

Appendix 1: Case description

The Czech Republic is a post-communist regime with mixed features of consensual and majoritarian democracy (Lijphart, 2012) characterized by a bicameral parliament, multiparty system, proportional representation, and prevailing practice of coalition governments. Governing political parties typically control the policy-making process with support from the majority in the Chamber of Deputies and the competent ministries (Ocelík et al., 2019).

The Czech Republic is the third largest consumer of brown coal in the European Union, covering around 49% of its electricity production (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2019). The majority of Czech brown coal reserves is located in the North Bohemian Basin. The coal is mined in opencast mines, the largest of them being *Vršany*, *Nástup*, *Bílina* and *ČSA*. Most of the brown coal production is used to produce power and heat for district heating in facilities located in the geographical vicinity of these mines (Vlček & Jirušek, 2015). All of the mines are owned by two large companies—*Sev.en*, and *North Bohemian Mines* (a subsidiary of partially state-owned *ČEZ Group*, the dominant player on the Czech energy market and one of the biggest energy companies in Europe). These companies also own most of the facilities where the brown coal produced in their mines is burned and thus their business activities are dependent on the continuation of mining (Vlček et al., 2019).

In 1991, largely due to environmental reasons, the Czech government decided to impose the so-called *territorial-ecological limits of surface coal mining* (henceforth “the limits”) in North Bohemia. As a result, 871 million tons of recoverable brown coal reserves, approximately 22 times more than current yearly production, owned by state and private companies were blocked from mining activity (Vlček & Jirušek, 2015; World Energy Council, 2016). Importantly, a decision on the limits was not part of the standard legislative procedure since government does not share decision-making competence in the case of governmental decrees. The decree that established the mining limits could be changed only by a majority vote of individual government members following the governing parties’ agreement. Thus, these limits have been the focus of ongoing public and political debate since their establishment and soon became one of the major issues for the formation of the Czech environmental movement (see Frantál 2016). Importantly, the strong position of nuclear energy (Osička & Černoch, 2017) and the so-called renewable energy crisis from 2011 (Vlček et al., 2019) substantially limited the development of countervailing industries, thus casting ENGOs as the leading regime-challenging actors (Ocelík et al., 2019).

In the ensuing years, the push to reevaluate the limits became stronger as the available reserves shrank. According to projections, mining would cease in 2024 in the *Bílina* mine, and in 2038 in the *ČSA* mine (Chamber of Commerce 2015). This would mean that several large thermal power plants, and also large district heating networks supplied by these mines, would have to be shut down (Vlček & Jirušek, 2015). The decision on the limits had to be strategic as well since it concerned the country’s future energy mix and thus raised questions as to how to replace the missing coal power generation, whether by new nuclear reactors and/or renewable energy sources or by a decrease in electricity export (the second highest among the EU28) (International Energy Agency, 2017). Moreover, Northern Bohemia is one of the poorest regions in the Czech Republic and cessation of mining activities would mean the loss of several thousands of jobs (Frantál & Nováková, 2014). This coal region is also among those identified by the European Commission as the most threatened by the ongoing energy transition (Alves Dias et al., 2018). The social dimension of the issue thus has also influenced the dynamics of the debate.

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