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Celebrating interim independence



When representatives of [65m people from 18 Middle European countries jointly declared their independence](#) in Philadelphia on Oct. 26, 1918, they set forth six principles that should be "incorporated in the organic laws of whatever Governments [their] respective peoples may hereafter establish." One of the principles was "that the free and natural development of the ideals of any State shall be allowed to pursue their normal and unhindered course, unless such course harms or threatens the common interest of all." It's a concept that was on display this weekend, as two of the EU's main proponents of faster integration, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron, visited Prague. Their message, when couched in the language of the declaration of Oct. 26, 1918, was that too much independence of the nations of Central Europe now "threatens the common interest of all." Surprisingly, most Czechs chose to ignore the message as they celebrated their interim independence.

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