

Autumn Elections 2024

Member of national comittee of Levice Antonín Hořčica writes about participation of our party in regional elections and senate elections.

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Levice in one year

The member of our media commission compiled a chronological list of our activities from the past year. From the unsuccessful attempt to unite left-wing forces for the European Parliament elections to all of our public debates and demonstrations.

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

It is a great honor of mine to present to you, on the occasion of the Volkstimmefest festival, the 2nd English edition of our party magazine "Levicoviny," which we will be showcasing at international events this and next year. In this issue, you will read about the course of the European elections in the Czech Republic from our party's perspective, we will also provide a summary of our party's activities, and finally, we will inform you about our participation in the region elections and Senate elections that are planned in Czech Republic for autumn of this year.

The Levice party is a member of the Party of the European Left and is the only political formation in the Czech Republic that fully adheres to the ideals of socialism with a human face and the legacy of the Prague Spring. We are primarily an activist party, but we regularly participate in elections, either through our own candidacy or by supporting other left-wing candidates.

I hope that this special edition of our magazine will give you a better understanding of the situation of the left in the Czech Republic, which is otherwise overlooked in the leftist media. I wish you a pleasant reading.



Vítek ProkopEditor-in-chief

M. Prokop

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European elections in Czech Republic



The results of European elections across Europe show that tough times are coming. In response to the steadily worsening living conditions as a result of the EU's neoliberal policies, people are voting for the far right, which has grown significantly stronger across Europe. The strengthening of the far right is also evident in the Czech Republic, where the Přísaha + Motoristé (Oath + Motorists) coalition entered the European Parliament with a shocking ten per cent, which, although it managed to weaken the SPD and Trikolora, instead opened up an absurd debate in the public space about whether the heiling and admiration of Adolf Hitler by its leader, Filip Turek, is really a sign of neo-Nazism.

The election results also showed the ongoing decline in support of the Czech left. Take Social Democratic party (SOCDEM) for example. During the pre-election meetings, when it seemed like a broad left wing coalition of SOCDEM, Levice (The Left) and Budoucnost (Future) is going to be formed, we seriously discussed goals of more than 3 percent of votes, some of the party leadership members even considered the possibility of getting a mandate. SOCDEM got 1,86 percent, which brought a huge amount of frustration and resulted in a premature

party congress, which will take place in October, and possible changes in the party leadership.

The previously mentioned coalition was widely expected, but never formed. The discussions and negotiations started already in summer of 2023 and even when potentially problematic topics including different EP fractions (The Left MEPs would have joined The Left fraction, SOCDEM MEPs would go to the S&D fraction) or different approaches to the foreign policies, it never seemed like an issue until the

coalition agreement was almost done and signed. Only then one of SOCDEM's EP candidates, Michaela Marksová Tominová, spoke against Levice's position on the genocide in Gaza and specifically refused to be on the same candidate list as the election leader of Levice, Jan Májíček. SOCDEM never had an unified position on anything, but since some of the most influential figures of the party leadership never wanted Levice in the coalition in the first place, this gave them the reason to officially end the negotiations with Levice.

Since this didn't come completely out of nowhere, given the nature of SOCDEM's usual approaches and strategies, in The Left we were able to navigate this situation without any bigger trouble. We managed to create our own candidate list with all of the positions filled, we set reasonable goals for the campaign (at least 1000-2000 votes, voters in every region, successful media presence, attracting new members) which were fulfilled, and we never backed from our radical left positions and rhetorics, which we would have to do in the coalition with the Social Democrats. We were the only party in these elections, that clearly stated opposition to NATO from the left position, the only party, that clearly and loudly supported refugees even though we knew, that it wouldn't bring us much votes, and the only party, that publicly supported Palestinian people at the demonstrations, in our statements, and also in the media. We never lost our principles.

That can't be said about the STAČILO! (ENOUGH!) coalition of the Communist Party (KSČM) and small nationalist parties. Their whole campaign stood on anti-immigrant rhetorics and criticism of the Green Deal from the conservative positions, which brought them 9,56 percent of votes. Some of the Communist Party members, which criticized the conservative positions of the coalition before the elections and were known within the Czech left as the progressive wing of the party, miraculously shifted their position and started presenting the coalition as a huge success. But it's no success, certainly not for the left as a whole, nor for the Communist Party, and not even for the party and coalition leader Kateřina Konečná, who was elected as MEP, left The Left fraction, tried to form a new conservative left fraction with Sahra Wagenknecht, and now remains fractionless (=powerless). Even though the coalition managed to reach 2 MEP mandates, one of them for Kateřina Konečná from the Communist Party, the whole of their campaign clearly showed, that pure "pragmatic" populism without ideology or principles pays off, and in this way pushed any radical and progressive left efforts in Czech Republic way back.

We often hear criticism, mostly from former or current Communist Party members, on not cooperating with STAČILO! and "splitting the left" in this way. The myth of cooperation and "left unity" as a key to success is very popular among the Czech political commentators nowadays, and in some way it makes sense, but we cannot forget, that only cooperation "for cooperation" is not enough.

We need a strong political program from the left, anticapitalist, progressive and internationalist standpoint and only on this basis we can build coalitions or, not to be said, merge. This means, for example, that for a potential coalition with the Communist party they first need to remind themselves of the internationalist roots of communism (Workers of the world, unite!) and stop dividing working class people based on their race and country of origin. We wouldn't join a coalition with the neoliberal TOP09, so why would we do it with the nationalist KSČM?

One of the biggest mistakes of both SOCDEM and KSČM is the prevailing focus on the electoral politics. Of course, electoral campaigns are an important tool for mobilization of the working people and all of us should be doing our best to be as successful as we can, but it's not self-defeating. Big part of our efforts as left wing parties should be the support of protest movements and of the real life working class struggles, such as the propalestine and anti-war movement or workers strikes, such as delivery drivers strikes or the most recent strikes of the steel industry workers in Ostrava. This and coherent left wing program are the strategies, that will help the Czech left in the long run, and we should focus on them. KSČM and SOCDEM's betrayal of the left wing principles in exchange for more votes are only short term solutions, that won't help us in the long run.



Markéta Juřicová
Co-Chairman of party
Levice

Levice іп опе уеаг



In a world increasingly dominated by neoliberal policies and right-wing rhetoric, the need for a unified, progressive voice is more critical than ever. The document that follows chronicles the activities, struggles, and unwavering commitments of Levice, a left-wing political party deeply entrenched in the fight for social justice, workers' rights, and international solidarity. The year 2023 into early 2024 was a period marked by both challenges and achievements, a testament to the resilience and dedication of our members.

On the first weekend of September 2023, we participated in the left-wing Volksstimmefest in Vienna.

On September 21, we condemned the increase in overtime in the Czech healthcare sector. The state should act with the "Don't be a raccoon" initiative. We are witnessing an attack by a rightwing neoliberal government on the public health care system, apparently intending to privatise it gradually.

At the end of September, A2larm published an interview about green non-growth communism by Kohei Saito to our CV (Central Committee) member Antonín Hořčica. We condemned the preparations for a joint meeting between the governments of Peter Fiala and Benjamin Netanyahu. The joint meeting did not take place because of the Hamas attack. The attacks on civilians were subsequently condemned by the meeting of our CV on October 7; we support the right of both peoples to state life.

Our Press Release says: "We agree with the position of the Palestine Solidarity Network: "We condemn attacks on civilians. The main responsibility lies with the Israeli occupation army and Israel, which is responsible for the occupation and blockade of Gaza. The situation of the Palestinians has been and is being ignored for a long time, the UN gives them the right to defend themselves against the occupation. We do not support any of the Palestinian factions, we are on the side of international law, human rights, against apartheid and the Israeli colonisation of the Palestinian territories...We demand the right for both peoples to live peacefully on the territory inhabited by them, including the right to the state life of both peoples."

We supported the trade unions of cultural workers against the underfunding of this sector by the state (and creeping privatisation) by participating in a demonstration at a concert at the Main Railway Station in Prague on October 8.

We condemned the dismissal of non-teaching workers in education - schools without cooks mean child hunger! On October 17, we supported the university workers' strike for a salary increase. The neoliberal government implements cuts so that it can then shout, "The state is a bad manager", and privatise the public universities. Topolánek and Nečas already tried that.

On October 20, there was an online debate with the Kurdistan Communist Party (KCP), "2023: 30 years of our parties (30 salên partiyên me)" we symbolically celebrated thirty years in 2023, just like the KCP. Comrade Mustafa Nabaz also gave an interview on our website (3).

On October 28, 2023, we condemned the award for K. Schwarzenberg, the apologist of fascism. We do not understand the glorification of Prince Schwarzenberg by some liberal "moral beacons". In addition to fascism apologetics (2), he downplayed the actions of convicted rapist Feri (from right-wing party TOP09, part of the current government).

On November 2, our co-president Markéta Juřicová appeared on Czech television in the debate "You Have a Word" ("Máte Slovo ") on the topic of the EU and migration. She became a unique voice of solidarity in the studio with the oppressed from poor, conflict-ridden and exploited countries. The only path to social change is consistent internationalism. The avalanche of hatred that followed against Markéta and Levice was shocking, but it will not stop us! The very next day, we condemned the behaviour of Liberty Smelter owner S. Gupta. Tens of thousands of jobs are directly or indirectly threatened by the arbitrariness of private capital. Our socialist solution - the means of production under the democratic control of the workers!

On November 3, there was also an open online debate with a member of the "Foreigner is not a slave" organisation on the topic of "The situation of foreigners on the labour market". We stand on the side of all exploited workers, especially the most precarious ones.

PCV (Presidency of CV, Executive Committee) Levice members Markéta Juřicová and Vítek Prokop met in Madrid with the president of the European Left party, Walter Baier. They talked about the preparation for the European Parliament elections, the upcoming program conference of Levice and strengthening cooperation in the future.

On November 11, 2023, the Program Conference of Levice for the EP Elections 2024 was held - representatives of all our grassroots organisations gathered for a program conference to discuss together our vision for Europe and its projection into our election program for the elections to EP 2024. The program was conceived under the slogan: "We are for European integration and cooperation, but it must serve the people, not corporations and elites. Currently, the European Union is not doing this!"

"The Program Conference of Levice (of November 11) supports all progressive strike and protest actions of the trade unions on November 27. Strikes and protests not only fight the anti-social actions of the current Fiala government but also help build a social movement of mutual solidarity of the underprivileged."

On November 14, we organised an open debate with Jan Májíček in Ostrava on "How can we defeat Fiala's government?"

On November 16, Vice-President Vítek Prokop evaluated the state of democracy in the Czech Republic after 34 years in the Czech TV debate "Máte slovo". His criticism became popular on social media.

On November 25, the day of the International Day against Violence against Women, together with the organisation Budoucnost, we organised a debate about the cyberbullying of women politicians in the Czech Republic and in Europe at the Mozaika Gallery in Prague. The panel included leading representatives of the Greens, KSČM and Pirates, members of the parties Izquierda Unida from Spain and Levica from Slovenia. On that occasion, together with the members of the European Left political secretariat, we also laid flowers at the monuments of two important women murdered for political reasons - Jožka Jabůrková and Milada Horáková.

We supported the protest actions of trade unions and other organisations convened on 27.11. in response to the continued incompetent actions of P. Fiala's government. Photo from our participation in the trade union demonstration.

In December, we condemned the "Diet of Prime Minister Fiala", which he ordered for the entire state.
"According to the Czech Statistical Office, consumption decreased by 32 kilograms year-on-year.

We ate less milk, meat, eggs, potatoes and fruit", but also the growth of inequality. While the proletariat starves, capitalists buy investment apartments, yachts and lavish summer homes.

In mid-December, we changed our image; our new party flag is red with a white party name.

In the elections to the European Parliament, we advocated for broader cooperation of the left. Unfortunately, our efforts to cooperate with the KSČM ran into a program mismatch. The party, whose name is "Communist", presented us with a program to protect the national bourgeoisie from ecological measures, apparently drawn up in accordance with the right-wing partners in Stačilo ("Enough! "). For a long time, we at least sought cooperation with SOCDEM (and movement Budoucnost ("the Future")), as the press conference of December 15, 2023 shows.

On December 23, 2023, however, we had to announce: "Levice, in an effort to get the left forces to cooperate in the EP elections, has been negotiating with SocDem since the end of June about a joint candidate (in which another partner was also supposed to participate). After several months of negotiations (when the mutual introduction of a set of candidates from the party field was already taking place and when it was possible to resolve several comments from the SocDem side), the SocDem leadership has now informed us that it is withdrawing from the negotiations and will not place us on its candidate list -

the official reason is the fact that, as representatives of a member party of the European Left, our candidates refused to commit to joining the S&D political group, because that would mean running against other EL parties. At the same time, the SocDem leadership knew about our party's affiliation to EL from the very beginning of the negotiations." However, it was clear from the course of the negotiations (and SocDem representatives confirmed this to us at the events of the Future movement) that the main problem for SocDem was our support for a just peace in the Middle East, stopping the massacre of civilians in Gaza. On January 26, 2024, we condemned the non-ratification of the Istanbul Treaty by the Senate. On February 2, we supported the Protest against the deprivation of the imprisoned TIP deputy (for Hatay), Can Atalay, of his parliamentary mandate (Jan Vaňo represented

On February 5, a discussion took place with the left-wing economist Jiří Šteg

Levice at the event of the Czech

branch of TİP)

On February 6, we condemned the attack by the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, M. Jurečka, on people with low incomes after the social reform. Benefits, their incomes will drop rapidly. It is difficult to find work while homeless. Poverty and social exclusion are expensive for society as a whole. But neoliberals will never understand that.

February 20 and 21, 2024 - We coorganised the demonstration "Now or never: protest for the freedom of Julian Assange", where comrade Nihat from TiP CZ and our non-party candidate for the European Parliament Jan Macháček spoke alongside our co-chairwoman M. Juřicová and vice-chairman V. Prokop. The speeches condemned not only the imprisonment of Julian Assange but also Can Atalay, S. Demirtaş and the murder of Alexei Navalny. Solidarity with all political prisoners!

On February 22, we protested in Ostrava against the socially insensitive layoffs at the Liberty smelter under slogans such as "Nationalise the steel plant, return work to the people!"

On February 23, Markéta Juřicová and Vítek Prokop participated in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the European Left in Ljubljana, the main topic of which was the European Parliament elections. The slogans of the independent candidate of Levice were "Give us Europe, and we will change the world!" and "Progressive Mind, Social Heart"

On March 1, we condemned the House's failure to approve marriage for all and the right to adopt children by same-sex couples in Wednesday's vote. March 16, 2024 - As part of the "Together Against Racism and Fascism" initiatives, the membership of Levice organised a demonstration against fascism and racism and for solidarity with refugees.

On March 27, we presented the first nine candidates for the European Parliament on the independent candidate list of Levice at a press conference, and there was also an event on the topic "Let's bury neoliberalism!"

On March 30, 2024, we held an online debate, the first in a series on EP2024, "Where are you going, Europe?".

On April 4, 2024, we filed a candidate list for the European Parliament.

On April 4, the European Left Party held a conference in Brussels called Europe to the People, which was attended by vice-president Vítek Prokop on behalf of our party, and our co-president Markéta Juřicová filmed a video greeting for her. As the only member party from the Czech Republic, we regularly participate in SEL events to present events in our country!

Through an interview with Mr. Yaroslav Chepa from the "Foreigner is not a slave" initiative, we drew attention to the appalling exploitation of Ukrainian workers in the Czech Republic, which Fiala's government is ignoring.

On April 6, we participated in the "March for Life" blockade. Abortion bans and restrictions on women's right to make free decisions about their bodies have no place in today's society. Levice has been fighting for women's rights for a long time, not only in elections, but also in the streets.

On April 8, we commemorated International Roma Day. The preelection online series continued with panels on "Women and Europe", "Social Cohesion and European Unconditional Income", "The Party of the European Left and its Activities", "Artificial Intelligence, Robotization", "Inequalities, What About Them?", " EU foreign policy - candidate debate of the Left", "How to fight racism?" and the final debate "20 years of the Czech Republic in the European Union - We need systemic change". The panels of our online debates included foreign guests from Germany (Die Linke) and Turkey (Sol Parti, TİP). We organized several pre-election picnics and live debates in Prague (on May Day), České Budějovice (May 24)

and Ostrava (June 3).

On June 3, we also participated in the debate "What is the left-wing vision of the EU? SOCDEM vs Levice", where we met the co-president of the Future movement, Klára Školníková. Elections to the European Parliament were held on June 7, 2024; Levice received 0.07 per cent, over 2,300 votes. Although such a result did not bring parliamentary seats or state financial support, it is a multiplication of our previous results in the Czech parliamentary elections. Based on our internal surveys, only between one and four per cent of people know about our party; the oligarchy does not stand behind us, so we cannot afford expensive advertising in the media. Therefore, a result of 0.07 per cent means support of between 2 and 7 per cent among people who have learned about our party. That is a promise of decent results in the future if we can get a wider promotion.

From the analysis of the distribution of votes across the Czech Republic, it was practically even - this gives hope for the creation of new base organizations, if we succeed in convincing voters to join the party. We are not an electoral party but an activist party; our goal is a revolution from below - for which we primarily want to be disseminators of ideas.

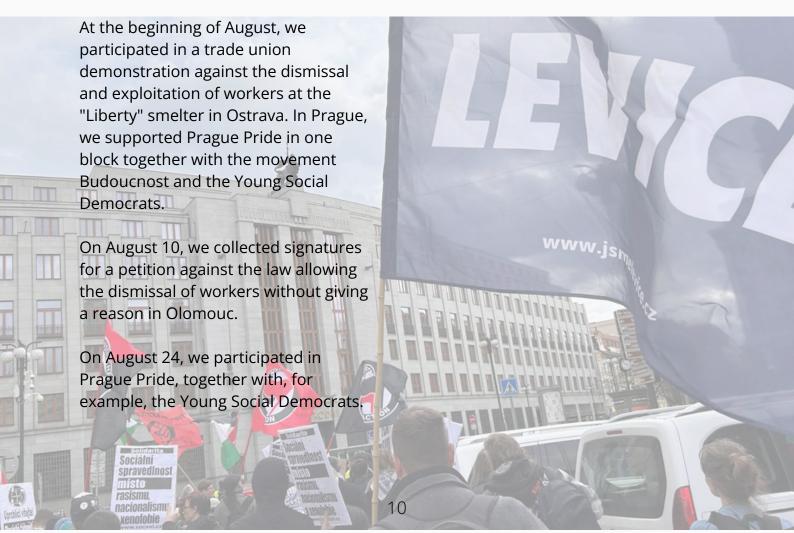
On June 22, the Executive Committee of European Left met in Brussels, which was attended by our co-chair Markéta Juřicová and vice-chair Vítek Prokop.

On June 22, the national convention of the Future movement took place, at which the leader of our candidate for the European elections and a member of the National Committee, Jan Májíček, gave a speech. We quote from him, "If the left-wing might have meaning, it must be a force that will be present wherever people resist injustice. Whether it is the fight against racism, strikes for decent wages (after all, the fight to save jobs at Liberty Ostrava is one of the key economic struggles going on today), solidarity with Palestine, or a protest against the cutting down of trees in the street: the party must be present everywhere and prove its practical validity everywhere. That is, it helps them achieve their goals with such movements.

It's a long-term activity, and it doesn't make sense to split forces that are going in practically the same direction."

From July 11 to 13, the Summer University of the European Left was held in the mining town of Mieres, which was attended by our vicechairman, Vítek Prokop, on behalf of our party. In the background of the lectures, he also met with former foreign minister Ian Kavan and debated with him the prospects for a peaceful end to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and other geopolitical challenges. In July 2024, the representatives of the Levice and the Green Party ("Zelení") signed a coalition agreement, which confirms that the Green Party, Levice, representatives of associations and independent candidates will run together under the name "Together for the People and the Environment" in the elections to the South Bohemian Regional Council. We also supported Ostrava Pride. Queer freedom, borders for capital!





Photogallery - more photos of our activities



Meeting with president of European Left
Walter Baier



Press conference officially launching our campaign for the European Parliament



Campaign for European Election in the city of Ostrava

Our representatives at the meeting of European Left Executive Board



Protest against racism organised by our anti-fascist platform



Steel giant Liberty Ostrava plans layoffs, workers revolt



One of the largest steel companies in the Czech Republic, the Liberty steelworks in the northern Czech town of Ostrava, is in economic trouble. Most of Liberty Ostrava's operations have been idled since last December.

The company is planning mass layoffs, with 2,300 employees to leave, and another 300 by the end of January (the company currently has over 4,100 workers). The employees are entitled to severance pay, but due to the company's insolvency they will not receive it. Part of the operation of the bankrupt smelter will be taken over by Vítkovice Machinery Trade.

The company's employees did not remain passive, they staged a protest. After a meeting between the trade union and the company management, angry employees set fire to the symbolic coffin of the company, and a photograph of the company's owner Sanjeev Gupta also ended up in flames.

The Left Party supports the workers' protests as the only possible response to the irresponsible actions of the owners.

The workers' voice needs to be heard as loudly as possible.



Martin Šaffek

Member of national board of Levice party

Autumn Elections 2024:

The Levice Party and Green Party Coalition in the South Bohemian Region and Support For the "Warehouse Worker For the Senate"



In the South Bohemian region, the Levice party participates in the coalition "Together for People and the Landscape," which includes the Green Party, the Levice, and representatives of local citizens associations and independent candidates. The joint programme focusses on protecting the environment, ensuring access to healthcare, social services, and education for all, and resisting the influence of developers and lobbyists, which often act against the needs of local residents.

The coalition's candidate list features
Antonín Hořčica from the Levice party
in the seventh spot. Hořčica has long
advocated for integration of
environmental and social issues. As cochair of the Levine's local organisation
in České Budějovice and a member of
the party's national committee, his
aims is to promote transparent
governance and sustainable
development in the region. As he puts
it: "We joined the 'Together for People
and the Landscape' coalition because
combining social justice with
environmental protection makes

sense. One of our region's major problems is the excessive influence of interest groups and lobbyists. The South Bohemian region must preserve its unique character with beautiful nature, quality education, and accessible healthcare. I believe that we can create a better South Bohemian region for everyone together." The Levice party considers Pavla Setničková, the lead candidate and a member of the Green Party, as a key figure in this coalition. Her long-standing fight against development

projects that threaten the landscape and water sources, thereby endangering the region's quality of life, aligns with the Levice's values.

"I consider cooperation and coalition building with independent personalities, associations, and various political parties that share the same priorities as essential. This approach demonstrates the ability to cross party lines, listen to citizens, and jointly focus on addressing the real issues that concern them," Setničková explains.

The coalition focusses on protecting the landscape from insensitive development projects that destroy open spaces and farmland. The South Bohemian region also faces significant water pollution and insufficient environmental protection. Climate change and poorly integrated transport infrastructure worsen these problems, and there is a lack of effective sustainability strategies. In the area of waste management, there is a growing risk of deterioration of air quality due to oversized incinerators and inadequate support for recycling. The coalition therefore proposes stricter regulation of development projects, protection of water resources, and investments in sustainable solutions that will improve quality of life. It advocates a better integration of public transport and supports recycling instead of incineration.

The social sector suffers from a lack of capacity for service, especially in 24-hour care facilities and home care, which is only available in limited areas. There are also insufficient services for seniors and people in need, and healthcare

is particularly difficult to access in border areas. Educational inequalities disadvantage children from less favourable family backgrounds. Therefore, the coalition advocates expanding practices for doctors and specialists in underserved areas and ensuring quality education for all children, regardless of their background. It also plans to strengthen networks of child psychiatrists and neurologists and encourage general practitioners to work in more remote areas. To save lives, the coalition wants to expand the network of public defibrillators (AED) with financial support for municipalities. In the social sphere, it focusses on increasing the capacity of 24-hour care facilities, expanding home care, and supporting mobile hospices.

A key project is the introduction of an effective and socially friendly climate plan for the South Bohemian Region, which will allow it to obtain funding from EU funds for measures to protect the landscape and improve water and air quality, thus improving the quality of life of the people.

In addition to participating in this coalition, the Levice party has decided to strongly support Lukáš Nozar's candidacy for the Senate. Nozar, known by his campaign as the "Warehouse Worker for the Senate," is running for the Social Democrats, with his main focus being the defence of workers' rights. His programme is built around advocating for the interests of those often overlooked by political elites: low-wage workers, people in precarious jobs, and those facing exploitative working conditions.

For the Levice party, supporting Nozar is a natural step since he is the only candidate whose campaign is entirely based on fighting for the rights of the working majority.

The party also appreciates his efforts to unite various leftist forces and his activist approach, aiming not only to reach traditional leftist voters but also those who often feel politically neglected. "It's crucial that strong leftist voices, unafraid to stand up for workers, be heard in the Senate," Nozar said during one of his campaign events.

As part of this support, the Levice party is actively engaging not only on-line but also plans direct involvement in his campaign, such as in front of factories in Mladá Boleslav. Here, Nozar aims to highlight the problems faced by workers daily and openly advocate for better conditions for everyone who lives off their labour.

The combination of forces in the South Bohemian region and the support for a Senate candidate highlights the Levice party broader strategy, which does not rely solely on its own candidates, but is ready to support other entities and coalitions where it makes sense. Their goal is to promote policies that address the needs of ordinary people whether it's access to healthcare, quality education, environmental protection, or fair working conditions. The Levice party demonstrates that, by working together, it is possible to achieve concrete changes that improve the lives of people both regionally and nationwide.



Antonín Horčica

Member of national board of Levice party

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA:

