



## CASE STUDY

# Strengthened value-based Czech foreign policies: a continued support for transition policies and development cooperation

This case study was developed by Glopolis and it captures the story of the most significant change that happened to the civil society organisations (CSOs) network thanks to the Stronger Roots Program. The network was awarded EUR 10,000 under the project and was provided with 25 hours of capacity development support.

### Network

DEMAS - Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights  
& FoRS - Czech Forum for Development Cooperation

### Country

Czech Republic

### Period when the change was observed

September 2020 – December 2021

# The most significant change that the network achieved

New Czech government established after the October 2021 parliamentary elections expressed its support for transition and development cooperation policies. Thanks to the involvement in the Stronger Roots program, DEMAS and FoRS began **working together more intensively and coordinated their advocacy towards various groups** – MPs, Senators, secretariats of democratic political parties, business associations.

The experience gained was **subsequently shared** across both platforms, DEMAS and FoRS, and also with other civil society organisations in the NeoN network (an infrastructure for collaboration of 18 networks that together reactively defend and proactively cultivate a democratic, civic space), which added to the systemic aspect of the change.



*“Securing the new government’s support provides the grounds to advocate for adequate financing of transition and development cooperation work that faced cuts under the previous government.”*

*Sabina Malcová, DEMAS*

**DEMAS and FoRS’ work helped ensure that transition and development cooperation policies have remained a part of Czech foreign policy** and it is likely that they will be further strengthened in the foreseeable future.

This systemic change should be viewed **within the larger context** of both DEMAS and FoRS’ longstanding efforts and larger socio-political developments, namely the appointment of a Foreign Affairs Minister actively promoting human rights and democracy

in Czech foreign policy as a result of the October 2021 parliamentary elections.

To illustrate the **longer-term importance of the change**, it is informative to look to Poland or Hungary, where promotion of human rights, democracy, and development cooperation in general have been significantly restricted.

## How the project contributed to the change

DEMAs and FoRS began **communicating regularly and frequently, working together more closely** on transition policy and development cooperation promotion.

**The networks also built bridges to reduce the deepening gaps between civil society, political, business and public/state sectors.** Previously, the networks' communication with the business sector, which plays an important role in shaping Czech foreign policy, had been ad hoc.

The continuous information exchange that was set up increased understanding among the networks and their contacts in the business sector, as well as political and public/state spheres. This led to a **deepening of trust, more openness** (listening to the needs of others) and **smoother communication** particularly among the CSOs (DEMAs-FoRS consortium) and the business/private sector.

STRONGER  
ROOTS

**The Stronger Roots** Program is jointly implemented by a consortium created by Open Society Fund Prague (CZ), Open Society Foundation Bratislava (SK), Glopolis (CZ) and the NIOK Foundation (HU). The Program aims to increase the resilience of civil society organizations and their networks in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, strengthen their social capital and embed them in the communities and societies in which they operate. Within the Program, the concept of transversal collaboration was developed and tested on 9 networks of civil society organizations.

| Nadace OSF



**Glopolis** is an analytical and networking center with an 18-years long outstanding think-tank experience in research, policy monitoring, advocacy and campaigning, relationship development, resource mobilization and facilitating collaboration at the Czech, CEE and EU-wide levels. Glopolis mission is to support transversal collaboration beyond the non-profit sector towards resilient civil society and sustainable democracy. Therefore, it seeks out and expands the field of shared aspirations of the CSOs, governmental and business representatives and engages them in solving common, societal challenges.