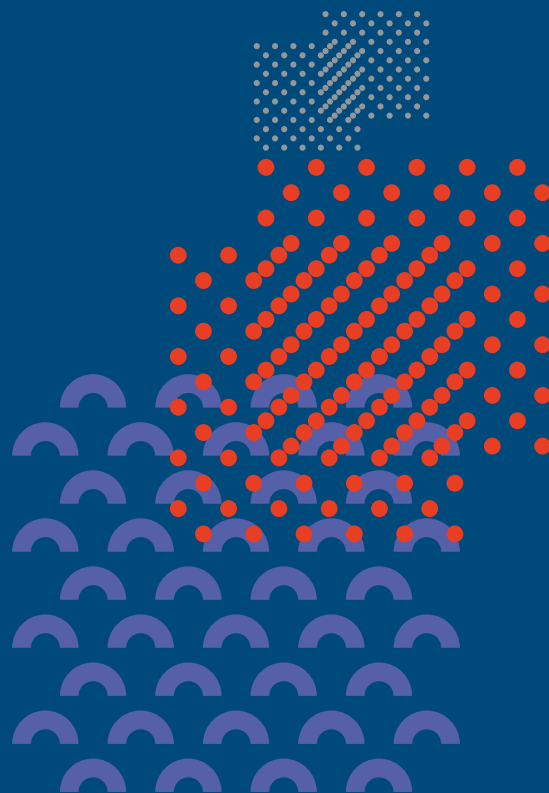
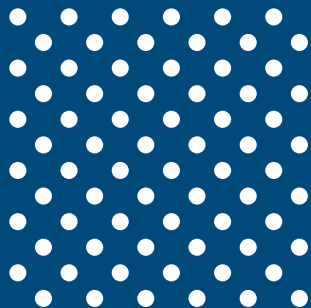




# Ideas Impacting Society

Priorities & Activities 2023

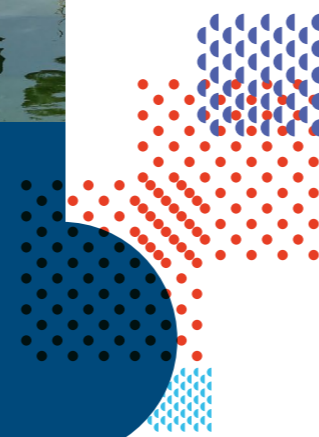
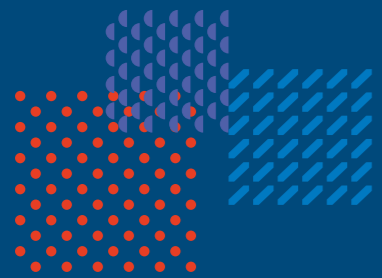




# Ideas Impacting Society

We connect and inspire people committed to improving society and fostering trust within it. By providing an open, interdisciplinary platform in Central Europe, we facilitate meaningful public and policy dialogues and encourage leadership grounded in democratic principles.

*I am very happy that Aspen Institute brings together personalities who tend to positively influence Central European society. We strive to support strategic thinking that goes beyond local and sector-related boundaries. By hosting interdisciplinary policy and public discussions, the Institute contributes to open dialogue that explores topics relevant to current society and its advancement. Specifically, we focus on the priorities of Values-based Leadership, Education, Transatlantic and EU activities, Technology, Innovation and Quality of Governance. Through our programs, we also want to encourage young leaders to further develop leadership based on values such as honesty, morality and respect.*



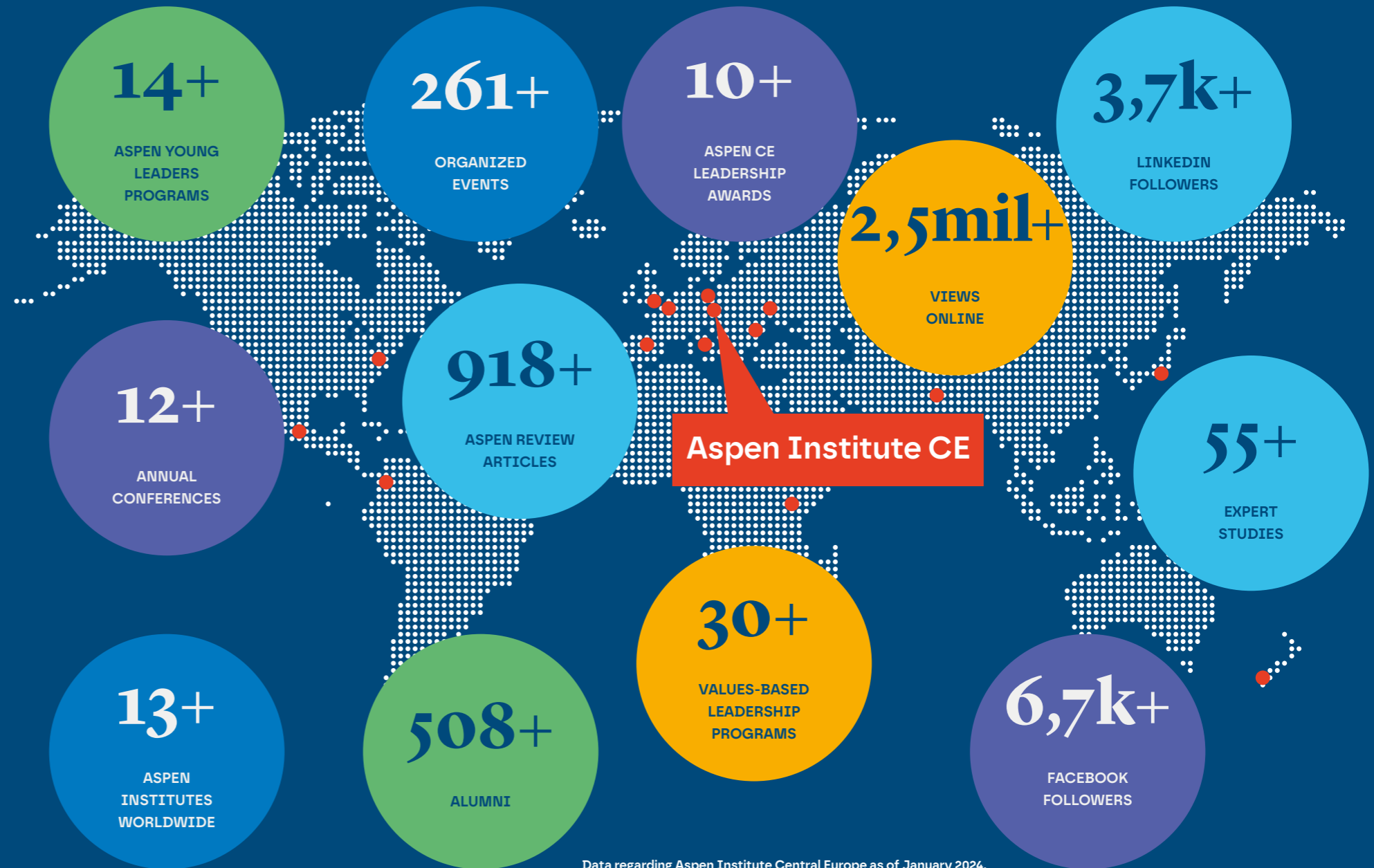
**MILAN VAŠINA**  
Executive Director

# About Aspen Institute Central Europe

## Open Dialogue, Multiple Points of View

Aspen Institute Central Europe is an independent platform that mediates interdisciplinary and regional cooperation and supports young Central European leaders. It serves as a politically and ideologically neutral platform for democratic discussions about global, political, economic and social issues to promote the functioning and development of democratic values. Aspen Institute Central Europe fosters values-based leadership with the belief that it is essential for a free, just and equitable society.

With the participation of experts from politics, business and public institutions as well as personalities from the arts, sports and science, the Institute organizes public conferences, seminars, workshops and expert discussions.



Data regarding Aspen Institute Central Europe as of January 2024.

# What They Have Said About Us

The Aspen Network is the strongest pillar of Aspen Institute. People who join discussions within our platform come from a diverse range of backgrounds helping us lead a rounded and multi-faceted dialogue.



*“I have confidence that Aspen CE will grow into a true, region-wide, platform promoting civil discourse and informed discussion, something we so desperately need in this day and age.”*

**MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT**  
Honorary Co/Chair of the US Aspen Board



*“The Aspen initiative is based on the best European thought traditions. The Aspen activities help us maintain social cohesion and bridge the gap between our divisions.”*

**PETR PAVEL**  
President of the Czech Republic



*“We are often asked - how are we holding on? It's therefore not surprising that I started this conversation with values. Yes, that's what keeps us going. The same thing that keeps you and your community going - interaction and mutual understanding.”*

**OLENA ZELENSKA**  
First Lady of Ukraine



*“It's such an enriching experience to be part of this community. I love the fact that it's a place where we share opinions in such an insightful and honest way with the sole goal of helping each other grow and make the world a better place.”*

**PAVLÍNA LOUŽENSKÁ**  
Founder and Chief of the Board at #HolkyzMarketingu



*“For me, Aspen Institute CE is a great place to get out of my professional bubble, to meet distinguished people and to confront my ideas and perspectives with people from different businesses and different countries. It's a unique way to stop, to reflect on what drives you in your professional and personal life.”*

**ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI**  
Co-founder at Podkast amerykański in Poland



*“Although today's world is marred by unpredictable forces, the one certainty is that participating in the Aspen Institute Central Europe's Alumni Network events always leaves me inspired, stimulates my curiosity and empowers me to act in a way that promotes civic responsibility and is beneficial to communities around us.”*

**ZUZANA VUOVÁ**  
Associate Program Management Officer at the United Nations



*“When I was invited to join the Aspen network, it was one of the turning points of my life. I got to know a lot of different kinds of people with very similar struggles, and I imagined better what I wanted to achieve in my life.”*

**YEMI A.D.**  
Multidisciplinary Creative



# Aspen Annual Conference 2023

## SPEAKERS:

### PETR PAVEL

President of the Czech Republic

### TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

Professor of European Studies, University of Oxford

### TOMÁŠ HALÍK

Professor, Charles University  
President, Czech Christian Academy

### PETR HLADÍK

Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic

### VĚRA JOUROVÁ

Vice President, European Commission

### JANA MATESOVÁ

Economist / Former Czech Representative to the World Bank

and many others...

#ASPENANNUAL



## Values: A New Trend of the Digital Era?

The goal of the conference is to provide an overview of political, economic and social development. The panel discussions are based on expert studies and, in addition to analyzing the state of the region, highlight the most significant problems in the observed areas and offer concrete recommendations for improvement. Business experts, members of the academic and non-profit sector in the conference panels are traditionally supplemented by members of the government.

In 2023, the international discussions focused on topics such as **Values-based Leadership** and **Defense of Values in the Digital Age**, addressing the pressure exerted on these values in our Central European region due to the influence of the digital era. The panels on current challenges for the Czech economy and society, and the conditions we create for our citizens and businesses, were based on expert studies about the **transition of the Czech Republic to a green economy, the digitalization of Czech small and micro-businesses, and the cooperation between school principals, founders and local services.**

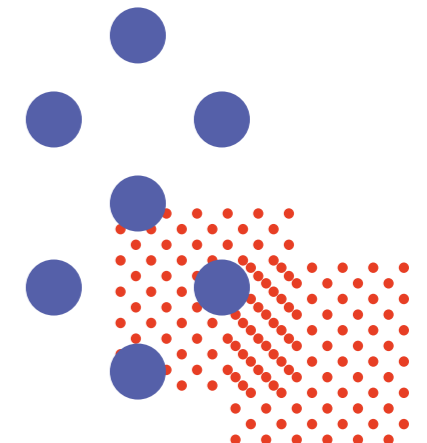


# Gala Dinner & Aspen CE Madeleine K. Albright Leadership Award

The Gala Dinner is annually held on the occasion of the Aspen Annual Conference. At the Gala Dinner, the Institute bestows the Aspen Central Europe Leadership Award on young upcoming professionals, so-called emerging stars, who, through their work or initiatives, have a positive impact on society in Central Europe. We are looking for less known stories that deserve encouragement and recognition for their contribution to society.



In 2023, the Award was presented to Vladimíra Petránková, a prominent physicist and Czech science ambassador worldwide, Founder of Czexpats In Science, and to Julian Gerhart, Founder of the Slovak educational portal Zmudri.sk – an educational project for tens of thousands of young people to develop their skills.



# Regional Offices

In 2023, Aspen Institute Central Europe also stepped up its presence internationally and opened a new office in Warsaw. The aim is to become a major platform in the region engaged in transatlantic policy dialogue and fostering additional topics which are critical both locally and regionally for further development of society while supporting trust within it.

## Key activities in Poland 2023:

**CATALYZING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND FOSTERING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES IN CIVIC ACTIVISM, STATESMANSHIP AND GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGY IN POLAND**

A roundtable organized in cooperation with the US Embassy in Warsaw, an extraordinary gathering of minds, setting a precedent for enriching dialogues among Poland's decision-makers and wider regional stakeholders.

### AFTER-POLISH-ELECTION DISCUSSION

The debriefing was held in Warsaw on October 17, 2023 with representatives from most of the major parties and many diplomats, fostering a constructive dialogue on the nation's political landscape, and on Poland's role in Europe and the world.



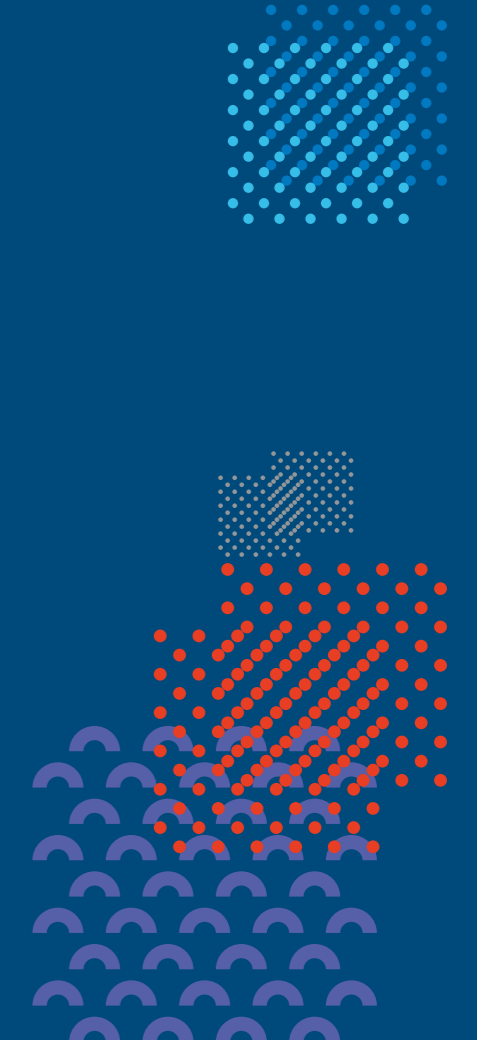
In 2024, there are plans to open an office in Slovakia to further increase our regional focus. In line with our program priorities, the Institute will also serve in Bratislava as a politically and ideologically neutral forum for democratic discussions about global political, economic and social issues, staying true to our mission of being a major interdisciplinary and open platform in the region which connects innovative and responsible leaders.

GEOPOLITICAL  
SYMPOSIUM  
JUNE 2024



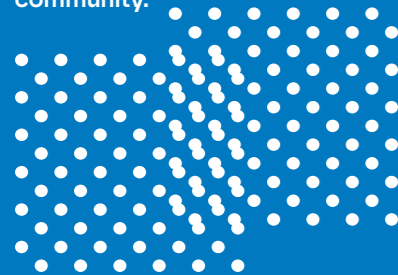
# Program Priorities

1. Values-based Leadership
2. Education
3. Transatlantic & EU Topics
4. Technology & Innovation
5. Quality of Governance:  
Effectiveness of Civil Service



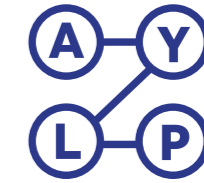
# 1. Values-based Leadership

Values-based Leadership is a critical focal point for Aspen Institute worldwide. Our leadership programs allow leaders to meet across various fields to discover new perspectives through dialogue and open discussions. These programs are primarily focused on challenging inspirational professionals from Central Europe to reflect upon various aspects of leadership and explore their core values, helping them further develop their potential. Graduates become part of an international alumni group whose goal is to support professional connections and develop collaboration within the community.



## Aspen Young Leaders Program 2023

Two editions of four-day intensive seminars were held in 2023, with a total of 65 participants from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.



#AYLP

**Aspen Young Leaders Program (AYLP)** offers emerging young leaders the opportunity to improve their personal and professional skills as well as expand their private network in the region and reflect on what it means to be a good leader in today's world. This involves reflecting on core values in our professional paths in decision-making, navigating our teams, and leading with self-knowledge, authenticity and integrity.

The uniqueness of the Program is defined by the strong emphasis on the **quality and diversity of speakers coming from business, arts, academia, politics, science, sports or the non-profit sector** and the broad array of topics and open conversations.



### SPEAKERS 2023:

#### JAROSŁAW GWIZDAK

Legal Expert, Former Judge, Educator, and Columnist

#### ONDREJ KUBOVIČ

Security Awareness Specialist at ESET SK, Author of the ESET Research Podcast

#### JAN LUKAČEVIČ

NATO 2030 Young Leader, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's Advisory Board, Member of the Czech Minister of Defence for Applied Defence Research and Development

#### ANETT MÁDI-NÁTOR

Vice President of Strategic Business Development at Cyber Services Plc and President of the Women4Cyber Foundation

#### ANTÓNIA MÉSZÁROS

Executive Director of UNICEF Hungary, TV Anchor and Documentary Film Director

#### DANUŠE NERUDOVÁ

Economist, Professor and Rector Emeritus of Mendel University in Brno

and many others...

NEXT EDITION  
SUMMER  
2024



## Other Leadership Activities

### ALUMNI NETWORK MEETING

In 2023, 46 people attended the Annual Network Meeting for the AYLPA Alumni, a community that connects individuals across their fields and countries, supporting their professional and personal ties. The Alumni are invited to remain involved in our activities and are further supported by the Institute.



### SOCRATES SEMINAR

Socrates Seminars **bring together executive and accomplished leaders** to discover new perspectives on contemporary issues in relation to leadership in a moderated dialogue. They are for those **who realize that one cannot lead others without leading oneself first**. It is an opportunity to understand tensions between ideas and goods competing in a globalized world and discover how our choices and decisions are shaped.



### ASPEN INSTITUTE CENTRAL EUROPE'S ANNIVERSARY

The 11th Anniversary of the Institute was held in June 2023 as a closed networking event under the kind auspices of H.E. Bijan Sabet, U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic.



## Our Achievements with Alumni

The figures below represent the number of alumni involved in each prestigious event thanks to the support of Aspen Institute Central Europe. Data regarding Aspen Institute Central Europe as of January 2024.



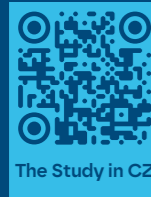


# 2. Education

Aspen Institute CE's priorities include Educational Leadership, with a focus on school principals and upskilling. In cooperation with experts from various fields, the Institute conducts studies, organizes public debates and expert roundtables to develop specific recommendations. These recommendations are then distributed among relevant policymakers and stakeholders.

## Key activities 2023

### SERIES OF REGIONAL DEBATES FOCUSED ON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND STATUTORY AUTHORITIES



The Study in CZ

Following the study "To Heat and Shine Is No Longer Enough", we organized a series of three regional debates and one conference in cooperation with Učitel Naživo. The debates focused on best practices between school principals and statutory authorities. We presented the findings of the survey, which were further discussed with relevant stakeholders in different regions.

- What is the Practice in the South Moravian Region? Brno, March
- How Do They Cooperate in the Vysočina Region? Jihlava, April
- How to Achieve Quality Schools That Put Children First? Prague, May
- What is Going Well in the Ústí Region? Ústí nad Labem, September

### FUTURE EDU: THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN NEW FORMS



The Study in EN

Aspen Institute Central Europe was a partner of the conference on lifelong learning and non-formal education, where we presented the outputs of the study "The Future of the Czech Labor Market".



# 3. Transatlantic & EU Topics

Public debates, that include cross-sectoral and in-opinion varied panelists on geopolitical, geo-economic and democratic questions, are organized to challenge the audience with contrasting perspectives, support open dialogue and democratic values.

## Key activities 2023

### DISINFORMATION AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN TIMES OF CRISES, CONFLICTS AND WARS

A joint year-long project with **Aspen Institute Germany** as a lead partner, focusing on a group of 17 influencers and content creators from Germany, Ukraine, Romania, the Baltics, and Central Europe to bring a list of recommendations to relevant national and European institutions.

### INFORMATION INTEGRITY IN THE AI ERA: A (CENTRAL) EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Together with **Aspen Digital**, we organized a half day conference to discuss AI and its impact on the news. There was participation from:

- **London School of Economics and Political Science**
- **European Commission**
- **Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty**
- **Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford**

The Conference was chaired by **Vivian Schiller, Executive Director, Aspen Digital**.



# 4. Technology & Innovation



In the program priority Tech and Innovation, Aspen Institute Central Europe focuses on topics of Information Integrity, Artificial Intelligence, Digitalization and Digital Economy. The Institute organizes public discussions and closed roundtables in cooperation with experts and organizations from Central Europe. An essential aspect of our activities is conducting studies in cooperation with other European institutions.

## Key activities 2023

### DIALOGUE ON THE DIGITAL ECONOMY IN CZECHIA

Two editions of educational closed workshops with the aim of formulating the needs of the digital economy business.

### SOCIETY 4.0: AI AND US

Public debate on the topic of Chat GPT and overall impact of new technologies.

### STRIVE LEARNING NETWORK

Closed expert meetings within the Strive Czechia program. The network is composed of experts from government, business, and other relevant organizations and associations providing recommendations while helping to shape the content of the study "**Micro and Small Enterprises in the Czech Republic on the Path to a Digital Future**".

### THE CZECH PATH TO NET ZERO

A Press Conference held in June 2023 about a published expert study "**The Czech Path to Net Zero: A Challenge or an Opportunity for Our Economy?**"



# 5. Quality of Governance: Effectiveness of Civil Service

An effective civil service is one that can manage the administration of partial tasks as well as the preparation and implementation of long-term goals. It can respond flexibly to current challenges and is an attractive employer offering an innovative, developing and goal-oriented work environment led by quality managers.

Focus on four pillars that form the cornerstones of effective civil service:

- Focus on outcomes and their measurement
- Flexibility in the organization of public administration
- Attracting and developing the most capable talents
- Digitalization and data-driven decision-making

## Key activities 2023

### REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS OF THE EXPERT GROUP

The regular meetings are held during the year in cooperation with different stakeholders and partners to support public dialogue on the topic of effectiveness of civil service aimed at increasing trust in it, focusing on delivery of strategic priorities and providing specific recommendations based on expert studies.



YOU GOVERN WELL WHEN YOU:



Know those you govern



Include those you govern



Unite those you govern



Defend those you govern

# Expert Reports 2023

Aspen Institute CE cooperates with leading experts and consulting companies on the studies, which serve as the basis for the panel discussions at the Annual Conferences. Specific recommendations, arising from the studies, are then addressed to political representatives and civil servants.

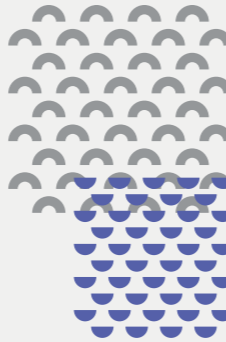
## GLOBAL CHALLENGE FACED BY THE WEST: IT IS ESSENTIAL TO INVEST IN SECURITY AND DEFENSE CAPABILITY IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO SAFEGUARD OUR INDEPENDENCE

Aspen Institute CE and Daniel Košťoval, The Prague Centre for Transatlantic Relations



### Recommendations:

- Investments in security and defense: specifically, investments in critical infrastructure resilience, cybersecurity and national defense
- Investments in access to raw materials and energy security to maximize self-sufficiency
- Developing effective organizations and instruments to ensure a unified Western effort
- Formulating a policy that creates a real basis for independent and sustainable development in Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Investing in technical education, innovation, new technologies, and ensuring awareness and education about the political value system



## THE CZECH PATH TO NET ZERO: A CHALLENGE OR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR ECONOMY?

Aspen Institute CE and Boston Consulting Group



### Recommendations:

- Support the transition of the economy to green technologies
- Introduce strong regulations and subsidies to support the decarbonization of industry and services, including setting targets for carbon reduction
- Prepare a comprehensive action plan to accelerate the deployment of new renewable energy sources
- Establish a national carbon neutrality coordination center at the government level to coordinate actions across sectors
- Submit a national decarbonization strategy, incorporate it into legislation, and launch positive communication campaigns



## EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED WITHIN A SINGLE TEAM COMPRISED OF THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND OTHER SERVICES

Aspen Institute CE and PAQ Research



### Recommendations:

- Introduce a system of affordable housing based on the gradual expansion of the city housing stock and setting incentive criteria for tenants
- Involve the authorities in the coordination of groups of bodies (schools, NGOs, city departments, social services) for regular information sharing
- Support the improvement of material conditions for children and provide administrative assistance with projects such as free lunches or the establishment of immediate material assistance benefits
- Select and evaluate school principals based on their focus on the pedagogical work of teachers
- Reduce the administrative burden on school principals and share the capacity of administrative staff with school principals, especially in project management



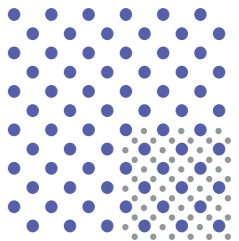
## MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC ON THE PATH TO A DIGITAL FUTURE

Aspen Institute CE and the Global Arena Research Institute



### Recommendations:

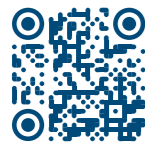
- Involving MSEs in local development plans in cooperation with municipalities and identifying priority MSEs that have the greatest impact in the region
- Promoting motivation for entrepreneurship and sharing examples of good practice, helping to develop a plan
- Promoting cooperation between the commercial sector and the educational environment in terms of research, development and human resources
- Upskilling employees in digital technologies and providing financial support to small businesses for projects related to the introduction and use of digital technologies
- Facilitating the resolution of problems with the implementation of digital technologies and reducing the disadvantage of MSEs when looking for partners/suppliers
- Supporting women in MSE leadership - finding ways to address barriers for women in MSE leadership and supporting them in acquiring digital skills



# Aspen Review 2023

Aspen Review publishes on a bi-weekly basis online articles, analyses, interviews, and commentaries by world-renowned Central European public figures, journalists, scientists and academics.

The latest annual issue, featuring selected articles, was printed on the occasion of the Aspen Annual Conference 2023.



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## Our Partners





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