

Parliamentary elections 2017

Summary

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- **The analyzed platforms** (9 websites, 2 Facebook pages) **published 306 texts dedicated to Czech domestic politics during the election campaign** (4th September – 20th October 2017); its number has increased as Election Day has approached.
- **The topic of parliamentary elections** (such as those mentioned in commentaries and select published statements of political parties) **dominated throughout the entire period of analysis**; other topics that were mentioned usually were connected with current events (e.g. the criminal charge of Mr. Andrej Babiš, the leader of the political party ANO, the Catalanian independence referendum and others) and so appeared on the platforms being analyzed only for a limited time.
- **The platforms described the Czech domestic political situation in various ways:**
 - **Several platforms** (“AC24”, “Svět kolem nás”, “Českoaktuálně”) **rarely mentioned the Czech domestic political situation** and if so they did not state any political preferences.
 - The website **“Sputnik CZ”** did not state any particular political preference, however it **was providing disproportional media space** (e.g. in interviews) **to marginal and anti-establishmentarian political movements**.
 - The website, **“Czech Free Press,”** **was providing media space to several political parties** in its free zone; this space was most often used by the minor, anti-establishment parties ČSNS/ANS and the newly emerged Pirate Party (which received 10% of the popular vote and thus became the third strongest party in the current parliament).
 - **Several platforms** (such as the websites “Aeronet,” “Protiproud,” “Vlastenecké Noviny,” “BezPolitickéKorektnosti,” and the Facebook pages of “Volby 2017” and “WeAreHereAtHome” – renamed “Zprávy.cz”) **provided biased information about**

Czech domestic politics, criticized certain subjects, and recommended that their audience cast their vote for others.

- **The ability of the analyzed platforms to diffuse their content via Facebook** (which were also connected with websites) **was very limited** (on average several tens of likes, shares, and comments for one post); the Facebook **page “WeAreHereAtHome” represents an exception** (on average two hundreds likes, \ fifty shares, and comments for one post), this Facebook page is currently trying to establish itself as an alternative news channel.
- **The negative comments about political parties highly exceed the positive ones.**
 - The centre-left **ČSSD** (the party also accused of corruption connected with the alleged privatization of the Czech stock of lithium), the centre-right **TOP 09, KDU-ČSL, STAN** and **the Greens** (especially concerning their positive positions towards the EU, NATO and migration) **were strongly criticized.**
 - The populist **ANO** (the winner of the election) **was also criticized**, however **it was occasionally perceived by some authors as a possible ally of protest parties in their clash with the political establishment.**
 - The centre-right **ODS** and the **Pirate Party** **were also criticized**, however **some observed platforms** (“Vlastenecké noviny” and the “Czech Free Press”) **published their statements.**
 - **The sentiments** towards the left-wing **Communist party** **were mixed**, this fact could harm the party in the eyes of voters looking for alternatives to the political establishment
 - **The only party portrayed positively was the extremist SPD**; several texts were also published that recommended to the audience that they should vote for this party (the Facebook page “WeAreHereAtHome” shared the SPD election commercials)
- **3 cases of disinformation appeared during the analyzed period**; this disinformations were mentioned in fourteen texts; **all disinformation were first published by the website “Aeronet.”**

The most influential disinformation accused the ČSSD of corruption connected with the alleged privatization of the Czech stock of lithium; this disinformation has been published by most of the analyzed platforms, and has been constantly

ČESKÉ V ÉŘE DEZINFORMACÍ VOLBY

appearing on these platforms since its first publication (4th October) until the elections (20th – 21st October); **the spreading of this disinformation** (not just on the observed platforms) **was likely supported by the fact that some political parties** (SPD, ANO) **used it in their election campaign.**