Annual Report

2017

A turning point

Dear readers and partners,

In 2017, we have finally published our website. It was a long time in the making. Our experiment in bridging the divide between academia and media originally began five years ago as a Scout-like exercise, responding to a striking reminder of the 1946 Kielce Pogrom. Since then, we have seen many more examples of penetration of the far-right ideas and sentiments into the mainstream. Today, it is clear that the divisive topics like Islam, migration and the Roma-related issues not only pose challenges to social cohesion, as was apparent from the anti-Gypsy rallies, and to the cause of evidence-based policy-making. Today, divisive topics are also an instrument of threat to the pluralist democracy.

Our response remains the same: blending academic research with premier journalism to create short and palatable, yet thorough and accurate, peer-reviewed content that presents knowledge not seen before. Our ambition remains to create a website where the readers can quickly get insights of unmatched rigour in a local language about *all* the common contradictions in the domain of divisive topics that exist in the public discourse – instead of readers looking for high-quality articles in various sources and leaving the reading with many questions unanswered. We do believe that such inordinate attention to the divisive topics is now necessary.

In 2017, an address book of researchers and other professionals committed to sharing their insights with *datalyrics* has grown well over 400. In cooperation with the *Budapest Institute*, a Hungarian body supporting evidence-based policy making, and *Median,* a renowned Czech polling agency, we created content that was translated into 13 languages and was republished in 20 countries. We have looked for further synergies with several projects that bear similarities with our initiative such as the *Oxford Migration Observatory*, *PorCausa* and *News Deeply*.

With dissatisfactory financial health, it will however largely depend on benefactors' generosity whether our concept will come to fruition or whether www.datalyrics.org will become just another forgotten, seldom updated website. It is you who will decide that and I take this opportunity to earnestly thank you if you make a decision to support us.

David Ruzicka
Chair of the Board and Acting Editor
Odlišnost, z.s.

P.S. On March 15th 2018, our project website has migrated to a new domain **www.datalyrics.org**. To the pioneers, we were previously known as *Odlišnost* (*Distinction*), hosted at **www.odlisnost.cz**. We believe the new name fits closer to our mission and will be better recognizable internationally.
We assumed our domestic target groups will understand the word *[distinction]* quite like *nuance* but most perceived it instead as a value-loaded statement of difference which led to needless misunderstandings.

Overheads share
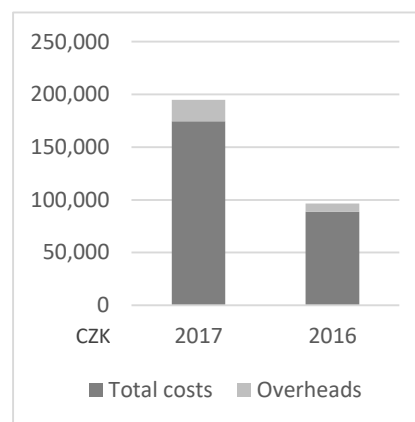
Full-time personnel trends

Contents

Reach

In 2017, *datalyrics* published nine articles in two languages on its website. Four articles were offered for republishing to mainstream media, three of which were accepted. The articles have appeared in 13 languages in **20 countries**, reaching an international audience of estimated **700,000+ readers**.

datalyrics has not started to use its own social media accounts yet. Nevertheless, its conent has atttracted 1,200 Twitter engagements on accounts of second parties.

Selected praise

This is a "website with some terrific articles".
Ian Malcolm, editor at *Harvard University Press*

Articles by *datalyrics* on economic impact of migration are "masterpieces of condensation".
Robert Rowthorn, Emeritus Professor of Economics at *University of Cambridge*

datalyrics' article on domestic violence in the Islamic tradition is "great".
Ayesha Chaudhry, Rita E. Hauser Fellow at *Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study* at *Harvard University*

datalyrics "is a great and fascinating project."
Jeffrey Sachs, special adviser to multiple UN Secretary Generals, celebrity economist

datalyrics "is an ambitious, tough, and very interesting project."
Monika Sieradzka, former head of news at *TVP*, Polish public television
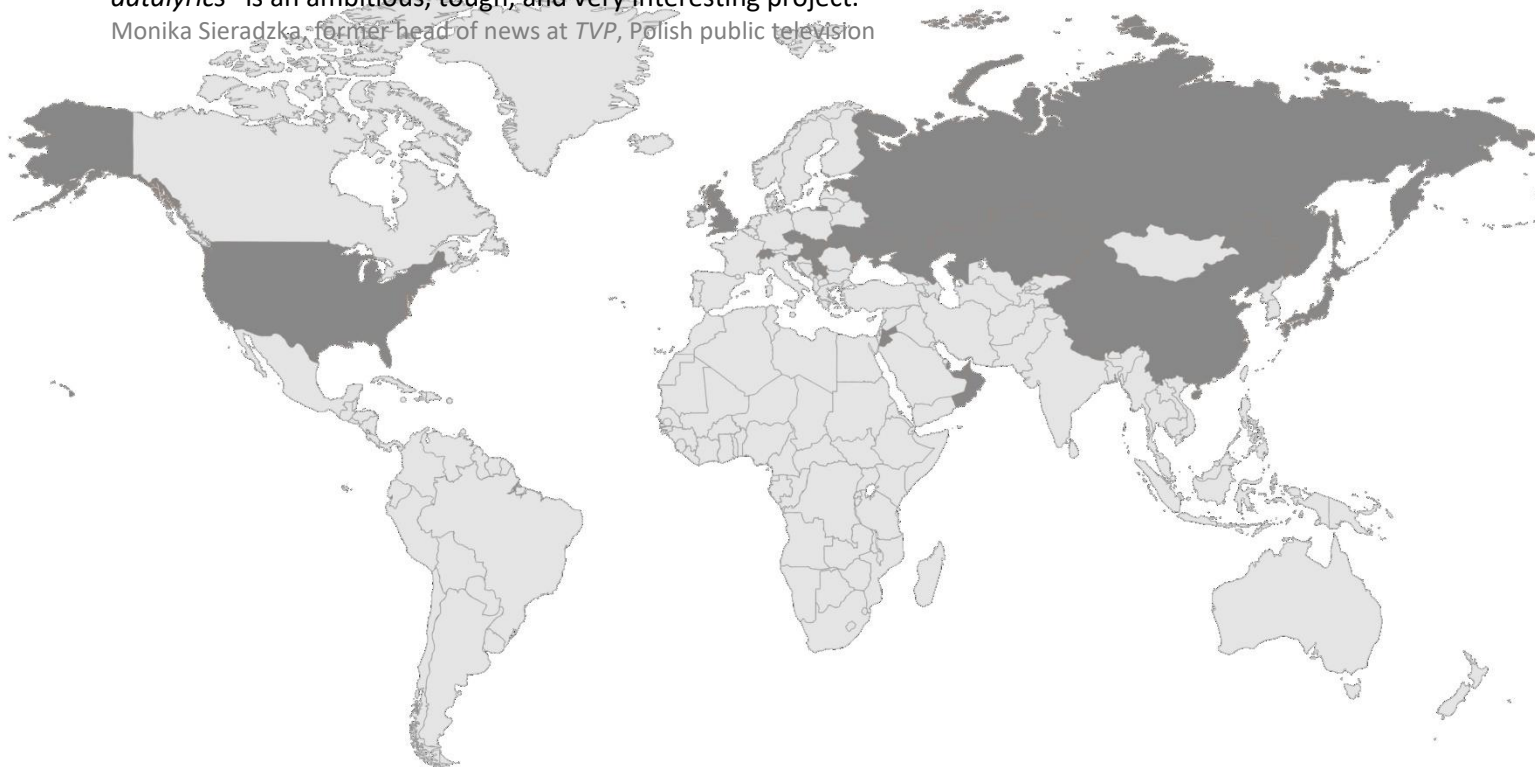
Countries where articles by *datalyrics* were published in 2017

Migration

Drawing on past work by the *Budapest Institute*, we have reviewed over 30 empirical papers and talked with leading immigration economists including George Borjas, Frederic Docquier, Giovanni Peri and Robert Rowthorn. In a series of articles thoroughly confronting the phenomena of Schrödinger's immigrant, we have shown that

- there is **no meaningful relation between refugees or migrants' choice of destination country and the generosity of the country's welfare system**
- **refugees and migrants do <u>not</u> take natives' jobs** – except for sudden mass migration (note new migrants can push earlier migrants out of job and migrants can induce a small downward push on wages of low-educated native workers)
- claims about cultural superiority of Czechoslovaks and malignancy of current migrants by Lukas Kovanda, an economic journalist, **are grossly misleading** and <u>not</u> supported by research by a Harvard economist to which Mr Kovanda ascribed his claims

Islam

A number of influential politicians recently plainly suggested that "Islam condones domestic violence". Together with several lesser known scholars of Islam, we analysed the most controversial Quranic verse 34 of Surah 4 An-Nisa in the context. In the resulting article that was praised by Ayesha Chaudhry, Rita E. Hauser Fellow at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, we have shown that

- a host of factors are far more important in determining the prevalence, nature of, and response to, domestic violence and it appears too sweeping for the Czech politicians to deride Islam for accomodation to domestic violence when, for instance, the law against domestic violence consisting provisions for a restraining order was passed in Malaysia 12 years before a similar law was passed in the Czech Republic
- the Quranic verse itself is however <u>not</u> benign and chauvinistic interpretations of the Quran that effectively blamed the woman for "provoking" the man into violence are firmly present in the Islamic tradition (again, these conceptions are not exclusive to the Islamic tradition as is illustrated on the example of mostly Christian Ukraine where such understandings have until 2009 been entrenched in law)
- the Czech translations of the verse by Ivan Hrbek are crass and erroneous

Roma

In cooperation with *Median*, we have created an interactive app that shows, based on the best available data in the domain, what factors affect the employment of a third of the Czech Roma who live in segregated areas.

- The data suggest that unemployment in the district, measure of segregation, and – overwhelmingly – education seem to be the **three dominant factors that explain the difference between the levels of employment of Roma from segregated areas and of non-Roma from its surroundings.**
- In a follow-up investigation into the inclusive education in the Czech Republic**,** we explained some recent evidence confronting suggestions that the Roma are relatively less educated than Non-Roma "because of their blood" and uncovered practices in specific regions that lead to the continuous practice of educating Roma in less demanding schools.

On occasion of a five-year anniversary of false reporting that contributed to anti-Gipsy rallies in 2012, we have drawn striking parallels with the events preceding these demonstrations and the 1946 Kielce Pogrom.

Income statement

CZK	2017	%	2016	%
Income				
Benefactors' contributions and donations	94,932	86.2	67,188	100.0
Service revenues	15,273	13.9	0	0.0
Exchange rate profits	-110	-0.1	0	0.0
Other profits	8	0.0	0	0.0
Total income	**110,104**	**100.0**	**67,188**	**100.0**
Operating Expenses				
Expert fees	44,012	25.2	16,215	18.3
Data analysis and coding	36,302	20.8	0	0.0
Purchase of books and other resources	1,081	0.6	0	0.0
Research costs total	**81,394**	**46.7**	**16,215**	**18.3**
Wages (management and editing)	44,000	25.2	0	0.0
Wages total	**44,000**	**25.2**	**0**	**0.0**
Web development	4,128	2.4	39,200	44.3
Licences and software fees	2,233	1.3	5,473	6.2
Domains and hosting	775	0.4	1,968	2.2
IT services total	**7,136**	**4.1**	**46,642**	**52.7**
Marketing (advertising, brand development)	1,751	1.0	12,925	14.6
Online advertising	39	0.0	0	0.0
Marketing total	**1,790**	**1.0**	**12,925**	**14.6**
Travel domestic	2,367	1.4	1,118	1.3
Travel abroad	17,209	9.9	3,781	4.3
Travel costs total	**19,576**	**11.2**	**4,899**	**5.5**
Accounting fees	6,050	3.5	0	0.0
Postage	458	0.3	0	0.0
Exchange rate losses	8,115	4.7	3,284	3.7
Difference from unapplied tax	5,842	3.3	4,598	5.2
Road tax	25	0.0	0	0.0
Banking fees	40	0.0	20	0.0
Overheads total	**20,530**	**11.8**	**7,902**	**8.9**
Total operating expenses	**174,426**	**100.0**	**88,583**	**100.0**
Profit (+) / loss (-) for the year	**-64,323**		**-21,395**	

Figures were calculated to the nearest centime but not reported as such which can cause minor differences.