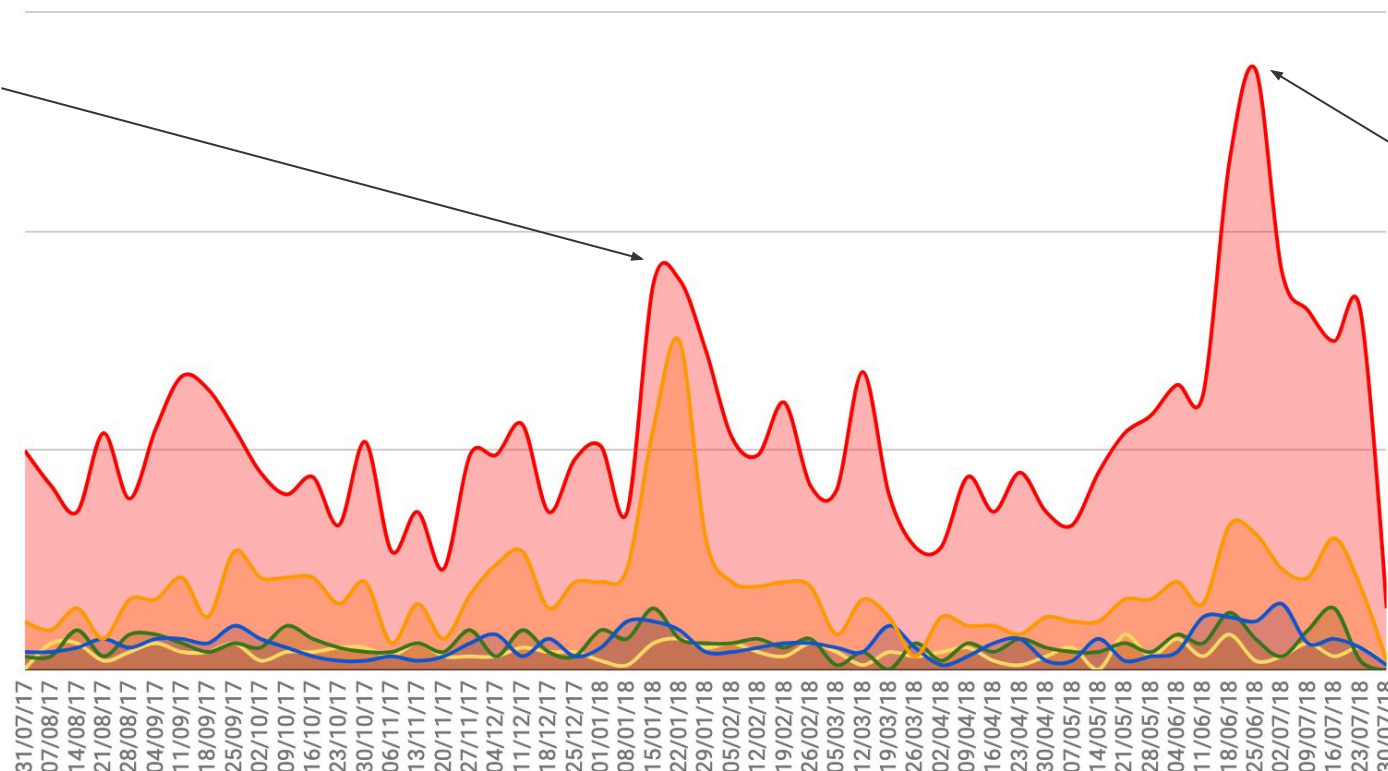
# Peak Analysis: Narrative Comparison

Events covering EU summits and meetings create peaks in the security, identity, and demographics narratives.

Local politicians and media outlets portray EU “elites” as encroaching on Czech sovereignty by attempting to force the country to comply with incompetent and unwanted migration policies. These policies are often seen as threatening national security, identity, and long-term prosperity.

■ Demographics ■ Economy ■ Humanitarianism ■ Identity ■ Security

**Mirek Topolánek [Czech Politician]:** "If the EU does not protect the Schengen border, then we have to close our own border...*If the EU approves Dublin IV, we have to close the Czech border...we cannot accept migrants, we would let ourselves go [and fail to preserve Czech civilization].*"



"The *[EU] summit* should, among other things, agree to a new approach to migrants ... *Migration can be fatal to the EU*, Merkel admitted. Yet they defend the opening of the gate to refugees "

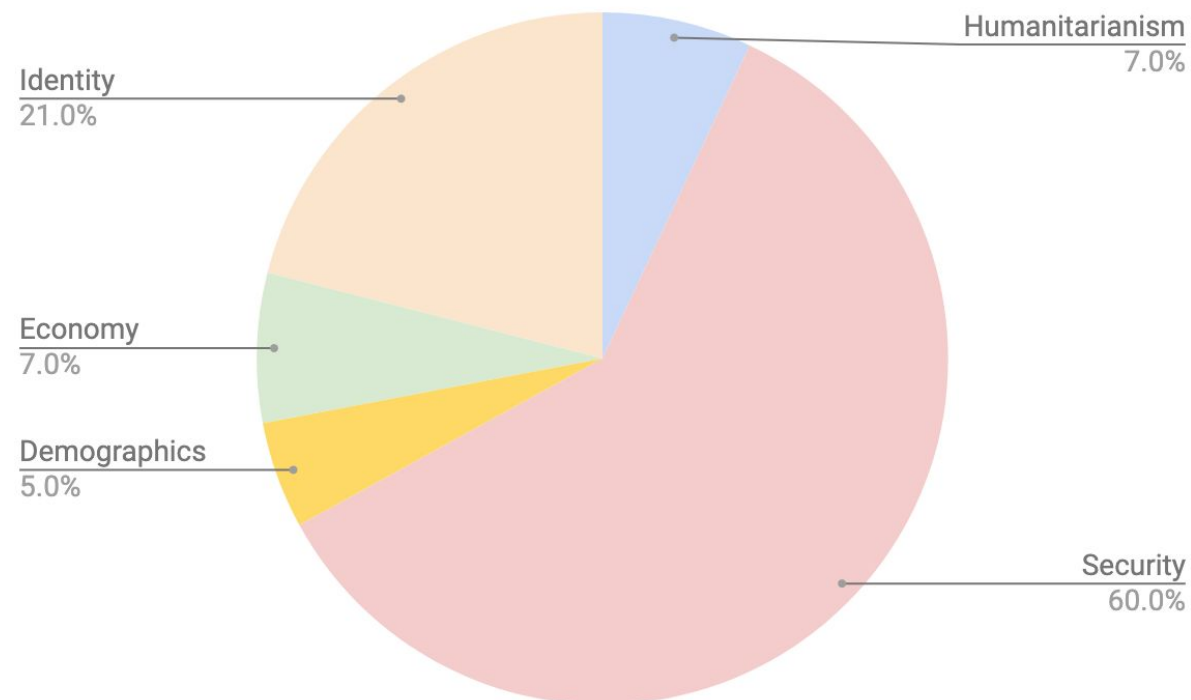
# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Demographics (1): *Key Points*

Due to a decreasing birth rate, dwindling foreign worker supply, and an aging population, the Czech Republic is currently struggling with the impact of an **aging population** on the labour market, as well as social and healthcare systems.

The public is divided on the issue: **pro-migrant voices** see **incoming migrants as a possible solution to this crisis**, whereas **anti-migrant voices** insist there is no need to seek work from outside Europe because **migrants from Eastern Europe provide a sufficient supply of new labour**.

**Results:**  
**~16,000 (5%)**





# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Demographics (2): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

We should only draw upon the labour supply of those countries culturally similar to ours

*Czech companies are particularly concerned about the shortage of employees. It is necessary to **bring economic immigrants from related countries such as Ukraine, Belarus, perhaps Kazakhstan and others** to assist us.*

*If the EU, including the Czech Republic, really **needed a workforce, it would involve Eastern European embassies and employment agencies.** (...) Illiterate blacks do not speak English and are unwilling to work.*

Migrants from African countries do not meet the needs of local labour demand

*If **African migrants come to our country and have to go to integration courses to be taught decent behavior, one can expect that there will be problems** as they probably do not have proper work experience. And there will also be problems with work performance and ethics.*

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

We need migrant labour to sustain the Czech economy

*We cannot rely on demographic developments either. Czechs do not procreate sufficiently, and even though the situation improved since 2000, even the most optimistic prognosis won't be sufficient for natural recovery of the local population. **The number of the inhabitants of the Czech Republic has been rising so far, but that is mainly due to positive migration.***

***By actively promoting skilled migration and enhancing its participation in the labor market,** the report says **it is possible to mitigate the negative impact of the expected decline in 50 million workers of working age** in Europe over a ten-year horizon.*

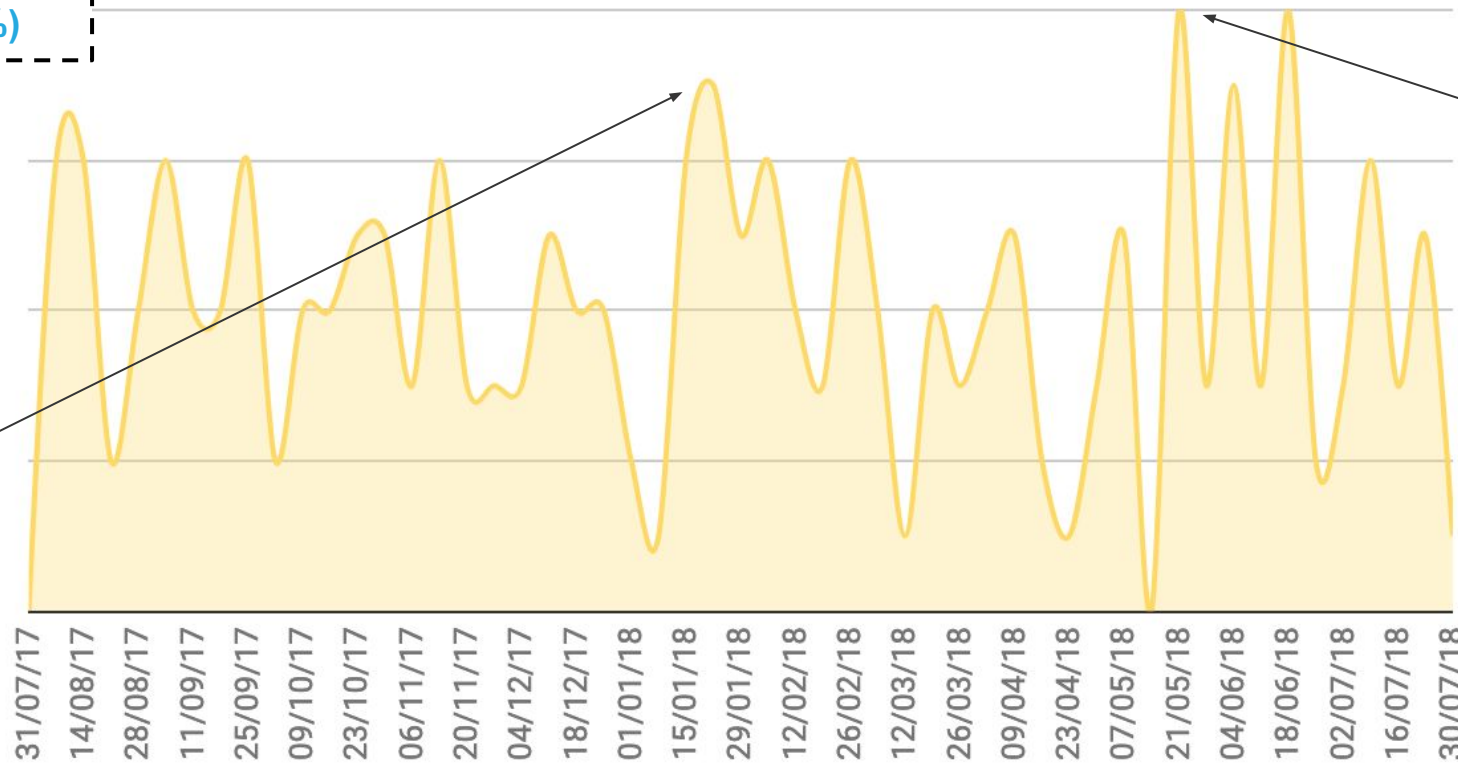


# Demographics (3): *Conversation Peaks*

The **demographic narrative spikes** when Czechs engage in conversations about **reports projecting the impact of an aging population on the labour market**, as well as the perceived involvement of the “European elites.”

**Results: ~16,000 (5%)**

*"The European elites first argued that immigration is a blessing for the economy and pointed to the **aging of the domestic population** as evidence. However, the elites refuse to acknowledge a **growing portion of the population that does not want this.**"*



The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): **Growth in the economy is hampered**, according to the OECD report, among other things, by the labor market, where companies have the problem of finding suitable workers.

Demographics

# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Economy (1): *Key Points*

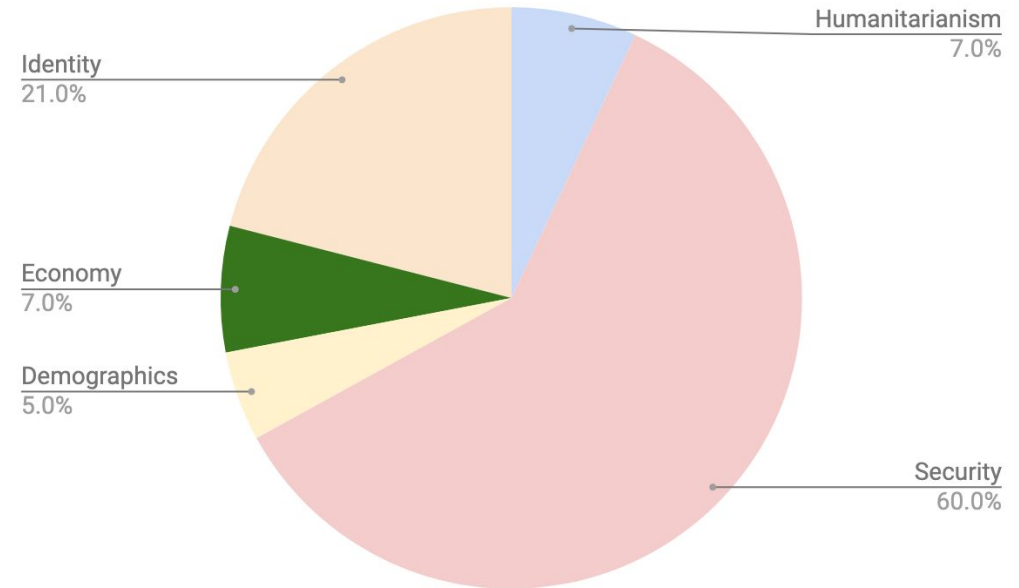
The Czech Republic has a stable economy, low unemployment rate, and a well-developed welfare system which provides social services such as health care and tuition-free education to citizens of the Czech Republic.

While most economic indicators suggest the country is thriving, individuals give voice to **concerns about rising personal debt, resulting in economic inequality.**

Ordinary people often feel there is an inequality whereby they have to fight hard for whatever little they have, whereas the international political and **intellectual elites give migrants (or Roma) access to social systems for free, and with no strings attached.** This creates a feeling that the elites do not recognize the economic consequences of migrants, and are not interested in the plight of the ordinary citizens who do.

**Pro-migrant voices counter the zero-sum-game argument by pointing to the thriving Czech economy and low unemployment rate.**

**Results:**  
**~24,000 (7%)**





# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Economy (2): Quotes



### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

The Czech Republic already has too much debt, it cannot afford to support migrants

*The volume of the total debt of the population has started to increase more than two years ago. **The dynamics of year-on-year Czech household debt growth rose from 5% to 9% last year.***

***The valorisation of pensions is very important** right now, especially in the context of rising household and public debt in the Czech Republic. **However, if we are forced to comply with the Dublin IV\***, we would have to feed around 1,600 migrants... **How would the valorization take place when we have to feed these migrants while our state debt has 12 nil?***

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

The Czech Republic is thriving economically, mass migration is not a concern

*Though it is true that voters gave preference to fear of facts (...) the **Czech Republic** has also been experiencing economic growth recently, and now has one of the **lowest unemployment rates. Mass migration does not concern the country.***

***Czechs are at the least risk of poverty throughout the European Union (...)** and they have the **lowest unemployment. We have no migration problems.** The average income is growing, and the local economy is expanding. We have never been as good as we are now. Still, the country shakes with dissatisfaction and a desire for change... How is it possible?*

\*Dublin IV: the EU regulation which determines which Member States takes migrants

[Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?jsessionid=jHNITp3HLjqw8mqGbQSpZh1VWpjCyVQq14Hgcztw4pbfSQZffnrn!557467765?uri=CELEX:32013R0604>]

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

Like they did in other EU countries, migrants will demand too much from our social systems

*We don't want Muslim migrants with 10 brats running around Czechia and demanding at least 20,000 CZK [cca 770 EUR] per person, free apartment, universities for free, mosques, etc.*

*With a stable 25 % unemployment rate among the Italian youth, there won't be many stable jobs for migrants...(in Italy, nor will there be any stable jobs for migrants in the Czech Republic). Migrants will present long-term burden for the state budget.*

The political elites are incompetent and do not care about ordinary citizens

*I am definitely unwilling, and I think that a number of Czech citizens are also not willing to bear responsibility and pay for the mistaken decisions of the so-called VIP politicians in Brussels.*

*The "elites" deal only with marginal problems, such as the question of whether we have two or more sexes. They ignore, for example, the ever-growing economic gap between the richest and poorest fellow citizens.*



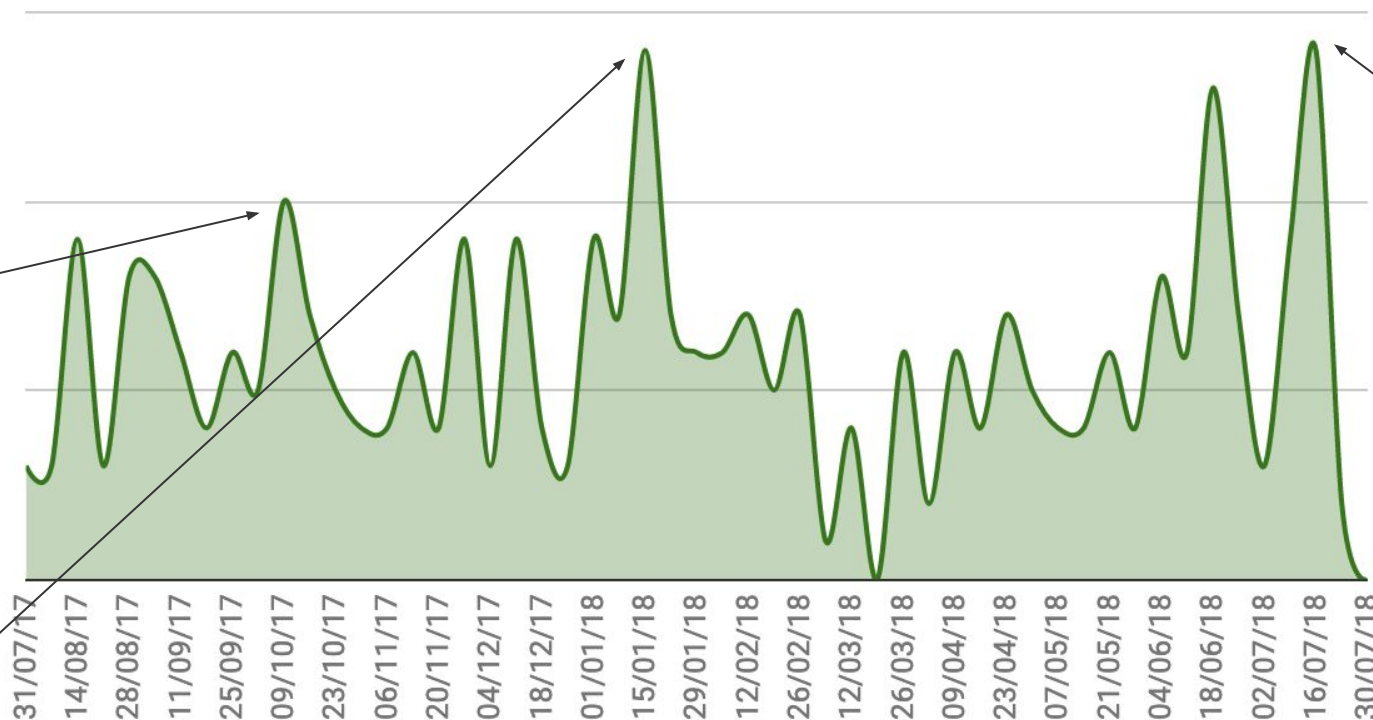
# Economy (4): Conversation Peaks

Politicians in the 2017 and 2018 elections portrayed the EU putting pressure on the Czech Republic to accept mandatory migrant quotas as a prime example of elites **forcing ineffective and expensive solutions onto ordinary citizens**.

Results: ~24,000 (7%)

Andrej Babiš (PM): “*The EU has imposed quotas on us when we refused quotas, so they threatened us. Now they have changed and say they will give 60 thousand euros for one refugee. All **this is unacceptable.***”

Miloš Zeman (President): “*The main issue of quotas is political - **the other member states are imposing a procedure that we can not agree to on principle.***”



SPD (Eurosceptic Czech political party): “*We face a deliberate attack from the EU on our culture, **sovereignty**, and freedom! We must increase defense spending to discourage immigration.*”

Economy

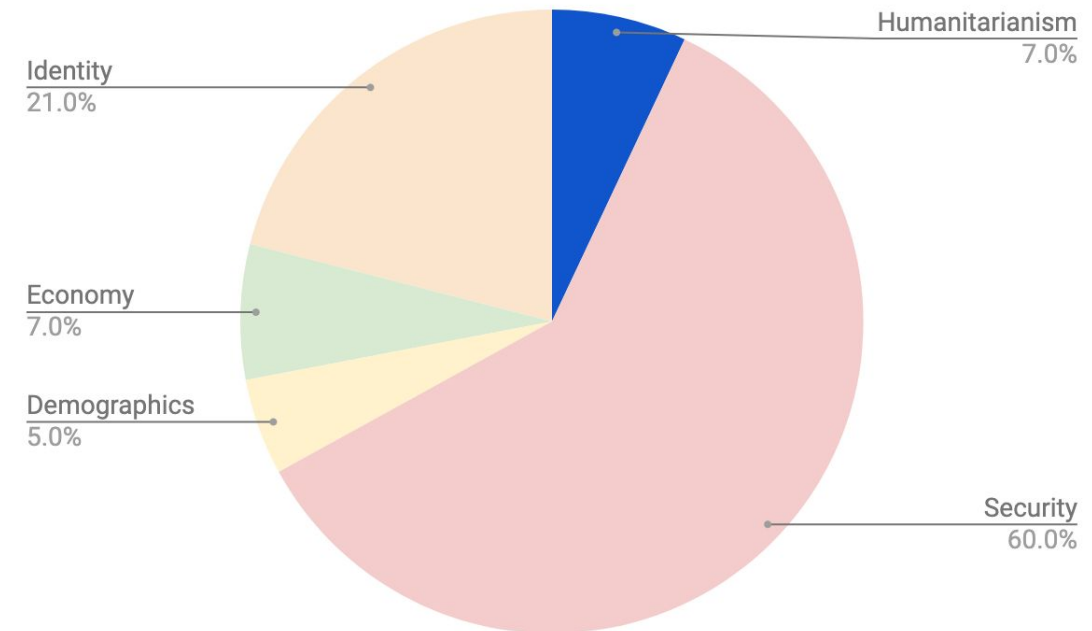
# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Humanitarianism (1): *Key Points*

Owing to the fact that there are very few domestic leaders with pro-migrant attitudes, **pro-migrant Czechs often attempt to garner support and sympathy for migrants fleeing war-torn countries by drawing upon statements made by international leaders** (such as Pope Francis). These supporters also tend to **emphasize the legal obligation** that the Czech Republic, as an EU Member state, has to accept migrants.

In contrast, **local politicians often voice the opinion of anti-migrant Czechs by making a strong distinction between “real” and “economic” migrants**. Even when considering those deemed “real migrants,” there is a strong belief that **only women and children should be granted asylum**, whereas men should stay in the native countries to solve the problems forcing people to flee. Czech religious leaders (such as the Archbishop of Prague) also advocate for such policies.

**Results:**  
**~24,000 (7%)**





# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Humanitarianism (2): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

The Czech Republic should only accept “real” refugees

*Kulhanek [presidential candidate] has nothing against migrants, from war-affected areas; he would accept women, children and elderly. “My opinion is that **young man, when they have a problem at home, should solve it there.** Then, the rest of the family – that is residing with us in the Czech Republic – would have a reason to go back home, if the local conflict is solved,”*

*I think that most refugees are not here because of the real threat of war, but simply because it is beneficial for them to be here. The Czech Republic has good social benefits and opportunities for employment.*

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

It is our humanitarian and legal obligation to assist migrants

*Czechs refuse to help Italy with solving the problem of 450 migrants. It **shows two basic characters of local politics: reducing alliance** to a means of **fulfilling short-term interests** and **turning humanity into self-love.** “Let them die at sea, we don’t care.”*

*I may not sound too conformist...but am obligated to “help thy neighbor” so **I would calmly live with some quota and redistribution,** even though I am not denying that it is a rather unfortunate solution.*

*For God's sake, **there are several dozen people who just flee from hell and need help.** And **we have some commitments,** we are members of the European Union and maybe if we get into a similar situation, we would be glad if someone helped us.*





# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Humanitarianism (3): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

The Czech Republic should only accept “real” refugees

*These are war refugees: the war ended, their home is liberated so they should return home to Syria. War refugees do not have other intentions - they just want to go home. **What we have now in Europe is the occupation of Muslim troops on our continent**, not miserable refugees.*

Only the elites from the Prague Cafe buy into this fake sense of humanitarianism

*Migrants flee from countries where nobody threatens them to Libya, where they are fighting. Allegedly, they suffer from starvation in camps where they lie and even are allegedly sold as slaves. Maybe this is the first time they work, and they have to save them from something like that. **It is necessary to play again a humorous comedy about humanity and human rights, a little bit of truth and love from the Prague café\*.***

*\*The Prague Café is a pejorative metaphor coined and used by President Miloš Zeman to create a clear distinction between himself (and his supporters) and his opponents. Zeman claims the majority of his opponents are either sympathizers of, or members of an elitist group that claim themselves to be the arbiters of conventional wisdom, and are intolerant of the less well-off, every-day man. Given the fact that they are mostly isolated within their “**café communities**,” they are out of touch and unconcerned with the needs of normal citizens. (<https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/jan-horn-t/prague-caf-brief-incursion-into-czech-presidential-discourse>)*

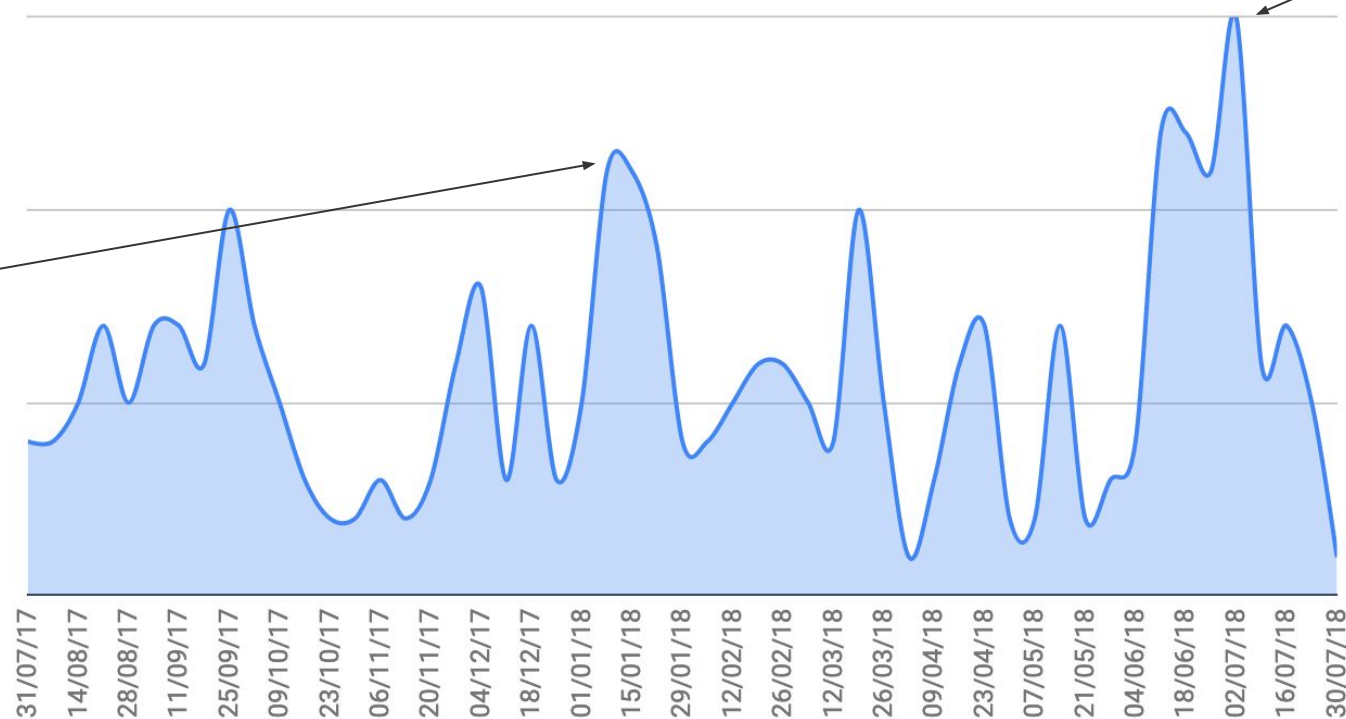


# Humanitarianism (4): *Conversation Peaks*

**Conversations spike** within the humanitarianism narrative when **politicians remark on unfolding situations involving fleeing migrants and the corresponding actions of other EU member states.**

**Results: ~24,000 (7%)**

Presidential candidate attacked for expressing semi-open stance to migrants: *"There are now **advertisements accusing Czech presidential candidate George Drahoš of not wanting to prevent the arrival of immigrants to the Czech Republic.***



Humanitarianism

The Czech Prime Minister refuses to take any of the 450 migrants that Italy rescued from an overcrowded migrant boat from the Mediterranean: *"We must help migrants in the countries from where they come...so that they never have to depart for their journey at all. **There is no solution in accepting people, on the contrary it increases the problem that we have in Europe.**"*

# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Identity and Customs (1): *Key Points*

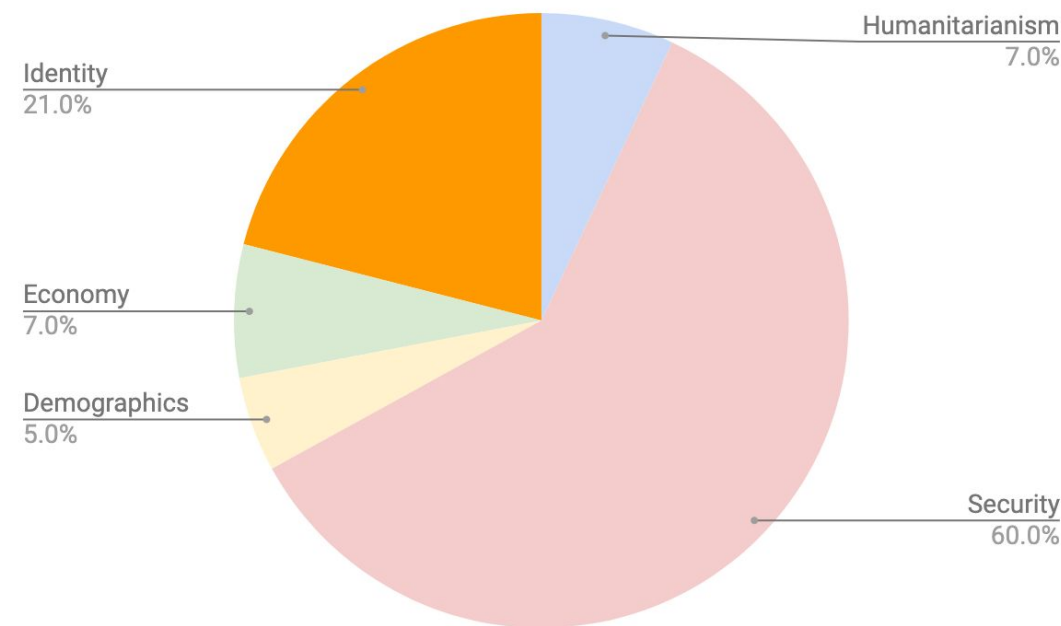
**Czechs have little-to-no experience with migrants from Muslim majority countries**, as most of its' migrants have historically come from nearby Eastern European countries which have relatively small language and cultural differences.

In the run-up to the 2017 legislative and 2018 presidential elections, the majority political candidates capitalized on this inexperience by **insisting Muslim migrants would not be able to assimilate into the country (evidenced by the failure to do so in other EU countries)**.

**Local religious authorities**, such as the Archbishop of Prague, also **believe preserving local and European identity is the correct "Christian" choice**.

**Pro-migrant supporters counter this belief by insisting Islam is compatible with European customs**. Supporters also counter by pointing out the **majority of illegal migrants in the country were from Ukraine, not Islam-dominated countries**.

**Results: ~76,000  
(21%)**





# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Identity and Customs (2): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

Europe is being ruined by islamization; we must preserve our country

*...this is not intended to spread hatred, but rather to point to the potential threat that **Sharia law poses to the Czech Republic's constitutional order**, especially in the area of free speech, religion, the Criminal Code, the Anti-Discrimination Act, and the Civil Code.*

*...anyone who has read at least a few passages of the Qur'an...simply has to know that **Islam culture is generally incompatible with our European one**.*

Migrants will fundamentally change European demographics

*"I share the opinion of Vaclav Klaus and Jiri Weigl, that **Western elites see in migration from Asia and Africa a tool for gradual liquidation of tradition, meaning white European nations**," says Valenta [Czech senator].*

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

Islam is compatible with Western society

***Islam's "incompatibility" with the West is a fairytale for unsatisfied voters in Europe, and islamophobia preserves that fantasy.** Thus, progressive mosques that could challenge this extremist idea are not engaged with and are left alone.*

Most of our migrants are not from Muslim-majority countries, they are from the Ukraine

*Transit migrants have been avoiding the Czech Republic and last year, **most of the illegal foreigners were from Ukraine**.*



# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Identity and Customs (3): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

The EU is threatening Czech sovereignty by imposing laws that we did not agree to

Klaus, Czech President from 2003-2013: ***Threatening sanctions for failing to meet migratory quotas is a lot like domestic violence.** You become wealthy together, but then your husband starts beating you. It is decent and democratic to ask yourself: is this decent?...Is this worth it?*

***More and more of our independence goes to Brussels.** And the **decision-making powers** of our government and our bodies are gradually narrowing.*

Preserving identity and customs is the Christian thing to do

Archbishop of Prague: ***We pray for the European peoples. May they return to their Christian roots, find their identity again and preserve the old continent for the next generations.***

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

The Czech Republic has always accepted migrants, with or without quotas

***Immigrants have always been accepted, even without quotas.** For example, most Muslim immigrants in the history of the Czech Republic were accepted by Mr Zeman as prime minister.*



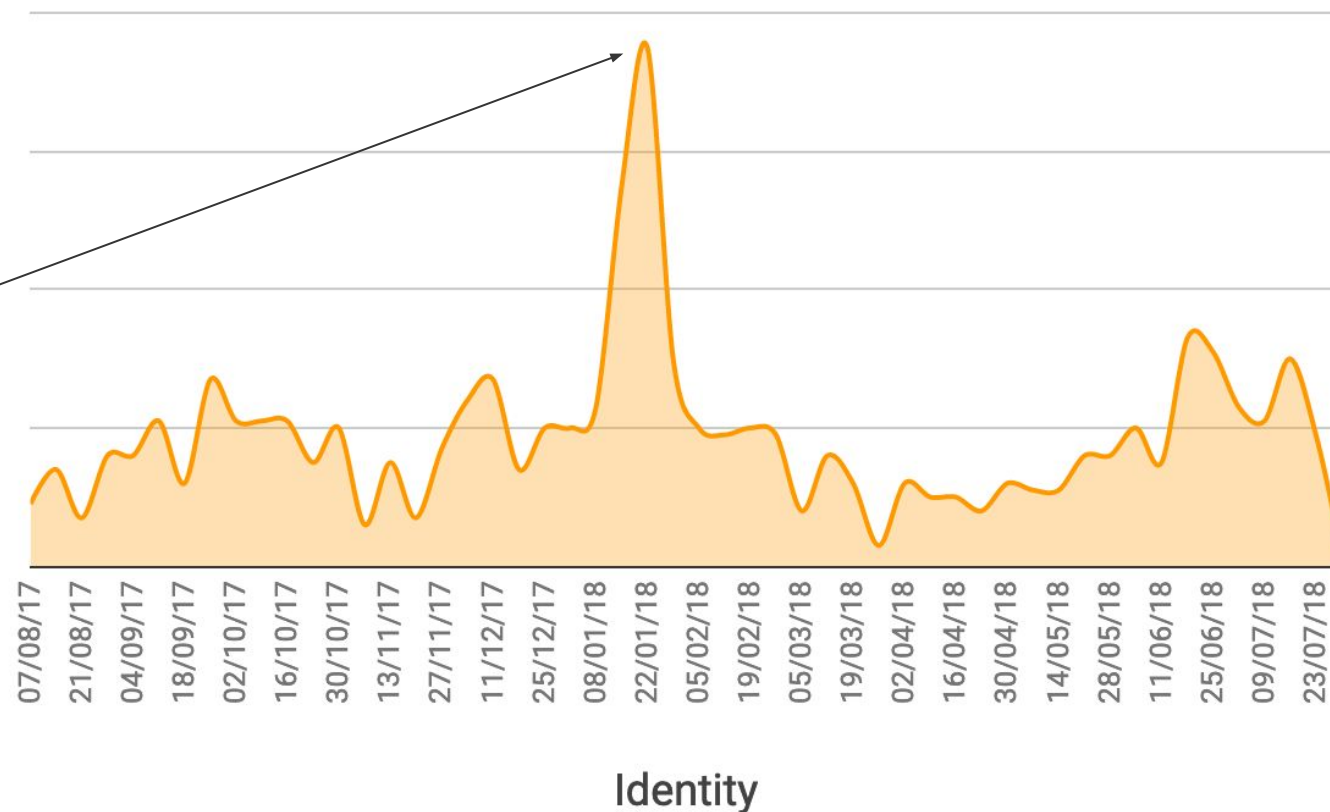


# Identity and Customs (4): *Conversation Peaks*

Throughout the 2017 and 2018 elections, politicians used pervasive Euroscepticism\* to create an additional anxiety around the encroachment of powerful international entities on Czech sovereignty.

*Results: ~76,000 (21%)*

**Presidential candidate Drahoš loses election, many believe as a result of his pro-EU stance:**  
*“Zeman disagrees with the transfer of powers to the EU, which Drahoš obediently accepts. If Drahoš wins the election, this will lead [the Czech Republic] to becoming a mere European province. We will de facto lose state sovereignty. The European Union fears the loss of other members after brexit, and therefore prefers weak and adaptable partners such as Jiří Drahoš.”*



\*The Czech Republic has one of the highest levels of Euroscepticism among the EU's member countries. Only 30 percent of Czechs have a positive image of the EU, according to the Eurobarometer survey carried out late last year. (<https://www.politico.eu/article/andrej-babis-to-eu-if-you-think-im-bad-czech-out-the-other-guy-migration-quotas-euroskepticism/>)

# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

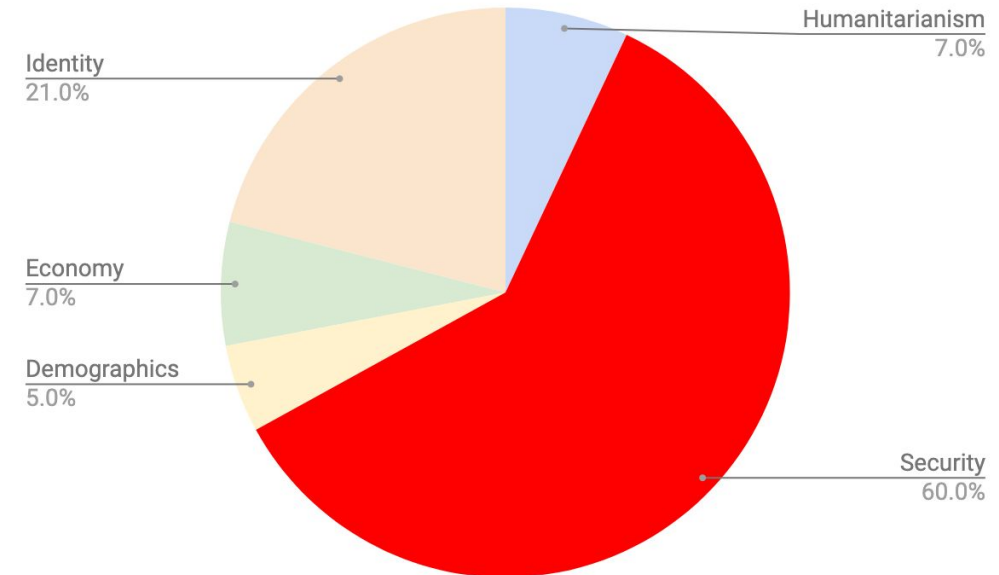
## Security (1): *Key Points*

As the country has accepted a scant number of migrants within the past year, **there are very few incidents within the Czech Republic of migrants committing crimes or acts of violence. Nonetheless, the majority of candidates** involved in the 2017 parliamentary and 2018 presidential elections ran on anti-immigration platforms which **reduced migrants to a dangerous mass of persons, intent on ravaging Western countries.**

Politicians point to Muslim migrants in particular as presenting a threat to individual, national, and EU-wide security. Migrants were also seen as bringers of disease that could result in country-wide epidemics.

**Pro-migrant voices** countered by **calling many of these crime statistics unsubstantiated fake news**, and also attempted to discredit certain politicians by highlighting ongoing criminal investigations against candidates like Andrej Babiš'.

**Results:**  
**~214,000 (60%)**





# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Security (2): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

Migrants, especially Muslims, threaten our individual security

*Father taught his daughter that migrants are tender and sensitive boys and mainly need understanding. Then **one of those traumatised poor wretches brutally beat her, raped her and finally drowned her.***

***The risk of subsequent terrorism increases with every single Muslim migrant.***

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

Current politicians calling for “law and order” are hypocrites, and they themselves are criminals

***Criminally prosecuted prime minister wants to fight against corruption. PM of the 6th safest country in the world** wants to fight for the safety of citizens. PM of the **country that accepted 12 migrants** wants to fight against illegal migration.*

*[People don't want to work with] **Babis** because he is currently **[involved in a criminal investigation and is being] threatened with prosecution...** I would not go with him to the coalition mainly because he was a member of a criminal organization...*



# Pan-European Narratives | CZ

## Security (3): Quotes

### ANTI-MIGRANT VOICES

Migrants are already threatening other EU countries, we can't let that happen to us!

*According to the crime statistics published by Leipzig on Monday, **the number of sexual crime acts in the past two years has risen sharply, which correlates with the migration crisis.***

*The SPD considers the current **series of attacks by Islamic offenders to citizens in Europe a logical consequence of EU multicultural policy. Islam is manifested as a hate doctrine that is incompatible with our way of life.***

Migrants bring diseases that will kill us all!

*Uncontrollable EPIDEMICS DID NOT EXIST before migrants came to Europe! So we can also thank MERKEL because with **MIGRANTS came diseases that DOCTORS NEVER even HEARD OF!** Get them out of EU!!!*

### PRO-MIGRANT VOICES

The Czech Republic is safe, politicians are fabricating statistics for their own political gain

***Politicians**, more than anyone else, **modify the image of reality to match their current political attitudes**, and **do not look too much at whether their opinion is based on false information.***

***Politicians lie.** For example, on January 7, **Ustian Senator Jaroslav Doubrava said** in an interview for the Parliamentary Letters **that German bombers are being illegally brought to the Czech Republic from Germany:***

*"I have news that in Munich they are fulling busses with illegal migrants and are scattering them around Prague. Nobody knows where, and nobody cares. Some time ago I informed the Minister but there was no change."*



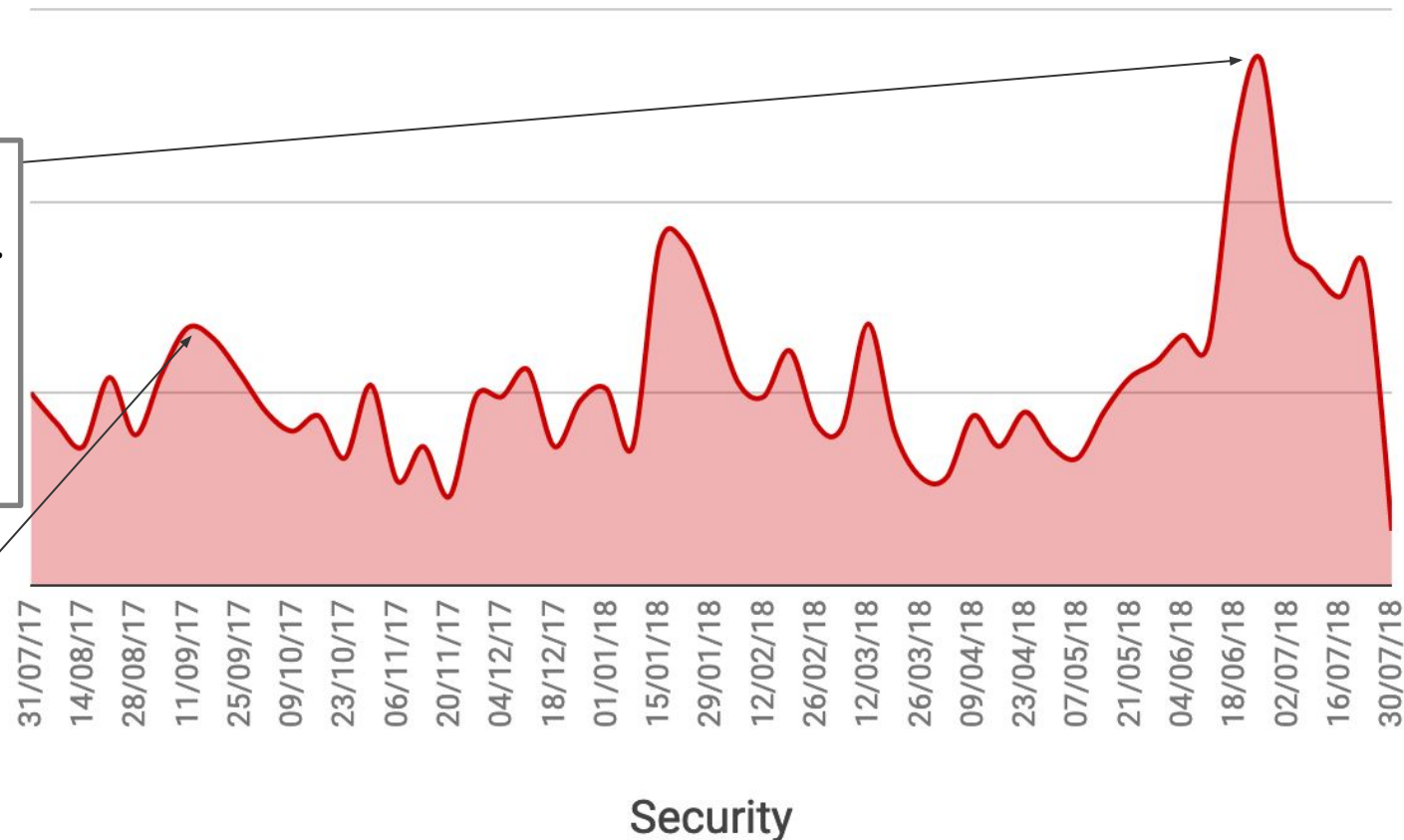
## Security (4): Conversation Peaks

Both the parliamentary and presidential elections focused on the securitization of migration. Then-candidates, Andrej **Babiš** (2017 winner and current prime minister) and Miloš **Zeman** (2018 presidential incumbent and current president), **both linked western countries' "failed integration" attempts to rising crime rates and incidences of sexual violence.**

**Results: ~214,000 (60%)**

**Czech Prime Minister Babiš refuses to take migrants rescued from an overcrowded boat in the Mediterranean and tweets: "...the Italian Prime Minister is asking the EU to take care of the 450 people travelling on the Mediterranean Sea. **Such an approach is the road to hell and encourages criminals to continue trafficking humans and engaging in illegal activities.****

**Czech Presidential Election Result: Right-wing populist incumbent, Miloš Zeman, narrowly defeats Jiří Drahoš by running on a law and order platform, **linking Islam to terrorist attacks in Europe and rising crime rates to immigration.****





# + *Local Issues in the Czech Republic Around Migration*



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# Local Issues | CZ

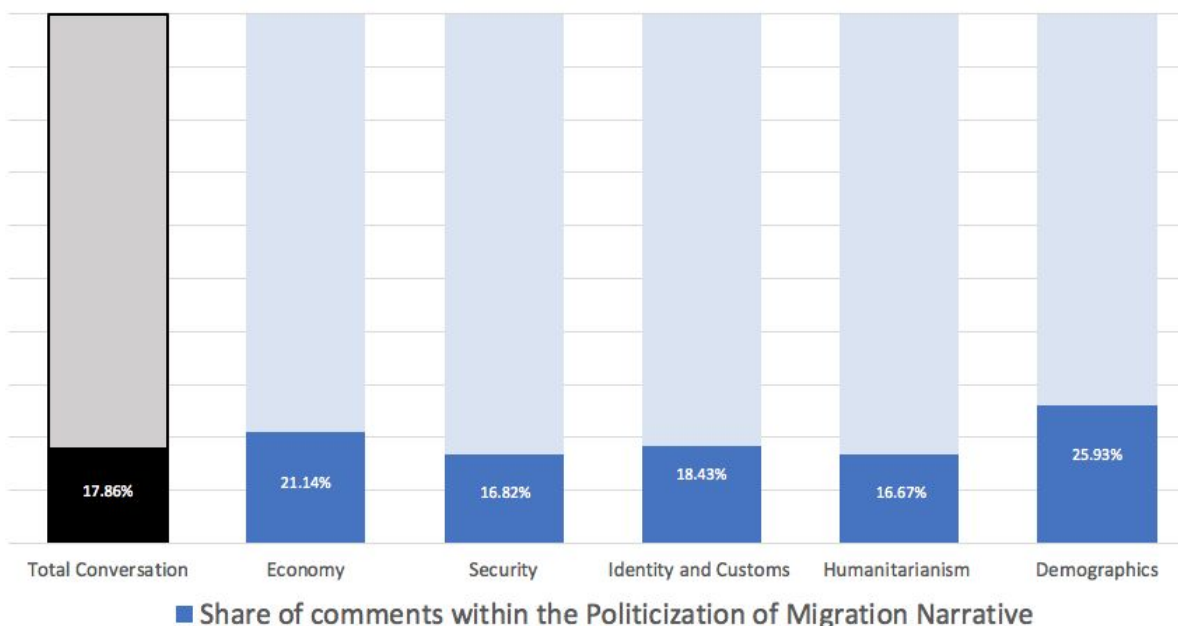
## Politicization of Migration

There is an underlying feeling within the Czech Republic that EU elites have been incompetent in handling the migration crisis, and are out of touch with the reality of everyday people. This perceived incompetence has been used by Czech politicians to score more votes by linking the issue of Czech sovereignty and security with an overbearing EU.

Consequently, almost all Czech political groups are anti-immigration, as seen in 2017 and 2018. In this way, Czech politicians used the issue of migration as a proxy to reshape the country's political system.

*“The Czech Republic is facing threats to our homeland as it pulled into a kind of hot nucleus of the neo-Marxist European Union, and dissolved there in the multi-cultural boiler and the flow of migrant hordes, as is now the case for the whole of Western Europe. In these times, we will need the president of courageous and decisive nature, not a formless jelly like Jiri Drahos whom the enemy foreigners will knock on his shoulder and applaud how great he is. We already have such a leader: Milos Zeman.”*

*“The SPD movement rejects the Czech Republic's subordination to the EU dictate requesting acceptance of refugee reception quotas. We have long and repeatedly proposed a referendum in the Chamber of Deputies on the EU. Citizens have to decide if they want to continue this form of European integration, which means the actual liquidation of our nation.”*



# + *Migration in the Context of European and Domestic Politics*



---

3.

# European and Domestic Politics Context within Narratives | CZ

## Impact of Politics on Migration Narratives

### *European Context*

Security of a country depends on its' network of allies (in this case, specifically the EU).

The role of other European countries in the migrant crisis is discussed extensively. For example, certain countries may accuse others of **taking less of the migration burden**.

The **EU quota system** is mentioned as well, and the responsibility of the current migration crisis is often shifted to key European politicians such as Angela Merkel or Emmanuel Macron.

### *Domestic Politics Context*

Domestic politicians taking stance on the migration issue and their strategies to cope with the threat posed by migration.

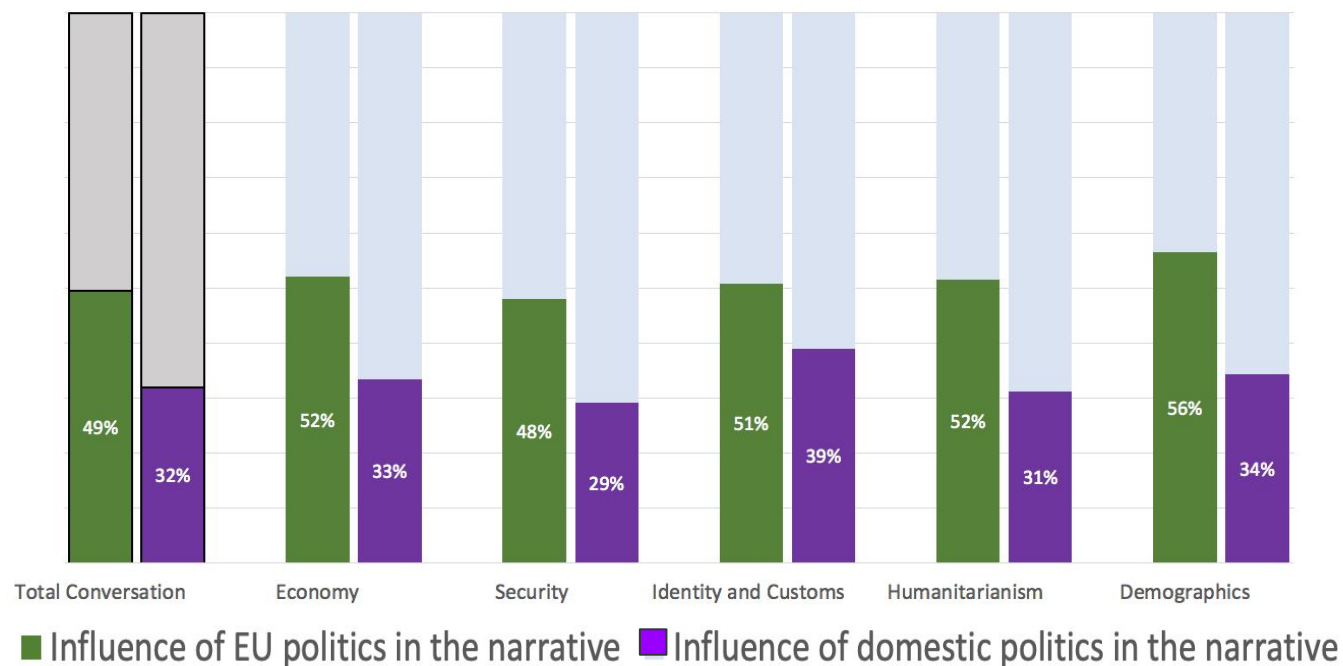
Discussions around **local parties and politicians** are prevalent on public social media platforms throughout all EU countries. It is clear that a local political party's position on migration strongly effects its popularity and election results.



# European and Domestic Politics Context within Narratives | CZ

## Fear of International Entities Encroaching on Czech Sovereignty

While domestic politics does spur conversation within the Czech Republic, **international politicians are mentioned more frequently due to a fear of the EU and other international entities trying to influence local politics.**





# + *Discussion Tone in the Czech Republic*



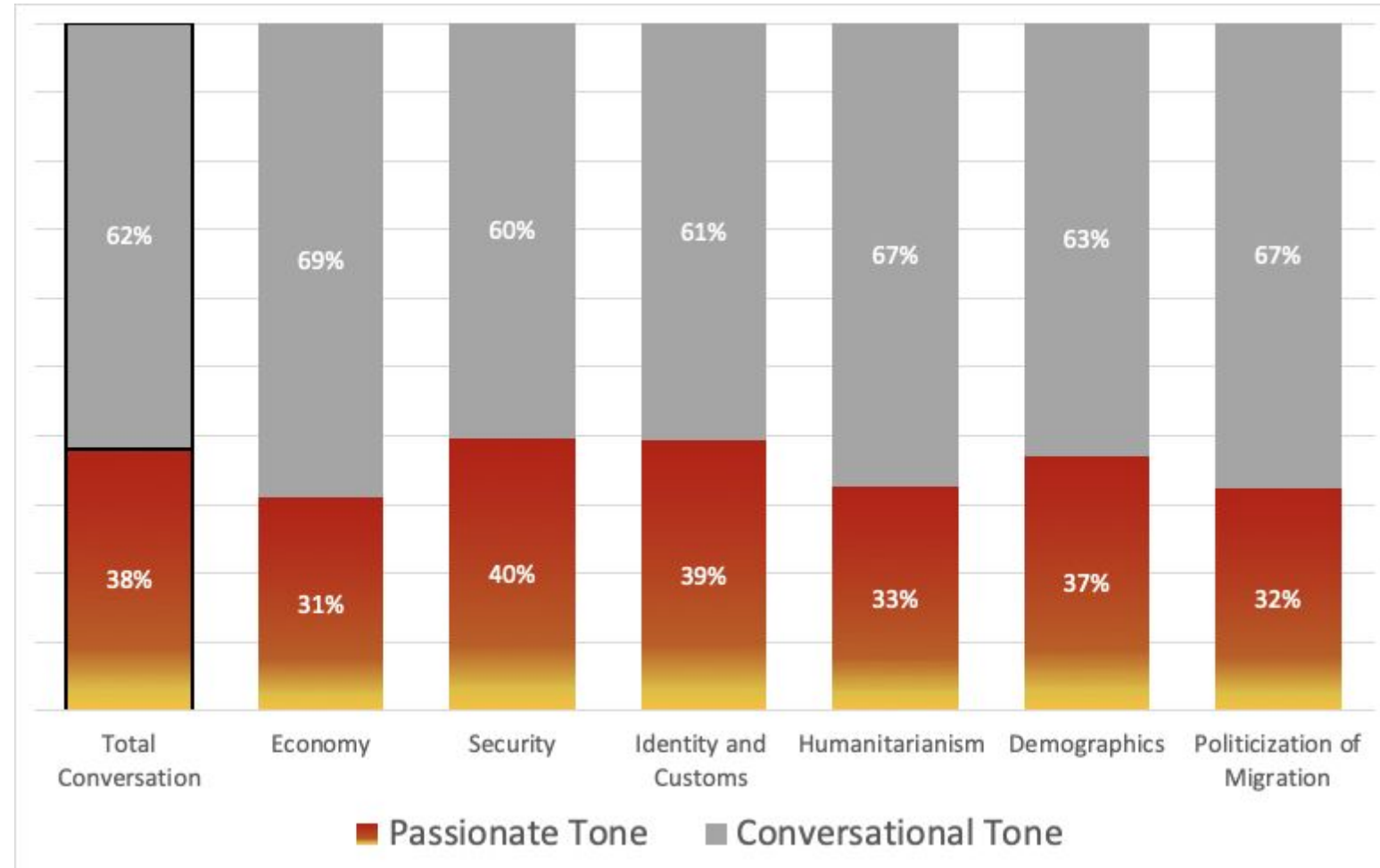
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4.



Given the scant number of migrants present in the country (there are currently 12 accepted migrants), very few Czechs have actually had personal contact with migrants.

Consequently, **the migration conversation has a largely conversational tone, with politicians and media outlets presenting primarily anti-migrant information as widely-accepted facts.**



# + *Conversation Channels*



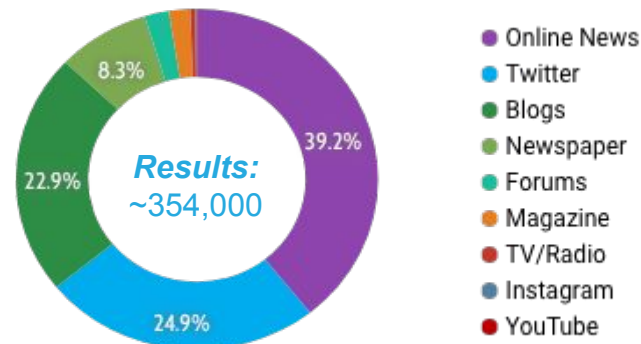
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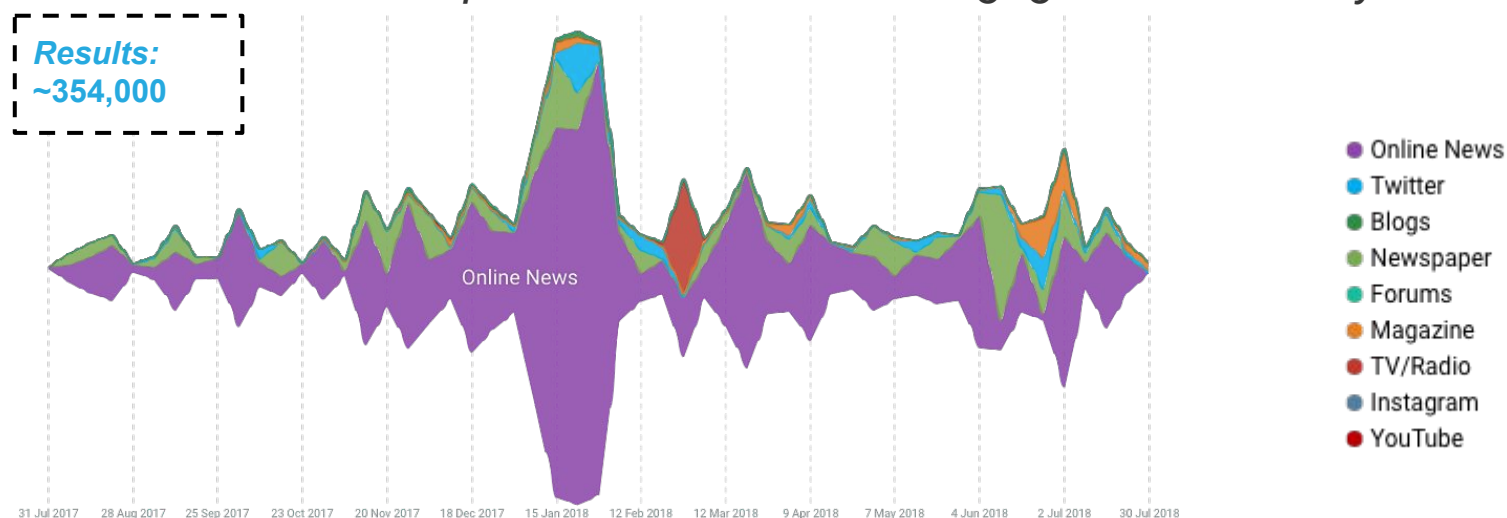


# Online News Sites Dominate the Conversation

**Content Generation:** *Online news outlets, Twitter, and blogs all generated a comparable amount of content in the Czech migration discussion.*



**Content Generation:** *Online news outlets spark far more content engagement than any other platform.*





# Online Media Follows Presidential Rhetoric

As most Czechs have had no personal experiences with migrants, the majority of conversations are shaped by politicians and the media.

Overall, **the Czech media didn't take a very different path than the politicians of the country on the topic of migration.** Reporters for online new sites tended to have the most reach and engagement.

Top Influencers	Publication	Description
Ondřej Golis	<a href="http://www.irozhlas.cz">www.irozhlas.cz</a>	Online News
Martin Fendrych	<a href="http://www.nazory.aktualne.cz">www.nazory.aktualne.cz</a>	Online News
Dominik Landsman	<a href="http://www.g.cz">www.g.cz</a>	Online News
Jiří Kubík	<a href="http://www.seznamzpravy.cz">www.seznamzpravy.cz</a>	Online News
Veronika Sedláčková & Michael Erhart	<a href="http://www.rozhlas.cz">www.rozhlas.cz</a>	TV/ Radio
Jakub Zelenka	<a href="http://www.zpravy.aktualne">www.zpravy.aktualne</a>	Online News
Jan Hejl	<a href="http://www.zpravy.aktualne.cz">www.zpravy.aktualne.cz</a>	Online News