



# **Analysing China Radio International's Tactics: A Case Study of Narratives Disseminated in the Czech Republic**

**Espresso**

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China has systematically and consistently promoted its own narratives on the international stage, aiming to shape the global landscape to align with its interests and ideology. These efforts encompass various strategies, such as the acquisition of media companies, active engagements by Chinese ambassadors in both mainstream and alternative media, the use of paid supplements, collaboration with Russian media through content sharing, and an increasingly robust presence on social media platforms.[1]

In recent years, China Radio International (CRI), a Chinese state media outlet broadcasting in 44 languages,[2] has been reported[3] to establish partnerships with and provide content to radio stations worldwide. However, there has been a dearth of comprehensive studies scrutinising the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) employed by CRI in its operations. Likewise, analyses focusing on the content delivered by CRI to local radio stations have been limited. This policy brief aims to bridge this informational gap by examining CRI's operations in the Czech Republic as an illustrative example.

The content analysis of CRI in the Czech Republic reveals two distinct pathways through which Chinese narratives permeate the information space. The choice of pathway depends on whether the content is intended for publication on the radio station's website (and subsequently promoted on Facebook) or for broadcasting purposes. The author underscores the disparities between two case studies that delve into events that significantly resonated within the Czech Republic during 2022 and early 2023: the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Czech presidential election.

### ***CRI as a Russian propaganda laundromat***

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European Commission cracked down on Russian propaganda related to the war and imposed sanctions on Russian state media Sputnik and RT (formerly Russia Today).[4] Similarly, the Czech government and security services recommended shutting down eight websites spreading pro-Kremlin disinformation related to Russia's war against Ukraine immediately after the invasion.[5] Chinese propaganda, however, evaded any restrictions, despite disseminating very similar narratives about the conflict in Ukraine and adopting or closely aligning with Russian rhetoric on the subject.[6]

Even before the invasion, China Radio International in the Czech Republic published a text on its website in which Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke of NATO as a relic of the Cold War and suggested that eastern enlargement had not contributed to peace.[7] Over the following weeks, the radio quoted Russian arguments about the causes of the invasion and published texts about the destabilising role of the United States and NATO.[8] It often contrasted the US position with that of China, which it portrayed as a neutral and responsible stakeholder. Regarding the European Union, the radio highlighted the negative economic and security consequences of the war for the EU. CRI also addressed the issue of alleged biological laboratories on Ukrainian territory in several articles, suggesting a possible connection to the origin of Covid-19.[9]

Interestingly, the European Union was portrayed as a victim of US imperialism who should start acting independently - in other words, 'freeing itself' from the US and correcting its allegedly misguided and aggressive stance towards China.[10] Although Russia is the aggressor in the war, China has also portrayed it as the victim. The real victim, Ukraine, hardly figured in the reporting. However, unlike Russian propaganda, China did not propagate the narrative of alleged neo-Nazism in Ukraine. [11] NATO was portrayed in the Chinese narrative as an extended arm of US influence, and in some countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary), Chinese propaganda curiously referred to it as Voldemort, the name of the main villain in the Harry Potter book series.[12]

The majority of texts published on the radio's website were translations from the original Chinese versions and did not disclose the authors' identities. However, a few texts were written by a Czech author Karel Pavlíček[13], who served as a special correspondent for China Media Group (CMG), the operating company of China Radio International. Another author based in Prague was Bradley Blankenship, an American freelance journalist whose Twitter account indicates that his articles have appeared in Chinese state media CGTN and China Daily, as well as propagandistic outlets like the Global Times and RT (formerly Russia Today).

As was the case with Covid-19-related news aimed at Central and Eastern European countries, Chinese content was not tailored to local audiences at the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which overwhelmingly see NATO as the guarantor of their security, the effort to portray NATO expansion as the cause of the war seems strange to say the least. This points to a passive sharing of centrally produced Chinese content rather than a successful localisation of the messages for a local audience. Also, the visual materials accompanying the posts contained text in English, confirming the lack of capacity to produce localised and therefore more effective propaganda.

### ***Offering a space to fringe politicians and parties***

In January 2023, as the Czech Republic approached its presidential elections, China Radio International's lack of understanding of Czech domestic topics became even more apparent. During the peak of the campaign and after the announcement of the election results, from 1 January to 14nFebruary 2023, CRI simply republished reports from the Czech News Agency on its website. Out of the ten texts analysed, Chinese radio sourced eight of them from the Czech News Agency. The remaining two texts warrant closer scrutiny. On 13 February 2023, CRI published an interview with Jaroslav Čejka, the former head of the Department of Culture and deputy head of the Department of Education, Science, and Culture of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In the interview, Čejka asserted that the election of Petr Pavel as the new Czech president marked "the beginning of a new, right-wing totalitarianism." [14]

A day later, CRI published a text by Jindřich Rajchl, chairman of Strana Právo, Respekt, Odbornost (Law Respekt Expertise Party, PRO)[15], who has been regularly speaking at demonstrations against the current government[16] alongside Senator Jana Zvyrtková Hamplová who previously shared disinformation narratives concerning Ukrainian refugees.[17] The op-ed begins with the words: "Regarding the phone call between the newly elected President Petr Pavel and Taiwanese President Tsai Jing-wen, which led to harsh condemnation from Beijing, I say again that he is not doing so of his

own volition, but on instructions" and "as an extended arm of the US, which is trying to destabilise other countries by using [third] countries."<sup>[18]</sup> In the following text, he does not focus on Taiwan or China, but talks about the rigging of the Czech presidential election by the media and the United States. Speculatively, the first sentence regarding the phone call with the Taiwanese president may have served the purely instrumental purpose of attracting attention from CRI, as the rest of the text aims purely at a domestic audience.

An analysis of the environment in which links to CRI posts appear on Czech Facebook shows that it is mainly far-left or, conversely, strongly conservative right-wing groups from the fringes of the political spectrum that share Chinese content. CrowdTangle Chrome Extension data<sup>[19]</sup> from 18 November 2022 illustrates this trend. The last 500 posts had a total of 6,290 interactions (i.e. likes, shares, or comments), and the profiles that CRI shared had a cumulative total of more than 1 million followers<sup>[20]</sup>. The five most popular posts focused on foreign topics related to China or the 20th Chinese Communist Party Congress.<sup>[21]</sup> The most shared CRI posts on Facebook were by Milan Krajča (Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, KSČM)<sup>[22]</sup>, the Facebook group Přátelé Ruska (Friends of Russia)<sup>[23]</sup>, KSČM Prague<sup>[24]</sup>, KSČM Prague 3<sup>[25]</sup> and Blok proti idiocii (Bloc Against Idiocy)<sup>[26]</sup>. CRI texts also appeared in the groups Názory bez cenzury (Opinions without Censorship)<sup>[27]</sup>, Děkujeme Maďarsku, děkujeme panu Orbánovi (We Thank Hungary, We Thank Mr Orbán)<sup>[28]</sup>, Skupina svobodných občanů ČR (Group of Free Citizens of the Czech Republic)<sup>[29]</sup> and similar fringe groups.

## ***Hiding behind local radio stations***

While China's previous attempts to promote a favourable image of the country through media involvement, sponsoring supplements, and China Radio International's news coverage have been problematic, they have allowed for the identification or estimation of the message's source. However, since 2019, there seems to be a deliberate effort by China to obscure the origin of its messages within the Czech information space. This tactic aims to facilitate the easier acceptance of Chinese narratives by local audiences who may otherwise be skeptical of them.

There have been documented cases of Russian media outlets publishing in the Czech language that actively defended the Chinese company Huawei and helped to spread pro-Chinese narratives about the Hong Kong protests or the origin of the Covid-19 virus.<sup>[30]</sup> Czech 'alternative' media outlets spreading pro-Kremlin propaganda have also helped to launder information and hide the origin of messages for local audiences. This process was described by Deník N, according to which it all starts with an article produced by CRI, which appears as an anonymous text on the radio's website.<sup>[31]</sup> In the next step, the article is picked up by a number of 'alternative' media outlets but the text is already signed by the media outlet itself or by a local 'author'. For Czech readers, the text thus appears as an output of the Czech media. Only a comparison with the original CRI article reveals the Chinese origin of the seemingly locally produced news. This method of information laundering was described, for example, in August 2022, when the Czech alternative scene published as its own text the full statement by the Chinese embassy in Prague, responding to the visit of US Congress Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan.<sup>[32]</sup>

But China Radio International is also a problematic actor because of its outsourcing of China-related programming to local partners without making it clear to listeners who is sponsoring the content production. In the Czech Republic, Radio HEY, a nationwide commercial radio station playing rock music, and Radio Color, which presents itself as "one of the last independent radios",<sup>[33]</sup> have both been broadcasting a programme called Barevný svět (Colourful World) since 2019 (2020, respectively). Radio HEY hosts the programme, then Radio Color adopts it and broadcasts it with a half-hour delay. According to Radio HEY, the programme is "a magazine not only about travel, but also about history, culture, sports, fashion, modern technology and other interesting things, especially from the Far East and, for us, far away, exotic China."<sup>[34]</sup> The nearly 30-minute block is broadcasted six times a week in the early evening.

What's missing from the broadcast, however, is information about the involvement of China Radio International. At the time of writing, only episodes taken directly from Radio HEY's broadcasts were available for listening on the CRI website. However, the CRI archive still offers the original version of the broadcast. This version of the broadcast adds a few extra seconds to the Radio HEY episodes in which the presenter introduces the programme by saying: "Chinese Radio International. This is Beijing. Dear listeners, welcome to the shortwave service of China Radio International, where we are broadcasting a brand new programme called Barevný svět [Colourful World], which we are producing in cooperation with the Czech Radio HEY and Phoenix Amber<sup>[35]</sup>. It's a magazine not only about travel but also about history, culture, sports, fashion, modern technology and other interesting things, especially from China."<sup>[36]</sup>

The author analysed a total of 70 episodes of the programme, nearly 35 hours of broadcasting, between 14 February and 9 April 2022 (the weeks of the impending or launched Russian invasion of Ukraine) and January 2023 (the period of the presidential election in the Czech Republic).<sup>[37]</sup> For the analysis, she used the Beey program, which allows transcription of the spoken word into a written record.

Although HEY Radio introduces the program as if it dealt "mainly with China," in practice the program deals with it almost exclusively. The broadcast is divided into six themes, which are repeated each week. Monday's broadcast focuses on traditional Chinese medicine. Tuesday's programme introduces Chinese gastronomy to Czech listeners. The Wednesday episodes are the most varied - in the analysed period, they dealt with Chinese architecture or Chinese production capacities and infrastructure. On Thursday, the agenda includes news. Friday broadcast focuses on "the wisdom of the Far East" while Sunday's programme deals with travel to UNESCO sites.

The broadcast itself features a mix of Chinese and non-Chinese songs and a text which is read by a moderator. Wednesday's broadcast is atypical - instead of one spokesperson, there are two moderators in the studio, referred to only as Mirek and Ivka (in the February-April 2022 segment analysed), who respond to each other. Mirek usually asks questions, while Ivka responds with references to her own unspecified experiences in China. Although, again, these are read out responses and not spontaneous answers, the involvement of her own experience moves the texts in a different direction. Particularly in comparison to the unified de-localised speech on other days of the broadcast, Wednesday's dialogues seem at times like an attempt to increase the appeal to the audience. This broadcast also slipped the most into tabloidisation, including innuendo that might surprise listeners.<sup>[38]</sup>

The Wednesday broadcasts often combined educational stories about culture and history with more "catchy" topics, such as love and sex, presented in a slightly orientalist way. The conversation between Mirek and Ivka in the broadcast on Chinese poetry may serve as an example. Ivka: "For instance, in a classic Chinese poem from the eighth century, the reader is presented with a romantic scene. A woman leans out of a window and looks at her lover, whom she hasn't seen for a long time. She ponders about how to express her love for him. She decides, cuts her long nails, wraps them in a silk bag and gives them to her lover." Mirek responds by saying: "If I hadn't already been a bit attached to Oriental culture [...] I might have thought that she didn't have it quite right in her head. But I suspect there must be a good reason behind it." Ivka explains: "There is. This was really an expression of great love; it made it into poems and books."[\[39\]](#)

Completely breaking from the episodes' set-up is the episode aired on 8 April 2022, which begins with a quote from Czech Egyptologist Miroslav Bárta and devotes an entire third of the programme to Egypt, which serves as a useful springboard for a conversation about the discovery of a Neolithic village in China.[\[40\]](#)

In the second analysed period (January 2023) Ivka was replaced in the studio by Tomáš and the episodes were broadcast on Thursdays. These 'spontaneous' conversations between Mirek and Tomáš did not deviate so much from the standard line that the programme follows during the week. An interesting exception, however, was the programme aired on 19 January, which focused on travel. The programme reacted to the lifting of the quarantine requirements on entering China, invited listeners to visit China and portrayed Chinese tourists as a welcome source of income for neighbouring countries. Here again, the hosts expressed admiration for China; for example, Mirek remarked on the rail travel in China during the Chinese New Year: "The volume of passengers is very hard for us to imagine." Tomáš responds: "It is. However, the Chinese are known for finding a solution to such matters. During the three years that tourism has been significantly slowed down, they have not been idle. They have introduced new technologies at many train stations, airports and motorways to ensure that spring travel runs as smoothly as possible. These technologies are designed to make the journey more pleasant for passengers, while also making it smoother and safer."[\[41\]](#) A list of positive innovations follow, including - controversially in Europe - face recognition.

Other January episodes covered a series on Chinese noodles, an annotated description of chapters of Sun Tzu's *On the Art of War*, Chinese New Year celebrations, traditional Chinese medicine, etc.

### ***Casual dropping of political narratives***

In the programme, China is portrayed not only as a country with a rich cultural tradition, but also as a developing country. It is often pointed out - sometimes seemingly out of context - that China is misperceived by the world. For example, the moderators mentioned: "Those of us who still have China fixed in our minds as a developing country may be surprised to learn how big a problem obesity and overweight are in China today"[\[42\]](#), or hinted that its products are of high quality: "For a long time, the Made in China label has represented cheap, inferior, low-quality products. But today, that is no longer the case."[\[43\]](#)

Mirek and Tomáš talked about the need to see the "real" China for oneself in one of the January episodes. Mirek said: "Those who have been thinking about going to the Middle Kingdom for the past few years will finally have a chance again. [...] Well, there's nothing like seeing China with your own eyes and getting an idea of the country based on personal experience. As the saying goes, the more one travels, the more one realises what the world around us is really and truly like."<sup>[44]</sup>

The Chinese government is portrayed in the broadcast in an exclusively positive way. For example, the moderator remarks: "However, the Chinese government is already trying to fight the wave of obesity and associated diseases as best it can."<sup>[45]</sup> Or: "During the reigns of non-Chinese dynasties in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries under the Mongols and in the seventeenth to twentieth centuries under the Manchus, these little feet became a symbol of Chinese culture. Although both the Mongols and the Manchus tried to ban them during their reigns, they simply never succeeded. This tradition symbolised the determination of the Chinese not to give up their own culture. It was only when the Communist Party came to power in 49 that the practice was finally banned."<sup>[46]</sup>

Mentions of the improved situation after the Communist victory in the civil war and the founding of the People's Republic of China even made it into an episode dedicated to Chinese beer: "[Ivka] But the first half of the twentieth century was marked by a decline for China. The country was occupied by Western powers. It was mired in constant wars and uprisings. These ended with the Second World War, and then with a civil war. [...] Raw materials were imported, the technology for brewing beer was in the hands of foreigners and the Chinese, except for the wealthiest elite, did not drink beer. Most of the production was destined for foreigners in China. [Mirek] Well, when did that start to change for the better? [Ivka] After the end of the civil war and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, in 1949 [...]."<sup>[47]</sup>

An analysis of the broadcasts during the beginning of the war in Ukraine and during the presidential elections in the Czech Republic shows that the broadcasts prepared in cooperation with CRI stayed away from security and political issues that resonated with the Czech society. This does not mean, however, that the programme was completely apolitical. On the contrary, episodes which focused on culture, history or language often presented views held by the Chinese Communist Party. For example, the programme repeatedly made claims about Tibet being an integral part of China<sup>[48]</sup> or about the civilising mission of the Chinese in Tibet<sup>[49]</sup>, or made negative references to the Tibetan theocracy<sup>[50]</sup>. Similarly, the claim that Taiwan belongs to the People's Republic of China appears in the programme dedicated to the Chinese islands, according to which "Hainan is the largest Chinese island after Taiwan"<sup>[51]</sup>, as well as in episodes on Chinese mountain ranges<sup>[52]</sup>. One episode, which focused on architecture, mentioned a mosque in Beijing and its surroundings, which, according to the narrator, are "pumped up with Chinese Muslim culture"<sup>[53]</sup>. Even in the aforementioned episode dealing with nails as a sign of devotion, there was an opportunity to insert a political message: "[Ivka] Her [*the Chinese Empress*' - *author's note*] nails later became a symbol of power profligacy and detachment from reality, leading to revolution and the overthrow of the empire. [Mirek] I am not surprised by that."<sup>[54]</sup>

## ***Utilising the topic of Traditional Chinese Medicine***

Monday's broadcast on traditional medicine, co-produced by 1. Škola tradiční čínské medicíny (1st School of Traditional Chinese Medicine)[55], offers a number of claims that are not overtly politicised, yet rather illustrate the bizarre conflation with the mainstream cultural context in the Czech Republic - and thus the persistent limits of localisation of Chinese narratives. For example, in the episode aired on 14 February, 2022, the Czech listener learns that regarding recreational sports, women "should almost entirely refrain from them during their period. Through bleeding, they lose kidney essence and should therefore not force the body into physical performance. Moreover, they lose blood, the sufficiency of which is perhaps even more important for them than for men. Without it, the female cycle cannot function properly, and without its proper function, almost nothing in the female body functions. From the skin to immunity and mental capacity." [56] Also interesting is a statement in the episode aired on 21 February 2022 that warns listeners against too much sexual activity, which ultimately leads to "many physical and mental problems. In the first place impotence, which is certainly not pleasant. Even less pleasant are other symptoms such as pain in the loins, confusion and forgetfulness, permanent mild depression or greater bone weakness." [57] Traditional Chinese medicine is described as at least as effective as Western medicine. [58]

In addition to the 1st School of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Unie příznivců tradiční čínské medicíny (Union of Supporters of Traditional Chinese Medicine, UPTCM) has joined the production of the Monday broadcasts focusing on traditional Chinese medicine, as shown in the analysis of the second period (January 2023). The Union presents itself as a community connecting "citizens to protect and develop the use of traditional Chinese medicine methods and practices". The UPTCM positions itself as a champion of traditional medicine, which is in perceived danger. It declares: "We fight against misinformation about traditional Chinese medicine. We work to ensure that the population of the Czech Republic, the EU and NATO member states can freely use it." [59] The Monday's episodes appear on the Union's website in the form of articles which link to Radio HEY and Radio Color. [60]

## ***Conclusion***

China has systematically and extensively promoted its own narratives both within Mainland China and internationally, aiming to shape the global environment according to its interests and ideology. These efforts have involved activities such as acquiring media companies, active participation by Chinese ambassadors in mainstream and 'alternative' media, the use of paid supplements, collaboration with Russian media, and a growing presence on social media platforms.

While the broadcasting of China Radio International (CRI) through local radio stations may initially appear insignificant and bizarre, an analysis of CRI's content in the Czech Republic reveals an intriguing ecosystem that has been created around it. In this ecosystem, extreme left-wing or strongly conservative right-wing groups from the political fringes, pro-Kremlin 'alternative' media outlets, radios presenting themselves as independent, and supporters of traditional Chinese medicine coexist and share Chinese content. As a result, the true source of the content, China, becomes obscured in the process of sharing.



Among the 70 episodes examined, the narrators consistently expressed admiration for China, highlighting its rich tradition, culture, imperial inventions, technological advancements, and architectural achievements. The contributions were consistently positive, avoiding any uncomfortable topics for China. Even in instances that could be perceived as critical, such as the demolition of traditional hutongs in Beijing or the threat of certain animal species' extinction, the narrators added remarks that emphasised policy changes or reframed the statements in a positive light.[61] Apart from occasional dialogues on Wednesdays or Thursdays, the contributions did not show an evident effort to make the content more appealing to the Czech audience by incorporating frequent references to Czech culture. Grammatical errors were also present, making it challenging even for native Czech speakers reading the prepared texts. Similar to CRI's written content on its website, it can be inferred that the content is produced centrally and later translated into various languages, including Czech.

CRI's efforts to hide its activities behind local actors will most likely not be limited to the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, very few China watchers and security practitioners have so far focused on this issue. However, Serbian analyst Stefan Vladislavljev of the BFPE Foundation[62] confirms that the Czech case may not be exceptional: "The CRI programme is also broadcasted in Serbian through the local radio station WTF (Welcome to Fun). This is a domestic radio station that regularly broadcasts content produced by CRI, always with a positive tone towards China."

China's attempts to adapt official narratives, aligning with the script provided by the central government and the Chinese Communist Party leadership, may initially seem unsophisticated. However, the analysis presented above clearly indicates a learning process on the Chinese side, as they strive to present official propaganda to foreign audiences in new ways. The documented processes of information laundering, which obscure attribution, should caution against underestimating Chinese techniques. Their apparent ability to employ effective communication methods, including collaboration with pro-Kremlin alternative media and embedding political messages in seemingly ordinary content, serves as a warning sign. If gradually accumulated experience and knowledge are combined with improved narrative localisation and enhanced proficiency in social media utilisation, Chinese information operations targeting Europe will grow increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect in the future.

*Note: The extended version of this analysis was initially published in Czech on 5 April 2023. Subsequently, Czech journalists began to inquire about the program's funding and its connections to China Radio International based on the findings of this analysis. On 30 April 2023, after broadcasting for three and a half years without interruption and airing over 1,000 episodes, it appears that Barevný svět has been discontinued on both Radio Hey and Radio Color.*



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## Notes

[1] E.g. Sarah Cook, Beijing's Global Megaphone: The Expansion of Chinese Communist Party Media Influence since 2017 (Freedom House, 2020), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/special-report/2020/beijings-global-megaphone>; Ivana Karásková, "How China Influences Media in Central and Eastern Europe", *The Diplomat*, 19 November 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/how-china-influences-media-in-central-and-eastern-europe/>; Ivana Karásková (ed.), From East with Love: Dissecting Pro-China Bias in Czech and Slovak Alternative Media (Prague, Association for International Affairs (AMO), 2022), [https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Mapinfluence\\_policy-paper\\_from-the-east-with-love\\_A4\\_web\\_06.pdf](https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Mapinfluence_policy-paper_from-the-east-with-love_A4_web_06.pdf); Ivana Karásková et al., China's propaganda and disinformation campaigns in Central Europe (Prague, Czech Republic, Association for International Affairs (AMO), 2020), [https://mapinfluence.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Mapinfluence\\_BRIEFING-PAPER\\_chinas-propaganda\\_A4\\_interaktivni\\_EN\\_01-1.pdf](https://mapinfluence.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Mapinfluence_BRIEFING-PAPER_chinas-propaganda_A4_interaktivni_EN_01-1.pdf).

[2] "Who we are", China Plus, *China Radio International*, 6 February 2017, <https://chinaplus.cri.cn/chinaplus/aboutus/aboutcri/62/20170216/393.html>.

[3] See Koh Gui Qing and John Shiffman, "Beijing's covert radio network airs China-friendly news across Washington, and the world", *Reuters*, 2 November 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/china-radio/>; Jojo Rinoza and Jeffrey Maitem, "Chinese Program Broadcast on Philippine State-Run Station Stirs Complaints", *Benar News*, 13 April 2020, <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/philippine/radio-criticism-05132020132833.html>; Beijing's Global Media Influence 2022 (Freedom House, 2022), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/beijing-global-media-influence/2022/authoritarian-expansion-power-democratic-resilience/country-reports>.

[4] "EU imposes sanctions on state-owned outlets RT/Russia Today and Sputnik's broadcasting in the EU", European Council, 2 March 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/02/eu-imposes-sanctions-on-state-owned-outlets-rt-russia-today-and-sputnik-s-broadcasting-in-the-eu/>.

[5] Vojtěch Blažek, "Sdružení zablokovalo dezinformační weby. Jde o bezpečnost státu, říká šéf", *Seznam zprávy*, 25 February 2022, <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-zivot-v-cesku-sdruzeni-zablokovalo-dezinformacni-weby-jde-o-bezpecnost-statu-rika-sef-190489>.

[6] Ivana Karásková et al., Backing Russia on Ukraine: China's Messaging in Central and Eastern Europe (Prague, Association for International Affairs (AMO), 2022), [https://chinaobservers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CHOICE\\_policy-paper\\_Backing-Russia-on-Ukraine\\_04\\_web.pdf](https://chinaobservers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CHOICE_policy-paper_Backing-Russia-on-Ukraine_04_web.pdf).

[7] "Wang Yi vyjádřil stanovisko k ukrajinské otázce [Wang Yi expressed an opinion on the Ukrainian issue]," *China Radio International*, 20 February 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/chinanews/3883/20220220/736849.html>.

[8] "USA jsou viníkem války na Ukrajině [The US is to blame for the war in Ukraine]," *China Radio International*, 25 February 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220225/738374.html>.

[9] "Spojené státy nouzově vymazaly informace o laboratořích, čeho se bojí? [The United States deleted in emergency information on laboratories, what is it afraid of?]," *China Radio International*, 11 March 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220311/742013.html>.

[10] "Jak by měly Čína a EU přistupovat ke vzájemným vztahům? [How should China and the EU approach mutual relations?]" *China Radio International*, 6 April 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220406/747676.html>.

[11] Ivana Karásková et al., Backing Russia on Ukraine: China's Messaging in Central and Eastern Europe (Prague, Association for International Affairs, (AMO), 2022), [https://chinaobservers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CHOICE\\_policy-](https://chinaobservers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CHOICE_policy-)

[paper Backing-Russia-on-Ukraine\\_04\\_web.pdf](#).

[12] "Je to Voldemort, který ničí mezinárodní řád! [It is Voldemort who is destroying the international order!]", *China Radio International*, 18 April 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220418/750452.html>.

[13] Karel Pavlíček, "Vlaky mezi Čínou a Evropou táhnou Eurasii k prosperitě [Trains between China and Europe are pulling Eurasia towards prosperity]," *China Radio International*, 1 February 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220201/733198.html>; Karel Pavlíček, "Ukrajinské krizi šlo diplomaticky zabránit, jde ji tak i ukončit [The Ukrainian crisis could be prevented diplomatically, so it can also be ended]," *China Radio International*, 8 April 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220408/748315.html>; Karel Pavlíček, "Evropa zapojením do sankcí kvůli Ukrajině přijde až o 2% HDP [Europe will lose up to 2% of GDP by joining the sanctions due to Ukraine]," *China Radio International*, 9 April 2022, <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220409/748318.html>; Karel Pavlíček, "Aby se Rusko zařídilo na obtížné časy, nakupuje zlato a yuany prodává [To prepare for difficult times, Russia is buying gold and selling yuan]," *China Radio International*, 13 April 2022 (republished 19 April 2022), <https://czech.cri.cn/communication/3888/20220413/749685.html>.

[14] "Čejka: Pavel vydává povely jako v pravicové totalitě [Čejka: Pavel issues orders as in a right-wing totalitarianism]," *China Radio International*, 13 February 2023, <https://czech.cri.cn/2023/02/13/ARTIpkGazrBA0wqPX78TYAHZ230209.shtml>.

[15] The party registered in 2019. In a statement on its website, the party subscribes to conservative values, but also states "we will not look back whether our solutions are considered left-wing or right-wing, liberal or conservative, pro-European or nationalist, populist or too technocratic. They're just labels that don't really say what's important." See Strana Právo Respekt Odbornost, <https://stranapro.cz/stanovy/>.

[16] Jindřich Rajchl, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/rajchl.jindrich/>.

[17] "Policie vyšetřuje dezinformace o tuberkulóze, šířila je i senátorka Hamplová [The police are investigating disinformation about tuberculosis, which was also spread by Senator Hamplová]," Czech News Agency, 22 February 2023, <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/hamplova-na-sitich-sirila-dezinformace-o-tuberkuloze-ted-ji/r~b5e498aab2a811eda9eeac1f6b220ee8/>.

[18] "Pavlovy kroky jsou hloupé a protiprávní, tvrdí Jindřich Rajchl [Pavel's steps are stupid and illegal, claims Jindřich Rajchl]," *China Radio International*, 14 February 2023, <https://czech.cri.cn/2023/02/14/ARTIQ54rYKk6d14D50gnYi6A230209.shtml>.

[19] The author would like to thank Veronika Blablová for invaluable help with data analysis through CrowdTangle.

[20] specifically, 1,093,158 followers

[21] The most popular posts included reactions to the visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to China (China Radio International, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/978664115512241/posts/5950510274994242>), the G20 meeting in: Bali (China Radio International, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/978664115512241/posts/5982871911758078>), Putin's statement on Nancy Pelosi's visit (China Radio International, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/100064684267350/posts/439160864916719>), US action in the Middle East (China Radio International, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/100064684267350/posts/419381586894647>) and the end of the 20th Chinese Communist Party Congress (China Radio International, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/978664115512241/posts/5912358308809439>).

[22] See Milan Krajča, Facebook, 22 October 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/351328815012336/posts/2939844322827426>.

- [23] Přátelé Ruska, Facebook, 24 July 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/272128832951927/permalink/2255685251262932>.
- [24] KSČM Praha, Facebook, 14 July 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/280553792042816/posts/5214729155291897>.
- [25] KSČM Praha 3, Facebook, 13 July 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/186295818128417/posts/5494106407347305>.
- [26] "Číňané obchodují, Západ válčí [The Chinese trade, the West makes war]," Blok proti idiocii, Facebook, 25 July 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/1595097904094493/posts/3242692289335038>.
- [27] Názory bez cenzury, Facebook, 8 August 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/442518126551175/permalink/1224423335027313>.
- [28] Děkujeme Maďarsku, děkujeme panu Orbánovi, Facebook, 24 October 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/936475283041625/permalink/5713676621988110>.
- [29] Skupina svobodných občanů ČR, Facebook, 22 October 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/370522673817737/permalink/1155140725355924>.
- [30] Ivana Karásková (ed.), From East with Love: Dissecting Pro-China Bias in Czech and Slovak Alternative Media (Prague, Association for International Affairs (AMO), 2022), [https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Mapinfluence\\_policy\\_paper\\_from-the-east-with-love\\_A4\\_web\\_06.pdf](https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Mapinfluence_policy_paper_from-the-east-with-love_A4_web_06.pdf).
- [31] Jakub Zelenka and Lukáš Prchal, "Do čínského rozhlasu a zase zpátky. Propaganda z Pekingu si pomáhá českými dezinformátory, pak to sdílí ambasáda [To Chinese radio and back again. Propaganda from Beijing is helped by Czech disinformation scene, then the embassy shares it]", *Deník N*, 17 April 2021, <https://denikn.cz/603972/do-cinskeho-rozhlasu-a-zase-zpatky-propaganda-z-pekingu-si-pomaha-ceskymi-dezinformatory-pak-to-sdili-ambasada/>.
- [32] Ivana Karásková et al., "How China Reacted to Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan Visit in CEE", *China Observers in Central and Eastern Europe (CHOICE)*, 16 August 2022, <https://chinaobservers.eu/how-china-reacted-to-nancy-pelosis-taiwan-visit-in-central-and-eastern-europe/>.
- [33] Radio Color, <https://radiocolor.cz/showpage.php?name=color-world>.
- [34] "Barevný svět - nový pořad na rádiu HEY - již od října [Colorful Worl - a new program on HEY Radio - since October]," *Radio HEY*, 23 September 2019, <https://www.heyradio.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2019090001>.
- [35] The trade register lists the company Phoenix Amber Ltd. with a wide range of activities from consulting to running a travel agency, processing amber, running physical education and sports facilities, organising sports activities, etc. In the past, Feng Zhai, a Chinese businessman active in the Czech Republic for a long time, worked as an executive of the company. See e.g. Lucie Mottlová, "Nejezděte do Ameriky, v Praze je to lepší, radí známým Číňan žijící v metropoli [Don't go to America, it's better in Prague, advises acquaintances of a Chinese living in the metropolis]," *Metro*, 30 June 2017, [https://www.metro.cz/feng-zhai-nejezdet-do-ameriky-v-prague-je-to-lepsi-fbx-/praha.aspx?c=A170629\\_134137\\_metro-praha\\_lam](https://www.metro.cz/feng-zhai-nejezdet-do-ameriky-v-prague-je-to-lepsi-fbx-/praha.aspx?c=A170629_134137_metro-praha_lam).
- [36] E.g. *China Radio International*, 20 June 2020, <https://czech.cri.cn/811/2020/06/20/1s190372.htm>.
- [37] It should be noted that some episodes were missing in the Radio HEY archive for the analysed time periods.
- [38] E.g. in an episode about shopping in Beijing, Mirek adds: "In our Pařížská (*street - author's remark*) we could at least feel like we were in Asia before the pandemic. Why? Well, there were also a lot of Asians walking around." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 2 March 2022.

[39] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 17 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[40] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 8 April 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[41] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 19 January 2023, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[42] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 15 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[43] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 10 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[44] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 19 January 2023, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[45] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 15 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[46] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 17 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[47] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 24 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[48] "Central Tibet already came under the rule of the Chinese Empire before the middle of the eighteenth century. Other parts of Tibet, namely the already mentioned Kham and Amdo, were annexed to China at the same time. Tibet became de facto independent again after the fall of the empire. Formally, the whole area was still part of China." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 14 March 2022.

[49] For example: "The Chinese emperor resorted to nepotism and the Tibetan king went on to marry one of the princesses. The princess brought ink paper and tea with her to her new home. She is said to have been able to convince the king to start dressing in silk and learn fine manners." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 21 March 2022.

[50] "Religion can be a good aide to rulers and a great match for political goals." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 28 March 2022.

[51] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 1 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[52] "Today we will again move to the mountains far east to the Chinese island of Taiwan." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, April 1, 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>; similarly, Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, April 9, 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[53] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 3 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[54] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 17 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[55] The website of the school describes it as "a symbiotic community of various provider organisations, associations and individuals who firmly believe in the power of Traditional Chinese Medicine and want to share its message with others. The base lies within Československá SinoBiologická společnost (Czechoslovak SinoBiologic Society), which uses support of companies or associations such as Traditional Chinese Medicine z.s., TCM servis z.s., ANDAO Institute, Pragon s.r.o. and others." "About school", 1. Škola tradiční čínské medicíny, undated, <https://www.tcm.cz/o-skole>.

[56] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 14 February 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[57] Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 21 February 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[58] "Modern science confirms thousands of years of experience of Chinese doctors." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 22 March 2022; If listeners injure themselves while playing sports, "then it goes without saying that in addition to Western

medicine, we should visit a Chinese medicine practitioner." See Barevný svět, Radio HEY, 14 February 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[59] Unie příznivců tradiční čínské medicíny, <https://uptcm.cz/>.

[60] E.g. "Novoroční čočka inspirovaná Indií i Čínou: Jak vykročit do nového roku zdravě [New Year's lentil inspired by India and China: How to step into the New Year healthy?]", UPTCM, 30 December 2022, <https://uptcm.cz/detail/79/novorocni-cocka-inspirovana-indii-i-cinou-jak-vykrocit-do-noveho-roku-zdrave>.

[61] "In recent decades, several species have become completely extinct, and 200 species of wild animals are very close to it. Today, there are many protected areas and reserves on the island where, for example, various frogs live. Some of them, such as green frog, are a traditional part of the local menu. The others, such as geckos, toads, butterflies and the like, are not normally eaten." Also: "In places where the forests had to retreat, today there are ponds full of carp, grass carp and catfish." See Barevný svět, *Radio HEY*, 1 March 2022, <https://heyradio.cz/download.php?sekce=17>.

[62] Interview with Stefan Vladislavjev, 15 February 2023.