

Report of 16.04.2018

"Czech Republic - critical of Europe and populist?"

Martin Kastler, former MEP and now full-time head of the regional office of the Hanns Seidel Foundation for the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, summarised the development in the Czech Republic in three points:

1. The Czech Republic will remain firmly on the side of the West, NATO and the European Union. This is shown, for example, by the extradition to the USA of the Russian hacker Yevgeny Nikulin, who is accused of stealing the access data of more than 117 million LinkedIn network users.
2. The elected Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis is an entrepreneur who invests throughout Europe. He is the largest investor in Germany from the Czech Republic. He is fully aware of the advantages of the European internal market. He will therefore try to let the Czech Republic participate in these advantages. The introduction of the Euro has no priority.
3. Cooperation with Germany and especially with Bavaria is of particular importance for the Czech Republic today and in the future. A long common border and cross-border cooperation links the Czech Republic with Bavaria. South Bohemia, Lower Bavaria and Upper Austria, for example, are growing together to form a common region in the heart of Europe.

The search for coalition partners for a stable government is now a priority in Prague. This should be possible by the end of May 2018. Within the Visegrad countries, the Czech Republic will play an important role in building bridges to Germany.

Martin Kastler is the representative for the Czech Republic in the network of the East-West Economic Forum. In his closing remarks, OWWF President Eberhard Sinner drew attention to European sovereignty, which is important for the global competitiveness and independence of all Europeans and does not make us the plaything of the coincidences of globalisation. As Franz Josef Strauß pointed out in his book "Programme for Europe" in 1967, we "must become Europeans in order to remain Germans". This European sovereignty also puts Emanuel Macron at the centre of his new foundation of Europe. The Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, Hans-Peter Schmidt, also referred to this in his greeting.