

NEWS SUMMARY AUGUST 18 – AUGUST 24

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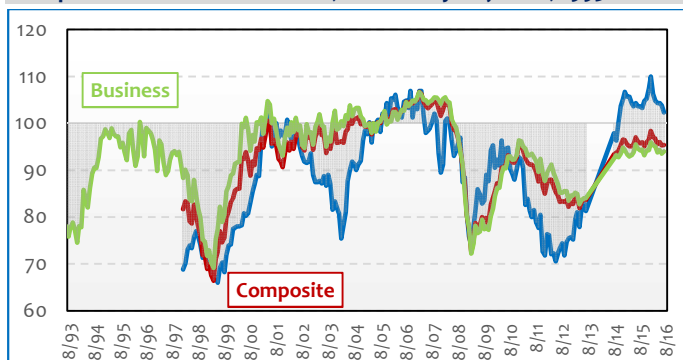
ECONOMY & FINANCE



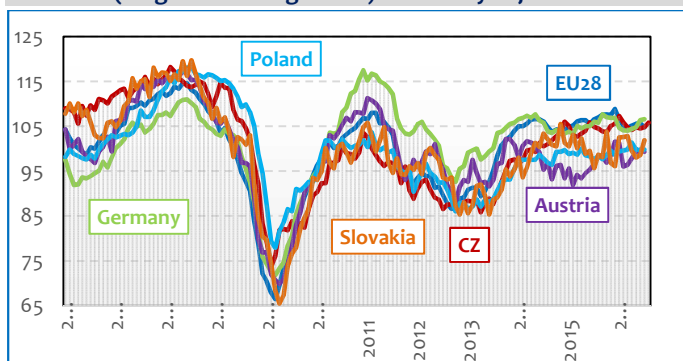
BUSINESS CYCLE SURVEY - AUGUST 2016 – 24. 8.

Overall confidence in domestic economy almost unchanged in August. The composite confidence indicator, that is stated by basic indices, increased by 1.4 points to 96.8, m-o-m¹. Confidence of entrepreneurs increased by 1.3 points to 95.3, compared to July. Among entrepreneurs confidence increased in industry and in construction; in trade increased slightly and in selected services decreased slightly. Consumer confidence indicator increased by 2.0 points to 104.3, m-o-m. Composite confidence indicator, entrepreneurs' confidence indicator and consumer confidence indicator are higher, compared to August 2015.

Graph 1: Confidence Indicators, Seasonally Adjusted, 1993 – 2016



Graph 2: Economic Confidence Indicators - monthly data (long term average = 100) seasonally adjusted



AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT



WITHDRAWAL OF GROUND WATER BILL – 23. 8.

The ME² has withdrawn a bill setting the price of ground water from the agenda of a cabinet meeting planned for August 24. ME Minister Brabec said that if the bill is submitted at a later date it will not contain provisions that could be abused so as to increase water prices for citizens. The PM³ Sobotka welcomed the decision. Plans to increase the price of ground water by 3 by 2022 had divided the cabinet and been criticised by municipalities.

¹ M-o-m: month-on-month

² ME: Ministry of Environment

³ PM: Prime Minister

EDUCATION & RDI⁴

CTU TO OPEN A NEW FIELD OF STUDY: INDUSTRY 4.0 – 18. 8.

The CTU⁵ is the first in the CR to receive an accreditation for new field of Industry 4.0, which is to deal with a connection of engineering and cybernetics. For example, car maker Škoda Mladá Boleslav or Třinecké Železárny have expressed interest in the students. According to CTU, it would be ideal if this program accepts about 50 students this year.

In addition, CTU intends to recruit dozens of new aircraft engineers. GE Aviation has an enormous interest in them. Production in the new factory of GE Aviation for aircraft engines will probably start around 2022.

MF⁶ Minister Babiš agreed with a CZK⁷ 2bn⁸ loan to the university, which will be drawn by the CTU until obtaining European subsidies, which CTU already requested for the project.

inMINISTRY OF SCIENCE (RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT) – 24. 8.

Deputy PM Bělobrádek (KDU-ČSL⁹) received approval from the Cabinet on Wednesday to continue to prepare a new ministry, under which research, development and innovation would fall.

Number of employees	160
Estimated cost	CZK 218mn/year

The new ministry would take care of agenda transferred from other ministries. Both the TACR¹⁰ and GACR¹¹ would come under the new ministry.

Among its main tasks would be to assure money for science and to shield international cooperation in science.

Bělobrádek wants to prepare a proposal by the end of this year, so that it can be discussed by the ChD¹² before the elections.

The MF and the MRD¹³ Minister Šlechtová (ANO¹⁴) are against this claiming that ministries already interfere with each other in competences.

⁴ RDI: Research, Development and Innovation

⁵ CTU: Czech Technical University

⁶ MF: Ministry of Finance

⁷ CZK: Czech Crown, the currency of the CR since 8 February 1993

⁸ Bn: billion

⁹ KDU-ČSL: Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party, centre party

¹⁰ TACR: The Technology Agency of the Czech Republic is an organizational unit of the stat that was founded in 2009 by the Act No. 130/2002 Coll. on the support of research, experimental development and innovation.

¹¹ GACR: The Czech Science Foundation GA CR (Grant agency of the Czech Republic) was established in 1993 by the Czech government as an independent research funding organization. It promotes basic (frontier) research over the whole range of scientific fields. On the basis of Calls for Proposals, the Czech Science Foundation provides financial support for both experienced and young and early-stage researchers. Moreover, it funds bilateral projects as well as projects carried out within international research programs. The main source of the funds available is the state budget, but contributions from other sources are also possible. The structure of support is divided into five domains: technical sciences, physical sciences, medical and biological sciences, social sciences and humanities, agricultural and biological-environmental sciences.

¹² ChD: Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Parliament of the CR

¹³ MRD: Ministry of Regional Development

¹⁴ ANO: ANO 2011, centre-right party

INDUSTRY & ENERGY & INVESTMENTS & TRADE

idnes.cz NUPHARO PARK GOES BANKRUPT – 18.8.

The ambitious project Nupharo Park for CZK 0.5bn that should bring together the functions of a business park and a technology and innovation center, ceased to be able to pay its debts. Its capacity is only 40% full due to insufficient interest by companies.

There are only four companies and institutions in the industrial zone of Nupharo Park: German company van Eupen producing electronic goods, international Hannas Masters (haulage contractor), Czech company Armax providing CNC machining, grinding and production of valves and a public institution - Center for Research of Energy Utilization of Lithosphere.

The Park received CZK 300mn¹⁵ in subsidies from the MIT¹⁶. The State wants to get the money back.

☰ GOVERNMENT DEBATES THE INDUSTRY 4.0 INITIATIVE – 19.8.

The government is scheduled on August 24 to debate the national Industry 4.0 Initiative. The aim of the document is to promote the so-called 4th industrial revolution in the CR to ensure the country's long-term competitiveness. According to the MIT, the document suggests possible measures that could boost the country's economy and industry and includes plans to support investment and applied research and deals with issues related to the cyber security, logistics and smart cities.

☰ TPCA'S SALARY INCREASE – 19.8.

TPCA¹⁷ have reached an agreement on a gradual increase of salaries by CZK 1,700. According to the new collective agreement, the average gross monthly salary in worker positions should reach CZK 32,500 by the end of the year. The company currently employs some 2,800 people. As of December, the workers will also be working shorter, 8-hour shifts.

☰ MILITARY EQUIPMENT EXPORTED – 22.8.

Czech arms manufacturers and producers of military equipment such as gas masks or filters, last year exported goods worth a record CZK 15bn. The highest number of exports, 28%, was to EU¹⁸ countries and was worth CZK 4.3bn. Czech arms exports to Bulgaria alone were worth CZK 1bn; exports to Slovakia saw similar numbers as did countries outside of the EU such as the USA and Iraq.

☰ OFFICE FOR ACCESS TO TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE – 24.8.

The new Office for Access to Transport Infrastructure, which creation was approved by Senate, will oversee the equal access of the state to the capacity allocation of individual carriers in crowded railway lines. The Office will also protect connections ordered and financed by public money against commercial lines. It will also have in charge the access to air infrastructure.

¹⁵ Mn: million

¹⁶ MIT: Ministry of Industry and Trade

¹⁷ TPCA: Toyota Peugeot Citroën Automobile Czech (TPCA) is an automobile manufacturing company in Kolín, Czech Republic. It is a joint venture between Toyota Motor Corporation of Japan and PSA Peugeot Citroën of France.

¹⁸ EU: European Union

OTHERS

PRAGUE TV TRAM ROUTES TO SEE LARGE CHANGES – 19.8.

Trams routes in Prague will undergo a big overhaul as of August 28. Some nine lines will have route changes while three new lines will be introduced. A dozen lines will remain unchanged.

The lines with changes are 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 18, 20, 24 and 25. The new lines are 2, 15 and 21. The unchanged lines are 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 22 and 26. In total there will be 24 lines (with no trams designated for lines 19 and 24).

☰ THE FATE OF CZECHIA REBRANDING – 22.8.

Earlier this year the Czech government made international news with its plan to promote “Czechia” as a snappy alternative to the cumbersome “the Czech Republic”.

Professor Petr Pavlínek, a geographer who teaches at Charles University and at the University of Nebraska discussed in an interview how successful has this rebranding actually been.

“Czech is an adjective, it's the name for a person, it's the name of the language – but it's not a country name. But we see that in the name of businesses for example. We have Hyundai Manufacturing Czech. We have Toyota Peugeot Citroen Czech. Many Czech businesses are using Czech, too.” Then there are other abbreviations: ‘Czecho’, ‘Czech Rep’, ‘CR’, which is the international abbreviation for Costa Rica.” “‘Czechia’ is the short name for ‘the Czech Republic’.”

It's not replacing ‘the Czech Republic’. ‘The Czech Republic’ basically remains unchanged.”

The American State Department now has ‘Czechia’ on its website. Also the influential CIA World Factbook included ‘Czechia’. From now on for sporting events, for non-diplomatic purposes, for purposes that do not relate to international treaties for example, we should use ‘Czechia’.

However, there is still some inconsistency, mainly among Czech users. The Government of the CR has been using ‘Czechia’ in some of its press releases and documents (some of them dating as far as 2007), while e.g. Czech team participating in the Olympic games stuck to the ‘Czech Republic’ and ‘Czech’.

☰ ELECTION POLL – 23.8.

Voter support for ANO has grown by just over 1% to 23.9%, suggests an opinion poll conducted in August by the SANEP polling agency. The survey indicated that government leaders the ČSSD¹⁹ would get 19.1% back if an election were held this month, a decline of slightly over 2% on the figure for the same poll in July. The KSČM²⁰ came 3rd with 13.4%, followed by the ODS²¹ on 11.2% and TOPo9²² on 6.1%.[©]

¹⁹ ČSSD: Czech Social Democratic Party, centre-left party

²⁰ KSČM: Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, far-left party

²¹ ODS: Civic Democratic Party, Liberal conservative, centre-right party, soft Eurosceptic party

²² TOPo9: conservative, centre-right party, it has been noted for its support of fiscal conservatism and is considered pro-EU.



Czech Press Agency (Česká tisková kancelář)



Czech Statistical Office (Český statistický úřad)



Hospodářské noviny



Novinky.cz



Prague TV



Radio Prague (Český rozhlas)