



CZECH – GERMAN CONNECTIONS

Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences
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CZECH–GERMAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE ENLARGED EUROPEAN UNION

The following article returns to the results of a series of research activities focused on opinions of local elites on the Czech side of the Euroregion Nisa/Neisse/Nysa border, i.e. the research concerning the possibilities for cooperation with their counterparts in the Federal Republic of Germany and the expected effects of the Czech Republic joining the European Union.

The absolutely prevailing opinion of the local elites, in connection with the possibility of the further development of Czech–German cross-border cooperation, is that a greater amount of cooperation between entities on the Czech side of the border is necessary and desirable, i.e. between Czech municipalities, local entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations. Nearly one half of the respondents consider the cooperation between local partners to be highly desirable for the results of cross-border cooperation and a further 50 % of all respondents admit that it would be useful. Particularly the first of the findings is valuable: the expectations of higher benefits from this kind of cooperation on the Czech side, in cross-border communities. We consider this question to be one of the principal prerequisites for the further dynamic development of “cross-border policy” at the local level.

In fact, this question is directed towards the fundamental concept of local inter-sector partnerships, i.e. a voluntary long-term cooperation of local, public administration and private entrepreneurial entities, even non-entrepreneurial (the so called non-state non-profit) organizations. This partnership has an important developmental potential since it extends the possibilities of local communities, lowers the risks of individual participants and generally results in synergic effects. Apart from this, such partnerships are supported by financial tools and by the majority of EU policies.¹

The local inter-sector partnerships (partnerships existing between sectors) of public interest can be seen as manifestations of a long-term and mutually advantageous cooperation between local entities (organizations and citizens) having a joint and publicly advantageous goal. In the Czech Republic they are still emerging slowly and accompanied by difficulties caused by the following circumstances:

- Traditionally the very strong position of public

administration (of the civil service) in communities (including remnants of the socialist state influence);

- Low level of self-confidence on the part of the local elites and possibly lack of mutual trust between people from local elites (low level of cooperation);
- Lack of established middle classes, namely of small businesses;
- Media driven mistrust towards inhabitants capable of taking the initiative;
- Yet not fully mastered philanthropy in Czech society (in the sense of self-less contributions to the common good).

If we use more demanding criteria for our assessment of the above-stated partnerships, we discover that the number of real partnerships is far less (which holds not only for this research).²

From the point of view of partnership, the so-called local action groups are promising. These communities of representatives of local self-government, local companies and entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations and various educational, research, service institutions striving together for the development of a larger community or a larger region by common means or at least mutually coordinated actions. The groups that were created within the EU LEADER initiative could serve as the best example of such partnerships.

Local partnerships are often developed under the influence of a leading person in the community who is very often a member of two segments of the local elites, e.g. from the political sphere and the business sector.

Such a person then concentrates an active core of inhabitants around him- or herself, which is probably the case of the Mayor of Jindřichovice pod Smrkem in the District of Frýdlant and in many other border municipalities

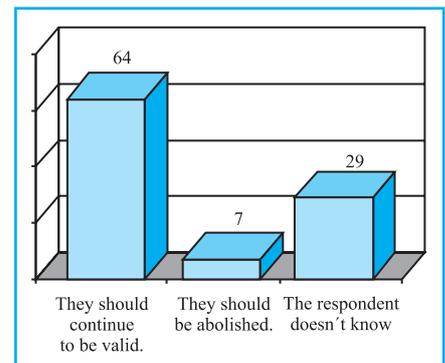
Much bigger problems arise during the attempts to establish a functioning partnership at a higher than the local level, e.g. on the border of rural micro regions. The following regions with a different development can also be found on the territory where this research probe was carried out:

- a) In the Šluknov Expansion (18 municipalities, 54.5 thousand inhabitants) some of the local entrepreneurs and businessmen have been starting to associate, mainly those developing activities in tourism, since the second half of the 90's; nevertheless, in spite of some significant results (Project of Tolštejn Demesne, which was extended to German regions) it is not yet possible to speak about a well-functioning partnership in the above-mentioned sense.
- b) In the Frýdlant Expansion (18 municipalities, 24 thousand inhabitants) they have not succeed-

MAIN TOPICS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Czech-German Partnership at the Local Level in the Enlarged Europe
 - Collective Memory
 - The Czech-Saxon University Centre
 - Czech Policy towards Germany Oscillating between Active and Defensive Approach
 - Perception of the Border Effects on Inhabitants of Borderland Areas
 - The Second Czechoslovak Republic – A Review
 - Membership in the EU and the NATO in Attitudes of Citizens of Central European Countries
 - The Uncomfortable Past in German Students' Opinions
-
- Edvard Beneš's Decrees and the Transfer Seen by Czech Society

Figure 1: Opinions concerning the validity of the Beneš's Decrees (%)



Source: Investigation of CVVM within the Project Our Society in 2005, February 14-21, 2005 *Naše společnost* 2005, 14. – 21. 2. 2005.

The Centre for Public Opinion Research of Institute of Sociology the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as SOU AV CR) regularly devotes its time to current themes in historical connections in its continual research activities. The investigation of the Czech public opinion in February 2005 focused, among other issues in the context of evaluating our relations with neighbouring countries, on the reflection of the transfer of Sudeten Germans from post-war Czechoslovakia and on the Czech public attitudes to further validity of President Beneš's decrees.

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ded yet, in spite of the “moral” (not financial so far) support of the Liberec Region, in integrating other entities than municipalities into this partnership association; these municipalities, however, do not cooperate too much either and in spite of the provided subsidies they have not been successful in creating a joint programme that would be feasible and strong. Their formal association has not undergone the transformation into inter-sector partnership (although there is a great opportunity for this process in the form of an offer to join the LEADER Programme).

- c) In the area called Podralsko (with 14 municipalities and 33 thousand inhabitants) they started making preparations for the Leader Programme as early as 2002 with the assistance of an external consultant. A group was created here which focused on local activities. However, the mayors of the surrounding municipalities had the main say in this group and these representatives did not develop the potential partnership cooperation beyond the boundaries of the benefit of individual municipalities and that of the traditional maintenance of municipal property.

The results of this research suggest that the perspective of local partnership is still fully dependent on the existence of a leading person/entity and his/its initiative (e.g. a mayor, counselling agency, etc.) and on whether the representatives of individual municipalities support and purposefully foster cooperation with other entities/persons. Coming closest to this concept in the municipalities, which started to develop, are the relationships of “friendship” or “partnership” with a nearby German village, which enabled the development of mutual relationships and common activities of Czech and German Associations or other institutions³ after the first mutual visits of these municipalities

In this survey, people with strong cross-border contacts and the right wing voters consider local partnership as necessary for the improvement of cross-border cooperation. Members of the political segment of local elites and the left-wing voters also admit the partnership is useful.

THE EXPECTED CONSEQUENCES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC JOINING THE EU

According to the majority of the respondents the Czech Republic will receive a financial support for its economic development from the EU funds and new markets for selling domestic products by entering the EU. At the same time a great majority of them (90%) expects that with entering the EU the living costs will also go up (food, accommodation, etc.). Further, the dominating opinion among the local elites was that the living conditions would increase, the unemployment rate would not be higher, but the influence of Germany in the Czech borderland would increase. They were not, however, united in their view as to whether our state sovereignty would be compromised. See the table that compares the results of our enquiry with the research carried out in 2003 (in %).

Very interesting, from the point of view of interpretation, was the result provided by the question concerning the potential consequences of the CR membership in the European Union from the viewpoint of any possible limitation of state sovereignty. Both supporters and opponents of the opinion that our sovereignty will be limited, are not differentiated either by their belonging to the segment of local elites or by the intensity of personal relationships in cross-border cooperation, or by the length of time spent in the borderland, or by the election preferences (the right wing, the

left wing, the undecided), or by the fact that their municipality cultivates partnerships or that it is located near the frontier. Rather it is the age category that counts here. Surprisingly, the strongest fears (65%) are shown by the respondents between the ages of 19 and 29, while significantly lower fears (33%) are shown by the group of respondents whose age exceeded 60.

The opinion concerning any possible limitation of our sovereignty, as we perceive it, is only a question of the experienced stereotypes in the form reflected by the mass media and by common surveys or public opinion polls. This is not only concerned with the result of “emotional balance”, in which existential fears compete with the “national pride”, inclination to tolerance and other factors of individual and group assessment. We presuppose that a “cognitive factor”, i.e. an ambiguity of the definition and content of the notion of sovereignty in the Czech general public, helps form this attitude. This is attested by the fact that groups of respondents with expected characteristic attitudes to the issue of sovereignty (e.g. the left wing supporters, the right wing supporters) are not strongly unified as far as this issue is concerned.

People usually acquire the notion of state sovereignty by means of other, supporting notions, such as permeability of the frontier, transfer of legislature competences to “Brussels”, existence of its own army, the possibility of hanging up only a

ses acquired in the representative investigation carried out in all districts of the CR neighbouring with the Federal Republic of Germany (2003) and in the 2004 research of local elites in the Nisa Euroregion.

The least frequently substantiated were the respondents appraisals as to whether there will be an improvement in cooperation between the Czech parties and the German Landsmannschaft organizations. In dialogues and questionnaires even some other consequences of the CR entering the EU for the Czech-German borderland appeared: simplification of the planned cooperation, renewal of the original natural state (territorial interconnection) in such areas as Zittau-Hrádek nad Nisou, etc.

The research carried out on both sides of the border (Czech Republic, the federal states of Bavaria and Saxony) in 2003⁴ offered a/certain comparison of the expectations as well as fears arising from the eastern extension of the EU on the part of the local elites. Representatives of Czech and German institutions agreed on the fact that in the preparatory “contact phase” solid foundations for developing mutual cooperation had been laid. After the introductory phase they expected that certain economic problems would appear (such as a decrease in the standard of living or any loss of job opportunities as a result of the job market competition, etc.).

Astonishing was the finding that with German respondents, fears arising from Sudeten German de-

Table 1. Expected Profits and Losses Associated with the Czech Republic Entering the EU

Ratio of Confirmative Answers in %	2003 population	2004 elites
The Czech Republic will get financial support for economic development from the EU Funds	63	89
The Czech Republic will reach a higher standard of living of its inhabitants	44	69
The Czech Republic will get new markets for exporting Czech products to the EU	56	80
Our state sovereignty will be limited	46	45
The unemployment rate will increase	59	32
The cost of living, such as costs incurred for subsistence, accommodation etc., will increase	89	90
The influence of Germany in the border areas of the Czech Republic	63	68

Source: SOU AV CR, *The 2003 Research in the Borderland of the Czech Republic and Federal Rep. of Germany – Research in Local Elites in the Nisa Euroregion*, 2004, TNS Factum/Tima.

Czech flag, etc. In addition to that, it is appropriate to mention that part of the Czech public welcomes the “limitation of sovereignty” (in the sense it understands the notion), since it is associated with a greater amount of personal freedom, with pressure for the improvement of the performance of the CR civil service, etc. It is therefore not possible to interpret the results of questioning concerning any possible impact of the CR membership in the EU on the state sovereignty as quite consistent in terms of values. With regards to the complexity and difficulty of this issue, ambiguity of notions and mainly to imperfection associated with our being able to inform citizens, including members of elites, necessarily gives an answer to the described “state of mind” of the local community.

Compared to the attitudes of the whole public in the Czech-German borderland, local elites are more optimistic than ordinary citizens about financial assistance from EU funds, an increase in the standard of living, the acquisition of new possibilities of selling products and about unemployment. They do not differ much in their assessment of the loss of state sovereignty, the growth of living costs and the influence of Germany in the Czech-German borderland. The table compares the ratios of respon-

demands were more frequent than support for them. A higher degree of willingness to comply with the demands of Landsmannschaft organisations was expressed on the Bavarian side of the border than on the Saxon side. The level of importance of the Landsmannschaft problem (assessed from both sides, German and Czech) in mutual relations moves at around 35% at the municipal level in the respondents’ opinions, but as far as the relationship between the two states is concerned, it doubles in significance, i.e. 70%. From these results we can deduce that a much wider cooperation potential is available for the development of partnership relations at the local and regional levels.

On the whole, it is possible to claim that the Czech Republic’s entry into the EU and its consequences for the further development of the border regions has met with predominantly positive appraisal and optimism on the part of the local elites. This optimism is necessary to correct the data taken from other research activities⁵, which maintained that initiatives in establishing cross-border contacts were most frequently taken by the German party. Whether the reasons for the Czech passivity include a lack of acquaintance with the EU mechanisms, or a lack of financial funds, or lan-

guage incompetence, it is desirable to bring to bear more assertively the needs and interests of Czech entities. This ascertainment of more-dimensional asymmetry will, only become valid at the time when however, become valid until the social capital and economic parameters have become equal on the Czech and German side of the border.

Václav Houžvička

Notes

¹ The very principle of partnership at all levels is one of the most important principles of the EU structural policy. Also the initiative called INTERREG, one branch of which is based on financing the cross-border cooperation of Czech and Saxon (Bavarian, Austrian, etc.) municipalities and organizations is based on the same principle. Unfortunately, it is exactly this INTERREG

that is an example of how any type of partnership can be implicated in the notion of partnership, including asymmetrical, temporary and superfluous relations and activities.

² The following are characteristic features of partnership: mutually advantageous cooperation, common goals of partners (they are often expressed in the joint programme or plan of activities), the length of the relation, full acceptance of the content and forms of cooperation between partners, the necessity and complementarity (each partner contributes something that would otherwise be missing, without which the result would not be reached), the synergic effect or the added by cooperation, i.e. the total positive impacts for the given territory are bigger than the aggregate of the effects that can be generated by individual participants in the cooperation. Čepelka, O. (ed.). 2004. *Místní partnerství a rozvoj venkova*. Liberec: Tima.

³ It is typical that entrepreneurial activities are independent of the relations between municipalities and citizens' interest organizations. From the experience of inter-regional partnerships in the EU it is however very well-known how the initial relationship of municipalities and micro regions can assist, for instance, with the sales of local products; the partner's region deals in the partner's products; the sales of these products are provided for within the territory of the whole partner's state, for instance the partner's territory is publicized in the newspaper or elsewhere as a tourist target, etc.

⁴ "Analysis and the Expected Development of Border Areas of the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany", the project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic carried out by the following two agencies: TNS Factum and Gaius.

⁵ See for instance the quoted research project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION WITH BAVARIA AND SAXONY IN THE OPINION OF THE LOCAL ELITES

In the course of 2004 two questionnaire research probes were carried out in the Czech-Saxon and the Czech-Bavarian (and also in North Bohemian and South Bohemian) Borderland trying to elicit opinions from the local elites' members concerning the CR entering the EU and the cross-border cooperation.¹

Characteristics of Local Elites in the Borderland

Although in each of the two cases a different method of selecting the required data² and a different technique of data collection was applied with samples including different amounts of data (200 units for Saxon and 85 for Bavarian Borderland), the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample is identical in both these investigations. The elites were divided, according to the source and the origin of their positions, into economic or political elites and those having power on the one side, and cultural and intellectual elites on the other side. The ratio of individual segments in both these investigations; in Czech-Saxon Borderland more representatives of the economic segment were asked to give their responses, while in Czech-Bavarian Borderland responses of its intellectual representatives prevail; with the representation of the political segment being approximately equal in all of them.

In harmony with the situation of the society as a whole among the local elites of the borderland, men have a much higher representation than women (in Northern Bohemia 61:39, in the west 68:32). If we simultaneously check the age of respondents, the trend towards the gradual promotion for women is evident (the younger the age category, the higher the ratio of women represented in both the samples) with all types of activities; with most significant representation in the intellectual elites. The age of the majority of respondents ranges between 30 and 59 years, which means that these are people at the productive age. Among respondents in Northern Bohemia the young generation up to 29 years was more strongly represented. It formed one tenth of the respondents (in comparison with the only one respondent in the West Bohemian Borderland). The fact that education is one of the most important factors, which differentiates positions on the social scale, shows the reality that members of those elites that have much higher education than the rest of the population. In Northern Bohemia forty-one respondents stated that they had university education and in the West Bohemian Borderland it was two-thirds of the population³.

The respondents among elites have been living in the borderland mostly for longer periods of time,

either since their childhood or for a period longer than 15 years. The total number of the so called "immigrants" is higher in the case of the South Bohemian border with Germany, which can be explained by a higher attractiveness of this locality in terms of accommodation. In general, it is possible to consider the borderland local communities as quite open social groups in which the 15% ratio of newcomers among elites (after the year 1989) shows that authority is not built traditionally on such sources as "the old residents" and experience. The emotional link with the locality, which does not have to be associated with the length of stay, was expressed by the majority of respondents (more than 90%) – in both these sets of answers they gave a positive answer to the question whether they feel that they belong to the place where they live and whether they feel at home there. According to these answers three quarters of the respondents have no intention of moving, which is considered a positive sign, mainly because the borderland is often considered a disadvantaged locality and would be endangered by a "brain drain".

According to the present results it seems however, that elites are, to a great extent, part of the stable local communities, which is very important for the functioning of all social structures. The reason for staying is, in both the cases, mainly the family. The second position is reserved for a good standard of living based on an interesting job. Also the feeling of being at home or the feeling of habits are mentioned as very important factors by nearly one half of the respondents on both sides of the borderland. As the most insignificant reason the respondents mentioned was the possibility of working abroad. In this there was also the biggest difference between the two sets of answers: in the North Bohemian Borderland it was the reason selected as very important less frequently (15%) than in the South Bohemian Borderland (9%). An explanation can be probably found in both the structure of the set – for the economic segment these factors are likely to be more important than for representatives of the elites having political power, or for cultural and intellectual elites – and in the worse economic situation of the Czech-Saxon borderland. Those who consider moving away from the borderland have no feeling of home associated with their place of residence (or they give it less importance than the other group); they do not consider a job abroad important and they do not feel responsibility for the municipality; they do not even consider social contacts apart from the family (a possibility of "acquaintances, friends, love", etc.) as important.

The Role of Institutions in the Cross-Border Cooperation

In the part of the research, which focused on the institutionalised form of cross-border cooperation, a very important role is played by Euroregions. Sense to these voluntary associations of border towns and municipalities, or micro regions, the former districts or other entities, can be given, among other reasons, by the very effort for this character of cooperation, namely at the communal level. The local elites had a possibility to assess the impacts of activities on the Nissa, Egrensis⁴ and on the Šumava Euro regions (always on "their" territories) and on other, namely state, inter-state and international institutions, economic entities, as well as on non-government non-profit organizations and on cross-border cooperation.

The above-mentioned Euroregions were best according to the results of their assessment; the greatest number of respondents expressed an opinion that they support this cooperation (Šumava and Egrensis Euroregions – 66%, Nisa Euroregion was even better – 89%). In all the above named cases only one of the respondents was of the opinion that Euroregions make the situation even more complicated. From the distribution of responses it is evident that the awareness of the existence and activities of Euroregions is quite wide, since the response "I don't know" has been selected in the case of the Nisa Euroregion only by one tenth of respondents; in the case of Egrensis and Šumava only by one third of the respondents⁵. As a whole, a positive assessment of institutions prevails in the following terms; according to the respondents only organizations of transferred persons, such as the Sudeten German Landsmannschaft are elements that complicate the situation.

From the distribution of responses, it is apparent that the awareness of the existence and activity of the Euroregions is widespread as the answer "I don't know" was selected only by one tenth of the respondents in the case of the Nisa Euroregion and in it was one third of all respondents in the Euroregions of Egrensis and Šumava.⁵ On the whole, a positive assessment of institutions is predominant and according to the respondents the situation is undoubtedly complicated only by numerous organizations of ousted persons, such as for instance the Sudeten German Landsmannschaft.

In both cases we can observe identical trends: the most positive role in the cross-border cooperation applies to the non-governmental sector (Euroregions and associations), with the economic sector (companies) and then the state sector to follow, with all this being at the lowest rather than the

highest level. Also international institutions (the EU, the Future Fund) were evaluated in the same positive way as the lowest level of the state administration.

In the matter of the legislative position of Euroregions the absolute majority of respondents from both areas are of the opinion that Euroregions should preserve their contemporary appearance, i.e. they should preserve their status of voluntary associations (see Figure 2). Respondents are satisfied with the existing appearance and activities of Euroregions. According to them, they function properly and this is the reason why they do not require their alteration. Only a small number of respondents (13% in the North and 18% in the South) have the ambition to possess their own

with the Šumava and Egrensis Euroregions; with the Bavarian part of the borderland this form of cooperation is apparently neither so widespread, nor popular.

Interesting results are brought by responses to the question concerning the influence of German citizens in villages located within the radius of 10 kilometres from the frontier. We can observe the existence of the same intensive cross-border contacts with German citizens on both sides of the border. Most frequent seem to be visits of Czech municipalities by citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany (with approx. 93% of responses in both cases). Special interest activity is also assessed as quite intensive (63% on the southern and 70% on the northern side of the border). But a significant

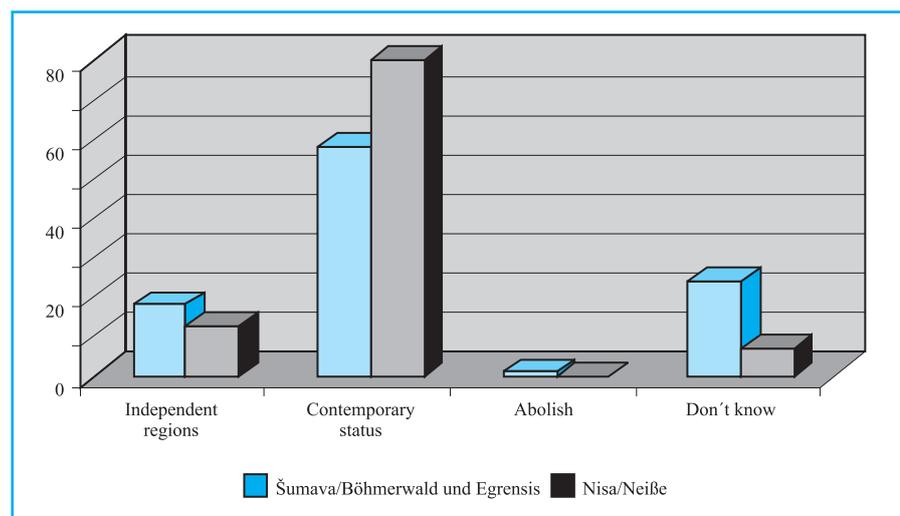
none of the respondents fully rejects the activities of German neighbours.⁶

Official cooperation at the municipal level exists in both research areas roughly to the same extent. Nearly two thirds of respondents know about this cooperation; nearly one fourth of respondents stated that their municipality did not cooperate; the remaining respondents are not informed about this cooperation. The cooperation has lasted, in the majority of cases, approximately 10 years and the content of this cooperation is focused more frequently on sports, cultural and social activities, i.e., on interest activities in general.⁷

Czech-Saxon activities take place, most frequently, at two levels: they can be characterized as institutionalised and official, or as optional tourist activities, not as “civil” activities in the cross-border community that is being established. One question remains open - whether the reason can be found in the historically different relations on both sides of the border or in the current social and economic situation on both the Bavarian and Saxon side of the border, again influenced by a different historical development. Probably, however, the reason for this is a combination of both factors will be the most probable reason of this situation.

Jitka Laštovková, Miroslav Brož

Figure 2: The opinion concerning the position of Euroregions within the EU



Source: SOÚ AV ČR, *The Research of the Elites in the CR/FRG Borderland, carried out in 2004*

self – government (autonomy) in the Euroregions with their own representatives and financial funds. This apparent difference between both the areas is caused by lower familiarity with the existence and activities of the Šumava Euroregion and the Egrensis Euroregion in the sphere of their activity (see above) - a bigger number of respondents thus selected the answer “I don't know”. In the northern part of the borderland there was, on the contrary, a higher number of responses showing satisfaction with the current state of affairs; the ratio of respondents requiring independence for Euroregions is approximately the same in both regions.

In general, we can express the opinion that the Nisa Euroregion was more successful in terms of being anchored in the consciousness of the local elites and this can have significantly positive impacts on the scope of its activities in comparison

difference can be found in activities of the economic and entrepreneurial character: while there were positive answers with 71% of respondents on the Bavarian border, it was only 58% on the Saxon border. This can be easily explained by the different situation of both federal republics – Saxony as a former part of the communist German Democratic Republic does not have such a strong economic background to be able to expand beyond the frontier to the same extent as the Bavarian economy. This results in a different social situation of both the countries and thus the relative possibility to develop business activities on the Czech territory is also different. The opinion concerning the activities of German citizens in the municipality is identical on both sides of the border – always roughly two-thirds of respondents accept it as positive and the remaining one third has no clear-cut opinion;

PRESIDENTIAL DECREES AND THE TRANSFER SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF CZECH SOCIETY

The centre for Research of Public Opinion of the SOÚ AV ČR regularly pays attention in its ongoing research activities to the attitudes of Czech society to current themes with historical connections. This also includes the new age history of Czech-German Relations. At present, nearly two thirds of all respondents (64%) lean towards the following opinion: that the presidential decrees, which legally codified, among other issues, also the confiscation of property and the loss of citizenship of the majority of the German-speaking inhabitants in the Czechoslovak Republic: 7% of all respondents think

that these decrees should be abolished. 29% of all respondents do not take a stand on this problem. The opinion that President Beneš's decrees should remain in existence and be valid was given mainly by people older than 45 years (in the category of respondents over 60 even more than 80% agreed with their validity), respondents with university education, pensioners, inhabitants of the Ústí Region, the Plzeň Region and the voters of the Communist Party.

The standpoint that these decrees should be abolished was supported, to an above-average ex-

tent, by the respondents with a very good standard of living, inhabitants of the Pardubice Region, entrepreneurs, employees in white-collar occupations and by voters of the following two political parties: ODS and US-DEU. Predominantly young people - though it was not surprising - were not capable of giving their opinion about the problems of these decrees: more than one half of respondents that do not exceed the age of 29 years selected the answer “I don't know”. A comparison between the current and the past data is provided by Table 2. On the basis of the results of all previous investigations it is possible to conclude that during the last three years there have been no significant changes in attitudes to this issue since all possible aberrations are within the statistical error range.

In the years 1994 to 2001 the given issue was studied by means of a different type of question – at that time directed towards the further validity of all Beneš's decrees (not only those associated

¹ The comparison was focused on the border with the Free State of Saxony (as a whole it covered approx. the area of the Nisa Euroregion) and the border with Bavaria (i.e. the Euroregions of Egrensis and Šumava).

² The Tima Agency, which was collecting data in the North Bohemian Borderland, made a two-stage pseudo-randomised selection (among municipalities and individuals) making use of the technique of direct contact of respondents with the interviewer; SC&C Agency, responsible for the collection of data on the southern border, selected a questionnaire and distributed it to institutions in the selected municipalities by mail, at the same time offering the possibility for the electronic form of answers.

³ The difference is probably associated, among other things, with the different representation of the intellectual and economic segment in both these samples - a higher representation of the intellectual segment also means a higher level of university educated people, while the economic elites at the lower level do not have to deduce their position from the cultural capital in the form of formal education.

⁴ On the Czech side it includes the area around the town of Cheb.

⁵ Again the ratio of “I don't know” answers is the lowest of all above-named institutions.

⁶ This is an important signal, among other things, in the relation to Sudeten Germans.

⁷ It is possible to assume that it serves mutual recognition; they have not got, however, any significant impact on the whole society.

with the legal codification of the German transfer). Concrete data from these investigations, including the precise formulation of the question, are brought by the survey in Table 3.

From investigations carried out at that time it is evident that in the years from 1999 to 2001 roughly one half of the respondents was of the opinion that the Beneš's Decrees should continue to be valid. 15 or 17% recommended reconsidering the validity of only some of them; and 9 or 7% would call their validity into question as a whole. More than one third of the respondents were not capable of giving their opinion on this particular question in both the above-mentioned investigations. However, both investigations carried out in the period from 1991 to 2001 suggested a shift in the respondents' opinion in comparison with the attitudes found in 1994. Contrary to the 1994 research there was a smaller number of those respondents who insisted on the validity of the decrees (decrease in/of 7 – 8 per cent points). There was an adequate growth of the group of respondents who thought that the validity of some of the decrees should be reconsidered (in 1994 it was 7% and 17% in 2001). The percentage of the respondents supporting the idea that all decrees should be considered valid and the insignificant number of the undecided respondents remained constant for the whole period of the research.

Evaluation of the Sudeten Germans' Transfer

A slightly different perspective of the event associated with the end of the war is offered by the investigation focused on the current attitudes of the respondents towards the transfer of Sudeten Germans after the Second World war. The precise formulation of the question, the offered variants of answers and the achieved results are shown in Table 4.

The transfer is considered to be just by more than one half of the respondents (54%). On the contrary 27% consider the transfer to be unjust. The opinion that it was just from the point of view of its fundamental socio-demographic characteristics was more frequent with people older than 45 years, with the respondents with a very low standard of living, pensioners, inhabitants of Bohemia and supporters of the Communist and the Social Democratic Parties (KSČM and ČSSD). The assessment of the transfer as an unjust act for which it is necessary to apologise is characteristic of/for the respondents with university education and those with a higher standard of living. Among the supporters of the concept of "drawing a line" the following groups of inhabitants are more frequently represented: the people aged 30 to 44, white-collar employees and respondents from households with the standard of living that is quite high. The supporters of the opinion that "the transfer was unjust and it is necessary not only to apologise, but also compensate the aggrieved or give the property back to them" is represented by such a small sample of respondents that it is impossible to identify any valid differences within individual social groups.

It is evident from the suggested temporal/time comparison in Table 4 that in the previous ten years there were not any significant changes in the structure of the acquired responses. Relatively the highest ratio of the respondents who consider the transfer to be just was observed in March 2002 (60%). In the following research activities the ratio of those who consider the transfer to be just gradually declined (in February 2005 by 6% points in comparison with the investigation carried out in 2002).

Table 2: Opinions concerning validity of Beneš's Decrees – Comparison (data in %)

	02/03	04/06	05/02
They should be valid even today	67	67	64
They should be abolished	5	8	7
I don't know	28	26	29
Note: Aggregate in each column = 100%			

Source: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – the CVVM Continual Research

Table 3: „From time to time the decrees signed by President Beneš are talked about. Do you think that (comparison 1994 to 2001, the data are presented in %)

	94/04	99/09	01/02
They should continue to be valid	57	49	50
The validity of some of them should be taken into consideration	9	15	17
The validity of all of them should be reconsidered.	7	9	7
Or the respondent does not know	27	27	26
Note: Aggregate of all figures in the column = 100%			

Source: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – the CVVM Continual Research

Do the Beneš's Decrees Influence Relations with Our Neighbours?

In connection with the discussions concerning the past and the perspectives of Czech–German and Czech–Austrian relations, problems of the so-called Beneš's Decrees and the transfer emerge quite often. For that reason the question focused direct on how these decrees influence bilateral relations with the surrounding countries. The results are shown in Table 5.

It is evident from Table 5 that more than one half of the respondents suppose that the Beneš's decrees negatively influence our relations with Germany (56%), more than one third of the respondents think that worst affected are our relations with Austria (35%). In case of Slovakia, Poland and Hungary the ratio of those who suppose that Beneš's decrees become a burden for the relations with the given countries is quite insignificant. Nevertheless, from the comparison of the completed research it is apparent that in comparison with 2002 and 2004 the burdening of bilateral relations with Austria and Germany by the problem of the Beneš's decrees is perceived with a slightly lower intensity by the general public.

The opinion focused on the question "to what extent the Beneš's decrees contribute to the burdening of the bilateral relations with the surrounding states",

is undoubtedly necessary to be perceived in the context of the general assessment of the current state of the Czech Republic bilateral relations with these countries.

It is possible to assume that it is exactly the influence of the discussions concerning so called Beneš's decrees (or more generally expressed – the impact of some historical resentments) that is constantly reflected in the less favourable assessment (and in the case of Austria these are tedious disputes concerning the Temelín power plant) of Czech–German and Czech–Austrian relations. As evident from Figure 3 (see page 6), which shows the development of the relations to the above mentioned countries since 2000, the current assessment of the relations between the Czech Republic and Germany, and predominantly with Austria, is really more favourable, which corresponds with the evident pacification of the situation and withdrawal from the action in the case of both conflicting causes. The assessment of the relations with the above mentioned countries proved to be much worse predominantly in March 2002. In the following period, however, the public opinion started to change (though in the case of Czech–Austrian relations only very slowly) and the process resulted in our relations with Germany and Austria being assessed the best of all in the last five years.

Daniel Kunštát

Table 4: Opinions about the transfer– Comparison (in %)

The transfer	95/07	01/02	02/03	04/06	05/02
was just	52	47	60	56	54
was not just, but it is necessary to draw a line and separate ourselves from the past	24	23	20	21	19
was not just and it is necessary to apologise for it	3	6	5	5	5
It was unjust and it is necessary not only to apologise for it, but also to compensate the aggravated persons for their losses or give them back their property.	1	2	1	3	3
The respondent does not know/is not interested in this issue	30	22	14	16	19
It was just/It was unjust*	52/28	47/31	60/26	56/29	54/27

*The aggregate of the following responses: "It was unjust but it is necessary to draw a thick line and bury the past", "it was unjust and it is necessary to apologise for it" and it was unjust and it is necessary not only to apologise for it, but also to compensate the aggravated persons for the losses, or to give them back their property".

Source: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – the CVVM Continual Research

WE INFORM ABOUT COOPERATION The Czech – Saxon University Centre

The Czech-Saxon University Centre (the Czech Acronym ČSVC) was established on 1st April 2003 at the Technical University in Chemnitz. The INTERREG IIIA initiative of the EU Community will take part in its financing until 2006. The Czech-Saxon University Centre (ČSVC) built at the Chemnitz Technical University has created conditions for the strengthening of scientific and professional cooperation between Czech and Saxon Universities in the cross-border area. All efforts of Czech-Saxon University Centre are focused, on the one side, on the extension of contacts at the level of individual branches of science between the TU of Chemnitz and the partner West Bohemian University in Plzeň, on the other hand to other Czech universities joining the project. The following universities are interested in creating cross-border professional communication: The Technical University of Liberec, J. E. Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Masaryk University in Brno, The South Bohemian University in České Budějovice, Charles University in Prague and the University of Economics in Prague. Cross-border regional development is also supported by innovative impulses in other key areas, such as the economy, transport, the environment, culture and education. These goals are realized, among other things, in cooperation with both regional partners – the Initiative of South Western Saxony and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of South Western Saxony. The main aim of the Czech Saxon University Centre (ČSVC) at the Technical University of Chemnitz is the formation of a long-term outline for research cooperation among universities in the Czech-Saxon cross-border area. The most significant item among these activities is the coordination of most important university measures. For the future the creation of a cross-border network is planned that would improve the quality and intensity of professional communication between scientists, students and other specialists from Czech and Saxon Universities, with preference to be given to those universities that are engaged in activities from the Czech-Saxon cross-border area.

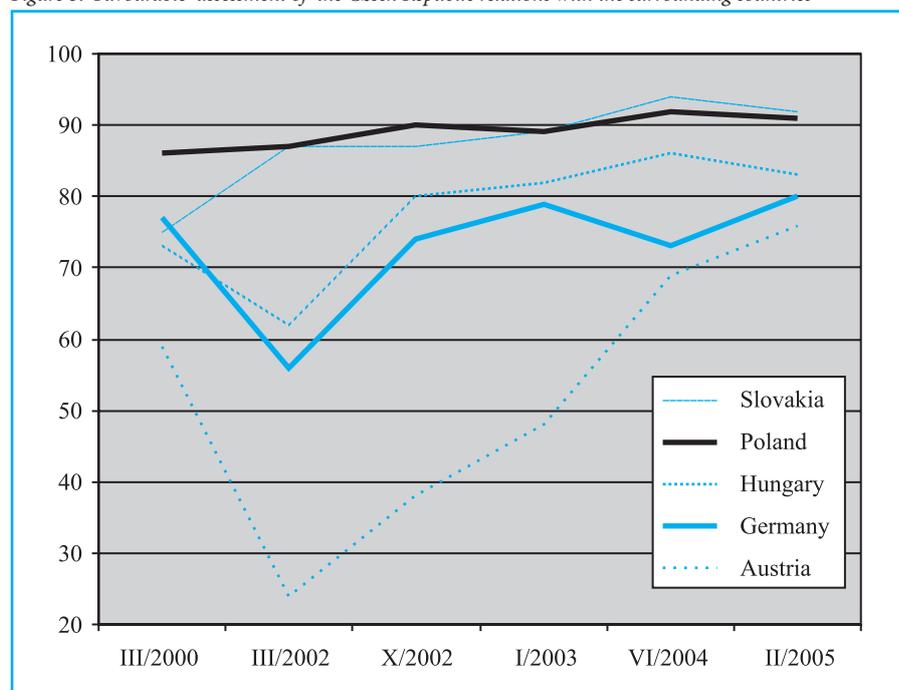


**Sächsisch-Tschechisches
Hochschulzentrum
Česko-saské vysoko-
školské centrum**

	March 2002	June 2004	February 2005
Slovakia	3	4	2
Poland	3	5	5
Hungary	33	6	5
Německo	61	65	56
Germany	58	43	35

Source: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – the CVVM Continual Research

Figure 3. Favourable assessment of the Czech Republic relations with the surrounding countries



Source: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – the CVVM Continual Research

PERCEPTION OF THE BORDER EFFECTS ON INHABITANTS OF THE BORDERLAND AREAS

In the research of the local elites within the territory of two Euroregions, Egrensis and Šumava, i.e. predominantly in the Czech and Bavarian borderland, we also focused on their perception of the in reality open frontier with Germany. On the one hand we were interested in how respondents evaluate this situation after an interval of 15 years and on the other hand how the open frontier has manifested itself in their lives. The consequences of permeability of the frontier were studied with exceptional consequence, since they point out at some of the real problems specific to the borderland areas the solution of which requires the understanding of politicians, considerable effort and cross-border bilateral debates on the part of local political elites.

Consequences of the Opening of the Border

We expected that only a small portion of respondents should state that for them the opening of the frontier is associated mainly with problems. This assumption has turned out to be unwarranted as none of the respondents admitted such sentiments

in their answers. On the contrary, after years of the closed and consistently guarded border areas, mainly the Bavarian border, a great number of respondents are aware of how significant this change is, what possibilities and challenges arose for them when the frontier with Germany was opened. Responses with only negative "frontier effects" do not appear in the investigated sample of inhabitants of the Czech borderland. 45% of respondents think that the actual opening of the frontier with Germany has brought only advantages. Both advantages and problems are seen in connection with the opening of the frontier with 40% of respondents.

Most of all, the opening of the frontier has become evident in the possibility to travel and in shopping tourism – this was stated by 74% respondents (and in addition to them 11% responded that "It was more likely to be the case"). For 54% of them (and in addition to them 26% responded that "it was more likely so") it is mutual recognition of one another, and for 47% (and in addition to them 31% responded that it was more likely so) business relations between these two countries have become intensified. According to these answers it is possible to deduce that on the Czech side there is an intensification of economic and business ties

between the Czech Republic and Germany. Traveling and cross-border tourism (cross-border shopping) may become the results of Euroregion activities (publishing two-language brochures about cross-border tourist traffic), organizations supporting and strengthening tourism (Czech Central Tourist Agency, Czech Centres, etc.) and efficient transport connection of both cross-border areas (for instance the train network within the Egrensis Euroregion – between Karlovy Vary Region, the Plzeň Region, Free States of Bavaria, Saxony and the Federal State of Thuringia with the possibility of advantageous travel costs with EgroNet). Apart from this, we can see a shift towards getting to know more about neighbouring countries, mainly by emergence and development of new border crossings (mostly pedestrian crossings), cross-border cycling routes, a system of ski running routes for skiers, etc. All this is bringing about the linking of cross-border areas between the Czech Republic and the Free State of Bavaria.

Criminality and Unemployment

However, in the respondents answers there were not only references to positive “frontier effects”. Forty-two per cent of respondents stated (of which 27% confirmed that it was likely so) that as a result of nearly half of the respondents supports this view, in comparison with the investigation done by the agency Tima in Northern Bohemia (i.e. the districts of Jablonec and Liberec) where the number is significantly lower - 29% respondents. We suppose though that in both the regions examined there is a great number of similar problems in spite of their differing gravity. These are: a lower degree of intelligence, escalation of national problems (mostly those of the Romany ethnic group), illegal businesses, prostitution; this in spite of more localities in the examined West Bohemian part of the Czech Borderland being more connected with negative border effects, such as the areas of Cheb and Tachov. This certainly influences public opinions also in the neighbouring regions. Only 15% of respondents in the western borderland suppose that there is an increase in unemployment on the Czech side of the border (32% of respondents say there is likely to be an increase in unemployment).

Table 6. Consequences of the Frontier Opening and their Manifestations.

	certainly yes	likely yes	rather not	certainly not	I don't know	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
There are more opportunities of getting to know one another.	54	26	1		19	100
Mutual relations have become more intense.	47	31	2		20	100
The possibility of travelling abroad for shopping purposes has increased.	74	11			15	100
Criminality has grown up.	42	27	11	1	19	100
The unemployment rate on the Czech side of the frontier has increased.	15	32	26	2	25	100
Other consequences of the opening of the border	81	19				100

Source of SOŮ AV ČR: Research in Elites in the Cross-Border Area of the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, 2004

The fact is, though not statistically confirmable that the opening of the border has given rise large and diverse groups of commuting workers who travel daily to Germany to work. We can assume that with the improving economy in certain regions of the Czech Republic also the living and working conditions of these “pendlers” will be improved, their number will be reduced, or this group will commute to work in bigger cities of the regions (Praha, Plzeň). Apart from this, German companies have become established in the Czech Borderland and created new jobs there. On the other hand, it seems to be problematic - at least with regards to the long-term trends in the formation of the labour market in the Borderland - that these are most frequently jobs for less qualified people whose overall income is very small.

Respondents have been further invited to specify any other possible consequence of the opening of the frontier. Principally they referred to negative frontier effects, most often it was a problem of the so called rubbish or trash tourism, when in individual cases Germans bring their rubbish to

the CR and leave it in places which are not meant to serve these purposes (for instance near highways, in the woods, etc.). Among further negative consequences of the opening of the frontier the respondents mention are the following: the purchasing of real property making use of non-existent Czech citizens, disorder in our country, wholesale shopping of German people in our shops, the illegal sale of alcohol and non duty-free cigarettes at stalls, the selling of clothes with falsified trademarks and prostitution on the Czech side of the border.

In the additional answers of respondents we can find also some references to positive impacts resulting from the frontier opening. It is for instance the growing interest in the language and culture of our neighbours, supported by various exchange programmes for language and professional courses, increasing awareness of the growth of education associated with it and also the development of the neglected borderland.

Lukáš Novotný

**CZECH POLICY TOWARDS GERMANY
BETWEEN DEFENSIVE AND ACTIVISM (II)**

From the point of view of individual periods it is possible to speak about the beginning of the nineties as a period of “activist optimism”, which significantly contributed to normalisation of mutual relations and cooperation, for instance in the area of European security. The defensive direction of deviating Czech policy was corrected by a positive relationship to the “European Germany” – i.e. to the role and policy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the European Community, including the positive response to the Maastricht Treaty. In the following period, in the years 1992 -1997, the integration theme, however, became the very source of alienation in Czech-German relations, which became a burden for the process. The minimum defensive consensus, which was created in the mid nineties, included even activist approaches, namely the effort to reach a political conclusion to the questions concerning the past. If the treaty of 1992 sidestepped the historical questions with regards to Czech-German relations, the turning

point was reached, thanks to the Declaration of 1997, which practically created the political conditions for liberating mutual relations thus enabling the Czech Republic to draw nearer to NATO and the EU.

The main content of the following period (1998-2004) was the practical Europeisation of mutual relations in the process of the Czechs entering NATO and the EU. Irrespective of the current political themes, historical issues harboured namely in internal political connections a considerably risky potential, primarily when they got out of hand (in terms of political control).

This became evident, most of all, in the spring of 2002 when radical statements made by the Prime Minister Zeman rendered Chancellor Schroeder's visit to Prague impossible.

With entrance to the EU a new phase of mutual relations has started. In the historical realm it is possible to presuppose that the ousted Germans' interests and societal organizations will

continue to make traditional demands on the conservative state government and the conservative CDU and CSU and develop activities not dissimilar to a “secondary” state policy. Significant will be the result of the 2006 German election. The current ruling coalition has clearly expressed its attitude many times and proved that it would not raise any legal and political claims and would not support them either. The main issue in case of the potential change of government will be focused on whether there would be a possibility (for the first time!) of raising this “secondary” political agenda to the federal level. A significant role will be played by the position of any possible CDU-CSU coalition partners, i.e. the FDP, which has always remained distant from attitudes of the Union of Expellees and various Landsmannschaft associations.

But new and supporting themes concerning mutual relations have opened predominantly in the area of European and security policy. Czech

policy has to react to a new situation: instead of the former (unrealistic) fear of the power of the allegedly strong and dominating Germany, now one speaks about the German “hegemony of weakness”. The project of extending NATO and the EU was in fact the core strategy in relations towards Central and Eastern Europe, which after 1990 was implemented out by all governments of the Federal Republic of Germany. This strategy was carried out without resulting in the dependence of the given countries (i.e. also the Czech Republic) on Berlin, as predicted by sceptics.

Germany does not play the role of regional leader and is not concentrating on striving for this role either – see the differences in priorities of the Czech/Central European and German policy in the process of EU extension and its reforms or the differing approach to the war in Iraq. Germany does not define its priority interest as Central European and in this period of insecurity and in looking for a new orientation it is more attached to its traditional partners, namely to France. In any case, German policy is in a phase of new defining strategic priorities; it is looking for an answer to the change in the European and Euro-Atlantic constellation. For instance, within the extended EU, after many years of successful policy it finds itself for the first time in a situation in which it has to learn new forms of cooperation. The German-French tandem itself will be marginalized without links to the majority of smaller member states. The process of searching therefore takes its course not only on the side of the Czech Republic and other new member states, but also on the side of Germany itself. A similar rupture has changed in connection with the newly defined the allied relationship between the EU and the USA. This is the situation that opens Czech policy to unprecedented possibilities: to contribute with active policy in the expected formation of a new strategy for the Federal Republic of Germany, which is just attempting to redefine the existing pillars of the German position in international relations.

Limited possibilities

What are the possibilities which Czech policy has while forming relations with its biggest neighbour? The research provides us with some general knowledge of the fact that Czech policy could do very little with the fact that the main bearers of interests in the Czech Republic on the German side of the border have been for a long period of time, the very Sudeten Germans, who have always been active in Czech-German relations, often independent of the political agenda of the Sudeten German Landsmannschaft. Now it is concentrating in its activities, not only on the federal level, but also on individual level of federal countries of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The politics of activist representatives with access to the FRG, is aiming at the “Dutch Model”, now the “Europeisation” of the asymmetrical bilateral relations. This does not mean full harmony with German preferences in the policy of integration and security. This approach however sees the best safeguarding of the future of our relations in keeping touch with German policy, but the participation in the integration dynamics represents, according to this concept, a corresponding framework of the Czech National political programme. The changeable coalition geometry within the EU, on which our policy relies (both activist and defensive), has, according to this opinion, a wider political field during the process of the ongoing economic and political integration. In contrast to this, the supporters of

anti-western sceptical realism will rather prefer to approach the EU accession, with the “Danish Model”, i.e. watchful policy oriented towards preservation of sovereignty, opposition to the intensification of the integration process and the cultivation of alternative political links.

Both of these „models“ include an element of “counterbalancing” the Federal Republic of Germany. All Czech governments, in some way or other, have tried to cultivate predominantly relations with Anglo-Saxon partners – see motivation for the pre-entering partnership with Great Britain, which was signed by the Social Democratic Party, and to a certain extent entering the NATO itself (i.e. there is a predominant link to the USA) and the EU. The Czech Social Democrats (ČSSD), in addition to that, turned to a more Francophile policy oriented more towards French socialists. Optimist activism, however, pair with a range of alliance and cooperation as a framework for relations with Germany, while sceptical realists rather develop it as counterbalance to German power and our dominating dependence on Germany.

Views of Germany and approaches to this country did not develop in a pure form, but as a mixture of various thoughts and streams. In a simplified way we can designate contributions and weaknesses of both the main tendencies. The activist trend in Czech policy contributed significantly to the liberation of our relations to Germany from political and ideological obstacles of previous decades. It was an element of liberal institutionalism and idealism in Czech political thought that could make use of the strong “European” stream in German policy much better as it tried to find links to it. Its weakness was associated with the impossibility of recognizing the strong influence of the Sudeten German factor in the policy of Germany (and mainly Bavaria) in the given internal political constellation at the beginning of the 90s. The view of the „European Germany“ sometimes obscured the fact that not all actors on the German political scene behave in a “European” and “post-national” manner. In addition to that, Germany is going through a period in which it is looking for “new foreign policy”; some analysts speak about an intensive foreign policy crisis. Germany is being changed from a “post-national” state into a “post-classical national democratic state”, just like all other advanced democratic countries. Thus in European policy German policy does not often take into account the interests of less important partners.

Rehabilitating the otherness

Sceptical realism has contributed a lot to the concept of the relations to the Federal Republic of Germany by rehabilitating the “otherness” of interests, ideological preferences and political concepts: opposition to the most willing and significant economic partners has become “politically correct” – though not always purposeful. But the realistic political approach (real policy) perceives nation states as integral territorial “actors”. It does not fully appreciate the importance of the institutional and political plurality of the Federal Republic of Germany and the multilateral, predominantly integration links. This however narrows the range of mutual relations with Germany and reduces the instruments that might have been used by Czech policy. In addition to that, *réal politique* (not only Czech) has always solved the problem of the strong power of Germany, whether real or hypothetical. The main problem of German (and therefore also European) policy of the last year is the weakness of the Federal Republic of Germany, the intensi-

fied penetration of internal political factors into foreign policy and the loss of strategic perspective.

We suppose that the well-known Palacký “dictum” concerning Czech-German relations can be applied in an analysis of the current situation only when we do not narrow it just to the “meeting and skirmishing” in the transition from national liberalism to political nationalism, i.e. absolutisation of the nation state. The federalist element in Palacký thinking should be accentuated. The European process of integration and the Czech participation in it deviate differently from the 19th century development. They do not replace the nation state, but change its character since they include even above- and post national elements. Rather than the “meeting” of the German element and the “taking over” of its political and institutional models, it becomes a question of the national programme of “sharing”, but on the European basis. Also “skirmishing” and “rejecting” goes on at a new level: it is not only a simple defence and the political “no”, but rather an active part in creating political alternatives, forming compromises and coalitions within the integrated multilateral institutions, mainly the EU and NATO. Here the Federal Republic of Germany may become a significant, though not the main “actor”; it can even be absent.

Asymmetry of relations

Before entering the EU the Czech-German relation were characterised by an enormous intensity of direct contacts. But typical of this relationship is an asymmetry between the intensity of practical cooperation and the achieved political and social proximity. On the axis between dependence on the one side and a close partnership (*Miteinander*) on the other side, this relationship can be designated as that of a cooperative neighbourhood (*Nebeneinander*). Germany cannot be “walked over” either in the Central Europe or in the EU. Czech policy should pay considerable attention to the German partner, make use of its mostly cooperative attitudes, cultivate mutual relationship, among other things also by increasing its presence in Germany, acquire the lively interest of the German public (i.e. beyond the Bavarian and Saxon border) in the Czech Republic. It should know how to make use of not only big integration grouping, but also regionalism, namely Czech-Polish-German, „Visegrad” and Czech-German-Austrian regionalism and thus incorporate mutual relations into much wider links. Active Czech-German coexistence can have only a “European” appearance; this, however, shall assume a lot of forms and will develop in a dynamic manner.

Vladimír Handl

**Further information
and language mutations
of the bulletin
are available
at the website:**

www.borderland.cz

SMALL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CONCEPTS

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The theory of collective memory created in the 1920s by the French sociologist M. Halbwachs is a decisive reaction to various attempts to define collective memory as “memory that is inherited”. Halbwachs, on the contrary, can see the continuity of the collectively shared consciousness not in biology, but in culture. Specific behaviour that man acquires by being part of a certain society and its culture is not a result of phylogenetic evolution, but a result of socialisation and ability to preserve traditions. Collective memory controls actions and recollecting within the interaction that goes on in society and to a certain extent makes these processes easier by introducing collectively shared models – as if drilled – and transferred from generation to generation. Memory is a socially structured orientation framework of individuals and societies determining what can be remembered. It is, as we can say along with M. Halbwachs and his theory of social determination of recollecting, a creative, constructive and socially determined activity that helps the process of self-awareness by taking part in creating an identity or identities of social groups. It also represents a system according to which the banal (something that can be forgotten) differs from the important (i.e. something that can be remembered). Namely people are not capable of remembering in the same way as they recollect; they also have to forget and be capable of distinguishing the significant from the insignificant. Thus an “artificial” continuity is created, and it is artificial since we select only those historical events and their recollections, which are significant for the further existence of social groups (for instance of a nation, ethnic community, etc.).

The concept of “collective memory”, which was created by Halbwachs and which is by no means ambiguous and without contradiction, is based on the practical reconstructions of the past of social groups, i.e. these are such adaptations of facts from time immemorial that correspond with the conviction and spiritual needs of the present and express the group identity. This arises out of the fragmentation of our recollections, when certain events of history are omitted for various reasons or even become taboo. In connection with this issue it is appropriate to mention the theory of the framework analysis as concerned by E. Goffman, who bases his theory on the fact that for each piece of memory and experience there are organizational principles, which are socially constructed.

The German orientalist J. Assmann distinguishes communicative and collective memory. Both of these forms of collective memory, according to him, form, in the first place, an orientation framework from which items/pieces of individual memory are elicited. Individual memory, however, does not mean that the memory is not influenced by socio-cultural and collective factors. Here, on the contrary, qualitative specific features are created on the basis of collective orientation systems. These features ensue from the framework that represents communicative and cultural memory and these in turn are influenced and controlled by it. Each of us gathers his own historical experience in the course of historical development (communicative memory). In addition to this we include other sources of information, such as books, museums, etc. (cultural memory) and subsequently connect them into a subjective network of relations. Individual perception of history is therefore a result of highly complex communication process. For that reason it is understandable that some views of the past acquire an institutionalised image. These are then distributed by media and finally become, to a certain extent, normative, e.g. by being included in textbooks. The problem of collective memory shows a difference between “history”, research-based historical consciousness, and “memory”, an intuitive process of recollecting, a shared version of the past. The following example, intentionally pointed but apposite, will enable us to understand the difference between these two notions and to get to know the basis of collective memory. Collective memory is not only non-historical, but it is, to a certain extent, anti-historical. If we want to understand something historically, it means to realise the complexity in the historical context, stick to historical facts and at the same time be capable of certain distanced attitudes, accept ambiguity (also moral ambiguity) of motives in the behaviour of the protagonists of historical events. This is, of course, extraordinarily difficult and in principle impossible as each of us approaches history with certain individual dispositions, knowledge, experience, etc., which individualise our views of the past. On the contrary, collective memory simplifies our views. It reflects events from one perspective, presses out some other – more or less by force – and rules out ambiguity. It is extremely important to deal with the historical memory of social groups, predominantly for the function these mental operations play in the process of forming and strengthening the identity.

Lukáš Novotný

LITERATURE CONCERNING THE THEME

THE SECOND REPUBLIC- VOYAGE IN BROKEN BOATS

Gebhart, J. – Kuklík, J. 2004. *Druhá republika 1938-1939. Svár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě. Praha/Litomyšl: Paseka. 316 p..(The Second Republic 1938-1939. The Democracy and Totality Dispute in Political, Social and Cultural Life)*

The five-month- duration of the Second Czecho-Slovak Republic reflected a vast crisis, which on the basis of the ultimatum approach of the totalitarian Third Reich to the assignment of its border areas and the climax of the Munich Agreement of European powers on 29th September 1938 hit all spheres of political and social life. All inhabitants of the territorially clear-boled state were deeply affected by disillusionment caused by the unexpected and early failure of the Masaryk’s idea of independent Czechoslovakia and deceitful the stance on the part of France and Great Britain. The whole society was paralysed by sceptical thoughts resulting from the feeling that everything had been lost. The Munich Agreement also succeeded in breaking a great number of human hearts. The book “Druhá republika – svár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě” by J. Gebhart and J. Kuklík (The Second Republic –The Democracy and Totality Dispute in Political, Social and Cultural Life), which was published on the occasion of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Munich crisis, fully satisfies the aim, i.e. to develop this comprehensive theme with a maximum avoidance of traditional resentments otherwise so typical of the opinions concerning Czech-German coexistence..

Forgotten period

The Second Republic can be given the label of the forgotten period of time, which has not been written about so far. As if that period never existed according to history textbooks and to a great number of publications. These materials mention only Munich and immediately afterwards the protectorate. But it was an extremely dramatic period of Czechoslovak history, a kind of “overture” to the occupation in March 1939.

In the first part the authors deal with establishment of the Reich Sudetengau. It was estimated that there were 520 000 Sudeten German members of the NSDAP, which was 16% of the total number of inhabitants of the Sudetengau – i.e. the largest number in the whole Reich. With the seizure of the power by Nazis the Nurnberg Acts started to be applied with consistence and precision. Racial persecution was based, apart from persecuting people, on internment and eviction of Jewish inhabitants, on discrimination principles and germanisation pressure against the Czech minority. By mid-December of 1938, 152 000 Czechs had escaped from the occupied borderland. Only partially was it possible to find accommodation for them in the inland. Thousands of Czech people had been living in temporary camps for long months.

In Czecho-Slovakia controlled by the government of R. Beran since December of 1938, during the period of the Second Republic, there was an unprecedented curtailment of political rights; these were bursts of nationalism, anti-Semitism and hatred. The republic deprived of one third of its territory and 40% of its industry found itself in economic crisis. Its political position in Europe quickly changed and the situation resulted in loss of political friends. Slovaks started to attack “Czechoslovakism” and prepared for separation; thousands of refugees headed for the country. The relation to German antifascists and Jews trying to get out of the occupied borderland was tense, the country could not accept them according to the requirements of the Third Reich.

Another problem for the radically reduced size of the state was the German minority consisting of approximately 240 000 persons. It was concentrated, with the exception of the area around Prague, mainly in bigger Moravian cities (Brno, Jihlava, Svitavy, etc.). The political and social life of this national group was controlled by the German National Socialist Movement linked to the SdP. As a whole, disappointment started to spread among Czech Germans after the Munich Agreement, mainly because they did not become part of the Reich either. It was expressed the most openly by the German population as well as local leaders of the SdP in the Brno and Jihlava language islands. The Czech majority population manifested, its employing all possible means; Germans were sacked, tradesmen and farmers had to face a boycott of goods. The German Reich organized assistance for these Germans – mainly in the form of providing them with financial funds and mediating jobs to them and by doing this it supported the pressure of the rest of Germans on Beran’s Government, which found itself in an intractable situation.

It was theoretically possible to opt for the Reich. However, it was soon clear that the Nazi game prepared for Czechoslovakia reckoned with the existence of the German minority’s interest in remaining the majority on Czech soil. The Czechoslovak government was willing to assist Germans to meet the Berlin requirement hoping it would enable the rest of Czechoslovakia to survive. The escalation of political requirements was repeated and nationally motivated skirmishes were triggered before the planned occupation of Czechoslovakia.

Words instead of Acts

Political efforts leading to “simplification” of the political system of Czecho-Slovakia and its reduction into the existence of two parties - the National Union Party and the National Labour Party - resulted in quite energetic parting with the existing political arrangement of the liberal and democratic type. The new political reality (called Authoritative Democracy by authors of the book), together with efforts to establish the majority system of the British type, limitation of the parliamentary power and decision-making in the form of yields was to unify all political streams for the purpose of carrying out “Democracy of Acts, Not Words”.

A great number of politicians and writers strove for maintaining democratic standards; one part of the political elites, however, failed. All mental and political changes/metamorphoses reacted to the newly created situation – i.e. to the weakening of state integrity and sovereignty, insecure warranty of the state border, feelings of disillusionment and resignation. The book documents all dimensions of the shock to the internal political and social structure of the democratic state. The existence of the Second Republic was distinctively portrayed by V. Černý in his Memoires - Křik koruny české, (Vociferation of the Bohemian Crown), where he compared five months of its existence to the “voyage of wild-looking castaways, packed in a broken boat, without sails and set afloat without any aim”.

Lukáš Novotný

THE UNCOMFORTABLE PAST IN OPINIONS OF GERMAN STUDENTS

The German public, both general and academic, was aroused by a piece of news that appeared under the title “A lot of Young People Do Not Know Anything about Auschwitz” in “Süddeutsche Zeitung” on February 17, 2000. It revealed the disturbing fact that 22% of young Germans aged between 14 and 17 had never heard of the holocaust and the liquidation camp in Auschwitz. The newspaper article used the data from the book by Alphorns Silbermann and Manfred Stoffers, published in the same year under the title “Auschwitz: Haven’t you ever heard?”. One of the questions of the questionnaire was provocatively formulated as follows: Who or what was Auschwitz? Five years before the Evangelical Press Agency (epd) published some facts from the investigation implying that 44% out of 1342 student-respondents had never heard of the Wannsee Conference and 38% had not known anything about the Nurnberg Acts. The results were even worse with students who took part in the 1998 survey of the Forsa Institute of Public Opinion. Out of 506 14- to 18-year old students only 13% were aware of Nurn-

berg Acts and a mere 7% the Wannsee Conference. The lack of awareness of the existence of the concentration camp in Auschwitz-Brzezinka was registered by one third of all student-respondents (31%). This disturbingly low access to information must have been influenced by insufficient generational and family transmission of experience from the previous generations living under the Nazi dictatorship. The results showed that in spite of ample publication and cultural activities of German educational institutions (mostly at the federal level and individual state centres for political education) there are serious inadequacies, i.e. shortcomings in terms of knowledge of basic historical events associated with the Second World War in a considerable part of the young generation.

The last of a series of the questionnaire investigations focused on historical thinking and awareness of students of the existence of the Nazi period was carried out by professors of the University of Essen, Klaus Ahlheim and Bardo Heger, among students of their university in the winter term of 2000/2001

academic year. Their twelve-page questionnaire was filled in by 2167 of the total number of students (in 2000/2001 a total number of 21 497 students were studying at the Essen University); with women covering 57% of the sample and 9% being foreign students. The facts obtained by both teachers are summarised in the following publication “Die unbequeme Vergangenheit” [The Uncomfortable Past]. Schwalbach 2003.

Drawing a Line

From the results of this investigation it is clear, among other things, that more than one third of respondents agree that it is high time “to draw a line (with the intention of breaking with the Nazi past)” (36%). However, this ratio is, in comparison with nation-wide research activities, significantly lower, – as the authors of this investigation themselves mention – in spite of this it is quite high when we take into account that this group will have a strong influence on public opinion in a couple of

years. According to the Institute for Demoscopy in Allensbach it was the opinion of 59% of Germans, irrespective of their age (63% in the old and 41% in the new federal countries), and in the survey of the Emnid Agency it was 46% in 1991. In both above-mentioned investigation it holds that the older the respondents, the stronger is the representation for the policy of drawing a line. With similar student-oriented investigations such a high representation was not achieved either. For instance in the questionnaire investigation among the students of the old federal countries it was 22% in 1992.

In the section called Sources of Information about Nazism the respondents were asked questions concerning such fundamental facts as those concerning the beginning and end of the Second World War. From the results it is evident, among other things, that every fourth respondent has never heard anything about pogroms of the Jews during the so called “Crystal Night” and nearly every third respondent is not capable of saying exactly when the Second World War broke out. Eight per cent of students could not identify any ethnic or social groups persecuted and liquidated by Nazis. The clear majority of respondents selected the following possibility: “All politically oriented groups thinking differently”. For 61% of respondents these were mentally and physically handicapped citizens, for 42% Roma inhabitants and 38% homosexuals. Communists and Social Democrats were mentioned only in 17% of these answers.

Even more striking are the results of the following questions: “What was planned in the course of the Wannsee Conference” and “What did Nurnberg Acts Mean”. 9% of them mistook the Nurnberg Acts for the Nurnberg proceeding and also the Conference near Wansee was confused with the post-war trials. This low level of knowledge among students contradicts the opinions of some of German historians and sociologists about our young generation/school children being swamped by materials about the Nazi period. Much better informed are the students presenting themselves as supporters of right-wing parties, the lowest knowledge of and interest in history of their country was among those who did not refer to any political affiliation. As a whole men dispose of better knowledge than women, in terms of individual branches of study students of medicine have the strongest interest in this period of history, while students of social and teacher training programmes are the groups with the lowest interest in the Nazi period.

The authors of the research were further interested in the following issues: to what extent knowledge about Nazism and the holocaust influence the respondents’ attitudes to the assessment of this historical period. Among students with a good grasp of facts there is a lower number of those who support the policy of the line drawing (28%), while their colleagues with a lower level of knowledge supported the policy of the line with 48% of respondents. It is difficult to assess whether better informed respondents support that policy much less because they know more about Nazi crimes and whether supporters of the line drawing are really less informed or rather do not want to know more. The authors themselves confirm that the method of standardized questionnaires they selected did not allow them to assess these facts properly.

As has already been mentioned here the clear majority of students do not contest the holocaust. 2% of them think that “a lot of things are exaggerated” in documentaries showing concentration camps. For 14% of respondents these programmes are devoted to much time. The level of informedness means, more than elsewhere, that the lower the rate of information, the more placed into question is the holocaust. While well-informed students (82%) selected the possibility “It is not true” that in documentary films about these camps “there are many

Variant of the answer	I agree %	I don’t agree %
Germans dwell on the past too much – mainly the Third Reich – and focus on the future very little.	35	55
I am upset that the Germans are still reproached for Nazi crimes	70	30
I do not feel ashamed at what the Germans did to the Jews	95	5
Germans feel liability for the Jews, even though the majority of Germans does not feel guilty for their persecution.	60	42
More schools and streets should be named after Jews	34	66
Today the Nazi period is part of history like any other era and for that reason it should not be stressed so much at schools.	10	90
In the Third Reich not everything was so bad as it is now presented.	10	90
Public recollection of Auschwitz and the persecution of Jews is not in the majority of cases real; it is only a routine and obligatory act.	49	51

Source: Ahlheim/Heger 2003: 28.

things exaggerated”, and 15% selected the following statement: “It is hardly true”; with their colleagues, less oriented in history, supporting the opinion of “It is not true” it is 64% and for 33% of respondents it is the possibility where the word “hardly” occurs.

Extremely interesting was the opinion concerning the lack of willingness of the entrepreneurial sphere of the Federal Republic of Germany to support the activities providing financial compensation for the people brought to Germany to do forced labour. The majority of respondents consider this approach as problematic (54%) and scandalous (23%). Also here it holds that the students who were not able to characterise either of the groups of persecuted and murdered groups of inhabitants, consider the reluctant approach of the companies as “understandable” (32%) or “quite proper” (6%).

The Third Reich and National Feelings

One of the questions investigated the students’ attitude to the statement of one of the former significant German politician, Franz-Josef Strauss. He said that “a nation which was so successful in reaching such a high profit should have the right not to hear a word about Auschwitz”. Only 4% of all students identified themselves with this opinion. An entire 70% felt aggrieved by other states reproaching term with Nazi crimes, 30% of respondents do not feel it like that, 95% feel ashamed at the injustice and mass murder carried out on the Jews and 5% do not think so. 10% agree with the statement that “not everything was so bad in the Third Reich as it is described now”, 90% of respondents are against this statement. The declared culture of the memory of Auschwitz and the persecution of Jewish inhabitants is a mere “routine and duty” for 49% of respondents. The same spirit appeared in the statements of the German writer Martin Walser, on the occasion of being handed over the Peace Award of the German Book Market in Frankfurt in October 1998. The remaining 51% of respondents hold the opposite opinion.

From the students’ responses it is evident that they “wish to have a sound national consciousness at last” (60%). Otherwise, from various research activities of the ALLBUS Institute from the years 1996, 1998 and 2000 it is evident that the national consciousness – in the question designated as “national pride” – is on the increase as a whole with in-

habitants of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the last year of the research 22% of inhabitants felt “very proud” (in comparison with 19% in 1996), 51% (45%) of them felt “quite proud”, 21% (23%) were “not so proud” and 6% (13%) “did not feel proud at all”. With the youngest generation from 14 to 25 years the manifestation of pride changed in these investigations from 29% in the year 1993 to 47% in 2000.

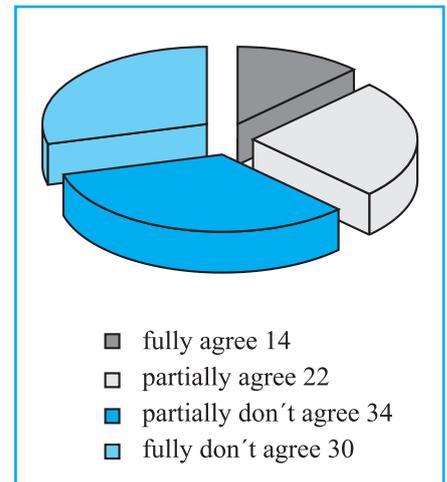
As a whole the authors of the research designated the answers of 29% of respondents as correct in terms of facts (all seven questions or at least six of them were answered correctly), with approximately one half (54%) we can observe shortcomings in the presentation of facts, 17% show a significant lack of knowledge.

The intensifying trend of the German youth “to draw a line and forget” can be indicated as the most significant fact ensuing from the research. There is an evident and more intensive need to separate from the past that “stigmatises” German society.

Lukáš Novotný

Figure 4. A Thick Line and Students in Germany.

The text of the question: “Is it high time we drew a thick line and forget the Nazi past?”



Source: Ahlheim/Heger 2003: 26.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE NATO IN ATTITUDES OF CITIZENS OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance have gone through a number of significant changes in the last 15 years. One of the things that permanently changed the appearance of these two international organizations was the acceptance of new member states, mainly the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In four of these countries, which are now members of the EU and the NATO, the citizens were asked in March 2005 how satisfied they are with their membership in the above-mentioned organizations.

The research mapping the attitudes of the public to the membership of their countries in the EU and the NATO was prepared under the umbrella of the organization CEORG, which joins together three agencies dealing with research of public opinions. In the Czech Republic it is the CVVM SOÚ AV ČR (The Centre for Research of Public Opinions of Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the CR), in Poland the CBOS Agency (Centrum pro Badania Opinii Społecznej) and in Hungary the TARKI Agency (Társadalomkutatási Intézet és Társadalomkutatási Informatikai Egyesülés). Besides Polish, Hungarian and Czech citizens, the Slovak citizens were asked the same questions. The research in Slovakia was carried out by the agency called FOCUS, which cooperates with CEORG from time to time. In all of the four above-mentioned states the research was carried out in the course of March 2005 on a representative sample of the population, on people older than 18 years. In each country approximately one thousand respondents were addressed. The investigation showed unambiguously that the citizens' attitudes to their own country and its membership in the EU and the NATO differ quite significantly (see Table 1).

The Map of the EU changed forever on May 1, 2004, when the EU accepted ten new members. Let's look at how citizens of the four newly accepted members are satisfied with the situation after nearly a year after being incorporated in the Union.

In Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic the clear majority of citizens agree with their membership in the EU. Though the lowest proportion of affirmative statements can be found in our country and in Hungary. In spite of the fact that the ratio of the citizens who do not agree with the membership in the EU in both these countries, reaches nearly three quarters of respondents. In Poland and Slovakia, approximately 8 of 10 inhabitants older than 18 years expressed their consent with membership of their countries in the EU. Similarly, the ratio of the inhabitants who do not agree with membership of their country in the EU is higher in case of the Czech Republic and Hungary (nearly one quarter of citizens) than in case of Poland and Slovakia (here approx. 15% of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction).

Even more significant differences occurred in the evaluation of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic in NATO. Even here, in all of the four countries, where the investigation was carried out, more than one half of the addressed citizens (see table No. 2) gave their consent to membership of their country in the North Atlantic Alliance.

Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic became members of the NATO in March 1999, Slovakia five years later, i.e. in March 2004. The consent of Slovak citizens to their membership in the NATO is significantly lower (54%), i.e. the lowest of all four states. On the contrary, a high rate of consent to the membership of their country in NATO is expressed by the citizens of Poland. In Poland more than 80% of citizens agree with membership of their country in NATO. The distribution of respondents' answers is, in the case of Polish membership in the EU and NATO, very similar. On the contrary, in

(the Civic Democratic Party) voters. A slightly higher rate of consent was recorded with men. Women, in comparison to men, do not align themselves with membership of our country in the EU and NATO, but they more frequently could not answer the question. Also people with a very good standard of living agree more frequently with membership of our country in both international organizations. Now let's look at individual groups of the Czech Republic population to see where we can find dissatisfaction with our membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO).

Table 8: Agreement/Disagreement with membership of his/her country in the EU (in %)

The respondent	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia
agrees by all means	31	31	43	38
more likely agrees	39	41	36	45
rather does not agree	17	16	10	11
does not agree by all means	6	6	4	4
does not know	7	6	7	2

Source: The research carried out under the auspices of the following CEORG agencies: CVVM (Czech Republic), TARKI (Hungary), CBOS (Poland) and FOCUS (Slovakia) in March 2005. They made use of the representative sample of population exceeding the age of 18 of the given country.

the remaining three countries that took part in this investigation, people more frequently agreed with their membership in the EU to their membership in NATO. In Hungary it was more than two thirds of the citizens addressed.

Agreement with membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union and in the North Atlantic Alliance was more frequently expressed by young people between 18 and 29 years of age. As far as economic activity is concerned, a higher rate of agreement is to be found among students, self-employed persons and entrepreneurs. From the point of view of political attitudes, the respondents who agree with membership of the Czech Republic in the EU and in NATO are more frequently those who are satisfied with the current political situation, the addressed persons giving preference to right-wing political orientation and the ODS

A negative attitude in our research was expressed mostly by respondents over 60 years old, i.e. mainly those classified as "unemployed pensioners". Also workers who were not trained in the area of their job gave more frequently disagreeable standpoints in comparison with other socio-professional groups. As far as the political orientation is concerned, a higher level of disagreement with our membership in the EU and NATO appeared mostly in the answers of left-wing respondents, namely with KSČM voters. Disagreement with the CR membership in both of the above-named organizations was more frequently expressed by the people who do not agree with the current political situation and those citizens who designated their own standard of living as bad.

Naděžda Horáková

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Address for Correspondence: Stribnické nivy 2, 400 11 Ústí nad Labem

e-mail: ul.socmail@soc.cas.cz

For results research and further information see the project website:

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