

Prague Security
Studies Institute



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

A MESSAGE FROM PSSI'S CHAIRMAN

Now in its 23rd year, PSSI's original security policy work program has become more recognized publicly than at any time in the past. The Institute is likewise on a firmer financial and organizational footing than ever before. This upward trajectory is a tribute to our exemplary staff.

PSSI's priority subject matters – including the economic and financial dimensions of what we term the "ground-based space race" and our pioneering research findings on U.S. and allied funding of sanctioned and other malign Chinese companies via their capital markets and private equity funds – are now widely debated in allied capitals, including at the Presidential level in the United States. We took these issues from near total obscurity.

PSSI will continue to stand with Ukraine in its valiant efforts to resist brutal Russian aggression in the great traditions of Vaclav Havel, Ronald Reagan, and Winston Churchill. In the words of the latter, "We shall not flag nor fail. We shall go on to the end".

In the challenging and unsettling times ahead, PSSI will be guided by our North Star of defending human freedom and defeating tyranny. In our view, that remains the essence – and the overarching mission – of the transatlantic relationship.

As in the past, none of this and other ground-breaking work would be possible without the friendships and support of the Institute's donors. We are most grateful. It is with a spirit of genuine optimism that we plan to continue to "outperform the market" and reinvigorate the non-military arsenals of Europe, the United States, and those of our other valued allies.

As ever,



Roger W. Robinson, Jr.
PSSI Chairman and Co-Founder



Participants of the 19th NATO Summer School

SECURITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

ROBINSON-MARTIN SECURITY SCHOLARS ACADEMY

The Robinson-Martin Security Scholars Academy (RMSSA) aims to strengthen the national security expertise and resilience in the Czech Republic and neighboring countries. This is achieved by training the next generation of security policy experts, with a focus on underdeveloped areas like economic and financial statecraft, space security, cybersecurity, and resilient communication techniques.

The course consists of a series of ten lectures and seminars per semester conducted in small group settings which are focused on traditional and emerging international security issues. Featured speakers in 2024 included Dr. Michael Romancov, a leading authority on Russia; Mr. Otakar Foltýn, Government Strategic Communications Coordinator; and Mr. Jan Padourek, Director General of the Section of Internal Security and Police Education of the Ministry of Interior, among others.

NATO SUMMER SCHOOL

The NATO Summer School, founded in 2005, is a one-week training session located at a most agreeable hotel resort near Prague for highly qualified students and young professionals from NATO member and partner nations. Over the course of the week, participants explore such topics as cybersecurity, space security, economic and financial statecraft, the China and Russia threats, and resilient communication strategies through expert lectures, workshops, and a week-long simulation exercise. Hearing from senior Czech and allied security policy practitioners and distinguished non-governmental experts, the program fosters critical thinking and collaboration, while deepening the students' understanding of NATO's challenges and various missions.

In July 2024, PSSI successfully organized its 19th NATO Summer School, entitled "NATO Under Authoritarian Assault," with distinguished speakers such as Ben Heap from NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, Dr. Petr Luňák of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, and Mark Galeotti from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). The program sought to address challenges connected to threats against the democratic order and the rule of law posed by the major authoritarian powers and their proxies. Students explored the geopolitical strategies of key international actors, discussed the new space race and its implications for the alliance, and probed the national security and human

Participants of the 7th Cyber Security Academy.

rights dimensions of global finance, and a host of other issue areas.

CYBER SECURITY ACADEMY

In September 2024, PSSI hosted its 7th Cyber Security Academy (CSA), achieving another milestone in advancing cybersecurity education over nearly a decade. This rigorous program, hosted in English for the first time, reflected PSSI's commitment to broadening its reach. Designed to assist with the increasing demand for skilled cybersecurity professionals, the program has continued to serve as a core project in PSSI's educational portfolio.

Tailored for graduate students, young professionals, and civil servants, this intensive week-long course delved into the technical, legal, and institutional facets of cybersecurity policy. It welcomed 24 participants from diverse sectors, including government, commercial entities, academia, and non-governmental organizations. The participants gained insights into the use of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), the role of artificial intelligence in influence operations, and cyber security in the military sphere.

The Cyber Security Academy featured 16 expert-led sessions focusing on the cybersecurity threat landscape within the Czech Republic, the European Union, and NATO. It also examined strategies employed by various entities to mitigate threats. The program culminated with a Tabletop Exercise, conducted by a

renowned cybersecurity firm RiskSight. With additional support from ČSOB, the British Embassy in Prague, and the National Cyber and Information Security Agency (NÚKIB), the program combined high-caliber speakers, interactive sessions, and valuable networking opportunities, fostering the development of the next generation of cybersecurity leaders.

Beyond the training schedule, CSA participants, speakers, and partners also participated in a special reception celebrating cybersecurity cooperation between the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. Hosted by British Ambassador Matt Field, this event brought together prominent cybersecurity experts from Prague and beyond, offering students a unique networking experience and a glimpse into global cybersecurity collaboration.

PSSI ALUMNI NETWORK

PSSI takes great pride in its alumni network, a thriving community of approximately 1,500 graduates from our various educational programs. This network has become a vital hub for sharing key insights in various security-related fields and offering rich opportunities for career growth through job openings, internships, and participation in groundbreaking research projects.

Among our alumni, a number of Czech security experts, scholars, and policy-makers have become prominent figures in



Reception hosted by the British Embassy in Prague.

the Czech Republic, as well as the wider Euro-Atlantic security community. Among PSSI's distinguished alumni are:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs – Jan Lipavský
- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Jan Marian
- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Eduard Hulicius
- Deputy Chief of Mission at the Czech Embassy in Washington DC – Jan Havránek
- Director of Foreign Policy Analysis and Planning Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Jan Šnidauf
- Special Envoy for Russia Policy Coordination at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Luboš Veselý
- Executive Director of the Czech Taiwanese Business Chamber – Alice Rezková
- Deputy Head of Sanction Division at the European External Action Service – Tomáš Šindelář
- Member of the European Parliament – Markéta Gregorová
- Coordination and Cooperation Officer at EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine – Ondřej Vosátka
- Czech Ambassador to the UN and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ex-deputy Minister of Interior & Defence – Jakub Kulháněk
- Director of the American Center – Vít Nejedlo

COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S IN SECURITY, INTELLIGENCE, AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Continuing in its efforts to cultivate future generations of security policy professionals and scholars, the Institute has forged a partnership with the prestigious Erasmus Mundus International Master Program since 2021. This collaboration is spearheaded by four distinguished academic institutions: the University of Glasgow, Dublin City University, the University of Trento, and Charles University. Through this synergistic partnership, PSSI offers exclusive internship opportunities to the most driven and exceptional students enrolled in the International Master's in Security, Intelligence, and Strategic Studies (IMSIS).

The strength of this partnership can be seen in the number of current PSSI employees who came to us through this program. In 2024, PSSI welcomed current IMSIS student Federica Pizzuto to the Space Security Program as a Project Assistant.



PSSI's Chairman and Co-Founder Roger W. Robinson, Jr. on Mornings with Maria on Fox Business.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STATECRAFT PROGRAM

The Economic & Financial Statecraft Program seeks to illuminate the growing risks associated with economic and financial interdependence with authoritarian regimes and the predatory, non-market practices of such regimes. A number of the Institute's activities have involved original, cutting-edge research that has shown to have the potential to materially strengthen transatlantic security cooperation. Our flagship initiative is tracking and monitoring the presence of Chinese companies – including sanctioned corporate “bad actors” – in the European and American capital markets and private equity portfolios.

FORCED LABOR INITIATIVE

On March 6, 2024, PSSI released a Perspective entitled “Suppliers in Chains: SHEIN’s Troubling IPO,” examining the fast-fashion giant’s alleged unethical practices. It detailed SHEIN’s links to forced labor in Xinjiang, violations of workers’ rights, environmental damage, and consumer safety concerns. It warned that a public listing – at the time being pursued with a targeted \$90 billion valua-

tion (which has been considerably reduced since) and underwritten by major banks like Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase – would legitimize these practices and channel Western investment into sustaining them. The perspective urged legislative action to prevent Western funding of such egregious corporate misconduct. The report was recognized in a press release by the Coalition for a Prosperous America (CPA), a bipartisan industry association focused on U.S. trade policy, on March 30, 2024.

COUNTERING IRAN’S STRATEGIC INTERESTS

On January 31, 2024, PSSI published a groundbreaking Perspective entitled “Funding of the Iran-China Strategic Partnership via the U.S. Capital Markets”, which exposed over \$6 billion in U.S. investments into Chinese companies that directly bolster Iran’s military, energy, infrastructure and surveillance sectors. The report highlighted ties between these companies and Tehran’s state-sponsored terrorism and called for urgent legislative action to prohibit U.S. investment in these entities and a thorough investigation into the full scope of such financial ties. PSSI’s Chairman Roger Robinson was invited to discuss the report’s findings on Fox Business. On May 31, 2024, the report was highlighted by the U.S. Congress Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party in a letter sent to the U.S. Treasury



Participants at the roundtable on increasing the effectiveness of sanctions against Russia, held at the British Embassy in Prague.

Secretary Janet Yellen and a subsequent press release.

On September 27, 2024, PSSI published a Perspective entitled “Europe Must Match American Legislative Momentum in Safeguarding Investors, Human Rights, and International Security,” calling on Europe to emulate recent U.S. legislative initiatives addressing financial ties to authoritarian regimes. The report highlighted ten key U.S. legislative proposals aimed at reducing financial risk exposure to undemocratic states, imposing capital markets sanctions, and enhancing material risk disclosure requirements. It urged the EU to adopt similar legislative measures to safeguard European values, security and retail investors.

STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

On September 30, 2024, PSSI published a policy paper entitled “Recommendations to Strengthen the Implementation of Sanctions against Russia in the Czech Republic.” It offered recommendations to strengthen the Czech government’s capacity to implement international sanctions, improve information tools, amend the criminal code to strengthen the punishment of violations of international sanctions, and to terminate exempted Russian oil imports. This publication was a part of the project entitled Taking Stock of Sanctions Implementation, realized by

PSSI in cooperation with Lobbio and the Association for International Affairs, supported by the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF Global).

On October 21, 2024, PSSI released its publication, “Strategic Purgatory: Can the CEE Region Free Itself from the 14+1 Framework?”, analyzing the decline of China’s “Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries” initiative. The report examined the framework’s waning relevance amid China’s controversial policies and emphasized the importance of dismantling it to align with Europe’s de-risking strategy. It called for the EU and NATO to strengthen economic and financial guardrails against CCP-linked entities and urged a proactive approach to managing economic ties, drawing lessons from Europe’s rather disastrous past experience with Russia.

On February 29, 2024, PSSI, in cooperation with the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the Association for International Affairs (AMO), Reconstruction of the State, Resistant.ai and the American Center Prague hosted a public debate titled “Sanctioning Russia: Making Sanctions Work in 2024.” Speakers included Tom Keatinge of RUSI, Jan Marian, Deputy Minister at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lucie Reháková of Resistant.AI, and Gabriela Svárovská, Foreign Policy Advisor at the Senate of the Czech Republic. The speakers summarized the past two years



Roundtable on the implementation of sanctions against Russia, held at the GLOBSEC Forum.

of issuing and implementing sanctions against Russia and analyzed the current shortcomings. They discussed implementation differences among the participating nations, cooperation and information sharing across countries and between public and private entities, available tools to strengthen sanctions, and their effect on the capacity of Russia to wage war.

The event was followed on March 1, 2024 by a closed roundtable entitled “Increasing the Effectiveness of Anti-Russian Sanctions”, organized in cooperation with RUSI, AMO, Reconstruction of the State, and Resistant.AI, which was hosted by the British Embassy in Prague. The roundtable was attended by 34 representatives from public, private, and nonprofit organizations involved in the implementation of sanctions, including the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance. The first session, facilitated by Lukáš Kraus (Rekonstrukce státu), focused on options to improve Czech sanctions legislation and also the multilateral sanction regime. The second session, led by Tom Keatinge (CFCS/RUSI), debated how the private sector can reinforce sanctions implementation, for example, by using proven AML frameworks, software, and data analytics solutions.

On August 30, PSSI, in cooperation with AMO, Lobbio, and GLOBSEC, held a roundtable entitled “Russian Sanction Implementation - Options for

EU Institutions” focused on proposals to improve sanctions implementation by EU institutions and the current Czech government. The event was held with the support of CRDF at the Globsec Forum. During the roundtable, Boris Kaliský (PSSI) and Lukáš Kraus (Lobbio) presented proposals for how the new EU Parliament, the forming Commission, and the current Czech government can contribute to the better implementation of sanctions. In the concluding debate, moderated by Pavel Havlíček, more options were tabled and discussed.

FLASH TRAFFIC REPORTS

In April 2024, the Economic and Financial Statecraft Program at PSSI launched a new series of reports, the Flash Traffic Report, intended to provide an overview of the capital markets dimensions of individual companies which have been highlighted in recent news articles over national security or human rights concerns. The reports call for increased scrutiny, legislative action, and certain capital markets sanctions to prohibit these investments.

The first of these reports was published on April 30, 2024, and highlighted Nuctech, a Chinese state-linked security manufacturer that had recently had its offices raided by EU authorities. The report underscored the company’s national security risk due to its ties to the Chinese Communist Party and its



PSSI's Project Manager Elias Sköld at POLITICO's Competitive Europe Week.

parent company’s role in China’s military-industrial complex. It revealed that Western investors, including Vanguard, BlackRock, and the Swedish national pension fund, collectively held millions in Nuctech’s parent company, Tsinghua Tongfang.

The second Flash Traffic Report was published on June 10, 2024, and focused on the national security risks posed by S.B. Submarine Systems, which had recently been flagged by U.S. officials for potentially compromising undersea fiber-optic cables critical to commercial and military data. The report revealed significant Western investments in its parent company, China Communications Services (CCS), with holdings by Fidelity, BlackRock, and Kopernik Global Investors totaling hundreds of millions. It also highlighted how CCS was itself owned by China Telecom, a state-owned enterprise linked to Chinese military and surveillance activities.

The third Flash Traffic Report was published on September 23, 2024, and highlighted the national security risks posed by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries (ZPMC), a Chinese state-owned company with a dominant share in the global container crane market. ZPMC was found to have installed unauthorized cellular modems on its cranes at U.S. ports, raising concerns about potential espionage and remote access by the Chinese government. The report also

noted significant Western investments in ZPMC’s parent companies, China Communications Construction Group (CCCC) and China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), which have ties to the Chinese military.

OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

On March 18-19, 2024, PSSI’s Director of Operations Boris Kaliský and Project Manager Elias Sköld participated at the 2024 SIFMANet Summit entitled “Making Sanctions Work – The Way Forward in 2024” in Riga, Latvia. The Summit was organized by the Centre for Finance and Security at RUSI – which leads SIFMANet (the Sanctions and Illicit Finance Monitoring and Analysis Network) – in partnership with the FIU Latvia, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Liechtenstein Norway Grants, the National Endowment for Democracy Participants included representatives from national customs authorities, financial intelligence units (FIUs), government ministries, and the private sector, all working together to address the challenges of balancing trade facilitation with the need for more stringent monitoring of restricted goods passing through EU borders.

On May 13, 2024, PSSI’s Project Manager, Elias Sköld, was interviewed and featured in Dagens Industri, Sweden’s largest business newspaper, highlighting



Project Coordinator Nico Mastrangelo delivers a lecture to students from Vilnius University.

concerns raised in the first Flash Traffic Report about Nuctech and its parent company, Tsinghua Tongfang. The article specifically focused on the Swedish national pension fund's investment in Tsinghua Tongfang. The article was republished the following day, May 14, 2024, on Placera, a Swedish financial news website.

On May 24, 2024, Project Coordinator Nico Mastrangelo gave a lecture to students from Vilnius University, focusing on the theoretical framework of Economic and Financial Statecraft and its relevance in addressing the growing threats posed by Russia and China. The lecture included insights drawn from PSSI's Economic and Financial Statecraft Program's previous and current reports, fostering a deeper understanding of the topic, and led to a productive discussion and exchange of insights with the students.

On June 20, 2024, PSSI's Chairman Roger Robinson Jr. was interviewed and featured in the nationally-televised TV documentary "Underwriting the Enemy," produced by Fox Nation and hosted by Maria Bartiromo. Alongside its release on the streaming platform of Fox Nation, the one-hour special was also aired on Fox Business twice in prime time, on July 20 and 21.

On October 1, 2024, Project Manager Elias Sköld attended POLITICO's Competitive Europe Week, an annual event that brings together key policymakers,

industry leaders, and experts to discuss Europe's economic future, competitiveness, and strategic challenges. He engaged in discussions on Europe's evolving economic security strategy, particularly its shifting stance on China and the progress towards a Capital Markets Union, and helped align PSSI's ongoing efforts to explore and address the strategic risks posed by global competition with the latest EU policy developments and strategic initiatives.



Speakers at the 7th Prague Space Security Conference, entitled "Forging Strategic Partnerships in the Global Space Race".

SPACE SECURITY PROGRAM

Security and sustainability of the space environment are essential to the day-to-day lives of Earth's inhabitants. To emphasize the intersection of global space security, economics & finance, and effective space governance, the Institute launched a program in 2010 dedicated solely to space security – the first of its kind in Europe.

In 2024, the Institute's Space Security Program continued to focus on identifying and monitoring, state-led, non-market economic and financial deals of China and Russia worldwide, including "ground-based space security risks" stemming from such deals, including outright "space sector capture".

SPACE SECURITY CONFERENCE SERIES

PSSI's Space Security Conference series is the Program's flagship initiative. To date, seven such international conferences have been convened in Prague (in 2011, 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2024), Tokyo (in 2013), and Washington, DC (in 2017). Under the auspices of the Czech Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Transport, and since

2024, the President of the Czech Republic, Petr Pavel, the conference hosts some 200 prominent government officials (both civil and military), senior non-governmental experts, and select industry members from NATO and EU countries, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and other key global partners.

On June 16–18, 2024, the Prague Security Studies Institute convened its 7th Prague Space Security Conference in Prague. The gathering, entitled "Forging Strategic Partnerships in the Global Space Race", and built on the previous event in 2022. Key themes of the conference included the spectrum of space threats and awareness, key dimensions of the global space race, defining successful strategic partnerships and strategies to secure the stability of the space domain, allied industry strategic space competitiveness, and the ground-based space race against the Chinese and the Russians in the economic and financial domain.

Senior civil and military officials included Rodrigo da Costa, Executive Director of the EU Agency of Space Programme, Jan Lipavský, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Jun Kazeki, Director General of the National Space Policy Secretariat at the Cabinet Office of Japan's Prime Minister, Amb. Marjolijn van Deelen, Special Envoy for Space at the European External Action Service, and other senior officials, from the US State and Defense Departments,



Dr. Jana Robinson at the Coalition for Prosperous America's Annual Conference.

the Defense Intelligence Agency, the European Space Agency, and private and non-governmental sectors.

The event also presented, for the second time, a special panel of allied space chiefs. They included: Lt. Gen. Thomas L. James, Deputy Commander of the US Space Command, Maj. Gen. Philippe Adam, Commander of the French Space Command, Maj. Gen. Michael Traut, Commander of the German Space Command, Maj. Gen. Paul Tedman, Commander of the UK Space Command, and Col. Giuseppe Gentile, Chief of Space Policy and Innovation Branch, Space Policy Office, Italian Defence General Staff.

In collaboration with SpaceWatch Global, a European space media outlet, PSSI prepared a post-conference radio mini-series that was published between September – December 2024 and involved interviews with select experts on topics of counterspace threats, sustainable space economy, the future of Europe's space competitiveness, and others.

In the five released episodes, the SpaceWatch Global editors provided interviews recorded during the conference consecutively with Maj. Gen. Philippe Adam, Commander, French Space Command; Deanna L. Ryals, Director, International Affairs, Space Systems Command, U.S. Space Force; Dr. Jong Shinn Wu, Director General, Taiwan

Space Agency and Dr. Il Seok Oh, Vice-President, Korean Academy of Space Security; and Kari Bingen, Director, Aerospace Security Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies.

SPACE SECURITY GUEST LECTURE SERIES

The Space Security Guest Lecture series, organized by PSSI, raises awareness of pressing space security policy issues. The 2024 Space Security guest lecturers included Dr. John Klein, Senior Fellow and Strategist at Falcon Research, Inc., who spoke about Space and Irregular Warfare.

On November 4, 2024, another distinguished guest lecture featured Dr. Aaron Bateman, an Assistant Professor of History and International Affairs at George Washington University, entitled "Great Power Competition in Space during the Cold War and Today". The lecture was guided by Dr. Roman Joch, Executive Director and Chairman of the Civic Institute, a long-time Prague-based think tank.

OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

In February 2024, PSSI's Managing Director, Dr. Jana Robinson, appeared in the Spotlight video program of the Czech online journal "Aktualne.cz" to discuss the recent news concerning Russia's potential development of a nuclear space weapon



PSSI's Chairman Roger W. Robinson, Dr. Jana Robinson, and PSSI's Director of Operations Boris Kaliský after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Prague Security Studies Institute and the Korean Academy of Space Security.

and the related issues of escalation, deterrence, and crisis management.

In April, in an episode of the War in Space podcast of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Dr. Jana Robinson was interviewed by Juliana Suess. Dr. Robinson delved into the issues stemming from the "ground-based space race" and "space sector capture" efforts of China and Russia. She explained why economic & financial statecraft is a crucial component of space security.

In May 2024, Dr. Jana Robinson discussed the issue of Chinese PLA-tied companies in NASA's global procurement network as well as Western suppliers with links to Chinese corporate bad actors, at the Coalition for Prosperous America's (CPA) annual conference. Introductory remarks at the panel, entitled "The New Space Race and American Manufacturing Leading the Way", were delivered by Congressman Bill Posey (R-FL) and focused on maintaining US leadership in space, addressing the China threat, and the importance of preventing the transfer of US space technology to the Chinese military that operates its space sector.

The Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI) and the Korean Academy of Space Security (KASS) announced on June 18, 2024, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during the 7th Prague Space Security Conference, marking the beginning of collaboration aimed at enhancing global space security.

Through this MOU, PSSI, and KASS agreed to develop and enhance their education outreach, as well as contribute to the promotion of friendly relations between the Republic of Korea and the Czech Republic, as well as other like-minded partners. The key areas of collaboration included an exchange of experts and researchers; joint seminars and symposiums; international conferences and workshops; and project development and fundraising.

In October 2024, Dr. Jana Robinson, PSSI's Managing Director, contributed to the first panel at ESPI's annual conference, entitled "Scaling European Space Capabilities for Security & Defence: From Ambition to Implementation". Dr. Robinson discussed the primary drivers of the increased public interest in this portfolio, issues related to space hybrid threats, and the risks and threats posed by China's malign commercial and financial statecraft in the space sector. She likewise appeared on panel 4, the closing panel of the conference, which focused on "leveraging different dimensions" of space security in implementing Europe's policy ambitions in this domain. Additionally, she shared her thoughts on how Europe can strengthen its space security & defence ambitions through trusted partnerships in an interview with SpaceWatch Global.

Also in October 2024, Dr. Jana Robinson represented PSSI at the 2024



Dr. Jana Robinson at ESPI's annual conference, entitled "Scaling European Space Capabilities for Security & Defence: From Ambition to Implementation".

International Astronautical Congress in Milan. She presented key findings from the 7th Prague Space Security Conference to the IAF Committee on Space Security, offering critical insights on space security trends and challenges. Dr. Robinson also co-chaired a Technical Session on "Assuring a Safe, Secure and Sustainable Environment for Space Activities," further underscoring PSSI's effort in this field.

INFORMATION RESILIENCE PROGRAM

PSSI has pioneered research in "disinformation as a business" and in countering disinformation by curtailing its root motivator – financial gain. In 2024, PSSI continued its efforts to defund disinformation actors via awareness-raising and following their money trails. PSSI is a driving force in expert and public debates about the financial aspects of disinformation. Our public-facing activities include media partnerships, joint "follow-the-money" investigation initiatives and using creative formats such as quiz games to highlight the tactics used by disinformation actors, also called "traders".

PSSI has focused on recommending a practical policy solution to counter disinformation – defunding, with its latest work focusing on video platforms. Besides policy makers, an important target group has been advertisers. PSSI has actively engaged these sponsors to explain how brand safety can be threatened by ads placed around content spreading disinformation. PSSI has monitored online ads, approaching brands whose ads appear next to problematic content. We seek to assist them with prioritizing



PSSI's Project Assistant Anna Dohnalová at the Res Publica Foundation roundtable in Warsaw.

responsible ad placement and supporting this standard of ethical business. This also defunds disinformation initiatives by reducing, if not cutting off, its advertising revenue.

With regard to the European Parliament elections of June 2024, PSSI participated in a regional study of authoritarian influence within the European Parliament as well as in the annual survey, Globsec Trends, to bring forward the latest sociological data on Czech attitudes towards the European Union and its policies.

PSSI has also responded to the polarized public debate regarding the ratification of the Istanbul Convention with strategic communication recommendations on this sensitive topic. The results were also presented at a meeting of the Government Council for Gender Equality at the Czech Government Office.

Together with colleagues from Visegrad Insight, PSSI analyzed the legal background of disinformation actors and identified legislative gaps and loopholes that allow them to profit. This multi-country project was funded by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its findings were presented to multiple organizations and governmental figures engaged in countering manipulative content, both in Prague and Warsaw. PSSI's Project Assistant, Anna Dohnalová, delivered a presentation at a Res Publica Foundation roundtable in Warsaw, together with that

organization's fellow researcher Miles R. Maftean.

PSSI also worked on a OIP-funded project covering disinformation campaigns during the September 2024 senate and regional elections. The main objective was to identify the most commonly spread narratives and monitor social media platforms, mainly Facebook and Telegram. A questionnaire was sent out to political parties across the political spectrum in the Czech Republic to note whether there had been any internal changes to the individual party's response to disinformation. No recommended strategies have been published, as yet. Accordingly, PSSI continues to encourage political entities to intensify such efforts prior to next year's parliamentary elections.

PSSI had an opportunity to partner up with CRDF Global to co-organize a three-day conference, entitled "Enhancing Information Resilience and Empowering International Cooperation to Counter Hybrid Threats". The event featured leading experts in the field of effective communication and information resilience. They discussed tactics, techniques and processes of state-sponsored and proxy media outlets and institutions that aim to influence public opinion, sow discord, or advance Russian geopolitical interests, both domestically and internationally.

Finally, PSSI's researchers teamed up with the Czech public interest advocacy



PSSI's Project Manager Kristína Šefčíková presenting PSSI's research at the conference "Enhancing Information Resilience and Empowering International Cooperation to Counter Hybrid Threats"

group Lobbio on a project aimed at opening a debate on how public service media should fulfill its new and sensitive role related to the proposed amendment to the Czech Television Act (as well as the Czech Radio Act). These acts officially task Czech public service media with countering disinformation. The resulting analysis provided recommendations based on best practices from other European countries. The results were presented in the Czech parliament to directors general of the public service media, politicians and representatives of government institutions and at a second roundtable to journalists and the expert community convened in November 2024.

Overall, PSSI's Information Resilience Program organized eight events in 2024 for representatives of government institutions, policy decision-makers, media, and the expert community. As this program's agenda focuses on domestic disinformation and politics, PSSI has established a steady presence in the Czech media with commentaries on this topic, alongside appearances in international media and Slovak outlets. In 2024, PSSI provided numerous commentaries and interviews about current events and its research, notably about disinformation as a business. The appearances ranged from TV prime time interviews through some of the most popular Czech online outlets to podcasts. In total, PSSI's disinformation-

related research and know-how appeared in the media 29 times.

As a testament to the effectiveness of these activities, PSSI has been subject to cases of "lawfare" by pro-Russian and other outside sources seeking to silence these efforts.



PSSI's Project Manager Kristína Šefčíková presenting recommendations concerning the role of public service media in countering disinformation in the Czech Parliament and to journalists and the expert community, respectively.

PSSI WASHINGTON

In the fall of 2006, PSSI Washington Inc. was established with a primary mission of strengthening American understanding of the security challenges facing Central and Eastern Europe and other post-communist states, and to pursue groundbreaking initiatives in the Economic & Financial and Space domains. PSSI Washington's China Capital Markets Initiative, for example, is the leading NGO work program in this field worldwide. This partner organization of PSSI Prague is a leading source of research and data on the expanding Chinese presence in the American capital markets and private equity funds. It is likewise the principal hub of PSSI's Space Security Program and convenes periodic, co-sponsored conferences and roundtables in this and other domains of security. More information can be found at www.pssiwashington.org.

2024 PUBLICATIONS

- Disinformation on Telegram in the Czech Republic: Organizational and Financial Background
- Funding of the Iran-China Strategic Partnership via the U.S. Capital Markets
- Suppliers in Chains: SHEIN's Troubling IPO
- Istanbul Convention in the Czech Republic: Debate Dynamics, Key Actors, and Communication Recommendations
- Flash Traffic Report: Nucotech Company, Ltd and Tsinghua Tongfang Co., Ltd.
- PSSI Perspective #33: Kdo jsou obchodníci se strachem a proč si na ně dávat pozor?
- PSSI Perspective #34: Obchod so strachom na Slovensku
- MEPs from Central Europe: A Bulwark Against Authoritarianism
- Flash Traffic Report: S.B. Submarine Systems & China Communications Service
- Jak nefinancovat dezinformace na video platformách?
- Flash Traffic Report: ZPMC & China Communications Construction Company
- Disinformation Actors in the Gray Zone of Law and Ethical Business
- PSSI Perspective #35: Europe Must Match American Legislative Momentum in Safeguarding Investors, Human Rights and International Security
- Policy Paper: Recommendations to Strengthen the Implementation of Sanctions against Russia in the Czech Republic

- PSSI Perspective #36: Strategic Purgatory: Can the CEE Region Free Itself from the 14+1 Framework?
- Recommendations for the New EU Parliament and Commission to Strengthen the Implementation of Sanctions Against Russia
- Role médií veřejné služby v postupu proti dezinformacím

2024 PUBLIC EVENTS

- February 27, 2024
Sanctioning Russia: Making Sanctions Work in 2024
- March 12, 2024
Space and Irregular Warfare (online guest lecture)
- August 30, 2024
Russian Sanctions Implementation – Options for EU Institutions Roundtable/GLOBSEC Forum
- November 4, 2024
Great Power Competition in Space during the Cold War and Today (online guest lecture)
- November 12, 2024
Role veřejnoprávních médií v postupu proti dezinformacím
- November 13, 2024
Roundtable: Strengthening Enforcement of European Sanctions Against Russia

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FUNDING SOURCES

CZECH GOVERNMENT:

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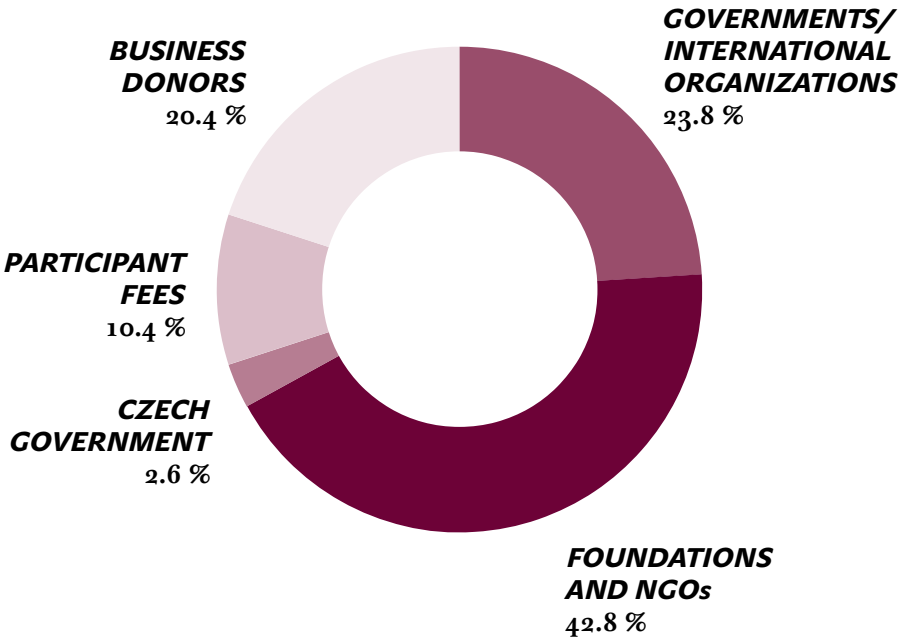
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THE PRAGUE SECURITY STUDIES INSTITUTE (PSSI) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in early 2002 to advance the building of just, secure, democratic, free-market societies in the Czech Republic and other post-communist states. PSSI's mission is to educate and train an ever-growing number of informed and security-minded policy practitioners dedicated to the development and protection of democratic values, principles, and institutions. PSSI offers programs that help meet the critical requirements associated with equipping new generations of young leaders to manage the complex, security-related challenges of the 21st century.

To advance its mission, PSSI conducts a broad range of activities under its Security Scholars Program,

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E-mail: jrobinson@pssiwashington.org

MAILING ADDRESS:

Prague Security Studies Institute
Pohořelec 6, 118 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic
Tel./fax: +420 233 355 735
pssi@pssi.cz www.pssi.cz

Inquiries About PSSI activities and projects can be directed to:

Dr. Jana Robinson (jrobinson@pssi.cz), Managing Director,
or Kristína Sikoraiová (sikoraiova@pssi.cz), Director of Operations.