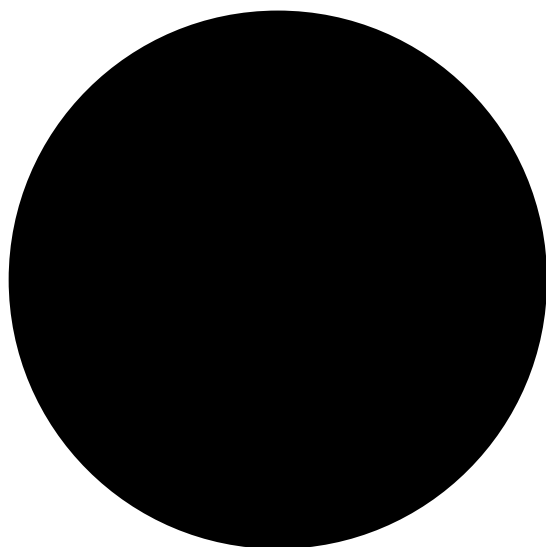


**City Management
and Administration**
The First Second Third Book



273-432

City Management and Administration

The Third Book

Administration and Crisis Management of Prague in 2012–2014

Contents

The Third Book	Administration and Crisis Management of Prague in 2012–2014	
	Introduction	279
	VII. Selected Problems of the Administration of the Capital City of Prague	281
	19. Fragmentation of administration and political responsibility in Prague	283
	20. Late decision-making on the example of large projects	293
	21. Non-decision-making in the example of un/affordable housing	303
	VIII. Reform of the Territorial Development Policy in Prague 2012–2014	315
	22. Political capital	317
	23. The content of the reform in 2012–2014	329
	24. Evaluation of reform and individual measures after 5 Years	349
	IX. Crisis Management of the City	363
	25. 2013 Flood in Prague through the eyes of the chairman of the crisis staff	365
	26. Crisis management in the capital city of Prague	379
	27. Crisis Manager vs. City Administrator	391
	Conclusion	401
	Bibliography	407
	Summary	421
	Index	425
	About the author	429

The third book focuses on the decision-making process in the capital city of Prague. Compared to other towns in the Czech Republic, it is extremely burdened especially by the excessive decentralization of management, which implies a lot of rather negative consequences for the future development of Prague, but also for the quality of life of its inhabitants.

First, we will try to show how the attitude of the city hall and the municipal authority to problem solving and project management has changed in history, especially in the post-November history. On the example of large traffic constructions as well as the issue of permitting housing construction.

We will also describe how the administration of the capital city is extremely parceled in many areas, how it suffers from excessive horizontal (territorial) decentralization, and also by inappropriate vertical (power) organization. We will also look at how mainly due to the electoral and general political system, elected politicians, but also the city administration, are put into a mutually and unfortunately generally antagonistic relationships. Thirdly, we will discuss how the city districts stand in an ever-increasing opposition role to the whole city.

We will also look at the principle problem in the close proximity of especially the legislative constraints, usually constituted by the state for a municipality of an “average” size, which results in our capital today being essentially powerless to external forces of development and acting a bit like a wind-powered ship without any significant capability of correcting the direction.

The core of the second part of the book is a description of what was done at the Prague City Hall under the authority of territorial and strategic development between 2011 and 2014 against these not very favorable conditions for development but also for the administration of the city. We will describe from which assumptions the reform of the policy of the territorial development of the capital city of Prague came, which measures were carried out during its implementation and also how these measures stand today, another 5 years since the reform. Not all parts of the reform were completed by the

October 2014 elections – some measures, including the new Metropolitan Plan – were not even supposed to be completed, some were delayed and unfortunately some are still incomplete. Therefore, we will also deal with the fact of how, due to the interplay of the problematic setting of legislation and laxity (i.e. unwillingness to take responsibility for decision-making) of the political representation administering the city in 2015–2018, the city's decision-making against internal as well as surrounding trends has been extremely delayed.

Based on all this knowledge, we will try to explain the importance of some factors for the successful course and especially the long-term effect of the reform, especially the time required for its thorough preparation and implementation, and the sufficient political capital inside the parties as well as external to them. And we will also address the motivation, i.e. the necessary commitment of politicians and officials to overcome the ever-increasing pressure and the number of obstacles through their extreme efforts, knowing that this demanding work will (perhaps) be evaluated only with a large time lag and will not concern them at all, except for some exceptions.

With more and more parts and chapters, the ich form will gradually appear in the text of this book in the description of events and processes as they relate more and more to events that I initiated, from my position of Deputy Mayor and Mayor of the capital city of Prague, and which I therefore view – in contrast to the earlier text – from a more personal perspective.

This will particularly apply to the last part devoted to crisis management and city administration during the very short period in terms of city life – the floods that hit Prague at the turn of May and June 2013. Therefore, first I will use my personal notes for the detailed description of how city crisis management works, which I will then try to put into the broader framework of city management during the crisis period. And subsequently – in the last chapter of the whole book – I will deal with the claims that in my opinion are placed on the personality of the responsible administrator of the big city – the Mayor of Prague, in times of major accidents or disasters, but at the same time also operating as a crisis manager.

Part VII

Selected Problems of the Administration of the Capital City of Prague

There is a wide array of city districts in Prague and they are too different from each other. Four are larger than Olomouc and the smallest has only 300 inhabitants.

The interests of Prague's city districts are seldom in line with the interests of the city.

The Prague City Assembly is not superior to the assemblies of the city districts.

The closer the parties are politically in the assembly, the more they compete for voters and find it difficult to cooperate.

In the capital, almost 1,200 politicians – representatives – are elected every four years. Half a year after the election, basically everyone is in dispute with everyone else.

The solution is to reduce the number of representatives, to avoid overlapping functions in Prague and city districts, and also to directly elect the Mayor of the city.

19. Fragmentation of administration and political responsibility in Prague

⁴¹⁶ Act No. 131/2000 Coll.

⁴¹⁷ Act No. 130/2000 Coll.

⁴¹⁸ This and many other data can be found, among others, on the website of the City District Catalog created by the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague in 2016 (Institute of Planning and Development 2018d).

⁴¹⁹ pursuant to Annex to Section 21 (4) of Act No. 491/2001 Coll. on elections to municipal assemblies

⁴²⁰ In the case of a successful candidacy for the Prague City Assembly, there is also the difference between the party and non-party electoral list that the political party receives under Section 20 (7) of Act No. 424/1991 Coll. on association in political parties and political movements, for the regional mandate a contribution of CZK 250,000 per year. Successful electoral lists of independent groupings are not entitled to this state contributions to political parties.

⁴²¹ Novák, Lebeda (2004), p. 26

The capital city of Prague is, at the same time, a municipality, a region as well as a statutory city. This means that the Mayor of Prague is the honorary chairman of the Union of Towns and Municipalities, Prague is a member of the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic and, like statutory cities, it can also divide into city districts and parts. Regarding the administrative division, elections and electoral system, Prague is mainly governed by the Act on the Capital City of Prague⁴¹⁶ and the Act on Elections to Municipal and Regional Councils⁴¹⁷. Since 1992 it has been divided into 57 city districts and elections are held every 4 years in all these territorial units. However, these city districts are very heterogeneous (TAB. 9). They range from several hundred inhabitants to Prague 4 with almost 130,000 inhabitants⁴¹⁸. In the outskirts, these city districts are mostly independent, small, but relatively organic territorial units with a more densely populated central area surrounded by less built-up areas. In the central part of the city, on the other hand, there are large and densely populated city districts, which are often delineated inappropriately, inter alia as a result of the previously existing local districts that were deliberately divided by the Communists.

Citizens older than 18 years of age and on the election day registered for permanent residence in the given territory can run for the Prague City Assembly or for the municipal councils. These can be registered on the electoral lists of parties or movements (which means the same in the Czech Republic), or on the electoral list of non-party candidates. In this case, however, the electoral list must be supported by the signatures of more than 7% of all eligible voters⁴¹⁹ in Prague or the given city district⁴²⁰ before submitting it.

The electoral system in the capital city of Prague is the so-called documentary proportional⁴²¹. In every city district and at the same time throughout the whole capital city of Prague, the inhabitants of the city vote for electoral lists of parties, but it is possible to "circle" selected candidates across the parties. Every citizen in the elections therefore has not

City district	Population	Representatives	City district	Population	Representatives
Prague 1	29.487	25	Prague-Dolní Počernice	2.460	15
Prague 2	49.544	35	Prague-Dubeč	3.754	15
Prague 3	73.749	35	Prague-Klánovice	3.488	15
Prague 4	128.268	45	Prague-Koloděje	1.510	7
Prague 5	84.496	43	Prague-Kolovraty	3.745	15
Prague 6	103.409	45	Prague-Královice	381	5
Prague 7	43.730	29	Prague-Křeslice	1.046	9
Prague 8	104.494	45	Prague-Kunratice	9.629	11
Prague 9	57.580	33	Prague-Libuš	10.312	17
Prague 10	109.438	45	Prague-Lipence	2.720	15
Prague 11	77.596	45	Prague-Lochkov	773	9
Prague 12	55.847	35	Prague-Lysolaje	1.460	9
Prague 13	62.358	35	Prague-Nebušice	3.348	11
Prague 14	46.604	31	Prague-Nedvězí	305	5
Prague 15	33.592	31	Prague-Petrovice	6.027	15
Prague 16	8.435	15	Prague-Přední Kopanina	684	9
Prague 17	24.401	23	Prague-Řeporyje	4.614	11
Prague 18	19.770	19	Prague-Satalice	2.522	11
Prague 19	7.098	15	Prague-Slivenec	3.613	11
Prague 20	15.296	25	Prague-Suchdol	7.112	15
Prague 21	10.764	17	Prague-Šeberov	3.190	15
Prague 22	11.099	25	Prague-Štěrboholy	2.245	7
Prague-Běchovice	2.644	15	Prague-Troja	1.345	9
Prague-Benice	697	7	Prague-Újezd	3.151	11
Prague-Březiněves	1.571	9	Prague-Velká Chuchle	2.438	13
Prague-Čakovice	10.888	21	Prague-Vinoř	4.311	15
Prague-Žáblice	3.619	15	Prague-Zbraslav	9.976	17
Prague-Dolní Chabry	4.464	15	Prague-Zličín	6.597	15
Prague-Dolní Měcholupy	2.860	11	City districts – total	1.286.554	1.121

TAB. 9 – City districts of the capital city of Prague and their characteristics, source: CZSO (2018c, f)

⁴²² Pursuant to Section 45 (1) of Act No. 491/2001 Coll. on elections to municipal assemblies, this value may decrease in certain specific cases. However, this applies more or less exclusively to elections in small municipalities.

⁴²³ pursuant to Section 45 (4) of Act No. 491/2001 Coll. on elections to municipal assemblies

one vote, but the number of votes corresponding to the number of seats elected in the councils of the city as well as the city district and can arbitrarily distribute these votes across the electoral list. Elected are candidates of those parties that receive more than 5% of the votes of all voters⁴²², in the order in which they were on the given electoral list. Or those who have received a very large number of preferential votes, 10% more than the average of the votes cast in favor of the given electoral list⁴²³. In practice, therefore, in the municipal elections in Prague, with a few exceptions, no one succeeds in skipping their fellow party members on the electoral list due to too many required preferential votes.

⁴²⁴ pursuant to Section 27 (4) of Act No. 491/2001 Coll. on elections to municipal assemblies

⁴²⁵ Description of the method and its variants e.g. Novák, Lebeda (2004).

⁴²⁶ In this case No. 52/10, the Constitutional Court also decided, which on 29 March 2011 dismissed a complaint by several persons and political parties about the regularity of the elections in Prague attacked precisely as a result of the purposeful division of territories into constituencies.

⁴²⁷ pursuant to Section 48 (1) of Act No. 131/2000 Coll. about the Capital City of Prague

For the purpose of elections, it is possible to divide the capital city of Prague and the city districts into electoral districts⁴²⁴. It is decided by the terminating Assembly, which must do so no later than 3 months before the elections, whose exact term within the defined range is announced by the President of the Republic. In the case of Prague, people voted in 7 districts in 2010, in 2014 and 2018 they voted in only one district. The votes on the electoral lists that receive more than 5% of all votes cast are then converted to the number of seats obtained in the Assembly based on the electoral divisor – the D’Hondt method⁴²⁵. The more constituencies, the more disadvantaged are the parties with low voting profits while recalculating the votes using the above-mentioned method. Therefore, it may happen, as in 2010, that even parties with almost 6% of the votes will not make it into the Prague City Assembly⁴²⁶.

In terms of the election of the Mayor of Prague and the mayors of the city districts, this is an indirect system of election. Only the elected assemblies elect from their ranks, based on the political agreement, the Council of the Capital City of Prague, including the Mayor as well as councils of the city districts, including mayors. The Mayor, the Council of the Capital City of Prague, the mayors or the councils of city districts can be recalled at any meeting of the given assembly at any time, similarly as in the Parliament of the Czech Republic without the need for a prepared alternative solution and new council members, a new city manager or mayor.

The number of representatives of the Capital City of Prague may be determined by the expiring past Assembly and the law stipulates a range of 55 to 70 members⁴²⁷. If they fail to do so, the same number of seats will remain in the next parliamentary term. There are 11 members of the Prague City Council, who are elected indirectly and only from the elected representatives. The number of city district representatives is determined by law based on the number of inhabitants of the given city district. Small city districts have even only 5 representatives, while large have even more than 40.

Thus, in the 2010–2014 and 2014–2018 election periods, the total of 1,186 representatives were elected in the capital city of Prague. In terms of the political relationship of elected representatives it is true that the closer programs and basic ideological goals their parent parties have, the more the groups of their voters overlap and their agreement is therefore more problematic in terms of the long-term success of their parties. Conversely, political parties and their representatives representing the far ends of the political spectrum, are

practically not competing for voters and thus cooperate more easily, even though their program focus generally differs more.

The self-government of the capital city of Prague is two-level, therefore there is also a clash at the vertical level – between the regional, Prague-wide assembly and the same authority at the city district level. Especially unpleasant is the situation when the mayor of a certain city district is from a political party that is in opposition in the Prague City Assembly.

The formation of coalitions within assemblies is based on the division of responsibilities for individual gestions in the council of the city district or the whole of Prague. Coalition cooperation usually works only at the beginning of the parliamentary term and in the case of parties close to each other the fear of taking over voters is gradually starting to prevail. This usually results in the gradual creation of trenches between individual councilors, to the point when their communication begins to take place, in principle, only formally within the council meetings. Thus, for example, although the transport subsystem is directly linked to territorial development, culture with education and other ministries, in real policy practice the individual ministries are managed or regulated separately from the perspective of self-government. In the event that even officials are assigned to their positions by political parties, this separation of management, and thus the fragmentation of administration, also penetrates into the lower management layer(s) of the city. This not only prevents the active direction of the future development of the city, but also threatens its current state and functioning.

However, even within the parties, representatives are usually not much of team players, which is due to many factors. Perhaps the most contributing factor to that is also the wage inequality between the so-called released and non-released representatives. Representatives of both Prague and a city district can become released by the decision of the given assembly, and they then execute their full-time mandate and for an appropriate remuneration. As a rule, all members of the council and chairmen of committees of the assembly are thus rewarded in Prague. In municipal assemblies of city districts, the situation is then proportional to their size.

Released members of the assembly are entitled to remuneration according to the law calculated as a defined basis plus a supplement according to the number of inhabitants of the given territorial unit. In the case of members of the Council of the Capital City of Prague, such remuneration amounted to a gross salary of CZK 100,000 in 2014 and in 2018 to almost

⁴²⁸ This self-governing act from the first decade of the 21st century is described in detail through its press spokesperson on the website of Prague 6 city district (Šálek 2004).

CZK 130,000. A non-released representative carries out his own work and receives remuneration for the performance of the representative by law. Its exact amount is determined by law and whether the person performs also other associated functions in the committees of the assembly. In 2014, this amounted to about CZK 4,000, in 2018 about CZK 7,000 gross. This income inequality is often solved by the political filling of the posts of members of the Supervisory Boards in companies with capital participation of the capital city of Prague. Sometimes, however, unfortunately – for example in the period up to 2010, but also in the years 2015–2018 – the executive posts of the members of the boards of directors of these companies were also filled this way.

The Prague City Assembly is not in a hierarchically superior position over the assemblies of the city districts. The Mayor of Prague is not superior to the mayor of a city district. Both are elected representatives of the people. All 57 city districts of the capital city of Prague are listed in the law. The Prague City Assembly may, by voting and amending the Statute of the City, modify the boundaries of existing city districts, create a new city district or cancel an existing city district. However, only if the local assemblies of the affected city districts also agree to do so. Something like this has happened only once in the post-November history. Effective from 1 January 2005, the Prague–Sedlec city district was divided between two neighboring city districts, Prague–Suchbát and Prague 6⁴²⁸.

City districts are subordinate to the city in terms of finance and property – but only as long as there are no cumulative functions of the representatives (see below). The Prague City Assembly approves the city districts for money from the overall budget. This has a significant political effect, as a larger contribution from a city district increases the likelihood of success of the given mayor of the city district in the next elections and vice versa. In terms of property, the competencies of city districts in the area of self-government are specified by the so-called Statute of the Capital City of Prague, which is a sub-statutory legislative document approved and very often updated by the City Assembly or Council of the Capital City of Prague. In addition to the above-mentioned delimitation of the administrative boundaries of city districts, they are also entrusted with the administration of, for example, listed squares, public areas or other areas of administration. The property of the city is one, but it can be thus entrusted to the administration of city districts. Once the property has been entrusted to the city district, it is then politically rather problematic to “retrieve” it.

The interests of city districts are not usually much in line with the interests of the whole city. Or, more precisely, they are not perceived especially by the elected representatives as coherent with the interests of the city. In many areas of governance, the interests of the city and of a city district are, as a rule, often directly contradictory both subjectively and objectively. For example, the issue of homelessness needs to be addressed by distributing social centers throughout the city. However, no city district wants such a place in its territory⁴²⁹. For example, Prague is interested in centralizing the building permit in one Prague-wide department to accelerate construction, which is being prevented by large city districts⁴³⁰. And in the same way we could continue in the case of repairing roads, building infrastructure and other areas of governance.

Therefore, it is possible to observe a certain analogy of the NIMBY effect also here. Here, however, it is the relationship not of the inhabitants to the city but of the whole city districts to the city. The solution to this problem is not easy. While the city districts are subordinate to the big City Hall in several aspects of administration, it often cannot do much in political practice. It is not at all unusual that in Prague three city districts argue where to lead and where not to lead a bridge or a ring road around the city. Or that the development of a 100-hectare area, such as the Bubny–Zátory area in Prague 7, and where more than 25,000 new residents are expected to live in the future, is, in fact, decided by administration of this city district which represents at present a basically similar population – about 40,000⁴³¹.

In the period from the November revolution until 2010, most of Prague's small townhalls as well as the regional assembly were dominated by a significant part or direct majority by one political party (CDP⁴³²) and the decision-making mechanisms therefore largely functioned also outside the official functions of mayors and representatives. This has not been the case since 2011 and the city's ability to perform decisions has, therefore, changed significantly (which is, moreover, strongly supported also by increasingly complex legislation). On 9 May 2012, the City Districts in Prague established the so-called Union of City Districts, which serves as a platform for their common approach during negotiations with the regional assembly, the Council and the Mayor. From the website of this group it is possible to read also a great misunderstanding of the functioning of the whole and parts. Here, the mayor of the Prague–Lochkov city district expressly states that: "The capital city of Prague is nothing else but a set of city districts"⁴³³. The relationship between the whole city and city districts is

⁴²⁹ Why this is happening and how to solve it e.g. in Hudeček, Dlouhý (2017).

⁴³⁰ In summary with other problems this was stated by the Director of the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague, Ondřej Boháč (Bořiková 2018).

⁴³¹ Prague 7 city district (2019)

⁴³² Civic Democratic Party

⁴³³ City Districts Union (2018)

thus largely complicated, especially politically. The fact that even a representative, councilor and mayor of the city district may become a representative of the capital city of Prague does not contribute to this either. In the 2014–2018 election period, the female mayor of the Prague–Slivenec city district was at the same time even a released councilor of the Capital City of Prague. One of the candidates for the Mayor of Prague in the election contest in 2018 ran also in one of the central city districts, and before the elections he made no secret that he would perform both functions if he won the position of the Mayor and also of the chairman.

In the final consequence, and we have mentioned only some of the reasons for this situation above, of the nearly 1,200 representatives elected in Prague, the vast majority are in a certain permanent dispute with virtually everyone else, which has a major impact on individual decisions and the overall decision-making of the city⁴³⁴. With increasing complexity, this is moving more and more towards late decision-making, which – in the case of a decision ensuring even the mere maintenance of the city – can become dangerous for residents and their property.

It is possible but relatively difficult to assess whether the current decision-making capacity of a city in the Czech capital is different from the situation in other cities. The system of elections, the administrative breakdown, the hierarchy of competencies and other characteristics that underpin the city's ability to make good decisions are different in each city and especially in each state. We have already mentioned cases of extremely centralized decision-making in the American Dallas and New York in the section on good governance. There are, of course, many types of administration somewhere between these extremes, and it is certainly not advisable to follow only the margins of the spectrum. Surrounding Central European large centers are with their organization of administration and electoral system just like that somewhere in between.

It is very difficult to identify the relationship between the city's ability to make decisions and its development. There are many areas of governance, and not all of them need to be quickly and directly dependent on the electoral system and the administrative and hierarchical territorial subdivision and related relationships of subordination and superiority. In 2017 we tried to analyze the relationship between the success of European capitals⁴³⁵ – based on the ranking of the quality of life of their inhabitants compiled by Mercer – and various aspects of the administration of these cities between 2011 and 2017 with one of my skillful graduates. We tried to evaluate

⁴³⁴ This claim is undoubtedly universal and is a common problem that is mentioned in case studies describing the enforcement of new policies across continents (e.g. Meyerson, Banfield 1969). However, the degree of relationship antagonisms is something that these case studies are unable to capture.

⁴³⁵ Trojan (2018)

the capitals of the 28 states of the European Union with a special focus on six close Central European cities – Prague, Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest, Vienna and Bratislava. However, with few exceptions, we have not been able to show any strong dependence. Therefore, it cannot be unequivocally said that the direct election of mayors, the system of elections (majority or proportional), but neither the number of city districts nor the number of representatives played an important role in the overall level of the city when comparing the capitals of the 28 states in the EU, as well as among the aforementioned six cities of Central Europe. The regional, historical and cultural context, as well as the different economic performance of states also in relation to economic cycles, are too much disturbing factors.

However, what this analysis has shown is that the electoral turnout of the city's citizens in the elections plays an obvious role in the success of the city in the Mercer ranking. Especially among the six Central European cities, greater voter turnout has led to a better ranking of the city in the Mercer ranking as well as a positive change in ranking (between the 2011 and 2017 rankings analyzed)⁴³⁶. Furthermore, greater voter turnout in these cities also correlates with fewer number of parties in the assemblies of these cities on average in the long term. And also with a less frequent change of mayors who lead these cities.

Obviously, it is true that the more people are invited to make decisions about a city, the more this city succeeds. People themselves want their city to be successful, they get involved, vote, choose more responsible politicians from fewer parties, and those in turn actively communicate with them and thus motivate them to further activity.

Thus, it could be true that inhabitants of the city gradually adapt to any system of elections and over time the representatives always learn at least a partial art of agreement. The question is, however, if this may be true even in the extreme case of Prague, where almost 1,200 representatives are elected in a too generally confrontational relationship with one another, where spatial-legislative constraints of decision-making are very problematic, in the form of the management of the inter-regional border where the system of indirect election of mayors results in their "daily" revocability, including all the members of the city council, and finally, where the hierarchical and above all personal non-subordination of city districts to the whole city creates altogether such a barrier for any decisions of the city that, in principle, the above-described adaptation in the behavior of the representatives cannot occur. It

is too easy for individual politicians in this system not to make decisions, especially in contrast to the need of making a great effort to implement virtually any measure.

The solution that will continue to grow in importance in the future is to simplify hierarchical relationships of superiority and subordination between the individual levels, reduce the number of representatives, avoid the possibility of overlaps in the performance of the representative office of the city districts and the whole city, and preferably change the number and powers of the city districts. Thus, at least the amendment to the Act on the Capital City of Prague, the Act on Elections to Municipal and Regional Assemblies, but also other legislative documents.

In the next chapter we will show the consequences of the situation described in this chapter, i.e. the long-term thinning of the capabilities of the capital city of Prague to make decisions.

Especially in the last 20 years, there have been late decisions by the city administration.

At the turn of the millennium, there was still an obvious effort between Prague and the city districts to agree on compromise solutions. Interest in a common agreement is now increasingly weakening and the situation is thus leading to a change in rules and laws.

Since 2014, there has been an extreme increase in the political power of city districts in Prague.

Prague is lacking 5 road bridges. However, one of them – Dvorecký – will be only for trams and pedestrians. The city district of Prague 4 wanted it that way.

City districts are not able to enforce much, but they are able to block everything.

The solution is to reduce the number of city districts and clearly define their competencies and responsibilities.

20. Late decision-making on the example of large projects

⁴³⁷ e.g. Kuta, Endel (2016)

In terms of construction, the common investment processes by which cities grow are divided into four basic phases, as shown in FIG. 36. Thus, the construction process for each major investment is described in countless engineering publications⁴³⁷.

When trying to describe the decision-making of the whole city, something needs to be added to the steady-state diagram above. Before the preparatory phase there are many changing trends taking place in the city and relating both lay and professional discussions. In one of the foregoing sections, we have named these decisions of the city as primary, as they are made directly by residents without feedback from the city administration.

It is better to describe such a situation with some examples, e.g. on the development of traffic in the city. Due to the increase in traffic intensity in the central part of the city, demand for new transport infrastructure is also increasing as first, whether for a new interconnection of river banks in the

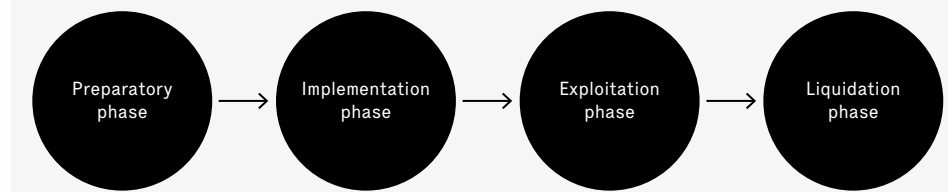


FIG. 36 – Phases of the investment process, source: Kuta & Endel (2016), adapted

form of a bridge or more generally for some capacity communication. This is manifested initially by growing discussions about the need for new investment and sometimes there are also some rather pet projects of active individuals.

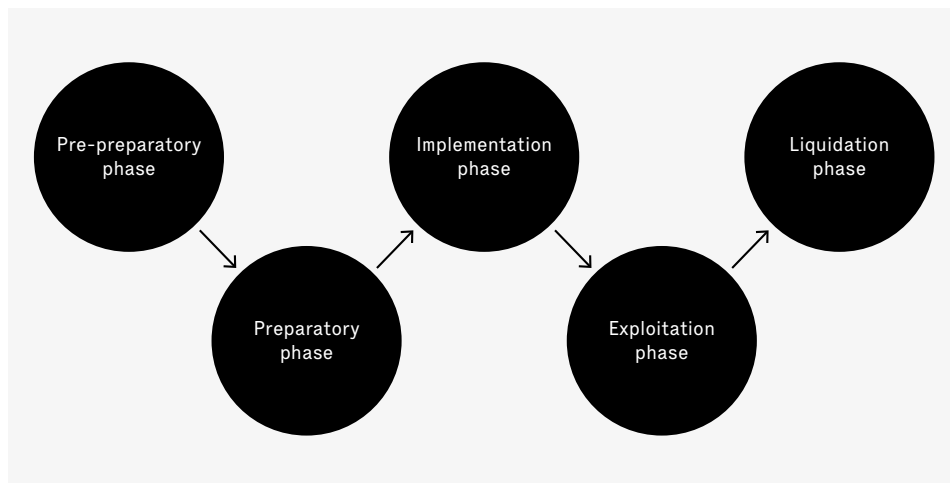


FIG. 37 – Phases of the investment process in terms of the functioning of the whole city, source: elaborated by the author

After some time, when the same increasing traffic intensity trends continue and the voices calling for the necessary change continue to grow, it is possible to trace the first clear city-wide positive link – the problem reaches the self-government, the highest control layer of the city. Responsible elected representatives will probably be aware of the problem somewhat earlier, while irresponsible elected self-government will neglect the problem for a long time. Sooner or later, the self-government will consider the situation, enter the necessary impact and needs analysis and set a deadline for completion of construction. By this first secondary decision of the city, i.e. the action of its self-government, this “pre-preparatory” phase of the investment process basically moves to the preparatory phase (FIG. 37). The work of officials will follow. Thus, the process of positive feedback starts, when the work of officials, planners and designers activates the self-government, which again decides towards the start of construction.

Therefore, to assess the state of the city’s decision-making, the pre-preparatory phase must also be included in the monitoring. The following examples show how the situation in one area of administration and in one narrow section of the city’s decision-making process has evolved in Prague over the past decades. Several major investments in the expansion of the transport infrastructure in Prague were selected as practical cases of implemented city decisions. Descriptions of these decision-making processes were created through interviews with witnesses and direct participants in these events⁴³⁸. A detailed description of them would make for a whole book,

⁴³⁸ The complete text is available in the Proceedings of the 23rd International Conference on Urban Engineering Karlovy Vary 2018 – Transport in the city (Hudeček 2018).

but all of these are known cases, so we will, within the necessary brevity, limit our description only to the information needed for our purpose.

Period until 1989 – the battle for the subway, the first example

Prague, like Vienna and Munich, experienced an extreme increase in individual transport in the 1960s. Based on experience from Germany – in particular Hanover, Cologne, Stuttgart and Frankfurt – a land-use plan with underground trams has been approved. The main argument was the cheapness of the proposed solution compared to the extremely expensive subway. Rather a whispered argument was the contact of the transport company to Milan, where the so-called Milan walls suitable for making excavated tunnels were produced.

The main argument of the subway supporters was the problem of curves and radii of curves, which in the case of trams in the historical center of Prague would mean interventions in buildings and blocks. And other strong arguments were the problem of the smaller capacity of the tram system and the difficult integration of underground lines at the exit of tunnels with surface transport. The professional circles of subway supporters were led by a team of Professor Frágnér (architects I. Nosek and V.A. Jirout), who for some time had attacked the traffic concepts of the municipality and revived the subway plans of Prof. Vladimír List from the 1920⁴³⁹.

The subsequent negative experience of Vienna that realized the underground trams and the extensive mapping of experience of the cities of the world at the instigation of Munich city councilors had considerably strengthened the voices calling for a change of direction. The assessment of the already initiated concept by an expert team from the then Soviet Union was at that time the last drop for the government’s decision of August 1967 to build the subway system⁴⁴⁰.

1990–2000 period – selection of the Blanka tunnel complex line, second example

The northwest part of the City ring road in the framework of the so-called ŽÁKOS (Basic communication system consisting of two circuits and several radials) was developed in 1994 in more than three variants, for which, divided into three groups, the names Dana (Dejvice), Hana (Holešovice) and Blanka (Bubeneč) were used for easy orientation and the Roman numerals denoted their sub-variants. In 1995, a municipal committee composed of experts and politicians, including

⁴³⁹ from the memoirs of architect Ivan Nosek (Nosek 2018)

⁴⁴⁰ Not only this event, but the entire history of the subway is dealt with e.g. in Kyllar, Šír, Romancov et al. (2004) or also in the encyclopedia published by the Prague Public Transport Company on the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Prague metro in 2014 (Fojtík, Mara 2014).

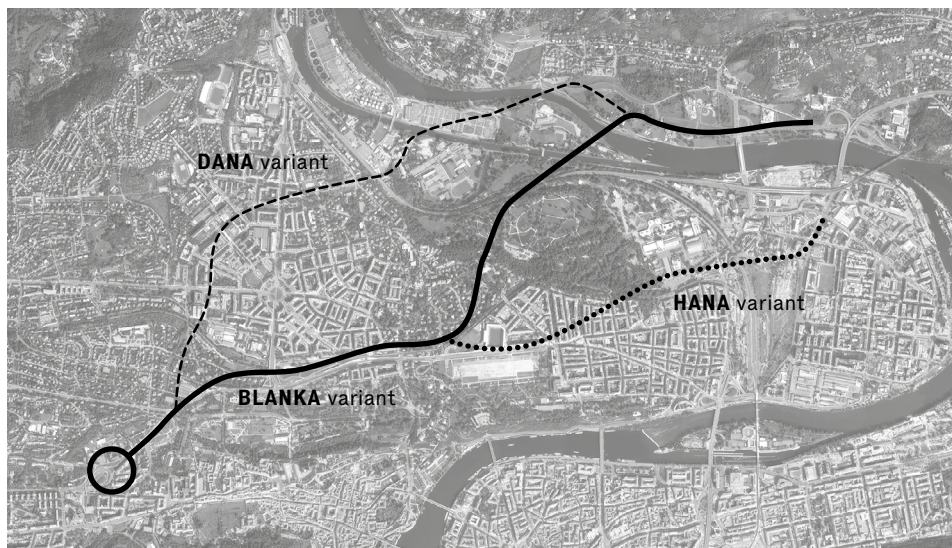


FIG. 38 – Three basic variants of the NW route of the Municipal Ring Road, source: Brusnický, Dejvický and Bubenečský tunnels (2015), adapted

representatives of Prague 6 and Prague 7 city districts, decided to choose one of the variants of Blanka (FIG. 38).

Each variant assumed significant calming in the places where the tunnel would pass. The Dejvická variant left thickened traffic in the heavily populated areas of Holešovice and especially Milady Horákové Street. Even the Holešovice variant did not solve it well. The arguments of supporters of leading it across Dejvice, emphasizing the need to divert traffic from Vítězné náměstí, were dependent on the completion of the NW part of the outer Prague Ring Road.

The then post-November period was characterized by an apparent effort of both large and small Prague town halls to agree, and at the same time there was an obvious intention that also the self-government, and hence the public, should participate in decision-making. As part of the multi-criteria analysis at the end of the work of the commission, the mayors of the city districts were awarded a significant score of their vote. In the end – quite logically to the set rating system – a compromise, medium variant was chosen, leading “between” both city districts⁴⁴¹.

2000–2010 period – route extension of subway lines A and C, examples third and fourth

Northern extension of subway line C. As in the previous example, the possibilities of extending subway line C from Nádraží

⁴⁴¹ from the memoirs of engineer Karel Háek (Hák 2018)

Holešovice to the north of Prague have been a frequent topic of discussion since the early 1990s. After the turn of the millennium, from the three variants considered – Bohnice, Kobylisy and a long variant linking the two housing estates – the direction of development finally stabilized eastward through Kobylisy, the densely populated housing estate Prosek all the way to Letňany, where the development of the local exhibition grounds was expected. The progressive decline in this sector of the economy as a result of the digital revolution was not reflected at that time. However, the seemingly logical, direct leading of the “short” variant in the final phase was influenced by Prague 9 city district, which pushed through the creation of two stations in the Prosek housing estate (today’s Střížkov and Prosek stations, FIG. 39)⁴⁴². Since the opening of the new stations in 2008, after some time, there will always be suggestions on how to use the still empty area of the Letňany terminal station – first as a space for the Olympics, and more recently as a possible seat of the Czech government⁴⁴³.

⁴⁴² Zďeradička (2017)

⁴⁴³ Heller (2018)

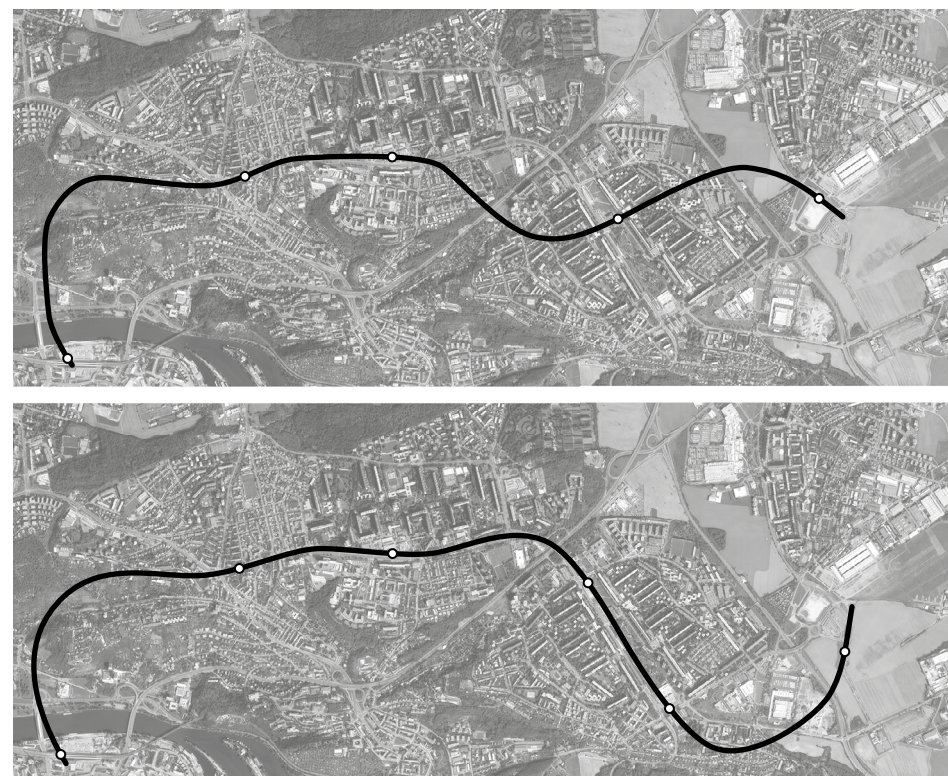


FIG. 39 – Planned and final route of the northern extension of metro line C, source: IPD, on-line archive of the land-use plan, adapted

Western extension of subway line A. A complex of many factors, in particular the growing need to reduce the intensities of individual as well as public transport from the area of Vítězné náměstí in Dejvice, ownership of land by the city (roads), possible EU funding, long-term preference of Prague 6 city district throughout Prague, and probably also other hidden interests, made this major investment project between 2005 and 2009 a priority, in terms of the need for new transport capacities, to the more suitable D subway line⁴⁴⁴. Following the opening of the extended route in 2015, there has been no optimization of tram traffic in the area and, therefore, the area is currently serviced by virtually all urban transport modes.

The present, examples fifth to seventh

Northern part of subway D. The management of the central and southern parts of subway D is currently already stabilized, land is being purchased and investment is being prepared. In the discussion about the northern part, where the experts of the Institute of Planning and Development of the City of Prague, the Regional Organizer of Prague Integrated Transport (ROPID) and the Prague Public Transport Company prefer to connect the new route with others in the stations Hlavní nádraží and Náměstí republiky, representatives of the city district of Prague 3 requesting a route in the direction to Žižkov are currently actively gaining ground. Prague 3 city councilors requesting a route to Žižkov.

Dvorecký bridge. The city bridge Zlíchov–Dvorce has been planned for a long time as a road and tramway bridge, which should ease especially the Barrandov Bridge in the south of Prague. The bridge is included in the land-use plan but its exact location is significantly influenced by changes in political sentiments in city districts. Prague 5 on the left bank supports the bridge because it is aware of the need for the most high-capacity connection with the opposite bank; Prague 2 as well because the bridge would help it to divert some of the traffic that now uses the northern Palacký Bridge; while Prague 4 is worried about the increase in automobile traffic and is trying to change the project in various ways – whether in the area of permitted traffic modes on the bridge, its exact location or connection to the existing transport infrastructure. On October 2, 2018, Prague 4 finally succeeded in enforcing a proposal at the Prague City Council meeting that would transform the bridge into a bridge only for trams, pedestrians and cyclists⁴⁴⁵. Trams on Wenceslas Square. Reaching the capacity

limit in the frequency of tram connections between I.P. Pavlova Square and Karlovo náměstí asked for a new connecting route between Hlavní nádraží and Vinohrady already more than 10 years ago. However, the tram lines through Wenceslas Square had been for a long time successfully blocked by Prague 1 until the elections in 2018 due to the refusal of the necessary changes to the land-use plan. However, trams had already been running on Wenceslas Square, until 1980. So far, a compromise option is to divert the route outside Wenceslas Square through the space in front of the main train station⁴⁴⁶.

Summary

From the above-mentioned seven examples and with a closer look at the development of urban decision-making, certain trends are evident, which have been gaining in Prague in an unprecedented intensity especially recently. In the era of central planning, the choice between the underground tram concept and the subway system was made at an expert level and, at the same time, similar discussions were conducted in other European cities. Therefore, the late choice of the final variant (only after the excavation of the underground tram began) has to be considered not as late with respect to the trend of growth in individual transport, but as a delay with respect to the project itself. Of course, such a delayed decision caused considerable problems in the project. In terms of transport trends, however, it was a normal, timely decision.

The loosening of the conditions after the 1989 coup brought a growing participation of the population, a growing awareness of the need for broad consensus, but at the same time apparently not so deep ditches between individual actors had been excavated. The will to agree on a compromise solution was prevailing. From the point of view of a suitable decision window of time, the moment of decision corresponds to the needs of the city. However, the inactivity of self-government in the necessary, related investment projects should be seen as a problem, especially the continuation of the route of the City ring road from today's tunnel opening in the Prague–Troja area. This further, consequent non-decision-making can already be seen as late decision-making in view of the needs of the city.

In the next period, after 2000, there was a clear emancipation and fragmentation of decision-making processes in the capital. Gradually, the ability of city districts has been strengthened at the expense of the entire city to decide on its “own” territory. This led to elections suitable for a small

⁴⁴⁴ Zděradíčka (2017)

⁴⁴⁶ E.g. Oppelt (2016). However, with the change of political representation at Prague 1 City Hall in 2018, the negative attitude softened somewhat.

⁴⁴⁵ as Resolution No. 2546 of the Prague City Council dated 2 October 2018, but also e.g. aktualne.cz (2018b)

part, but less suitable for the whole urban organism. In certain cases, this leads also to elections suitable for interest groups. It is also evident that the decision is being delayed in relation to the often already declining trends, such as the abandoned exhibition center in case of the extension of the subway line C. Or also that the delay could be coming from the confusion of the projects at the same time, which is the case of preferring the less needed extension of line A over a new route D.

Finally, in the current period, both previously emerging trends have still intensified. The gradual relinquishing responsibility for decisions at the central Prague-wide level goes hand in hand with the delay in key decisions. The growing power of city districts to change major city-wide projects is evident.

Before drawing conclusions, it is still necessary to ask whether these examples indeed mean that agreements are more and more difficult to reach. Whether it is not only a delusion and the situation is the same as before, only now we look at those earlier decisions with a certain distance. In the previous text, the above-mentioned examples are evaluated individually and only qualitatively. However, in large projects, it is not possible to do it in any other way. There are too few of them. Small projects, which are many compared to the large ones, can be theoretically better evaluated – and based on quantitative indicators – but such small projects never check the decision-making systems of the city as large projects do. It is the large projects that are the engine of innovations in building as well as process procedures.

What is obvious, however, is the increasing number of stakeholders in the investment process over time, which has grown also into state legislation. The greater number of stakeholders, including the greater role of city districts, and the increasingly common overlapping of the functions of the representatives of the city districts as well as of the capital city of Prague, certainly nothing of this strengthens the ability of the city to realize large buildings. And this is understandable, because the size of the project must always correspond to the hierarchical management level at which individual decisions are taken, otherwise it is almost certainly doomed to failure.

What else is obvious is the gradual and extreme activation and professionalization of activist groups, as well as the diminishing interest in a common agreement. This is a very problematic trend for Prague's traffic system, which basically reaches the limit performance on all routes and in many places every day, because people do not change cars for bikes, more trams can no longer travel on the backbone routes, the metro frequency at peak times already reaches technical limits. There is

nowhere else to go, the system in this area of administration in Prague has exhausted its possibilities for further development. Therefore, the secondary decision-making of Prague in large infrastructure transport constructions shows negative trends in terms of time and its severity penetrates to the level of the set rules of primary decisions of the city, i.e. electoral system, administrative division and also defining competencies of control layers.

Of course, large infrastructure constructions are only a narrow section of secondary decisions and it is advisable to look also into a different area for a better idea of the decision-making processes in Prague. In the next chapter we will therefore deal with the decision-making of the city in the area of housing and its long-term development.

In the area of building permits, the situation has reached a point where the city administration is no longer making decisions.

The growing demand for new apartments and houses contrasts more and more with the declining supply.

Since 2015, the deficit in the number of houses and apartments in the territory of the capital city of Prague has been accumulating.

The causes of the crisis in the housing market are of three kinds: political, legislative and administrative.

In order to alleviate the crisis, Prague performed almost no activity in 2015–2018.

The complexity of legislation and the professionalization of activist groups has shifted much of the responsibility to the courts – the least qualified bodies for decision-making on territorial development.

⁴⁴⁷ Detailed and regular surveys are mainly carried out by development companies themselves. More e.g. analysis of Trigema, Skanska Reality and Central Group (2018a, 2018b).

21. Non-decision-making in the example of un/affordable housing

In the previous chapter we have shown a gradual delay in the decision-making process of the city in the area of large transport infrastructure constructions, one of many causes of which is the linking of decision-making processes, less and less clear separation of the role of the whole city and city districts, an increase in the number of stakeholders and problematic boundaries of administration set by laws and standards.

We will now describe the fact that the problematic situation in the city's decision-making does not concern only large transport infrastructure constructions on the example of the so-far most serious problem of Prague in the post-revolution period, which is the problem of un-available housing. This chapter is also a certain introduction to the text in the following part describing the reform of the territorial development policy in the capital city of Prague from 2012 to 2014.

Prague has seen a steep rise in apartment prices over the past few years. While prices almost stagnated until 2015, they subsequently started to grow at a rate that significantly outweighed the level that would correspond to the business cycle (FIG. 40)⁴⁴⁷. The main reason, which is evident from the comparison of this and the following graph (FIG. 41) is the declining supply of apartments on the market, which resulted in their limited quantity with rapidly rising prices. Prices of new apartments subsequently followed the prices of older apartments.

Until the beginning of 2015, the situation in Prague seemed to be quite stable; after years of crisis, there were signs of a market recovery. Projects subdued in times of crisis were completed. Buyers could choose from several years old “slow sellers” at relatively reasonable prices. There were more than 7 thousand new apartments on the market, which was not a staggering number, but the average prices of new apartments were on a quite stable level of CZK 55-60 thousand/m². However, during this period, very strong demand-stimulating factors began to gradually meet with a set of constraints on the supply side, which, combined with the later extremely inflexible supply side response, resulted in an overall constraint on

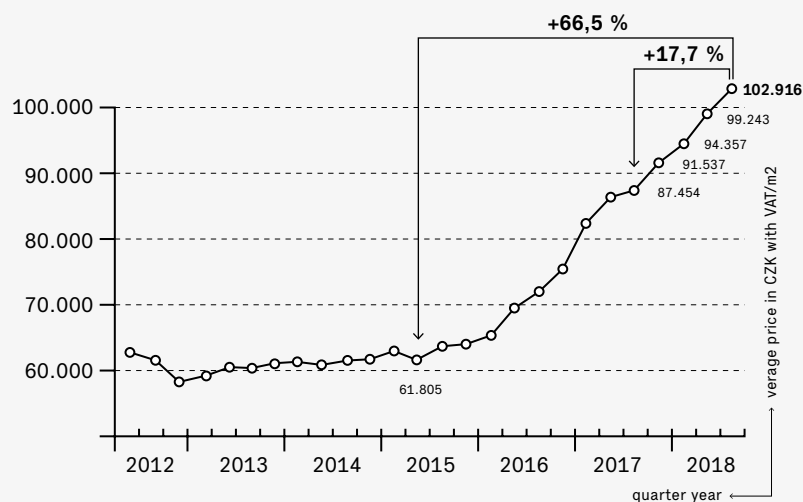


FIG. 40 – Development of apartment prices in the capital city of Prague in 2012–2018, source: analysis of companies Trigema, Skanska Reality, Central Group (2018b)

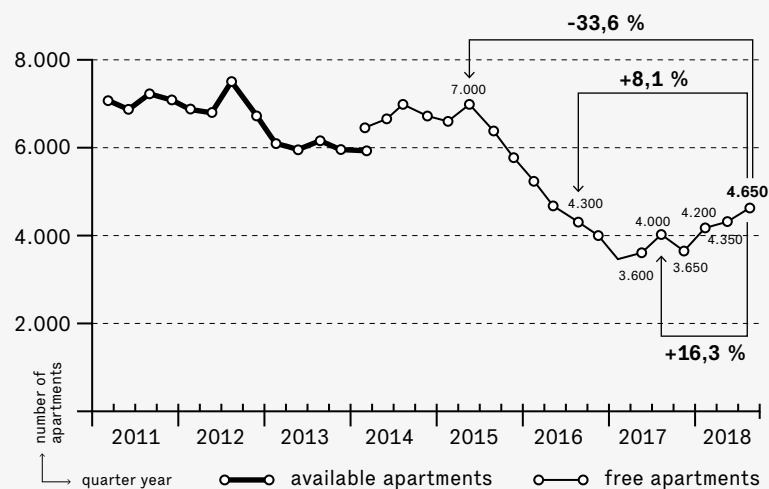


FIG. 41 – Development of the number of available apartments in the capital city of Prague in 2011–2018, source: analysis of companies Trigema, Skanska Reality, Central Group (2018a)

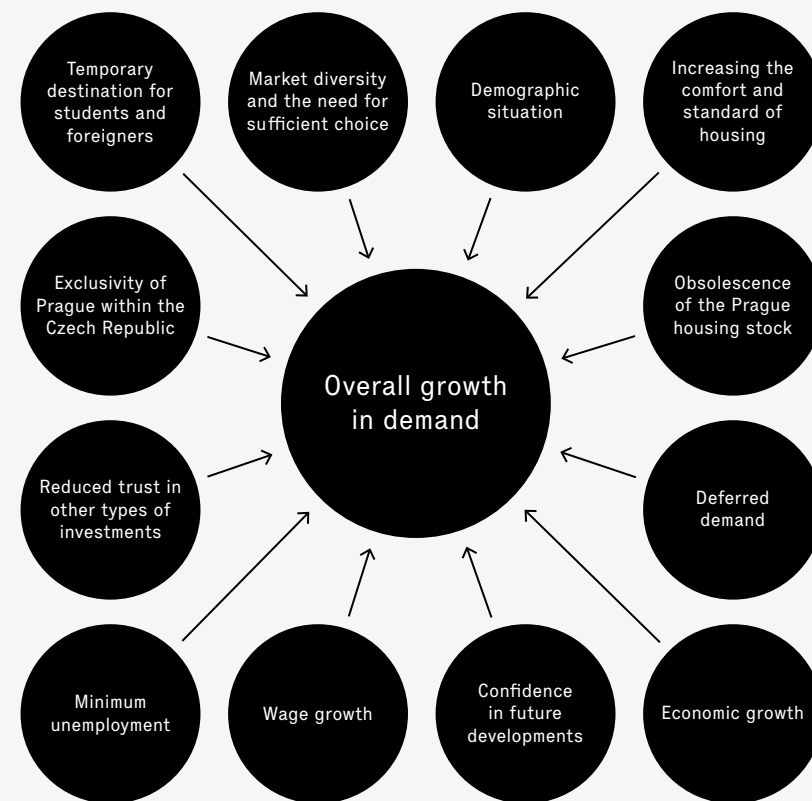


FIG. 42 – The most important factors of demand and supply growth influencing the housing market in Prague since 2014, source: Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019), adapted

Political causes	Administrative causes	Legislative / legal causes
Anti-construction and anti-development policy settings	22 building offices in town hall buildings and their insufficient capacity and qualifications	Viewing the approval process from a legal point of view only
Inability of self-government to act and approve changes to the land-use plan	Failure to comply with administrative deadlines	Judicial annulment of the practice of so-called UP amendments
Building closures – brownfields only as a virtual theme	Complicated and inconsistent assessment of monument care	Bullying appeal without relation to the actual threat to the appellant's rights
Postponement of the validity of the new Prague Building Regulations	Lengthy and opaque appeal proceedings	Reviews of binding opinions
		Judicial reviews and actions

TAB. 10 – Breakdown of the causes of the decline in the supply of apartments and houses in the capital city in Prague, source: Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019), adapted

the supply of apartments on the market below a certain critical level⁴⁴⁸. The factors and causes influencing the growth of demand since 2015 are shown in FIG. 42.

The causes of the decline in supply are many and can be divided into three basic areas – political, administrative and legislative-legal causes. TAB. 10 shows them clearly. Which of these are causing constraints to the decision-making of the city and which can be influenced by the good governance of the city, will be discussed further in the text.

As a result of coincidence in the increasing importance of the above-mentioned factors, the number of apartments delivered to the market decreased at the turn of 2015 and 2016. This downturn on the supply side reached its lowest in mid-2016 at the level of 3,500 available apartments⁴⁴⁹. All cheaper apartments at a greater distance from the center or with problematic accessibility were basically sold out. Projects newly placed on the market responded to price increases and in mid-2017 their average price was already CZK 75,000/m², in the first quarter of 2018 the level rose to 88,000 per square meter⁴⁵⁰ and in 2019 it had already exceeded a certain psychological threshold of 1 m² for CZK 100,000⁴⁵¹.

In 2018, the trends from 2016 and 2017 further deepened, as the numbers of newly permitted apartments in residential projects were still insufficient. Until September 2018, only 1,600 new apartments⁴⁵² were started in Prague, of which, however, 800 apartments are in a single major project. In October 2018 not even one apartment in apartment buildings was started (no building permit was issued) in Prague. Just for comparison – 1,700 were started in 2016 and 2,500 apartments in 2017 in new apartment buildings⁴⁵³.

The key number for evaluating these numbers is the needed number of new apartments that should be built in Prague. In Prague, according to the analysis of the Institute of Planning and Development⁴⁵⁴, there are over 500 thousand housing units in apartment buildings and another 100 thousand family houses, mostly situated in the outer ring of the city. As a rule, therefore, the number of 6,000 new housing units required per year⁴⁵⁵ is usually given, which is most often justified as a simple renewal of the number of apartments, since at an estimated average lifetime of 100 years this figure represents 1% of the total number of housing units.

However, the number of people living in Prague is increasing every day by commuters, visitors and tourists. Only during the Christmas holidays the long-term recorded population – a quarter of the second million – “moves about” in Prague⁴⁵⁶. Prague is increasingly connecting with the network of global

cities. Not only is it the capital and therefore the city serving the whole Czech Republic plus partly for historical reasons also Slovakia, but as a historic and beautiful cultural city it is also a center of global tourism⁴⁵⁷.

It is also advisable to take into account the ongoing pressure to increase the standard of living of the population, i.e. spatial comfort and standard of living, manifested particularly in the increase of floor space per person. The current average living area per person in the Czech Republic is 32.5 m², in 2001 it was 18.6 m² and in 1961 only 10.5 m² per person, given the fact that out of the whole country, the biggest apartments are in Prague⁴⁵⁸. Furthermore, other demographic factors need to be included in the analyses – e.g. the generational change in housing estates built in the 1980s and 1990s. Last but not least, housing deficits in previous years must also be considered, especially if the required number of new apartments is not fulfilled in the long term. Rather, we are talking about the need for well over 6,000 new housing units per year.

What is not happening in Prague is logically happening in its vicinity. Given the sharp rise in the prices of apartments and rents in Prague (about 40–50% for new apartments over the last 3 years⁴⁵⁹), individual construction outside Prague with daily commuting for workers in Prague is unfortunately the only alternative. And it is probably necessary to accept that future citizens of Prague will increasingly commute. In 2017, more than 5,000 family houses were started in the Central Bohemia Region, i.e. twice as many family houses than apartments in Prague⁴⁶⁰. Families living there usually have two cars and use the urban infrastructure. They are Praguers.

Shortage in newly built apartments has already met Prague once in the post-revolutionary history. This was in the mid-1990s, between 1994 and 1996, when residential construction fell to the level of 2,000 apartments per year. It is a bit of a question whether the trend of massive suburbanization and emigration outside the capital in the 1990s was also due to the lack of supply of new buildings in the capital. The “prefab houses” gained a negative connotation at that time and the individual desire for one’s own house with a garden prevailed. There was no real housing market. The first and extensive waves of privatization of the housing supply took place. New apartments in apartment buildings had hardly been built until 1997; the market with older apartments was small in scope, limited only to houses and apartments returned to owners in restitution proceedings. Mortgage loans were provided only by a minimum of banking institutions and the interest on such loans was so high that – in particular due to regulated rents

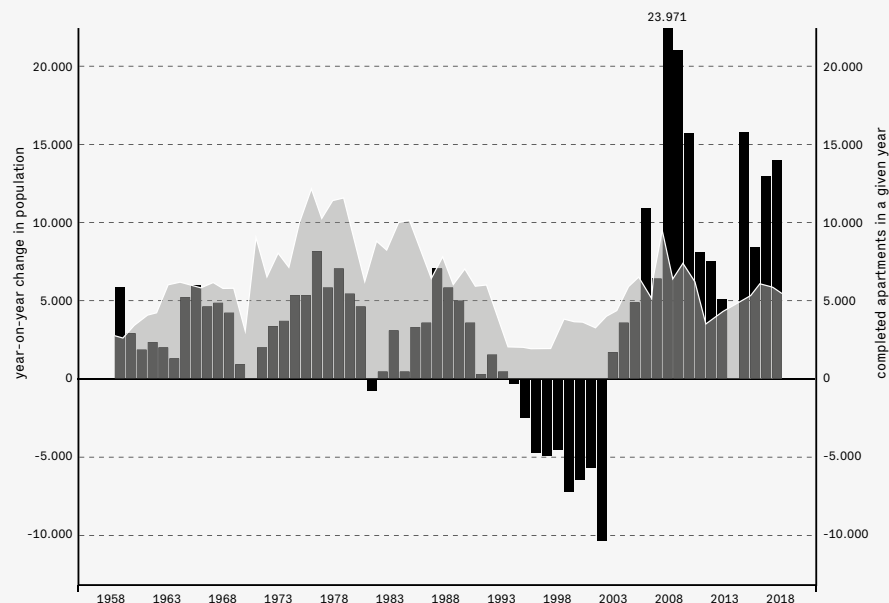


FIG. 43 – Long-term change in the number of inhabitants and the numbers of completed apartments in Prague, source: Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019). Note: completed apartments are marked with columns

(terminated in Prague only in 2013) – the purchase for foreign money could not pay off⁴⁶¹.

Only after 2000 it was possible to realize real estate projects by private entities and the market with new apartments began to exist in reality. In conjunction with the economic growth initiated in 2002, the population growth balance responded very sensitively to the development of this new segment of the economy. FIG. 43 shows, among other things, how large-scale construction after 2000, together with the factor of economic growth, enabled an unprecedented increase in the population in Prague. With the onset of the economic crisis, especially in terms of the migration balance, there was again a decline. Finally, the development of population growth since 2015 is no longer accompanied by a sufficient supply of apartments.

It is clear that the development of the construction and real estate market in Prague has not in the past run more than twenty years with the necessary continuity. After the economic downturn, new construction was not able to respond to pressures of demand; the offer has become completely inelastic, mainly due to problems and obstacles in the process of

permitting construction. We have already divided them into three basic areas at the beginning of the chapter – legislative/legal, administrative and political. However, these include many others, such as gradual tightening of the credit policy of the Czech National Bank, or legislative transfer of the obligation to pay for the purchase of property from the seller to the buyer, etc.

We will now focus mainly on those obstacles that can be influenced by the decision-making of the city. Or at least those which form the constraints of the city's decision-making but which can also be changed if the city administration is enlightened. And by the enlightened administration I mean such city administration that will be able to enforce also changes in nationwide standards and laws. And which can also count e.g. on the fact that they may not live to see the results of this activity politically. The legislative/legal area⁴⁶² is mainly related to building law and the administrative code. From the perspective of the legislation itself and its changes, a major

⁴⁶² We describe this area in detail with my colleagues in the study by Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019), pp. 32–34.

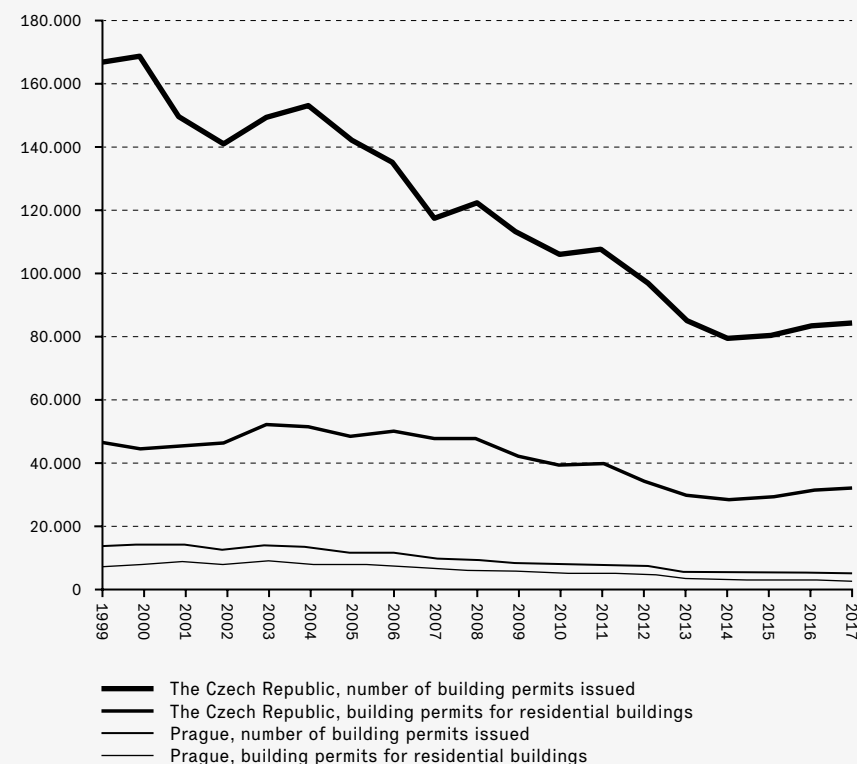


FIG. 44 – Development of the number of issued building permits in Prague and in the Czech Republic, source: CZSO (2018a, b, e)

⁴⁶³ Act No. 183/2006 Coll.

⁴⁶⁴ Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019), p. 34

⁴⁶⁵ Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019) based on CSO data (2018a, b, e)

change in the history of the Czech Republic was the approval of the new Building Act⁴⁶³, which has been in force since 2006. Since then, it has undergone a total of thirteen amendments. However, after more than a decade of its validity, in connection with other legislative regulations, the legal environment in the construction sector is becoming very problematic. In Prague, most housing projects started (permitted) by 2008 received zoning decision still under the terms of the original building act from 1976⁴⁶⁴. Construction of these unrealized but previously started (permitted) projects was often postponed until the economic slump subsided, i.e. for the period after 2011 and 2012. However, even in the following period of economic growth, the number of building permits granted was not increasing (FIG. 44)⁴⁶⁵. From the economic development point of view, it would be logical also for the number of building permits after 2013 to grow more significantly, as the construction segment reacts very sensitively to the economic cycle in standard conditions and overtakes other parts of the economy. However, this is a systemic problem, as data on the number of building permits from Prague, unlike the whole country, have a downward trend until 2017, whereas this has not been the case for the whole Czech Republic since 2014.

Obviously, in the past few years, the legislative environment in the construction industry has become, on the one hand, extremely complex in the Czech Republic, but hand in hand with this it has become very favorable for a wide range of obstacles leading to a slowdown in approval of projects. Many proceedings in this area end in administrative courts, whose conclusions then interfere directly with the approval or land-use planning process. On the side of the applicants and the state administration there is a “defense” in the form of preparation of very detailed and theoretically legally unsailable decisions, which, however, complicates the whole process and the files and proceedings become extremely extensive. In addition, the standard consideration of the matter⁴⁶⁶ includes the aspect of judicial review as an integral part of such administrative consideration, where each of the participants in the approval process anticipates the possibility that such a judicial review may take place. This approach is presented, for example, in the handbooks of the “environmental” association Arnika, where the administrative action is included into the area of “public control” of decisions and the lawsuit is even listed as standard part of discussion of land-use planning documentation (FIG. 45).

This is not quite a typical situation – undoubtedly the possibility to go to court if the rights of any party to the

⁴⁶⁶ That means assessment of the public interest in terms of compliance with the Building Act, land-use planning documents, urban planning aspects, and construction-technical assessment, including also the interests involved, such as monument care, environmental protection, coordination of infrastructure buildings and others.

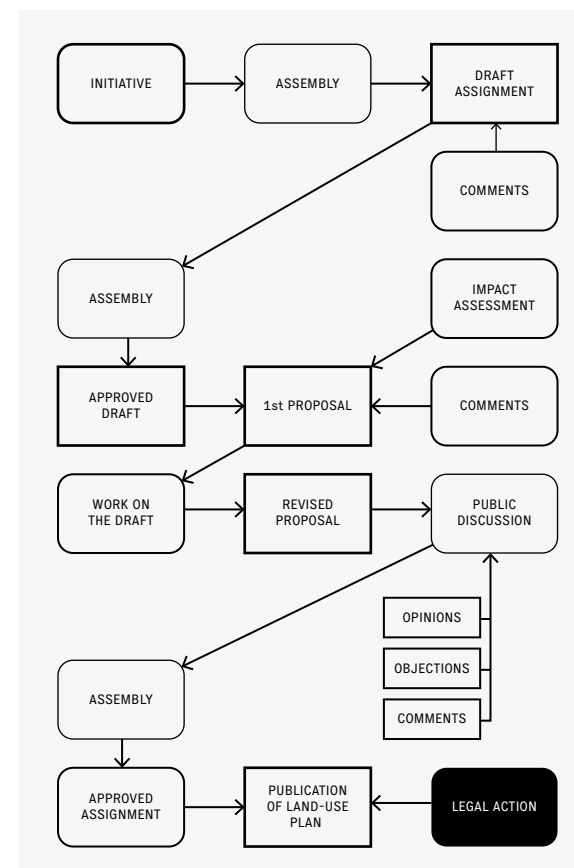


FIG. 45 – The lawsuit as an integral part of the discussion of the land-use plan – Arnika, source: Záhumnská (2015)

administrative proceedings are affected is the basis of the modern constitutional state but should be used only in truly isolated cases when other defense or protection options are exhausted and, above all, the possibilities of a certain social agreement are exhausted. However, in the area of building permits and land-use planning, it is common practice that disagreement with the decision is not openly presented and a potential plaintiff is only waiting for a suitable moment when such an administrative act can be challenged by an action which, however, is not intended to protect the specific rights of such a participant and, therefore, does not aim, for example, to partially remedy a decision in an area where, in his view, specific rights are infringed but is aiming for the complete annulment of such a decision. Typically, in this case, for the cancellation of a land-use plan or its part, or against a zoning decision, etc. Although a small number of decisions are

challenged by administrative actions in terms of the absolute number of decisions, the likelihood of such a dispute increases with the size of the intention.

It follows from the above-written segment that legal obstacles are a major constraint to decision-making from the point of view of the capital city of Prague and that, apart from its legislative initiative, the city administration has little room to change this legislative setting. With regard to the above-written, the capital city of Prague can therefore be recommended to cooperate with the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic in the preparation of the new Building Act and related sub-legal standards. It is also clear that this is a problem for Prague or densely populated areas, and a way to solve this seems to be a joint approach of several of the largest cities in the Czech Republic – Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Pilsen and others, which will encounter the same problem – if not already today, surely in a few years' time.

The second area – administrative⁴⁶⁷ – already partly falls within the competence of the city administration and includes, in particular, non-observance of administrative deadlines on the part of the authorities, requirements for supplementing other documents beyond laws and decrees, interventions of other administrative bodies involved (conservation, environmental, etc.). However, this is a delegated competence of the state administration, and therefore the self-government of the capital city of Prague can intervene in this area only by limited means and methods.

In this area, the complexity of the legal environment is manifested in its overall lack of clarity, when especially the state administration authorities have not established uniform methodological procedures. It is common to have different requirements at individual building authorities for the necessary content of the submitted project documentation. "Excessive caution" generates an additional amount of documents and supporting documents, resulting in delays in decisions and non-compliance with deadlines. At the same time, the overall bulkiness of such a file increases the likelihood of occurrence of a formal error, which also increases the chances of those who disagree with the intention and want to defend themselves through appeals, to delay consideration by requests for review of binding opinions, and subsequently also by actions. A separate chapter is the course and length of the appellate procedure, when the file from the first-instance building office, of which there are 22 in Prague due to administrative division, moves to the appellate body, i.e. to the construction department of the Prague City Hall. According

Year	Number of positive resolutions				Totally weighted positive resolutions
	Initiative	Entering a change	Change proposal	Total	
2018	83	126	24	233	75,2
2017	105	70	4	179	39,0
2016	83	3	2	88	12,2
2015	40	1	17	58	21,8
2014	138	9	4	151	22,3
2013	0	49	8	57	24,3
2012	0	34	27	61	38,3

TAB. 11 – Restrictions on approving changes to the land-use plan in 2015–2017, source: Prague City Hall, Department of Spatial Planning (2019)

Note: Voting in the right part of the table was weighted in the ratio 1/9: 1/3: 1, because with the serial number of the vote (initiative – entering a change – change proposal) it is necessary to somehow take into account the "difficulty" of voting. The difference in political responsibility for the individual types of resolution was thus determined to be one-third of each other. The year 2014 was an election year – the previous political representation had only about two thirds of the year to discuss changes, and in the last third of 2014, no changes to the land-use plan were voted on at all.

to the website of the Institute for Spatial Development, more than half of all decisions of this department in the matter of appeals procedures are returned to the first-instance office for reconsideration⁴⁶⁸.

In other words, the original building authority, although it has already decided, must re-examine the whole agenda, but with greater caution, as it is clearly under the supervision of the original applicant that this time his decision is impeccable, further developing a spiral of complexity and caution. According to the analysis of Deloitte, which included 64 projects with more than 5,500 new apartments, the average discussion of project proposals in Prague takes 1,553 days (4.3 years), but also with a maximum of 7,222 days (19.8 years)⁴⁶⁹. And, most importantly, the original applicant does not know in advance even the estimate of this period. There is no such thing as a serial number of the file and the time limit cannot be estimated even according to the current workload of the office.

The third area, the political one, is already completely connected with the administration of the capital city of Prague. It concerns the decision-making powers of the municipal self-government. This includes, for example, the absence of goals of the city. This may be surprising, but despite the existing demographic and migration forecasts, the Prague self-government has not yet set a selected target value of the population at a future point in time, to which the city as

⁴⁶⁷ This area is described in more detail in the study by Hainc, Červinka, Šajtar et al. (2019), p. 36.

⁴⁶⁸ Institute of Spatial Development (2018)

⁴⁶⁹ Deloitte (2018), p. 23

a whole should be directed both by construction and the robustness of, for example, infrastructure.

Furthermore, the political area consists of the issue of multilevel self-government. Problems arising from meeting the diverse requirements of city districts, which are certainly beneficial from some point of view, but on the other hand, do not have sufficient support in the current legislative environment. And unfortunately, in this respect, even the very helpfulness of the investor to the requirements of the City Hall does not give the applicant the assurance that the subsequent authorization process will be fast and without obstacles. Especially when the city self-government is in an antagonistic relationship with the city-wide self-government.

This area also includes the issue of the ability of the self-government to deal with individual development projects – whether using the construction closure tool or in the process of approving changes to the land-use plan. In the example of the activities of the political representation, including its political statements during the problematic period 2015–2017, it is easy to demonstrate that the decline in construction and the ever-increasing “inaccessibility” of housing was virtually not addressed at that time. The self-government did not register this problem at all; or even refused it. In the spirit of a completely absurd and empty thesis of “more greenery, less concrete”, there was until then an unprecedented decrease in the approval of resolutions on changes to the land-use plan in the Assembly of the Capital City of Prague in 2016 (TAB. 11) which, due to the rapid transformation of the city in recent years, are essentially an integral and (still unfortunately) necessary part of almost all projects in the territory of the capital city of Prague.

The complex of the above-mentioned obstacles to the development of the capital city of Prague, some of which touch more on the limits of the city administration and less the decision-making skills and the activities of elected politicians, and some on the contrary, ultimately means that Prague is in its spatial development more or less like a ship in a severe storm (environmental influences) and without a helmsman (administration issues).

But is it more due to the poor administration or poorly set decision-making limits? In the next chapter we will describe the implemented reform of the territorial development policy in Prague in 2012–2014, where the problems on both these sides will be clearly visible.

Part VIII

Reform of the Territorial Development Policy in Prague 2012–2014

By 2010, Prague had got rid of the tools with which it could influence its development. It sold its land, most of its apartments, became heavily indebted, and until 2014 it had also struggled with the effects of the financial crisis.

In 2012, after thorough preparation, the reform of the territorial development policy was launched.

It included 11 measures: a new territorial and strategic plan, principles of territorial development, building regulations, a manual for public spaces, the concept of Prague's banks, the Institute of Planning and Development, an information center, a reform of the City Hall, the advisory body called Sounding Board and the participatory project Prague for People.

At some points, the reform counted on the completion of works in the next parliamentary term but was rejected by the next political representation.

Each action of self-government costs politicians a certain part of their political capital created in elections. Unfortunately, it was not enough to complete the reform in the next parliamentary term.

The reform cannot be considered entirely successful, as it has not prevented a rapid rise in property prices in the coming years.

22. Political capital

In 2012–2014, the reform of the policy of the development of the territory of the capital city was implemented in Prague. Its preparation took place intensively in the years preceding it, particularly in 2010 and 2011. Some of the reform measures were launched as well as completed in this period. Some measures were not planned to be completed by the end of 2014 due to their nature and demanding character. For example, in a land-use plan, it is perfectly fine if its terms of reference and initial phases are formed during one parliamentary term and its completion is carried out only in the following period. And finally, some measures failed to be completed by 2014 in spite of the original intention, but also due to the substantial efforts of virtually the majority of stakeholders.

The reform and its preparation in the period between November 2011 and May 2013 was tied to me as First Deputy Mayor of Prague with the responsibility for territorial and strategic development, and subsequently from June 2013 to September 2014 as the Mayor of the capital city of Prague I held the same responsibility. The need for reform was based on a number of starting points, the most important of which were:

- The absence of a long-term strategy of the city in the form of a targeted population in the future and mainly their distribution in the area of the city.
- Building permits and permits for new construction (including housing) were disproportionately long in Prague and there was a concern that the situation could deteriorate in the future. Many of the land-use plan changes that were on the table in 2011 were older than 5 years, and nine-year changes were not a complete exception. The current update of the Strategic plan was called Prague Olympic, and this intention was not (never entirely) valid.
- In a densely populated city, it was very difficult to build according to standards and regulations compared to western cities. In Prague, new "city" streets have not

been created for some time, but flat-panel buildings, solitary buildings have.

- In terms of urban design, the city disintegrated in both horizontal and vertical directions. Height regulation in the form of building coefficients is quite powerless when determining the heights of houses. Unfortunately, the spatial demarcation of functions by means of colors in the land-use plan also seem quite pointless.
- The visual appearance of the public spaces was still indebted to communism. The public space was full of columns, railings and other obstacles. Prague with its public spaces resembled much more Sarajevo than Vienna or Barcelona.
- An abnormally large number of people moved to the suburban area, despite the fact that already in 2011 the access roads were congested. And the same was true of crowded commuter trains. The current limited number of P+R car parks, with a total capacity of only a few thousand parking places, was far from sufficient for this onslaught of commuters.
- At peak times, the frequency of subway connections has already reached technical limits in the central part of the city. The same was true for the main tram lines in the city.
- Any repair of larger roads in the city threatened to trigger a city-wide traffic collapse. This fear led to the gradual postponement of repairs, the growth of internal debt on roads, and thus spurred another spiral of larger problems and larger repairs⁴⁷⁰.

It would be possible to continue the enumeration further, but it is not necessary, as it is unfortunately obvious in this respect that many of the mentioned problems still occur in Prague to a greater or lesser extent. However, it is important to mention that already in 2012 we were seriously worried at the Prague City Hall that the above-mentioned problems could, in the event of any change in external conditions, atrophy into an extreme form. Prague was burdened by three extremely expensive investments totaling nearly CZK 70 billion, decided by the political leadership of the City Hall in 2005–2007⁴⁷¹. Moreover, the sale of its property in the form of the housing stock (privatization) was also essentially completed, with some minor exceptions, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, but – and this is very serious – similarly, also large and lucrative development areas were also sold. Since 2010, the city has also faced a much smaller budget and lower tax revenues compared to the pre-crisis period. The situation began

⁴⁷⁰ The estimated total internal debt on roads in 2013, which was communicated to me by the director of the contributory organization Technical Road Administration, including bridges, was CZK 20 billion. Until 2018, despite the large increase in the budget of Prague as a result of the boom of the Czech Republic, it virtually did not diminish (Němec 2018).

⁴⁷¹ The Blanka tunnel complex (planned CZK 31 billion and actual CZK 37 billion), Metro A (CZK 22 billion with imminent withdrawal of the EU subsidy of a quarter of costs), 250 new 15T trams for the transport company (CZK 19 billion).

⁴⁷² According to data from the Budget Department of the Prague City Hall, the tax revenues of the capital city of Prague increased over the course of 5 years from 41 billion in 2013 to 51 billion in 2018 (Prague City Hall 2019).

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to improve only in 2015. In 2018, Prague received tax revenues from the state by 10 billion more than in 2013⁴⁷², an amount equal to Ostrava's annual budget.

In the years preceding 2010, the city significantly reduced its own resilience. It has got rid of a large number of levers and mechanisms, which until then had been available to advance its own development. It therefore seemed necessary in 2010 and 2011 – which were the years of my preparation for the function of First Deputy – to undertake a comprehensive reform of the territorial development policy consisting of changing all three decision-making (and thus planning) levels – regional, urban and local.

The implementation of any reform in public administration is primarily a matter of political capital, from which a certain political cost is deducted for each measure implemented. This principle is based on the deep essence of every decision (whether of a city or a person). The new order that arises as a result of the decision always follows only after a certain period of chaos. Therefore, there must be sufficient stock of capacity to implement the reform. It is therefore a combination of the magnitude of current political power, personality power and, above all, the commitment of responsible decision makers. In other words, also here the tried and true saying is valid which says that nothing is for free.

It is therefore always appropriate to assign the political price of such a decision to any decision in the public administration, in this case in the city self-government. What, from the outside view of the functioning of the city, may seem like a slight change, or even a change clearly for the better, usually entails a great (bargaining) turmoil and some lowering of the political capital of those who make decisions inside the political decision-making. Only exceptional periods of absolute and unquestionable societal crises close to the primary, i.e. existential, goals are times when the implementation of reforms does not reduce political capital⁴⁷³. At the level of states, such crises are wars or famines, at the city level such crises may be, for example, epidemics, fires or, in a milder form, for example, extremely poor air, etc.

In this respect, the reform of territorial development policy in the capital city of Prague was based on the political capital resulting from the elections. And that in turn consequently determined the maximum possible price of individual measures. In the municipal elections to the Prague City Assembly in 2010, only 4 political entities were elected due to the division of Prague into seven electoral districts after the corruption scandals and the published wiretappings of the Mayor

⁴⁷³ And somewhat unfortunate is also the fact that political capital reduces also the oftentimes correct crises prevention, thus too early secondary decision-making in a period of calm.

⁴⁷⁴ In an extreme form, this „habit“ of forming constituencies has even a name – Gerrymandering (more e.g. Kasík 2018) according to its probably first documented implementer, Governor of Massachusetts, Elbridge Gerry (1974–1814). Prague voted in this way in 2010, when the CDP and CSDP political parties feared a small election profit. This was indeed the case, but the whole process was ultimately successful for these political parties. It provided them, albeit only very tight, with the majority in the Assembly of the Capital City of Prague and allowed the election of the Mayor from CDP for at least some time. In 2014, despite the protests of many colleagues, I maintained my view that such manipulations were evil, and the elections ultimately took place in a single constituency.

⁴⁷⁵ Czech Social Democratic Party

⁴⁷⁶ This exception was the CSDP representative and later Senator Mgr. Jiří Dientsbier.

⁴⁷⁷ I am – especially looking at the following and still ongoing (personal) consequences – still convinced that from the former Governor of the Czech National Bank, doc. Ing. Zdeněk Tůma, it was a wise and far-sighted decision.

⁴⁷⁸ And this seems to have created the basis of criminal complaints and judicial political trials „on demand“.

⁴⁷⁹ Until 2012, the City Development

who served in the office for 8 years⁴⁷⁴. The winner of the elections, the electoral list of our TOP09 political party with the leader doc. Ing. Zdeněk Tůma, CSc., the former governor of the Czech National Bank, however, was excluded from participation in decision-making on the further development of the city by the political parties CDP and CSDP⁴⁷⁵, which were closer to each other in the past, especially in terms of personnel. In the previous section, we have already looked at the causes of this seemingly illogical evolution: Politically more distant actors do not compete for the same voter and, in addition, if the actors of these parties know one another and there is no extremely principled person favoring political ideas over power – which did not happen in 2010, with one exception⁴⁷⁶ – their agreement on further cooperation is relatively easy.

For the reform to be conceivable at all, it was therefore necessary to change the then coalition at the Prague City Hall. This change, however, became feasible only after Zdeněk Tůma gave up his surely logical right to perform the function of Mayor and “settled” in the new coalition with the position of chairman of the Finance Committee⁴⁷⁷. Moreover, the second of the political clubs (CDP), in order to maintain the position of the Mayor, split into two fiercely fighting factions⁴⁷⁸ when the coalition was changed, later even into two representative clubs. I negotiated the change of the coalition with the then Deputy Mayor of Prague and former Mayor of Prague 8 Josef Nosek (CDP). The preparation of the coalition change required more than a hundred meetings and personal negotiations at that time. The whole process involved a huge amount of effort and time.

In this context, the further reduction in political capital as a result of the reform described is also worth mentioning. In terms of not the development of the city, but from the political point of view, there are power ministries and other ministries in each executive self-governing body. In Prague, such power ministries include, in particular, transport, budget and assets, including the city’s ownership interests in its own joint-stock companies. The management of territorial and strategic development in Prague – although this is absolutely essential for the future direction of (any) city – has only finances (and thus real political power) in the amount of the budget of one contributory organization⁴⁷⁹.

The management of territorial development vs. transport is from the political point of view something like a duel between David and Goliath. Deputy for Transport and Prague Public Transport Company “manages” more than a third of the Prague budget (in 2012 it was over CZK 20 billion⁴⁸⁰), while territorial

Department (CDD) and later the Institute of Planning and Development (IPD) with an annual budget of CZK 250 or CZK 350 million/year.

⁴⁸⁰ Prague City Hall (2019)

⁴⁸¹ The key decision maker needs to have appropriate determination to carry out the reform. This is often double-edged, because personal interest can be just as good. And therefore the number of politicians – corruptioners is nothing to be surprised at. However, these must be constantly combated.

⁴⁸² It was a relatively wide team of people, whose manager was Ing. arch. Vít Máslo, founder and co-owner of CMC Architects, one of the largest architectural offices in the Czech Republic.

development managed at that time and still manages two or three hundred million Czech Korunas, most of which are personnel costs. The Deputy Director for Property and Equity Holdings is in charge of a huge number of properties, leases, but also deals with supervisory boards and boards of most mammoth city joint-stock companies with lots of daughters and granddaughters. You must therefore be extremely committed to the future development of the city if you “exchange” the above-mentioned political power for it. And, at the same time, you have to be prepared for the fact that especially your colleagues in your political party will later make you aware of that.

Without political power and political capital, no measure or change can be enforced and, in the long run, no active political activity can be undertaken and, therefore, it was already clear at the beginning of 2012 that there was not much time to reform the policy of the territorial development in Prague. There were less than 3 years to go to the elections, and the coalition itself was not created as a result of the voters’ will shown in the elections, but in some way from above by the activity of some political leaders, which does not help further development of stability. It was therefore clear that enormous efforts would be needed to implement the reform⁴⁸¹.

From the initial number of more than two tens of changes⁴⁸² proposed by my consultants, I finally chose 10 basic, at least quite probably feasible measures. Later, one was divided into two, and in the final total there were 11 more or less dependent projects (TAB. 12). All of them fell within the competences of Prague and indeed any attempts beyond these competencies, for example, we can mention negotiations with the Ministry for Regional Development on the unnecessary need for separate Principles of Territorial Development of the Region, were not successful in the end. In short, there was not enough time for such negotiations and I was increasingly missing the much-needed political capital. At the parliamentary and governmental level, Prague’s problems and needs have always been rather overlooked, for which there is partly an objective reason – because of its population density, Prague is usually the first city to come up with a need for some change.

We will look at the individual measures of the reform in terms of their content in more detail in the next chapter, but now we will focus again on the political value of these measures. Earlier in the text, we have already mentioned the need to change the coalition to start the reform. Furthermore, the exchange of power ministries for the possibility to carry out the reform. However, similar consequences related to virtually all measures.

Institute of Planning and Development	Reorganization of the City Development Department into a dynamic and modern organization, a brain trust of the city analyzing the condition of Prague at each moment and synthesizing conclusions from the obtained data as a basis for decision-making by the City Council. Not a managing authority, but a conceptual and research workplace performing “urban science/citylogy” in Prague.
Strategic plan	New update of the previous version focused on the enforcement of the Olympics in Prague.
Land-use plan	Replacement of the current one, too burdened by corruption (due to the difficulty of deciding on possible development), with a simpler one in terms of permitting construction. Aimed at the population of the city, not at its extensive development into the landscape. The measure also included the elaboration of a professional research (carried out by the FA CTU) on how to actually enter the land-use plan correctly in the conditions of these days and legislation. Part of the measures was also to ensure a transition period between the old valid land-use plan and the newly created Metropolitan Plan, especially in the approach to approving changes to the land-use plan with the help of an expert commission of architects and urban planners, assessing each change with regard to current and future condition of the territory.
Building regulations	A new version of a secondary legislative document (Regulation of the Capital City of Prague) enabling the construction of a city and a city street.
Public spaces manual	Creation of a completely new regulation for the solution of public spaces. Later, due to its complexity, the Prague Banks Development Concept was separated from this measure as the eleventh measure of the reform.
Principles of territorial development	A new update of the existing principles, partially canceled by the court, which would again enable the re-routing of ring roads, the development of the airport and, among other things, more logically changed, for example, the management of TSES for the current city. It also included negotiations (unsuccessful) on the abolition of this duplicate document for Prague at the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic.
Reorganization of the City Hall	Creation of a section dealing with decision-making on the territory, in which all relevant departments of the municipality would be included, which would have a head of the section above them, who would be a manager able to find a solution beneficial to all, especially in the case when their own opinions were in conflict.
Sounding Board	The advisory body of the Prague City Council, to which the individual councilors would present their intentions, and from the following discussion they would gain valuable knowledge and feedback for their further actions.
Prague for People project	A communication platform for the inhabitants of the city in cases when a certain change in the land-use plan caused controversies and it was necessary, in order to proceed, to find out the attitude of the public on the spot.
Information center	A tool for communication among the city, residents, investors and civic associations (later CAMP).

TAB. 12 – Measures implemented in the framework of the reform, source: elaborated by the author

⁴⁸³ And even more paradoxically, the term „super official“ was used by this political party in 2006–2010 at the Prague City Hall for the three high-ranking officials chosen by the then Mayor and standing somewhat outside the structures of the municipality.

⁴⁸⁴ The agreement in the leadership of our representative club was a responsibility of Ing. Novotný, councilor and later Deputy Mayor in charge of culture, exhibition and tourism.

⁴⁸⁵ Transparency of administration, external relations or information technology basically are not responsibilities in this respect.

The new land-use plan, called for the sake of differentiation of the Metropolitan Plan of Prague, was enforced only for the second time at the Prague City Assembly meeting, under a serious threat of disintegration of the new coalition that was established only three months before that.

The reorganization of the municipality with the aim of speeding up the permit procedure and setting up the system of decision-making on the development of the territory so that in case of mutually conflicting opinions with the state administration authorities the Office is able to resolve these by itself did not pass through the existing coalition. Paradoxically, the old – corruption-burdened – wing of CDP under the argument of the creation of a “super-official”⁴⁸³ prevented the reorganization so much that the coalition was finally terminated at this point. The Mayor, for a reason incomprehensible to me, stood on the anti-reform side. The resolution on the reorganization of the municipality thus became the long-awaited detonator among the parties competing for the same voters. In the Prague City Assembly, I proposed to dismiss the Mayor and for the second time in the election period I created a new agreement (this time with the CSDP) for the further functioning of the Prague City Assembly and, from my point of view, to complete as much of the reform as possible.

After becoming quite unexpectedly the Mayor due to the sudden, unexpected but well-managed floods⁴⁸⁴, I hardly changed my responsibilities in order to continue the reform – I only added security issues. Therefore, even this step did not increase the political capital within my political party and the representative club, rather the contrary. The Mayor must have a power department – preferably directly finance, to be able to control the other councilors at least a little in our overly restrictive political and electoral system. Thus, my power to change things grew only slightly, despite the fact that the agenda associated with the Mayor’s function is about three times the time of the deputy. Responsibility is even greater.

However, an even greater mistake in this respect was made by the Mayors after me – they basically took no responsibilities⁴⁸⁵, due to the total misconception in the sense that they would coordinate and direct the work of the other members of the council. The Mayor of a large city in the Czech Republic does not really control anything. The Council is a collective body in which a vote is taken and where also he has one vote. If he does not have any responsibility, he has nothing.

And it is possible to continue to describe the political price of individual measures. For example, the project Prague for People, or one of the meetings with the citizens in Vidoule

where the old plan for territorial development taken from the past political representation and not of any quality, was discussed whose conclusions showed the need to divide the affected area into 2 parts – one untouchable for construction and the other relatively possible under certain conditions – was politically abused by competing political representatives in the 2014 elections.

The transformation of the CDD into the IPD and the related steps, and furthermore, by the end of 2014 unfinished work on the creation of a new update of the strategic plan, led to the revocation of executive director of the IPD, who was implementing the reform, immediately after the 2014 elections by the newly emerging political representation.

New building regulations were approved in June 2014. These on 120 pages and in almost one hundred paragraphs dealt with the rules and necessary actions for construction in Prague. One paragraph on one page also covered large-scale advertising in the built-up area, where, after discussion with the city districts (19 of the 22 large city districts thus agreed), this advertising was prohibited in the built-up area. Due to the effective lobbying of a group of billboard companies, however, the validity of these regulations was later suspended by the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic and later this paragraph was removed from them within the 2016 update⁴⁸⁶. This whole anabasis probably contributed (billboard companies used their means, advertising banners and connection with private nationwide televisions to an unprecedentedly large anti-campaign) to the loss of the electoral list, on which I was the leader in the 2014 elections, which subsequently facilitated my long-awaited exclusion and the subsequent departure of some of my other colleagues from TOP09.

Even seemingly harmless policy measures have a political price deducted from political capital. For example, advisory bodies. Knowledge of no single person can be sufficient to cover the complexity of a city of 1 million inhabitants. In order to solve such complex problems – such as the future development of the city – and to make an appropriate judgment about the state of the city, the key decision maker has to make hundreds or rather thousands of meetings, both with political colleagues and especially with officials. That is to say, with the directors of the municipal unions, as well as with the lower levels of the clerical hierarchy, city experts on the development of the city, but also with ordinary people, representatives of civic associations and many others. I can confirm from my own experience that only interviews with officials often on the lowest levels of the administrative hierarchy often opened

⁴⁸⁷ The big and occasional advisory body was the Sounding Board. It was established with the aim to set a long-term cooperation of the civic, professional and academic sectors with political representation in the future. In other words, it was about „teaching“ us politicians and officials and restoring our mutual trust between the actors of development after the last political representation, and also – last but not least – to ensure the best possible continuity of city administration in the future.

⁴⁸⁸ in this case led mainly by a former dissident and signatory of Charter 77, Ing. Eva Vorlíčková

⁴⁸⁹ Apart from others even those who have already solved the problems at the City Hall – even at the time when we did not sit with our colleagues at the Town Hall.

my eyes and directed me to the right solution to the given problem. I practiced it also during foreign visits – half an hour (courtesy) meeting with politicians and then hurry to “their” office to see the officials, city companies and allowance organizations. No matter how good education and professional expertise are not enough to handle if only a small number of the city’s problems, you need an advisory board to manage it – preferably multi-level, i.e. close/small/everyday and large/occasional/expertly wide-spread⁴⁸⁷.

The political cost of such advisory bodies is that they are generally composed of experts, fortunately enough in a city with a million inhabitants. Unfortunately, not always, or very rarely, these experts are members of the same political party and very exceptionally, or almost never, they are members of the same representative club that holds you in the Czech political system as deputy or mayor of the city. It is therefore in my opinion really necessary to start to consider in the Czech Republic whether after all the chairmen and mayors should not be elected directly and thus be a little less revocable during the election period than today, when they ultimately have to “buy” the support in the ranks of their fellow representatives in various ways – certainly not based on professional and high-quality work.

Finally, the description of the political price of the above-mentioned individual measures would not be complete without the most important point of view, i.e. holistic. Our personal commitment, which brought me and my colleagues to the Prague City Council at the end of 2011, and our struggle against the then extreme interconnection of business and politics⁴⁸⁸ led in a completely different (than this land-use) story to a later widely publicized and highly scandalized court case in the matter of the overpriced “Card of Prager” – Opencard. For more than 3 months we dealt with the inactivity and corruption of the previous political representations, followed the opinions of lawyers⁴⁸⁹, also the usual opinion of the Magistrate Department of Legislation and expert commissions, and yet, for a single vote in the Prague City Council – moreover, making the whole project also cheaper and, above all, necessary (Opencard was not contractually secured at the time when I served as the Deputy Mayor in 2012 due to inactivity of the previous representation) – we have been dragged by the police and the courts for more than 7 years. And the members of past Prague City Councils responsible for the whole overpriced project went to court as witnesses.

This political prize must also be counted as a counterbalance to the implemented reform of territorial development

⁴⁸⁶ All parties in the coalition at that time (Green Party, ANO, CSDP) participated in the removal of the paragraph text restricting large-scale advertising.

⁴⁹⁰ Which, to tell the truth, I have not heard in any other state that anyone would be more seriously dealing with. Is it then a specificity of the Czech Republic?

policy, although these matters are connected only through the personal level of the councilors and deputies involved. Therefore, in my opinion, questions⁴⁹⁰ are rightly relevant as to whether the whole system of political accountability should be built differently. Therefore, I ask the following questions: “Why is the vote of deputies and senators in the Parliament of the Czech Republic (especially those in opposition) protected by indemnity and immunity and often more demanding positions of executive mayors of at least a few of the largest cities in the Czech Republic and with them also the whole city councils are not? And, thus: “Who in the Czech Republic should do communal policy? And why?”

On 7 November 2013, the Department of Development of the Capital City of Prague was transformed by the amendment of the deed of incorporation into the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague – a new urban conceptual and planning workplace.

On 31 May 2013, work began on updating the Strategic Plan of the Capital City of Prague called Prague Olympic.

In the summer of 2014, an analysis of the state of the city was completed, which showed that Prague had hundreds of small problems, but no big one. It was bad news for responsible politicians and, on the contrary, great news for lax self-government.

On 7 June 2012, the assignment of the Metropolitan Plan of Prague was approved. It was to be completed in 2015 and approved in 2018.

The Metropolitan Plan newly proposes what may be in the territory, instead of dictating what must be in the territory. It sets new priorities for the development of the territory, height regulation, the nature of

the development, the possible burden on the territory as well as, for example, a suitable extent of the territory for recreation.

In 2012, the creation of new Prague building regulations began. They were completed and approved in June 2014.

In the summer of 2013, the municipality was reorganized and a post of a deputy director for decision-making in the territory was created. He was supposed to oversee the acceleration and improvement of construction permits in the territory.

In the period 2012–2014, more than 2,000 personalities from public and academic life were involved in the city administration as part of “expert participation”.

In 2013, work began on the information center of the capital city of Prague.

23. The content of the reform in 2012–2014

Institute of Planning and Development of the City of Prague

The core of the reform was the transformation of the central planning and expert contributory organization, whose role was also beyond the reform itself. Planning and conceptual institutions or office departments in cities guarantee a certain continuity of the city's development despite electoral periods and political turbulences. Since any reform can succeed only by ensuring adequate staffing capacities – experts, managers and professionals – whose activity is independent of political cycles, the existence of such an institution is a necessary condition for the future conceptual development of the city according to the set course in the long term.

Since the establishment of the Czech statehood in the 1920s, some professional planning organization, or at least a commission, has always had its place in the history of the capital city of Prague. Over the years, however, both its name and structure have changed, and oftentimes also its predominant activity. In the 1920s it was the State Regulatory Commission for Prague and its surroundings. During World War II, the development of Prague was governed by the so-called Planungskommission, after the war called already in Czech – Plánovací komise (Planning Commission). In 1951 the commission was dissolved and at the same time the Office for the Land-Use Plan of the Capital City of Prague was established. In 1961, the Chief Architect's Department was founded by the National Committee of the Capital City of Prague. He was appointed by the Council of the National Committee of the Capital City of Prague. After 1989, the Chief Architect's Department was associated with the socialist system, which led to its abolition, and along with other changes in the sphere of public administration, the Chief Architect's Department was essentially divided into two organizations as of 1 July 1994. This gave rise to the Department of Development of the Capital City of Prague (abbreviated as DDP) as the organization responsible for the preparation of the land-use plan and the Territorial Decision Department of the Prague City Hall – ensuring territorial

decision-making in the delegated powers of the state administration. Subsequently, in 2001, the Development Department was included into the structure of the city as a separate section of the Prague City Hall. However, later on, in March 2005, the City Development Department again became an urban contributory organization. In 2012, the City Development Department had an annual budget in the amount of CZK 220 million and 180 permanent employees. Its task was, besides worrying about the land-use plan, its changes and modifications, also the agenda of the strategic plan, administration and development of digital maps of Prague and geographic information systems⁴⁹¹ and also long-term transport planning⁴⁹².

His reputation after the first decade of the new century was largely devastated by the policy of partial interests of the then political representation.

As part of the initiated reform, on 7th November 2013, the Assembly of the Capital City of Prague approved the transformation of the Development Department of the Capital City of Prague to the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague (IPD). Changes in the statute of the Development Department of the Capital City of Prague were supposed to enable the contributory organization – the Institute of Planning and Development – to better ensure the qualified development of Prague, including the functions that the city can offer to its inhabitants as well as visitors. This can always be achieved only by increasing the requirements for the expertise of employees who will help the city to improve its planning and development. Therefore, the main activities of the IPR included research, as well as education and the use of data, information and knowledge, plus open communication and cooperation with the public and other entities involved in the development of the city.

The essence of the transformation of the DDP to the IPD was, in addition to the new personnel policy, also to change its internal structure so that the topics related to the development of the city were given the highest priority in the hierarchical structure of the organization. Therefore, three basic sections of the institution were created – the detail, plan and strategy sections of the city, whose leaders thus became the top representatives of the new urban planning and analytical institution right after the head of the institute and his deputy. These basic steps subsequently enabled new directors of expert sections with extensive powers to initiate and coordinate works on the conceptual documents that the city needed.

Since it was not possible to find one single person in the Czech Republic, appoint that person with the competence of

⁴⁹¹ The history of professional planning and development bodies of the Capital City of Prague discussed in more detail by Bendová (2018).

⁴⁹² However, not the medium and short term – that belonged to a separate contributory organization of the Institute of Transport Engineering, later incorporated into a contributory organization Technical Road Administration.

the Prague's chief architect and, at the same time, the director of the (in no way well-paid) contributory municipal organization, in the end, the model of the advisory expert body of the Institute director was adopted, which retained a managerial and thus executive function. In this way, the so-called Board of Directors was established, and in 2014, Martin Rajniš, a prominent Czech architect and university professor, became its chairman.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan of the Capital City of Prague was first developed in 2000 and subsequently updated in 2008⁴⁹³. This version was subtitled Prague Olympic. The then political representation set the goal of organizing the Olympic Games in Prague in 2016 and expected it to be a sufficient blockbuster, which, eventually, according to the 2010 election results, was apparently not. However, this purpose completely obscured everything else in the document, which included neither the implementation part nor was it elaborated into sub-projects, measures and action plans. Likewise, it did not set any performance evaluation indicators.

Therefore, by its Resolution No. 903 of 31 May 2013, the City Council of Prague decided to revise this first update⁴⁹⁴ of the 2008 Strategic Plan. The new Director of the Institute of Planning and Development – Tomáš Ctibor – was authorized to start work. It was also necessary to define the basic directions and priorities of development, which would be part of the task of creating a new territorial, or Metropolitan, plan. The main goal of the beginning process, however, was to create such a Strategic Plan that defines and subsequently fulfills the main development goals for Prague by 2030.

Although the deadline for completing the update of the strategic plan was not precisely set, as its parallel continuous development with the Metropolitan Plan was assumed, the work on its introductory part – the analysis – was delayed for personnel reasons against the assumptions and by the end of the parliamentary term only the initial part of the document had been prepared – however, a highly valued and until then not carried out comprehensive analysis of the condition of Prague. Its elaboration was divided into six thematic areas: an open and cohesive city and the potential of active and educated people (people/cohesion), a vibrant city (creativity), a prosperous city (economy), a physically permeable, accessible and connected city (movement/mobility), a functional and aesthetically pleasing environment in the city (including

⁴⁹³ Approved by the Assembly of the Capital City of Prague on Dec. 11, 2008 as Resolution No. 22/42.

⁴⁹⁴ Although this chain of updates raises some doubts about a properly configured system, this is a good practice.

environment and ecology) and a transparent and cleverly managed city (system). One person – a respected expert – was tasked to elaborate and coordinate the work in each of these thematic areas with the help of his own experience, but in particular a series of round tables, workshops and conference meetings, to analyze his topic in detail. The method of analysis can therefore be classified rather as an expert type of strategic planning, not a community type. Overall, around 1,500 experts from all possible fields were involved in various ways in the process of creating the analysis, ranging from economists, geographers, urban planners, sociologists, demographers, historians, philosophers, to representatives of professional associations, non-profit organizations and executives of major companies or government organizations⁴⁹⁵. The basic requirement for the analysis was not its synthesis by the SWOT method, which is not very suitable for a comprehensive assessment of the state of a big city, but rather a problem-oriented document in which every major problem or trend is documented, including proposals for possible measures on a single sheet of A4 paper.

The resulting document was handed over to me as Mayor with responsibility for strategic development in July 2014, i.e. two months before the end of the parliamentary term. The main thesis of the processed material could be summarized as follows: “Prague has a lot of small problems, but no big one.”

None of these minor problems in 2014 threatened with an immediate sharp non-linear development that would result in further problems. For example, certain negative impacts of tourism on the city center were identified: Prague’s low readiness to increase the number of foreigners, weaknesses in promoting culture, and achieved capacity limits of public transport and infrastructure in several places. The document mentioned also a small, almost insignificant social and urban deterioration of some housing estates (especially in Prague 11) and, apart from other things, also pointed out a sufficient, but not high, pace of permitting new buildings.

I certainly did not take this surely positive conclusion of the analysis for Prague lightly at that time. It could be further developed in two completely different directions. A responsible self-government would be concerned that one in the future gradually atrophying problem would entail all other problems and would try to constantly monitor dozens of key indicators. Conversely, for irresponsible self-government, this report meant an opportunity to do nothing. After all, we have no big problem. In other words – extremely demanding and responsible work vs. no action. Today, regrettably, we already know

⁴⁹⁵ A detailed description of the whole process is part of the finished document, accessible also on-line at the IPD Prague website.

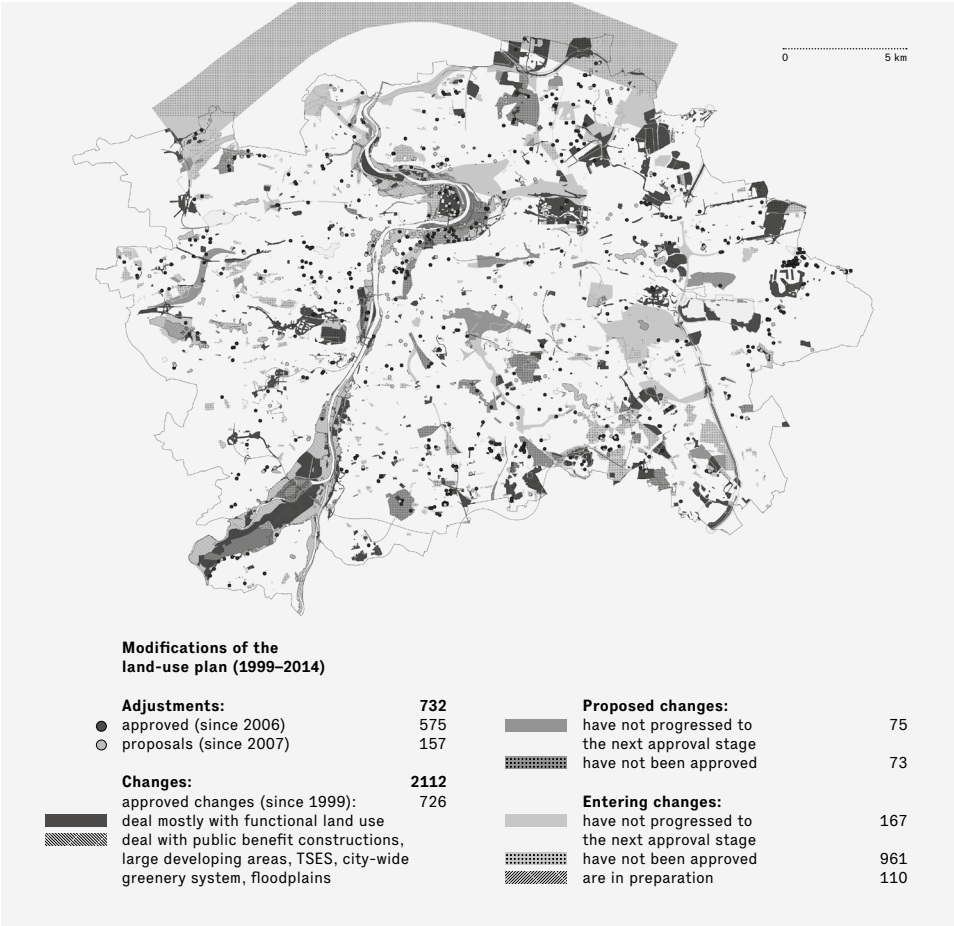


FIG. 46 – Changes to the land-use plan of the capital city of Prague until 2014, source: Koucký et al. (2014)

that the second way was chosen after 2015. And that today, unfortunately, it is already true that “Prague has one big problem”, namely that families with children and the middle class will not live in it.

New territorial “Metropolitan” plan

The valid (still, even in 2019) land-use plan of the settlement unit of the capital city of Prague was approved by the Prague City Assembly in 1999 in effect from 1 January 2000. This land-use plan can be changed by law through amendments or modifications⁴⁹⁶. Until 2014, almost 800 proposals for modifications and more than 2,700 changes were thus submitted to the acquirer, i.e. the Department of the Land-Use Plan of the Prague City Hall (FIG. 46). This really means almost one

⁴⁹⁶ However, only until January 23, 2012, when the capital city of Prague was invited by the Ministry for Regional Development to continue to consider the change in the land-use rate code as a change in the land-use plan (Institute of Planning and Development 2018c).

proposal for a certain type of change every other day. In the 14 years of the land use plan, more than 1,200 modifications or changes were eventually approved, which represents some change every fifth day. The reason for this enormous number of changes was and is the very nature of the land-use plan – a functional zoning system defining “what must be in the territory”. There are 56 such categories in the drawing of the current plan. In the last 25 years, in Europe this type of land-use plan is being abandoned. Territorial plans of this scale in the neighboring countries (Germany, Austria) are conceptual documents of political representation and construction in the territory proceeds according to plans in more detailed scale. Functional zoning is to some extent an anachronism of the land-use planning system of the pre-November era. Its purpose was to separate the then incompatible functions – especially housing and production. However, these days, when industry has largely cultivated its externalities, especially in the case of large service-oriented cities, the trend is, on the contrary, to interconnect functions. In practice, therefore, in Prague, if the investor’s interests do not coincide with the mandatory use of the territory depicted in the plan – which is, in fact, almost always – (s)he must ask for a change or earlier for a modification of the plan. For a variety of reasons, in the case of some of which there was no doubt about their true corrupt cause⁴⁹⁷, in 2012, when I assumed the post of Deputy, some were in the process for 9 years or more. Only slightly less old were the changes of important development areas, which I therefore dealt with as a priority and literally “pushed” them through the Prague City Assembly in the following years. These were areas around today’s railway stations – Masarykovo nádraží and Smíchov – and also Bubny-Zátory brownfield in Holešovice.

In Prague, as a result of many hundreds of approved and unrelated changes to the land-use plan, the composition of the city gradually began to disintegrate, both in terms of height and space. It was necessary to solve not only spatial regulations, but also the height ones – calculated according to the so-called floor area coefficient, which in fact is not a height regulation. In addition to changing functional zoning, it was necessary to define development priorities in accordance with the strategic plan, to differentiate territorial regulations according to their necessity, to define true height regulation and much more.

As part of the transforming Institute of Planning and Development, an office was created whose director was renowned Czech architect and university professor Roman Koucký. He was given a difficult task – to transform the rigid and

essentially purely regulatory existing (Czech-specific) land-use plan according to the standards applicable in western cities. It was necessary to transform a document that tries to solve – in the spirit of Czech legislation – everything, and unfortunately it does not solve anything.

For ease of reference, this new intended plan was called a metropolitan plan, although – and this is important – because of legal constraints, it does not address the metropolitan area of Prague, including its hinterland, but only the city itself within its administrative boundaries. This situation, which concerns, among other things, also in scale less detailed documents – the Principles of Territorial Development of the Region – creates at the administrative borders of Prague a boundary, which does not exist in the real world. This problem will have to be addressed in the future as part of public administration reform.

To this end, the drawing up of the plan was finally commissioned by the Prague City Assembly on June 7, 2012⁴⁹⁸. The work schedule was set up so that the land-use plan would be approved by the following political representation resulting from the 2018 elections. The launching of the public discussion of the plan was targeted for 2015 and its approval expected in 2018. However, meanwhile, at the level of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, some passages of the Building Act have been changed and as a result of waiting for this amendment⁴⁹⁹ the original work schedule has been delayed by the end of 2014.

Part of the assignment was also my agreement with Professor Koucký and the team of processors that first an extensive textual and graphic material would be elaborated, describing the nature of the created metropolitan plan, the methodology of its creation and the meaning of the regulations and limits set therein. This would then be subjected to professional as well as lay discussion, from which the maximum for the next procedure would be extrapolated. This unprecedentedly large and methodologically exceptional publication – *Metropolitan Plan: Rationale Concept* – was published in mid-2014. It is divided into 18 separate thematic workbooks and, like other documents, can be downloaded from the website of the Institute of Planning and Development.

By the end of 2014, in addition to this document, also the key works on the background and basic characteristics of the Metropolitan Plan were successfully completed. Its basic thesis is Prague as a modern and sustainable city striving for an appropriate combination of three basic pillars of sustainability – social, economic and environmental – which intensively utilizes the capacity of its internal environment and forms a

⁴⁹⁷ According to eyewitnesses, who had however never published the matter for fear of their own business, it was a relatively simple extortion mechanism in the spirit of the principle „until you pay, the change will not be approved“. But processes thus set have gradually created something that is now called debt to truth. Only the strongest, or investors connected to this system, could continue to survive. The most solid ones, on the other hand, would gradually leave. The construction carried out by the investors involved in the system continued to run despite the gradual complication of the processes. There was no need to resist new state legislative measures from the point of view of municipal self-government.

⁴⁹⁸ Resolution No. 2 M/2 of the Prague City Assembly

⁴⁹⁹ Act No. 350/2012 Coll., Dated 19 September 2012, amending Act No. 183/2006 Coll., on land-use planning and building regulations, came into effect on 1 January 2013.

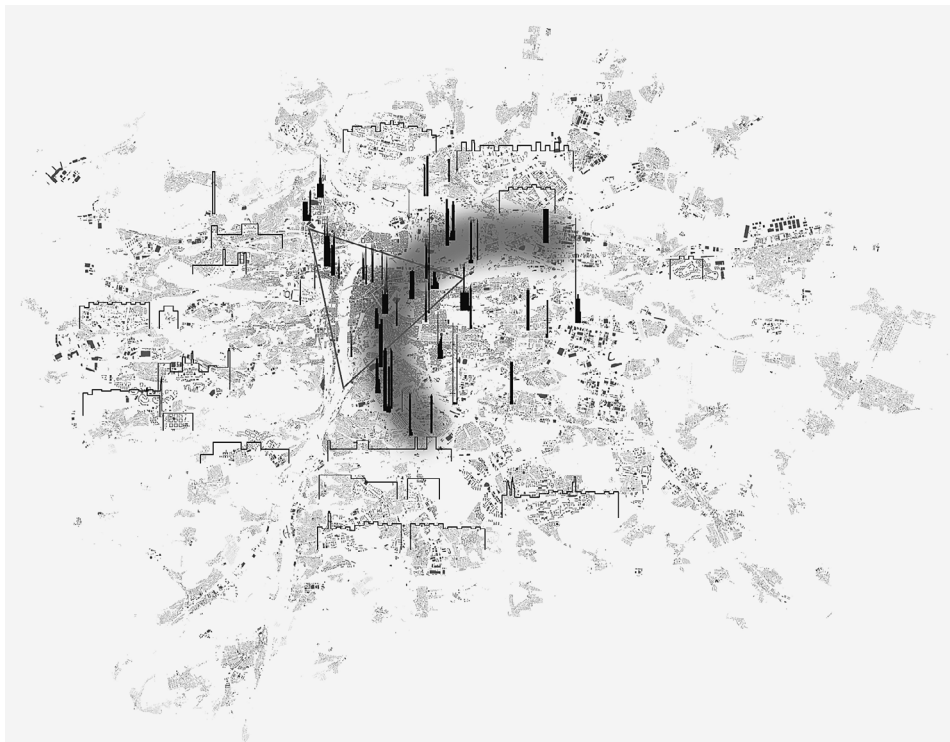


FIG. 47 – Area of future intensive development of Prague, source: Koucký et al. (2014)

compact development. Therefore, one of the basic theses of the Metropolitan Plan was the need for implosion of architecture into the space of the city. Of course, not all areas are prepared for such intensification. For example, the historic core of the city is valued precisely for what it is. Similarly, caution should be exercised in the case of housing estates, as these were and still are formed (partly successfully and partly unsuccessfully) as places seeking an appropriate combination of “urban” character and landscape. In other words, the main objective of the plan is to facilitate the penetration of high-quality construction, especially into the present unused areas in the wider background of the center of Prague.

In this context, the identification of sites suitable for high-rise construction⁵⁰⁰ has also been discussed at length. Unfortunately, the height regulation, common in the land-use plans of western metropolises, based on the usual limitation of the height of buildings in meters or floors, is replaced in the current land-use plan of Prague by a rule based on the so-called built-up index which, unfortunately, does not restrict height too much. That places the floor area of the entire building in relation to the territory. In other words, it is possible to build

high-rise buildings are several meters lower. If the Metropolitan Plan talks about high-rise buildings, it is precisely such heights of houses that already exist in several places in Prague. It is not appropriate to call them skyscrapers.

⁵⁰¹ pursuant to Act No. 183/2006 Coll. on land-use planning and building regulations in its further wording

narrow and tall buildings on a large plot of land without contradicting the current, otherwise very strict regulations in the territory. This practice should therefore also be changed. The greatest possible future development potential of the city, including high-rise buildings, was eventually identified especially in the area of the right-bank inner-city arch (FIG. 47).

Updating principles of territorial development of the capital city of Prague

Spatial planning documentation in the Czech Republic has three basic levels⁵⁰¹ – national spatial development policy, principles of spatial development of individual regions (14 of them) and land-use plans of cities. The principles of territorial development of the region lay down general rules of development of the given territory and also set development plans of supra-local importance. The main task of the principles of territorial development of all regions is to ensure that the individual territorial plans of municipalities are linked and not mutually contradictory. The law stipulates that they must be regularly updated at least every 4 years.

In the case of Prague, which is, at the same time, a municipality, a statutory city and a region, this, however, does not make much sense, since both the principles of territorial development of the region and the territorial plan of the settlement unit of the capital city of Prague cover the same territory. Both are binding for decision-making in the territory. The land-use plan is more detailed than the principles of territorial development of the region. Their scales are 1 : 10,000 or 1 : 50,000. In case of any major change of the land-use plan it is always necessary, at the same time, to change the regional principles of territorial development and vice versa. And when approving each of these two documents, it is always necessary to either prove the change being created or at least the assignment of this change in the other of these documents. It is a truly terrible system.

In 2014, the valid Principles of Spatial Development of the Capital City of Prague were approved by the Municipal Assembly on 17th December 2010⁵⁰². In 2011, however, the Supreme Administrative Court canceled part of this resolution, in part based on the submission of one of the city districts, which appealed against the management of the second parallel runway of Václav Havel Airport Prague. And, at the same time, it also complied with the submissions of residents of other city districts regarding the external route, i.e. the Prague Motorway Ring⁵⁰³. These interventions of the court significantly

⁵⁰⁰ Unfortunately, in the very conservative Czech Republic, anything that height-wise exceeds a certain level of our tolerance is incorrectly called a skyscraper. In reality, however, buildings around the world are not called this until they reach 150, and now even 200 meters. The tallest building in the Czech Republic is AZ Tower in the Brno–Center city district with the height of the antenna 116 m (the height of the building 111 m). Prague’s

⁵⁰² Resolution No. 35/29 of the Prague City Assembly

⁵⁰³ These were sections of the ring road: motorway D1–Běchovice and Březíněves–Horní Počernice.

disrupted the long-term conceptions of the development of the territory of the capital city of Prague. Another point, which was therefore introduced within the reform of the territorial development policy, was the speedy implementation of the new update of the Principles of territorial development of the region which would succeed in other legal disputes.

In 2012, the Institute of Planning and Development was given the task, during the correcting of the previous draft of the document, before submitting it to the Prague City Assembly, to assign it to three reputable law firms in the area of administrative law in the Czech Republic, both at the beginning of the creation process and mainly before the final part of the completion of the entire resolution. The prepared material was approved at the last September (2014) meeting of the Assembly in our election period⁵⁰⁴.

Building regulations

The land-use plan is a suitable tool for the conception of area development, but it is less suitable in case of its use for decision-making in area development. The reason is its scale, which cannot cover the details of the city, i.e. blocks and buildings. All natural and juridical persons and the relevant public authorities are obliged⁵⁰⁵ to respect the general requirements for construction laid down in implementing regulations, which are three⁵⁰⁶ for the territory of the Czech Republic, for land-use planning and design activities, for permitting, carrying out, using and removing constructions.

Prague is empowered by the Construction Act to replace national standards with its own regulation⁵⁰⁷. In 2012, however, the “Prague” Decree in force was from the substantive point of view already far behind the needs and trends of regulatory documents in the European context. Its content often addressed the outdated problems of the city during the Industrial Revolution and did not take into account the development of urbanism in recent decades. The requirements of the decree were directed to the construction of a city with a large built-up area and low population density. At the same time, the trend of segregation of the city’s functions was based on the problems caused by the industrial revolution and mass migration of people from rural areas to cities in the second half of the 19th century, and not with the current exactly opposite trend of urban sprawl associated with suburbanization. A review of such obsolete regulations was therefore necessary.

In 2012, I commissioned the Institute of Planning and Development to work out new rules for construction and Pavel

⁵⁰⁴ Resolution No. 41/1 of 11 September 2014 approved the Update of the Principles of Territorial Development of the Capital City of Prague No. 1. as a general measure No. 43/2014, this document entered into force with effect from 1 October 2014.

⁵⁰⁵ according to Section 169 paragraph 1 of the Building Act

⁵⁰⁶ These are Decree No. 501/2006 Coll. on general requirements for land use, then Decree No. 268/2006 Coll. on technical requirements, and finally Decree No. 398/2009 Coll. on general technical requirements ensuring barrier-free use of buildings.

⁵⁰⁷ This regulation, entitled “General technical requirements for construction” for the territory of the capital city, was set in 2011 by Decree No. 26/1999 Coll. of the Capital City of Prague, on general technical requirements for construction (GTRP) in the City of Prague, as amended, issued in delegated powers by the Council of the Prague City Assembly on 19 October 1999; at that time still in accordance with the previous legal regulation in the municipal establishment No. 367/1990 Coll. and in the Building Act No. 50/1976 Coll.

⁵⁰⁸ Until recently, there was a great misunderstanding in the Czech Republic between the sufficient illumination of apartments (which is fine) and insolation (which is nowadays often perceived as a negative feature). In a document approved in June 2014 and later revised in 2016, this contradiction against the will of the Ministry for Regional Development has not yet been resolved. The joint personal initiative of the Director of the Institute of Planning and Development of the City of Capital City of Prague Mgr. Ondřej Boháč and Kamila Dostalová, Minister for Regional Development, managed to remove this „mistake” from the given regulation.

⁵⁰⁹ jako nařízení č. 11/2014 Sb. hl. m. Prahy

Hnilička, an extremely knowledgeable architect in that issue, with international experience, was appointed as the head of the team. His task was to grasp the issue of building regulations so that the preconditions for the emergence of quality new architecture in accordance with modern trends, as well as monument protection and exceptional values of the capital city of Prague were created. That is, to enable the use of traditional planning and construction tools, which should preserve the classic urban construction structure using building blocks and street lines, with an emphasis on living parterre and residential public spaces.

The creation of the document had to be coordinated with the progress of the work on the Metropolitan Plan, however, so that building regulations would not depend on its approval. The main objective and, at the same time, task was to create a comprehensive system of “simple” planning, development and construction in Prague. In other words, both the regulation and the land-use plan must speak the same language. Therefore, when writing the document, it was assumed that individual regulations were defined in the Metropolitan Plan and vice versa. Including, for example, the division of the territory of the city according to built-up and the possibility of building-up (stabilized, transformational, developmental, non-development), expected rate of change (stability), character (division into locations), prevailing use and the extent of land use to build up, which are all subdivisions included also in the Metropolitan Plan.

Emphasis during the assignment and subsequent creation of new building regulations was put in particular on the need to place buildings with street and construction lines (= creation of a classic city) and height regulation, a location-dependent parking solution – in the center without cars, on the edge with a sufficient number of parking spaces, on building spacing and apartment lighting⁵⁰⁸, and also public space regulations, requiring, for example, a duty to create alleys from a specific street width, etc.

An important aspect of the “simplicity” of the system created, and at the same time a novelty, was to make use in the regulation, in justified cases, provisions of the so-called dispositional nature in the form of requirements specified by the term “usually”. That is, always, unless the objective conditions preclude it and the builder must duly justify these exceptions, in other words, in justified and duly explained cases.

Prague Building Regulations (abbreviated as PBR) were approved by the Prague City Council in 2014⁵⁰⁹.

Reorganization of Prague City Hall

One of the main objectives of the whole reform was to speed up the decision-making on construction, which took in 2012 for large projects often 5 or more years. However, in addition to the ubiquitous human factor, the city's decision-making barriers in this regard have been (and still are) influenced mostly by state legislation. Both territorial decision-making departments and building authorities belong to the area of state-administrative decision-making. However, as one of the main problems proved to be non-compliance with the statutory deadlines for comments at individual offices (especially in the case of appeals), it seemed appropriate to subject this system of "expressers" to self-governing control at the management level.

Therefore, the reorganization of the Prague City Hall was to put all departments affected by the building permit processes into one section – thus creating the so-called Section of decision-making on the territory of the of Prague City Hall – headed by a person who would be – not from the material point of view but from the managerial and personnel point of view – a superior of the state-administration decision-making agenda. Therefore, his or her task was not supposed to be to interfere with the substance of the decision, but as the supervisor, (s)he was tasked with setting up a system of control of the authorization processes so that there was no delay in the deadlines for making the decision. Also, to avoid further excesses, especially in cases of conflicting opinions of the two state administration bodies concerned, and thus the factual impassibility of "anything" new in the territory.

The reorganization for me then quite incomprehensibly in the coalition (CDP-TOP09) stuck on the current cast in the management of some unions and I have reasons to believe that it was a reminiscence of previously established corrupt orders. In May 2013, the then Mayor of the Council of the Capital City of Prague blocked my proposal for change. I succeeded in its enforcement only after his dismissal (including all members of the City Council from the CDP), thus, only after the establishment of a new agreement on the continued administration of the city with another of the political parties (CSDP) in the Assembly.

Manual for creating public spaces

Although the center of Prague has been increasingly transformed from the typical gray post-communist city with broken

facades of houses since the 1990s as a result of tourism pressures, public space in the wider center as well as near the development of villas more remote from the center, semi-detached houses and modernist settlements remained, with a few exceptions (new playgrounds, thermal insulation of pre-fabricated houses) are significantly unchanged. Separating pedestrian and car areas, except for bus stops, the vast diversity of street furniture, dozens of (surplus) columns and signs with individual use on the slightest stretch of street or square, impassable intersections at the corners of public spaces and squares, and many others were (and at some places still are) typical attributes of the capital city of Prague, as well as other post-communist cities.

As a Prague-wide politician, it makes no sense to solve every tree or square. The strength of the Mayor is not to push planting a tree somewhere. That can be equally well and practically with the same speed pushed through also by an ordinary citizen or civic association. The power of political representation is in the fact that with its help it is possible to set processes and rules so that, for example, trees are automatically planted along with the revitalization of squares and streets.

The situation had not been dealt with for so long that in 2012 it required the establishment of the Public Space Office within the Institute of Planning and Development, whose director was appointed Pavla Melková, an architect experienced in that issue. Its main task was to develop a conceptual material that, once approved, could be implemented in every investment project, in any reconstruction of roads or public space, and define the quality (of objects, shapes, materials, etc.) in the public space with respect to the international standard, but also the specifics of Prague, and which will be addressed to all participants involved in the creation of public spaces. Unlike most developed metropolises, Prague had never had a similar document before 2012.

The Manual of creating public spaces in the capital city of Prague was drawn up at the end of 2013 and I finally carried it to the Council⁵¹⁰ with its sister document – Strategy for the development of public spaces. Like building regulations – and unlike them, it is not regulatory and legally binding – the Public Space Manual envisages exceptions to the rules which, however, must be justified. It also counts on the fact that the degree of difficulty of the applied solutions must depend on the hierarchy of meaning of individual public spaces in the unit of the city. The rules are therefore scaled according to the degree of "hardness" from strict "must/must not,

⁵¹⁰ Resolution of the City of Prague Council No. 904 of 31 May 2013

recommended” to “can/should not”. The public space manual, like other documents, is available in digital form on the website of the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague.

Concept of Prague banks

One of the traditional types of public spaces, which is also distinguished in the above-described Manual, is the waterfront. The banks of the Vltava River in Prague are changing their character in connection with the environment they pass through, from natural banks in the narrow necks of the canyons to the wide banks of the floodplain landscape to urban stone embankments with alluviums. This public space is therefore partly residential, partly relaxing or promenade, but also partly representative. On the other hand, the river is a transport route and its surroundings can, with a little effort, form a permeable corridor for pedestrians or cyclists.

Given that the Vltava River is an important city-forming element in the capital city of Prague – in its entire scope and length, by far not only in the area of the Old or New Town – I agreed in this case to create a separate Concept of Prague banks. The original 10 points of the reform of territorial development policy have thus grown to 11.

The 340-page document was completed in 2014 within the Public Space Office of the Institute of Planning and Development and approved by the Prague City Council in February 2014⁵¹¹. The document forms the basis for coordinating and meeting the goal of quality development of Prague’s banks in terms of urban planning, investments, exploitation, management and protection. The Concept of Prague banks divides the Vltava River in Prague into three basic sections – North, South and the city center – and defines different objectives, measures and development tools for each of these sections. The document addresses both city-wide issues related to the river, the legislative framework, ports and docks, passenger and freight transport on the river, ferries, sports and recreational facilities.

An essential element in the document was the proposal to establish a coordinating body of the capital city of Prague competent in the matters of development, management and utilization of the embankment in the city center: Municipal Waterfront Administrator. The reason for this step was the complex legal and administrative character of the territory.

But also the utilization of the waterfronts in different times of the day and the year, when it was constantly necessary to

respond sensitively to requests and questions in the vicinity of residents, tourists and visitors, cyclists or fans of evening entertainment. Furthermore, it is also an area significantly affected by floods, which brings additional organizational and technical requirements. The city waterfront manager was therefore entrusted with the task of being an intermediary and partner of completely different types of participants: on the one hand, state administration authorities, in particular river basin and waterway administrators, on the other hand small operators of services and activities on the waterfronts and finally to the public as the primary circle of waterfront users, whose interests always intersect in the city center. The competencies, responsibility and duties of the Municipal Waterfront Administrator consisted mainly in maintaining a balance in the use of the banks.

In the course of 2014, this activity was carried out extremely responsibly by a shipbuilder and, inter alia, also a river navigation lecturer, Mr. Daniel Hagen, of course with a significant contribution of the Municipal Police and other organizational units of the city. During 2014, it became apparent that in order to do good work, comply with the sailing and selling rules, and especially to keep the waterfronts, particularly after Friday or Saturday nights, in a good condition, essentially constant supervision and the presence of the administrator are needed, often even at night. Personally, I lived near Prague waterfronts in the course of my term of office and together with Daniel Hagen we had to deal with problematic situations several times related to, for example, inadequate order maintenance, insufficient presence of the municipal police, insufficient collection of waste and cleaning after exuberant, usually Friday or Saturday nights, and many other areas.

Sounding Board

All the steps and measures undertaken in the framework of the reform had to be weighed professionally. Therefore, an expert advisory body of the Council of the Capital City of Prague was established in the issues of urban development, whose basic task was to provide feedback to the Prague City Council and give recommendations for solving specific issues related to the development of the city. It was therefore a body that itself did not create concepts of development. This activity was left to the self-government and the experts delegated by them. The advisory body was named, by its very nature, a “Sound Board”. The plenum comprised about 80 members, including representatives of organizations, non-profit associations,

⁵¹¹ Resolution No. 162 of 4 February 2014

state administration bodies as well as private corporations, but mostly composed of experts from various fields of science – economists, architects, engineers, geographers, philosophers, theologians, urbanists, sociologists, psychologists and many others.

After the initial discussions in 2012, the whole project was institutionalized into 4 large one-day meetings each year – partly in the form of a plenary meeting and partly in the form of roundtables. Always after four meetings, i.e. in one year, one third of the staff changed. The meetings took place under the auspices and organization of the Institute of Planning and Development. They were held in the premises of the First Republic residence of the Mayor of Prague on Mariánské náměstí. Their content was provided by members of the Prague City Council through project managers and directors of individual offices of the Institute of Planning and Development⁵¹². Personally, I was present at all the meetings of this advisory body, gathering valuable knowledge and learning different perspectives on the individual issues discussed or the measures proposed.

Both the proposal of the metropolitan plan and the individual theses of the strategic plan were presented on the Sounding Board. The Public Space Office asked experts for opinions on the layout and concept of public space development. There the Deputy Mayor of Prague, responsible for tourism, tourist industry and culture, received valuable advice on the development of the long-time neglected Prague Exhibition Grounds in Holešovice. The meetings were recorded, archived and made available on the website of the Institute of Planning and Development. These recordings also include conclusions of discussions and suggestions for possible changes of the discussed measures.

Prague for People project

The development of the territory of the capital city of Prague during the transitional reform period – especially until the Metropolitan Spatial Plan was approved – had to be managed very responsibly in order to avoid excessive discrepancies between the present and future intended condition.

This process had to be addressed most urgently in the changes to the land-use plan, since their number has gradually increased since 2000 and the original concept according to which the land-use plan was created had already lost its validity. The existing land-use plan and changes to the land-use plan are like Siamese twins in this respect, one without the

⁵¹³ The process of making changes to the land-use plan by the city – however, it is more suitable to use the term “assessment” – is given by law. It is the official duty of the city. Initiatives to change the land-use plan from people, investors or city districts are processed by the Land-Use Plan Department of the Prague City Hall and through the responsible councilor it submits them all to the Council and subsequently also to the Assembly of the Capital City of Prague. Only one body is decisive – The Assembly of the Capital City of Prague. Any resolutions of other bodies are not binding. The Department may process certain changes as a matter of priority so that they are on the agenda sooner. However, sooner or later (and unfortunately there is a lot of room for corruption), the Assembly of the Capital City of Prague must comment on all changes and initiatives. There is no other proper solution. The Prague City Assembly always expresses its opinion on each change three times in a sequence, but each vote has different content. The first vote decides whether it makes sense to deal with the site at all. The second vote discusses what the site might look like. Expert opinion on the given territory is formed. The city will thus clarify what it expects from the given site. In the third vote the change is either approved or disapproved – depending on whether the original suggestion

other does not work. Unfortunately, today's still valid Land-use plan of the settlement unit of the capital city of Prague is set up to block almost any development of the city without the possibility of changes. It was therefore necessary to find an appropriate compromise so that all new investors' intentions were in line with the defined priorities of the new land-use plan and at the same time that development did not suffer too much due to the changes during the reform period. The solution proved to return the process of deciding on changes to the land-use plan to regular tracks and not be afraid to make competent and transparent decisions⁵¹³. Therefore, at the beginning of 2012, I set up an advisory body to the Prague City Council – the Commission for Changes to the Land Use Plan. It consisted of 12 architects and urban planners, who at regular monthly meetings assessed each change from a professional point of view and subsequently recommended it to the Prague City Council for its acceptance or non-acceptance. This has greatly increased the ability of us politicians – representatives – to assess whether or not a given change in the land-use plan is in line with the city's long-term objectives. The opinion of the Commission was not always respected, although in the vast majority of cases it was. Sometimes political interests prevailed, sometimes local interests.

However, not even this Commission for the changes to the land-use plan could completely replace the need for civic participation in decision-making. That is why, after a series of discussions with my advisors at the end of 2012, I launched also a project called “Prague for People”, whose aim was to gradually transform access to public space by trying to involve the public in shaping it. First, a new website was set up to enable people to participate actively. If the residents were not satisfied with what their street looked like or how the immediate surroundings of their apartment or house were being solved, they were able to use an interactive map and suggest solutions to the problematic place. However, due to the gradually and rapidly growing activity of the newly transformed Institute of Planning and Development, also especially in the area of population participation and the organization of public meetings, the Prague for People project gradually focused more closely on problematic investor intentions in the area and changes to the land-use plan.

Whenever a certain number of comments were exceeded, and therefore problems related to a certain change in the land-use plan, my meeting with local citizens in the given locality, usually a local school or community center, was prepared as part of the project. Between 2013 and 2014, these meetings

⁵¹² Here I just have to mention the excellent pancakes loved by all, which were served during lunch break by catering.

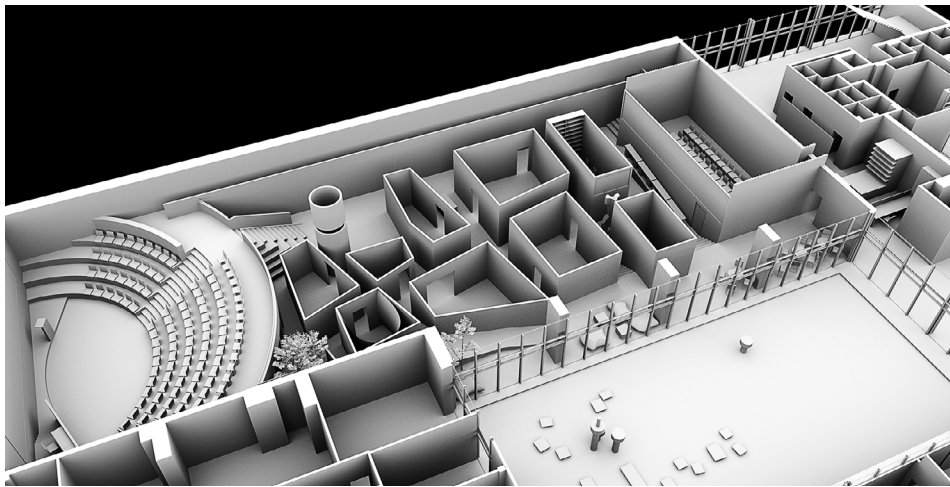


FIG. 48 – One of the first architectural designs of the Information Center in 2013, source: Institute of Planning and Development

is in line with the city's view of the given site. That is why it is quite right and normal for the Prague City Assembly to say gradually "yes" to the change for the first time, "yes" for the second time and "no" for the third time. Even such a process is beneficial for the city – it gained an opinion on the given locality, which will help local citizens and possible other applicants for change. The problem, however, is that this process takes a very long time.

⁵¹⁴ The results of these public discussions were not, in part perhaps also surprisingly, merely negative in terms of development plans. For example, even in the case of one very thorny change – the conversion of a neglected area in the Vidoule locality in the city district of Prague 5 – due to the meeting with citizens on 20 February 2013, it was proposed not to further support this

with citizens took place on average every three weeks or every month. The often very demanding discussion with the inhabitants was eventually feasible thanks to the professional approach of the Czech non-profit organization AGORA CE dealing with participation methods for a long time⁵¹⁴.

Information Center of the Capital City of Prague

The last, but by no means the least significant point in the reform of the development policy of the territory of the capital city of Prague was to create an urban information center, following the example of large foreign centers. In the face of modern times, it was no longer possible to prepare development concepts and, despite the size of Prague and the logical separation of its administration from the population, to leave these without information about where "their" city intends to go, and therefore whether they should, and where and how much to engage. In my opinion, the development of the city can be successful in the long term only if the relationship between the inhabitants of the city and its administration is set correctly. We have already described earlier that in cities that have long been successful in the world rankings of quality of life, there is also a generally higher turnout at elections⁵¹⁵.

Therefore, the Institute of Planning and Development received additional money within the 2013 and later also 2014 budgets for the implementation of the information center with a library, a café, a lecture and projection hall. A suitable place was long considered. The buildings around the town hall in the

change in the land-use plan, but to examine the possible development in only one part of the given territory. And so it subsequently happened – on 19 September 2013, the Resolution of the Assembly No. 31/20 did not approve the proposal to enter this amendment no. Z – 2765/00 and later, at the renewed request of the landowners, work began on a new change. However, according to responses and discussions held at the end of 2014, even this would probably require a similar public meeting again. It was and still is a sensitive piece in the western part of the territory of the capital city of Prague.

⁵¹⁵ for more see Trojan's study (2018)

city center near the Old Town Square were considered. In the end, however, it was decided that the Information Center would be created directly on the premises of the Institute of Planning and Development, in one of three buildings designed in the 1960s by architect Karel Prágr.

As part of the reconstruction of the premises, a walk-through exhibition hall with the option of several parallel projections and a lecture hall (FIG. 48) was intended to be created. However, we completely underestimated the complexity of the legislation related to the public procurement and the completion of the information center was constantly prolonged and postponed. At the end of the parliamentary term in October 2014, the information center was only about half completed. The system of public procurement and investment processes in public administration did not allow us to prepare, compete and carry out a complete reconstruction of the building in two years. The process of construction of the information center thus affected roughly half of the next parliamentary term.

Hundreds of small problems in 2015 became a justification for politicians that nothing needed to be solved. In 2016, however, several problems met and caused a crisis in the housing market.

Due to the opposition of the following political representation, the Metropolitan Plan was not submitted for public discussion until 2018, with a possible date of approval in 2022.

Through their media and political influence, advertising companies managed to suspend the effectiveness of the Prague Building Regulations and remove the reformist political representation.

The Deputy Director of the Prague City Hall for the section of decision-making in the territory was not chosen in the entire 2014-2018 election period.

Between 2014 and 2018, three people took turns at the position of Director of the Institute of Planning and Development: Tomáš Ctibor, Petr Hlaváček and Ondřej Boháč.

Affordable housing in Prague can be re-established only in the case of deeper reform measures than those implemented in 2012-2014.

24. Evaluation of reform and individual measures after 5 Years

The political representation of the capital city of Prague was changed in the fall 2014 elections. I became an opposition representative and, moreover, without any political power, after my political party expelled me with some fraud. The new coalition in Prague in 2014 was formed partly by activist, locally oriented political groupings, but partly also by a specific phenomenon of the current Czech political scene – the oligarchic group. It was thus possible for the next 4 years to observe, almost in real time, whether the high-quality city administration, including the still-developing Institute of Planning and Development, would be able to maintain the set trajectory of further development of the city, or in what areas and how many deviations would occur. From today's perspective – from the turn of 2018/2019 – it is possible to go through individual projects one by one in this way. In the end we will try to make an overall evaluation.

During 2015 and 2016, the update of the Strategic Plan of the Capital City of Prague was completed, which was approved on 24 November 2016 by the Prague City Assembly⁵¹⁶. The approved document is based on the analysis produced in 2014, but it is more of a framework than a development strategy. It sets a fairly appropriate vision of the city, namely Prague as the cultural metropolis of Central Europe, but – and that is very serious – it was extremely out of date already in its approval year. It does not reflect at all the deterioration of the housing market situation, nor describes the link between this phenomenon and many other socio-economic indicators – house and apartment rental prices, income-based segregation of inhabitants, demographic indicators, and others. Prague is beginning to transform itself into a city where families with children live on the outskirts of the city in a suburban development outside the administrative territory⁵¹⁷, which is not mentioned in any key urban development document. Updating the Strategic Plan fails also in the core function mentioned in earlier sections. It does not set a targeted future population to which self-governments would focus their

⁵¹⁶ Resolution No. 21/7 of the Prague City Assembly

⁵¹⁷ Most cities all over the world also were not able to avoid this trend, but there are countless exceptions that have managed it. Vienna is a good example in this respect.

measures under housing, transport, infrastructure and other policies.

The new Prague Building Regulations approved by the Prague City Council⁵¹⁸ came into effect on 1 October 2014 and replaced the previous legislation. Already in the last but one chapter, we explained – when describing the political situation – that, however, these subsequently became part of the Prague-wide election campaign fed by a cartel of companies operating advertising spaces. “Officially” this situation is described as a result of not incorporating some comments on material from the Ministry for Regional Development, especially as a requirement for notification by the European Commission, but in fact it was only because no one of the incoming political representation wanted to mess with the powerful (especially in relation to politicians) billboard companies.

On 16 January 2015, the Ministry for Regional Development decided to suspend the effectiveness of the Prague Building Regulations. This created a situation where for the territory of the capital city of Prague no specific building rules were in force, and from the date of suspension it was necessary to apply nation-wide regulation⁵¹⁹. This situation was generally perceived as undesirable, and also the opinions on its legality varied considerably. After a series of discussions, in the middle of 2016, with 4 exceptions, the Prague City Council finally approved their original (!) version, but as one of these exceptions was also a revision of the paragraph on the regulation of billboards (and to date, there is essentially a toothless rule in terms of advertising regulation in Prague), the whirling waters around the document have ceased. Its second version has already been approved without problems and was not contradicted by the Ministry for Regional Development.

Over the years, the Institute of Planning and Development has worked intensively to improve the document's quality. In the summer 2018, the material in the City Council was updated again. From the point of view of construction of the city very important but in the Czech building law very problematically set measure on the obligation of sun rays to reach 1/3 of the floor area of apartments on 1st March was removed from it⁵²⁰. After a long-term effort of the director of IPD, this rule of so-called insolation of apartments was compared with normal lighting of apartments in neighboring countries.

The Public Space Manual has been implemented in other documents of the city and since 2014 every reconstruction of public space in Prague takes place in accordance with it. However, a related document – the Concept of the Prague Banks – has fallen partly into “political disfavor”. In particular,

⁵¹⁸ Regulation No. 11/2014 Coll. of the Capital City of Prague, laying down general requirements for land use and technical requirements for buildings in the capital city of Prague.

⁵²¹ This fact came to light against the will of the then self-government thanks to published interviews by Professor Koucký (Koucký 2017).

⁵²³ And there were not few of them. In its judgment of 10 June 2015, the Municipal Court in Prague rejected the motion from a natural person seeking the cancellation of the Beranka level crossing. Furthermore, city districts Prague-Dolní Chabry, Prague-Ďáblice, Prague-Lysolaje, Prague-Nebuše, Prague-Suchdol and other legal entities seeking the cancellation of the Ruzyně airport area, including the New Parallel Runway and specific areas. City districts Prague-Dolní Chabry, Prague-Ďáblice, Prague-Lysolaje, Prague-Nebuše, Prague-Suchdol, Prague-Satalice, Prague 20, Prague-Vinoř, Jenštejn, Přezletice, Radonice, Podolanka and natural persons seeking cancellation of corridors and areas for the Prague Ring Road. The Prague-Dolní Chabry city district, the Chvalská association and natural persons who sought the abolition of corridors and areas for the Prague Ring Road. And also to natural persons who sought the cancellation of the Václav Havel Airport Prague areas (Institute of Planning and Development 2019).

the most lucrative and most frequently visited part of the Vltava River banks in the city – the waterfront in the area of the Smetana Embankment – has been used differently from what was intended since 2014, especially for commercial reasons. The function of the city manager was cancelled. Open to the public, but in terms of security and, for example, the disturbance of the night calm of the extremely guarded area, it has become a wilder visitor zone on the one hand and space for several companies abusing the relaxed situation on the other.

In the first two and a half years of the next parliamentary term, the draft of the new land-use plan of the metropolis was the target of an attack by activist groups. In 2015 and 2016, two directors of the Institute of Planning and Development were gradually dismissed, always in the context of the effort of the self-government to cancel the preparation of the land-use plan, which both prevented until their dismissal. In 2016, the Commission of the Council of the Capital City of Prague “for control over the completion” of the Metropolitan Plan was established, and for about 2 years the team of processors was tasked with topics other than the completion of work that started in 2012⁵²¹.

Every detail in the proposal of the plan was discussed repeatedly. Particular attention was paid to height regulation. Here the team of Prof. Koucký received critical voices from both camps – both the irreconcilable ones, protesting against any increase in development, but also supporters of modern administrative districts, who found the regulation of an otherwise brave professor of architecture to be excessive. However, both of these reactions probably confirmed the good judgment of the processor.

The public discussion of the Metropolitan Plan⁵²² did not begin until the summer of 2018, i.e. roughly at a time when the original work schedule envisaged its approval. The expected approval of the document was thus postponed until 2022.

Principles of territorial development, or their update, approved in September 2014 and allowing, among other things, the completion of the outer ring road around Prague, the parallel runway at Václav Havel Airport and several other previously court disputed measures, were expected to be the subject of several assaults in the courts. However, all of them withstood legal disputes until the beginning of 2019⁵²³. In the meantime, two other updates concerning the management of some railway corridors were completed and approved by the Prague City Assembly, but without well-defined routes of the corridors of the Territorial Environmental Stability System

(TESS) whose change has been demanded for a long time within the city development.

The reorganization of the municipality was already broken and changed in 2015. The deputy director of the Prague City Hall responsible for early and trouble-free decision-making on the territory was not selected for 4 years. The post was held as an authorized representative by the Director of the Monument Care Department. Again, the need for a coordinating officer has been discussed only by the following political representation since the beginning of 2019.

Since 2015, the Sounding Board has stopped meeting as the advisory board of the Mayor of the city. The Prague for People project was not followed with any other projects.

The information center, after a partial revision of its concept, was completed in mid-2016 as the Center for Architecture and Urban Planning (abbreviated as CAUP). The architect and popularizer of architecture Adam Gebrian also participated in the design and implementation. The main mission of the information center was to improve the public debate on the development of Prague in line with the 2012 assignment. CAUP therefore acts as an open platform for anyone interested in joint planning and development of Prague.

In addition to its basic information center function, CAUP also features an exhibition hall with a unique large-screen projection, a study room, a café, an outdoor terrace and a modern lecture hall with a rich program consisting of public discussions, performances by domestic as well as foreign experts, workshops, projects and other activities (FIG. 49). Several times a week there are thematic lectures and public discussions on urban planning and architecture. At the same time, exhibitions are constantly being installed and continuously replaced there, oriented especially towards the capital city of Prague. The information center also serves as a shop selling books published by the Institute of Planning and Development or other publishers.

Finally, the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague, created as a necessary part of the future administration of the city, serving mainly to encompass the enormous complexity of the city with a million inhabitants, remained in roughly the same role it was given in 2012–2014. To this day, the main purpose of IPD Prague has remained to create expert opinion on issues related to the strategic and spatial planning and development of the city. Furthermore, it provides background materials, presents and promotes the results of activities focused on strategic planning and development, spatial planning and development, city infrastructure,



FIG. 49 – Center for Architecture and Urban Planning, source: photo – Institute of Planning and Development

Term of office	Director of IPD Prague
2011–2013	Mgr. Jana Vaněčková
2013–2014	Tomáš Ctibor
2015–2016	Ing. arch. Petr Hlaváček
2016–dosud	Mgr. Ondřej Boháč

TAB. 13 – Directors of the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague, source: Bendová (2018)

public space and spatial information infrastructure, including the creation of conception, provision and updating of geodata and basic map work of the capital city of Prague. Since 2013 there has been an established emphasis on scientific research and education.

In the period from November 2014 to October 2018, two directors were gradually dismissed more or less without justifiable reason (TAB. 13).

The latter, although chosen by the same political representation in a proper selection procedure, in essence “only” because he insisted on the need to complete the Metropolitan Plan.

In December 2018, the valid organizational structure of IPD Prague (FIG. 50) consists of eight sections divided into offices⁵²⁴, three of which are in the director’s section. The sections provide for all activities that are defined by the Charter of IPD Prague. The form (and number) of these sections is slightly different from that of 2013 and 2014. The importance of the three basic development pillars of the city, corresponding to the criteria – region (strategy), city (land-use plan) and location/detail (public spaces), was slightly lowered. Until now, the Board of Directors has also remained in the organizational structure of the IPD which, as in 2012–2014, is an advisory body to the director and provides, inter alia, expert opinions on the city’s key development plans.

The current number of IPD employees (around 220 employees) as well as the budget (less than CZK 350 million/year)⁵²⁵ exceeds the originally envisaged amount in 2012, i.e. at the time of the start of the reform. Any transformation of any institution always requires an increase in both staff and budget. Afterwards, however, it is more than desirable that in the second phase there should be some consolidation of activities and personnel capacities. This did not happen after 2014. On the other hand, in 2015–2018 the boom in the Czech Republic meant a big growth of revenues for Prague as well, up to 1.3 times compared to 2013. In terms of the relative amount

⁵²⁴ At the end of 2018, due to the coalition disputes, an unsuccessful attempt to affiliate the Institute of Planning and Development with the Institute of Transport Engineering, since 2008 part of a contributory organization and later joint stock company Technical Road Administration, responsible for short and medium term transport planning.

⁵²⁵ The Institute of Planning and Development (2017)

⁵²⁶ The correctness of the implemented measures is underlined e.g. also by awarding of the Czech Architecture Award, which was part of the gala evening on 19 November 2018 at the Karlín Forum in Prague. The Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague received it for an exceptional achievement. It was acquired jointly by Prof. Roman Koucký and the team of the Metropolitan Plan Office for searching for a new way in land-use planning and opening up a discourse on the purpose of land-use planning and also the Center of Architecture and Urban Planning for an innovative approach to architecture promotion (Institute of Planning and Development 2018a).

of the IPD budget to Prague’s income, this is thus a sustainable situation.

Taken together, it can be stated in general terms that the vast majority of completed or in progress projects and measures have survived also to some extent a problematic political period, more or less with only slight detriment. And it is even quite possible to attribute some credit to all such conceptions and especially processes in the city, that the more and more deviating today already former political representation was not in the end well received by both expert and lay public in 2018 elections. This is one of the reasons why the approach to city administration, which was launched in 2012–2014 in the area of spatial development and planning in Prague, can be described as continuing and relatively successful even after the last four years⁵²⁶. However, there are also some obvious takeaways after 5 years.

Firstly, even good planning and well-set functioning city operations cannot do much to counteract business intentions penetrating political decision-making. Both “forgetting” of the Conception of the Vltava River Banks Development, and in particular the situation regarding building regulations caused by companies dealing with large-scale advertising, shows the great dominance of economic interests over the interests of the city or its self-government.

Secondly, in the 2014–2018 parliamentary term, the same danger as linking the city administration with business showed to be the ingression of local activism at the level of the Council and the Prague City Assembly. The land-use plan is always a touchstone of the city administration. It is a document affecting virtually all citizens in the city, and it is quite possible that in the conditions of a city with a million inhabitants under current Czech legislation, it may even be unrealistic in the end. However, local activism should always remain local and aim at the problems of the localities from which it arose. By postponing and blocking the development of the city as a whole, however, considerable damage is done, both in terms of the quality of life of the population (prices and rent of apartments) and in terms of competitiveness of the whole city, and thus in the case of the capital city as well as the whole state.

Thirdly, the need for a robust analytical planning organization has not been questioned. In some members of the Prague City Council in the 2014–2018 parliamentary term, I noticed some doubts about exceeding the advisory and conceptual role of the Institute of Planning and Development, but I think these opinions were unique. On the other hand, at several meetings of the City Council, there was often certain

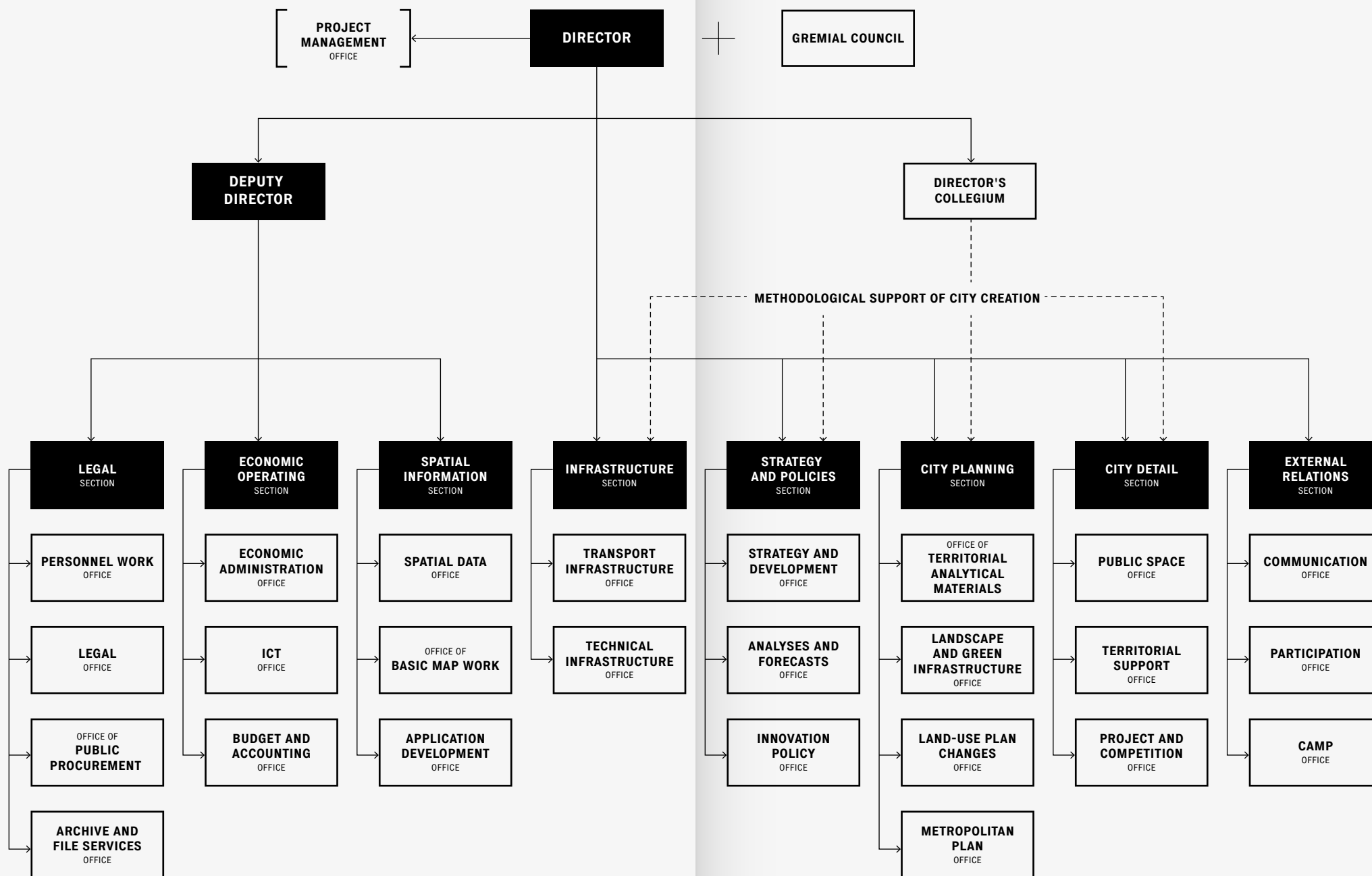


FIG. 50 – The organizational structure of the Institute of Planning and Development of the Capital City of Prague, as at 31st December 2018, source: Institute of Planning and Development (2018b).

helplessness to make good decisions in the face of the high complexity of the city, which implies a need for even greater involvement and possibly also IPD powers than in the previous period.

Fourthly, while each self-government wants to choose their own closest counselors, which is logical, not every politician is willing to stand up before experts and present to them along with his team their own plans for the further development of the city. Advisory – albeit critical – bodies, the Sounding Board, only met three times during the whole period in the first year of the new coalition and its members were no longer addressed for any other work. I cannot imagine how I would obtain the much needed expert feedback during my parliamentary term without this body. The fate of the Prague for People project was the same.

However, what the 2014–2018 parliamentary term also showed is that any hesitation in the administration of a large city can lead to problematic situations. Politicians can ignore the life of the city and move away from its functionality too much, thus also delaying their view of the problems in the city that are constantly evolving so much that these do not appear in their field of vision, although they logically do not disappear anywhere in the real world. While the winged statement of the Mayor of Prague about spoiled Praguers who had not yet stood in real traffic jams⁵²⁷ had not escaped general public in 2018, a similar rejection of the problems and very little effort to solve them in the area of Prague development, which was in the given parliamentary term much more frequent, regrettably escaped the greater public attention between 2008 and 2014. In the previous chapter I mentioned an analysis made in 2014 as part of the update of the Prague Strategic Plan, which then stated that Prague had no significantly atrophied problem, “only” dozens of small problems. I also mentioned that there was a serious concern at the time that this state was not merely an imaginary calm before the storm. In the following years there were problems with the approval of building regulations due to the interconnection of politicians, lobbyists and advertising companies, and activists against the creation of the initiation land-use plan, but also stopping the process of approving changes in the land-use plan. Along with the trends started in the past (completed privatization, the entry of Prague among at least continental cities, increasingly prolonged construction proceedings due to the construction of poorly set legislation), they became a phenomenon today called the housing crisis or, if we want, the crisis of affordable housing. This may not have been prevented despite the

⁵²⁷ e.g. Bohuslavová (2018)

reforms launched in 2011. Given all the trends, the series of measures implemented between 2012 and 2014 was simply too late. However, by responsible and active administration of the city, it would have been possible to at least partially mitigate its consequences.

From this perspective, therefore, the reform, its enforcement and individual implemented evaluations cannot be assessed now as successful overall. The reform has not partially prevented the assumed problem on the property market. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the reform (acceleration of building procedures) has not been met and it is probably all the same, from today’s point of view, whether the non-linear development and the snowball effect could or could not be prevented by a more reasonable city self-government in 2015–2018.

In the coming years, the capital city of Prague will have to make a great effort to at least partially mitigate the effects of the “irrational” decline in the supply of apartments and houses in the last few years. And it is more than obvious that even after a sufficient number of residential buildings have re-entered into the market year-on-year, at best, it will “only” stop the further rise in prices and not reduce them to earlier levels, that is, amounts reasonable for at least the middle class⁵²⁸. In view of the above, future political representations cannot avoid cooperation especially with the Czech Republic and particularly with the Ministry for Regional Development which, through its decisions, sets the limits of administration within which the current situation has evolved to its present form.

In terms of affordable housing, it is not appropriate even to “look” around at other cities, or those that address housing issues more successfully, such as Vienna which has already been invoked for some time. For over 100 years it has been building “its own” city with its own funds and is a state that enacts its own laws. If today Prague begins to build apartments alone, it will be like Vienna in 100 years’ time. It is therefore necessary to deal with Prague and look for an intersection of our long-term (since 1989) endeavor for a market environment and, at the same time, develop itself through population growth.

There is only one right way to solve the current situation – inaccessible housing: Extreme effort (at an expensive political price) in political action, personal involvement of people, not discussing unnecessary details of different approaches, but realizing all possibilities simultaneously. In particular, it is necessary to create:

⁵²⁸ In the coming years, with a big burden Prague will have to fight with competition from other cities in the Central European region, where the scissors between disposable income of population and housing prices do not open to the same extent as in Prague (more Kliment 2018).

- Simple and fast construction by investors,
- Active construction of the city implemented by the city developer,
- Active housing market,
- Family loan system,
- Support for cooperative apartments.

A lot can be done and many ideas can be mutually synergistic. But they can also be used to further deepen our problem. For example, in the current situation – admitting the problem of climate change – it is not enough to plant trees and prevent cars from entering Prague. This is not just about reducing CO2 in Prague, but an overall reduction in CO2 per capita. In other words, it is about maintaining the current level of CO2 in Prague while increasing the population, which simply means an increase in the population in the city.

Therefore, let us not wait and demand no ideal solutions, but rather push agents to actively solve problems. Affordable housing will not be “done” by itself. It must be worked for daily through political work. Every decision requires effort, and political ones extreme effort. We must be able to appreciate those who can make these decisions. Therefore, let’s constantly ask politicians (in Prague and other big cities): “What did you do to keep the apartments from being so expensive so that our children could study and live here?”

In this respect, I am also a little skeptical about the future self-governments of the capital city of Prague. Indeed, the 2012–2014 reforms were paid for dearly by political capital. The cost of reform decisions has been considerable in this respect and the efforts required to overcome obstacles have been enormous. For members of (not only) the Prague City Council there is a huge difference between the expressions “I’m doing” and “I will do”. Gone is both the time when everything was arranged by politicians and the time when politicians did nothing and everything was solved by the market. Nowadays, the processes of management and construction are so pervasive that politicians especially must make an extreme effort to make the whole system clear. Wherever someone already lives, there up to a certain population density (s)he does not want other neighbors. The “Not In My Back Yard” (NIMBY) effect is a natural phenomenon derived from the basic two system processes – concentration and thinning. Therefore, it cannot be “stopped”, only minimized as much as possible.

If we want to have affordable housing in Prague, we have only two paths to choose from. Either we protect construction

permitting processes from disputes – in other words: we will suppress our ever-increasing ability to attack one another at court or otherwise and hold back one another in the course of building proceedings – or we will give power to someone who will build for us. Both paths lead to limitations of our own power, but each in a different way. On the first path, we must limit ourselves collectively in exchange for leaving vast space for individual choices. On the other path, we will limit ourselves very little in exchange for a great restriction on our personal freedom. The inactivity of self-government, the unwillingness of elected representatives to take such unpopular measures, has long led to this second path. Any slowdown in political effort means that later – if we want to avoid an overall collapse – this effort will have to be somewhat artificially increased.

It is more than certain that the lack of apartments is always somehow resolved in at least a little democratic society. However, the later the necessary efforts are made, and hence at a hierarchically higher level, the more human rights and freedoms are usually trampled. Urban planning and architecture in our cities are also depreciated by this late decision-making. The later we get to it, the more likely the state, and thus some political regime, will build on our behalf housing estates or some modern equivalent of theirs.

Part IX

Crisis Management of the City

At the time of the floods in 2013, Prague had neither a Mayor nor a Director of the Security and Crisis Management Department.

Weather forecasts did not indicate that even the first degree of flood activity should be exceeded.

By knowing the hydrological situation and learning from the floods in 2002, I was able to catch the extremely rapid onset of the flood in time.

During the first moments of the crisis situation, a relatively large number of the city's security systems did not work.

The dismissed political representation of the city, including some mayors of the city districts, intervened in the solution of the flood inappropriately but also through the media.

To an unprecedented extent, flood barriers were installed for the first time during their existence – within 40 hours.

25. 2013 Flood in Prague through the eyes of the chairman of the crisis staff

The flood in 2013 came very unexpectedly (how else) during the overhaul of the coalition, which we have described several times in the previous section. The (un)cooperating coalition, which was not able to continue the reform of the territorial development policy, was terminated on 23 May 2013, when the then-Mayor and four other members of the Prague City Council from the same political party (CDP) were removed⁵²⁹. Exactly enough members remained in the Council (6), so that it would have a quorum and responsibility for the operation of the city would not be delegated to the Prague City Assembly. For the period of the next 14 days, i.e. until the meeting of the next Assembly originally planned for Thursday 6 June 2013⁵³⁰, I was entrusted with all the Mayors' duties as the First Deputy Mayor at that time. My originally planned short and transitional function sounded rather jerking at that time: First Deputy Mayor of the Capital City of Prague in charge of the Mayor's office. Since truly I should not have become the elected Mayor of the capital city of Prague in those 14 days⁵³¹, I did not go to his office, with the exception of things that had to be solved really urgently.

One such duty was the previously convened Security Council of the Capital City of Prague, which was scheduled for Thursday, 30 May 2013. There I met for the first time with the Director of the Municipal Police, the Regional Director of the Police of the Czech Republic, the Director of the Rescue Service (collectively, directors of the Integrated Rescue System units, so-called IRS), representatives of the Department of Security and Crisis Management of the Municipality and other members of this organ of the city formed through the Act on the Capital City of Prague. Until then, it is true that I used to see those persons at the meetings of the Prague City Assembly but I did not come into direct contact with them under my responsibility of territorial and strategic development. There was no director of the security department at that time. The last one retired three months earlier and the successor was not selected. The department was headed by an authorized

⁵²⁹ Brendlová, Švec (2013)

⁵³⁰ I canceled the negotiations during the floods. The next one took place only on Thursday, 20 June 2013.

⁵³¹ Ing. Václav Novotný was responsible for the agreement with colleagues in the leadership of our representative club.

person, as we shall see later, rather inappropriate for this function.

The Security Council is convened and managed by the Mayor and on this particular agenda was the approval of a new version of the traumatological plan of the Emergency Medical Service of the Capital City of Prague. It was more than a hundred pages, and when I opened it seemed to me to be material created for its own sake, so at that time I didn't hesitate to ask the present members of the council if any of them had read it. After a few evasive responses, I was told that the legislation had changed and that the previous document – which was only a few pages – had ceased to suit it. So I asked if the previous one (which seemed more appropriate to me at least from a distance) could be inserted into the new one at least as an attachment.

Then, because it had been raining continuously for several days, I God-knows-why got an idea to ask those present how long it takes to build flood barriers (FIG. 51), which Prague has been gradually acquiring since the turn of the millennium and whose very small existing part in 2002 protected the city center from the then-great water of many centuries. And I was also wondering how much it would cost to pull these barriers out⁵³². Nobody responded to my question about the barriers, so I asked again and tried to describe in more detail that I was asking about their total length today and their pulling out completely in the event of a major flood. The present members of the Security Department finally admitted that nobody really knew that exactly, for the barriers had never been pulled out in full. However, I learned that it would probably not be less than 2 days, rather 52–56 hours. Their total length is between 6 and 7 kilometers, and the price for such an event would surely be over CZK 10 million, only with direct costs included. Built barriers, however, block roads, close public spaces and as such cannot logically be pulled out just for fun. I asked where the barriers were located. Most of them are in a warehouse located 15 km from the Vltava River in Prague–Dubeč city district, was the answer. Absolutely convinced that I saw the group of the highest and most extremely experienced heads of the security forces of the capital city of Prague for the last time in my life, I subsequently concluded the meeting of the City Security Council.

A day later, on Friday, May 31, 2013, I was informed by security officials that the 1st flood level⁵³³ had been exceeded on the Vltava River in Chuchle and that the floodgate at Čertovka would be closed and the first short separated pieces of flood barriers in the city center laid. With somewhat strange answers

⁵³² At that time, I remembered one of the probably fictional stories that had come to me in connection with the inauguration of President Bill Clinton. When he became President, he was reportedly told at his first meeting with the administration that he could have an official presidential plane, Boeing 747 known as Air Force One, always ready to take off within 30 minutes. To which he replied: „OK, now”. Probably a fictional story ends with a statement that the deadline, of course, was not met.

⁵³³ A level called Vigilance, which is declared when the flow rate exceeds 450 m³/s.

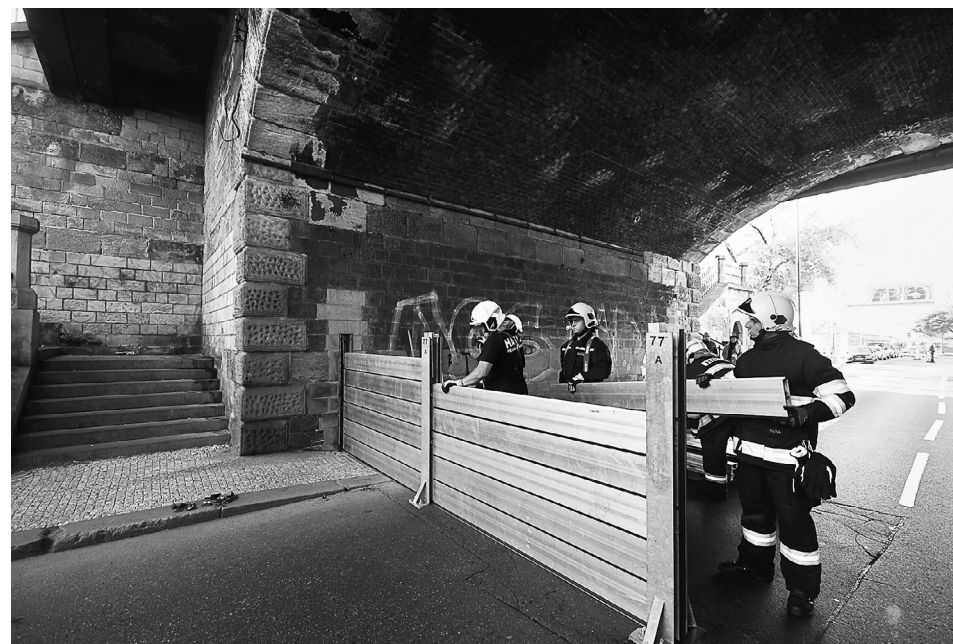


FIG. 51 – Flood barriers in the capital city of Prague, photo: Prague City Hall

to my questions about current and past water levels, the increase in flow rates over the past hours, the extent of rainfall in the upper Vltava River basin and tributaries, I realized that while talking to a Security and Crisis Management person, he is “only” a mailman of the messages of others. Therefore, I requested direct telephone numbers of representatives of the Czech Hydrometeorological Institute and the Vltava River Basin. I called the CHMI first, introduced myself and became acquainted with the person responsible for the current situation in Prague. I started asking questions about the situation. The Czech Hydrometeorological Institute provides probabilities based on several prediction models. According to the words of the respective CHMI representative, these did not indicate that only the second stage of flood activity should be reached.

I also called the responsible representative of the Vltava River Basin. This was Ing. Jiří Friedel, with whom I was on the same page immediately. Unlike the CHMI, the Vltava River Basin always has accurate and up-to-date information on the condition of watercourses and reservoir levels. I therefore asked the engineer especially about the Orlík reservoir, as other parts of the Vltava cascade are not very relevant in the event of a major flood. I knew the total volumes of each tank. Vrané and Slapy are small in volume and Lipno is too high for any flood purposes.

“What is the current retention of Orlík?” I asked. It is approximately 90 million cubic meters, engineer Friedel replied. “The tank is not completely full, but at the same time it does not have an excessive base.” So I continued with the questions: “How much is the current inflow to the tank? How much time can the entire Vltava Cascade give to Prague for building the barriers?” I was directing my thoughts to those two days the officials informed me about on the Security Council a few hours ago. I learned that with the current numbers, it should be a few days.

The next day, on Saturday 1 June 2013 at noon, a meeting was convened at the Department of Security and Crisis Management of the Prague City Hall after the water slightly increased again and approached the limits when it was necessary to deal with traffic on the Vltava River. The meeting was attended by representatives of CHMI, the Vltava River Basin, directors of IRS units, selected employees of the Security and Crisis Management Department and several other people, among others my colleague – the only other Deputy Mayor, Ing. Pavel Richter. For the first time, I received the flood plan of Prague there – a thick multi-page book consisting, among

other things, of an extensive description (table), which obliges individual city sections to implement specific measures related to the given flow values in the Vltava River. The plan was modified according to the last flood in 2002, so I assumed that the activities therein were running properly and began to ask for the measures associated with the operation on the river for which the meeting was convened. At flows above 600 m³/s, shipowners are obliged to store all vessels at one of the two ports in the city. At 800 m³/s nothing can float on the river anymore. I asked what the plan was in case that would not happen. “There is no description of this situation in the plan,” I was told by the officials from the department.

The weather forecasts were still the same. In fact, the CHMI representative informed me and all the others at the meeting that the second stage of flood activity would not very likely be reached. I asked engineer Friedel how long the retention volume of Orlík would last at the current inflow to it. The answer was that at the current inflow, which was about 550 m³/s, it should be comfortably more than two days. So, on Saturday noon I knew that Orlík at the current inflow still provided us with enough time for the construction of flood barriers.

From the flood plan I read that the next follow-up flood protection measures, including the installation of other short parts of flood barriers, are carried out at flows above 900 m³/s. At that time, over 700 m³/s flowed through Prague, of which also the slightly flooded Berounka flowing into the Vltava River in the south of Prague made up approximately 200 m³/s. Therefore, I asked for the drainage of the Orlík Reservoir to be started, in order to, as soon as possible, reach the flow to which we had the city of Prague prepared at the moment. I did not want to repeat the mistakes that occurred in 2002, when all the reservoirs of the Vltava Cascade were gradually filled up, thus losing the time so much needed for preparation against more water. The discussion was slightly escalated, as such manipulation at the dam based on a “wish of someone” from Prague is not common⁵³⁴. In addition, an increase in flow rate of 200 or 300 m³/s means moving the sluice gates by a few centimeters, which is not easy to accomplish. However, I did not withdraw from the requirements and after about an hour I received a confirmation from Ing. Friedel from the Vltava River Basin saying that the manipulation on Orlík was carried out, and 900 m³/s really started flowing through Prague in the following hours.

I decided to set the next meeting of the Flood Commission at 10 a.m. the following day, saying that this could change if the flow in the Vltava River continues to rise. I tried to contact

⁵³⁴ At the time of no flood, the power company controls the operation at the Orlík Dam, but according to later information from the Vltava River Basin, the management was probably already transferred at that time. And it is the economics of electricity generation that makes it desirable to have reservoirs as full as possible.

televisions with the information that flood conditions were being reached in Prague, but – and this is somewhat bizarre – I was told at that time it would not fit in the news anymore. That Mr. Pomeje was getting married. It was not the last time I came across a media barrier, as we will see later.

On Saturday evening, i.e. on June 1, 2013 on the eve of the onset of the flood, I still opened one social event supported by the capital city of Prague with a short word at 10 p.m.

Shortly before that, I spoke to engineer Friedel by telephone. I learned from him that so much water had started to flow into Orlík that our measures to reduce its level had already lost their original effect and the outflow was equal to the inflow. So, on Saturday evening I had in my head that any worsening of the condition already meant the necessity of building continuous parts of flood barriers.

At 11 p.m. I was going to bed with some expectation that I was likely to be woken up around 3 a.m. Deep in the night, exactly at 2:16 a.m. on Sunday, June 2, 2013, I was called by engineer Friedel, who was at that time at the mayor of Prague–Zbraslav city district in the south of Prague, saying that Berounka in Beroun was reaching problematic flood conditions and we should probably launch flood control measures in the low-lying Zbraslav. He said he called the Security and Crisis Management Department first and somehow did not feel that they understood him completely there.

Therefore, I immediately called the Deputy Director of the Department, saying that I ordered building barriers in Zbraslav immediately. Since I did not receive an adequate response, for safety's sake I asked when it would be done. The answer was very unclear "I don't know". They said it was night, weekend, almost summer, people were on vacation, so it would take a while. At that moment, I assumed that a team was ready somewhere, like firefighters just coming down the poles from their beds, and flood measures would begin to be implemented in minutes. I will add now how deeply I was wrong then.

I got up, turned on the lamp at my desk, took a white sheet of paper and called back engineer Friedel and started asking questions. "How much does Berounka flow in Beroun now? What was the flow 4 hours ago? How much is flowing into Orlík? How many of the 90 million cubic meters are now left from those that were as retention in Orlík just a few hours ago? How much are we draining? What is the flow rate of Sázava? How much water was in Sázava 4 hours ago? Where is it raining? Where did it rain 4 hours ago? I wrote down the values, counted them and based on the responses created a simple

hydrological model of the basin with the development over the last 4 hours, and with assumptions of possible infiltration and future flows in case of continuing rain. After heavy rainfall in recent days, I evaluated the ability of the soaked soil to hold water at no more than 5% of the rainfall. In other words, I counted on the fact that what falls from now on, would basically flow to Prague.

At the end of about 6 minute-long phone call I said that, according to what I had just learned, there would be a flow rate of 1,000 m³/s in Prague in three hours, i.e. at 5 a.m., and the second degree of flood activity would be achieved. And in 10 hours, i.e. at noon sharp on Sunday, 1,500 m³/s will flow through the Vltava River, and the third level of flood activity will be reached. What I heard from the phone was, "Depending on what you say, it will be like that."

Therefore, I called again the Deputy Director of the Department of Security and Crisis Management saying that I am calling the Prague Flood Commission at 5 a.m. The reaction was, "So early?" I replied in a raised voice that YES and that we would declare a state of danger, because by noon there will be flooding in Prague. I also asked about Zbraslav and the barriers. The answer was the same as before.

I immediately called the director of the Municipal Police of the Capital City of Prague with whom I met 3 days ago on the Security Council. He answered my phone (at 2:25 a.m. on Sunday!) and I told him that I needed a car, preferably with a blue light and a very good driver. In 50 minutes (3:15 a.m.) I had a real professional⁵³⁵ ready at my house with a car and we arrived at the city hall at about 3:30 a.m.

On the way to the city hall, I commissioned the Director of the Communication Department to provide important information reports on basically an already certain flood to the media, but in vain. The new Director of the Communication Department was in the office for about 1.5 months. She was 25 years old. She probably didn't have contacts to the "right" people. Or maybe they were not awake. TV NOVA reportedly told her that quintuplets were being born. An editor from CT said he would try to get someone within an hour and a half. I therefore put this director of the Communication Department aside and at 4 a.m. I personally contacted a CNA reporter. One of those who attended press conferences at our city hall. I apologized for the night's phone call and dictated the necessary news of the coming flood water and asked her to send it to all the media as soon as possible. Only then did Czech Television take it over at least as an information headline running at the bottom of the screen.

⁵³⁵ Mr. Jiří Mojžíš, a professional driver of several Mayors before me, and indeed probably the best driver I have had the honor to meet so far.

At five in the morning on Sunday, June 2, 2013 the Flood Commission met and basically at that moment a dispatch arrived about reaching the flow of 1,000 m³/s. To my question whether there are already flood barriers in Zbraslav, I got the same vague answer again. I still kind of assumed that barriers have been traveling around Prague already for a long time and are being assembled on an ongoing basis. But I was so gravely mistaken. I was assured by the present security department employees that the flood plan was being followed. And that was true. According to the plan, the sirens were tested, this and that was checked, everything possible verified. Exactly what the plan imposed was carried out. So I called the crisis staff at 8 a.m.

At that moment, however, I stopped trusting everyone around me, because the situation seemed very bad to me and I did not feel those people perceived it the same way. At 5:35 a.m., therefore, I called and woke up the former mayor of Prague 8 (Josef Nosek), who, among other things, during the flood in 2002, managed alone the evacuation of the inhabitants in Karlín, saying that after 10 years flood water was rushing to Prague again. I needed a man of common sense who would be able to divert from the plans that possibly everyone may follow, but without accomplishing the main goal. He arrived at the city hall shortly after seven in the morning, despite being one of those coalition councilors dismissed a week ago. I also called my two fellow representatives, Deputy Pavel Richter and Councilor Lukáš Manhart, requesting that I would need them at the City Hall, because I felt that it all relied too much on me.

At 8:00 a.m. I started the meeting of the crisis staff, had the meteorological situation described by CHMI and the Vltava River basin, as many times afterwards, and asked about the flow rates, the condition of Orlík, Berounka and other hydro-meteorological information. I asked the Deputy Director of the Municipal Security and Crisis Management Department for the fourth time about the flood barriers in Zbraslav. I still got the same “no-response”. This time, however, I already did not let go and asked with a raised voice in front of all those present there: “How many people do you have? How many barriers are out there already?” The answer was some vague murmur and that the barriers probably were not out yet. People are being sought for, they said. It is weekend, people need to come back from vacation or homes.

At that moment, it all clicked in my head and I realized that no one would come. That apparently there is no organized large group of people ready at the machines that had

⁵³⁶ This was a very experienced officer in the field of law, JUDr. Martina Děvėrová, whom I later appointed Deputy Director of the Prague City Hall.

⁵³⁷ Later I was asked by several fellow representatives whether the situation could also be used to terminate disadvantageous contracts from the time of the problematic political government from 2006–2010. After consulting with lawyers, however, I withdrew from it. Extraordinary measures taken during the declared state of danger must be associated with the given situation, i.e. with the flood. The idea that due to the flood Prague would run into such financial problems that the disadvantageous contracts from the previous period had to be canceled was clearly rejected by lawyers as too irrelevant.

been building barriers since two in the morning. Prague is only waking up, it is weekend, Sunday and almost summer. With a raised voice, I asked further, “How will you transport the barriers to their destination once you have taken them out of the warehouse?” They said trucks were needed. “Where and how many trucks does the city have?” It does not have any. “How will you mount them? How many workers are trained for this?” Answer: “There are two assembly kits for it.”

I interrupted the crisis staff because there was no point in continuing. There was no way further, there was nothing to decide about. But there was a real need to act. First, it was necessary to establish a functioning and fast decision-making process. I declared, after consultation with the Mayor’s office director⁵³⁶, a state of danger (starting at 9:45 a.m.) so that all city departments as well as all city employees would be subject to a single command and it would be possible to take action more quickly, command actions and solve problems⁵³⁷.

Furthermore, I considered it most important to get the flood barriers out of the warehouse at least for transportation. Trucks were missing. I found out what type of trucks were needed and wrote down a code expressing the number of axles and load capacity. I turned to my fellow deputy, Pavel Richter, who is a builder by profession. “I need trucks, a lot of trucks, like twenty. Who has twenty such trucks?” My colleague looked at the type and said that Metrostav or Hochtief could have maybe two.

I remembered that many years ago my dad introduced me, only by shaking hands, to some gentleman with whom he cooperated as Deputy Logistic Director of Nestle Chocolate Factory in Olomouc. I called my dad to Olomouc, who was already at retirement age, saying that I absolutely needed to know who he was, what he was doing, and I needed his phone number. Fortunately, my dad was awake. The gentleman was named Antonín Prachař (later Minister of Transport) and was the then vice-president of the Česmad transport association. I remembered that name, refused pleasant formalities like how I was doing and wrote down the phone number. I called Mr. Prachař and asked him if he was still working in the association that I urgently needed trucks, and a lot of them, immediately, and if he could help me. He asked about the type and then he said yes. He asked how many I needed. “Twenty” I said. “Can you do that?” He said yes; that he could handle it. He gave me a number for the then president of the association, Ing. Starosta.

I sent my colleague, Deputy Pavel Richter, to the warehouse in Prague–Dubeč and gave him the number of the President of

Česmad. I added that all barriers built to stem the flow in the Vltava River must be at least at the level of 2,000 m³/s loaded and “turned out” from the warehouse by 11 a.m. He later called me that trucks were starting to run, but that there was no way to load it on them because there was a lack of forklifts. Later I found out that the contributory organization Administration of Services of the Capital City of Prague, which is in charge of the warehouse as well as the barrier operation, had some trucks contracted. I did not ask who actually came there for the cargo at that time. They say it was the local mayor who then acquired the forklifts at a nearby super/hypermarket.

I was also very worried that the barriers would get lost somewhere on the way. Protection is absolutely useless if somewhere even a single piece of it is missing. And, indeed, later one truck with barriers heading to the waterfront in Prague–Holešovice “got lost”. Or, in fact, one Polish driver arrived from the other side of the given block of buildings, where he was fortunately discovered by the police in time – eating a snack in his car.

The trucks were sorted out, then it was necessary to find workforce. I asked the directors of security forces still sitting in the room how they were with the workforce. With regard to the state of emergency, all of them called for possible reserves. Therefore, the army came to my mind. It has authoritative command and I remembered the Moravian (1997) as well as Prague (2002) floods, where it helped significantly. I approached the Colonel, a representative of the Army of the Czech Republic in Prague, at the crisis staff, saying that I needed the army. I estimated the need for 300 men. The answer was that the army did not have that many and, moreover, that he could not decide about that. That the order must be given by the ACR General Staff. “How do I instruct the General Staff?” I asked. He said it was the government who had to give the order.

I understood that the situation would be complicated there and I called the then Minister of Finance Ing. Miroslav Kalousek, saying that I have a really serious problem in Prague, that I need at least 300 soldiers, and immediately. And to get them, the order needs to be given by the government. He was then trying to convince me that no government decision was needed. We mutually raised our voices and I repeatedly emphatically reiterated that I needed the government to meet, decide and task the General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic and send 300 soldiers to Prague right away. He hung up the phone to call me back in a while, saying that the Prime Minister (RNDr. Petr Nečas) was informed about it, the Army

General Mičánek was on duty at the General Staff and gave me his phone number saying he knew about me.

The general answered my phone, I introduced myself and told him again that I needed the army, at least 300 men. He replied that such an amount was not possible, but that he would get me 50 soldiers within 72 hours. To that I replied that we did not understand each other. “I need 300 men here in Prague in 12 hours, otherwise we will not manage to have the barriers built in time.” He said there were 50 others somewhere. I think he said in Žatec or in Bechyně, but that is not important. Again, in a more emphatic voice, I told him that I still hadn’t made myself clear. “If there are not at least 200 men here in a few hours and the barriers are not erected within 12 hours, Prague will be under water.” After a brief moment of silence, he told me he would call in a few minutes. After 15 minutes he called and in 4 hours there were first 50 men, two hours later another 50, and then another 100 men at our disposal. The remaining 100 for a total of 300 arrived during the night. The necessary order to call them was given by the decision of the crisis staff and the so-called KOPIS to the present Colonel⁵³⁸. I will now skip ahead and add that seeing the Czech Army’s organized team put together the individual parts of the flood barriers was impressive. To secure their meals and a place to rest turned out to be a problem later. However, in the meantime, let’s go back to the morning hours of Sunday, June 2, 2013.

I ended the crisis staff meeting and convened another one at 10:30 a.m., but incredible things began to happen there, in my opinion. Politics became involved in the whole process. Not only the mayors of the city districts affected by the local floods (in the role of guests at the Crisis Staff meetings), but especially the various political cliques, instead of helping began to sabotage the subsequent negotiations and delay them excessively. I had to terminate prematurely one of the other crisis staff meetings. People were only grumbling there without any use. I am convinced that in such moments politics and democracy should be totally set aside. Some of the arguments were pitiful. For example, they do not have a number of someone from the crisis staff, etc. Only long after that I realized that the previous political representation (CDP) was dismissed after 20 years just a week before the flood itself, and therefore the possibly flooded Prague was a suitable opportunity for it to “reassert” itself due to our failure. For some mayors of the city districts, however, apart from politics another matter came to the forefront – they did not know they had their own responsibilities and duties, and their office had little knowledge of

⁵³⁸ At a later hearing in the Senate on the situation during the flood in Prague 2013, I learned from a representative of the Army of the Czech Republic that its headquarters really fell asleep during this period. Despite the reminders of some generals, and despite the obvious worsening of the situation in virtually the entire territory of the Czech Republic (state of danger and later state of emergency was eventually declared in 8 out of 14 regions), advance reserves were not called in time.

crisis law and flood plans. The flood plan of the capital city of Prague concerned city-wide policy – namely the Vltava River (and Berounka), protection of the embankments, traffic on the Vltava River, and informing the city districts about the situation on the Vltava River. On the contrary, they did not know the flood levels on individual tributaries of the Vltava River. Local floods in Prague are subject to flood plans of individual city districts and it is thus logical. Management through a hierarchically higher junction only complicates the solution to the local situation and delays assistance.

On the evening of Sunday, June 2, 2013, the Minister of the Environment (an emergency had already been announced by the government) notified me in a personal phone call about the fact that he had three rainfall models with different outcomes available for the next day, and thus it was not at all certain that the culmination of water stops in Prague at a flow rate of 3,100, 3,200 or even 3,500 m³/s. This report, however, was very problematic, as a large evacuation of the population begins in Prague at approximately 3,000 m³/s. So, it was not at all sure whether tens of thousands of people would not need to be evacuated on Monday morning, i.e. during the rush hour. Flood barriers in the center occupy entire streets that become impassable. They must also be guarded non-stop, as only one sabotage can cause a disaster of unprecedented proportions.

It was therefore necessary to reduce, as much as possible, the conflict between the onslaught of three hundred thousand people going to Prague on Monday and uncertainty regarding the condition of the Vltava River and its surroundings. I realized that a large portion of people going to the city were carrying young schoolchildren, and those alone were the most vulnerable group in the event of floods and confusion. However, it was not in my power to “cancel” classes in schools directly, but it was possible to close school buildings. So, the next day, I pleased probably all schoolchildren with my decision and at the same time again created an excuse for political criticism from some mayors. One of them at the Crisis Staff meeting, before which my above-mentioned decision was briefly announced, made the effort to find an exception to the given regulation. He “advised” the mayors present to designate the schools, which they did not want to close, as buildings needed to deal with the flood situation. “Their problem,” I thought at the time.

Despite this certain dose of sabotage, including a bit of a stupid media offensive, the entire flood protection system then more or less started and a very demanding operation took place, when the individual components of the city were

already functioning in harmony to deal with the situations that arose. The main task of the Crisis Staff of the capital city of Prague – the construction of flood barriers – in the end, despite the incredible time constraint, was fulfilled in time. Early in the morning on Monday, June 3, 2013, we reached an advantage of about 3 hours over the increase in the flood wave. In the end, the Vltava River culminated slightly above the flow rate of 3,100 m³/s and by that morning barriers of 6 km in total were completed. Prague was thus prepared for a flow rate of 4,160 m³/s. Barriers were erected to that extent for the first time in their existence, and, moreover, in an extremely short time.

The flood in 2013 was less extensive than the one in 2002, but its onset was much faster. The flood plan as well as some parts of the city were not well prepared for such a situation.

In 2013, a flood occurred also on the small Prague tributaries of the Vltava River – to the surprise of some city districts.

Several semesters of hydrology and climatology saved me from the fate of Igor Němec.

Along with the flood, a large blackout hit the city in the summer of 2013.

In a crisis situation, ready-made scenarios are implemented. The key is the experience or at least knowledgeableness of decision-makers from past crisis situations.

A new type of crisis situation requires the activity of the highest control layers. However, in the city, this layer is, unfortunately, made up of politicians.

26. Crisis management in the capital city of Prague

⁵³⁹ That is why the town of Beroun, which often suffers from floods, has probably the most perfect early warning information system in the Czech Republic, which, by means of a direct digital telephone connection between the town hall and the inhabitants living in the endangered area, ensures the necessary communication and helps to coordinate the individual actions of the town.

The flood in 2013 was, in terms of the size of the water flow in the Vltava River, much smaller than the flood of several hundred years in 2002. However, the difference was in the speed of the onset of the flood wave (FIG. 52). In 2013 there were only 38 hours between the beginning of the flood and the culmination, during which the necessary flood control measures had to be implemented.

Another difference between the two floods was also the rapid increase in the flood wave at Berounka, mainly due to the basically zero capacity of the soil in the basin to absorb water due to heavy rainfall in the 5 days preceding the flood. This is a particularly unpleasant thing for the crisis management of the capital city of Prague because Berounka, unlike the Vltava River, has virtually no reservoir on its course that could give the cities on the river time to prepare measures⁵³⁹.

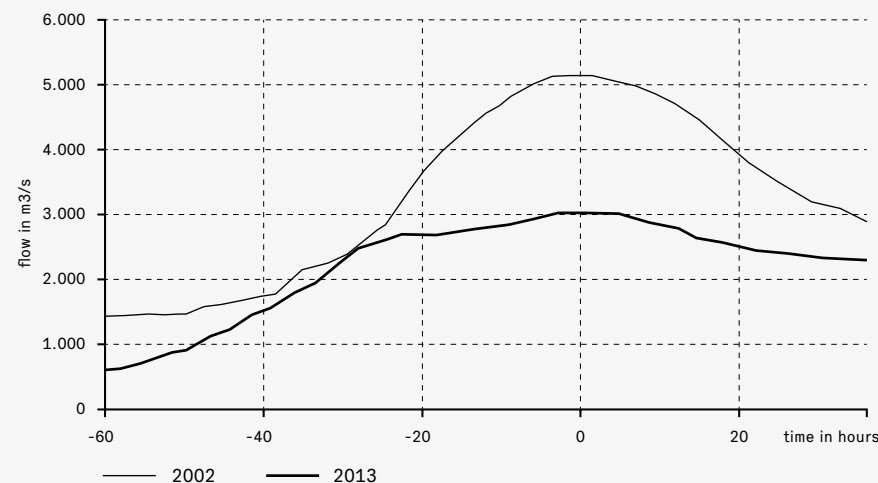


FIG. 52 – Comparison of the course of floods in Prague in 2002 and 2013, source: Czech Hydrometeorological Institute (2014)

Finally, the third most significant difference in 2013 was the heavy rainfall directly above the territory of the capital city of Prague and in the so-called inter-river basin, which is the area between the last large tributary (here right-hand – Sázava) and the borders of Prague. Both of these areas are very problematic in terms of predicting the behavior of watercourses, which mainly concerns small streams in the territory of Prague. It is on them that torrential rains are most pronounced.

The flood report prepared by the Prague City Hall⁵⁴⁰ states that the then-valid flood plan based on the 2002 flood was fine, but it was not designed for such a rapid increase in flow in the Vltava River as in May 2013. In other words, all measures described in the flood plan met the requirements for a crisis situation of this type, but the speed required to carry out the sequence of actions was not addressed in the plan.

This fact had little effect on the functioning of most of the city's organizational units after I declared a state of danger on Sunday morning. The Police of the Czech Republic, the Municipal Police, the Rescue Service and the Fire and Rescue Service of the Capital City of Prague still had the last flood in their "living" memory. Also, the two "most vulnerable places" of the city from the last flood – the Transport Company and the Zoo – were also well prepared this time. The flood barriers of the transport company protecting the endangered metro stations against the flood water were erected much earlier than we managed to start a similar (though much larger) construction of aluminum walls around the river. Following the experience of 2002, the operation of the metro was stopped in time, in line with increasing flows. The tunnels themselves, after the problems in 2002, succeeded. In the overall balance sheet after the flood, the transport company even saved on operations.

The management of the zoological garden of the capital city of Prague closely monitored the rising water levels. Director Mgr. Miroslav Bobek was in constant telephone contact with the crisis staff. We often negotiated directly. In time, he declared a state of emergency on his premises, summoned all the necessary employees and took the necessary measures in advance of the onset of the flood wave. Thus, although one third of the zoo was eventually flooded, it managed to move all its fauna and valuable property equipment to the upper part of its premises. The lower part of the Zoo is (and has always been in history) a polder for the overflowing Vltava River⁵⁴¹.

However, the rapid onset of the flood proved to be problematic for the Department of Security and Crisis Management of the Prague City Hall for several reasons. The department

did not have a proper director after the last long-term director retired several months before the flood. Unfortunately, the safety equipment was not maintained in adequate condition either (sirens as well as the radio system failed shortly after the outbreak of the flood).

On the one hand, it makes sense, albeit dangerous. Due to the extra element in the crisis situation, which was the speed necessary for action, the city administration (i.e. the subconscious of the city organism) actually is not enough to solve the situation well. Whenever there is a need for innovation in the process, instead of just a routine repetition of some past activity, we have already described in several previous decision-making sections the need to involve also higher management layers of the system. And precisely this need arose in Prague at the turn of May and June 2013. The activity of the department – even the professional one – had to be largely saturated during the flood itself with the activity and work of the elected self-government.

This is also evident in the delayed reactions of some city districts. The mayors and their subordinate administration and security departments had nothing to learn from, since the flood in 2002 took place mainly on the Vltava River, not (with exceptions in the form of Rokytka, for example) with its tributaries in Prague. Some mayors and their authorities cannot therefore be blamed too much for the late response to the flood water in 2013⁵⁴². Former President of the Czech Flood Protection Association, a former engineer and expert in place, Colonel in reserve, Ing. Jan Papež, who died in 2017, divided the mayors in this matter, from the point of view of the flood, into those "before" and "after".

The speed of the flood onset in 2013 also shows how information in the crisis gradually moves from bottom to top, from parts to the whole. And how important it is, therefore, that these parts themselves can respond adequately and in a timely manner to the change of situation. While we dealt with the flood situation in Prague very intensively since Sunday morning, the larger unit – the state – was only slowly taking action, even though it received feedback, at least from us, since the morning on the problems we faced. The Government of the Czech Republic declared the second crisis level – the state of emergency – only in the late evening hours⁵⁴³. At that time, in fact, in all regions in the territory of Bohemia, extensive floods were more or less raging. If the actions in Prague started only with this announcement, the flood on the Vltava River would not have been managed. Similarly, even city districts reacted even faster to the flood conditions in their territory.

⁵⁴⁰ Prague City Hall, Department of Security and Crisis Management (2013), p. 14

⁵⁴¹ In fact, since the flood in 2002, there has been talk in Prague that the protective wall, which was designed „only“ for 20 years of water in 2013, should increase. In 2014, therefore, I had a GIS analysis (Fošumpaur 2014) of the Vltava River overflow processed in the event that this wall was increased to 500 years of water. The narrow throat that would arise, I feared, could significantly create a swell in the city center during some next flood. However, the analysis eventually showed that such a treatment would mean even in extreme floods the backwater at the Libeňský Bridge only in the order of centimeters. Unfortunately, the raised ramp would cause a much greater flooding (level rise of up to 2 m) of the neighboring Troja Castle, and therefore it is appropriate, if this path of protection of the Prague Zoo will be used in the future, to extend the protective ramp to protect not only the zoo, but also Troja Castle.

⁵⁴² In this respect, however, I must mention that some of the mayors were on holiday at the time of the floods and did not bother to come to the endangered Prague too quickly. And, on the contrary, some mayors literally put on their boots and dealt with the flood very intensively from Sunday morning in their own part of the city (and in coordination with the Fire and Rescue Service, the Municipal Police and the entire crisis staff). I would like to name them here – they were the mayor of Prague 1, Ing. Oldřich Lomecký, and also the mayor of Prague 7, Marek Ječmének.

⁵⁴³ Novinky.cz (2013b). The state of emergency was finally declared for all regions in the territory of Bohemia with the exception of the Pardubice and Karlovy Vary.

Moreover, in social systems, some abnormalities usually creep into the action of a higher whole, which is completely unnecessary when dealing with the situation. For example, the then-President of the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic⁵⁴⁴, who began organizing teleconferences of all governors, where we “could” tell one another what the situation was in our region and what each one needed, sensed the opportunity to make himself visible. Here, in my opinion, it is necessary to point out the complete uselessness and possibly also the harmfulness of these pseudo-actions⁵⁴⁵. Fire brigades and the whole integrated emergency system⁵⁴⁶ are much better and faster connected than the heads anointed through occasional teleconferencing. The need for a powerful pump, heavy equipment or anything else is better and faster transferred through these information channels, and only then can the top control layers confirm the matter to speed up the process.

This principle can be demonstrated in one situation that occurred during our flood just near the Prague border. Through security forces and an integrated rescue system, I got information about the imminent rupture of the loose dam of the Mlýnský Pond in Říčany, from which flows the right-side tributary of the Vltava River in Prague – Rokytka. The lower Rokytka river is always flooded during floods in Prague due to the georelief, and it was no different in 2013. Therefore, the entire city district of Prague 8 and its inhabitants never underestimated the flood after their experience. However, breaking the dam on the upper flow of Rokytka would mean another, so-called extraordinary flood, which, by its severity, usually demolishes houses and causes casualties. Immediately after this report, my colleagues from the Crisis Staff and I went to a place where in Říčany a long-term, successful and extremely hardworking mayor Mgr. Vladimír Kořen awaited us, who quickly discussed the situation with us. For the city of Prague, unlike the “small” Říčany, it was not a problem to get (and especially later pay for) heavy equipment, loosen the dam in one of the places, apply mud to the whole pond and thus allow the rising surface of the reservoir at least a moderate smooth flow. This also happened based on my personal agreement with the mayor.

Thus, in solving a crisis situation such as a flood, it is not the complex organization of mass meetings or teleconferences, but the high-quality interconnection of executive units and only the subsequent interconnection of responsible decision-makers that is necessary.

After all, this is precisely why national legislation knows crisis situations – the third and fourth levels belong to the two

⁵⁴⁷ The state of danger is defined in Section 3 of Act No. 240/2000 Coll. and emergencies and other crisis situations are described in Constitutional Act No. 110/1998 Coll.

lower ones mentioned above (danger, emergency) – the State of Threat to the Country and the State of War⁵⁴⁷. However, neither of the latter two has yet been announced in the contemporary Czech Republic.

The essence of crisis situations is to allow an exceptional concentration of power, which is needed during the crisis for sufficiently rapid decision-making. While in times of calm, a multi-headed body is usually responsible for a given territorial unit, during a crisis, its powers are concentrated in the hands of a narrow group of decision-makers. Thus, instead of parliament, it is the government or the prime minister and the president who decide directly. Chairmen of towns, mayors and governors decide instead of city and regional assemblies.

In order to avoid excessive and unjustified concentration of power, these states are always declared only when an obvious reason is present and for the time strictly necessary, moreover limited by law. In addition to this, during the announced crisis states time is measured for the authorized decision-makers, and the entire crisis staff and every second of their actions is recorded due to subsequent litigation. Basically, always after the crisis, responsibility is sought for property damage or, in worse cases, casualties.

In the event of the 2013 floods, the situation in Prague was slightly more problematic in terms of responsibility for the city's decision due to the absence of a Deputy Mayor. When Prague has an acting Mayor, his first deputy takes responsibility in the crisis during his “inactivity” (for example during sleep). In this case, however, as a result of previous events in the city hall, I was the only person. Some of my fellow deputies helped me (and sometimes this service was even to the detriment), but none of them was legally responsible as my deputy. So every minute of my activity was recorded for me and I postponed rest as much as possible. From June 1, 2013 to June 5, 2013, I slept a total of seven hours. Only then did my schedule return at least a little to a period of alternating days and nights.

The declaration of crisis entitles authorized persons to “require” work from private entities in connection with the crisis situation. In practice, however, companies usually like to help, because everything is often invoiced later and nobody worries about the price much, which is fine, in my opinion, in the case of a reasonable agreement⁵⁴⁸.

These managing persons may also order the closure of public spaces and buildings in the context of a crisis situation. In the case of public buildings, we have already mentioned the need to close schools. However, access to public areas also had to be restricted during the 2013 flood as well. Gradually,

⁵⁴⁸ During the crisis situation on the first day of the flood, we too at the extraordinarily convened Council of the Capital City of Prague approved the release of a reserve in the amount of CZK 50 million for measures necessary in connection with the flood (Resolution of the Council of the City of Prague No. 917 of 2 June 2013).

⁵⁴⁹ A comical incident in this context is my first „after-flood“ departure from the city hall on Saturday, June 8. I wanted to gain strength after an exhausting week, so I headed to areas of the city outside the center itself. In my effort to rest in one of the forest parks in the territory of the city of Prague, I found a sign at the entrance with the inscription: “Based on the decision of the First Deputy Mayor of Prague RNDr. Tomáš Hudeček, Ph.D. the area is closed until further notice.” So I finally rested in the garden of a nearby restaurant.

⁵⁵⁰ Aktualne.cz (2013b)

⁵⁵¹ Prague City Hall, Department of Security and Crisis Management (2013), p. 16

I was forced to close city parks⁵⁴⁹ by decrees (this is how decisions are issued and subsequently enforced) after a woman was killed with a falling tree in Průhonice park near Prague due to waterlogged soil⁵⁵⁰. In the territory of Prague, these floods eventually passed without the loss of a single human life.

Responsible decision-makers during the period of the declared crisis state are also entrusted with the power to order demolition of structures dangerous for further development or carrying out extraordinary landscaping. I had to use these powers as well. At one hall in Prague–Chuchle, which by its part prevented free flow of water from the formed lake, it was necessary to break through the runoff. The landscaping had to deal with the divided (literally half-cut) Imperial Island not more than 100 meters in front of the Central Waste Water Treatment Plant in Prague–Troja.

Finally, in the context of a crisis situation, these crisis staff chairmen may also set work responsibilities for people in employment with a given territorial unit. Although I could never have imagined something like this, and certainly did not plan it, did not long for it, and to be quite accurate – I did not even realize that at those moments – I had nearly 60,000 subordinates during the June 2013 declared crisis. However, this number cannot be overestimated, as the Labor Code applies, which cannot be circumvented in this respect, rather surprisingly, even with the security services. In the case of a multi-hour obligation, despite the order of extraordinary shifts and performances, the law imposes an obligation to rest. That is why I called the Army of the Czech Republic to help build flood barriers on Sunday morning on 2 June 2013. From the already mentioned report on the flood⁵⁵¹ it is possible to literally quote:

The very rapid progress of the flood caused the need to accelerate the construction of flood protection measures in the capital city of Prague. This required a significantly larger number of builders than planned in the City of Prague Flood Plan. A total of 142 members of the Fire and Rescue Service, 513 members of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Units, 300 members of the Army of the Czech Republic, 22 members of the Czech Red Cross, 23 citizens’ volunteers and 64 employees of the Service Administration of the capital city of Prague were deployed. At the time of the construction of the largest number of mobile flood protection measures, more than 500 people were deployed at the same time, which increased the demands on planning of further construction so that all persons involved in this construction were allowed sufficient rest. A total of 200 members of the Police of the Czech Republic and 550 policemen of the City Police of the capital city

⁵⁵² I still remember (perhaps mistakenly) that at that time it was a bike of – for the development of the city in the long run rather a negatively acting cycloactivist – Vít Masare.

⁵⁵³ With the only exception being, in certain circumstances, the director of the fire brigade, who is also the main coordinator of the operation of the integrated rescue system in the territory of Prague. And again here, with one exception in the territory of the capital city of Prague, which is the area of Václav Havel Airport. There he who commands is the director of airport firefighters.

⁵⁵⁴ Novinky.cz (2013a)

of Prague were deployed during the flood to ensure security measures.

Nor can the number of 60,000 subordinates be overestimated because these people cannot each perform any activity, both because of their qualifications and because of other limitations. For example, the installation kits on the vertical parts of the flood barriers were “said to be” only two in 2013. Moreover, one of them “got lost” with one of the cars accompanying the barriers and part of the barriers in Prague 1 was thus assembled using an allen wrench of one of the passing cyclists⁵⁵². The amount of hands available in such cases may then be irrelevant.

However, the concentration of power into the hands of one person or a very narrow group of persons responsible for a large city places extreme demands on them. The Mayor of Prague must manage the crisis staff during the crisis. Not only to somehow survive its meetings, as is often the case at political meetings, but to really actively and as best as possible solve the problems that come through information channels, the city administration and other parts of the city.

The Crisis Staff is a plenum composed of the highest directors of security forces, representatives of CHMI and the Vltava River Basin, but also directors of companies responsible for urban infrastructure – the transport company, energy (Prague Energy, CTSO – transmission system operator in the Czech Republic), water management and waste services. A representative of the regional hygienist is present, but also e.g. a representative of the army. All of them are top experts in “their” area of administration and are responsible for the proper progress of work in their area of activities. And on request, they will communicate it on the (recorded) meeting of the crisis staff. However, none is responsible for the operation of a complex of security measures carried out in the territory of the city⁵⁵³. And none of them will tell you more than necessary at the crisis staff meeting. And that’s why you have to constantly ask questions, know how to ask questions, and only then draw conclusions and propose solutions to the problem.

I experienced that 14 days after the flood in mid-June 2013, when a transformer station⁵⁵⁴ burned down in a substation in Prague–Chodov and a third of Prague found itself without electricity for almost 5 hours. Prague has practically no source of electricity of its own, and all of this flows into it through three substations from the Central Bohemian Region. Each of these substations can have multiple transformer stations. The one in Chodov has two, and at the time of the fire (during which one person died) the other unfortunately went through a long

outage. I convened the crisis staff (it was still active from the time of the flood) and thoroughly discussed the situation with those present. We mainly dealt with the speed of the so-called rounding, i.e. the transfer of electricity from two other substations, which had never been done in Prague until then. Fortunately, it happened at night. This would be a very serious problem during the day⁵⁵⁵.

Unfortunately, from the original mutual reassurance that everything was fine, that the electric current would be restored soon and especially that there was no further danger, several very deep systemic problems were revealed at that meeting of the crisis staff. I wrote down in detail in the notes the capacity numbers of the remaining substations and transformer stations, which I learned from a CTSO representative, and then asked about the daily electricity consumption of the whole city. Today, due to the high number of air conditioners in households and offices, consumption in summer is almost the same as in winter and is around 1,000 MW⁵⁵⁶. At the meeting of the crisis staff, however, I calculated that the capacity of the remaining substations does not exceed this value too much, and that we thus got relatively close to exceeding a certain limit. Power engineers in Prague distinguish situations called n-1 and n-2, etc. The number means the number of substations excluded from operation, so in the given situation it was the state n-1. The situation where more than one substation (or one of the transformer stations in this substation) is decommissioned is very unpleasant, because through the distribution network from the Central Bohemian Region it is not possible to provide enough electricity for all households and businesses. And what was even worse, this collapse-prone condition was supposed to last until September, as that was exactly how long the planned shutdown at the second of the transformer stations at the Chodov substation was planned. Until its commissioning, I therefore ordered the Municipal Police to intensively guard the other two substations.

The floods and this experience assured me at the time that the situation in Prague in the area of a certain basic resilience of the city and crisis management required attention. I have become somewhat sensitive to any security threats. Therefore, when the Ebola⁵⁵⁷ epidemic began in Africa in the spring of 2014 and cases of sick people returning from areas affected by that disease began to appear at some airports in Europe, I immediately convened the Security Council and again began to ask: "How is such a situation taken care of in Prague?" According to the director of the Rescue Medical Service of the Capital City of Prague⁵⁵⁸, who pointed out the problem several

⁵⁵⁵ The director of the joint-stock company Pražská energetika (distribution system operator) personally advocated the solution of this problematic situation, immediately after the blackout in June 2013. Today, the time to transfer electricity in the event of a similar accident should not exceed 20 minutes.

⁵⁵⁶ Elektrina.cz (2018)

⁵⁵⁷ UNICEF Czech Republic (2014)

⁵⁵⁸ Among others, also Senator MUDr. Zdeněk Schwarz, an experienced director of the Rescue Medical Service of the Capital City of Prague, who was basically behind its entire rise to one of the best-rated municipal medical rescue services in the world.

⁵⁵⁹ which became Ing. Josef Juránek

⁵⁶⁰ The members included also Army General Andor Šándor, Ing. Dana Drábová, Prof. Mgr. Miroslav Bárta, Dr., editor-in-chief of the Czech version of National Geographic Tomáš Tureček and others. I began its first meeting with the question of what we may fear in Prague in the future. And Professor Bárta replied: „In the course of time, social unrest will come.“

⁵⁶¹ Aktualne.cz (2014)

⁵⁶² The basic recommendation for residents is to always have at least 2 liters of water ready in the apartment or basement. Furthermore, it is also necessary to raise awareness among the population about the obligation of the Czech Radio to broadcast the necessary news in times of crises and to remind them of the fact that one radio – in their car in front of their house – will be able to receive broadcasts even in the event of a power failure, and many more.

⁵⁶³ I was counting on it a bit, and so I asked the experts also about the possibilities of solving this problem. My question was: „How much should Prague spend from its budget each year, for example, to improve flood protection measures?“ A suitable solution able to withstand electoral cycles seems to be to proceed in the same way as insurance companies do. Thus, first map the

times in the past, only two sufficiently high-quality protective suits for the safe transport of such patients were available in the Czech Republic, namely in Zlín. At that time, I commissioned a remedy to this situation (this matter was perhaps completed in the next parliamentary term). Fortunately, the epidemic did not reach the Czech Republic at that time.

After the flood and the proper resumption of the functioning of the Department of Security and Crisis Management of Prague City Hall, including the appointment of a new director of the department⁵⁵⁹, I also established an expert group dealing with city security. In this advisory body, with a nickname “Disaster Club”, I have consulted many times with its members, experts on social, technical as well as natural crises⁵⁶⁰, about the security and resilience of our capital city.

At the instigation of this advisory body, and also in response to the June 2013 blackout discussed above, the exercise “Blackout”⁵⁶¹ praised by the International Security Community, was held after long preparations in February 2014, which revealed several weaknesses in the supply of electricity to Prague. Problems were identified both on the part of the city itself in the form of the need for its own at least medium-sized power plant, and on the part of its organizations (shortcomings were found e.g. in hospitals, but also in organizations providing social care and others). However, there was even a certain ignorance of the population about the appropriate procedure in the event of a power failure⁵⁶². Unfortunately, most of the recommendations from the exercise fell by the wayside after the 2014 elections. Obviously, we are waiting for a crisis, which only then will activate the self-government to take action. After 2014, the active type of city decision-making in this area changed to late⁵⁶³.

After 2014, I followed with serious concern quite frightening examples in short succession concerning security in the capital city of Prague, when the self-government did not even convene the Security Council.

The first took place in December 2014. Heavy rainfall began to freeze after a sharp evening cooling, both on the roads and on the traction lines of trams. The transport company gradually lost the possibility of resolving the situation until the operation of trams in Prague stopped completely⁵⁶⁴. Tens of thousands of people remained standing at the stops in the bitter cold without being given a single piece of information or warning. At the same time, the meeting of at least the safety council should have roughly the following form: requesting information from CHMI regarding the weather situation in the next 5 hours, requesting information from the transport

threat of river overflow multiplied by the frequency of floods of a given level per time unit. Calculating the probable loss of property and roughly such an aliquot amount is the answer to my question. However, I no longer had the time and opportunity to commission such an analysis.

⁵⁶⁴ Novinky.cz (2014)

company, requesting information from the technical administration of roads, asking about the possibility of solving the situation on their part (deployment of emergency buses, towing of trams blocking intersections), consideration of other possible risks – for example, suddenly stopping the subway, etc., collaboration by the chairman of the crisis staff and implementation of conclusions – in this case at least in the form of passenger information at all subway stations, on the buses and bus stops. And also in critical places, i.e. places distant from other modes of transport, it was necessary to find a solution for alternative transport either from the sources of the city or from other line operators.

While in the case described above, really serious problems were “only” threats, in the following instance they actually occurred. In May 2015, there was a hidden accident on the water supply pipeline in Prague–Dejvice. Bacteria from the sewage pipe penetrated the drinking water and, after ingesting it, a final number of almost 5,000 people began to feel severe nausea⁵⁶⁵. The first few hundred people even heard a diagnosis of “dehydration” from doctors and were advised to drink enough water. The mayor of Prague 6 had a similar experience at the time. The identification of these problems occurred only after a long delay, moreover only thanks to an experienced senior employee of the call center of the Rescue Service of the Capital City of Prague, who put together several similar phone calls mentioning nausea from the same area and informed higher crisis structures of the city. However, even after that, the city did not warn the inhabitants and the situation reached the public basically thanks to the media. Although more than 30,000 inhabitants were eventually endangered and the accident was one of the worst in the recent history of Prague, the Security Council, or rather in this case, the crisis staff of the city did not meet even once. And, what is especially sad, they did not meet even to better prevent such a situation in the future. At the same time, one very modern solution exists and is already widely used by the security forces of many states. At the city level, this could be a certain agreement with e.g. Internet search engine operators, which would identify the problem well in advance and to a corresponding territorial extent much earlier than the employee of the emergency services, according to the increased frequency of, for example, the word “nausea”⁵⁶⁶.

Naturally, in the case described above, the issue of crisis management was connected with the security policy of the city. In the case of good policy, this includes both long-term measures, either directly preventing crises or, if they

are inevitable, at least reducing the damage they cause. City resilience and crisis management are therefore connected spheres. However, resilience is already part of the long-term decision-making that takes place in the city when things are quiet, when the City Council and the City Assembly meet, behind-the-scenes negotiations take place and long-prepared measures are negotiated. These connected spheres also include the main character of the management system that in the case of Prague is (usually) the person of the Mayor, more aptly perhaps called City Administrator, who turns into a crisis manager in times of disasters. We will deal with his necessary abilities and characteristics in the following, last chapter of the book.

⁵⁶⁶ And it is, of course, clear that this is a move on the thin border of privacy and personal data protection.

During periods of calm, the Mayor should be a knowledgeable layman. In times of crisis, his amateurism can be a big problem.

In a small village, the chairman of the village may be the most competent person during a crisis situation. This is almost impossible to achieve in a big city.

Municipal politicians, chairmen and mayors should be elected in October. They would undergo crisis management training until January, and only then would they take office.

Crisis management is related to maintaining the city's resilience: the non-repairs of bridges and their possible collapse are the responsibility of the self-government, while the administration is responsible for their non-closure before the collapse.

Today's unfortunate trend is to avoid responsibility. This is happening at the state level, but also at the level of Prague.

Mayors and chairmen should be elected directly. They should be given such powers to meet the responsibilities that are widely placed on them.

27. Crisis Manager vs. City Administrator

Crisis management of the city is unique for a responsible decision-maker compared to decision-making in a period of calm. In principle, it is completely impossible to avoid responsibility and not to make decisions, as is often the custom during decision-making in periods of calm. In those periods, the actions and measures of a big city are slow compared to people's everyday lives. Almost everything, once decided and implemented, can usually be easily changed later, and what was stated can be denied without any major problems or consequences, and, last but not least, with a relatively small loss of political capital. In periods of calm, therefore, a certain irresponsibility of self-government does not matter much at the moment. But not in times of crisis. In crisis, each initial decision, including media speeches, is very important and essentially irreversible.

Immediate responsibility for all actions of the chairman of the Crisis Staff is important. In the first few moments of a crisis situation, a decision is usually made on the success or failure of the following procedure. It can be likened to a situation when an attacker is rushing at us. We'll probably get scared and start running – that is not a bad choice. However, we can already have some experience and be able to intimidate the opponent with a step forward. In a crisis, everyone behaves as they are truly able. Whatever we decide, all other activities – already completely subconscious – will be performed according to this first decision. Therefore, the more experience, the higher the probability of making the right decisions.

While during the period of calm the most suitable person for the office of the chairman of the town or mayor of the city is a layman, able to listen and be more or less knowledgeable, function as a considerate representative of the people and at the same time a person about whom there is political agreement among his colleagues, during a period of crisis his "amateurism" can be quite a big problem. It is a problem given by our system of administration that the chairman of the crisis staff is usually the least erudite person in the field of security and crisis management during the resolution of a disaster.

This is especially true in cases of a new situation, for which the components of the city security administration have not yet been trained and are therefore not ready.

This does not matter much in a small village, where the mayor with his local knowledge is perhaps really the most competent person. He knows every corner of his territory and often also every inhabitant of the given village. In a big city, however, this is clearly a problem. Perhaps it would not be out of the question to elect at least chairmen of towns and mayors of cities directly, thus with their fixed four-year term for the entire parliamentary term, and best of all sometime in October, with the elected persons undergoing training until 1 January, and only after that seating themselves in the chairman's or mayor's chair.

Or we can also get inspiration from overseas. During a visit by representatives of the Department of Security and Crisis Management of the City of Prague together with the management of the Czech Flood Association in 2014 in the US states on the Mississippi River⁵⁶⁷, it became clear that in the event of a flood on the river, the US Army National Guard takes command in the flooded area. This makes sense for several reasons. It is difficult to accuse the commanding general of being inexperienced. Unlike elections, where it is basically possible to choose anyone, there is a solid hierarchy in the army trying to match the merits and experience of the soldiers as best as possible. The military also has sufficient internal regulations to deal with and learn from mistakes in decision-making. And last but not least, its poor decision-making in terms of financial responsibility is covered by the whole state.

The previously mentioned former president of the Czech Flood Protection Association, Ing. Jan Papež, told me several times in connection with the flood in Prague in 2013 that several semesters of hydrology and climatology saved me from the fate of one of my predecessors in office, Mayor RNDr. Igor Němec⁵⁶⁸. During the floods in 2002, Mayor Němec literally the night before the disaster said on television that the situation in Prague was extremely excellent⁵⁶⁹. He was – as all politicians are more or less in the habit of doing – dictated by advisers what and how to say. And the stupid advice to Mayor Němec from the depths of the municipality or his political party at the time probably sounded something like this: “Calm everybody down.”

I was (or was Prague?) lucky in this respect in 2013. Floods have really accompanied me already for some time in my life, both theoretically and partly also practically. During my Master's degree studies of geography at the Faculty of Science of

⁵⁷⁰ A leading Czech expert Prof. RNDr. Ing. Vladislav Kříž, DrSc. used to commute to lecture on hydrology at that time.

⁵⁷¹ This time from world-class experts – Prof. RNDr. Bohumír Janský, CSc. and Prof. RNDr. Jakub Langhammer, Ph.D.

⁵⁷² Tollar (2002)

Palacký University, as Ing. Papež commented, I really attended – and, moreover, gladly and regularly – hydrological and climatological seminars⁵⁷⁰. In addition to all the processes, during my university studies I learned, among other things, about all the rivers and their catchments, reservoirs and their parameters, in general the hydrological and climatological specifics of all areas of the Czech Republic. Moreover, in the summer before I started at this school (1997), Moravia was also hit by extensive floods. At that time, I personally participated as a former canoeist in rescuing equipment from our flooding sports hall. The Moravian floods, their causes and consequences were subsequently a frequent topic in various areas of my university studies. And by a strange coincidence, at the final Master's degree state exams in May 2002 I drew a question concerning the course, causes and consequences of the hundred-year floods in Moravia in 1997.

However, the peculiar coincidence of life does not end here either. After graduating from Master's degree studies in May 2002, I started living in Prague. As a direct participant, I therefore experienced floods even here and from October I started doctoral studies in geography at the Faculty of Science of Charles University, and so – although my specialty already focused on regional development – I did not avoid several other seminars and publications of my later colleagues⁵⁷¹ from the field of physical geography concerning, for a change, the floods in Prague.

My professional, but especially academic background would not be enough to properly solve the flood situation without certain other coincidences. A key figure for much of my actions during the flood was a colleague from a coalition party, who was already mentioned in the last but one chapter, former mayor of Prague 8, Josef Nosek, who in 2002, from the position of the chairman of the crisis staff, led, among other things, the successful evacuation of Karlín⁵⁷². In 2011, I completely agreed with him to change the coalition, thanks to which, among other things, the reform of the territorial development policy could also be launched. Countless times we discussed his own experience of the flood during the necessary negotiations at the time. I was extremely interested in that.

The role of Josef Nosek, who came to the city hall to help me immediately on Sunday morning based on my request, was (not only for me) important also in one key aspect. On Sunday at 8:30 a.m., immediately after the first meeting of the crisis staff, during which I realized that the start of all events, despite all my many hours of effort by that time, still dragged on insanely, I put him in a chair in my office and asked what

⁵⁶⁷ The whole thing, together with the Czech Flood Association of the Czech Republic, was co-organized by my Office of the Mayor, but in the end I could not participate in this event due to time constraints, which I still regret to this day.

⁵⁶⁸ Given, in my opinion, the obvious difference between the management of the floods in 2002 and 2013, I was sometimes quite surprised by the question of the then still television (CT) editor Martin Veselovský, sometime during the first days of the flood in 2013, who started my entry into the broadcast by asking if I felt like Igor Němec. Which, I think, was more than stupid at the time.

⁵⁶⁹ Hampejs (2017)

would be awaiting me on a personal level in the coming hours and days. Where the managerial pitfalls of my post await at a time of such a crisis, where it is necessary to prepare for something preventively and for what to prepare. As a man already knowledgeable in that field, he predicted very precisely at that time the future waves of nervousness in the crisis staff coming mainly from the mayors of the city districts, who will at all times try to balance for better or worse on the edge of responsibility and the desire to gain political points. He also helped me, among other things, to set up the closest team of officials in charge, who, during the flood, carried out the activities assigned to them by the crisis staff that met every 3-4 hours. Among other things, his important advice was that in the interest of my own health, I must immediately hand over my mobile phone to someone who would be with me non-stop in the coming days. My then-closest adviser, assistant and later director of the Office of the Mayor, Mgr. Ondřej Boháč⁵⁷³ had been close to me since that morning. I gave him my phone, and for three days, during which I slept for about 1 hour (due to the emergency he had not slept even that much), he was my alter ego⁵⁷⁴.

In particular, based on the experience described above, I would like to say today that the person in charge of responsible crisis management – i.e. one who deals with a situation for which the integrated rescue system and the security department of the municipality alone is not enough – should have two abilities, namely to make quick decisions and, if possible, without mistakes. Only both of these characteristics together can be sufficient to successfully manage a crisis situation. Only a certain vigor in decision-making based on experience (or at least knowledgeableness) can lead to the ability to take responsibility for one's own decisions, and thus in a figurative sense for the entrusted city. However, it is the responsibility that is especially recently, it seems to me, somehow disappearing from our public life in Prague, but also in the Czech Republic. This is reflected, and I consider this to be particularly serious, even in times of calm, when a crisis is not being resolved, but “only” the resilience of the city, and when the need for responsibility for decisions is much less.

In one of the previous sections, we described the long-neglected maintenance of bridges in Prague, which also manifested itself in the 2014–2018 election period, among other things, also by ignoring warnings about their serious condition. This eventually led in 2017 to the fall of the footbridge for pedestrians and cyclists in the city district of Prague–Troja and later to the closing of several other bridges that seemed

almost hysterical. Subsequent political statements and the rejection of the responsibility of the then-members of the Prague City Council testified to the fact that the political representation did not accept responsibility for this state of the entrusted city, even though, in fact, it had that responsibility. Thus, either this situation was an anomaly, or it is a consequence of the development towards the ever-increasing (and increasingly less manageable) complexity of society and large cities in particular. Although I am personally convinced of the first of these possibilities, because as an opposition representative at the time (2014–2018) I was quite familiar with the atmosphere of non-communication and general fear of officials of contact with the unpredictable and controversially behaving political representation, this may be proven only in the course of time and possibly by more accidents in Prague.

Otherwise, it is really a long-term trend and we are no longer able to make more effort to maintain them with the current organization of administration in the face of the growing complexity of our cities. In other words, we are talking about a possible future situation when even other political representations will not be able to meet the responsibility for security in the city, both during crises and also in the form of ensuring sufficient resilience of the city's infrastructure. In such a case, this responsibility would have to be removed from self-government and political representation and placed in the hands of some specialized state institutions, i.e. city-wide security technicians, engineers and commanding crisis managers in times of disasters.

I am not calling here for some social totalitarianism under the guise of ensuring security, I am just pointing out that in a big city like Prague, whose complexity already far exceeds the abilities of lay people – elected politicians – to comprehend this in the necessary detail, it may be required to make some changes to the whole system of their management in the future.

Given the origins of our legislation and the electoral system, our current city governance setting has its roots in the revolutionary days of 1989. The spirit of these events in the following years penetrated into the general effort to prevent any concentration of power, and, in my opinion, very unfortunately at all levels of public administration. It is certainly necessary to prevent an excessive concentration of power at the national level, where laws are made and where there is potential as well as power to influence the other two pillars of state power. The current oligarchization of the Czech political scene and examples from the surrounding Central European states only

⁵⁷³ Since 2016, he has been the director of the Institute of Planning and Development, to whom, among other things, many years ago, I supervised his bachelor's thesis at Charles University on the topic of the plan of future cycle paths in Prague 11.

⁵⁷⁴ The engagement of such a non-stop working assistant quite refined the surrounding characters. Once called Prime Minister Nečas who, after Ondřej Boháč introduced himself to the phone, gladly, willingly and politely told him what he should tell me, what was set up and what I should carry out. At that time, Miroslav Kalousek did the same, realizing that we were in a difficult situation. However, when, for example, the then Minister of the Environment, Mgr. Tomáš Chalupa, called, literally roaring, he insisted on talking directly with Hudeček, because he is a Minister in the government of the Czech Republic. However, at that time I led the crisis staff with about 20 permanent members and more than 20 associate guests. Fortunately, today it is just a hilarious story.

exacerbate this need. At the same time, however, the question is whether, within today's very strong and, above all, narrow boundaries, the city administration needs the same obstacles to decision-making. Is it necessary to look for an agreement, for example, in Prague, across almost 1,200 elected representatives?

There is certainly a big difference in the need for timely decision-making in the construction of flood barriers, investing in property security (= basic resilience) and, for example, in the previous part widely discussed need to build new apartments in Prague (or allowing these apartments to be built). However, when looking in more detail, it is also clear that today they are a little closer than before when there were enough apartments, that is, at a time when it was not necessary to deal with construction as quickly as possible in the face of a housing "crisis". There are only two modes of decision-making enshrined in our legislation. Fast and slow. In times of calm and times of crisis. There is no transition zone between them.

Specifically, for example, in today's intense need to solve housing in Prague, it is no longer a sufficient argument to refer to the election as a catalyst for such similarly growing problems; that is, the worshipped flexibility and ability to make a change in democratic regimes guaranteed precisely by holding free elections. The opinion that people are more likely to choose a strong political representation that will be able to decide is, in the conditions of Czech cities and especially Prague, completely odd, at least in the area of securing housing construction. Here, in the case of elections, the closure of Prague as a constituency with its own administrative borders is fundamentally reflected in this problem. For a large part, permanent property owners are satisfied with the growth of real estate prices. The value of their property is growing, they tend to improve the environment, and therefore have a reason to vote rather for construction-hindering local activists, which, however, further exacerbates the spiral of problems.

Certainly, we do not want all the accumulating problems in our cities to gradually reach the level of the state, where some kind of a more directive (if not totalitarian) state system will "solve" them in a uniform basis, just like the same housing estates that were once built everywhere. A better way is to leave as many problems as possible to be solved at lower levels of public administration. Here, more directive decision-making does not threaten the future of our democratic establishment in any way. Unlike the state level, where we rightly fear the centralization of power. However, this path requires that the chairmen of towns and mayors of (large)

⁵⁷⁵ And it is certainly necessary to take into account that the limited time my colleagues and I had to implement the measures played a big role. In some areas of administration, we only had 1.5 years.

⁵⁷⁶ Czech Tourism (2014)

cities could effectively solve the problems of the territories entrusted to them, which brings us by the end of our book back to its beginning.

After the successfully managed flood, I was elected Mayor of the city, and due to the need to continue the reform of the development policy of the territory, I retained the responsibility for the development of the city and added only one more to it, namely security. Within these two responsibilities, I was able to make, in addition to the obvious day-to-day operations, a few more key political decisions. However, the more I was outside my two entrusted responsibilities with proposals for various measures, the less successful I was in enforcing them⁵⁷⁵. My colleagues in the City Council, even though we were all from one political party, were not formally subordinate to me in any way, and the personal level of relations depletes relatively quickly in the political environment. On the other hand, my fellow councilors and deputies, of course, dealt with many of their own projects. But I did not find out about them, which is of course also wrong, especially when, as the Mayor in the media environment, I was more or less responsible for anything that happened at the City Hall, and oftentimes did not even happen at all.

I do not claim that the Mayor of Prague is completely powerless outside his responsibilities, which can be demonstrated, for example, in the following three successfully completed projects in 2013 and 2014, in which I, as one of their initiators, actively participated:

- With the Deputy for Culture Ing. Václav Novotný, we succeeded in a hussar stunt in the form of winning the organization of the so-called Congress of Congresses⁵⁷⁶, i.e. the congress of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) for 2017, which significantly moved Prague in the field of congress tourism – qualitatively the highest type of tourism – to the position of 10 most successful cities in the world.
- With the Deputy for Transport Ing. Jiří Nouza, despite the critical situation with unpaid invoices for the Blanka tunnel complex, we managed to solve this in a way free from later litigation and most possible other problems. Through a thorough analysis, all discrepancies in the assignment (missing resolution of the assembly), in the project itself (additional work, among other things also due to the collapses during the construction exceeded the limit set by the Public Procurement Act), and in the current situation (the city did not order the completion of

the construction due to overdraft and the contractor had to stop the construction) were resolved by arbitration with the contractor. Thanks to it, the construction work could continue 4 months after the work was stopped and the work was finally successfully completed. To this day, it is a bit of a mystery to me why this step, which I dare say that other city councils would not be able to take at all, was evaluated more or less negatively in the media and public space.

- And, finally, with the councilor for property, Ing. Eva Vorlíčková, we succeeded at the level of the Prague City Council to enforce, initiate and subsequently carry out the exhumation of the remains of Josef Toufar, the priest from Čihošť who was martyred by the communists in the 1950s. This happened in October and November 2014, shortly before the end of our term of office⁵⁷⁷.

⁵⁷⁷ for documentation of the whole process see Doležal (2017)

However, I try to draw attention to the fact that in the Czech system of administration of large cities, apart from one's own entrusted responsibilities in the City Council, projects are very difficult to enforce, with a few exceptions. After my appointment as Mayor, there was no longer the state of danger or emergency. The quick decision-making of the city thus became slow, and there are no transition stages between these modes.

Finally, to the occasional question of my students, what I personally actually enforced in Prague during its administration, I answer with some exaggeration that, since 2014, it is finally possible⁵⁷⁸ to see in the subway when the next train will come, while until then we could only read from the screens when the last one left. And if it amuses them, I'll add that today it is no longer such a problem to go to a fairly decent toilet in the subway, while before 2014 one was afraid to even approach those places.

⁵⁷⁸ thanks to my personal conversation with the then Director of the Transport Company of the Capital City of Prague, a great man and an expert in his place, Ing. Jaroslav Duriš

With these answers, I try to point out at least a little bit the real size of the power of the Mayor of Prague in today's legislative and electoral system. Small things can be enforced successfully, but big ones only at the cost of huge losses of political capital and only in the responsibilities entrusted to you in the Prague City Council.

But maybe I am just looking at it all from the wrong angle. Maybe I did the most when I took the children from the Radost⁵⁷⁹ children's home personally to the Prague Zoo. There were no TV cameras, it was not photographed for social networks, it was not in the newspapers, but the children had unadulterated joy in their eyes and I had a feeling of really meaningful activity.

⁵⁷⁹ Which was founded long before my political engagement by my two colleagues, who later worked in my office at Prague City Hall, Mrs. Jitka Bendová and Jana Šmejcká (see Burianová 2006).

Conclusion

City administration is not an easy activity, either in practice or in theory. Every city is different, every epoch is different, every situation requiring some solution is different, and therefore even every solution is logically different. Only at the most general level can several aspects of good city administration be agreed upon and, moreover, only if there is knowledge of the general development of the world and society within which cities and their inhabitants stand today. Even with a relatively small approach to the details of the functioning of cities, the extreme complexity of individual urban organisms is already beginning to surface. Concepts of good administration applicable to one city may not work at all for another.

And, moreover, this applies also to the development of the same city over time. If all cities in the settlement system emphasize a certain type of measure, it may well be that only the differently focused city will experience unprecedented spatial, economic as well as social growth and development. Just like at sea, some waves form and others disappear at a given moment, so that a moment later everything changes and the roles would be reversed. Cities are already very close to the free will of the people. This, like the coincidence implicitly inserted at the level of elementary particles into the essence of our world, cannot be bound in any way, maximally described by means of probabilities. Whenever we think we already know the future development and adapt our decision-making or the decision-making of the whole city to this, some unexpected non-linearity in the development appears and we have to start with our plans and goals from the beginning.

That is why it is necessary to know all these above-mentioned aspects of cities and development in general, because without them it is not possible to perform any city administration well at a given time. That is why on many previous pages, in chapters and sections we tried to analyze the causes and drivers of urban existence, their behavior and decision-making, both in relation to us – the inhabitants of cities, and also in relation to higher social units.

However, the integral approach forced by our efforts has in many places met its extreme breadth, the vast number of different fields of science, society and technology, the comprehensive concept of which required, in addition to a long professional study, several years of experience in the highest representative body of a large city, also more than five years of effort, research of hundreds of works and countless expert consultations in preparing this publication.

Now, in its conclusion, it is more than obvious that the prerequisite for the future good administration of cities, i.e. large and on Earth unique organisms interspersed with technical, natural as well as social sciences, must be the growing ability of us people, and in particular of city managers, to have such a broad knowledge. At the same time, however, it is quite difficult to imagine that something like this can be asked at all from people – those in the service of the city in particular. Unfortunately, development does not give us a choice in this, and in some form it is necessary to cultivate this knowledge in society.

On the other hand, there is no need to succumb to despair, even when considering the limits of democracy, elected representatives and appointed employees in the city administration. Effective administration of the city (in general of any social unit) has in the past been behind their ups and downs, but the broader social context that determined the development has always played an important role. Even stronger have always been the two basic systemic processes – concentration and thinning, which take place in our reality.

In today's globalized world, cities are something like trees in a forest. Each individual tree grows until it is cut down by the weight of the growing volume of wood. Among other trees, however, these grow more slowly and live longer. Although they do not have unlimited space there and they limit one another, they also provide common protection against strong winds and share nutrients through fungi in the soil. Together with other animals, they form as the whole forest a large organism, within which they are capable also of collective – not individual – transformation.

After writing all three books and their parts, I am convinced today that the main goal of city administrators should be such a city to which people like to return. Whether it's a daily return from work from another nearby city, an occasional return from a well-deserved vacation, a long work or adventure stay in a distant country, or repeated visits by tourists and visitors. This institute of return of the inhabitants is a supplement to the efficiency and suitability of cities for the life added by the architect Jiří Hruza, an addition brought by our era. In it Western

society, on the one hand, grew somewhat lazy and contented with the already sufficiently high-quality environment of its own cities, but on the other hand, it also began to have sufficient wealth compared to the improved accessibility of all possible places on our planet. I come from somewhere and at the same time I want to travel everywhere has become the motto of ever younger generations. The importance of returning to somewhere therefore seems today to be a key commodity that cities are creating in today's world and will create in a very near future.

In another, generally accepted view, good city administration also means making decisions at the right time, given the development and trends. The freedom in the activities of decision-makers within the individual control layers of the city, whether it is the municipal self-government (consciousness) or the city administration (subconscious), decreases with the growth of their hierarchical level, i.e. with the significance of their position. The decision-making process is therefore reminiscent of underwater swimming, during which we sometimes have to breathe on the surface. After a long series of decisions in the lower control layers, once in a while the whole decision-making process reaches the level of the highest control layer. Here, it is often basically only possible to state a different amount of agreement or disagreement, and then the work and other decision-making within the lower control layers continues.

Therefore, top management and politicians with a few exceptions within decision-making processes cannot decide too "differently" but rather "at a different time". Despite the fact that the ability to make timely decisions in each of the segments of the chain of the city's decision-making is many times more difficult with each and every little growth of the city, it should be required especially in the largest ones. It is on them that the cultural cultivation of the surroundings and other cities in the settlement system stands.

It is somewhat of a problem in the Czech Republic today that the evaluation of this fact, i.e. the recognition of timely decision-making abilities in people working in the city administration, which should be the task of the media, is basically, with few exceptions, not happening at all. Therefore, one important thing disappears in the social discourse: Premature decisions of the city, usually due to a corrupt environment, are as harmful to the city as late decisions, caused by local activism, which has found its way to the city-wide level.

The city's premature decisions against development trends, thanks to which politicians or officials, for example, award

contracts to related parties, stand out from the boundaries of good decision-making, as do late decisions caused by blocking the development plans necessary for the city. Again, it is a matter of finding a certain appropriate measure, in this respect a balance in the triad of interests of the people, the city and the whole. Therefore, generalizing and today extremely frequent evaluations or condemnations of actions or non-actions of the city administration in the style of “at least something happened when he was in power” or “these at least do not steal” are therefore out of place. Only thanks to the responsible work of the evaluators, today especially the media, can the administration of Czech cities put into practice optimal use of suitable time windows for individual decisions.

A separate chapter, which was given space in the publication in a large part, is therefore the extremely problematic situation in the capital city of Prague. It seems that in addition to strong and permanent systemic processes, which run at different intensities and at different times through settlement systems throughout the planet, Prague has been caught between the legacies of special types of administration in the last few decades. The epoch of a totalitarian state without private property and emphasis on human rights was replaced in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century by the epoch “everything is allowed”. And then, unfortunately, too quickly without the necessary period of reasonable balance, it was transformed into the era of “everything is wrong”.

Good city administration is a key project of humanity with developmental, social, as well as environmental trends. Whatever happens to our planet, climate or society, as humans we will draw our strength from our own closeness and ability to respond technologically and organizationally to the change. Between the two forms of the concentration process taking place within the framework of social development, i.e. between the migration of people to live close to one another and the shortening of distances, the first one will always be more suitable in terms of environmental impacts. Certainly, there will be many more epochs of disillusionment from cities in the future, as has been the case many times in the past. After them, however, we will set out again as one humanity to continue to thicken and intensify the use of space and time.

It must be clear to the administration of large cities that “its” inhabitants will always be a little ahead of other, smaller cities in this mindset. A liquid society (that is, a more interconnected and more complex society) begins and arises in large cities, making human society more complex. The more intense melting of society does not take place due to sparsely

populated areas, which is important also for the harmony of development.

For the administration of small towns, this means a slight simplification of the situation, as it knows what developments can be expected in the near future. But also not so much, because in the age of social networks, which, like any other technologies, gives a lot and also takes a lot, this development delay is much smaller than before. Increasing demands on good city administration are thus placed on smaller and smaller cities, where, however, it is also more difficult to find responsible, honest and hard-working citizens who could cope with this work. Especially in a situation when they are being given more and more responsibility – apart from the political one, recently in the Czech Republic to a completely absurd degree also criminal liability – and at the same time, the legislation does not give them more powers to rectify and change things, rather the opposite is happening.

In the area of territorial development, which is probably the most important issue from the city’s point of view, as the cities themselves and their inhabitants are mainly entities occurring and growing in space, the situation in the Czech Republic is even more sad. Cities in the Czech Republic have thus gradually lost the ability and opportunity to decide on their territory – partly through state regulations and partly by the growing importance of each person’s personal rights – that especially large cities today are already basically only passively watching the continuing uncontrolled suburbanization and the unstoppable rise in housing prices and real estate in general. And, on the other hand, in a small village, it is a problem even to simply change the boundaries of a cadastral area.

However, the administration of cities and the actors who work in it in the Czech Republic cannot be “blamed” too much, especially in a situation when there is basically no proper scientific background which would monitor, describe and, thanks to its knowledge, through a change in the laws subsequently facilitate their work. Urban science, universities/schools about the city, the field of “citylogy” – nothing like this can be studied in the Czech Republic, but also in the immediate vicinity, and it is not possible to deal with cities so comprehensively. Urbanism and architecture, both historical sciences about cities, are only difficult and slow to connect with urban sociology and psychology. Technicians, creators of technical standards, engineers, including urban ones, who might be closest to the functioning of the whole city, focus on the technical and technological side of the city and especially infrastructure, unfortunately often completely detached from the need for

compromise given by the regional, historical and especially social context. And, finally, geographers, demographers, and economists unfortunately usually tend to be drowning in analyses and unable to take into account the need to make decisions here and now. And they do not understand the need to fulfill good administration by making timely decisions in an uncertain environment. Unfortunately, this is also the sad experience of the author of this book from the time of his term of office. Cities turn too little to universities with their problems, and those, unfortunately, vice versa, do not understand much about the real needs of the city and its administration. Perhaps this is where the main problem of good administration of Czech cities lies, and I firmly believe that this text will help to improve this situation in the future.

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Summary

This publication deals with the search, delimitation, definition and examples of good governance of a big city, besides other things in the legislative conditions of the Czech Republic. The text is divided into three books.

The first book defines the current position of cities in the global social system using system theory. There the city is viewed as a complex system and in a certain sense a not fully developed organism. A sandwich structure is identified – people: city: settlement system – within which parts form units, which in turn react to them, grind their edges, transform them and use them for their further development.

Through a deep theoretical-methodological discussion, the essence of general development on the edge between order and chaos is described there, the basic two system processes taking place in our surrounding reality – thinning and concentration, and also the existence of coincidence and choice embedded in the innermost essence of our world. In the following chapters, these findings and conclusions are applied to the historical development of society and also cities within an increasingly interconnected global settlement system.

Analogues, simple physical or mechanical models based on similarities or, on the contrary, differences of various types of systems are used for the clarity of description of a complicated issue. Knowledge from a wide range of scientific disciplines is used, from astrophysics, physics, chemistry, biology, ethology through material engineering, economics, geography and geoinformatics, sociology, psychology to cybernetics, mathematics, informatics and several others.

The second book deals with the essence of a decision and decision-making, both in people and in cities formed by them. The objectives of basic human behavior as well as the objectives of behavior of cities are discussed. Characterized and thoroughly analyzed are the two highest management layers of the city – self-government and administration, which are described by analogies to human consciousness and subconsciousness.

The core of the second book is the definition and description of good city governance, which is elaborated in detail especially for large and important cities in the settlement system. Attention is paid also to the limits of this good governance. Thus, to various limitations that affect city administrators and make good governance often impossible.

The last three chapters of this second book address the essence of planning as a form of decision-making for complex systems. Probably necessary steps to be taken in the future at the level of state legislation in the Czech Republic, in order to make further development of especially large cities in the Czech Republic sustainable in the long term, are listed there, too.

The third book is devoted to a case study of the Capital City of Prague. To the key problems of its administration – excessive fragmentation of the administration of the Capital City of Prague, delays in decisions especially in the last few decades and, last but not least, also the critical situation in the housing market. Possible solutions of problems and recommendations for the city self-government, responsible ministries and legislators are outlined.

A substantial part of the third book is devoted to the reform of policy of the development of the territory of the Capital City of Prague initiated in the years 2011–2014, for the most part implemented, but in certain aspects unfinished in the next electoral term. 11 actions under the reform are described, including the assessment of their condition over the next five years.

The final part is devoted to the issue of crisis management of the city. Based on the real example of the solution of the flood situation at the turn of May and June 2013, similarities and differences with city management during non-crisis periods are discussed. Direct records of the then Chairman of the Emergency Committee of the Capital City of Prague are used for that purpose, which are subsequently set into a broader framework of crisis management under the conditions of self-government of cities and municipalities in the Czech Republic. The last chapter is then devoted to the characterization of the position and personality of the Mayor of Prague, taking the role of a prudent manager of the entrusted city during a period of calm, however, in times of disasters assuming the role of a crisis manager.

The whole publication aims to be a guideline not only for the professional public, but also for all who want to know what possibilities of city administration in today's world city officials and elected officials of self-government actually have.

However, among other things, it also seeks to be a source material for lawmakers, so that their steps in the adoption of laws are kept with the greatest possible awareness of the problems that municipal governments and administration face due to the oftentimes problematic legislation in the Czech Republic.

The text was conceived also as educational, scientific-pedagogical. Individual chapters are partly formed into separate professional lectures in the field of "citylogy", which can include, for example, management and economics of the city, urban engineering, urbanism, architecture, geography, sociology, management and others.

The text of the publication is partly based on the author's habilitation thesis, successfully defended in the field of Urban Construction and Engineering at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Technical University of Ostrava.

Index

A

ability to react 34, 36, 152
 activism 213, 355
 adaptation/ability to adapt/
 adapting 21, 290
 Administration of Services
 of the Capital City of
 Prague 221, 374
 agglomeration 27, 47, 49, 70,
 184–185, 195, 197, 210, 213,
 253, 270
 Amnesty International 187
 amygdala 152
 antiquity 49
 areas of administration 183,
 195, 206, 214, 252, 287, 397
 Aristotle 21, 97, 177
 army 234, 374–375, 385, 392
 assembly 211, 217, 227, 282,
 285–288, 373, 397
 Association of Regions of the
 Czech Republic 283, 382
 asymmetric (frequency) distribution
 78–79, 82–83, 204
 Austria 30, 92, 219, 262,
 307, 334
 availability 46, 53, 117,
 123, 138, 177, 236

B

Barcelona 171, 318
 Bénard cells 88–89
 benchmark 171, 204, 251, 254
 Berlin 36, 44, 46, 204, 211, 290
 Berounka 369–370, 372, 376, 379
 bifurcation (cascade, point)
 90–93, 151
 blackout 32, 139, 378, 386–387
 Bratislava 42, 49, 211, 229, 290
 Bremen 204
 Brno 128, 171, 194, 196–198,
 203, 206, 211, 227,
 229, 270, 312, 336
 Brussels 42
 Budapest 42, 49, 211, 290
 Building Act 189, 246, 261–262,
 264, 310, 312, 335, 338
 building permits 302, 306–307,
 309–311

C

cadastral map 233, 262
 causality/causalities 91, 93,
 119, 134, 167
 Central Bohemian Region 385–386
 chairman of the Crisis or
 Emergency committee/staff 375,
 368, 391, 393
 chairman of the town/city district
 (local mayor) 11, 163, 211,
 217, 224, 289, 390–392
 change of the land-use plan
 299, 305, 313, 314, 317,
 322, 330, 333–334, 337,
 344–345, 347, 358
 chaos 21, 23, 64, 66, 71–72, 74,
 81, 83–84, 86, 89, 91–92, 96,
 99, 102–104, 106–107, 113,
 127–128, 134, 147, 150, 160, 169,
 172, 238, 240–241, 267, 319
 Chicago 131
 Christianity 128
 city administration triad 180,
 184, 190, 194, 196
 City Development Strategy 244,
 247, 251, 252, 255–256, 259
 city state 49, 118, 177, 204–205, 242
 city walls 27, 48, 106, 118, 130–131
 climate change 90, 106, 109, 360
 coalition 227, 286, 320–321,
 323–324, 340, 349, 354,
 358, 365, 372, 393
 coincidence 91, 99, 114, 156
 Cologne 295
 commute/commuter/commuting
 10, 35, 41, 43, 46, 135,
 184–185, 270, 306–307, 318
 compact city 134, 139, 185
 complex systém 21, 26, 28–30,
 33, 103, 122, 127, 136, 151, 156
 complexation 134
 complexity 21–23, 28, 33, 82,
 97, 101, 104–105, 109, 157, 160,
 165, 169, 171, 174, 181, 205, 207,
 217, 229, 270–271, 289, 302, 312–
 313, 322, 324, 347, 352, 358, 395
 complexity of decision-making/
 managing 172, 174,
 193, 195, 207, 217

concentration (process) 76–77,
 79, 87–88, 91–92, 97–98, 104,
 112–114, 119–120, 122, 151, 172,
 179, 203, 234–235, 238, 241, 263
 consciousness 34, 107, 114,
 150, 153–155, 157–158,
 160–162, 175, 217–218, 237
 contributory organization 159,
 186, 216, 227–229, 318,
 320, 329–330, 354, 374
 control layers 37, 103,
 150–153, 155, 157, 160–161, 164,
 168–169, 172, 180, 194–195,
 207, 240–241, 249, 251,
 255, 301, 378, 382
 conurbation 126, 130
 Copenhagen 201
 Copenhagen City & Port
 Development Corporation 201
 countryside 31, 96, 126, 188
 crisis management 163, 280,
 379, 386, 388–391, 394
 crisis manager 280, 389, 395
 Crisis Staff 375–377, 382, 385, 391
 crisis state 163, 383–384
 Czech Flood Protection
 Association 381, 392
 Česká Třebová 46

D

Dallas 210, 289
 decision(–making) modes 150,
 161, 162, 238, 241, 396, 398
 Dejvice 270–271, 295–296,
 298, 388
 delegated powers of state
 administration 176, 188, 202,
 216, 219, 224–225, 263, 312, 330
 democracy 120, 375
 demographic revolution/transition
 58
 Detroit 32, 50, 70
 development area 267, 318, 334
 diffusion 66, 122, 197
 direct/indirect elections of mayors
 174, 290
 Disaster Club 387
 dissipative structure 88
 Dresden 46–47, 49, 269

E
economic cycles 123, 186, 290
ecosystem 29
election period 285, 289,
323, 325, 338, 348, 394
elections (municipal) 167, 212,
219, 280, 283–285, 287,
289–291, 299, 316, 319–321,
324, 335, 349, 355, 387, 396
electoral system 161, 226, 283,
289, 301, 323, 395, 398
elements 21, 23, 26, 28–29,
36–37, 44, 48, 65, 74, 76–79,
83–84, 87, 103–105, 113, 120–121,
168, 178, 180–181, 190, 232,
235–237, 240, 260
emancipation 112, 120–121,
123–125, 136, 139, 245, 299
emergent manifestation/
property 29, 151
emotion 34, 36, 152–155,
160, 175, 238, 252
entropy 64, 66–68, 70–71,
75–77, 88, 99, 151, 179
European Union 42, 181, 246, 290

F
fear 32, 50, 152, 155, 158, 160,
238, 240, 262, 286, 318, 320,
334, 380, 387, 395–396
feedback loop 168, 244,
248–250, 255
fire brigade 129, 214, 382, 384–385
flood 35, 37, 41, 80, 159,
162, 177, 239, 280, 323,
342–343, 364–366, 368–388,
392–394, 396–397
flood barriers 35, 364, 366–377,
380, 384–385, 396
flood plan 368–369, 372,
376, 378, 380
Forth Worth 210
fractal 31, 74, 80–84, 87, 91,
102–103, 108, 167, 169, 241
fractal dimension 82–83, 87
fragmentation of adminis-
tration 227, 283, 286
France 121, 219
Frankfurt 42, 295
free will 55, 99, 156, 158? 169, 178

G
generalization 30, 44,
46, 70, 93, 99, 127
Germany 70, 121, 137, 219,
228, 262, 295, 334
global warming 90, 104
globalization 134
good (city) administration/
governance/management 143,
177, 180, 192–193, 195, 216, 225

H
Hamburg 204
hierarchization 77, 84
hierarchy 21, 30, 42, 47, 49–50,
74, 78, 84, 99, 103, 113–114,
116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 130, 155,
179, 188, 195–198, 241–242,
250, 289, 324, 341, 392
Holešovice 175, 202,
295–297, 334, 344, 374
homeostasis 26, 32, 104
Hong Kong 131
housing crisis 264, 358
housing estate 137, 185, 193, 247,
264, 297, 307, 332, 336, 361, 396
Hradec Králové 47
human factor 172, 174, 340
Human Rights Watch 187

I
importance of the city 27, 42,
43, 50, 53, 66, 134, 195
incrementalism 250
individualization 123–124, 136, 139
industrial revolution 43,
112, 116, 131, 338
industrialization 121, 124
innovation 28, 35, 59, 90, 99,
103–104, 122–123, 128, 130,
136, 182, 197, 237, 300, 381
Institute of Planning and
Development (of the
Capital City of Prague) 196,
229, 298, 306, 316, 322,
328–331, 334–335, 338–339,
341–342, 344–345, 394
instruments of power 117–118
intelligence 33, 35, 38, 84, 123, 160
interconnection 22, 32, 59, 76, 109,
119, 124, 126, 136, 152–153, 168,
182, 207, 255, 293, 325, 358, 382
investment process 293–294,
300, 347

J
Jihlava 47
joint stock company 184, 216, 220,
227–228, 320–321, 354, 386

K
Karlín 175, 355, 372, 393
Kiev 49
Kladno 47

L
land-use planning 246,
259–264, 267–268, 270,
310–311, 334–335, 338, 355
laws of gravity/Newton's
gravitational formula 41, 57, 127
Le Corbusier 137
legislation/legislative 77, 161,
183, 201, 203–204, 212, 226,
246, 261–263, 265, 280, 288,
300, 302, 309, 322, 325,
335, 340, 347, 350, 355,
358, 366, 382, 395–396
light smog 138
linear equilibrium development/
phase 64–67, 70–72, 75, 84, 151
linear non-equilibrium develop-
ment/phase 65–66, 75, 77,
84, 88, 90, 92, 120, 27, 249
London 43, 47, 74, 123, 139, 138–
139, 185, 201, 210, 212–214, 268

M
Madrid 171
Manhattan 212–213
Manchester 32, 70
master plan 260, 261
mayor 23, 29, 157–158, 168–169,
172, 174, 184, 193–194, 206–207,
210–211, 217, 226, 285–290,
296, 325–326, 364, 370,
372, 374–376, 381–383,
388, 390–394, 396
megapolis 47, 212
metabolism 26, 31, 35, 104
metropolitan area 27, 42,
49, 124, 126, 134, 136, 139,
148, 185, 238, 335
Metropolitan Plan 229, 265–267,
270, 280, 322–323, 328, 331,
335–337, 339, 348, 351, 354–355
Mexico City 42
Middle Ages 118, 128–129
Milan 295
Milan walls 295
Ministry for Regional
Development (of the Czech
Republic 197, 261, 312, 324
Mladá Boleslav 47
modernization 112, 124
Moravia 153, 155, 200,
252, 374, 393
Moravian–Silesian Region 200
Municipal Police (of the Capital
City of Prague) 221, 343,
365, 371, 380–381, 387
Munich 49, 295

N
nervous system 154, 157
neural network 35

neurons 154
New York 32, 42–43, 47, 55,
58, 74, 128, 131, 179, 187,
206, 210, 212–214, 248,
253–254, 263, 289
NIMBY effect 214, 288, 360
noise limit 225, 270
non-linear non-equilibrium
development/phase 21, 65,
77, 84, 86–92, 102–103, 106,
114–115, 119, 134–135, 138, 151,
156–157, 194–195, 198, 200, 238,
241, 249, 269–271, 332, 359
non-linearity 21, 87, 90–92,
104, 106, 108, 114–115, 128,
130, 241, 249

O
officer 35, 159, 218, 239, 352, 373
Olomouc 46, 167, 197, 252, 282, 373
Opencard 325
orbitofrontal cortex 152
organically grown 67, 139, 167
organism 26–27, 29–33, 36–38,
50, 60, 65, 67, 76–77, 83, 90,
104–105, 107–108, 114–115,
122, 130, 135, 151, 153–159, 161,
165–168, 175, 177–178, 182, 207,
217, 219, 235, 255, 268, 300, 381
Orlik (Reservoir) 368–370, 372
Ostrava 32, 36, 46, 70, 128, 171,
194, 196–198, 200–201, 206–207,
211, 227, 229, 252, 270, 312, 319

P
Pardubice 46–47, 211, 252, 381
Pareto rule 79
Paris 42, 48, 136–137,
182, 185, 229, 268
Parliament 199, 285, 326, 335
path dependency 157, 254
People in Need 187
period of calm 239, 241, 319, 391
period of crisis 163, 391
Pilsen 47, 194, 312
Plato 118, 153, 177, 183
Police (of the Czech Republic)
189, 325, 365, 374, 380, 384
political capital 175, 280, 316,
319–321, 323–324, 360, 391, 398
political cost 319, 325
population density 27, 49, 53, 56,
60–61, 86, 89, 194, 202–203,
205, 214, 261, 270, 321, 338, 360
Prague City Hall 10, 14, 159, 172,
220–224, 312, 318–321, 323,
329–330, 333, 340, 345, 348,
352, 368, 373, 380, 387, 398
Prague for People 316, 322–323,
344–345, 352, 358
Prague Olympic 317, 328, 331

primary goal 179, 232, 235–239,
242, 247, 250–251
Principles of territorial
development of the region
246, 258–259, 261, 316, 321,
322, 335, 337–338, 351
privatization of housing
stock 307, 318, 358
privatization of public power 213
proceedings (administrative,
construction) 263, 305, 310,
311, 358
project manager 172, 226–227,
251, 344
Public Space Manual 264, 316,
322, 340–342, 350

Q
quaternary 80
quinary 80

R
reform 172, 185–186, 210, 213,
225, 258, 262–264, 270, 277,
279–280, 303, 314, 316–317,
319–325, 329–330, 335, 338,
340, 342–346, 348–349, 354,
359–360, 365, 393, 397
Regional Development Strategy
of the Czech Republic 197
regionalization 43
regulation 31, 35, 105–107, 118,
138, 157, 159, 166–168, 183,
189, 194, 219, 227, 229, 232,
234–235, 243, 246, 251, 254,
260, 262–264, 270, 310, 316–318,
322, 324, 328, 334–339, 341,
350–351, 355, 358, 376, 392
regulatory plan 188, 246, 260–262
reorganization 323, 340, 352
representative 30, 82, 99, 113,
157, 167–169, 177, 193, 195, 204,
207, 210, 212, 215, 217, 219,
225, 282, 285–291, 294, 296,
298, 300, 320, 323–325, 330,
332, 342–343, 345, 349, 352,
361, 365, 368–369, 372–375,
385–386, 391–392, 395–396
Rescue Service of the Capital
City of Prague (Medical) 221,
365, 380–381, 384, 386, 388
resilience 26, 32, 139, 195,
198–199, 319, 386–387,
389–390, 394–396
risk 33, 58, 70, 119–120, 122,
124, 152, 240, 251, 388
Rokytká 381–382
Roman Empire 102, 128
Rome 67, 128–129, 167
Ruhr 70
Říčany 382

S
Santa Fe Institute 42, 83
savings (from density, agglom-
eration, economic) 139
Sázava 370, 380
second law of thermodynamics
66, 75
secretary of the municipal
office 219
Security and Crisis Management
Department 364–365, 368,
370–372, 380, 387, 392
Security Council (of the Capital
City of Prague) 365–366,
368, 371, 386–388
self-organization 21, 89, 101, 169
settlement system 41–44, 47–48,
50, 53, 60–61, 65–66, 70, 74,
76–78, 80, 82–83, 89–90, 103,
107, 118, 128, 134–135, 155, 161,
177, 180–181, 184, 193–198,
200, 204, 211
Singapore 192, 204–205
Slovakia 219, 307
Sounding Board 343
spatial planning 148, 229,
244, 259, 261–262, 352
state of danger 163, 371, 373,
375, 380, 383, 398
statutory city 211, 283, 337
steam engine 121–123, 130
Steven Hawking 38
strategic planning 244–246,
252, 332, 352
Stuttgart 295
subconscious 23, 153–155,
157–162, 175, 217–218, 237,
239, 255, 381–382, 391
subsystem 26, 28–29, 67, 83,
91, 99, 160, 180, 184, 195,
216, 227–228, 238, 286
suburbanization 57, 90, 135,
307, 338
subway 295–296, 298–300,
318, 388, 398
suprasystem 180
sustainability 27, 32, 335

T
targeting 181, 232, 241–243,
250, 253, 260
territory planning 203, 259, 260
territory planning 259–260
tertiary 80
theory of differential urbanization
132, 134
thermonuclear reaction 77, 104, 107
thinning 64–66, 71, 74–77, 79, 84,
89, 96–100, 103–105, 107, 113–
115, 122, 127, 138, 151, 161, 165,
235–236, 247, 251, 253, 291, 360

Tokyo 43, 47, 74
Toledo 167
TOP09 320, 324, 340
Transport company of the capital
city of Prague 220, 298, 318,
320, 380, 385, 387, 398
Třinec 211

U
uncertainty 66, 71, 91–93, 99,
109, 124, 147, 152, 156, 173,
232, 239–240, 251, 376
urban man 61, 70, 136
urban marketing 35
urban sprawl 48, 135, 185,
192, 201–202, 338
urbanized area 47, 49, 53, 56, 58,
135, 181, 183, 185, 187, 205
Ústí nad Labem 46, 211

V
Václav Havel Airport Prague
322, 337, 351 385
Vienna 42, 47, 49, 128, 192,
204, 211, 229, 254, 265, 290,
295, 307, 318, 349, 359
Vinohrady 130, 207, 220, 299
Vítkovice 207
Vltava River 342, 351, 355,
366, 368–369, 371–372,
374, 376–382, 385
Vltava River Basin 368–369, 385

W
Warsaw 36, 49, 211, 290
Wenceslas Square 298–299
will of the city 147
Wolfram's classes 100, 102,
104, 109, 127, 128, 136

Z
Zábřeh na Moravě 46
Zlín 252, 387

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Notes

City Management and Administration
Tomáš Hudeček

Prague Institute of Planning
and Development, 2020

Graphic design: Martin Odehnal
Translation: Didacticus, s.r.o., Marcela Uhrová

Financial support:
Project n. TL01000423 “Improvement of systems
and processes of permitting new construction
in Prague: affordable housing”, Technology Agency
of the Czech Republic 2018–2020.

Reviewers:
Miroslav Svítek, prof., Czech Technical University
Jan Jehlík, prof., Czech Technical University

City Management and Administration: ISBN 978-80-88377-15-3
The First Book: ISBN 978-80-88377-16-0
The Second Book: ISBN 978-80-88377-17-7
The Third Book: ISBN 978-80-88377-18-4

Originally published as *Řízení a správa města*
© Institute of Planning and Development, 2019

An extraordinary book both in terms of the breadth of its view — from systems theory to the thrilling description of the flood crisis — and also thanks to the fresh and open viewpoint of a university expert who unexpectedly became the Mayor of Prague.

Jan Sokol, prof., Charles University