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„On the other side of the border”. The media in strengthening an international dialogue (the Czech-German Journalism Award)

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to describe the role and significance of the Czech-German Journalism Award in creating a dialogue between journalist circles in both countries (the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany). Their competition is a tool for developing strategic external communication between the two nations, the aim of which is to strengthen mutual understanding. A structural and qualitative analysis of text was used as the research method, while the mission was to describe the kinds of publishers/broadcasters awarded and characterize the problems discussed in the award-winning works of the two editions of the Award held to date.

Key words: Czech-German Journalism Award, strategic external communication (media relations), cross-border journalism

The mass media play an important role in international and intercultural communication (Ociepka, 2002, p. 14), are a significant foreign policy tool the state has at its disposal (Hess, Szymańska, 2009, p. 31), and serve as an important instrument in either strengthening or weakening neighborly relations. Examples of using the media as a tool for paving the way for finding an agreement, neutralizing frictions and clarifying both parties' intentions can be found in various journalism competitions, such as the German-French Journalism Award (in German: *Deutsch-Französischer Journalistenpreis*, in French: *Prix Franco-Allemand du Journalisme*, 1983) and the Polish-German Journalism Award (in German: *Der Deutsch-Polnische Journalistenpreis*, 1997). Their well-tried formula, as well as recent developments in Europe (the migrant crisis) were the direct incentive for the establishment in 2016 of the competition for the Czech-German Journalism Award (in German: *Deutsch-Tschechischer Journalistenpreis*; in Czech: *Česko-německá novinářská cena*) (hereinafter referred to as the CGJA).

This article is an idiographic case study, or a description of a narrow element of international communication. The short history of the CGJA competition appears to be sufficient grounds on which to base a description of an individual event, not allowing for making generalizations or searching for correlations, but rather drawing our attention to the differences instead of the similarities.

The competition – history, objectives, regulations

The CGJA is organized by the German-Czech Future Fund (DTZF, in German: *Der Deutsch-Tschechische Zukunftsfonds*, in Czech: *Česko-německý fond budoucnosti*), German Journalists Association (DJV, in German: *Deutschen Journalistenverband*) and the Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic (Syndikát, in Czech: *Syndikát novinářů České*). The competition draws on wide representation from both countries' journalists, in opposition – similarly to the German-French Journalism Award – to the dominating political and local government structures that initiate and organize the Polish-German Journalist Award (Olechowska, 2017, p. 39). Despite the differences between the articles of association of the Czech (Němcová-Tejkalová, Láb, 2016, p. 23)¹ and German (Stasiak-Jazukiewicz, 2013, p. 94)² professional organizations, the idea of cooperation (with the DTZF contributing as a coordinator) in organizing the competition has been a success.

According to the articles of association signed by the competition's organizers in 2016, its objective is to “reward Czech and German journalists who create impartial and credible journalism concerning the neighboring country, thus contributing to a better understanding between Germans and Czechs” (Satzung, 2017). The document's subsequent paragraphs state that the award is meant for the best publications presenting crucial aspects of the life of the other nation, describing the mutual relations, and discussing the two countries' coexistence in Europe. These assumptions were also emphasized in his interview for a Prague radio station by Tomáš Jelinek, the DTZF director: “Particularly in today's debate on the refugee crisis we can see how crucial it is to understand the reality, instead of just describing it in black and white colors [...] which is why we have estab-

¹ Distrust of professional organizations and associations.

² The journalists prefer to be members of institutionalized professional groups.

lished the CGJA, where we can honor those journalists that contribute to the mutual dialogue” (Bucan, 2016).

The competition’s jury is composed of representatives of both countries. It operates on the basis of a set of regulations adopted by DTZF following consultation with the Czech and German journalist associations. The jury is a 5-person team which, for each of the three competition categories, is comprised of representatives of both journalist associations. The DTZF organizes and participates in the jury sessions, but has no say at them. The awardees are selected in three-stages:

- 1) the DTZF verifies if the material meets the formal requirements and subsequently, depending on the dominant form of narrative – assigns it to the relevant category;
- 2) each member of the jury is given online access to all the works in order to choose three works in their own language in each of the categories – as nomination proposals; as for the Milena Jesenská category, jury members indicate the single best work regardless of its language;
- 3) on the basis of the jury members’ choices, the DTZF draws up the nominees list; during a common session, the jury selects the winner in each of the categories (except for the Milena Jesenská category) (Schultheis, 2018).

The award comes in three categories: *Text* (publications with written text prevailing over other forms), *Audio* (with sound as the dominant element) and *Multimedia* (with mixed forms of narrative). Two awards are given in each of the categories – to a Czech and a German representative of the media, respectively.³ Each time, journalists from both countries are also awarded the special Milena Jesenská award,⁴ which goes to authors

³ It should be noted that in the first editions of the German-French and the Polish-German Journalism Awards, the awards were given to representatives of both the nations in each category; it was only later that their organizers decided otherwise; currently, there is only one winner in each category, regardless of his or her nationality.

⁴ Milena Jesenská (1896–1944) – a Czech journalist, editor and translator. She published her texts in *Přítomnost* magazine, and the *Tribuna*, *Národní listy* and *Lidové noviny* daily newspapers, the *Pestré listy* magazine, was briefly an editor in *Pestrý týden*, and between 1938–1939 in *Přítomnost* magazine. She was a member of the resistance. She died in Ravensbrück concentration camp in May 1944. In 1995 she was awarded the honorary title Righteous Among the Nations. Known as a friend of Franz Kafka, and for her translations of his works into Czech. Polish edition: F. Kafka, *Letters to Milena*, translated by F. Konopka, Wyd. Literackie 1959. Her book titled *Beyond our strength: Czechs, Jews and Germans 1937–1939*, selected by V. Burian,

of works that stand out in terms of their original and timeless nature, drawing on mutual understanding and dialogue.

A total of 166 Czech and German works were entered in the first two editions of the competition, while the final list of items evaluated by the jury amounted to 69. As usual in these types of competitions, texts published in the press (41 in total, with 17 Czech and 24 German ones) were the most numerous. The number of works entered in the other two categories was even – 14 in the *Audio* (5 and 9, respectively) and the *Multimedia* (again 5 and 9) categories each (Schultheis, 2018). Also, the asymmetry between the numbers of works entered is typical of the aforementioned German-French and Polish-German Journalist Award competitions, where the majority of the works entered are German.

Among the more essential provisions of the competition regulations, note should be made of the ban, valid for three consecutive years, on winners entering their works in the category in which they were successful. This provision limits the possibility of the same journalists winning over and over again. As intended by the organizers, this rule is supposed to help popularize the competition among a wider group of Czech and German journalists and go beyond the circles already specializing in Czech and German issues.

The awards gala is held alternately in the Czech Republic (the first one in Prague on January 29, 2017) and Germany (the second one in Nuremberg on November 10, 2017),⁵ during the annual Czech-German Discussion Forum organized for journalists. The winners in each of the four categories receive EUR 2,000, financed by the DTZF.

Competition finalists – structural analysis

35 mass media materials (17 Czech and 18 German works) made it to the final round of the first two editions (3 Czech and 3 German ones in each of the three categories; in 2017, works were nominated for the Milena Jesenska award).

L. Engelking, translated by L. Engelking, Wyd. Czarne, Wołowiec 2003, was published in Poland in 2003. As for Polish literature reporting on her, she has been written about by M. Szczygieł, *Gottland*, Wyd. Czarne, Wołowiec 2006; H. Krall, *Biała Maria*, Świat Książki, Warszawa 2014.

⁵ As an exception, the first two editions were held in the same calendar year.

Table 1

The Czech-German Journalism Award finalists in 2016–2017 – structural analysis

	The Czech Republic				Germany				Total
	range of impact		type of broadcaster (applied to electronic media outlets)		range of impact		type of broadcaster (applied to electronic media outlets)		
	domestic	regional/local	private	public	domestic	regional/local	private	public	
Text	<i>Reportér magazyn</i> (4) <i>Literární nowiny</i> (1) <i>Respekt</i> (1)	–				<i>Prager Zeitung</i> (1) <i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> (1) <i>Reportagen</i> (1) <i>Die Zeit</i> (1)	–	–	11
Audio	Český rozhlas Plus (3) Český rozhlas ČRO 2 (1)	–		4	Deutschlandfunk Kultur (2) Deutschlandfunk (1)	SWR (1) MDR (2)	–	6	10
Multi-media	Český rozhlas (1) Česká televize (1) ČT 24 – historie (1) Český rozhlas Radiožurnál (1)	–	You Tube (1)	4	ARD Tagesschau (1)	MDR Fernsehen (2) BR Fernsehen (1) SWR Fernsehen (1) WDR Fernsehen (1)	–	6	11
Special award	<i>Týdeník Euro</i> (1)	–		Český rozhlas Radiožurnál (1)	Deutschlandfunk Kultur (1)		–	1	3
Sum				17		18			35

Source: Author's own study.

As far as the types of mass media are concerned, 12 of the nominated works were published in the press (7 Czech/5 German ones), 14 were broadcast on the radio (7/7), 8 on television (2/6), and one was posted on YouTube. As for the radio and television materials nominated (in the *Audio*, *Multimedia* and *Milena Jesenská* categories), all of them – except for the film *Generace N – Deutschböhme/Generace N – Sudetenland* (YouTube) – were broadcast through Czech and German public media channels. Thereby, the CGJA competition proves once again that public media outlets serve as an important element in building civic society, undertaking essential topics within the public (political, social and economic) matters domain, at the same time bestowing patronage over domestic artistic creativity. What should be noted is the disproportion between the numbers of Czech and German works nominated in the *Multimedia* category – clearly in favor of German (6) over Czech (2) film materials – which indicates substantial asymmetry in television broadcasters' potential.

I. The press

Among the nominated press materials (12), Czech texts were published in the themed press (*Literární noviny*, a cultural and political monthly; *Týdeník Euro*, an economic weekly), while most of the nominated German works were published in the general-information press (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a supraregional information daily; *Die Zeit* an opinion-making weekly; *Sächsische Zeitung*, a Saxon regional daily).

With regard to the Czech winners, the award went twice to texts published in the recently-established (2014) liberal monthly *Reportér Magazin*, which is characterized by ambitious reporting forms. Another Czech press award winner was the liberal and prestigious weekly (established in 1989) *Respekt* (which discusses topics from the domains of economics, science and culture).

With regard to the German winning press materials, they were printed in the bimonthly *Reportagen* established in 2011 (a literary feature), and the weekly *Prager Zeitung* closed in 2016 (its printed version was published between 1991 and 2016, whereas currently it is only published on-line at www.pragerzeitung.cz).⁶

⁶ This weekly was a German-language paper sold in the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria. It mostly discussed the relations between the Czech Republic and German-speaking countries. The idea of the paper's founder, Uwe Müller, to turn the

Summing up, the press materials that won the award in the first two editions of the competition were published in the German information press and the Czech themed press. The large representation of new titles that do not boast years of publishing tradition is evidence of young journalists' interest in cross-border problems.

II. Electronic media

Among the nominated radio and television works of the German public broadcasters (13), most were materials made by regional radio stations/broadcasters, with the rest of the works having been broadcast in national bandwidths (5). This is a natural consequence of the larger decentralization of the German public mass media, as compared with the Czech mass media system, which stems from the federal structure of the state and the way German regional public media outlets grouped in ARD are organized.

Among German regional broadcasters, most of the nominated works (4) were either commissioned or made by the journalists from MDR (in German: *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk*, broadcasting from Saxony, a federal state neighboring the Czech Republic, and from Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt); 2 nominations were produced by SWR (in German: *Südwestrundfunk*, from Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg); one nomination was produced by WDR (in German: *Westdeutscher Rundfunk*, from North Rhine-Westphalia) and one by BR (in German: *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, from Bavaria that neighbors the Czech Republic). The geographical proximity (Heinderyckx, 2015, p. 3169) of the Saxon and Bavarian public broadcasters to the Czech Republic creates favorable conditions for their journalists to develop interest in cross-border topics.

weekly into a newspaper that would become *ZEIT Mitteleuropas*, failed. Marcus Hundt, its editor-in-chief, explained that – despite a steady reader interest and a growing number of subscriptions – the weekly was closed for financial reasons, as it received no subsidies from the German Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Czech Ministry of Culture which offer support to German-speaking media projects and the national minority press. Dalibor Bartos, a journalist of the on-line daily *Britské listy*, wrote after the demise of *Prager Zeitung*: “Such a shame. Europe needs not only a Czech-German paper, but also a European paper. The division between the European nations is finally over [...], despite the different mother languages that they speak. [...] It is essential that Europeans get to know one another better, understand one another and, perhaps, also realize that they are a mighty group of wonderful people” (Hundt, 2017).

As far as German television programs are concerned (6), again a majority of the nominations were for films made for the regional broadcasters MDR, BR, SWR and WDR, but there were some made for the television news service *Tagesschau* (national television channel ARD), as well.

From among the Czech television works entered, 3 made it to the final round. They were broadcast on public-service television channels, such as the ČT 24 Historie history channel. Ultimately, a film made especially for YouTube won the competition (Die Finalisten, 2016, 2017).

As mentioned before, the nominated Czech and German audio materials were broadcast by public radio stations. Their Czech authors were journalists working for national-coverage channels of the news-service and commentary type: ČRO 2, Plus and Radiožurnál. It is worth noting that two of the winning works were the result of the Czech editorial teams' permanent interest in the neighboring country: *Cíl: Německo* [Aim: Germany] is one of the features made within the station's year-long project aiming at depicting Syrian refugees' lives in Bavaria; the document titled *Yusra plave o život* [Yusra swims for her life] was made in Berlin as a result of cooperation between journalists from different countries.

Categories of the themes undertaken in the winning materials

19 journalists and 15 works have won awards, with 7 having been published by Czech and 7 by German mass media outlets, and one television work titled *Generace N – Deutschböhme* (2017) which was published on YouTube.

The themes discussed in the winning materials were diverse – with the Czech ones mainly tackling the problems of contemporary migrations (the refugee crisis), and the German ones being far more varied, and focusing on mutual events, relationships and ties of a historical nature on the one hand, and describing the Czech-German borderland and contemporary Bohemia on the other.

I. The migrant crisis

The topics undertaken by the Czech awardees were mostly related to the migrant crisis that EU member states faced after the German government's announcement of its protection for Syrians coming to Germany.

This crisis deepened the differences between the two countries in respect of how the problem should be dealt with. The Czech Republic is (similarly to Poland, Slovakia and Hungary) counted as belonging to the so-called *unwilling coalition* opposing the European Commission's proposal (2015) to adopt a quota system to distribute immigrants among EU member states (Potyrała, 2015, p. 38).

These opposite stances on refugees adopted by the two countries' societies and governments have provided an impulse for Czech journalists to start exploring the integration processes occurring among immigrants already living in Germany on the one hand, and recent newcomers on the other. Tomáš Lindner, one of the awardees, noted the same, saying: "It surprised me how the refugee issue has suddenly opened a gap between the Czech Republic and Germany. [...] The picture of integration is not a black and white one. You cannot say that Turks in Germany are not integrated. Some of them have not integrated themselves, while others have been very successful at it" (Tomáš, 2017).

Lindner's feature *Sultán v Berlíně* [Sultan in Berlin] was directly inspired by the referendum on amendments to the Turkish Constitution, which elicited very emotional responses and divided Turks living in Germany. The author not only described Berlin's Turkish minority, but also showed how diverse it was, and indicated that the nature of these divisions went beyond religious, economic or outlook-related matters, but there was also a generational aspect to it. One of the documentary's protagonists, 20-year-old Mehmet Arsen, supported the cabinet-parliamentary system's replacement with a presidential one that was to increase the powers enjoyed by president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Another protagonist, Kazim Erdoğan, said: "If you are not proud of your surname [Erdoğan: accidental similarity of the surnames – P.O.], you become a traitor in the eyes of his supporters. Central opinions are gone, completely. All we have now is well-defined supporters or opponents of the president" (Lindner, 2017).

Loyalty towards their ancestors' homeland is reinforcing prejudices that young German Turks and liberal Berlin are facing today. Lindner's feature drew a picture of internal divisions among German Turks, most of whom felt good in Germany (90% of the respondents) on the one hand, while over half of them perceived themselves as second-class citizens, on the other. Yunus, yet another protagonist, began to sense pressure from German society: "You have to declare yourself as loyal to Germany, in order to choose between two elements of your identity. I am a local pa-

triot from Berlin, while my home may have many dimensions” (Lindner, 2017). This message emerged repeatedly in statements made by other protagonists, as well. One of them was 18-year-old Yusra Mardini, whom Czech journalist Magdalena Sodomková met on the Serbian-Hungarian border (*Yusra plave o život*). The author was interested in the assimilation process of the swimmer (once popular in Syria) as she walked across Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary, to finally settle in Berlin. Mardini’s stay in Germany was illegal for the first few months, until she won over the officials of the Wasserfreunde Spandau club. Perhaps, she may represent Germany at the Olympic Games one day (Duc Hiên, Sodomková, Jensen, 2017).

Another way of coping with living in a new country was shown by Dora Kaprálová in her text titled *Lajkujte mně a smrt se vám vyhne* [Give me a like, and death shall pass you by]. The main protagonist here was Syrian Aboud Saeed, who, on the basis of his online posts describing the war in Syria, had published a critically-acclaimed book in Germany titled *Der klügste Mensch im Facebook* (that translates as *The wisest man on Facebook*). In 2013, he was granted political asylum in Germany. The Czech journalist visited the writer, who has been referred to as a contemporary Henry Miller, in his Berlin flat to find that acculturation (Szopski, 2005, p. 132) was a continuous process (Kaprálová, 2016).

Describing the migrants coming to Germany, Czech journalists go outside tolerant and inclusive Berlin in order to indicate that its multiculturalism differs significantly from what the rest of the country is like. The ghettoization of space inhabited by immigrants observed in smaller conservative German towns (and in the Kreuzberg and Neukölln districts of Berlin) is a result of the emergence of problems related to cultural differences and insufficient social adaptation on the one hand, and the unfriendly attitude towards strangers demonstrated by some native Germans on the other. One of such places was described by Lucie Suchá in her award-winning press feature titled *Oheň, fotbal, Německo* [Fire, football, Germany]. She chose a town called Tröglitz (Saxony-Anhalt), where a refugee home was burned down in 2015. Local NPD activists initiated marches to the house of the evangelical minister and mayor of the town, Markus Nierth, who was a public advocate of tolerance towards the immigrants. For a year, he and his family were under police supervision, and received anonymous letters containing threats. Some of his opponents resorted to even more radical forms of pressure, such as sending him parcels of excrement. The mayor of Tröglitz was not the first to step

down due to the refugee issues, but he was the first to admit so openly. At the end of the feature, the Czech journalist was curious about who won and who lost in this case. Following the 2015 events, the former mayor described his experience, saying: “I lost my home, because I do not feel as good here as I used to, and my children are not so carefree anymore [...] On the other hand, however, they are now much more enlightened, politically mature. A delusion? Are you not better off when you know the truth and realize what people are truly like?” (Suchá, 2016).

Dora Kaprálová, the author of a documentary titled *Alenka v říši divů, aneb má cesta za uprchlíky* [Alice in Wonderland, or my journey after refugees], went on a trip to another German town – Torgelow (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania). The feature was an account of school film workshops for German students and immigrant children: Armenians, Afghans and Syrians. Fundamental questions were raised there about the building blocks of one’s identity, about where we were from, how much our origins determined our lives, or whether we were tolerant to other cultural groups that had been forced to leave their homelands. Kaprálová reported that the parents of children attending the Albert Einstein school in this town of eight thousand had filed a petition with the principal against their children having joint classes with the immigrant children. The author asked “[w]hether the parents know that Einstein was himself a refugee?” (Kaprálová, 2015). The narrative clearly valorized the category of a border that had stopped dividing people on the one hand (as the physical border between the nations is gone), but had failed to connect them on the other (a ‘mental’ border, cultural barriers). The motif of a journey, not always undertaken voluntarily (economic migration, fleeing the war), ran through this documentary: “We are all on the way. Some of us more, others less. One can be a nomad, another one is deep-rooted. Some are escaping war, others hunger, yet others are escaping because they want to dance [a reference to a school drama – P.O.]” (Kaprálová, 2015).

The fortunes of other refugees, this time arriving in a little Bavarian town called Hof, were followed for a year by reporters of the Czech Radiožurnál station. Vojtěch Berger’s documentary *Cíl: Německo* was a portrait of a successful bilateral integration of refugees and the local community (Vojtěch, 2017). The show’s protagonists were young Syrians who did well at making their own ways in their new homeland: 23-year-old Jihad set up a support group assisting refugees arriving in Germany, while Okba and Siby, a married couple from Damascus, established a cordial friendship with an elderly German, Christel Kern. An example of

acculturation of Syrians in Germany was found in the decision made by Fida, the mother of Tala, who was attending a German kindergarten, who agreed for her daughter to participate in religion classes: “We respect the fact that this place has a different culture. Tala is a Muslim, we teach Islam at home. But as she is growing up in this country, she must know Christian values, as well, so that she can have her own opinion. And first of all, so that she does not feel like a stranger here” (Berger, 2016).

Such a large representation of the topic of migration among the Czech competition winners indicates that they are focused on the contemporary issues of integration and globalization that go beyond bilateral Czech and German relations. The diminishing role of political and territorial borders which until recently played the role of barriers and which are being replaced by cultural and symbolical ones (Kalin, 2010, p. 97) is the main message carried by the Czech journalists.

II. Historical contexts

Works on the history of Czech and German relations were among the competition winners. One of those was Kilian Kirchgeßner’s radio documentary titled *Pfarrer Toufar ist verschwunden* [Father Toufar has gone missing], which presents German readers with new facts concerning the persecution of the Catholic Church in communist Czechoslovakia. Father Josef Toufar was accused in 1950 of staging the so-called Číhošť miracle (named after the village of Číhošť, where he was the parish priest), where the altar cross reportedly moved several times during a sermon. The spreading word of the miracle aroused the interest of the security service, which arrested and tortured the priest, who later died and was buried in a mass grave. On the occasion of the anniversary of the priest’s interment in the parish of Číhošť, the German journalist reconstructed the events of 65 years ago (Kirchgeßner, 2016a).

The mystery of the Číhošť miracle has not been explained to date, and neither has the mystery of the 1929–1945 audio recordings found in Czech radio archives referred to as ‘Beutefonds’ (which can be treated as a sort of compensation for the Third Reich’s devastation of Czech phonographic records). Pavel Polák, the author of the feature titled *Tajemný kořistní fond* [A mysterious discovery in the archives] searched the length and breadth of the Czech radio archives to find the source of these pre-war German materials. The journalistic investigation indicated that after

WW II a substantial part (probably three-fourths) of the Third Reich's radio archives found itself in the Soviet Union, and had been returned to its original owners only after the fall of communism. As the author emphasized: “However, what is stored in Prague is much more voluminous than what Moscow returned to the Germans after the fall of communism. Therefore, there are two possible explanations: either the Russians only took a part of the archives with them, or the Moscow archives still hide tens of thousands of recordings from Nazi times” (Polák, 2017). ‘Beutefonds’ is one of the many unsolved Czech-German riddles from the past. By undertaking such topics, journalists can contribute to creating bilateral projects – including the mass media – which (in the case described here) could involve digitizing and making the recordings accessible to both Czech and German audiences.

Cultural cooperation between the Czech Republic and Germany, which is one of the prerequisites for neighboring countries coming closer together, was the subject of two more works. In his radio feature titled “*Prag empfing uns wie Verwandte.*” *Wie Thomas und Heinrich Mann zu Tschechen wurden* [“Prague accepted us as if we were relatives.” How Thomas and Heinrich Mann became Czechs], Peter Lange uncovered further historical events which had been a taboo subject in communist Czechoslovakia. Its protagonists were Thomas and Heinrich Mann, who, following Adolf Hitler's seizure of power (they were active opponents of the Nazi movement), were forced to leave Germany, with Thomas Mann renouncing his German citizenship. In 1935, Rudolf Fleischmann, a factory owner from Proseč (Pardubice Region) and an enthusiast of Mann's artistic work, sought for honorary citizenship of the town and Czech nationality to be awarded to the writer. Mann would often say that he took pride in being a national of a country whose political and spiritual foundations corresponded to his own outlook. Jan Macháče, the current mayor of Proseč, emphasized the significance of the historical events that had formed a bridge between the Czech Republic and Germany (Lange, 2016).

Yet another example of how history and politics have impacted the lives of Czechs and Germans alike was provided in Thomas Purschke and Hans-Jürgen Büsch's television documentary titled *Eine besondere Beziehung* [Special ties]. The film presented the fortunes of the athletes Emil and Dana Zátopek and Herbert Schade, and showed archival footage from the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games where Emil Zátopek won gold, beating Schade of Germany (Purschke, Büsch, 2016). The Mann

brothers' biographies and the friendship between Zátopek and Schade are examples of the tight relationships that exist between Czechs and Germans, relationships that have not been entirely broken, despite the tragic developments of the 20th century (WW II and the Iron Curtain).

III. The Czech and German Borderland

Three of the award-winning works drew on the subject of the Czech and German borderland, which constitutes a separate and – at the same time – connected region of diverse economic potential. Contrary to the Polish and German borderland, Germans have lived on Czech territory since the Middle Ages, and the borderline has not been subject to change (Majewski, 2007).

The historical events that have happened in this borderland, including migration, were discussed in the film documentary titled *Generace N – Deutschböhme*. Its protagonists were Sudeten Germans, and the narrative adopted two perspectives – that of the Sudeten Germans who had remained in Czechoslovakia (Pauli Luft, born in 1935 in Strupčice and Milan Král, born in 1936 in Prachatice) and those who decided to leave for Germany (Karl Simeon Schlosser, born in 1937 in Krušnohorské sub-province, Přisečnice and Gertruda Emma Landsmann, born in 1920 in Kladruba). They reminisced about the pre-war coexistence of Czechs and Germans which had ended in 1945 with the expulsion of over 3 million Germans from northern Bohemia. Their recollections painted a tragic picture of those events: Pauli Luft mentioned violent attacks and discrimination against the German community; Milan Král talked about the forfeiture and theft of German property; Karl Schlosser, currently of Sonnenberg, Brandenburg, mentioned the fact of a Pole having been killed in their homestead; finally, Gertruda Landsmann described her deportation to Germany. In their reports, those disastrous war-time events constantly had them searching for answers to such questions as: “Who am I? What are my roots? Where are my home and my homeland?”

In the 1980s, Pauli Luft finally had an opportunity to move to Germany, but her husband, an ethnic German too, opposed the idea. Luft admitted: “If I went to Germany, I would still be a stranger, an alien.” Milan Král, whose mother was German and father was Czech, said that, immediately after WWII, many Germans were certain they would soon be returning to the places where they had grown up: “Anna [his mother

– P.O.], you stay here, we’ll be back soon” – some of Král’s family members insisted when they were being deported in 1946. Karl Schlosser, on his part, dreamed for years of returning to his home village of Přísečnic, now gone as a result of flooding. The film closed with a fragment of the hymn *Kde domov můj?* recited in Czech by Gertruda Landsman (Kupková, Komarevtseva, 2017).

Table 2

**A fragment delivered by one of the characters
of Generace N – Deutschböhme/Generace N – Sudetenland**

Hymn recited by Gertrude Landsmann	Proprietary translation into German	Proprietary translation into English
“Kde domov můj? Kde vlast je má? Voda hučí po lučinách, A to je ta krásná země, země česká, domov můj!”	“Wo ist meine Heimat Dass Wasser braust auf den Wiesen Und das ist das schöne Land Böhmerland, meine Heimat!”	“Where is my home? Where is my homeland? Water roars amid the meadows, And here is the beautiful land, Böhmerland, my home!”

Although presenting historical events and undertaking the topics of expulsion, loss of home and the search for identity, this film documentary made a reference to the current migrant crisis in Europe. It promoted the universal values leading to a strengthened dialogue, shaping intercultural sensitivity. In the film, Milan Král was still working towards promoting reconciliation, and guiding Germans coming to visit their Heimat around his family town of Varnsdorf. To Karl Schlosser, his participation in the film was a chance to convey a message: “Last year I read in a newspaper that young people from the Czech Republic were interested in history. [...] I became excited, as I had wanted to contact someone about that for a long time. I am a living memoir. I am happy that you [authors Kupková and Komarevtseva – P.O.] are making this film. When I see Olga, who is Russian, and photography director Veronika, who is Czech, both being young persons, then I know that this is a true understanding between nations” (Kupková, Komarevtseva, 2017).

Two more works depicted the contemporary Czech and German borderland. In *Die Brücke am Pöhlbach* [The bridge over the Pöhlbach], Corinna Anton visited two towns, Vejprta (Ústecký Region) and Bärenstein (Saxony), divided by the national border. The border crossing between the two regions was opened in 2005 and the German journalist was interested in how the borderland community was doing ten years later.

In her documentary, the author found out that, despite the disappearance of the national border, there were still barriers remaining in terms of cultural (e.g. most of the Czech population can speak German, while few Germans can speak Czech), economic (economic migration of Czechs to Germany), and administrative obstacles (e.g. lacking legal frameworks for common healthcare for borderland inhabitants). One example of the difficulties was the EU financing system for joint undertakings: “If an entrepreneur from Vejpra wishes to sell gingerbread on the Saxon side during a common event [...] they first need to obtain a special permit, which is why everyone prefers to stay in their respective towns” (Anton, 2015). The same is true when it comes to implementing the Czech and German project for a joint binational information and cultural center: “It is also an enormous bureaucratic effort if you want to employ a Czech person from Vejpra in the joint information center in Bärenstein: ‘It looks as if he or she was on a business trip every day’” (Anton, 2015). Another obstacle that Vejpra and Bärenstein faced was the currency exchange system. Although there was no bureau de change in the Czech town, euros were accepted there, but on the German town there was “[...] no single company in Bärenstein that would accept crowns” (Anton, 2015). One would think it normal that the natural circumstances of a borderland that has no national borders would create a solid basis contributing to the establishment and intensification of multi-faceted cooperation – but this has not actually happened here. The text provided a picture of the as yet unused potential that living next to each other brought, not only in the context of administrative solutions, but also cultural connections.

Another example of issues that hindered Czech and German cooperation was found in the process of building a network of road connections between the countries. The problem was illustrated using the case of the A14 motorway, which was supposed to facilitate transport within the territory of the former East German regions. The film titled *Milliardengrab Autobahn* [Motorway – a cemetery for billions] by Arndt Ginzel and Martin Kraushaar attempted to identify the causes of the difficulties relating to the never-ending repairs of the roads (already lasting 17 years). The motorway was expected to connect Dresden and Prague and, as Petr Šourek of Corrupt Tour, a company arranging tours of the motorway sections under reconstruction, suspected it “was deliberately built on unsuitable terrain in order to increase the costs and, thus, the profits” (Ginzel, Kraushaar, 2015). The document shed light on the issue of the lack of transparency in managing EU subsidies, not only in the Czech Republic

and Germany, but also Poland (the example of the bridge in Mszana on the Polish A1 motorway was provided).

It can be expected that the problems of the Czech and German borderland, where the phenomenon of the inhabitants experiencing both “closeness” and “strangeness” (Kłoskowska, 2005, p. 294) is observed, and which by all natural means is a place where bilateral stories come across each other most frequently, will remain an inspiring area of exploration for journalists on both sides of the border in the future editions of the CGJA competition. By undertaking controversial topics (Pfetsch, Adam, Berkel, 2006, pp. 3–4) they will (perhaps also in cooperation with Polish journalists) contribute to the nations coming closer together, whereas their works will testify to the possibility of generating typically cross-border messages (Jóskowiak, 2002, pp. 181–186).

Social problems

The aim of the CGJA competition is to demythologize mutual stereotypes, which in the context of developing an international dialogue should be considered as an ongoing process. The so-called clichés are made weaker by such undertakings as, for instance, Kilian Kirchgeßner’s feature titled *Königin der Früchte* [The queen of fruits]. Its main character was Blanka Milfaitová, who had achieved international success as the owner of a marmalade manufacture. Milfaitová was an example, showing that passion and dreams could be fulfilled in a country that Germans perceived as backward. The text was also a bitter reflection upon Czech vices (self-stereotypes): “‘Envy’ – she says – ‘is a horrible Czech trait.’ [...] The more often she [Milfaitová – P.O.] appeared in the paper, the harder it was to find someone to help. ‘Why should I work?’ – her neighbors asked. ‘Only to help you get richer?’ Instead, every few weeks an inspector knocked on her door as a result of more and more anonymous complaints filed against her regarding food inspection, sanitary inspection, commercial supervision and the tax authorities” (Kirchgeßner, 2016b).

At the same time – the colorful description of Milfaitová’s European travels was a form of adoration for the geographically diverse continent, as the fruit she collected came from Portugal, Corsica, Greece, Macedonia, Slovenia and other places. The document could also be subjected to a deeper discourse analysis, and treated as a panegyric on the concept of ‘slow living’ or minimalist living, as opposed to the high pace of con-

temporary lifestyles and materialism: “For 34 years I had the feeling that whatever it was that was happening around me was not a life. Grey and humdrum, like a wave of monotony – coming one after another [...] In the changing world, people can be divided into three groups: those who fail to notice that the world is changing; those who notice it but do nothing; and the smallest group, of those who make the changes. I realized that if I did not leap over from the first to the third group, I would waste my life, and in a few years I would not even know what opportunity I had lost” (Kirchgeßner, 2016b).

Another example of an award-winning German work on Czech society was found in Martin Becker and Tabea Soergel’s radio feature titled *Kommt ein Dicher in die Kneipe. Oder: Das Petr-Prinzip* [A poet comes to the bar. Or Peter’s rule]. Set in the climate of Prague’s bars, the work talked about the life of poet Petr Hruška, a foreman in a waste sorting plant near Kladno. The German journalists were amazed by the simplicity of Hruška’s life, who gave up on the notion of material status as a prevailing value (Becker, Soergel, 2015).

Both these works had a wider axiological dimension, drawing the audience’s attention to daily existence. Here, the elements of happiness stood in opposition to the contemporary social processes that focus around the problems of growth economics. In a sense, the award-winning works devoted to social issues explored the concept of *borderland*. In this case, the concept should be interpreted symbolically, as a space for social and cultural contact between two different cultures, the aim of which was to find a dimension in which the new human and their identity were being formed, which in his study of intercultural communication Fred L. Casmir defines as the concept of “third culture” (Casmir, 1996, p. 49).

International journalism in the opinions of the awardees

The CGJA competition is an institutionalized forum for creating international dialogue, which in turn serves as an encouragement to undertake reliable and objective journalism depicting the complexity of the Czech and German relations. Most of the laureates of the first two editions were young journalists, curious about the country of their neighbors, aiming to pursue understanding and present their audiences with a genuine (as most of the works were documentaries) picture of reality, confronting the popular and stereotypical opinions about the events or processes they de-

scribed. The mass media thus become a meeting place (Mikułowski Pomorski, 2007, p. 18). So far, the competition awards went to foreign correspondents Kilian Kirchgeßner – an independent journalist working in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Peter Lange – an ARD correspondent working in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and Pavel Polák – a Czech radio correspondent working in Germany. Other laureates, too, have close relations with the neighboring country, among them Lucie Suchá, who has been dealing with the issues of German-speaking countries for many years, and Dora Kaprálova and Martin Becker, whose award-winning work emerged as a result of their living in the other respective country: the Czech literary critic and documentarian lives in Berlin, while the German radio journalist lives in Prague. Among the laureates there were also ‘travelling journalists’ Tomáš Lindner and Magdalena Sodomková, for whom foreign peregrinations are a way to expand their knowledge of the world and get a new outlook on cultures that are known but not yet recognized. The events or phenomena occurring in the neighboring country that they mentioned in their works were close and familiar to them, and thus were so authentic. Their knowledge stemmed from direct experience, whereas close contact was presented as a prerequisite for stereotypes to be overcome and the dialogue to be strengthened. The laureates placed emphasis on this, too. According to Kilian Kirchgeßner, his work was meant to “[...] show that [the Czech Republic – P.O.] is not just a country of the poor, or of the 1990s stereotypes [...] That the people living here have good ideas, and that they have turned their original ideas into successes. That here, too, you can find people hitting the road, setting off on their journeys like anywhere else in the world. This is an important step on the way to eliminating prejudices” (Kilian, 2017). Pavel Polák, too, spoke of the mass media as a tool for demolishing mutual prejudices: “As a Czech radio correspondent in Germany, I can see that the German media outlets, similarly to the German audience, sometimes have a tendency to generalize the Czech Republic with regard to its stance on the migrant crisis. When – to put it straightforwardly – you stand in the middle of a street in Germany, you can see for yourself that German roads are not flooded with refugees. But when you read online mass media in the Czech Republic you can get the impression that Germany is experiencing Armageddon. However, this is not what is actually happening there. I think that as it comes to relations between nations and people, it is always right to be open and to offer reliable information” (Pavel, 2018). The need to counter images simplified by national media outlets was stressed by Veronika

Kupková. The film *Generace N – Deutschböhme* was designed to show that the Czech and German mass media were still ignoring the subject of Germans' expulsion from the former Czechoslovakia, or were not always objective in presenting that problem (Minaříková, 2017). The competition winners emphasized unanimously that by presenting the things that Czechs and Germans had in common they were contributing to a better mutual understanding. At the same time, however, thanks to depicting the facts in an objective manner they do not pursue the forceful elimination of the existing differences between the two nations (Pestic, 2007, p. 154). Lucie Suchá, the author of the feature on Tröglitz, highlighted this stance by saying: "I wanted to show what the reality there truly looked like" (Lucie, 2017). Magdalena Sodomková made this even plainer: "I guess this [the migration-related topics – P.O.] deserves to be reported. Yet, certainly there is no point in 'going to extremes,' or trying to make things look more correct, better or prettier than they really are [...] As reporters, we should stick to the facts and present concrete characters" (Lâm, 2017). The need to describe facts in reference to national historical and cultural contexts was also pointed to by Tomáš Lindner: "The journalist's job is to bring out the different aspects of reality [...], reduce the level of emotion in the debate, but also avoid painting pictures in shades of pink" (Tomáš, 2017).

Among the award-winning works, those which resulted from cooperation between journalists from different countries should be especially distinguished. They were: *Generace N – Deutschböhme*, authored by Czech reporter Veronika Kupková and German journalist of Russian descent Olga Komarevtseva, and *Yusra plave o život*, authored by French photographer of Lao descent Lâm Duc Hiên, Danish journalist Brits Jensen who lives in the Czech Republic, and Czech journalist Magdalena Sodomkova. The personal contact that journalists from different countries establish with one another is of crucial significance in the process of verifying mutual prejudices and allows for putting the described events and phenomena in a wider intercultural context. The supporting and developing (also in the form of personal contacts between journalists of the neighboring countries) of each form of cross-border cooperation within the mass media domain constitutes a value in itself. Martin Kraushaar noted the same saying: "It is also necessary that we are able to confront our opinions with what people from other countries have to say, and that we can cooperate with each other in order to present and clarify the given topic better" (Arndt, 2017).

Summary

An analysis of the 15 award-winning works by Czech and German journalists allows us to reach the conclusion that the CGJA is fulfilling its objectives, “expanding the knowledge of the local society, politics, economics, history and/or culture, depicting the daily lives of the people living across the border” (Satzung, 2017). The materials referred to in this article put an emphasis on the aspects shared by Czechs and Germans, thus contributing to getting to know each other better, and to a better mutual understanding. The works discussing contemporary issues and the current problems of the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe served as a distinctive mirror reflecting the Czech and German relations.

One of the distinct, common traits demonstrated by the Czech authors' works was the bipolar agenda represented by the media outlets (taking on the 'German' point of view on the migrant movements) on the one hand, and by the public on the other (Ociepka, 2012) (according to the latest opinion polls, 58% of Czechs perceive the presence of other nationals in their country as an issue (Hanzlová, 2018)). The discrepancy between the opinions adopted by the Czech and German societies on the migration processes stems from historical circumstances (contrary to Germans, Czechs have not experienced forced migration), and from religious factors (German society is dominated (60 percent) by evangelical Christianity that requires the faithful to bring help to the needy; the Czech Republic is one of the most secular countries in the world). Despite this, the award-winning works of the Czech authors showed the role of the political and territorial borders as diminishing in favor of cultural and symbolic ones (Kalin, 2010, p. 97). The border, in all of its different meanings, was being revalorized (transformation of soft and hard borders) (Krzysztofek, 2003, pp. 93–94), while presently the line dividing Czechs from Germans was mainly of a cultural, geographic and economic nature. This distinguished this borderland from the Polish and German one, where integration processes were of a political/ideological nature, and which started relatively recently (Sakson, 2013, pp. 11–74). The focus on the present time and the future of the multicolored Europe that prevailed in the award-winning works was a characteristic of the mass media message, a process naturally resulting from the merging of people, role models, life styles and values.

The border that until recently functioned as a barrier has become a plane on which to accustom yourself to different non-European cultures. This wide scope of social problems centered around refugees makes no attempt

at analysis. The Czech competition works, in the main, turn into a lesson in adopting a critical view of yourself and your neighbors on the one hand, and the culturally different immigrants coming to Europe on the other. This ‘apparent departure’ from bilateral relations gives chiefly Czech journalists and audiences the opportunity to demythologize stereotypes, and to document and position both the countries towards each other.

Thanks to promoting cross-border ideas, the CGJA competition has become a tool for creating international politics (Mikułowski Pomorski, 2006, p. 17). Also, those works that are voted winners stand a chance of becoming the “natural ground on which feuding parties can meet” (Hess, Szymańska, 2009, p. 33), and have the potential to spur public debate on a topic determined by the jury’s decision. Invoking Agnieszka Szymańska’s description of the significance of strategic external communication undertakings (Anne Schwan), it must be noted that, in view of the future editions of the competition, the awards given to Czech and German journalists will – thanks to the choice of arguments, opinions and positions – become another instrument for persuading audiences to embrace a certain union of values. Media outlets, as well as journalism competitions that are components of the institutionalized media market self-regulatory system (Urbaniak, 2011, p. 59), are a perfect channel for distributing contents among the international audience, in line with the accepted communication strategy (Szymańska, 2014, p. 286). Moreover, through their achievements the award winners will help disseminate observations of what brings Czechs and Germans together, and what divides them.

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„Po drugiej stronie granicy”. Media w umacnianiu międzynarodowego dialogu na przykładzie Czesko-Niemieckiej Nagrody Dziennikarskiej

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest próba określenia roli i znaczenia Czesko-Niemieckiej Nagrody Dziennikarskiej w tworzeniu dialogu pomiędzy środowiskami dziennikarskimi obu krajów (Republika Czeska i Republika Federalna Niemiec). Mający bilateralny

charakter konkurs jest narzędziem strategicznej komunikacji zewnętrznej dwóch krajów, którego celem jest umacnianie porozumienia pomiędzy narodami. Jako metodę badawczą zastosowano strukturalną i jakościową analizę treści, zadanie polegało na: wskazaniu rodzajów nagrodzonych wydawców/nadawców oraz określeniu poruszanej tematyki w zwycięskich pracach konkursowych dotychczasowych dwóch edycji Cz-NNDz.

Słowa kluczowe: Czesko-Niemiecka Nagroda Dziennikarska; strategiczna komunikacja zewnętrzna (media relations); dziennikarstwo transgraniczne