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## STAN and the Stans



One day after PM Petr Fiala met in Astana with [Kazakhstan's president and PM](#) and spoke at the [Kazakhstan-Czech Business Forum](#), STAN's leadership approved the nomination of [Dep. Foreign Min. Martin Dvořák](#) as EU affairs minister. He's a proud [buster of sanctions-busters](#) who said on [OVM in mid-Feb.](#) that companies active in the post-Soviet region are used to giving bribes, skirting the rules, engaging in fraud and corrupting people. We probably aren't able to avoid this unless the local governments are willing to confront it, he said, and they probably aren't. While in Astana Fiala took great pride in bilateral trade last year with Kazakhstan of \$1.3bn. Czech exports to there rose y/y by 224%, but apparently mainly because of [reexports to Russia](#). Dvořák wants to use secondary sanctions to nip this type of business in the bud. He could end up doing the same thing for trade with Kazakhstan and the other Stans that his STAN colleague Jozef Síkela has done for energy trade with Russia.

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