



NATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AGENCY  
CRIMINAL POLICE AND INVESTIGATION SERVICE  
POLICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

# 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

# NCOZ

EN

ENGLISH EDITION

**2024**  
ANNUAL REPORT  
**NCOZ**

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# FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR

Dear readers,

another year has passed, and our agency (NCOZ) is publishing its annual report again. I consider 2024 to have been a successful year. We managed to bring several major cases within our remit to completion, particularly in the areas of corruption, tax-related crime, and human trafficking.

I also regard as noteworthy one criminal case that ultimately had to be discontinued. This concerns the explosions at the ammunition depots in Vrbětice. We remain convinced that these explosions were caused by members of the Russian military intelligence service (GRU). However, due to the refusal of the Russian authorities to cooperate in the matter, we were forced to close the case. You will find more details about this in our annual report as well.

It is important to realize that organized crime has evolved into a poly-criminal phenomenon, where perpetrators do not focus on a single type of crime but instead exploit any available opportunity to maximize illicit gains.

We are witnessing the convergence of new technologies—unknown just a few years ago—with “traditional” forms of criminal activity, including investment fraud, counterfeiting of currency, and money laundering.

This year also brings a new version of the Government’s strategic document: the Organized Crime Strategy 2025-2030. We are pleased that our experience contributed to its development.

The key challenges will include adapting legal instruments to soci-

etal developments and technological progress, refining the process of collecting electronic evidence and using it in court proceedings. The practice of good and effective cooperation among state institutions and international partners needs to be fostered. Furthermore, it is essential to focus on the tracing and seizure of criminal proceeds, as financial resources enable the growth of organized crime’s influence. An effective response to newly emerging trends—such as the penetration of criminal groups and hybrid threats from abroad—includes reducing the risk of entry and residence of individuals posing criminal or security threats within the territory of the Czech Republic.

What else remains to be improved in our work? We certainly need to further develop the specialties of the NCOZ officers and enhance the digitalization of our activities, which would help reduce administrative burdens.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to all colleagues for their efforts over the past year. I deeply appreciate their work, knowing how demanding it is. And I have no doubt that many challenges still lie ahead.

I wish you pleasant reading.



Col. Jiří Mazánek  
Director  
National Organized Crime Agency

# SUMMARY

From the NCOZ perspective, the 2024 main trends may be established based on the cases solved and described in this report. Corruption continues to appear as one of the main forms of organized crime. Typical cases are associated with the distribution of public funds in the field of public procurement and subsidies. Most schemes include the combination of the manipulation of the public tender process, as well as conspiracy to do so, and the abuse of inside information and political influence.

Investment fraud, characterized by large volume of loss and number of victims, continued to be committed in 2024. Interceptions of illegal migrant transports continued. Here, the Czech Republic remains a transit country. There have also been cases of human trafficking related to labour exploitation (modern slavery), as well as cases of employment agencies in which the criminal conduct relates to tax crime.

## TAX AND MTIC CRIME

Speaking of tax crime in particular, MTIC frauds were the most common schemes. Most perpetrators tend to evade their VAT liability instead of inducing excessive deductions. A growing trend throughout Europe is the quantitative increase in the damage caused by, and the qualitative growth of criminal groups.

Increasingly serious customs and tax fraud cases are associated with the import of goods into the EU in which international organized crime groups with a professional background and related crime-as-a-service suppliers are involved. In 2024, NCOZ detectives intervened against providers of the so-called money services; an Asian form of the informal money transfer system known as hawala.

## STATISTICS

According to the statistics, 77 criminal proceedings were formally initiated in 2024. 75 investigations resulted in the initiation of criminal prosecutions and a motion to file an indictment was submitted to the public prosecutor in 52 cases. Plea agreements were concluded in six cases. Proportionally, cases in the field of economic crime and corruption are predominant, with 158 cri-



minal cases out of a total of 854 cases processed in 2023. There were 69 cases of financial crime and 50 cases related to organized criminal networks. Seven cases concerned cyber-enabled crime.

In 2024, the Police of the Czech Republic managed to seize property worth CZK 5.76 billion. The ratio of the value of the seized property to the damage caused is 20.1%. The NCOZ accounts for CZK 1.48 billion worth of seized property.

## HIGH-PROFILE CASES

Among the agency's high-profile cases, the report presents the case of manipulation of public tenders in Liberec. The Deputy Mayor of the City of Liberec and a local businessman are facing charges in connection with the award of a public construction contract worth more than CZK 1 billion.



Two large-scale cases related to the transportation of illegal migrants – codenamed ASIX and HATIN – resulted in indictments. In the HATIN case, the indictment targeted 14 suspects believed to have been facilitating transportation of illegal migrants primarily from Turkey. In the ASIX case, NCOZ detectives proposed filing an indictment against six suspects in relation with migrant transports across several EU member states with Germany, or some other EU country as the final destination.

### VRBĚTICE EXPLOSION

In April 2024, the investigation into the explosion of ammunition depots in Vrbeřtice, Czech Republic was completed. The case was discontinued while the investigators managed to identify the suspects as the members of the GRU (Russian military intelligence service) as well as their probable motive. Since the

suspects are Russian residents and the Russian authorities have refused to cooperate, the possibilities of obtaining further evidence were exhausted. Therefore, the investigating authority is unable to obtain further information that would allow the initiation of a criminal prosecution against the suspects.

### DAOLU - ASIAN CAAS GROUPS

The DAOLU case concerns the intervention against an Asian group of covert money transfer service providers. Criminal groups are believed to have transferred funds worth at least CZK 560 million by means of the informal financial system. An important organizational element of the scheme was the establishment of the so-called “collection points” located in an Asian wholesale centre.

Collection points were used to receive cash from customers, as well

as to pay it out. Subsequently, the money service brokers ensured that each amount was paid out in the required currency (including virtual assets), in the correct amount, in a particular location, at the required time and to the authorized person.

### ANALYTICS AND TRENDS

The analytical section of the report focuses on four major topics: national trends and developments in the area of organized crime, the use of cryptocurrencies in criminal activities, human trafficking and modern slavery. Based on several cases involving modern slave traders, the NCOZ is also preparing a preventive campaign. The last featured topic is sports corruption where we address internationally significant phenomenon of the involvement of criminal groups in sports betting fraud (match-fixing).





# NCOZ – STRUCTURE

National Organized Crime Agency (NCOZ) is a law enforcement agency with national jurisdiction, formed within the Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Police of the Czech Republic.

The agency consists of executive divisions (sections/commands and regional offices) and supporting departments. There are three commands: Criminal Networks Command, Serious Economic Crime & Corruption Command and Financial Crime Command.

The agency's leadership as well as individual specialised commands are based in Prague along with supporting departments providing criminal intelligence analysis, forensic data analysis, administrative support, logistics and international cooperation. As of 1 August 2018, Col. Jiří Mazánek, the former director of the agency's Serious Economic

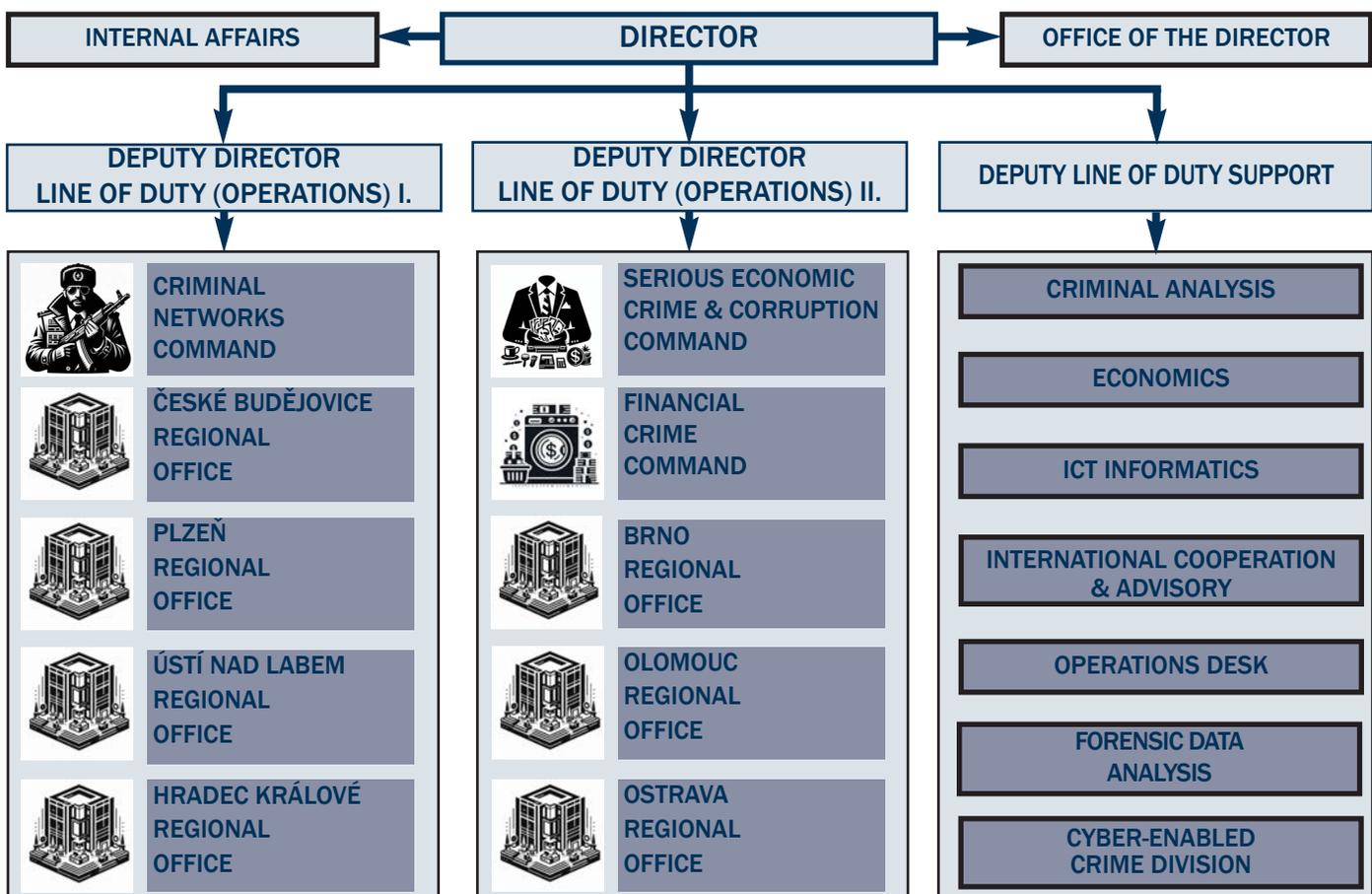
Crime & Corruption Command, was appointed the Director of the NCOZ.

Within its responsibility, the NCOZ specialises in the detection of organised crime, financial crime, serious economic crime and corruption. Within a defined range, the agency is also a coordination, advisory and supervisory body in relation to other departments and units within the Police of the Czech Republic.

By detecting and investigating organised crime, the NCOZ contributes to the security of the state. In accordance with the established subordination, the agency is involved in the fulfilment of tasks assigned to the

Police Presidium of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of the Interior. Apart from its tasks within criminal proceedings, the Cyber-enabled Crime Division also provides expert advisory and support in the area of seizure and tracing of cryptocurrencies, both to other departments of the agency and other units of the Police of the Czech Republic alike.

On regional level, the activities of the agency are delegated to its regional field offices, which primarily deal with organised crime committed in the respective area. These offices are located in České Budějovice, Plzeň, Ústí nad Labem, Hradec Králové, Brno, Olomouc and Ostrava.



# JURISDICTION

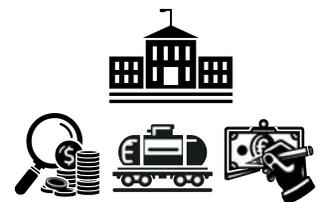
The NCOZ is a specialised agency of the Police of the Czech Republic with national jurisdiction, which deals with criminal cases of utmost gravity. NCOZ's subject-matter jurisdiction is determined by whether the crime is either related to high damage or has been committed by a so-called "special entity" or an organised criminal group. More than a half of the cases fall within the jurisdiction of the High

<p><b>Representatives of central government bodies</b></p> <p>Criminal activity related to the exercise of powers by representatives of government bodies in their capacity as minister, deputy minister, MP, senator, director of a state office and his/her deputy.</p>	<p><b>Representatives of regional government bodies</b></p> <p>Criminal activity related to the exercise of powers by representatives of regional governments in their capacity as a governor and his/her deputy.</p> 	<p><b>Judges and public prosecutors</b></p> <p>Criminal offences committed by judges and prosecutors in connection with the exercise of their jurisdiction.</p> 
<p><b>Harming financial interests of the European Union</b></p> <p>Criminal offences related to the use of financial support from EU funds.</p>	<p><b>Tax crime and serious economic crime</b></p> <p>Tax crime and serious economic crime with damage exceeding CZK 150 million.</p>	<p><b>Money laundering and violating international sanctions</b></p> <p>Crimes related to the laundering of criminal proceeds and violations of international sanctions.</p>
<p><b>Organized criminal groups</b></p> <p>Criminal activities of organized criminal groups pursuant to Section 361 of the Criminal Code, or particularly serious and organized crimes in the areas of:</p>	<p> Extortion</p> <p> Violent crimes</p> <p> THB Human trafficking</p> <p> Illegal migration</p>	<p> IEDs used against life, health or property</p> <p> Crimes against currency and means of payment</p>



**Within its remit, the NCOZ fulfils the tasks of**

- Asset Recovery Office in the Czech Republic
- Designated office to combat tax evasion and tax-related crime
- Designated central office for tackling money counterfeiting



**Organized crime is a group-conducted criminal activity the preparation, way of execution or consequence of which:**



- 1) may pose a threat or threatens the execution of public administration based on the principles of a democratic rule of law or
- 2) heads towards the denial or denies fundamental human rights or otherwise interferes the constitution order or
- 3) harms the economic interests of the state and its critical infrastructure or
- 4) may cause harm or harms particularly vulnerable victims or
- 5) may cause or causes an extensive damage to life or property or
- 6) is of international character

Because of the high social danger, conspiratorial and organized nature, deployment of special police forces is required to detect this type of crime.



# NCOZ

NATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AGENCY  
OF THE CRIMINAL POLICE AND INVESTIGATION SERVICE  
POLICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Do you want to protect the security of the Czech Republic and fight organized crime? We work on the most serious and complex cases with top professionals at home and abroad, using state-of-the-art technology. We are looking for new colleagues who want to join us in working for the safety of citizens and the protection of their rights.

## BECOME AN NCOZ OFFICER

NCOZ is a nationwide unit focused on detecting organized crime, financial crime, serious economic crime, and corruption. If you have ambitions to advance your professional career, we will gladly welcome you to our ranks. We are interested both in experienced police officers and those who may not yet have much practical experience but want to grow under the guidance of seasoned professionals.

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**CONTACT FOR CANDIDATES: [NCOZ.PERSONALNI@PCR.CZ](mailto:NCOZ.PERSONALNI@PCR.CZ)**

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# NCOZ IN 2024

The timeline records the NCOZ high-profile cases of 2024. Details are available online in the press release overview. All press releases published by the NCOZ Public Relations & Prevention Office are available in full on the official website of the Police of the Czech Republic.



## JANUARY 2024

26 January

NCOZ detectives proposed indictments against two individuals for money laundering. This is another case related to earlier large-scale credit fraud at the Metropolitan Savings Cooperative (Metropolitní spořitelní družstvo – MSD). The laundering of funds originating

### Indictment for Money Laundering related to a Credit Fraud at MSD

from fraud against the MSD allegedly took place from 2011, involving the transfer of more than CZK 1 billion to the account of a shell company controlled by both accused individuals, which, according to our findings, did not conduct any legitimate business activity. The

intention of the accused was to prevent the identification of the origin and final use of funds obtained through a credit fraud. One of the accused concealed funds amounting to approximately CZK 618 million, and the other approximately CZK 532 million.

29 January

The European Delegated Prosecutor concluded a plea agreement with three accused individuals prosecuted in connection with the Olomouc Regional Museum development project funded by EU resources. The case concerned approximately CZK 14 million worth of subsidies gran-

### Plea Agreement in the Olomouc Regional Museum Case

ted to the museum within the scope of the project “Virtual Museum in Education – Using New Digital Technologies to Connect Formal and Informal Learning.” All three accused pleaded guilty and agreed with the European prosecutor in charge of the case upon penalties and com-

penation for damages. On 5 April 2025, all three individuals were finally sentenced to three years’ imprisonment with a five-year suspended sentence, monetary and disqualification penalties as well as the obligation to compensate damages.

## FEBRUARY 2024

2 February

NCOZ officers initiated criminal prosecution against three individuals for conspiring to murder and for unlawful possession of firearms. According to our findings,

### Conspiracy to Murder – Three Individuals Charged

the accused cooperated in planning a contract killing of a person from the business sector with the aim of obtaining financial gain. Their plan was ruined thanks to

the timely intervention of the NCOZ detectives. The accused are facing imprisonment from 15 to 20 years or an exceptional sentence if found

6 February

NCOZ officers carried out an operation under the code name of DONJON II, concerning unlawful drawing of subsidies from EU funds and the Czech state budget which resulted in 11 individuals being detained within the

### DONJON II – Fraud Involving EU Subsidies

territory of the Czech Republic. Subsequently, six individuals and one legal entity were charged with aggravated crimes of harming financial interests of the EU and subsidy fraud. According to our findings,

the activity was coordinated with a common intent that companies controlled by the main accused would obtain subsidies amounting to approximately CZK 136 million based on misinterpreted facts.

9 February

Criminal prosecution of four individuals (including one foreign national) was launched in connection with a large-scale fraud investigation. This case involves circumventing collective investment laws. A group of individuals collected funds totalling at least CZK 800 million from more than 1,500 victims under the pretext of establishing a so-called private alternative fund. Money were collected since 2017 via trust entities from inju-

Charges in a CZK 600 Million Investment Fraud

red investors being promised 9% of “guaranteed returns”. In reality, only a part of the funds had been invested while the rest was used

e.g. for personal expenses and company operations. The damage caused by the suspects has exceeded CZK 600 million.



Vehicles seized from the accused



21 February

Based on the intelligence gathered by the NCOZ officers, an investigation was launched into a group suspected of corruption related to the supply of medical materials to hospitals. Suspects are believed to have been systematically manipulating public tenders to ensure contracts being awarded to pre-selected



PROFA – Manipulation of Medical Supply Contracts

ted bidders, having asked for and received bribes in return. NCOZ officers initiated criminal prosecution of ten suspects charged with participation in an organized criminal group, securing advantages in public procurement, money laundering, harming financial interests of the EU and bribery or accepting

bribes (depending on individual involvement). The suspects were involved in medical supply tender manipulations in Prague, Ústí nad Labem, Jihlava and other locations in the Czech Republic and abroad. Since mid-2022, fraudsters were interfering in public contracts of the Regional Health Company and Jihlava Hospital in favor of preferred suppliers.

27 February

In a criminal case supervised by a prosecutor of the High Public Prosecutor’s Office in Prague, the NCOZ initiated criminal prosecution of five natural persons and five legal entities. Charges included subsidy fraud and

Prosecution for misuse of subsidies intended to support sport

securing an undue advantage in the awarding of a public contract. The case is related to the misuse of subsidies provided to the Czech Tennis Association within the system of government support of sports organizations.

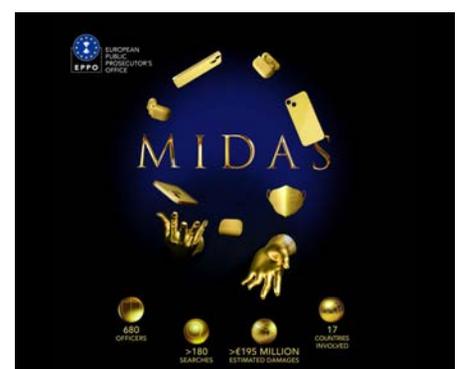
The legal classification applied by the police authority in the decision to initiate criminal prosecution is not identical for all the accused persons.

29 February

NCOZ participated in an extensive international operation coordinated by the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) across 17 countries, targeting an organized group suspected of committing VAT fraud in trading electronics and protective face masks. The criminal scheme was based on a carousel fraud. The tax gap is currently estimated at

MIDAS – International Police Operation in 17 European countries

EUR 195 million. One of the main orchestrators of the scheme was arrested in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, 17 search warrants were enforced, including residential properties and company premises of subjects involved in the case. The criminal proceedings are conducted in Germany. The operation followed several years of investigation.



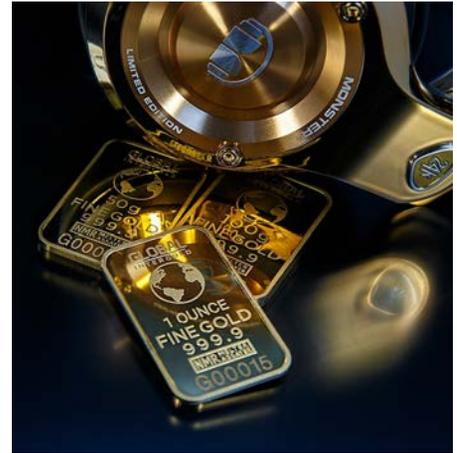
MARCH 2024

5 March

NCOZ detectives initiated criminal prosecution against one natural person and one legal entity on the charges of fraud. The accused company had been offering investments in WCA International fund products to the wide public, promising high returns through investments in currency pairs, global indices, commodities, precious metals, and bonds of major companies, startups and technological projects. Case officers concluded

Investment Fraud Exceeding CZK 2.1 Billion

that the organizer had not been conducting investment activities in a reasonable scope capable of generating the declared returns. Instead, a significant portion of the funds was used for his personal expenses. The accused are believed to have caused damage exceeding CZK 2.1 billion with at least 6,000 victims involved. Typical features of a Ponzi scheme have been identified in the company's operations.



26 March

NCOZ officers initiated criminal prosecution of a suspect charged with distribution, production and handling child pornography and related money laundering. The accused is believed to have been running dedicated websites within the TOR network containing previews of pornographic material depicting child sexual abuse, including mate-

HAGRID – Charges for Distribution of Child Pornography

rials showing showing adults subject to sexual violence or depicting disrespect for human dignity, as well as sexual acts between humans and animals. For a fee paid in virtual currencies, interested parties could register on these portals and subsequently download additional illegal pornographic content. However, access to the data has

never been granted despite any payments made. The offender received about CZK 1 million worth of virtual currency, which he withdrew via Bitcoin ATMs or used for payments for goods and services at various companies. At the end of 2024, the case was finalized by filing a motion for indictment.

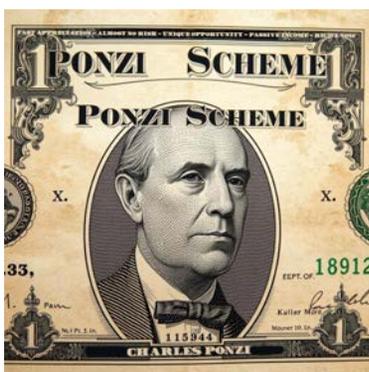
27 March

Criminal prosecution of thirteen suspects was launched in connection with the activities of a group of eighteen cooperating companies operating under the name RAMFIN. The prosecution concerns aggravated fraud committed for the benefit of an organized criminal group and participation in such a group. The companies

RAMFIN – Thirteen charged with a CZK 340 million investment fraud

presented themselves online as an independent investment group capable of reaching advantageous returns while minimizing risks and maximizing profits. In reality, none of the companies either provided any significant returns nor conducted any legitimate investment activity. Instead, the money received from the victims were

used for the personal benefits of the suspects running the fraud scheme or lent to other legal entities, effectively extracting assets from the companies within the scheme. Damage exceeding CZK 340 million was caused to the detriment of more than 1,200 victims, many of which were elderly.



Ponzi Scheme

*A Ponzi scheme is a type of investment fraud in which victims are attracted by false promises of high returns on their investments. Various forms of psychological manipulation are often used, such as building pressure by referring to the alleged “time-limited” and “once-in-a-lifetime” opportunity to get rich. Fraudsters pretend to generate profits and pay out returns from the deposits of new investors. The scheme is named after Italian-American fraudster Charles Ponzi (1882–1949), who used it for his postal coupon frauds.*

APRIL 2024

8 April

PRINT – operation against document forgery group

Codenamed PRINT, an operation targeting forgery of identity documents and public records was carried out in February 2024. Following the searches of houses and other properties, two suspects were charged with forgery and alteration of public documents as well as fraud and credit fraud. Since 2019,

an organized group of offenders had been operating in the Czech Republic (particularly in South Moravia and Prague), as well as in Slovakia and Ukraine. Using forged Czech and Slovak identity documents—primarily ID cards and driver licenses—and forged or altered public documents, the group

attempted to defraud victims by pretending to sell an apartment in Brno for CZK 6 million and signing a CZK 7 million loan agreement. In spring 2024, case officers succeeded in raising charges of document forgery against a third individual who had been staying abroad.

9 April

Tax Evasion – three individuals charged

NCOZ detectives charged three with tax evasion in relation to the opera-

tions of an engineering company in the Moravian-Silesian Region. The

case is supervised by the High Public Prosecutor’s Office in Olomouc.

11 April

LIBEREC – NCOZ OPERATION RELATED TO PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS



NCOZ officers conducted a coordinated intervention related to three criminal proceedings in the Liberec Region.

The raid included searches of premises located in two properties used by the Liberec municipality and registered offices of several construction companies. The operation was based on reasonable suspicion of crimes related to public procurement manipulations performed by local governments in the Liberec Region.

The accused are also suspected of corruption, abuse of authority, and breach of duty in managing another’s property. In the first case, charges were brought against seven individuals, two of whom were remanded in custody. The case concerns small-scale public contracts awarded by an employee of the Liberec municipality. Contracts are believed to have been manipulated in favor of pre-selected suppliers.

In another case, criminal prosecution was initiated against two individuals—the Deputy Mayor of Liberec and a local businessman—in connection with awarding a manipulated construction contract worth over CZK 1 billion. Both defendants are prosecuted at large.



19 April

NCOZ officers charged six offenders with corruption related to the management and administration of municipal flats of a local city district in Brno. Unlawful financial benefits were received in the process

Six Individuals Charged in case with Apartment Allocation in Brno

of allocation or exchange of flats and apartments owned by the municipality. One of the accused is an employee of the housing department of a Brno city district office. Two individuals are charged with

accepting bribes and abuse of authority, facing up to 10 years' imprisonment if convicted. Four others are charged with bribery. The case is supervised by the Brno Municipal Prosecutor's Office.

29 April

## VRBĚTICE – TERMINATION OF INVESTIGATION INTO AMMUNITION DEPOT BLASTS



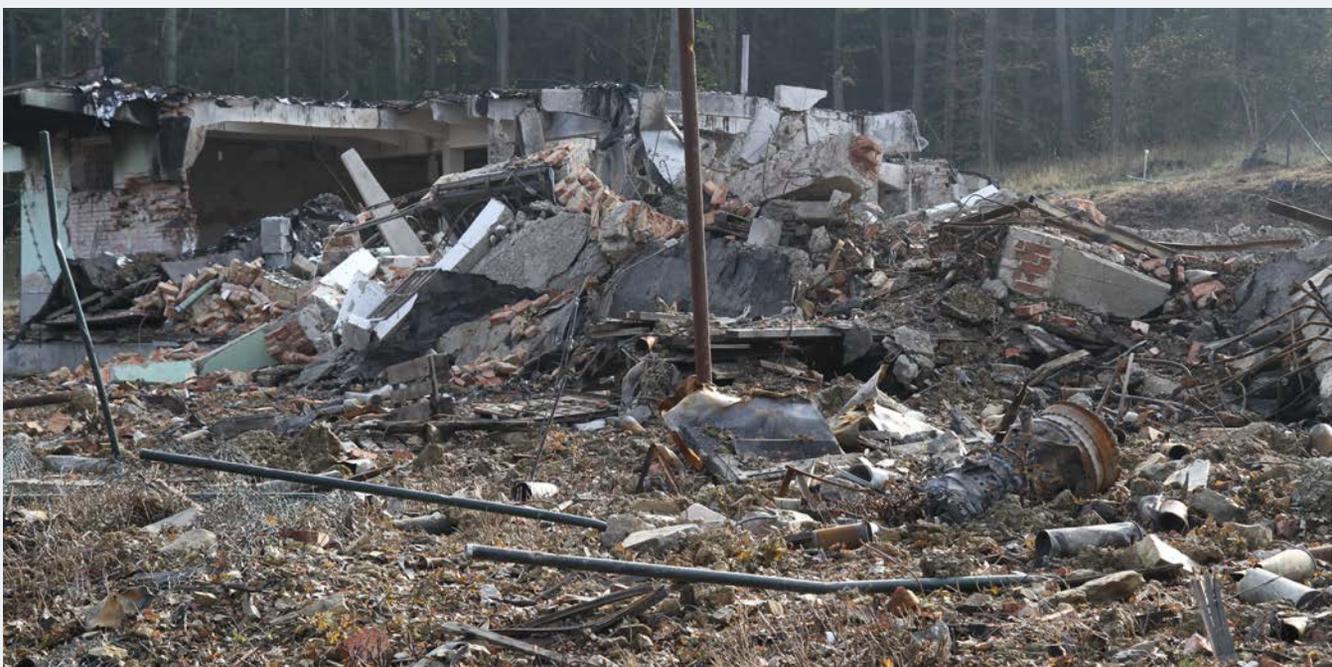
The investigation into the explosions at the Vrbětice ammunition depots on 16 October 2014 and 3 December 2014, causing the deaths of two Czech citizens and damage exceeding CZK 1 billion, has been discontinued pursuant to Section 159a (5) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

In their decision, case officers confirmed the involvement of Russian military intelligence in causing the explosions and the deaths of Czech nationals, stating that this was not an isolated incident but part of a long-term sabotage campaign undertaken by Russian military intelligence within the EU and Ukraine. It is considered proven that the explosions at both depots in Vrbětice were carried out by members of the Russian military intelligence

service—the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, known as GRU—whose motive was to prevent the delivery of weapons and ammunition to areas where Russian forces were conducting operations.

Russian military intelligence had resources needed to cause the explosions. These included operatives who had traveled from Russia for this purpose and

immediately returned. Beyond that, GRU possessed detailed information about the stored goods, their movement, and the final customers, case officers concluded. The perpetrators were identified as members of Unit 29155, designated for conducting sabotage operations abroad, under the 161st Special Operations Training Center. Wanted notices have been issued for GRU operatives Anatoliy Chepiga, Alexander Mishkin, and General An-



drey Averyanov (commanding officer).

Further progress is hindered by missing details, particularly regarding the movements of GRU operatives in the Czech Republic and at the Vrbětice depot area. It can only be assumed what tasks they fulfilled in the Czech Republic and neighboring countries, or how many other Russian military personnel and collaborators were involved in the attack. Since the suspects reside in Russia and Russian authorities refused to

comply with requests for international legal assistance—citing sovereignty, public order, and the country’s vital interests—it is impossible to obtain necessary facts known to the Russian military and intelligence services. All possibilities for obtaining further evidence in the Czech Republic and in countries that complied with Czech requests have been exhausted. Consequently, the investigating authority is unable to gather additional information enabling criminal prosecution. Therefore, the decision was taken

to discontinue the case. Investigation was conducted within the joint investigation team with the UK while closely cooperating with law enforcement authorities of Ukraine and the United States. The investigation also involved cooperation with security forces both in the Czech Republic and abroad, supported by additional intelligence on the identity and movements of the subjects of interest provided by Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Austria, the Netherlands, and Greece via judicial cooperation channels.



**NCOZ**

NATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AGENCY  
CRIMINAL POLICE AND INVESTIGATION SERVICE  
POLICE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

## WANTED PERSONS

Wanted notices have been issued for GRU operatives Anatoliy Chepiga, Alexander Mishkin, and General Andrey Averyanov:



**ANDREY VLADIMIROVICH  
AVERIYANOV**

DOB: 29th September 1967  
Citizen of the Russian Federation  
Commander of GRU Unit 29155  
alias  
Andrey AVERYANOV, DOB: 29.09.1967  
Andrey OVERYANOV, DOB: 23.08.1967



**ANATOLIY VLADIMIROVICH  
CHEPIGA**

DOB: 05th April 1979  
Citizen of the Russian Federation  
Member of GRU Unit 29155  
alias  
Ruslan BOSHROV, DOB: 12.04.1978  
Ruslan TABAROV, DOB: 23.10.1975



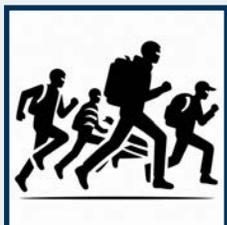
**ALEXANDER YEVGENIYEVICH  
MISHKIN**

DOB: 13th July 1979  
Citizen of the Russian Federation  
Member of GRU Unit 29155  
alias  
Alexander PETROV, DOB: 13.07.1979  
Nicolai POPA, DOB: 18.07.1979

MAY 2024

21 May

## HATIN – ILLEGAL MIGRANT TRANSPORTS, MOTION FOR INDICTMENT



NCOZ case officers filed indictment motions against fourteen suspects believed to have been organizing transports of illegal migrants primarily from Turkey into the Czech Republic or via the Czech Republic to other EU countries. Code-named HATIN, the case has been under investigation since August 2021. Having arranged illegal border crossings for at least 2,000 migrants, the offenders have been collecting substantial payments. The group’s estimated profit is at least EUR 2 million. The accused are charged with organizing and facilitating illegal border crossings for the benefit of an organized criminal group. Some CZK 900,000 worth of cash have been seized along with two vehicles and one real property, all assets considered criminal proceeds.



Note: As of the publication date of this annual report (October 2025), final judgments have been issued for some defendants.

30 May

### The visit of Jan Paďourek to the NCOZ



Jan Paďourek, Director General of the Internal Security and Police Education Section of the Czech Ministry of the Interior, paid a visit to the NCOZ. He was interested in agency’s operations, our views on security threats within the agency’s jurisdiction and the development and training of NCOZ officers. He was presented with a visualization of the planned new

facility in Prague-Zbraslav, which will provide modern infrastructure for several special police units in the future. In the long term, Mr Paďourek has been active within the security community; from 1993 to 2018, he served, inter alia, as the Deputy Director for Analytics and Foreign Relations at the Office for Foreign Relations and Information (ÚZSI).

## JUNE 2024

10 June

### Meeting Between the NCOZ Leadership and Taiwan’s MJIB

Following previous cooperation, a meeting was held between the NCOZ leadership and representatives of Taiwan’s Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB). The discussion focused on strengthening mutual cooperation, coordinating procedures, and setting up future collaboration in combating international crime (illegal migra-

tion, investment fraud, Asian criminal networks etc.). Both parties agreed to deepen cooperation, including organizing training activities and sharing best practices. Other specialized units of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service were also given the opportunity to present their activities and establish contacts.



### 12 June

A tax officer is now facing indictment for abuse of authority, unauthorized access to computer systems and data carriers, and accepting bribes. Indictment motion is also targeting two foreign nationals for damaging the creditor, one facing additional charges of bribery. From 2019 to 2022, the tax officer, using his insider know-

### Indictment motion in relation to the tax database leaks

ledge, searched sensitive information in tax administration databases concerning entities under investigation either by tax authorities or the NCOZ. Data were being offered for sale to company officers during private meetings, thereby influencing tax, court enforcement, or criminal proceedings. In exchange for information and advice on how

to proceed most effectively in the course of these proceedings, the tax officer was receiving bribes including a Mercedes-Benz vehicle. The actions of the accused resulted in damage to the state estimated at CZK 2 million. The investigation was supported by the General Financial Directorate and the Financial Analytical Office (national FIU).

### 13 June

As part of the Czech Ministry of the Interior's security development cooperation project, NCOZ joined an expert mission to Accra, Ghana in May 2024 to establish contacts with national agencies responsible for combating cybercrime. The aim was to share experience in detecting, investigating and prosecuting

### NCOZ cooperation in training forensic specialists in Ghana

cybercrime, with emphasis on dark web activities, cryptocurrency trading, development of training programs and establishing direct and permanent contacts for uncovering serious cross-border crimes. The delegation held meetings with Ghana's criminal police leadership, cybercrime unit, international co-

operation department, National Central Bureau of Interpol, WAPIS (West African Police Information System), FSL (Forensic Science Laboratory), and other units. It also actively participated in forensic training for Ghanaian police specialists aimed at collecting and forensic analysis of digital data.

### 13 June

Experts from the Czech Republic, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and joined by representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office, NCOZ, the National Cyber and Information Security Agency (NÚKIB), the National Counterterrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime Agency (NCTEKK), Brno University of Technology, and Masaryk University,

### Cybercrime seminar in Bogotá

organized a three-day seminar in Bogotá, Colombia in late April 2024. The objective was to share expertise with seven Latin American countries on cybercrime, cryptocurrencies, cybersecurity, legal regulation of artificial intelligence, and to build opportunities for further cooperation between government institutions and universities.



### 27 June

Following extensive pre-investigation conducted by the Customs Administration, NCOZ officers filed charges against twelve individuals in relation tax evasion and participation in an organized criminal group. The group of offenders enriched itself by evading VAT liability, leaving behind a tax gap exceeding CZK 234 million. Case officers believe that the group had been operational since 2021, organizing the import of precious metal jewelry from a non-EU country through

### Operation to intercept a CZK 234 million tax evasion

a Czech legal entity. Subsequently, shell companies were used to declare tax who either failed to declare the goods in their tax returns or misrepresented their records by declaring lower values. Imported goods were immediately distributed by couriers to other EU member states, primarily Germany. During the operation, which involved more than one hundred officers from the NCOZ and the Czech Customs Administration, ten suspects were detained. House se-

arches were carried out at the suspects' residences, as well as searches of all offices used by the group across the Czech Republic. As part of the criminal proceedings, cash (in foreign currency), funds in bank accounts, and precious metal jewelry were seized. Investigators from the NCOZ and customs officers were supported by experts of the Czech Financial Administration, joining their forces as part of the so-called Tax Cobra task force.

JULY 2024

2 July

Sixteen suspects (15 Czech citizens and one foreign national) were arrested and charged with tax evasion, credit fraud, subsidy fraud and participation in an organized criminal group. The group was operating primarily in the South Moravian Region. Since early 2019,

16 Charged with tax and subsidy fraud

offenders are believed to have been issuing and adding fictitious invoices into accounting of legal entities in order to misrepresent key economic indicators such as liabilities, receivables and turnover. Misrepresented figures were later presented to banks and public in-

stitutions providing subsidies (including EU subsidies) to obtain loans and grants. By unlawfully claiming VAT and corporate income tax deductions on these fictitious expenses, they allegedly caused damage to the state exceeding CZK 70 million.

17 July

NCOZ officers carried out an operation in relation to public document forgery. Codenamed BELUGA, the intervention targeted an organized group suspected of providing false Romanian identity papers to Moldovan citizens in order to facilitate a free access to the Czech labor market and legalize their possible travels within the EU. The suspects are also believed to have been engaged in illegal employment of foreigners. The organized group reportedly operated mainly in the Nymburk area, supplying foreign workers to the Czech-based em-

BELUGA – document forgery and illegal employment of foreigners

ployers for a financial gain. Eight suspects (foreign nationals and Czech citizens) were charged with forgery and alteration of public documents and illegal employment of

foreigners as members of an organized group. One legal entity was also charged with illegal employment of foreigners conducted as the core of its business activities.



10 YEARS OF THE TAX COBRA



2014  
2024

The “Tax Cobra” project was formally launched in the Czech Republic in 2014 through an agreement between the Ministries of the Interior and Finance, aimed at exchanging information and coordinating efforts in combating tax evasion and tax-related crime.



The term “Tax Cobra” refers to a working method and procedural approach involving the Customs Administration, the Financial Administration, and the Police. These are highly effective and efficient procedures for law enforcement authorities, with the primary goal of ensuring proper tax collection and, where possible, recovering illegally obtained funds back to the state budget.

Since its inception, Tax Cobra has saved more CZK 16 billion from being lost from the state budget.

July 19

## ASIX – INDICTMENT FOR MIGRANT SMUGGLING



NCOZ officers filed indictment motions targeting six individuals in connection with bringing illegal migrants across several EU countries, including the Czech Republic, to Germany or other EU destinations. The organized group is believed to have gained unlawful profit of approximately CZK 8 million through its activities.

The international organized group is believed to have been arranging transports of illegal migrants originating mainly from Syria at least since October 2021. Migrants were smuggled via Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, with Germany being the final destination. Passenger cars, minibuses, vans, and light commercial vehicles were used for these transports. Several more individuals had been initially prosecuted in the scope of the case (for organizing and enabling illegal border crossings) but some defendants have already had plea agreements approved by the court.



## AUGUST 2024

August 22

NCOZ investigators have finalized another case related to the business activities of the Metropolitan Savings Cooperative (MSD) by filing an indictment motion. Sixteen suspects are now facing charges of aggravated credit fraud. Being either MSD officers or major shareholders, defendants are believed to

### Metropolitan Savings Cooperative – another indictment motion

have been signing credit agreements from 2010 to 2013 under conspicuously – disadvantageous conditions for the Cooperative. Evaluation processes were purely formal, failing to assess applicants' creditworthiness or conducting thorough risk evaluation before granting loans. Not even lowest

standard checks were performed regarding the pricing of real estate and securities used as collateral, with actual values being only a fraction of the loan amounts due to false appraisals. This is resulted in damage reaching almost CZK 4.5 billion to the detriment of the MSD which is now facing bankruptcy.

August 30

NCOZ investigators have finalized a case involving manipulated public contracts awarded by the Radioactive Waste Repository Authority (SÚRAO). After the indictment motion, five individuals and two legal entities are now being

### SÚRAO – gaining advantage in public procurement

prosecuted for involvement in tender manipulations. Three of these individuals are accused of committing the crime for the benefit of an organized criminal group. From April 2020 to May 2022, the accused are believed to have been en-

gaged in coordinated illegal activities to influence SÚRAO's procurement processes, aiming to secure manipulated contracts for preferred suppliers at the expense of other bidders.

August 20



## DAOLU – INVESTIGATION OF ASIAN “MONEY TRANSFER SERVICE” GROUPS

NCOZ detectives targeted Asian criminal groups operating informal money transfer systems. These groups traditionally engage in tax evasion, customs fraud and drug trafficking, with illegal activities tied to covert financial flows.

This crime-as-a-service phenomenon is accompanied by the successful circumvention of measures against money laundering and terrorist financing. This issue is internationally — particularly in Europe—known as “Chinese underground banking”.

Europol, for example, uses this term. The money-transfer service, referred to within the Chinese community as “HUIKUAN FUWU” and within the Vietnamese community as “DICH VU CHUYEN TIEN”, essentially replaces the function of a bank. Its main purpose, or rather the essence of its operation, is the unauthorized transfer of funds (regardless of their origin) from Europe to East and Southeast Asia (and vice versa), for a fee that typically depends on the total amount sent or the client’s creditworthiness.

The investigation documented that the organized criminal

groups unlawfully provided banking services amounting to at least CZK 560 million. A key organizational element consisted of so-called collection points located in an Asian wholesale center. These served as places where customers could deposit (and withdraw) cash, after which the service ensured that each amount was paid out in the required currency (including virtual assets), in the correct amount, at the specified location, at the required time, and to the authorized recipient.

The prosecuted organized criminal groups operated internationally and had been active at least since 2020, functioning on the basis of trust. They were formed along ethnic lines (Chinese and Vietnamese), reinforced by family and regional ties. Their illegal activities were conducted in a manner designed to prevent the identification of the real custo-

mers, the senders of the money, as well as the detection of the service as a whole. During the acceptance and payout of cash, so-called tokens (banknote serial numbers) were used to verify the customer and to confirm that the pre-agreed amount of money had been handed over. The organized criminal group also used so-called trusted couriers, who transported large volumes of cash in concealed compartments built into motor vehicles.

In the course of the investigation, eight individuals were charged. During house searches and searches of other premises, more than CZK 55 million (converted) in cash was seized as evidence. Criminal prosecution is underway for unauthorized business activity under Section 251 of the Criminal Code, violation of competition rules under Section 248, and participation in an organized criminal group under Section 361.



## SEPTEMBER 2024

September 25

NCOZ officers finalized their investigation into a large-scale case of illegal imports of goods from China with tax evasions exceeding CZK 1 billion. The investigation, which had taken several months and was completed within - one year, resulted in disclosing an organised group of individuals involved in the imports of goods without due payment of taxes, primarily electronics and clothes. Our conclusions indi-

### REJDAŘ – indictment proposal for billion-crown tax fraud

cate no VAT was paid for the goods intended to be illegally distributed into EU countries, thereby causing a damage of app. CZK 1,2 billion. In the autumn of 2023, the operation with a codenamed REJDAŘ entailed the seizure of cash money (approximately CZK 2.5 million) and financial funds from bank accounts (approximately CZK 17 million), together with seizing vehicles, watches and more than 500 pallets of

goods of various nature, which was planned for direct sales in e-shops. Seven individuals are charged with criminal offences of participating in an organised criminal group and evading taxes, fees and similar compulsory payments. Three legal entities are prosecuted for evasion of taxes, fees and similar compulsory payments committed in benefit of an organised criminal group.

## OCTOBER 2024

8 October

Eight were arrested during a raid in the Moravian-Silesian Region. The case concerns small-scale public contracts awarded by the Moravian-Silesian Energy Center. The contract awarding system was based on prioritizing pre-selected bidders who had paid bribes to get

### Charges related to Moravian-Silesian energy center contracts

the contracts. Subsequently, five individuals and one legal entity were charged. The prosecution concerns crimes of securing advantage in public procurement, public tenders, and public auctions, abuse of authority, accepting bribes, and bribery (depending on

individual involvement). Some contracts related to marketing services were financed from EU funds. The total value of the contracts involved in this criminal case amounts to several million CZK.

17 October

The Tax Cobra task force (NCOZ and Customs Administration officers) carried out a large-scale operation to dismantle an organized group suspected of having evaded VAT by more than CZK 149 million from October 2019 and March 2023. The main organizer is believed to have

### VAT fraud exceeding CZK 149 million

formed an organized group that systematically issued fictitious invoices to reduce tax liabilities. Investigation indicated that invoices were being issued on non-existent taxable transactions in order to decrease tax liability for particular business entities. Shell companies

having conducted no real activity and having been represented by strawmen, were used for this purpose. Thirty individuals and eighteen legal entities were charged with participation in an organized criminal group and tax evasion committed for the benefit of such a group.

25 October

With the consent of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), the NCOZ initiated criminal prosecution of one legal entity and two individuals on the charges subsidy fraud and damaging the EU's financial interests. The accused are believed to have submitted false information and misrepresented facts during the grant application

### Subsidy fraud involving toast bread production line

process for an innovative toast bread production line under the "INNOVATION – Innovation Project" program, part of the Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness 2014–2015 Operational Programme. Fraudsters succeeded in receiving the requested subsidy, granted in 2018 and funded from the Czech state budget. Following

an audit by the European Commission, EU refused to reimburse the subsidy to the Czech Republic as the project was deemed ineligible. This resulted in CZK 100 million of loss caused to the Czech Republic represented by the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

30 October

NCOZ officers concluded the investigation of a large-scale investment fraud case involving the private alternative fund Growing Way. One individual and one legal entity are charged with fraud. The suspect established an alternative investment fund and created

Growing Way – investment fraud causing CZK 1.5 billion damage

a fraud scheme, offering financial market investments in 2020–2021 and promising unrealistic returns. Detectives concluded that the organizer conducted no real investment activity and used the funds for personal purposes. CZK 1.5 billion are believed to have

been extracted from 4,193 victims. Thanks to NCOZ’s swift intervention, more than CZK 1 billion worth of criminal proceeds have been seized. Funds will be used to partially compensate the victims.

NOVEMBER 2024

26 November

Following the NCOZ intervention at the Municipal Real Estate Agency (Městská realitní agentury) in the town of Havířov in April 2023, six individuals were charged with gaining advantage in public procurement, accepting bribes, and

Public procurement manipulations at municipal real estate agency

bribery. Based on additional facts uncovered during the investigation, one more natural person and three more legal entities are now facing the same charges. Previous charges were extended to include breach of duty in managing ano-

ther’s property and tax evasion. It was established that the suspects had been manipulating public contracts awarded by the Havířov municipal real estate agency to favor pre-selected suppliers, restricting competition and transparency.

28 November

NCOZ officers launched criminal prosecution of 14 females who profited from forced prostitution abroad. Some of the accused are believed to have formed a covert network in 2019 to profit from prostitution carried out by others in the United Kingdom (specifically Northern Ireland) and the Republic of Ireland. The group was recruiting prostitutes from underprivileged communities, arranged

TERZUZ – Prosecution of an organized pimping group

client contacts, transportation, accommodation, and advertising of sexual services. Within the group, “operators” (other suspects now facing charges as well) were in charge of scheduling shifts and directing clients to specific prostitutes on a daily basis. To avoid disclosure, all communication went via private chat groups within mobile apps where the women appeared under nicknames. Recei-

ving part of the prostitutes’ earnings, the organized group is believed to have earned and shared at least CZK 10 million worth of criminal proceeds since 2019. All women are charged with pimping committed for the benefit of an organized criminal group and participation in such a group. The case, code-named TERZUZ, involved cooperation with foreign law enforcement agencies.



## DECEMBER 2024

5 December

From 3 to 5 December 2024, Prague hosted an interdepartmental conference of forensic specialists focused on collecting, processing, evaluating and analyzing digital evidence in criminal proceedings.

## International conference on digital evidence

The main objective of the conference was to foster cooperation and to share best practice in the area of using forensic analytical tools for data collection, evaluation and analysis as evidence in

criminal cases. The conference was attended by more than thirty forensic experts from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belgium, and France.

12 December

NCOZ officers initiated criminal prosecution of a suspect charged with distribution, production and handling child pornography and related money laundering. From 2020 to early 2024, the suspect was running dedicated websites

## Distribution of pornography – motion for indictment

within the TOR network containing previews of pornographic material depicting child sexual abuse. For a fee, users could register themselves on these portals and subsequently download additional illegal pornographic content.

However, access to the data has never been granted to them despite the payments made. The offender received about CZK 1 million worth of virtual currency, which he withdrew via Bitcoin ATMs.

17 December

NCOZ officers successfully dismantled an organized group engaged in providing so-called money transfer services. Based on gathered intelligence, an investigation was launched in January 2024 into individuals suspected of illegal financial operations. In cooperation with the Czech FIU (FAÚ), it was established that the main organizer – being a director of a legal entity – conducted illegal “banking activities” without authorization, along

## Organized Asian criminal group providing money transfer services

with other group members. The group targeted the Southeast Asian community, offering services involving cash collection and money transfers. This included making deposits into Czech bank accounts and subsequent transfers to various European countries and Southeast Asia. These operations were conducted outside legal oversight to conceal the identities of actual owners and senders of funds. During its time, the group is believed to

have illegally transferred some CZK 800 million worth of funds. Unlike similar cases, paying cash-on-delivery fees for fictitious registered parcels was used by the accused to conceal the true origin of the money. Eight individuals (including two foreign nationals) were arrested and later charged with participation in an organized criminal group and violations of economic competition rules, all committed for the benefit of the criminal group.



# CASE STATISTICS

## FILED FOR PRE-INVESTIGATION

**77 CASES**

Initiation of criminal proceedings: An official record pursuant to Section 158 (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code filed in 77 cases of suspected criminal activity reported 37 cases (57 %) resulted from Agency's own field intelligence operations.

**37 CASES OWN INTEL**



**57 %**

## CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS LAUNCHED

**75 CP**

Initiation of criminal prosecution: a resolution on the initiation of criminal prosecution pursuant to Section 160 (1) and (5) of the Criminal Procedure Code in a total of 75 cases. This includes charges against:

**329 NP** natural persons

**53 LE** legal entities



## FILING INDICTMENT MOTIONS & PLEA BARGAINS

**52 FIM + 6 PB**

Motions to submit an indictment were filed in relation to 52 cases. Within these cases, indictment motions addressed:

**194 NP FIM** natural persons

**15 LE FIM** legal entities

Plea bargains referred to 6 cases. Agreements were made with :

**12 NP PB** natural persons

**1 LE PB** legal entities

## CASES UNDER INVESTIGATION

The total number of criminal files under investigation as of the end of 2024.

	CRIMINAL NETWORKS	50
	SERIOUS ECONOMIC CRIME & CORRUPTION	158
	FINANCIAL CRIME	69
	CYBER-ENABLED CRIME	7
	<b>NCOZ TOTAL</b>	<b>284</b>

## TOTAL: 284 FILES IN PROGRESS.

The total number of criminal files under investigation as of the end of 2024. Total: 284 files in progress. 2019-2022 year-over-year file number comparison. Note: Until 2022, NCOZ responsibilities included terrorism, extremism and cybercrime.

2019	320
2020	285
2021	282
2022	267
2023	255
2024	284

## Number of cases supervised by EPPO European Public Prosecutor's Office

2020	3
2021	5
2022	8
2023	17
2024	24

# RECOVERY OF CRIMINAL PROCEEDS

According to internal statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic, CZK 5.766 billion worth of assets were seized by police, public prosecutor offices and courts in the course of criminal proceedings in 2024. This equals the net value of CZK 5.455 billion after accounting for assets whose seizure was revoked. The ratio between the value of seized assets and the total damage caused is 20.1%.

## OVERVIEW OF SECURED ASSETS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR THE PERIOD 01.01.2024 - 31.12.2024

Regional Police Directorates	4 142 306 375 CZK		
National Organized Crime Agency (NCOZ)	1 483 395 092 CZK		
National Drug Enforcement Agency (NPC)	140 989 972 CZK		
<b>TOTAL FOR CZECH POLICE</b>	<b>5 766 691 439 CZK</b>		

Value of Secured Assets 2022–2024	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023	YEAR 2024
NCOZ	2 892 149 126 CZK	6 209 465 734 CZK	1 483 395 092 CZK
NPC	105 227 112 CZK	143 031 646 CZK	140 989 972 CZK
Regional Police Directorates	2 399 971 763 CZK	2 473 641 872 CZK	4 142 306 375 CZK
<b>TOTAL FOR CZECH POLICE</b>	<b>5 397 348 001 CZK</b>	<b>8 826 139 252 CZK</b>	<b>5 766 691 439 CZK</b>
BALANCE OF ASSETS AFTER REVOCATION OF SEIZURE	5 216 000 000 CZK	6 365 649 574 CZK	5 455 227 333 CZK



Note: The minimum value of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances seized by the National Drug Enforcement Agency (NPC) is estimated at approximately CZK 401.6 million. The value of these illegal substances is not included in the official statistics on seized property.

## COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW – SEIZED ASSETS – TO-DAMAGE RATIO FOR THE PERIOD 2020 – 2024

YEAR	Seized assets in millions of CZK	Seized assets net (after adjustment)	Total damage in millions of CZK	Seized assets to damage ratio
2020	6 550	6 551	16 713	39,2 %
2021	7 043	6 856	21 429	32,9 %
2022	5 397	5 216	16 172	33,4 %
2023	8 826	6 365	18 093	48,8 %
2024	5 767	5 446	28 692	20,1 %

# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



In 2024, as in previous years, significant changes in the security situation within the EU and the Czech Republic were reflected in developments concerning organized crime – both domestically and across the Union. The importance of this threat to the EU was demonstrated by numerous activities undertaken by member states aimed at responding this highly dangerous form of crime.

For NCOZ, these measures provided valuable insights and guidance. Consequently, NCOZ devoted considerable attention to operational cooperation with foreign partners and to both legislative and non-legislative measures related to combating organized crime, adopted at both national and EU levels. Similar attention was given to measures introduced in democratic jurisdictions across the globe. EU activities in 2024 clearly indicated that tackling organized crime remained a high priority within the Union. This was evident from the approach of the Belgian and Hungarian presidencies of the Council of the EU, individual member states—particularly those experiencing a deterioration in security due to organized crime—the European Commission, and Union agencies such as Europol, Eurojust, CEPOL, and EPPO.

In 2024, the EU placed increasing

emphasis on strategic cooperation and targeted actions against organized crime. Legislative acts were adopted that, once implemented in the Czech Republic, are expected to enhance the effectiveness of combating organized crime. It also became clear that the threat posed by organized criminal networks in some EU member states rivals that of extremist or terrorist groups and could further destabilize security within the Union. Criminal networks are attempting to infiltrate the EU, and their suppression will not be possible without robust cooperation among member states, third countries, and strong support from EU institutions and agencies.

The significance of this particular issue for EU security and the high level of danger posed by these criminal structures was underscored by recent Council of the EU discussions, European Commission documents, and Europol reports. This

was further confirmed by Europol's latest SOCTA 2025 report analyzing the situation within the Union and the ProtectEU, the new EU internal security strategy for the period 2025–2030, presented by the European Commission in spring 2025.

Throughout 2024, NCOZ continued efforts to leverage EU instruments in combating organized crime, such as the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), and Operational Task Forces (OTFs). International cooperation provided NCOZ with numerous reasons why the Czech Republic must not lag in implementing effective measures against organized crime. Many member states apparently tightened their own rules significantly in 2024.

NCOZ remains fully aware of the



## Visit of the FBI Director to Czechia

*FBI Director Paul Wray visited the Czech Republic from 21 to 25 February 2024. During his meetings with the Minister of the Interior Mr Vít Rakušan, the Police President, General Martin Vondrášek, and the Director of NCOZ, Col. Jiří Mazánek, Mr Wray highly appreciated the long-standing partnership and the excellent level of mutually beneficial cooperation with Czech law enforcement authorities. In particular, individual cases involving FBI-NCOZ cooperation were acknowledged. The FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) is a federal investigative agency under the US Department of Justice. Its primary mission is to investigate serious crimes across the federal state borders, as well as to combat terrorism, cybercrime, and corruption.*

importance of both operational and strategic dimensions of international cooperation. In 2024, the agency again addressed numerous legislative and non-legislative issues affecting its responsibilities, being forced to prioritize due to their volume. EU legislation continued to shape many aspects influencing NCOZ operations, and further EU acts are expected in coming years that will significantly impact efforts against organized crime and corruption in both the EU and the Czech Republic.

Examples include Council conclusions on mapping the most threatening criminal networks (10512/24) and Europol reports giving a clear warning that organized crime threatens EU internal security. These documents highlight that the criminal environment is constantly evolving as offenders seek new opportunities and exploit vulnerabilities. Criminal entities skillfully leverage the economy for illicit purposes, exploiting weaknesses in social systems to generate enormous illegal profits while employing strategies to conceal and legitimize their income.

Financial crimes, particularly money laundering, undermine society by infiltrating the legal economy and fostering a parallel

society increasingly reliant on organized crime. In April 2021, the European Commission adopted a common Strategy to Tackle Organized Crime 2021–2025, setting priorities and measures to address criminal networks' organization and business models. The strategy focused on strengthening law enforcement and judicial cooperation, dismantling criminal structures, addressing high-priority crimes, eliminating illicit profits, and adapting enforcement to the digital age. A number of 2024 EU initiatives were linked to this document, and NCOZ participated in discussions on the new EU approach to organized crime. (Note: In spring 2025, the European Commission presented the ProtectEU – a new strategic document on internal security for 2025–2030, outlining the EU's approach for the coming years.)

In 2024, the EU also discussed the concept of High-Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN), addressing new trends, modi operandi, technologies, online environments—including dark web—and other variables influencing the globalization of organized crime. EU actors focused on mapping HRCNs, including Europol's report on high-risk networks. The Council called on member states and Europol to incorporate

mapping results into SOCTA 2025 and consider them when defining new EMPACT priorities for 2026–2029. NCOZ contributed to these efforts and will continue to engage in future activities.

EU outputs in 2024 emphasized that financial investigations are essential for uncovering money laundering, terrorist financing, and other serious crimes, providing investigators with leads to detect criminal activities and map entire networks, including transnational implications. Financial investigations can also yield critical evidence for prosecuting suspects and identifying and confiscating criminal assets. NCOZ actively participated in initiatives related to this area.

In 2024, the EU adopted the Confiscation Directive (2024/1260), which entered into force on 22 May 2024. Member states now have 30 months to transpose it into national law. The directive covers the entire asset recovery process, replacing previous instruments. NCOZ engaged in discussions on its implications towards the Czech Republic and the efforts to crack down organized crime.

In 2024, the EU discussed the possibility of more effective communication between law enforcement

## President of the BKA visited NCOZ



*On 16 July 2024, Col. Jiří Mazánek met Mr Holger Münch, the President of the Federal Criminal Police Office of Germany (Bundeskriminalamt – BKA). The meeting focused on current security issues and future bilateral cooperation. The BKA is Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office. It is the main federal agency responsible for combating organized crime, terrorism, cybercrime, and other serious criminal offenses. The BKA cooperates with international organizations such as Interpol and Europol and helps to coordinate complex police operations among the German federal states.*



## Visit to the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) in Wiesbaden

*From 21 to 24 October 2024, NCOZ leadership visited the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) in Wiesbaden, Germany. The visit addressed recent security topics related to the war in Ukraine, issues concerning Russian-speaking organized crime groups, environmental crime (particularly the illegal import of hazardous waste), and expert assessments in serious economic crime cases. Recent trends in online fraud, especially various types of investment scams, were also part of the agenda.*



authorities and internet service providers. The NCOZ also devoted appropriate attention to this issue.

Last year, the agency continued to extend its cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), which plays an important role in combating tax crime within the EU as part of its remit to protect European finances in the area of subsidy and tax fraud. In its 2024 annual report, the EPPO warned citizens and institutions about the extraordinary scale of fraud damaging the interests of the Union, stating that organized crime is heavily involved in these activities.

In 2024, NCOZ assisted in hosting the Schengen evaluation mission carried out in the Czech Republic as part of the regular Schengen evaluation. Based on the mission findings, recommendations will be given to the Czech Republic aimed at improving the situation. It can be expected that some of these will also have an impact on the efforts to weaken organized crime in the Czech Republic.

NCOZ continued to establish tight cooperation primarily with other EU member states. Apart from the legal basis for international judicial cooperation in criminal matters

under the EU legislation, the following tools proved to be of particular benefit: direct legal contact, the possibility of discussing individual cases within Eurojust, joint investigation teams (JITs), meetings of contact points of expert networks etc. There was also intensive cooperation between the NCOZ and some third-party countries.

Cooperation with other countries was handled on an ad hoc basis, depending on the actual necessity, the structure of local authorities and their competences, etc. Issues of foreign cooperation and international activities were handled by

EPPO

EUROPEAN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR OFFICE



EUROPEAN  
PUBLIC  
PROSECUTOR'S  
OFFICE

The main task of the EPPO is to protect particular financial interests of the European Union by the means of criminal law. Its jurisdiction covers corruption and frauds involving EU funds with damage threshold exceeding EUR 10,000 and cross-border VAT fraud causing damage of more than EUR 10 million. The EPPO represents the public interest and operates independently of national governments, the European Commission or other EU agencies. Its structure is decentralized, with headquarters in Luxembourg and 42 local offices in the member states. The European Chief Prosecutor and 22 European Prosecutors are based in Luxembourg, overseeing investigations conducted by delegated European prosecutors in individual member states. Delegated prosecutors work within national judicial systems but remain independent in the exercise of their functions. To date, there are three European Delegated Prosecutors and three Assisting European Delegated Prosecutors in the Czech Republic.

the NCOZ international office, the Department of International Cooperation and Methodology. The department was providing coordination, guidance and advisory in areas falling within the department's jurisdiction.

Being in charge of tasks in the area of international police cooperation, the department is also contributing to assignments related to the Czech Republic's membership in the EU and other international organizations and expert networks.

In 2024, NCOZ representatives with the unit's remit, NCOZ representatives actively participated in relevant EU-level meetings. The agency also contributed to individual outputs to be used in further negotiations and to direct police-to-police cooperation related to organized crime, making use of EU outputs published on the topic. International cooperation was coordinated via the dedicated Directorate of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, international cooperation was being coordinated, including operational coopera-

tion with special foreign police forces abroad. NCOZ's international office was providing language support at coordination meetings and legal assistance activities both in the Czech Republic and abroad. This included operational meetings of joint investigation teams under the auspices of Eurojust as well as various expert and case-related meetings organized by Europol.

Last but not least, the the office organized and facilitated the participation of NCOZ officers in training courses, seminars, and other educational activities. Appropriate attention was paid to the language training of unit members. In 2024, NCOZ officers continued to participate in the implementation of foreign development cooperation projects and EU-funded projects. Regular meetings were held throughout the year to exchange information and handle requests with authorized officers or liaison police officers of foreign security forces as well as Czech police liaison officers deployed abroad. The Asset Recovery Office (ARO) played an important role in 2024.

The NCOZ is an expert and advisory office for detecting and securing proceeds from crime and performs the tasks of the office for tracing assets derived from crime in the Czech Republic.

In 2024, an NCOZ officer represented the Czech Police in the CARIN network (an international law enforcement cooperation network of experts sharing information in the area of asset tracing and recovery on informal basis). One of the main objectives of the network is to promote cooperation and exchange of information on the detection and seizure of criminal proceeds. In 2024, the NCOZ actively participated in drafting the new Organized Crime Strategy 2030 and the related Action Plan 2025–2026. Prepared by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, both strategic documents have been approved by the Czech government. Besides other topics, the documents also address priorities and tasks relating to the area of international cooperation.



**ARO**

**ASSET RECOVERY OFFICE**



The Department of International Cooperation and Advisory of the NCOZ is in charge of tasks assigned to the agency being the Asset Recovery Office (ARO) for the Czech Republic. The ARO office handles international asset tracing requests received from various organizational units of the Police of the Czech Republic, particularly economic crime departments of regional police directorates and the National Drug Headquarters (NPC), the national drug enforcement agency. At the same time, the ARO team responds to requests received from foreign ARO offices. ARO officers regularly participate in international meetings of the ARO platform, organized by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs – DG HOME) in cooperation with Europol. Within the Police of the Czech Republic, NCOZ is the expert and advisory department in the field of tracing and seizure of criminal proceeds.



# TRENDS IN ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The most significant current trends in organized crime in the Czech Republic include the persistence of corruption-related offenses as one of the main forms of organized criminal activity. Furthermore, there is an increase in both the number and sophistication of investment fraud schemes, and the continued appearance of large-scale tax and customs fraud. These crimes are perpetrated by international organized groups with professional backgrounds, capable of significant innovations in their modus operandi.

## VIOLENT CRIME

Within established Czech and foreign criminal structures operating in the Czech Republic, there has been a continued decline in violent conduct, which currently occurs only at lower levels of criminal networks with a basic degree of organization. In connection with the turbulent development of organized crime—particularly caused by mass migration to the EU (from Africa and Ukraine), accompanied by the relocation of criminal networks into the EU (including the

Czech Republic) a future reversal of this trend cannot be entirely ruled out, especially due to potential clashes over criminal territories and markets.

## HIGHLY ORGANIZED CZECH CRIMINAL GROUPS FOCUSED ON CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Criminal manifestations in the area of corruption are linked to the allocation of public funds in public procurement and subsidies. Within highly organized criminal structures, various schemes have been

long existing, combining manipulation of public tender procedures and scheming in the course of awarding public contracts, along with misuse of information and influence. In relation to public contracts, similar unlawful practices as in previous periods have been detected. These corrupt practices are concentrated mainly in the construction sector, IT services, healthcare, cleaning, and technical services. Criminal activity can therefore still be expected primarily in areas where decisions on public budgets are made (e.g., public con-

## CHANGE IN THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

*What distinguishes the current period from previous ones is a fundamental qualitative shift in the security environment. The boundaries between external and internal threats are blurring. While closely interconnected, all threats appear to act in synergy, amplifying the potential impacts of these changes. Following the deterioration of the global security, the Czech security environment is increasingly influenced by external and broader factors. The most visible manifestations are armed conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. Another significant factor is the impact of illegal migration, which is evident across Europe, including the Czech Republic.*

*New security threats are being created by growing societal pressures that risk undermining internal stability and consensus. Traditional threats associated with organized crime have not disappeared but are gradually transforming in line with overall developments. One reason why the Czech Republic should not lag behind in implementing effective measures against organized crime is the situation where individual EU member states are significantly tightening their own measures against organized crime. This refers to illegal migration in particular, as countries aim at making themselves less attractive territories for criminal enterprises. A scenario in which the Czech Republic becomes a favorable and widely used location for criminal business—where numerous opportunities are combined with low risk and mild penalties—would have a profoundly negative impact.*

tracts, subsidies) or in business sectors that are heavily regulated and where circumventing regulations may result in significant economic gains (e.g. waste and emission management, energy production, capital markets etc.).

## FRAUD

Fraudulent activities represent a significant area of financial crime. While their form has evolved with the development of information technologies, the essence remain linked to different variants of investment fraud and the Ponzi-type fraud schemes. Investment fraud is particularly dangerous due to high levels of damage, which can reach billions of Czech koruna, and large numbers of victims, often reaching hundreds or thousands per case. NCOZ also deals with several cases of subsidy fraud involving high damages in the tens or hundreds of millions, where funds were extracting on the pretext of alleged science and research or introducing technological innovations in industry.

## TAX CRIME

This area continues to involve activities aimed at tax evasion, money laundering, and MTIC (missing trader intra-community) VAT fraud in cross-border trade within the EU. Goods and services are entering the domestic market with no VAT liability. Alternatively, there are taxables declared which refer to non-existent goods or services. Among tax frauds schemes, VAT remains the most frequent target with the highest recorded damage. The primary goal of most tax fraudsters is no longer claiming excessive deductions but avoidance of paying any VAT. This includes not only reducing the tax liability but

also fraudulent extraction of profits, e.g. by transfer pricing. Recent trend show a rising volume of damage in these transactions and emerging combination with customs fraud in imports of goods, mainly from Asia to the EU. Here, tax gap reaches up to hundreds of millions of euros. Asian criminal groups involved in these frauds operate a complex infrastructure of money laundering and underground money transfers, provided by professionals offering crime-as-a-service.

## FOREIGN CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Foreign criminal networks operating in the Czech Republic include primarily Russian-speaking and Asian (mostly Vietnamese and Chinese) organizations, as well as Balkan groups. These organizations engage in various types of crime, particularly economic and drug-related offenses. They maintain strong foreign ties and often launder funds derived from different criminal activities. Foreign criminal structures also create corrupt links to public administration and cooperate with Czech criminal groups.

Criminal organizations from the post-Soviet countries hold a very significant position in the Czech Republic. In 2024, risks associated with the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine were primarily trending. The conflict has resulted in the relocation of business elites and criminal authorities to Western European countries, including the Czech Republic. This is made possible by more lenient residence permit rules (the so-called “temporary protection” status) and related benefits (such as the ability to open bank accounts and make cash deposits or transfers justified as family savings or business capi-

tal). Consequently, there is an influx of substantial financial resources legal origin of which cannot be verified and which are typically used for further legal and illegal activities.

Other risks affecting the Czech Republic and other Western European countries include money laundering carried out abroad. Examples include corruption in Ukrainian public administration linked to public tenders (including defense contracts) and the subsequent increase in activities of Ukrainian criminal networks engaged in the money laundering procedures.

Among Asian criminal networks, organizations from Southeast Asia hold the leading position, followed by those from East Asia. Their main activities include customs fraud, laundering of criminal proceeds, covert value transfers, and criminal services associated with illegal migration. In 2024, crimes related to the production and trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances remained to provide their main source of income. Within Asian organized crime, the Vietnamese community has long been dominant, with criminal organizations that are usually highly organized and committing crimes in a sophisticated manner. In addition to illegal production and trafficking of drugs (methamphetamine, cannabis products), Vietnamese organized crime has been long focusing on economic crime. Vietnamese criminal organizations also organize illegal migration and the acquisition of residence permits for Vietnamese citizens, which in the long term undermines Czech migration policy.

The Chinese criminal community is also highly significant, focusing pri-

marily on economic activities and goods imports, committing tax and other offenses similar to Vietnamese criminal organizations. The traditional domain of Asian (primarily Vietnamese, but also Chinese) criminal groups has long been organized tax crime, customs fraud, and extensive laundering of criminal proceeds. For these purposes, Vietnamese and Chinese criminal structures create specialized criminal organizations providing crime-enabling services (CaaS) such as “customs clearance” or “money transfer service.”

Speaking of all foreign criminal structures operating in the Czech Republic, the impact of changes in the external security environment is evident, resulting, inter alia, in the interconnection of criminal organizations and state actors, which include intelligence services and state-controlled economic entities.

## MIGRATION

Illegal migration has a fundamental impact on the nature of security threats that will manifest in Europe and, indirectly, in the Czech Republic. For migrants from the Middle East, the Czech Republic is almost exclusively a transit country. Examples from neighboring countries show that failure to manage migration may change the security situation in a country fundamentally and rapidly. Even relatively small criminal groups begin to pose a threat to public order and the rule of law.

### KEY MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE PROTECTION OF THE SCHENGEN AREA'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Key measures to enhance the protection of the Schengen Area's external borders include a more effective verification of the true identity of individuals seeking legal entry into the Schengen Area by performing thorough checks of the travel documents presented. In addition to illegal migration tradi-

tionally organized by smuggling criminal groups, attention is also to be paid to the activities of criminal groups engaged in organizing other, sometimes highly sophisticated, forms of illegal migration. This may include unlawful interference (bribery, forged documents, etc.) of the issuance of residence permits, work visas, and student visas.

In the area of illegal migration, there was a significant decrease in migrant transports through the territory of the Czech Republic in 2024, compared to previous periods. The use of the Western Balkans route declined considerably due to ongoing measures to prevent illegal migration, implemented primarily by the security forces of Hungary and Serbia. Germany remained the main final destination in Central Europe, followed by Austria. Transports largely passed through Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria, with the Czech Republic almost excluded from migrant transit routes.

### CUSTOMS CLEARANCE SERVICE



*DICH VU HAI QUAN* in Vietnamese, this is a criminal activity based on massive undervaluation of imported goods upon its entry into the EU by up to 90% (using falsified purchase invoices) combined with transferring the obligation to pay VAT at EU entry to purposefully established legal entities. These entities submit the required tax returns but fail to pay the assessed tax. Due to customs undervaluation and subsequent introduction of goods into EU markets at its real prices, the damage caused by the unpaid VAT is extremely high.

### MONEY TRANSFER SERVICE



*DICH VU CHUYEN TIEN* in Vietnamese, this crime-as-a-service allows the execution of concealed and unregistered international payments, mainly used for making covert payments for customs-undervalued goods. Officially, only the price stated in the already undervalued customs declaration can be paid. Payments are used to transfer criminal proceeds outside the banking system to Vietnam or China. Funds may be transferred back later to the Czech Republic, being laundered as alleged “foreign investments”. The system operates as an underground international bank, allowing cash deposits at a “branch” in the Czech Republic (e.g., in the infamous SAPA market in Prague) and subsequent cash withdrawals at a corresponding branch in Vietnam or China. In addition to long-used couriers transporting large amounts of cash, this service has recently begun using various online tools and payment solutions (e.g. cryptocurrencies, online non-bank payment systems, startup e-commerce banks, etc.).

In their destination countries, illegal migrants continue to expect not only safety but also a noticeable improvement in their personal economic situation, as they flee countries that are both insecure and economically unstable. In 2024, most illegal migrants apprehended in the Czech Republic were Syrians, followed by Turkish nationals.

Passenger vehicles continued to be the primary choice for International criminal groups involved in organizing transports of illegal migrants without a residence permit or an authorization to move within the Schengen Area. In one case, a truck driver was detained in the Czech Republic, driving a vehicle specially modified for concealed transport of migrants. Compared to 2023, international air transport was used more frequently for illegal migration. Individual migrants were put on flights from Greece to Prague using forged travel documents of Schengen area member countries.

As in previous years, NCOZ recorded the emergence of new organized groups for committing this type of crime, including in the Czech Re-

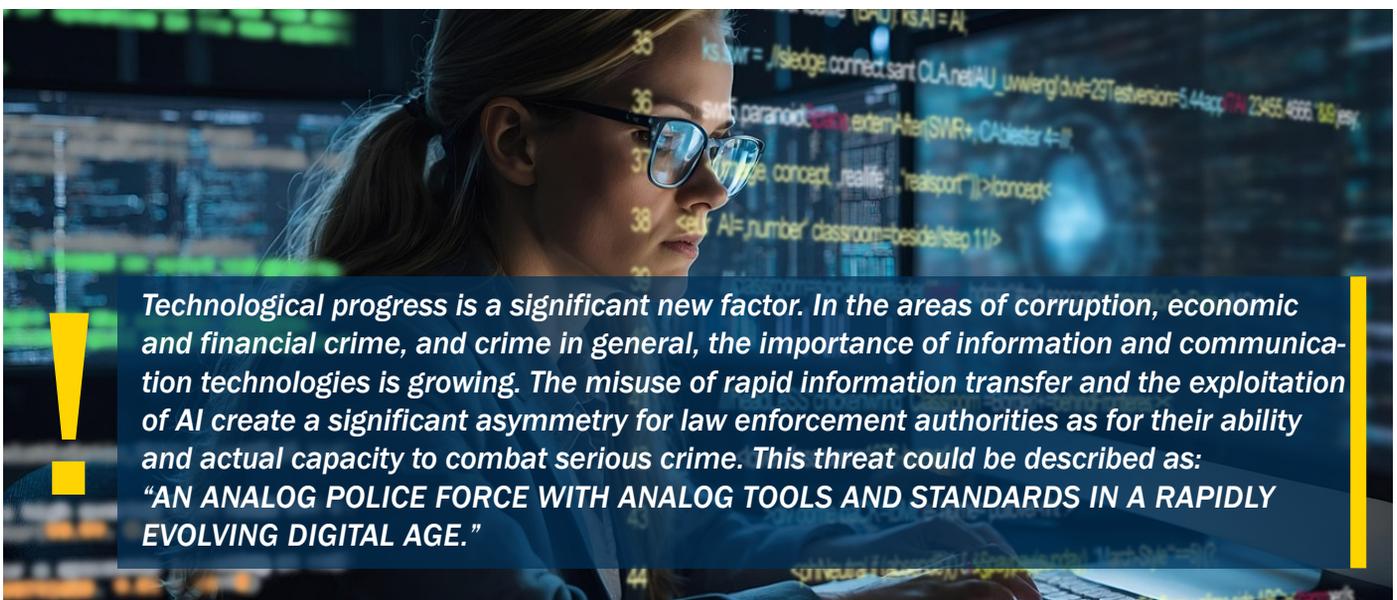
public. Their members partly include Czech nationals tasked with facilitating vehicles intended for transporting illegal migrants and hiring individuals willing to act as drivers. Other (often higher-ranking) members of these organized groups are foreigners bearing residence permits in the Czech Republic. All these organized groups are of international character, i.e. they consist of members operating in several countries.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

Environmental crime is an area where an upward trend can be expected. This may constitute an opportunity for organized crime groups. Several factors may build a synergistic effect, including strict waste management regulations in European countries (e.g., landfill bans in Germany), rising energy prices, disproportionately low penalties under the Czech Criminal Code. Furthermore, there is the upcoming ban on landfilling recyclable waste in the Czech Republic in 2030 and the approaching end of renewable energy facilities' lifespan (in particular solar and wind power plants).

This area may also be affected by the aging of combustion-based energy technologies, pressure for modernization and emission reduction, combined with the cost of emission allowances. Consequently, there will be continued pressure to operate these facilities as long as possible, regardless of emission burdens and potentially without paying for emission allowances. Both the evasion of landfill fees and emission allowances essentially constitute forms of tax crime.

Attention must also remain focused on the disposal of old environmental burdens. A risk arises from the combination of relatively high waste disposal costs with demand for construction materials and efforts to minimize expenses. This may lead to the use of waste, including hazardous waste, in the construction of development projects or linear structures. The growing gap between the cost of recycling and landfill disposal will represent potential profit for criminal groups already active in this segment or those newly entering it. A growing interest of criminal networks in conducting illicit business in this particular area can be expected.



**Technological progress is a significant new factor. In the areas of corruption, economic and financial crime, and crime in general, the importance of information and communication technologies is growing. The misuse of rapid information transfer and the exploitation of AI create a significant asymmetry for law enforcement authorities as for their ability and actual capacity to combat serious crime. This threat could be described as: "AN ANALOG POLICE FORCE WITH ANALOG TOOLS AND STANDARDS IN A RAPIDLY EVOLVING DIGITAL AGE."**

# HIGH-RISK CRIMINAL NETWORKS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF NCOZ



Serious and organized crime is one of the greatest security threats faced today by the Czech Republic and the EU as a whole. The nature of organized crime is rapidly evolving, adapting to a changing world.

Serious and organized crime undermines the very foundations of political, economic, and social stability through money laundering, violence, and serious corruption, the Europol's SOCTA 2025 (Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment) report concludes.

Criminal networks are increasingly interconnected with external hybrid

threats, encompassing a wide range of criminal activities and tactics often carried out through organized crime structures.

In this context of highly dangerous internationally operating and predominantly Czech-based criminal structures, two main types of High-Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN) operating in the Czech Republic

are recognized:

**HRCN I:** Organized high-risk criminal groups with systemic influence and a strong international reach

**HRCN II:** Professional organized criminal groups without significant international connections, operating mainly on a regional basis

A graphic featuring a dark world map background. On the left, a white-bordered box contains the text 'HRCN I.' in large yellow letters, an illustration of three stylized figures in suits (one holding a gun), and the text 'HIGH-RISK CRIMINAL NETWORKS I' and 'CRIMINAL GROUPS WITH SYSTEMIC INFLUENCE AND STRONG INTERNATIONAL REACH' in white and yellow.

HRCN I represents the core category of professional, stable, and long-standing criminal groups with relatively robust structures, significant profits, and the ability to infiltrate legitimate business and the public sector. These are often groups whose members are suspected of participation in an organized criminal group (a criminal offense under Section 361 of the Czech Criminal Code) targeting perpetrators who establish, participate in, or support the cri-

iminal activities of an organized criminal group.

Due to the seriousness of their crimes, these cases typically fall under the jurisdiction of the High Public Prosecutor's Offices. The groups' typical characteristics include a larger number of members with a clear hierarchy, international operations, a long-term polycriminal nature of activities, combining criminal conduct with formally legal business. Fre-

quently, criminal activities are related to illegitimate influence over the exercise of public authority.

The most serious organized crime groups generally have multiple sources of income, and their development correlates with current trends in organized crime, which these groups are helping to shape, as described in the Organized Crime Strategy 2025-2030.

HRCN I groups utilize—and sometimes themselves act as—professional providers of criminal services in a wide range of forms, such as legal services, offshoring, data hacking, money laundering, lobbying/corruption, facilitation of illegal migration, violence, illegal waste management. Their annual revenues reach at least tens of millions of Czech crowns. These groups launder criminal proceeds through additional business activities designed to dissolve toxic assets. They employ sophisticated tools, including money transfer services, use covert identities, and create com-

plex business chains to conceal their criminal activities.

These networks maintain strong ties to foreign criminal organizations and may have contacts with foreign state actors – possibly even in the form of direct and deliberate involvement in hybrid attacks with the elements of violence, terrorism, cyberattacks, and espionage.

Typically, those HRCN I groups which are adversely known to the law enforcement, have been or are at the forefront of interest for the NCOZ and other agencies

of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service with nationwide jurisdiction. In the course of their operations, there is usually a great deal of international police and judicial cooperation.



## HRCN II.



## HIGH-RISK CRIMINAL NETWORKS II

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZED CRIMINAL GROUPS WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL LINKS, OPERATING MAINLY AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

HRCN II refers to a category of organized crime groups with predominantly regional activity within the Czech Republic, focusing on committing a smaller range of criminal offenses. These include organized crime networks either established or dynamically growing associated with serious manifestations of corruption and corruption involving the so-called “specialized entities” (e.g. politically exposed persons). From the spectrum of criminal environ-

ments addressed by the NCOZ, these typically include organized groups committing serious “white-collar” crimes such as corruption, misuse of EU and national subsidies (subsidy fraud), investment fraud and large-scale tax crime. Beyond that, circumvention of international sanctions, human trafficking and facilitation of illegal migration may also be present.

These groups are characterized by latency, sophistication and gradual

corrupt penetration into public administration. In this respect, HRCN II may operate without an apparent organizational structure, even though their criminal activities generate high profits for organizers and cause damages often reaching hundreds of millions of Czech crowns. These groups exploit – and sometimes deliberately create – legal loopholes through lobbying and influencing the exercise of public authority.

# CRYPTOCURRENCIES AND CRIME

The growing popularity and adoption of crypto-assets in society is closely linked to the continuing trend of increased use of cryptocurrencies in criminal activities. According to the internal statistics of the Czech police, CZK 93,615,280 worth of crypto assets were seized in the course of criminal proceedings between 2015 and 2023. Their value may fluctuate further due to ongoing proceedings and the high volatility of crypto assets on the market.



The current cryptocurrency market comprises of thousands of different digital currencies and tokens, varying in technological foundations and intended use. Bitcoin, Ethereum, Tether, XRP, Dogecoin, BNB and Solana are arguably among the most popular ones. According to various cryptocurrency data aggregators, as of May 2025, the number of cryptocurrencies and tokens exceeds 11,000. Inseparably, the exponential growth of crypto-assets is linked to the decreasing complexity of their creation, introducing both innovative opportunities and new risks associated with unlawful conduct.

Cryptocurrencies are used across the entire spectrum of cybercrime and are becoming particularly significant in profit-driven criminal activities. Organized crime groups have recognized their potential and seem to incorporate them more and more into their operations as a financing tool. Cryptocurrencies are becoming a key means of anonymizing finan-

cial transactions, especially in money laundering, fraudulent schemes, and financing illegal services such as drugs, weapons, child pornography, illegal software, or hacking services.

Perpetrators employ social engineering techniques, deepfake technologies, and phishing campaigns to gain access to victims' financial resources, which get then converted into cryptocurrencies.

A notable phenomenon involves foreign fraudsters luring small investors with allegedly lucrative investment opportunities and manipulating victims to extract funds from them. Unknowingly, victims often turn themselves into money mules, moving money through their personal bank accounts and purchasing cryptocurrencies, which are sent immediately to perpetrators' accounts abroad – thus becoming criminally liable for negligent money laundering. This process not only conceal the origin of funds but also complicates their recovery

back to the victims. Another growing trend is cryptocurrency thefts. Users of virtual asset services are targeted by phishing attacks, malware and other tools aimed at compromising their online accounts or hardware wallets to siphon off funds.

A significant problem is the misuse of decentralized finance platforms (DeFi) and so-called mixing services (mixers), which help disperse transaction traces and make the detection and documentation of criminal activity considerably more difficult. The largest recorded cryptocurrency thefts have occurred through DeFi projects, which operate outside the reach of traditional financial regulations and function autonomously.

The technological core of DeFi consists of smart contracts—self-executing programs running on the blockchain. While widely used in legitimate applications, they are often exploited for criminal purposes, such as automating fraudulent

## NCOZ Cyber-enabled Crime Division

*Since 1 January 2023, the Cyber-enabled Crime Division has served as the expert authority on virtual currency issues within the Police of the Czech Republic. This department provides advisory and methodology in the area of cryptocurrency-related crimes, being also responsible for analytical and coordination activities.*

*Given the high technological complexity and continuous evolution of this field, it is essential to enhance the expertise of officers continuously, particularly in tracing, seizing and proper procedural handling of cryptocurrencies. Police of the Czech Republic is using advanced forensic and analytical tools to follow cryptocur-*

*rency transactions on blockchain networks. These technologies enable effective tracing of money flows, including the identification of suspicious transactions and linking them to specific wallet addresses. This is a significant improvement towards efficiency in identifying perpetrators and documenting criminal activity.*

schemes like Ponzi-type “pyramids” or prohibited online lotteries. A risk factor is that some smart contracts may contain errors or lack adequate security from inception, making them easy targets for cyberattacks.

Crime involving cryptocurrencies is dynamic and technologically demanding, with perpetrators constantly refining their methods, tools, and strategies to increase efficiency, profitability, and evade countermeasures. This evolution requires an appropriate response from law enforcement authorities. In this context, it is necessary to consider modernizing the Criminal Procedure Code to reflect the specifics of digital assets, particularly in the areas of cryptocurrency seizure, management, and international cooperation for obtaining evidentiary information from foreign service providers.

In 2024, Police of the Czech Republic seized CZK 42.55 million worth of cryptocurrencies. Each year, the volume of seized cryptocurrencies is increasing – both at the regional police directorates and agencies with national jurisdiction. Within the NCOZ alone, crypto-assets worth CZK 6.37 million were seized in 2024. This trend reflects the growing use of cryptocurrencies in criminal activities but also the improving capabilities of the Czech

Police in tracing and seizing these digital assets.

A significant step toward strengthening legal certainty in the cryptocurrency domain is the new EU Regulation on Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA), which introduces a unified regulatory framework for the entire EU market. MiCA addresses the need to harmonize fragmented legal regulations on crypto-assets across EU member states. A key element is the classification of crypto-assets, distinguishing between e.g. utility tokens, asset-referenced tokens, and e-money tokens. Each category is subject to specific requirements regarding issuance, transparency, and supervision. Another important aspect is the regulation of crypto-asset service providers (VASPs), who will be required to obtain a license to operate within the EU and comply with strict rules on client protection, asset security, and anti-money laundering measures.

Police of the Czech Republic actively communicates with banking institutions, global cryptocurrency service providers, and other relevant entities from both public and private sectors. The goal is a timely detection of suspicious transfers and freezing of digital assets. Cooperation with cryptocurrency exchanges and wallet providers is crucial, as asset recovery is significantly hindered

without their assistance.

International cooperation is carried out through Europol, Eurojust and Interpol channels, involving partners from EU member states and beyond. It includes both repressive and preventive measures. Strengthening international collaboration is essential because cryptocurrency transactions are often cross-border, and perpetrators may hide their digital gains on exchanges and wallets worldwide.

In this context, enhancing the role of Asset Recovery Offices (ARO) is critical, particularly within the CARIN network for tracing and securing illicit crypto-assets. With its global network of contacts, CARIN is uniquely positioned to facilitate rapid and effective information exchange and to coordinate cross-border investigations and asset recovery measures. Strengthening this cooperation does not only involve formal legal tools but also informal sharing of intelligence and best practices among AROs. One of the key aspects of reinforcing ARO's role in this area is the development of specialized knowledge and skills. Tracing criminal proceeds in cryptocurrencies requires deep understanding of blockchain technology, cryptography and the operations of cryptocurrency exchanges and mixing services.



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# | HUMAN TRAFFICKING, MODERN SLAVERY AND EXPLOITATION



In recent years, NCOZ detectives have repeatedly investigated into cases of so-called modern slavery, which exhibit largely identical characteristics. For this reason, the NCOZ is preparing a long-term prevention campaign targeting individuals who may become victims. Beyond that, police officers and state and public administration officials (including municipal police officers) are also among the target audience as those who encounter with victims of human trafficking in the course of their work. Human trafficking is a problem that primarily threatens vulnerable groups within the society.

The most endangered are those facing difficult life situations who are seeking help and may easily fall victim to manipulation. People without knowledge of the local language and legal or social system may unknowingly enter dangerous situations, unaware of their rights and available protection options. General awareness, prevention, and accessible assistance are all a key to protection against such threat. One of the campaign's major objectives is to teach police officers and public officials who interact with underprivileged individuals to recognize the warning signs indicating potential victims of human trafficking.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND LABOR EXPLOITATION

The Czech Republic continues to be considered a country of destination, transit, and source. Recent developments in the area of human trafficking essentially mirror current European trends in this type of organized crime. The most common form of human trafficking in the Czech Republic remains the misuse of victims for other types of exploitation, prostitution and forced labor (e.g. in the perpetrator's household) or profiting from such

conduct. Offenders primarily target victims from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, forcing them to perform physically demanding work while confiscating all or most of their earnings.

Labor exploitation is often linked to agency employment. However, in the environment of regular employment agencies, sufficient evidence to establish the crime of human trafficking is repeatedly lacking, with identified deficiencies usually leading to administrative proceedings for violations of labor law. Current cases (codenamed VÉVODA and MOGUL) have shown that under very specific conditions, labor exploitation may indeed be happening. Family-based criminal clans may copy certain features of "shadow" employment agencies (e.g. supplying workers under a contract for work; in other cases, perpetrators may sign standard temporary employment contracts on behalf of victims). At the same time, some key features of legitimate operations (such as recruitment through public advertisements, including social media) are systematically absent and replaced by entirely different methods, such as personal targeting among underprivileged communi-

ties. The goal here is to recruit individuals prone to total dependency on perpetrators.

## ORGANIZED PROSTITUTION

Although prostitution is voluntary, the Czech Republic reflects a growing pan-European trend of prostitution-based exploitation of women originating from Asia, Ukraine, Latin America, and Africa. Social, security, and financial conditions in source countries are forcing these women to travel to the Czech Republic or other selected European countries on tourist visas. Many of them voluntarily become "occasional" prostitutes, seeking to repay airfare debts to perpetrators and send earnings back to their families to improve their economic situation.

In 2024, an earlier takedown of a criminal network had a significant impact on the supply of sexual services, including activities of pimping criminal organizations. As this network had monopolized all online offers of sexual services in the Czech Republic, the intervention resulted in a substantial deterioration in conditions for criminal online activities of pimping gangs and individual pimps. The 2023

NCOZ operation against the online sexual services monopoly highlighted the trend of increasing importance of online activities in organized prostitution. In the future, greater use of various online platforms (Uber, Airbnb, etc.), large language models (LLMs), and purpose-built mobile applications can be expected in the practical implementation of organized prostitution schemes. This trend aligns with the long-term shift from brothels to private apartments or escort services, whose addresses change on a random basis.

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In 2024, the NCOZ participated in the operations of European police networks under Europol through the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), focusing on the area of human trafficking. Within this platform, so-called Action Days were carried out across the Czech Republic from April 20 to April 27,

2024, targeting labor exploitation. This involved inspections, intelligence gathering, documentation, and evaluation of findings on relevant environments and individuals.

Under EMPACT, NCOZ experts are also long-term participants in the working group on commercial surrogacy and sale of children. For the period of 2024 and 2025, NCOZ has become the coordinator of joint operations targeting illegal commercial surrogacy and child sales. A conference was held from October 8 to October 10, 2024, discussing EU member states' approaches to combating this dangerous phenomenon.

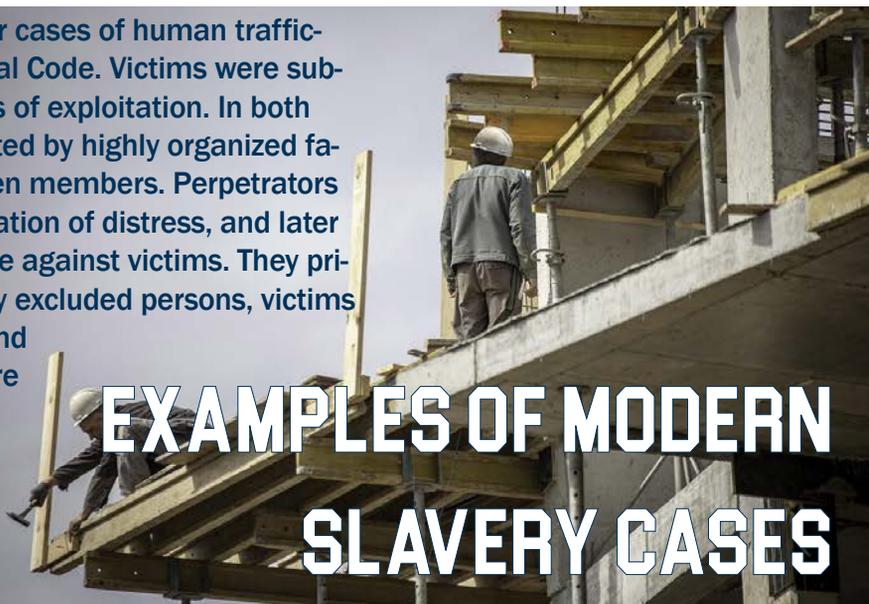
One of the main reasons for the NCOZ taking the lead in addressing illegal surrogacy was the criminal case codenamed ŠPANĚL. The case investigated into individuals related to a foreign fertility clinic that had been recruiting women from Ukraine to become surrogate mothers for male clients from

abroad (typically originating from wealthy Western countries). The modus operandi included the surrogate mother traveling to the Czech Republic for childbirth, after which she and the male customer made a joint declaration of paternity before a Czech registry office. This resulted in the man being recorded as the child's father on the birth certificate (including a declaration of citizenship by descent). The surrogate mother also signed documents in the Czech Republic relinquishing her rights to the child and giving a consent to the child's relocation to the country of the father. Beyond that, the document also granted the father full power of attorney for all further legal actions concerning the child. This emerging trend of surrogacy represents an area where legislative amendments are necessary in order to get this conduct included into the Section 168 of the Czech Criminal Code as another form of exploitation.



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In 2024, the NCOZ handled two major cases of human trafficking under Section 168 of the Criminal Code. Victims were subjected to forced labor and other forms of exploitation. In both cases, unlawful conduct was committed by highly organized family-run criminal groups of six or seven members. Perpetrators used a combination of deceit, exploitation of distress, and later threats of violence and actual violence against victims. They primarily targeted the homeless, socially excluded persons, victims with physical or mental disabilities, and drug addicts. Another common feature of these cases was the latent and long-term nature of the criminal conduct, which is believed to have lasted over ten years.



## EXAMPLES OF MODERN SLAVERY CASES

### VÉVODA CASE

One of these criminal organizations was investigated against by the NCOZ under the case code name VÉVODA. In addition to Czech nationals, the group exploited individuals from Slovakia, Poland, Romania and Latvia who had found themselves marginalized in the Czech Republic for various reasons. Victims were approached by perpetrators across the country at train stations, town squares, or near charity centers and were subsequently housed in extremely poor conditions, receiving low-quality food, often expired or even animal feed-grade bread.

Perpetrators arranged construction work for their victims and transported them to work sites, where victims were forced to work under supervision, typically six to seven days a week for 12–14 hours per day. They either had no employment contracts or signed only work performance agreements, the content of which was grossly inconsistent with reality.

For their labor, victims received either no wages or only a small fraction of what they were entitled to. Through this form of labor exploitation, perpetrators gained substantial benefits, the full extent of which has not yet been determined due to the long duration of the criminal group's operations. In the course of criminal proceedings, four properties were seized from perpetrators, who themselves had never reported any legitimate income and were receiving social benefits.

### MOGUL CASE

Another criminal organization investigated by the NCOZ under the case name MOGUL primarily exploited victims from the Ústí nad Labem region, housing them in accommodations owned by the perpetrators. Victims were used for forced labor over extended periods, performing domestic work in perpetrators' homes and assisting in renovations of their properties. Additionally, victims were supplied as labor to various companies that, alongside their regular employees, also employed agency workers or temporary staff. Their field of business included waste removal and processing, laundry services, mattress manufacturing, and mechanical and construction industries.

Victims either received no wages or only a fraction of the appropriate amount. Perpetrators extracted victim's earnings by deliberately establishing business entities to receive payments from end employers into company accounts. Victims were transported to workplaces by members of the organized group, who sometimes worked alongside them while maintaining control and ensuring subordination.

Some victims were also recipients of state social benefits, which perpetrators confiscated entirely – often directly at post office branches, where victims collected their benefits only to immediately surrender them to perpetrators.

# BETTING FRAUD

The NCOZ has been addressing corruption in sports for several years, aiming to build capacity and expertise in this area. The development of online betting has significantly accelerated the volume of funds flowing through this sector. The global interconnection of sports environments creates greater opportunities for profit, naturally attracting organized crime groups and requiring police attention.

## MATCH-FIXING

Over the past decade, the Czech Republic has faced numerous scandals involving match-fixing, particularly in football. These issues range from the lowest local leagues up to the premier division. Despite increasingly strict regulations, illegal betting groups and corruption remain a serious threat. Match-fixing often occurs covertly and latently, making it highly dangerous and difficult to detect. Unfortunately, the Czech Republic is no exception – in fact, it ranks significantly in the number of matches influenced by such criminal conduct.

Sports betting is a major economic sector, generating an estimated

turnover of EUR 522 billion in 2023. However, these figures may represent just about 40% of the global market. The remaining 60% is largely unknown, indicating that the actual volume of illegal betting is likely much higher. This enormous amount illustrates the scale of the issue and shows how this phenomenon can affect society not only in sports but also economically. Match-fixing threatens not only the integrity of sports but also trust in betting markets and their regulation.

Organized crime groups are frequently involved in this criminal activity. These groups operate in well-structured networks, connected to various economic and criminal environments. For example,

match-fixing is frequently used as a money laundering tool. Funds originating from illegal betting or other unlawful activities are “laundered” and reinvested into further criminal enterprises. This fact underscores the urgency of combating match-fixing. This is not only an act of fraud against fans and athletes but also part of a broader criminal mechanism threatening economic and social stability.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The current legal framework in the Czech Republic provides certain tools for prosecuting match-fixing. There are discussions within the expert community regarding further strengthening. Also, the possibility of introducing a standalone

**INTERPOL  
MATCH-FIXING  
TASK FORCE**

**PRAGUE, OCTOBER 15, 2024**

In October 2024, Prague hosted an international conference on sports betting manipulation, organized in cooperation between the Czech Police and Interpol. The event was attended by representatives of sports associations, the Czech Olympic Committee, the National Sports Agency, and experts from 46 countries. The conference was also attended by the NCOZ Director, Col. Jiří Mazánek.

According to Sportradar's world ranking, the Czech Republic ranked second in the number of suspected manipulation cases (67 suspicious matches detected), behind Brazil (109 matches) and ahead of the Philippines (65 matches). The conference aimed to share experience and the *modi operandi*, strengthening cooperation between the Police of the Czech Republic, sports organizations, and Interpol. Further emphasis was laid on the prevention and suppression of betting-related crime.

criminal offense of match-fixing into the Criminal Code was debated to reflect the particularities of this crime. The National Sports Agency (Národní sportovní agentura) also considers match-fixing a serious issue.

The definition of “illegal manipulation of sports results” can be found in the explanatory report to the Act No. 230/2016 Sb., which significantly amended the Promotion of Sports Act No. 115/2001 Sb (Zákon č. 115/2001 Sb., o podpoře sportu). The report reads that illegal manipulation of sports results means intentional conduct aimed at unlawfully altering the outcome or course of a sports competition to eliminate, in whole or in part, the unpredictability of the competition for the purpose of obtaining undue advantage. This definition is based on the Council of Europe’s Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions.

In the Czech Republic, there is no specific criminal offense for match-fixing in the Criminal Code. Manipulation of sports competitions may fall under several offenses, depending on whether the unlawful conduct is motivated by receiving financial gain (e.g. to the detriment of sports betting offices) or achieving sporting success.

Given the circumstances of a particular case, the most common examples include:

**Fraud (Section 209 of the Criminal Code):** match-fixing is carried out with the intent to gain financial profit (e.g. players, coaches, or referees deliberately manipulating match results for bettors)  
**Bribery (Section 331–334 of the Criminal Code):** a person is bribed to influence the result of a sports

competition.

A major challenge for law enforcement and prosecutors is that penalties for this crime are typically limited to suspended sentences combined with disqualification orders. For individual players, this often results in ending their careers as sportsmen, while for intermediaries – who are usually not members of the Czech Football Association – such sanctions are ineffective. These individuals are often linked to international groups, and match-fixing is their main or sole source of income. This makes them highly reluctant to cooperate in exposing higher-level organizers of the fraud schemes. The issue also raises questions about future specialization – not only for police officers but also for prosecutors and judges – due to the specific nature of the sports environment.

#### PREVENTION OF MATCH-FIXING

Preventing manipulation of sports results relies primarily on legislative regulation, timely warning systems, monitoring and analysis, followed by operational measures and subsequent criminal investigations.

Internationally, there are mathematical and statistical systems available, focusing on sports results data collection and analysis. Thus, risk indicators of suspected manipulated matches are identified. There are several private companies operating in this field, such as Sportradar, Federbet, and GLMS. With their technologies and expertise, they are capable of identifying suspicious patterns and unusual events within sports competitions. They monitor betting and gaming activities to detect sus-

picious odds changes, unusual bets, or other anomalies that may indicate attempts to manipulate results.

These insights are then shared with law enforcement agencies, betting operators, sports associations and international sports federations. Big data analysis is a key to uncovering betting anomalies. As a part of its contribution to tackling match-fixing, the European football association (UEFA) provides a number of data - primarily player details, history, transfers and historical analyses – to be compared with datasets gathered by private actors such as Sportradar. UEFA also maintains long-term cooperation with Interpol and Europol.

Technological development is a crucial prerequisite for the law enforcement to keep pace with constantly evolving fraud methods.

#### CURRENT TRENDS

Manipulation is not limited to football betting. While football is widely perceived as the most affected sport, the question remains why. Similar to other team sports, the reason may be that match-fixing requires the involvement of multiple individuals (ideally a goalkeeper, a defender – preferably a center-back – and an opposing striker), increasing the risk of detection, for example, through intercepted communications.

The moral integrity of individual players can sometimes be easily compromised, driven by the desire for financial gain to maintain an expensive lifestyle. Typically, these are young adults aged 18–23 at the start of their sports careers who suddenly begin earning large

sums of money. The absence of a manager or advisor to guide them in managing their newfound wealth often leads them to spend most of their earnings immediately. To maintain this costly lifestyle, they may end up taking short-term, unfavorable loans, making match-fixing appear as an easy way to earn extra money.

Foreign experience shows that betting manipulation also affects

other sports, such as tennis, basketball, table tennis, handball, and ice hockey. Tennis, in particular, has seen a surge in betting activity. With increasing prestige and prize money, the area of e-sports has also grown significantly. E-sports involve competitive video gaming, where players, teams, or associated individuals can deliberately influence match outcomes – either by intentional losses or poor performance.

Match-fixing is a global problem that overwhelmingly crosses national borders. Therefore, cooperation between national and international institutions such as Interpol, Europol and top-level sports organizations within the EU is essential. For this reason, the Czech Republic decided to host an Interpol expert meeting on match-fixing in 2024.



# NCOZ

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