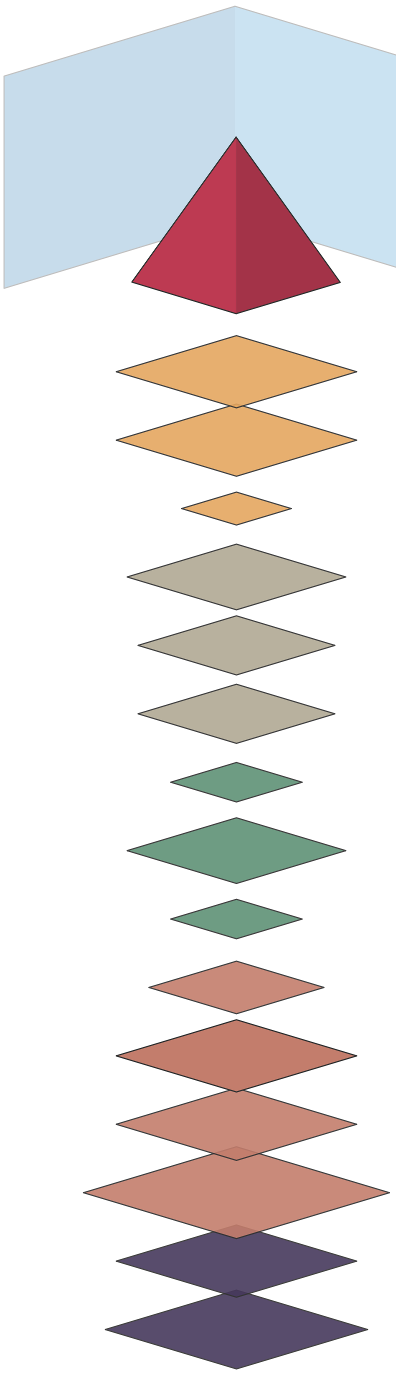
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

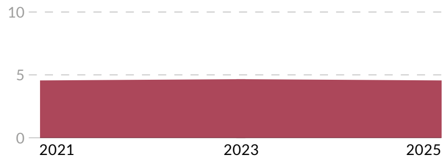
GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

CZECH REPUBLIC



4.55 ↘0.13 CRIMINALITY SCORE

127th of 193 countries ↘8
29th of 44 European countries ↘4
16th of 17 Central and Eastern European countries ↘3



CRIMINAL MARKETS	**4.80**	↘0.07
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	5.50	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.50	↘1.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.00	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	4.50	↗0.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.50	↗0.50
FLORA CRIMES	3.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.00	↘0.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00	↘0.50
HEROIN TRADE	4.00	↘0.50
COCAINE TRADE	5.50	↗0.50
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50	↘0.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.00	↗0.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	0.00

CRIMINAL ACTORS	**4.30**	↘0.20
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.50	↘1.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.50	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.50	↘0.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.00	0.00

This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State.

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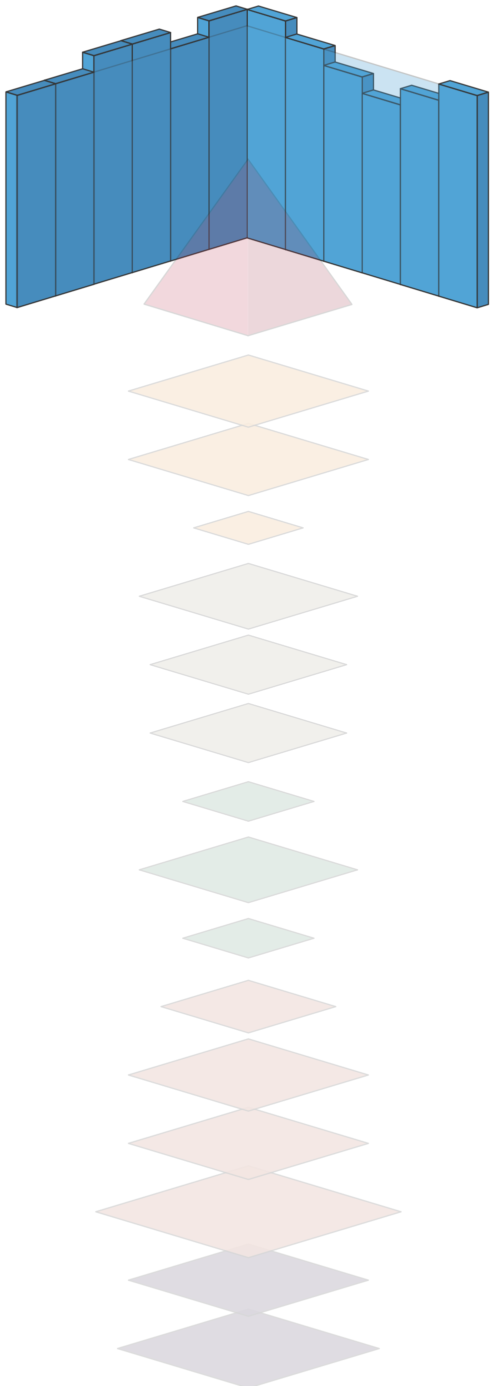
Funded by the European Union

ENACT is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Institute for Security Studies and INTERPOL, in affiliation with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

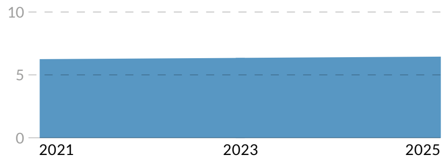
CZECH REPUBLIC



6.50 ↗0.08

RESILIENCE SCORE

31st of 193 countries ↗1
22nd of 44 European countries ↗1
1st of 17 Central and Eastern European countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	**6.50**	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	**6.50**	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	**7.00**	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	**7.00**	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	**6.50**	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	**7.00**	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	**7.00**	0.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	**6.50**	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	**6.00**	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	**5.50**	↗0.50
PREVENTION	**6.00**	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	**6.50**	↗0.50

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

The Czech Republic serves as both a source and destination country for human trafficking, with victims subjected to various forms of exploitation, both domestic and foreign. While the majority of trafficked individuals in the country are Czech nationals, there is a growing number of victims originating from Central and Eastern Europe, South and South East Asia and, more recently, Nigeria. Many victims are trafficked through the Czech Republic to other European destinations, particularly the United Kingdom. Male victims are often exploited in labour-intensive industries such as construction, manufacturing and agriculture, whereas women and minors are predominantly subjected to sexual exploitation. The Czech Republic is also a hub for pornography production, where many victims of human trafficking are exploited in this industry. Additionally, female victims continue to face forced marriages to non-EU nationals under the guise of an 'advantageous' marriage, leading to subsequent exploitation through sex and/or labour trafficking. Victims are frequently recruited under false pretences through employment agencies and unregistered labour brokers, often working in various service industries. Vulnerable groups, including Ukrainian refugees, children in orphanages, individuals with disabilities and those on short-term visas, are particularly at risk.

The Czech Republic remains a significant transit point for individuals smuggled into Western Europe, primarily Germany and Austria, through the Central European migration corridor. Criminal groups facilitate human smuggling by providing stolen or altered Schengen visas, forged identity documents and illicit transportation services. The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has also contributed to an increase in smuggling activities, particularly among young men seeking to evade military conscription. Czech nationals typically operate as drivers within these smuggling networks, while Ukrainian, Syrian and Vietnamese actors play key roles in document forgery and logistical support. In response, the Czech authorities intensified border security measures in late 2023.

Extortion and protection racketeering are not widespread in the Czech Republic, with only limited involvement from organized crime. However, the real estate sector has been impacted by fraudulent activities, as landlords and property managers utilize fabricated debts, such as falsified utility bills, to coerce tenants into eviction. This form of extortion is primarily profit-driven and is predominantly executed by private-sector actors rather than organized criminal groups.

TRADE

The Czech Republic is both a source and transit country for arms trafficking. The illicit firearms market includes converted and reactivated weapons, along with outdated Czech military equipment that is trafficked into Europe, Africa and Western Asia. There were also reports of Czech weapons being trafficked, via Argentina, into the hands of Brazilian groups such as Primeiro Comando da Capital and Comando Vermelho. There are growing concerns that arms originally sent to Ukraine have been diverted back into European criminal markets. While Czech nationals dominate the arms trade, individuals from various other nationalities are also involved.

The market for counterfeit goods in the Czech Republic has declined since 2016 due to stricter enforcement measures. Nevertheless, violations of intellectual property rights continue to be a concern, particularly in the textile and toy industries. The most commonly seized counterfeit items include sportswear and luxury brand products. Additionally, reports indicate that Russian organized crime groups are managing factories within the country that are dedicated to illicit cigarette production. Moldovan nationals are frequently recruited under exploitative conditions to work in these factories. The illicit profits generated from the counterfeit cigarette trade are believed to finance other organized crime activities.

The illicit trade in excise goods, particularly tobacco, had been declining until 2021 but has recently rebounded due to rising inflation and increased taxation. Czech customs authorities have reported a surge in cigarette seizures, with illicit products entering the country from Belarus, Poland and Ukraine. While the trade in illicit beer remains relatively low, there has been a noticeable increase in the market for smuggled wine.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal timber harvesting continues to be a problem in the Czech Republic, which serves as a major exporter of timber to Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Poland and Italy. Additionally, the country acts as a transit hub for smuggled teak from Myanmar, a situation facilitated by the use of shell companies. Czech companies have been implicated in the procurement of timber associated with one of the largest illegal logging schemes in Russia, which involves over 600 000 cubic meters of unlawfully harvested wood. While illegal logging remains a problem, it is not considered a widespread international issue.

The Czech Republic plays a role as a transit, destination and source country for trafficked fauna. Birds of prey and parrots are smuggled into Western Europe through the Czech Republic, while live reptiles are transported by car to Germany and the Netherlands. Additionally, the country also serves as a processing hub for illegally obtained CITES-protected species from Poland and Slovakia, which are subsequently used in traditional Chinese medicine. In recent years, Vietnamese and Czech crime groups have been linked to the wildlife trade, where animal parts are processed in the Czech Republic and sold to Vietnamese communities both domestically and internationally. These groups reportedly forge documents and relabel shipments of endangered species. Furthermore, criminal networks involved in wildlife trafficking are also engaged in drug smuggling and the distribution of counterfeit goods.

Non-renewable resource crimes in the Czech Republic encompass the extraction of oil and coal smuggling, as well as resource-related fraud. Illegal moldavite mining, especially in Southern Bohemia, has surged significantly due to rising global prices, resulting in environmental degradation.

DRUGS

The Czech Republic primarily serves as a transit country for heroin destined for Western and Northern Europe. Organized crime groups from the Western Balkans, particularly Kosovan and Albanian networks, dominate heroin trafficking within the country. Although heroin use declined following COVID-19 restrictions, it has since been partially replaced by synthetic drugs that produce similar effects. Reports indicate that criminal networks launder profits from the heroin trade through casino chains. Cocaine availability has surged in the Czech Republic, with the country functioning as both a destination and a potential transit hub for the drug. High-profile cocaine traffickers have utilized the Czech Republic as a logistical base, while Western Balkan networks connected to South American cartels play a crucial role in the market. In recent years, Czech authorities have seized hundreds of kilograms of cocaine concealed in banana shipments from Ecuador, marking one of the largest drug seizures in the country's history. Additionally, the real estate sector is often exploited to launder profits generated from the cocaine trade.

The Czech Republic is a significant source country for cannabis production. Small-scale cultivation is prevalent, with cannabis being socially accepted as a less harmful alternative to other drugs. While domestic production satisfies most of the demand, some cannabis is smuggled in from Slovakia and Hungary. Vietnamese criminal networks, along with various domestic actors, are involved in the illicit cannabis trade. Recent reports indicate a decline in the number of discovered grow houses and seized cannabis plants. The Czech Republic is a prominent producer and consumer of synthetic drugs in Europe, particularly methamphetamine. The market is primarily dominated by small-scale production, though some larger laboratories operate for export purposes. Most precursors are sourced from Romania and Poland, while finished synthetic drugs are smuggled into Germany and the Netherlands. The country has also experienced an increase in the availability of high-quality methamphetamine from Mexico; however, domestic users generally prefer Czech-made Pervitin. The market for MDMA continues to expand, with rising sales through darknet platforms. Additionally, the country is witnessing a surge in the use of synthetic cannabinoids, along with the emergence of fentanyl.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crime continues to pose a growing threat in the Czech Republic, particularly in light of escalating geopolitical tensions in Europe. The Czech National Cyber and Information Security Agency (NUKIB) has issued warnings about an increase in cyberattacks targeting public infrastructure. Small and medium-sized enterprises have reported a 38% rise in cyberattacks, including incidents involving ransomware and spyware. State-sponsored cybercriminals from Russia are believed to be the primary perpetrators of these attacks. The Czech Republic also hosts servers that facilitate cybercriminal activities. Cryptocurrency scams and hacks also affect users in the country, where the market remains largely unregulated due to the absence of national-level policies.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

The Czech Republic continues to grapple with ongoing financial crimes, such as tax evasion, fraud and embezzlement. Criminals often impersonate bank employees to obtain victims' financial information and perpetrate fraud. Online investment scams, particularly those promoted through social media, continue to be prevalent. Additionally, credit and insurance fraud schemes targeting banks and insurance providers are prevalent.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

There is no official or credible evidence that traditional mafia-style groups systematically operate in the Czech Republic. However, smaller hierarchical organizations remain active in illicit markets typically associated with mafia-style groups, including extortion, armed theft and bribery of law enforcement officials. While these groups do not exert widespread control over criminal markets, their involvement in violent crimes and corruption indicates an ongoing, albeit limited, presence.

Loose criminal networks dominate the organized crime landscape in the Czech Republic, playing a key role in multiple illicit markets, including the cannabis and synthetic drug trade, human smuggling and trafficking, arms trafficking and fauna-related crimes. Unlike traditional mafia-style groups, these networks are flexible and opportunistic, adapting to changes in law enforcement pressure and market demand. Some criminal networks specialize in illegal moldavite mining in Southern Bohemia, with reports indicating that miners have become increasingly aggressive when confronted. Czech citizens are sometimes involved in transnational organized crime activities, particularly as logistical facilitators within smuggling and trafficking networks. These networks frequently collaborate with foreign actors in transnational drug smuggling, arms trafficking and human smuggling.

There is no substantial evidence to suggest that the Czech state directly facilitates organized crime. However, reports indicate that certain state-embedded actors have been implicated in corruption, money laundering and financial crimes.

Foreign organized criminal actors from the Balkans and Asia maintain a strong presence in the Czech Republic, using the country as a logistical hub, safe haven and operational base for money laundering and other illicit activities. Balkan organized crime groups engage in burglaries and robberies, reinvesting their proceeds into real estate, gambling and the gold trade through jewellery shops. South East Asian criminal networks, particularly the Vietnamese diaspora, rank among the most powerful organized crime groups in the country, controlling illegal drug production and distribution, tax fraud, corruption, and human smuggling and trafficking operations. Vietnamese criminal actors are also linked to arms trade, and the production and distribution of cannabis and methamphetamine. These foreign groups frequently collaborate with local networks to facilitate smuggling and trafficking operations. Additionally, there are reports of increased activity by Ukrainian and other Russian-speaking organized crime groups, further expanding the influence of foreign actors in the Czech Republic's illicit economy. According to experts, the 'Ndrangheta and other Italian organized crime groups are present in the Czech Republic, although their specific activities remain unclear.

Private-sector actors play a significant role in facilitating financial crimes and money laundering in the Czech Republic. Development and investment companies, real estate agencies, exchange offices, casinos, gaming rooms, antique shops, restaurants and taxi companies are all heavily implicated in illicit financial activities. Many of these entities utilize cryptocurrency to launder illicit funds, capitalising on the country's largely unregulated digital currency market. Lawyers are also involved in financial fraud, embezzlement and money laundering schemes, sometimes serving as intermediaries between criminal actors and legitimate financial institutions.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Czech Republic is a stable democracy characterized by robust institutions and an engaged civil society. The country is governed by a centre-right coalition consisting of five parties, which took office at the end of 2021. While political parties operate freely and power rotates regularly, public confidence in the government has waned due to austerity measures, allegations of corruption and dissatisfaction with economic policies. In January 2024, the government survived a no-confidence vote despite growing political opposition. Despite these concerns, the Czech Republic demonstrates strong political stability, effective governance and a firm commitment to democratic principles.

The country has established a robust legislative framework for anti-corruption efforts, overseen by the Conflict of Interests and Anti-Corruption Department within the Ministry of Justice, which manages the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023–2026. This framework emphasizes reforms in public procurement, regulations on lobbying and increasing transparency in political party financing. However, civil society organizations have criticized the slow pace of reform implementation and the government's failure to proactively disclose data related to procurement and public spending. The European Commission has acknowledged progress in judicial reforms but has also noted that corruption continues to be a concern. Moreover, corruption remains a challenge, particularly in high-level politics, with cases involving senior government officials.

International cooperation remains a key component of the Czech Republic's strategy against organized crime. The country is a signatory to major international treaties, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the UN Convention against Corruption and the Arms Trade Treaty. Czech authorities work in collaboration with international organizations and foreign governments to address issues such as human trafficking, cybercrime and money laundering, supported by established extradition agreements. Additionally, the Czech Republic is fully integrated into international police and judicial cooperation networks.

National policies and laws comprehensively criminalize various forms of organized crime, including human trafficking, smuggling and wildlife crimes. The country differentiates between petty and grand corruption, with stricter penalties for corruption involving public officials. However, penalties for drug-related offences remain comparatively lenient within the European context. Additionally, arms trafficking remains an area requiring further legislative attention.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Czech judiciary upholds its independence, with the rule of law prevailing in most cases. In recent years, the government has emphasized the importance of preventing political interference in judicial appointments, addressing previous criticisms of the former administration. The country's prison system faces challenges, including overcrowding and a shortage of personnel. Several prisons operate at over 110% capacity, leading to an increase in incidents of violence by prisoners against guards. The use of methamphetamine within prisons is a growing concern, while the recidivism rate remains among the highest in the EU, with nearly 70% of former inmates returning to prison.

Law enforcement agencies are fully integrated into international cooperation efforts. The National Organized Crime Agency investigates financial crimes, tax fraud and arms trafficking, while cyber-dependent crimes fall under the jurisdiction of the NUKIB. While the Czech police are regarded as one of the most trusted institutions in the country, corruption persists, with reported cases of bribery, unauthorized database searches and information leaks.

Territorial integrity remains a concern due to the Czech Republic's central location in Europe, which makes it a transit point for organized crime. Border control measures have been strengthened, particularly in response to the challenges posed by migration. Since 2022, Czech authorities have been preparing for potential influxes of migrants by establishing provisional border checkpoints and enhancing cross-border cooperation. Cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure, such as railways and regional airports, have also posed a challenge to national security, with reports indicating possible involvement by foreign hacker groups.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The Czech Republic is assessed to be at low to medium risk for money laundering and terrorist financing. Authorities have prioritized asset freezing and seizure as measures to combat financial crimes. The National Organised Crime Agency leads investigations into money laundering, with a growing focus on transnational organized crime. Legislative reforms have strengthened compliance with international financial regulations; however, challenges remain due to a lack of judicial expertise in managing complex money laundering cases. Prosecutors carry the responsibility of proving illicit financial activity, which creates loopholes that allow criminals to evade prosecution.

The Czech Republic demonstrates a robust economic regulatory capacity and economic freedom. Structural reforms and open-market policies have contributed to a resilient economy. These open-market policies have enabled the country to benefit from earlier regulatory reforms, and its business regulatory framework is clear and accessible, ensuring broad participation in the law-making process. Moreover, the Czech Republic has significantly streamlined the process of filing and paying taxes, resulting in a reduction of the time needed to accomplish these tasks. However, external pressures, such as the war in Ukraine and rising inflation, have revealed certain vulnerabilities. Investigations into the collapse of energy companies have raised concerns about potential criminal involvement in various economic sectors, although no direct ties to organized crime have been confirmed.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support mechanisms are well established, with a combination of government and NGO-led initiatives assisting victims of organized crime. The Ministry of Interior operates an assistance programme for human trafficking victims, while NGOs offer additional services, including legal representation and housing support. Child victims are covered under a separate national referral system, which provides social welfare benefits. The country has maintained a witness protection programme since 2001, offering relocation services and identity changes.

Prevention efforts have been enhanced through awareness campaigns aimed at vulnerable populations, particularly Ukrainian refugees, who remain at an increased risk of human trafficking. Government agencies and NGOs collaborate on public information campaigns and operate hotlines to offer legal and social support. Czech authorities also support data-driven prevention strategies, with major cities participating in annual wastewater analysis programs to monitor trends in drug consumption.

Civil society organizations play a significant role in policy advocacy and service provision. The government has established an official cooperation strategy with NGOs, supporting their involvement in anti-trafficking initiatives and rehabilitation programs for drug users and former prisoners. However, the Czech media landscape is facing growing challenges, including concerns over media ownership concentration and threats against journalists. Additionally, concerns have been raised about the impact of economic pressures on the Czech media, which has led to the closure of several print outlets. Reports also indicate that journalists covering political issues are encountering increasing challenges. Nevertheless, in August 2023, parliament amended the media ownership law to prevent government officials and parliamentarians from owning media outlets, applying the law to the true owner rather than just the controlling individual, thereby closing the trust loophole.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.