

Press Release

Trust in European and international institutions – April 2017

- ④ Roughly equal shares of the Czech public currently trust (48%) and distrust (47%) the European Union.
- ④ Approximately one-half (50%) of respondents distrust the European Parliament as opposed to just under one-third (32%) who do trust it. A comparable number (31%) of respondents trust the European Commission, while 47% do not trust it.
- ④ The least trust is in the Chair of the European Council, i.e. the European President, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, i.e. the EU Foreign Minister. It should be noted, however, that many people do not know who these figures are in Europe, and this has an effect on their level of trust.
- ④ More than three-fifths (61%) of respondents express trust in the United Nations, while 28% do not trust the UN. Just under three-fifths (58%) of respondents trust NATO, while one-third (33%) do not trust NATO.

Prepared by:
Jarmila Pilecká
Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences
Tel.: 210 310 591



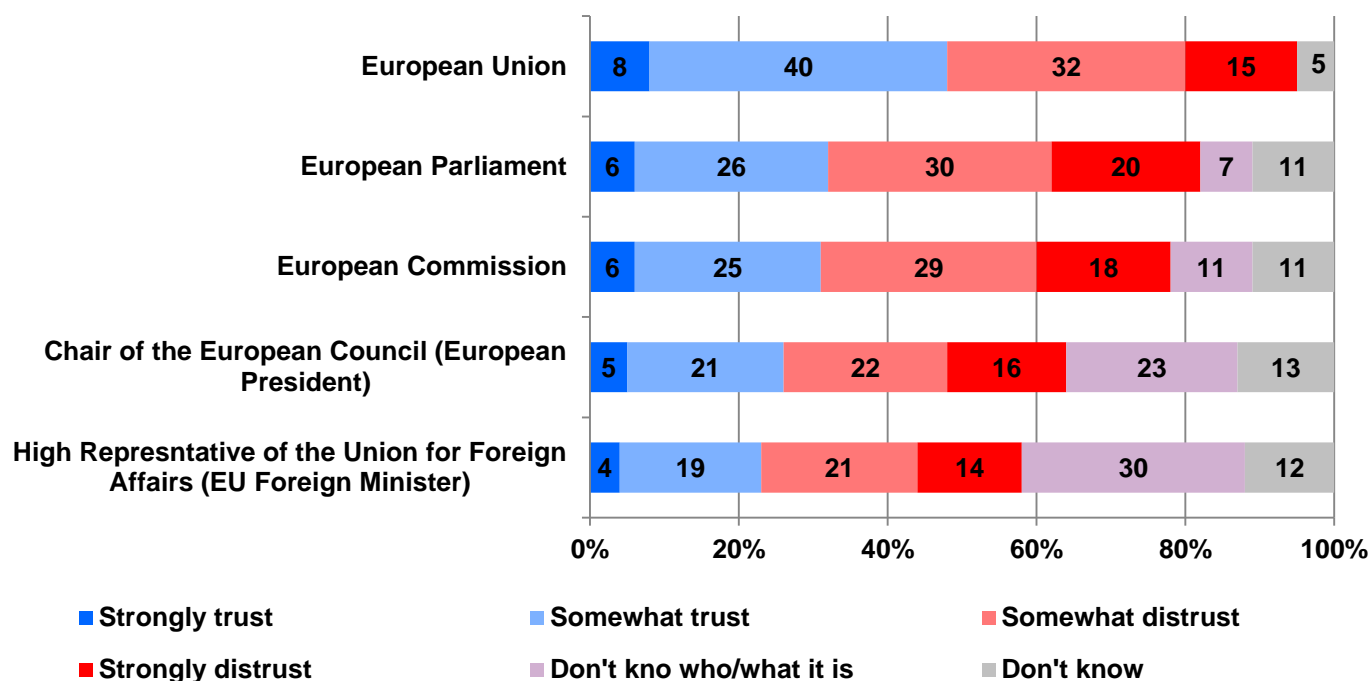
As part of its April survey the Public Opinion Research Centre posed a set of questions examining Czechs' trust in international organisations and the institutions of the European Union. Respondents specifically commented on how much they trust the North American Treaty Organization, the United Nations, and the European Union. Among EU institutions, they commented on how much they trust the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Chair of the European Council, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the EU Foreign Minister).

Roughly equal shares of the Czech population at present express trust (48%) and distrust (47%) in the European Union. However, when it comes to institutions that fall under the European Union there is more distrust than trust. Figure 1 shows that one-half (50%) of respondents currently feel distrust in the European Parliament compared to just under one-third (32%) of respondents who trust it. A comparable number (31%) of respondents also express trust in the European Commission, while 47% Czechs do not trust it. There is also a relatively large share of respondents who do not have a clear opinion on this matter and answer 'don't know' (European Parliament, don't know = 11%; European Commission, don't know = 11%).

The least trust is in the Chair of the European Council, i.e. the European President, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, i.e. the EU Foreign Minister. They are trusted by approximately one-quarter of the Czech public (26% trust the EU President and 23% the EU Foreign Minister), while just under two-fifths of respondents distrust the EU President (38%) and around one-third distrust the EU Foreign Minister (35%).

Here again, like the European Commission and the European Parliament, there is more distrust than trust. However, many people do not know who these figures are and this influences how much they trust them. Three-tenths (30%) of respondents say they do not know who the EU Foreign Minister is. A smaller but still significant share say they do not know who the European President is, with 23% specifically declaring that they do not know who he is. A large share of people had no clear opinion on this matter and chose 'don't know' as their response (12% in the case of the Foreign Minister and 13% in the case of the EU President).

Figure 1. Trust in EU institutions¹



Note: Items in the figure are ordered from highest to lowest according to the sum of responses 'strongly trust' and 'somewhat trust'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost) 3–13 April 2017, 1033 respondents aged 15 and over, face-to face-interviews.

It is apparent from the time comparison that trust in EU institutions and in the European Union itself has for all the survey institutions increased since the last survey conducted in April 2016. The current survey shows that overall trust in the EU has grown since last year by 11 percentage points. Trust in the European Parliament and the European Commission has increased by 5 percentage points, and a smaller increase (of fewer than 5 percentage points) is observed in the level of trust in the European President and the EU Foreign Minister. The current figures most resemble the distribution of opinion observed in April 2013.

¹ The question read: 'Please tell me, do you trust: a) the European Union, b) the European Commission, c) the European Parliament, d) the President of the Council of Europe, i.e. the European President, d) the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the EU Foreign Minister)?' The response options were: strongly trust, somewhat trust, somewhat distrust, strongly distrust, don't know who/what it is.

Table 1. Trust in EU institutions (a time comparison – in %)

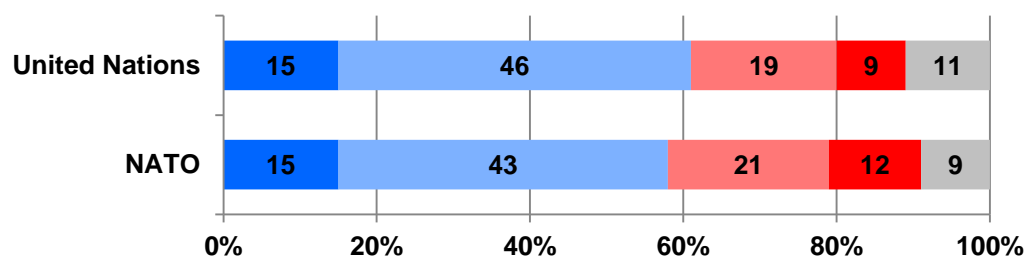
Year	03	04	04	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Month	XI	III	V	XI	II	IX	II	II	II	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
European Union	57	57	64	55	56	58	50	55	60	55	52	40	45	49	52	37	48
European Parliament	42	-	49	44	-	-	-	-	44	39	34	30	30	36	36	27	32
European Commission	39	-	46	41	-	-	-	-	40	38	34	28	30	34	35	26	31
European President	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	27	22	25	29	28	22	26
EU Foreign Minister	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	29	21	24	27	29	20	23

Note: The percentages in the table are the sums of the responses 'strongly trust' and 'somewhat trust'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 2 shows that the levels of trust in the UN and in NATO are currently roughly the same. More than three-fifths of respondents express trust in the UN (61%), while 28% express distrust in the UN. Less than three-fifths (58%) of respondents trust NATO, while one-third (33%) feel distrust. Both of these organisations thus enjoy more trust than distrust from the Czech population. Approximately one-tenth of respondents had no clear opinion and chose the response 'don't know' (UN don't know = 11%; NATO don't know = 9%).

Figure 2. Trust in the UN and NATO²



■ Strongly trust ■ Somewhat trust ■ Somewhat distrust ■ Strongly distrust ■ Don't know/No answer

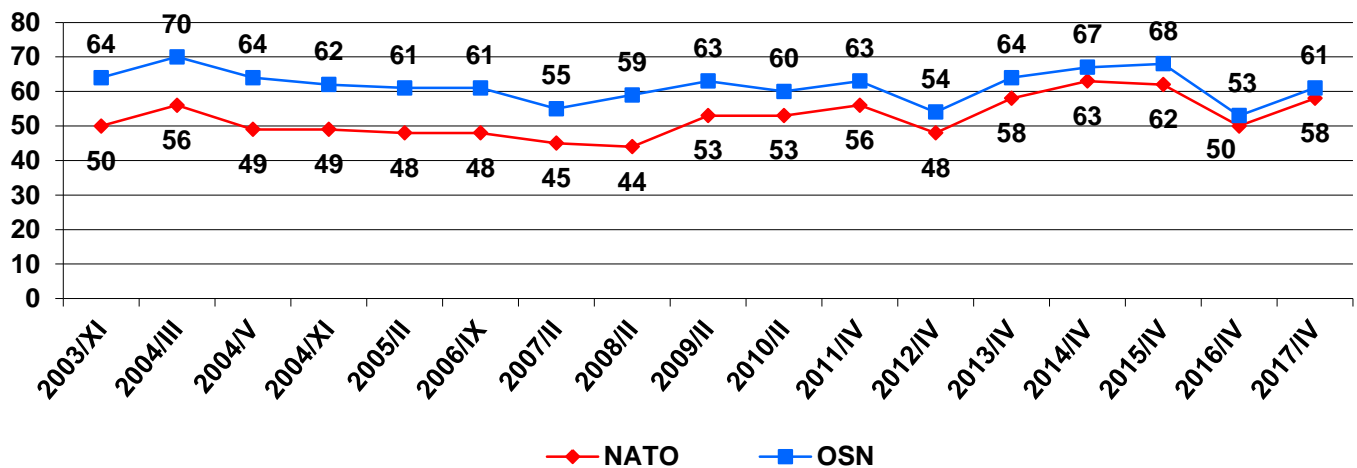
Source: Public Opinion Research Institute, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost) 3–13 April 2017, 1033 respondents aged 15 and over, face-to face interviews.

When we look at the trend for trust in these institutions over time, we see that there has been a significant increase in trust in both institutions compared to the previous survey, with trust in both the UN and NATO growing by 8 percentage points. The figures in this survey are closest to the results from 2013, when trust in the UN was at 64% and trust in NATO at 58%.

² The question read: 'Do you trust or distrust: b) the North American Treaty Organization (NATO), c) the United Nations (UN)?' The response options were: strongly trust, somewhat trust, somewhat distrust, strongly distrust'.

An increase from last year in the level of trust was recorded not just for the European Union but also for the international organisations of the UN and NATO. The current results most resemble the distribution of opinion observed in April 2013 and 2011.

Figure 3. Trust in the UN and NATO – a time comparison – in %



Note: The percentages in the graph are the sums of the responses 'strongly trust' and 'somewhat trust'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Among Czechs there is a strong correlation between trust in the UN, NATO, and the EU; if people trust the UN, in most cases they also trust NATO, and vice versa.

Looking at respondents' socio-demographic characteristics we find that trust in European and international organisations increases with respondents' level of education. These institutions are also trusted more by people who claim to have a good living standard, while people who claim to have a poor living standard distrust these institutions significantly more. Distrust is expressed more by people over the age of 60, and in the case of the EU by people aged 45 and over.

People who rank themselves clearly on the left side of the political spectrum distrust European and international organisations more. The EU and its institutions are distrusted significantly more often by supporters of the Communist Party (KSČM).

Technical parameters of the survey

Survey:	<i>Czech Society, v17-04</i>
Survey by:	<i>Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences</i>
Project:	<i>Czech Society – Continuous Public Opinion Research Project of the Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences</i>
Survey dates:	<i>3–13 April 2017</i>
Sampling method:	<i>Quota sampling</i>
Quotas:	<i>Region (NUTS 3 Regions), size of place of residence, sex, age, education</i>
Data source for quota sampling:	<i>Czech Statistical Office</i>
Representativeness:	<i>Population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15</i>
Number of respondents:	<i>1033</i>
Number of interviewees:	<i>244</i>
Data collection method:	<i>Face-to-face interviews conducted by interviewers with respondents - combined CAPI and PAPI questioning</i>
Research instrument:	<i>Standardised questionnaire</i>
Questions:	<i>PM.65, PM.162</i>
Press report no.:	<i>pm170524b</i>
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Prepared by:	<i>Jarmila Pilecká</i>

Glossary of terms:

A quota sample replicates the structure of the basic population of the study (in this case the population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15) by setting quotas for different parameters. In other words, a quota sample is based on the same proportion of persons with the selected characteristics. We used data from the Czech Statistical Office to create the quotas. In our surveys quotas are set for sex, age, education, region, and community size. The sample is thus selected so that the percentage of men and women in the sample corresponds to the share of men and women in each region of the CR. Similarly the sample reflects the corresponding shares of the population in individual regions in the CR, citizens in different age groups, people with different levels of education, and people in different sizes of communities.

A representative sample is a sample from the total population whose characteristics can be validly inferred to apply as the characteristics of the population overall. In our case this means that respondents were selected with a view to generalising the collected data as applicable to the population of the Czech Republic aged 15 and over.

The Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM) is a research department of the Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences. Its history dates back to 1946, when the Czechoslovak Institute for Public Opinion Research began operating as part of the Ministry of Information. The current CVVM emerged in 2001 when its predecessor (IVVM) was transferred from the Czech Statistical Office to the Institute of Sociology. Its incorporation within an academic institution provides a guarantee of high professional standards and quality, and as part of an academic environment the CVVM is required to fulfil criteria that ensure it meets the highest professional standards. The CVVM's work is centred on the Czech Society research project, in the frame of which it examines public opinion by conducting ten surveys annually on a representative sample of the population over the age of 15, with approximately 1000 respondents participating in each survey. The questionnaire's omnibus format makes it possible to cover a wide array of topics. Political, economic, and other generally social topics are regularly added to the survey. The surveys include both repeat questions, whereby it is possible to observe phenomena over time, and new topics that reflect current events. The long-term and continuous nature of this project focused on surveying public opinion is unique in the Czech Republic.

‘This work was supported by the AV21 Strategy of the Academy of Sciences under the ‘Global Conflicts and Local Contexts: Cultural and Social Challenges’ research programme.’