

## How Foreigners Are (Not) Written about

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### Introduction

Until 1989, immigration to the Czech (and Slovak) Republic had been stringently controlled. The average person could meet someone born abroad only rarely. Typically, such encounters were limited by both social and spatial factors. Some university students had the opportunity to meet their foreign counterparts; factory workers sometimes had Vietnamese coworkers who had been coming to Czechoslovakia since the end of the 1950s; and people living in cities with army bases regularly met with Russian soldiers, stationed in the country after the 1968 occupation. The Czech society prior to 1989 was more or less self-contained, confined to the country's impenetrable borders. After the fall of communism, the situation changed dramatically. Since 1989, the number of people traveling in and out of the country has been growing rapidly and as a result, foreigners are a more numerous and accepted element of the Czech society.

The Czech Republic's geographical space is again becoming what it had been for the most part of the country's history: a meeting place of different religions, languages, customs, lifestyles, people of diverse physical appearance, representatives of a multitude of nations and cultures. This development is of course also seen as a problem and is described in many dimensions and from various points of view. Migration and foreigners are issues discussed in regard to international politics, demography, labor market, legislation, etc. People talk of problems caused by foreigners, of the complicated attitude of the Czech public towards foreigners, and – unfortunately less often – also of problems that trouble foreigners themselves. In this essay, we explore just one dimension of the complex relationship between the Czech society and foreigners: the image of foreigners presented in selected daily and weekly periodicals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This text is an abridged version of an extensive study of the same name prepared for the Multicultural Center Prague by the sociologists Petra Klvačová and Tomáš Bitrich. The analysis is a part of the project *Media and minorities: the medial image of foreigners and ethnic and national minorities in the Czech Republic*. The study contains more detailed information about methodology and research material as well as comprehensive analysis results and several chapters covering specific issues such as schooling or residency permits. Full text of the study is available from the Multicultural Center's library or at [www.mkc.cz](http://www.mkc.cz) (under *Publications and Research*).

### Why is it important to investigate the media image of foreigners?

Media are a natural source of information about foreigners. The way in which the media write (or talk) about foreigners can have a significant influence on commonly shared ideas about foreigners on the part of the Czech society. A foreigner is someone who is different in a number of ways. In his passport, a foreigner has a different country of birth, he may look different or dress in a different way. What he does may be different from what the locals do. If the majority society lacks any idea of the experiences of foreigners, their worldview and the motives behind their actions, it is difficult if not impossible for the majority and foreigners to say about each other: "I understand what the other is doing" (Schütz 1974 as cited in Nohejl 2001). A contrary situation causes uncertainty and fear which can make people attribute to others the worst attitudes, motives and opinions. This, of course, can lead to hostility or, if combined with other factors, even to open aggression.

The extent to which the image of foreigners is negative is an issue often pondered by sociologists (e.g. Kostlán 2003). For several reasons, we are not raising this issue in this essay. Above all, analyzing media after having raised this question would be a quick business providing almost no new information. The vast majority of articles that we have analyzed could be described as depicting foreigners in rather unflattering contexts. Articles are full of robberies, murders, illegal border crossings, diseases, beggars and prostitutes, illegal laborers, work-related injuries, etc. We could conclude our investigation by stating that foreigners are usually depicted in negative contexts. But if we were to be precise and divide the analyzed articles into positive and negative, we would encounter a problem: such characterization of many texts is next to impossible.

A good example is the article *Romanian policeman in Prague* (Právo, 21 December 2001). How are Romanians portrayed in this article? On one hand, the portrait is negative, as the article informs about Romanian citizens who cross the border illegally: "*Illegal migration of Romanians is tackled by the Czech police in Prague with the help of Valentin Balan, a Romanian police officer.*" Although it is not specified, the context of the article will evoke in readers the picture of beggars and thieves. On the other hand, the article helps to build a very positive image of Romanians, especially when contrasted with the vast majority of other articles, which are about Romanian beggars and thieves. In the cited article, there is a Romanian policeman, the opposite of a criminal.

We can provide one more example to show why it is problematic to divide articles about foreigners into those that are good and those that are bad. Newspapers often print articles that to most readers probably seem as portraying foreigners in a good light. However, even there it is possible to find formulations supporting the disagreeable aspects of foreigners' image in the media. In this respect, we agree with other authors who follow the image of minorities in the media. For example, Kamila Karhanová and Jiří Homoláč (2001) explain how problematic can be a sentence that seemingly says something positive about a Roma victim of a racist attack:

*“The male victim did not have any problems with the law.” (...) Imagine an article about the armed robbery of an older woman ending with. “the victim is gainfully employed and had no problems with the law in the past.” (...) It is often the case that well-intentioned attempts by the media to write positively about the Roma achieve the exact opposite by unwittingly employing the stereotype of a ‘decent’ Roma: the emphasis on the above banal, secondary qualities presents their holder as someone exceptional, someone who does not really represent the Roma minority. That which should cast doubt over a negative image is presented as an exception; therefore, an attempt at uprooting prejudice ends up re-confirming it.*

There is a large number of similar articles in the printed media where foreigners play very diverse roles; it is therefore impossible to judge an article as being just negative or just positive. Often, there is not enough information to judge a foreigner's behavior as simply negative or positive. For the above reasons, it is not very useful to ask the question whether the image of foreigners in the Czech media is negative or positive as it cannot be reasonably answered.

*What, then, is the subject of our interest and what is the foundation of our conclusions?* First, we focus on contents of individual articles instead of determining whether an article about foreigners is negative or positive. We describe specific contexts in which foreigners are described in the press. We are interested in the theme structure of writing about selected groups of foreigners (the Vietnamese, Romanians and Ukrainians).<sup>2</sup> This structure is not particularly diverse: each group is covered by the press in connection to only a handful of themes that are constantly repeated. Second, we are interested in the source of information used by authors. It is important to take notice of who is cited, who speaks and what other sources are referred to. Again, journalists perpetually use only a few sources and disregard all the others almost systematically. The third dimension of articles that we will focus on includes implied and concealed assumptions, shared expectations, established connotations, etc. In the analyzed articles, it is possible to examine what is it that seems natural to readers: what is generally shared, what requires no explaining, defending or emphasizing. On the other hand, highlighting a certain characteristic of a person may suggest that this characteristic is extraordinary for him as well as for other members of his group and that they are commonly perceived in a totally opposite way.

The focal point of the present analysis corresponds to methods of qualitative research strategy.<sup>3</sup> We have not predetermined a list of phenomena for which to search in the analyzed articles (such as negative and positive connections). Categorization of article contents and their form, text structure as well as other characteristics have been developed gradually in the course of the analysis. The discussed articles have been read by all of us one way or another. While for some

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<sup>2</sup> For our justification for selecting these three groups, please see below.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the methodology implemented, please see the full text of the study at [www.mkc.cz](http://www.mkc.cz)

articles, we limited our investigation to headline or only glanced at the article's content, there were other articles that we analyzed in detail. We have also utilized automatic search functions to sort articles.<sup>4</sup>

Before turning to the results of our analysis, we shall describe its limitations. Because we examine newspaper articles, we deal with three separate areas. We touch on editorial work, the mechanisms leading to including one piece of news while excluding another and the mechanisms governing acceptable and unacceptable ways of writing for newspapers. We also touch on newspaper readers, and thus on the question what the Czech society thinks about the subject of our research, i.e. about foreigners. The third area we touch on is the topic of analyzed articles, i.e. foreigners themselves, their lives, statistical data, etc. Our analysis concentrates on the printed media and texts of articles; consequently, majority of our conclusions concerns these texts.

However, we can indirectly describe also those articles that were not in the center of our research and that interested us only marginally. If we were to analyze the work of journalists, we would have to carry out interviews with them and actively examine work in newsrooms. If we were to discuss foreigners, we would have to talk with them, visit places where they live and carry out ethnographic research in some of their communities. If we were to discuss newspaper readers, we would have to do a questionnaire survey. However, we can discuss these areas at least in a limited extent and indirectly. The structure of article topics as well as the internal structure of articles motivates us to ask what is the work of journalists like. We have discussed the analysis results with several journalists during writing of this essay. The analyzed articles are an evidence of what journalists or editors think of their readers and their interests. As regards readers and their reactions, we can build on public opinion polls concerning the Czech society's attitude towards foreigners (e.g. Rezková 2003). To some extent, we can also discuss foreigners themselves, as we have worked with additional materials such as statistics and other researches.

The analyzed articles themselves are a source of information about foreigners, although in this respect, press analysis is more of a secondary method. As stated above, for example an ethnographic research would be more fruitful. Nevertheless, press articles offer a great deal of information about the individual groups of foreigners that could be used for further research as well as for educational activities, etc. This is especially true for the type of article that we call a “foreigner story”. “Foreigner stories” are usually longer articles about the life of a concrete foreigner or a concrete group of foreigners in the Czech Republic. Some of these stories are rich in depictions of environment and people, giving readers a very colorful image of the

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<sup>4</sup> Based on a partial analysis of the database, we have selected specific words and their inflected forms for the computer to search in the remainder of the database “for us.” Subsequently, we read these “mechanically” selected groups of articles in order to eliminate the articles that belonged elsewhere. We have processed the articles that were left aside after sorting out the most frequent topics in a similar way.

life of foreigners in this country. For example, readers learn that many Vietnamese market vendors have a university degree, that their children are successful at school and that many of them plan on returning to their homeland. Readers can also learn that Chinese businessmen prefer Czech business partners and fear extortion by their countrymen. Readers can learn that orthodox ministers come to the Czech Republic from Ukraine and that Afghan asylum-seekers are losing the chance to be granted asylum here although their stories are full of horror. Readers learn that illegal laborers live in uncertainty and constant fear, being totally dependent on the benevolence of their Czech employers, etc.

In other words, although this essay is not based solely on analysis of articles from the press, the three mentioned areas (journalist work, reaction of readers and the reality of foreigners' lives in the Czech Republic) are only a complementary source of information that functions more as a framework for our conclusions. The conclusions presented below are based chiefly on our analysis of news articles and the information acquired by such analysis.

### Explaining the selection of groups for analysis

For our analysis, we selected foreigners from three countries: Vietnam, Romania and Ukraine. Our reason for this selection was that we were interested in people from countries whose economic, political and social conditions are described as worse than those of the Czech Republic. At the same time, the Vietnamese, Romanians and Ukrainians are covered very often by the Czech media. The common perception of these nationals is usually connected to specific and characteristic activities: Vietnamese market vendors, Ukrainian laborers and Romanian beggars or thieves. We were interested in determining whether articles in the press merely reproduce these perceptions or write about the Vietnamese, Romanians and Ukrainians also in different contexts, i.e. contribute to a more multicolored image of these groups.

The entire study *How Foreigners Are (Not) Written about*, an abridged version of which is presented in this essay, follows up on our last year's project examining the way in which Czech daily newspapers cover the issue of refugees (Klvačová, Bitrich 2001). Analysis of articles about refugees showed that the refugee image presented by the Czech press is for several mutually interconnected reasons very incomplete. First, readers learn about refugees only in connection to certain events or themes (illegal border crossings, wars, refugee centers), while others are left unmentioned. The life of a refugee as described by the Czech press has many aspects that are uncharted. Second, almost no articles look through the eyes of refugees: they talk about refugees but give them no space to speak for themselves. Instead, articles cite policemen, public officials or local government representatives. Third, articles draw on a very limited scope of information sources. Press articles make use of legislation, statistical data or other written information only exceptionally.

Refugees often stay in the Czech Republic for only a limited period of time (if not granted asylum). Some of them are in the Czech Republic only to try illegally crossing

the border, ending in police custody. Other refugees live in fenced refugee centers and their contact with Czechs is extremely limited. The existing situation when refugees live 'in the country' but not really 'with us' naturally contributed to the resultant perception of refugees by Czechs.

We were interested in exploring the extent to which the image of foreigners living in the country is different: after all, it could be expected that they were a more integral part of our society than refugees. They have been living and working in the Czech Republic for a long time and we come into contact with them more often. We wished to ascertain whether the social and spatial proximity results in a different style of writing about foreigners as compared to refugees. At the same time, however, we presumed that certain features of the image of foreigners and the image of refugees would be identical.

### Description of analyzed articles

We analyzed articles published between 1 September 2001 and 31 August 2002 in the daily newspapers MF Dnes, Lidové noviny, Právo, Blesk and the weekly magazines Respekt, Reflex, Pátek Lidových novin, Magazín MF Dnes and Magazín Práva. Compared to our previous analysis, we have added to our selection several weekly magazines as we expected them to print articles about foreigners that would be different from those appearing in the daily newspapers.<sup>5</sup>

During the analyzed year, a total of 3,930 articles have been published in the above periodicals containing one or more strings with the root *vietnam, ukrajín or rumun*. However, many of these articles did not fall into the scope of our analysis, for example those talking about Ukrainian Street or Romanian Street. Then, there is a body of articles about Vietnam, Romania or Ukraine and not people from these countries in the Czech Republic. Similarly, we have ignored articles dealing with historical facts and events. After eliminating all irrelevant articles, our set was reduced to 2,880 articles. The most striking information is that in 1,453 of them, there are also

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<sup>5</sup> Press monitoring services (automatic search capabilities of an electronic article database) have been provided to the Multicultural Center Prague by Newton IT. The core of analysis included articles containing the keywords *Vietnamec* (Vietnamese), *Ukrajinec* (Ukrainian) or *Rumun* (Romanian) and other words with the same root, such as *vietnamský* (the adjective form of *Vietnamec*). We have also included articles containing a number of more general keywords such as *cizinec* (foreigner) or *imigrace* (immigration) Between September 2001 and August 2002, a total of 11,145 articles contained one or more of the selected key words. For more information about title selection and key word usage, see the full text of the study, which is available from the library of the Multicultural Center Prague or at [www.mkc.cz](http://www.mkc.cz) (under *Publications and Research*).

words relating to crime, courts or the police.<sup>6</sup> The high percentage of such articles has been confirmed by a later, more systematic examination of the analyzed set.

The first general observation we shall make about the analyzed set of articles is that the three groups of foreigners are most often covered by the Czech press in connection with crime (this is the case in more than 50 percent of articles). One could argue that this is a general trend in today's news writing – crime sells. To confirm or repudiate this assumption, we have examined the percentage of crime stories among all articles published in two dailies in the course of one month. We have established that the share of articles about crime in all articles published is lower by one half to two thirds – 18 percent in MF Dnes and 24 percent in Právo (see table).

There are two large groups of articles published in two specific newspaper sections – the sports section and the arts section. From the start, we did not want to include these articles in our analysis for two reasons: first, it was necessary to narrow down the set of articles to be analyzed to a manageable quantity; second, we assumed that athletes and artists are covered in the press more as any other athletes and artists rather than as foreigners. On one hand, this enabled us to set aside a rather monotonous body of articles like culture programs or sports results. On the other hand, we left out two theme pools that present the Vietnamese, Ukrainians and Romanians in a good light.

If we subtract articles from the sports and arts sections, *we have a total of 1,627 articles on which our analysis is based*. These articles concern people referred to as the Vietnamese, Romanians or Ukrainians (based on their nationality or origin) who live on the territory of the Czech Republic. Apart from covering chiefly the subject of crime (after subtracting articles about sports and arts, the share of articles dealing with crime grew to 75 percent), these articles talk about the three foreigner groups in contexts that can be intuitively expected by most of readers. The Vietnamese are chiefly connected with market stalls, Ukrainians are usually described as laborers or members of organized crime groups, while Romanians are most often portrayed as beggars, pickpockets and thieves.

A typical article about members of the three analyzed minority groups is a short piece from the crime report section. Such articles are usually based on information provided by the police, often the only source cited. In this respect, articles about the Vietnamese, Romanians and Ukrainians are very similar to articles about refugees, although the media image of the three groups is somewhat more varied. At first sight, it would appear to the average reader that these short and fairly standardized pieces of news are of no interest for our present analysis for there is nothing more to say about them than they concern crimes committed by foreigners. But for a number of

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<sup>6</sup> This is not the exact number of articles that cover crime. Shooting, for example, is also the subject of sports articles, while other articles cover crime but do not contain any of the words usually used in the context. However, our further work with the set of articles has shown that the estimation of article's subject based on automatic search of key words is fairly accurate.

reasons, we believe that it will be useful to subject these articles to a more detailed analysis.<sup>7</sup>

Aside from articles about crime, there are other types of articles that inform about foreigners in different contexts. Many of them, however, are unfavorable,<sup>8</sup> informing about Romanians and Ukrainians with tuberculosis, about the repulsiveness of Vietnamese markets or about Ukrainians bringing down wages on the Czech labor market. But there are also articles whose authors try to write in better contexts. These articles cite additional sources of information including foreigners themselves and often cover such topics as children, holidays or festivals or stories of real people. However, there is only a small percentage of such articles in the analyzed set. Nonetheless, such thematically different (and unusual) articles are important for our analysis because when contrasted with the typical short articles about crime, they help us better show the characteristics of the media image of certain groups as well as understand what is missing in this image, i.e. the topics, themes and contexts that are usually disregarded by journalists.

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<sup>7</sup> First, as mentioned earlier, articles about crime are the most frequent source of information about foreigners, because they are the most likely to reach the average reader. Also, this type of article offers – in a limited space – a multitude of more or less correct ways of news reporting concerning foreigners. For example, it is possible to examine the means used to establish a relationship between crime and foreignness/nationality. It is possible to trace the patterns of including nationality in the headline and what is the correlation between the use of nationality in the article's headline and the overall effect of the article. It is also possible to examine the frequency with which nationality is used in articles and in what parts, or what are the alternative categories utilized in place of nationality.

<sup>8</sup> There may seem to be a discrepancy between our avowed dislike of the fairly common tendency to 'sort' articles into 'positive' and 'negative' and our evaluation of contexts in which foreigners are covered by the press. However, this discrepancy is not real. Evaluating whether a certain topic is covered in a specific article negatively or positively is not the same as evaluating the context of a specific article. It is not very complicated to evaluate a context: for example, tuberculosis or crime are both objectionable subjects. But the coverage of foreigners in connection with such subjects is often very diverse: it is therefore not possible at times to decide whether it is simply 'positive' or 'negative'.

Table: Percentage of articles about crime

	All articles containing the strings <i>vietnam</i> , <i>rumun</i> or <i>ukrajin</i>	... without irrelevant contexts, articles about events abroad or history	...without articles about culture and sports	Total number of articles published per month (estimate)	
				MF Dnes	Právo
Total articles	3,930	2,880	1,627	16,000	6,000
Crime articles	(45 %) 1,767	(50 %) 1,453	(75 %) 1,220	(18 %) 2,942	(24 %) 1,449

## Main conclusions

The following part of our essay contains the main conclusions of the analysis. We use specific examples to illustrate why can certain ways of writing about foreigners be problematic. We will show what perspective is predominant in the analyzed articles and what impact this has on the image of foreigners.

### 1. Talking about them but not with them

The biggest problem is that foreigners are described in the press, but they have virtually no opportunity to say something for themselves. Our research shows that this is for example the case of Romanian citizens seeking asylum in the Czech Republic. They are described almost exclusively as thieves, pickpockets, beggars and sources of tuberculosis infection. Such information is complemented by more general topics, such as the introduction of a visa requirement for Romanian nationals or the debate about migration after the Czech Republic's entry into the European Union. Based on our analysis, it is not possible to provide any information about the percentage of Romanian asylum seekers who engage in one of the above activities in the Czech Republic. But even in cases when Romanians were engaged in begging or stealing in Brno or elsewhere, it is wrong that we do not know anything about their lives or motivations for their actions.

Let's take a closer look at one of the exceptional articles, which provides at least an intermediated story of a Romanian. It is not an accident that the heroes of the story are children: one of the conclusions of our last year's analysis was that if we gain more thorough information about refugees, it is very often through children.<sup>9</sup> It is true in the case of Romanian citizens who cross the Czech Republic's borders, as evidenced by an article titled *Children run away from hunger and war. Where can they go?*:

<sup>9</sup> If journalists decide to speak with someone from a refugee center, it is children. The only article offering an in-depth coverage of a refugee story was about two Afghan boys aged 17 and 9 (Klvačová, Bitrich 2001).

*"Instead of France, the fifteen-year-old Michail from Romania found himself near Brno. He insisted that a relative of his family had brought them into the country. Together with his two brothers, who are twelve and sixteen, they decided to approach the Romanian embassy in Prague with a plea for help. People from the embassy put them on a train to Vysní Lhoty, a refugee center. Instead of 3,000 dollars a week for emptying slot-machines in Paris they were promised by people traffickers in Romania, the children were supposed to end up in a foster home in the Czech Republic, more or less behind bars. The boys chose to return to Romania instead. These are no ordinary children running away from home because of bad grades at school. rather, it is a premeditated emigration because their family decided to send the children to make money in the West. Michail and his brothers are economic refugees, just one side of the coin (...)"*(MF DNES, 9 May 2002).

What we learn about Michail and his brothers is an indicator of what we do not know about other refugees: what situation do they come from? Are they coming with their family or only some of them come here while others stay behind? What do they want to achieve by coming to the Czech Republic or elsewhere in Europe? Do they return back and if so, when? Michail is fifteen. Readers can discover a part of his life's story, thus obtaining something to base their assessment of Michail's actions. Readers may pity him for having been born into a hard and difficult life. Or readers may blame his family for abusing their children. Or they may condemn Michail as a born criminal.

The cited article shows how important it is for understanding actions of someone else (in this case a Romanian refugee) to hear the person's story, be it only indirectly. This is even clearer in the case of what we call in this essay foreigner stories. These stories are usually based on interviews and statements by real foreigners living in the Czech Republic. Readers learn – often by way of direct speech – about why and how foreigners come into the Czech Republic, about how they live, what problems they face or whether they want to stay here, etc. Based on information provided by concrete individuals, readers are able to better understand for example the motivations of a Vietnamese market vendor, who – in spite of having graduated from a university – sells inexpensive clothes from a small stall, or the motivations of a Moldavian truck driver, whose visa has expired but he decided to stay in the Czech Republic and work illegally.

### 2. Foreigners lack opportunity to say that they are not all alike

Next conclusion is related to opportunities given to foreigners to comment on the media image of their own group. We have concentrated on articles in which someone is characterized as being a member of a certain group. For example, an article about a beggar characterizes him as coming from Romania, i.e. he is a "begging Romanian."

It is important to note that this is like indirectly writing about all Romanians.<sup>10</sup> These people have no chance of defending themselves or protesting, although they are from the same country as the much-discussed “beggars and thieves” and definitely would be able to provide readers a great deal of interesting information or at least something about their status in the society that they had left. The importance of giving foreigners room to protest against the media image of their own community has been confirmed by many of the analyzed articles. When a minority member has the opportunity to speak in the press, he often uses it to set himself apart from his countrymen who contribute to the making of a negative media image. This may be illustrated by an article about the life of the Chinese community in the Czech Republic. One of the images of Chinese people that resonates well with a large portion of the Czech society is connected to misconduct, drug trafficking and organized crime. This image is nourished with “objective” police data about acts of revenge among the members of the Chinese community, about Chinese businessmen killing each other, etc. In one article, a Chinese businessman tries to distance himself from this image by wishing that Czechs would not consider all Chinese people to be drug and people traffickers (*Mr. Li has a problem*, Pátek Lidových novin, 19 October 2001).

All the above was affirmed by reactions of some foreigners taking part in debates during which the preliminary results of this research had been announced. An Ukrainian student, an engineer from Angola or a doctor from Tunisia voiced their frustration with the way in which people from their groups are usually portrayed by the media. Furthermore, some of them also protested against the questionable group labeling used by the media, for example against the use of the word “foreigner”. Who can be considered a foreigner? A person of non-Czech origin? Or perhaps a person without the Czech citizenship? In newspaper articles, such nuances are typically overlooked, as is the official status of a foreigner’s stay in the Czech Republic.

### 3. Foreigners are given little space when interviewed

What are the sources of information most often employed by journalists? In most cases, cited sources include the police, mayors, government ministry officials and school teachers or headmasters. Articles about Ukrainians or Vietnamese are also those that cite members of their community more of ten. However, the percentage is extremely low. One could argue that this is not really an issue of disparity between

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<sup>10</sup> The Czech adjective *rumunský* and the noun *Rumun* (Romanian) are very pejorative in many contexts, as illustrated by the following examples. The quotations are from letters to the editor or from interviews with people approached by journalists “*The City of Pardubice looks like a Romanian camp*”(No one enforces city ordinance; MF DNES; 13 October 2002); “*They thought they were going somewhere in Romania*”(ZOO director hates bars; MF DNES; 1 June 2002); “*The manager, who looks like a Romanian, also lied to us and contacted the court about our victory*” (*The mafia evicts family with 2 children*; MF DNES; 27 June 2002); “*Carefully monitored (on the D 1 motorway) are the materials used to repair pavement, gasoline prices, cleanliness of toilettes and also the aggressiveness of Romanian thieves*”(DI motorway is unwell, MF DNES, 20 February 2002).

space provided to foreigners and space provided to Czechs, but rather disparity between space provided to representatives of organizations and institutions and space provided to private individuals. It is always easier to reach an organization. For this reason, we measured the space available in newspapers to representatives of foreigners’ organizations. Our finding is clear: there is almost no trace of such organizations in the press. For every 100 articles citing a representative of the government or other institutions, there is just 1 article citing a representative of a foreigners’ organization.

Journalists who have taken part in public debates organized by the Multicultural Center Prague had a simple explanation for this fact. The reporting of daily newspapers is based on short articles in which there is not enough space to cite all the parties concerned. If we compare newspaper articles based on who is cited or whose statements are reproduced, the disproportion between space allocated to foreigners (or their organizations) and space allocated to the majority society is more than flagrant. It is true that newspapers have only a limited space available, but this space is rarely used to voice the opinions of foreigners.

Let’s look at another example. The majority of articles about Ukrainians covers issues related to employment of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic. There are articles about illegal residency of Ukrainians on the Czech territory, police raids of boarding houses, work-related accidents involving Ukrainians or about whether employing foreigners jeopardizes the jobs of Czechs. Articles cite police spokesmen, employment office directors and sometimes managers of companies that employ Ukrainians. Articles citing Ukrainian workers are very uncommon. Let’s take a closer look at one such article. In *Thanks for Ukrainians* (Respekt, 8 April 2002), two Ukrainian workers, Marfej and Hryhorij, speak about their situation. Among other issues, the article focuses on the difficulties that Ukrainians face when applying for a work visa and also on the existing system of clientelism, i.e. issues different from illegal residency of Ukrainian workers, failure to observe work safety standards or presence of cheap Ukrainian labor force on the Czech job market. Who speaks in an article is to a large degree connected to the manner in which a certain issue is treated in the press. This brings us to the next conclusion of our analysis.

### 4. Problems with foreigners and foreigners’ problems

It is interesting to take note of the topics that bring foreigners onto the pages of Czech newspapers, the impulses for writing an article or the conditions which an event must fulfill in order to be printed.

In most cases, articles cover a problem with foreigners: foreigner commits a crime, foreigners seek asylum, foreigners do not know what to do with household waste, Vietnamese markets are unsightly and offer low-quality products, illegal Ukrainian laborers reduce the value of labor, etc. There are almost no articles offering in-depth coverage of a problem that foreigners have to cope with in the Czech Republic, although an interview with anyone without Czech citizenship could convince readers

that such person's life is indeed very complicated. Residency permits are just one example. One article describes the difficulty and humiliation connected with the regular annual journey through a multitude of institutions to collect forms and documents required to prolong a residency permit (*How one can live in Liberec like a Czech, but still be a foreigner*, MF DNES, 10 April 2002). The analyzed set contains only one more article briefly mentioning this problem (*Working hard, but sometimes breaking the law*, MF DNES, 3 October 2002).

The above again demonstrates the enormous difference between short articles and "foreigner stories".<sup>11</sup> Foreigner stories are often written by authors who have in their mind the idea of introducing problems of foreigners to Czech readers, as evidenced by some of their headlines: *Mr Li has a problem* (Pátek Lidových novin, 19 October 2001), *To live like a man* (Pátek Lidových novin, 26 October 2001) or *Czech foreigner mill* (Reflex, 20 September 2001). The dissimilar perspective of both types of articles is clear when we look at the topics and issues covered by foreigner stories. They describe foreigners' problems with being granted asylum in the Czech Republic, residency permit or visa for relatives traveling from abroad. They also describe problems that foreigners have with racism, unfair competition from Czech companies or recruitment of Czech employees. Other problems covered by foreigner stories include breaking the language barrier or getting used to Czech food, etc. Unlike the largest part of other articles, foreigner stories do not present foreigners as a source of potential or real problems for the Czech society, but rather seek to show the kind of problems that foreigners may encounter in the Czech Republic.

## 5. Foreigners: presumed troublesome

Next conclusion concerns all articles, including those that apparently strive at presenting foreigners in a good light. It corresponds to the conclusions of Karhanová and Homoláč (2001). Some articles put emphasis on the fact that certain foreigners do not represent a problem, that they work hard and do not engage in criminal activities, etc. On surface, such statements enhance the positive perception of these individual foreigners; however, they also strongly underpin the assumption that foreigners are not usually like that. A man from Stráž pod Ralskem says about people living in a nearby refugee center: "*We don't mind them,*" indirectly suggesting the normative notion or expectation that we (Czechs) should mind them (*Quiet in the refugee camp*, MF DNES, 1 October 2001). The same effect is produced by the incessant accenting of the fact that the Vietnamese and their children attending Czech schools are hard working, which is basically a reaction to the unspoken expectation

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<sup>11</sup> The analyzed set also contains several articles about foreigners with a nationality other than Vietnamese, Romanian or Ukrainian. These are the 'foreigner stories' published in one of the weekly magazines. The reason for including them in our analysis in spite of their not covering one of the selected nationalities is quite simple: the total number of such magazine articles was very low (19). We therefore cite a few examples relating to the Chinese, Afghans, etc.

that foreigners are usually not hard working and come to the Czech Republic to live at the expense of others.

The article *Self-employed Ukrainian is also a student* (MF DNES, 20 March 2002) is yet another example of a well-intentioned article that contributes to confirming long-established perception of one group of foreigners. The headline itself indirectly hints at the uniqueness of a Ukrainian doing business and studying.

*"He does not drink, smoke or fight. He is self-employed and goes to school. Michael Razumnjak, a 26 year Ukrainian, is everything that the common notions about laborers from the East in the Czech Republic are not. Together with his family, he lives in Husinec near Prachatice where he runs a shoe repair store."*

By starting with "*he does not drink, smoke or fight*"; the article is very likely to strengthen the image of Ukrainians as those who drink, smoke and fight. The sentence about Michael Razumnjak being "*everything that the common notions about laborers ... are not*" will probably have the same effect on readers.

Analogies are to be found also in other foreigner stories. For example, one article about the life of the Chinese community in the Czech Republic quotes a Chinese businessman adding that this man "*has a reputation of a respectable businessman and has never been at odds with the law or dealt with the mafia*" (*The Chinese in our country*, Magazin Práva, 4 July 2002).

## 6. Living with them is normal

The assumption that coexistence with foreigners is problematic goes hand in hand with the assumption that presence of foreigners in the Czech Republic is something peculiar or even pathological. This assumption is treated in different ways: some texts expressly reinforce it, indirectly confirming how widespread the assumption is, while other texts do not portray presence of foreigners as a problem at all, thus strongly helping to change the majority society's perception of foreigners.

This is true especially for some of the "foreigner stories", which help emphasize the normality of foreigners living in this country. Some of them do so by the mere act of writing about foreigners in order to provide Czech readers a glimpse into their lives in the Czech Republic. Other foreigner stories explicitly state that "*it is normal for foreigners to come here.*" For example, an article about illegal laborers from Moldova starts with a depiction of the economic situation in their home country and goes on to explain that it is natural for them to come to the Czech Republic in search of work (*Czech foreigner mill*, Reflex, 20 September 2001). The arguments presented in the article are built on a comparison between Moldavians and Czechs who decided to work abroad. Some articles are very inconspicuous in imparting the normality of coexistence with foreigners, telling the story of one foreigner without delving into his or her foreignness. What is important in such articles is the story of the person's life,

his qualifications, etc. A good example of such a story is an article about an Angolan vicar in the Moravian country (*African pioneer turned vicar*, Reflex, 13 December 2001).

## 7. Contexts omitted and overlooked

We now proceed to another relevant issue, namely the superficiality and shallowness of many articles. We have not read newspapers as regular readers – we were much more careful. We examined articles covering one issue or several inter-related issues that were published days, weeks and even months apart. This helped us to see that journalists often overlook discrepancies and contexts that would seem obvious to many a newspaper reader. A good example is a statement – which the article’s author fails to comment – made by a school headmaster about the new government bill on minority classes in schools. The headmaster says that he cannot imagine where to find for example teachers of Ukrainian if he is required to do so for the sake of Ukrainian pupils (*Mission: to understand each other*, MF DNES, 9 February 2002). This is peculiar, considering the fact that many other articles constantly repeat that manual laborers from Ukraine are often well-educated and sometimes even have a university degree. However, this context is completely omitted from the article.

The issue of missing contexts is apparent in many other articles. The most striking example is an article about the Chinese community (*The Chinese in our country*, Magazin Práva, 4 July 2001). An important part of the article that aspires to be an in-depth coverage of the life of Chinese people in the Czech Republic is the story of a Chinese businessman who was arrested and sentenced to many years in prison right after his arrival in the country. In the article, the businessman speaks about his illegal journey to England and his arrest in Prague. However, his story is not the story of an average member of the Chinese community in the Czech Republic as suggested by the article’s headline and topic.

## 8. Labeling: foreigners and Czechs, us and them

One of the few articles about the Vietnamese that attempt to present a more diverse and informed picture of the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic contains the following information: *What is it that hinders toleration between the two communities?*

*“What the Vietnamese do not like.*

- *The necessity to apply for renewal of residency permit every year,*
- *Toughening regulations regarding their line of business,*
- *Condescending behavior of Czechs.*

*What Czechs do not like:*

- *Mass tendency to violate business regulations and use of corruption,*
- *The Vietnamese community is too reclusive and not enough transparent,*

· *Competing with local stores and businessmen with low quality and counterfeit products.”*  
*(Working hard, but sometimes breaking the law*, MF DNES, 3 October 2002)

There are three things that the Vietnamese do not like and three things that Czechs do not like. It should be noted that Czechs are positioned against the Vietnamese. But who exactly falls into the “Czech” category? Most likely, it should include people who claim to be Czech nationals, or the “community” of Czechs, as indicated by the initial question. In such case, the formulations are rather nationalistic and support the nation-state idea. This idea, however, ignores the eventuality that the reader could be someone else, as there are people of different nationalities living in the Czech Republic. But it is also possible that “Czechs” or “Czech community” means citizens of the Czech Republic or, more generally, people living on the territory of the country. In this case, there is a problem with singling out the Vietnamese because they live here together with us. Some of them have obtained residency permits or became Czech citizens. If we decide to interpret the classification this way, we must find it somewhat xenophobic, because it leaves the Vietnamese out of the family of the Czech Republic’s inhabitants. The first interpretation therefore identifies readers or us with Czechs, ignoring readers of different nationalities, while the second interpretation excludes the Vietnamese from the family of the Czech Republic’s inhabitants.

But is there a different way of writing? Is this not a language trap that cannot be avoided? There is probably no formulation that would not be vague, simplifying and incorrect in one way or another – languages tend to be that way. We could replace the formulation “what Czechs do not like” with the complex clerical definition “What is it that persons who reside on the territory of the Czech Republic and who do not have Vietnamese citizenship and do not claim to be Vietnamese nationals do not like” – but even then, we may be ignoring those Vietnamese who live in the country and engage in activities other than market vending. It could be helpful to consider formulations such as “what is it that Czech Vietnamese do not like”, “what the others do not like” or “what is it that patrons of markets and competitors do not like.”

It is important to realize that this article is clearly not one of those that add to a negative image of the Vietnamese community. On the contrary, the article presents the Vietnamese in a colorful manner, mentions things that are left unsaid elsewhere and juxtaposes pluses and minuses. Nevertheless, the article is symptomatic in showing one of the crucial problems of writing about minorities: creating boundaries between *us*, *Czechs* or *readers* and *them*, *foreigners* and those who do not belong to us or do not read the press. It is also an indication of the usefulness of not labeling articles



as either positive or negative and not examining whether the media image of foreigners is positive or negative.<sup>12</sup>

### 9. Special mark: Ukrainian

In many articles, the words *Ukrajinec* and *ukrajinský* (noun and adjective meaning Ukrainian) are employed as a synonym, similitude or phrase almost exclusively in a pejorative sense. Articles mention the methods used by the Ukrainian mafia and Ukrainians as a group are described with unflattering characteristics. In this respect, articles about Ukrainians are similar to those about Romanians or Vietnamese. It seems, however, that the media image of Ukrainians, created using a variety of clichés and frequent connotations, is worse than that of the two other groups. While the words *Rumun* and *rumunský* (noun and adjective meaning Romanian) are usually used in connection with begging, theft or bad hygiene; words *Vietnamec* and *vietnamský* (noun and adjective meaning Vietnamese) in connection with counterfeit, low-quality or smuggled goods; words *Ukrajinec* and *ukrajinský* are used in connection with violent crimes or crookedness.

Often, the derogatory references can be found in articles which are not about Ukrainians, but about something completely different – floods, disputes between tenants and property owners, construction of a new dam or a prospering foundry. Ukrainians are usually present in these articles through a short remark, characteristics or allusion. Although these articles are not about Ukrainians in the first place, they significantly contribute to creating and maintaining a specific image of Ukrainians. Below, we show what concrete situations and events involve comparisons to Ukrainians or words and phrases that make use of one of the characteristics commonly attributed to Ukrainians. We will also show what the effect on readers may be.

Ukrainians often play role in stories about violent crimes, which are attributed to them as a group. For example, in an article about rent arrears collection (*Will you pay?* Reflex, 25 October 2001), the director of a municipal real estate management company explains why his company hired a debt collector:

*‘First, we hoped that he would be able to collect some money. He came back with CZK 160,000, which is not a trifle. And what is perhaps even more important, the debt collector influenced people psychologically. All of a sudden, they were afraid and saying: Jesus, they hired an Ukrainian or something.’*

Another article tells the story of a man who has repeatedly attacked his wife and threatened her with Ukrainians (*Quarrel ends with shooting*, Blesk, 20 December 2001):

*‘Almost every day for the past few weeks, S. L. (37) and his wife Š. L. (35) quarreled. Fighting culminated with the man pursuing his wife, who had run away from their house to the fields full of fear, and firing several shots in the air. The police say that the man has physically assaulted the woman two weeks ago. On several occasions, he also threatened her by saying that he would have her killed by Ukrainians (...).’*

Our third example is an excerpt from an interview with the singer David Kraus, the son of the actor Jan Kraus (*A view from a deer stand*, Reflex, 20 June 2002). In the end of the interview, the interviewer says that Kraus must be very much like his father, and he answers:

*‘It’s very much true. When my father does an interview, he takes out his own tape recorder and says: ‘If you get something different than I will on this tape, I will have you beaten by Ukrainians beyond recognition. We can start now.’*

What do the three excerpts have in common? Ukrainians are depicted as a very serious threat. Moreover, one cannot but notice that none of the above excerpts mentions “Ukrainian contract killers” or “Ukrainian racketeers,” but only “Ukrainians.” The label “Ukrainian” functions as a characteristic that does not require any further explanation because it is generally comprehensible. A mere mention of ethnic or national identity is enough for debtor, wife or journalist to imagine what could be in store for them.

Ethnicity is used in a similar way also in less dramatic contexts. Some of the following situations in which Ukrainians are mentioned are rather distressing, but Ukrainians do not play the role of robbers and thugs – rather, they are only suspicious characters. Take, for example, two articles that inform about sentencing of a man who abused his stepdaughter. Both articles cite his testimony, during which he reportedly said that his daughter “*hung out with the Roma and Ukrainians*”(Stepfather gets 6 1/2 years for raping his daughter, Právo, 7 May 2002) and also that “*she preferred young men of Ukrainian or Roma origin*”(Stepfather victim of lechery, Blesk, 7 May 2002). Another article deals with evacuation of people from their homes during the 2002 floods (*Lahovice under water*, Právo, 14 August 2002). In the article, a woman from the flooded Lahovice explains why she does not want to leave the town: “*Who would want to leave*

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<sup>12</sup> Of course, it could be interesting and valuable to carry out such an analysis and study the different ways of writing that build or deepen or emphasize the barrier between Czechs and foreigners or other minorities, as well as the ways of writing that highlight the sense of belonging and the fact that we all live here together. Such an analysis would have a practical importance because many journalists may not realize that their formulations help build barriers between *us and the others*. It could be very helpful for such journalists to take a closer look at the language instruments they use, learn something new from it and also get fresh ideas about writing differently. Unfortunately, the amount of time available to us prohibited carrying out any such analysis, so the idea remains only a suggestion for future work.

(..). *Since yesterday, there are strange people walking around, maybe Ukrainians or whatever, I am afraid.*” Another article informs readers about statues that adorn Prague’s cemeteries. At one point, the article speaks about theft that is more and more frequent and then quotes the director of Prague’s Cemeteries Administration as saying:

*“It’s not the homeless or Ukrainians who peel off precious metals anymore, it’s organized groups stealing per order” (Cemeteries as a sculpture gallery, Právo, 25 April 2002).*

All the above excerpts have something in common: those using the word “Ukrainian” as a negative and unflattering label are not journalists, but rather people quoted by them. This is true for a vast majority of articles that contain the words *Ukrajinec* or *ukrajinský* as a characteristic of an entire group of people. The same is true for articles about Romanians. One could argue that compared to the quoted witnesses, public officials or letters to the editor, journalists themselves act correctly. It is typically not journalists who refer to Ukrainians as to a single and internally homogenous group and attribute negative features to this group. On the other hand, one could ask whether journalists, who are responsible for the final version of their articles, should not reflect on such statements from the it sources or perhaps go so far as to omit them completely. It is safe to assume that the average reader is not going to distinguish between whether something about Ukrainians has been said by a woman on the street or the journalist himself.

Recalling one of the research problems of our analysis, namely whether the image of the three selected groups as presented by the Czech press differs from the commonly shared assumptions and ideas regarding these groups, we have arrived at an interesting conclusion. In articles containing the words *Ukrajinec* or *ukrajinský*, journalists create a certain image of Ukrainians by intermediating to readers – most often by way of verbatim quotations – nothing else than the commonly shared assumptions and ideas about Ukrainians.

The fact that journalists do not reflect on the use of established phrases that may be helping to enhance the bad image of Ukrainians as a whole becomes even more problematic if such a phrase is uttered by a known public figure or high-ranking public official. This is the case of the mentioned interview with the son of the Czech actor Jan Kraus, who reproduces his father’s derogatory statement attributing Ukrainians the role of violent thugs. The article *Dam budget to grow by 50 percent, study says* (Právo, 11 April 2002), which informs about the need to boost the budget of a new dam being built near Bruntál, is similarly incorrect. This time, Ukrainians are misused by Ivo Dokoupil, a spokesman for the environmentalist group Hnutí Duha Jeseníky:

*“Thinking in the line of ‘as soon as you irrevocably agree with construction of the dam, we will tell you the real cost’ perhaps has its place among Ukrainian businessmen, but according to Dokoupil, it is not something that should be done by ministerial officials.”*

An illustrious statement often cited by the media came from Otakar Vychodil, the chairman of the Civic Democratic Party’s (ODS) Olomouc branch. Vychodil explained his resignation by saying that he no longer wished to represent a party *“..some of whose members use methods of janitors, Ukrainian mafia or the communist secret police.”* Articles referring to this statement with full quotations had appeared in many periodicals over several weeks (e.g. *Angry Klaus pulls out from Prague election ticket*, Právo, 4 December 2001). The analyzed set of articles also contained a number of similar articles. Not once had the articles authors stopped to think and comment on the comparison used by the quoted politician; they merely pondered the impact on the internal situation in ODS. Otakar Vychodil abused Ukrainians once more, when he commented on the situation in ODS by saying: *‘A Ukrainian element is definitely involved’ (ODS is an elevator to power, says Vychodil, MF DNES, 13 December 2001).*

One more way of employing similitudes and established phrases about Ukrainians. Phrases and comparisons employing Ukrainians have one additional feature: some articles talk of Ukrainians together with other groups, which are for the most part also attributed appalling qualities. We have already cited from two such articles: in the first one, a stepfather accused of abusing his daughter said that she *“bung out with the Roma and Ukrainians,”* and in the second one, he said that *“..she preferred young men of Ukrainian or Roma origin.”* Ukrainians as a group are presented alongside the Roma. In an article titled *Foundry’s revenue to grow by 40 million* (MF DNES, 12 February 2002), the author writes that the foundry employs “30 Ukrainians and Belarusians and the same number of prisoners”. In an article about a police raid in one of Chomutov’s brothels (*SWAT team raids infamous dive*, Blesk, 31 May 2002), Ukrainians are connected to prostitutes: *“There are Ukrainians and whores there,”* said a bystander about the raid.

So far, we have been examining articles that depict Ukrainians in a negative manner. But it should be noted that there are many articles that are different. Unfortunately, they are not different because they do not depict Ukrainians in such a manner, but because they do so less obviously. For example, the article *Locals don’t like adjustment of bushes on Husovice square* (MF DNES, 4 May 2002) contains a statement of a woman living on a busy street regarding the local town hall’s decision to remove bushes separating residential houses from the street: *“Without anyone telling us, five Ukrainians with saws came last Monday and simply eradicated the bushes.”* The Ukrainians did not make the decision to remove the bushes, they were merely hired to do so. Although there is just a brief mention of the Ukrainians in the article, it is very clear that it was them who removed the bushes. In another article, Ukrainians are in a similar position (*Two-story house collapses in Prague*, Právo, 11 May 2002). A house in which Ukrainian were working collapsed all of a sudden and a person from a

neighboring house comments the situation: *'A few Ukrainians with backs started to demolish load-bearing walls on Wednesday. It was windy at night and that did it.'* It is safe to assume that in both cases, Ukrainian workers were only following orders from the town hall or the construction company involved. This, however, is not so important for someone reading the article. What is important is that even in a situation that presents them in a better light (as workers), Ukrainians are involved in mishaps. It could have been very easy to steer clear of such way of writing. It would suffice to replace Ukrainian or Ukrainian worker with the word worker or employee of the company XY.

## Conclusion

We have attempted to describe the main characteristics of reporting about selected groups of foreigners by the Czech press as well as the way in which the media image of these groups is created. In our summary, we would like to somewhat shift our emphasis and use our findings as the foundation for recommendations as to what direction should journalists take in working with the image of foreigners in the media in order to be effective and achieve results.

We have seen that the image of Vietnamese, Ukrainians and Romanians presented in the Czech printed media is not very different from the perception of these groups by the general populace. Majority of articles reporting about foreigners is somehow connected to crime. Also other contexts in which foreigners are covered in the media are negative: appalling environment of Vietnamese markets, Romanians and Ukrainians as a source of tuberculosis, Ukrainians as a threat for Czechs on the job market. The number of positive articles is drastically lower. Positive articles often inform about children, school, holidays or are what in this essay we call 'foreigner stories'.

Perhaps the greatest unfairness is that in articles about foreigners, foreigners themselves do not have a chance to voice their opinions. Most often, readers learn about foreigners from police spokesmen or public and elected officials. Foreigners' point of view is absent from a vast majority of articles. When foreigners do get a chance to comment on their own situation or the situation of their fellow countrymen, there is great discrepancy between the space allocated to them and the space allocated to representatives of the majority society. Almost all articles are written from the perspective of the Czech society, i.e. they cover problems that the Czech society has with foreigners and not problems that foreigners encounter in this country. Articles are full of crimes committed by foreigners, Ukrainian workers working below minimum wage or low-quality products sold at Vietnamese markets. But if a foreigner gets a chance to speak, readers can see how many problems he must deal with, for example the regular annual journey through various institutions to prolong a residency permit, or the humiliation Vietnamese market vendors must feel when addressed by their first name by Czech customers.

The issue at hand is not that journalists should not be writing about foreigner crime or that they should be writing positive articles only. It is more important that they strive to present a more balanced and colorful picture of foreigners living in the Czech Republic. There are several ways of achieving this. For example, journalists can be more careful when working with information in articles about crime – they can reduce the use of ethnic or national labeling and try to suppress the connection between crime and foreignness. After all, the information that either the victim or the offender were Vietnamese, Ukrainian or Romanian is not relevant. A good sign is that some media outlets have introduced or are about to introduce ethic codes or editorial policies that, among other things, outline the circumstances under which ethnic labeling may or may not be used in an article.

Furthermore, journalists can endorse better contexts in which foreigners appear in the press. It would be easy to make more use of the positive topics that have already made their way into the press, including foreigner stories, stories about children and their work at school, foreigners' customs and habits, cultural activities and foreigners' associations. Also, journalists should search for new topics and contexts in which to present the life of foreigners in the Czech Republic to the reading public.

The most important for journalists is to make the voice of foreigners about whom they write more heard. Journalists often respond to this by saying that it is very hard to find a foreigner willing to answer their questions. This may well be justified to some degree. Also, we should not forget about the language barrier. However, there are other ways of bringing the voice of foreigners to the newspapers. Journalists may for example cooperate with associations of foreigners living in the Czech Republic or with non-governmental organizations that help foreigners. The voice of foreigners can be made stronger by journalists also indirectly, by using alternative information sources dealing with concrete groups of foreigners, results of ethnological and sociological researches, certain websites, etc.

During public debates organized as a part of the *Media and Minorities* program to present results of our analysis, journalists often argued that they write about issues that interest the reading public. Even if we accept the logic of this argument, i.e. newspapers are driven by the reading public and must forgo their educational role, there is still one reason why such an explanation cannot hold its ground: everyone keeps forgetting that the Czech reading public includes foreigners residing in this country. Certainly, their number is still relatively low – approximately 200,000 or 2 percent of the total number of inhabitants. When we say that journalists should endeavor to provide a more balanced portrait of foreigners, we mean more than just educating Czech readers. We think of the feelings of people who have immigrated into the Czech Republic for various reasons, many of whom want to live here forever. We think of people who upon reading a newspaper feel like a Ukrainian woman who – during one of the debates – talked about how ashamed she felt every time she read an article about Ukrainians in the Czech press.

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