

# ***NATIONAL REPORT***



**COUNTRY:**  
***Czech Republic***

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# **1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL SPORT SYSTEM/ARCHITECTURE**

According to Topendsports (Sport + Science), the national ice hockey team of Czechia is one of the very best in the world. In fact, the most popular sports in this country include ice hockey and football. In general terms, “in the Czech Republic, and formerly in the Czech countries, sport has been associated with numerous significant historical events” (Safankova and Svoboda, 2020).

The ministry responsible for sport in the Czech Republic is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and “the main strategic document is the ‘Concept of Sport Support 2016-2025 - SPORT 2025’ (referred to as the Sport 2025 Concept), which sets out the directions of development and support of Czech sport, pillars, priorities, strategic goals and conditions for fulfilment in the period 2016 – 2025” (ESSA-Sport, 2019).

Specifically, the key objective of the sports policy of the Czech Republic 2016 – 2025 is to improve the conditions for sport and the national representation of the Czech Republic to reflect the importance of sport for society and individuals, respecting the tradition and sporting policy of Europe. To achieve this objective, strengthening the institutional provisions on sport in the Czech Republic, without which the necessary transformation of the sport system cannot be achieved, is fundamental.

Various actors work jointly on these objectives, collaborating with the aforementioned Ministry, namely the National Council for Sport, which includes a Chamber of Regions (representatives of the Association of Regions, the Association of Towns and Municipalities and the Association of Local Authorities); the Czech Olympic Committee (WWTP); and the Czech Sports Union, which is the largest sports organisation in the Czech Republic established in 2013.

## **2. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE A SPORT DIPLOMACY STRATEGY?**

From the research we conducted with key informants from the Czech Republic, we found they do not perceive the presence of a formalized national sport diplomacy strategy, and they think it is an autonomous strategy, not integrated with other governmental activities.

The essential objectives of sport diplomacy in the Czech Republic are to normalize or reinforce diplomatic relations:

- (1) to promote peace and inclusiveness, spread and share values and development,
- (2) to create business opportunities and drive economic growth, and
- (3) to improve the country’s global reputation, for which creating and/or promoting our nation-brand are “important goals” of Czech Republic sport diplomacy.

### **3. WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT DIPLOMACY GOVERNANCE AND WHO ARE THE MAIN ACTORS?**

Regarding the organisation of Czech Republic sport diplomacy governance, our research shows that it is based on a flexible structure and/or task-specific arrangements, such as committees, forums and networks.

As for the actors involved in sport diplomacy processes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not important, the Ministry dedicated to Sport is quite important and a dedicated institutional body is important.

However, the Czech Republic sports bodies are involved on an ad hoc basis through other sport diplomacy actors.

As for the country's media in sport diplomacy actions, key informants from the Czech Republic say that "they are empowered and constantly involved, and they receive specific training in sport diplomacy."

For the other actors, "private companies are involved on an ad hoc basis / only few of them are involved"; athletes "are empowered and constantly involved, they receive specific training in sport diplomacy and can play an autonomous role", and the organisations of the key informants (i.e., universities) "are empowered and constantly involved, and we receive specific training in sport diplomacy." City authorities and local institutions do not have a specific role and are not involved in sport diplomacy.

### **4. TOOLS OF SPORT DIPLOMACY**

Regarding the level of public economic resources available for sport diplomacy activities in the Czech Republic, the key informants say they are scarce or adequate and, by considering the pre-Covid19 period, many actions were attributable to sport diplomacy.

In particular, extensive diplomatic and political efforts are made to attract mega-events in the Czech Republic. However, activities of employing high-profile sports people, media coverage and international broadcasting and organisation of trade missions are less implemented.

As regards the sport diplomacy activities implemented in Czech Republic in collaboration with less developed countries, mentoring or training programmes, funding for collaborative projects aimed at specific values, and sports fellowship schemes and grants are widely implemented; however, partnerships for sports competitions and sport exchange programmes are less implemented.

As for sport diplomacy activities implemented in our country aiming at empowering sport diplomacy actors, political support and training for diplomats and athletes are the most implemented, followed by dedicated resources and coordination tools and monitoring and evaluation processes.

## ***5. SPORT DIPLOMACY'S FUTURE***

Regarding the major weaknesses of the Czech Republic's sport diplomacy activities, our key informants point out that they are: "a small country with less sporting success."

The greatest challenges and opportunities of sport diplomacy activities are to "involve former athletes in sport diplomacy who can use their skills, abilities and contacts in this area."

Finally the key informants identified three possible disadvantages if the EU were to have a common sport diplomacy policy, namely (1) different interests of individual countries; (2) different support for sport in different countries; and (3) politicization of sport.

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