



Press Release

Public Opinion on the Czech Republic's Membership in the European Union – April 2017

- ⦿ Almost one-third of Czechs (32%) are happy with the Czech Republic's EU membership.
- ⦿ The share of Czechs who are happy with EU membership increased from the year before by 7 percentage points.
- ⦿ Approximately one-third of Czechs (33%) are proud to be European citizens and almost three-fifths (57%) feel themselves to be citizens of the European Union as well as citizens of the Czech Republic.
- ⦿ Three-fifths of Czechs (60%) believe that the Czech Republic should be a member of the European Union.
- ⦿ The share of respondents who believe that the Czech Republic should be a part of the EU increased from the year before by 9 percentage points.

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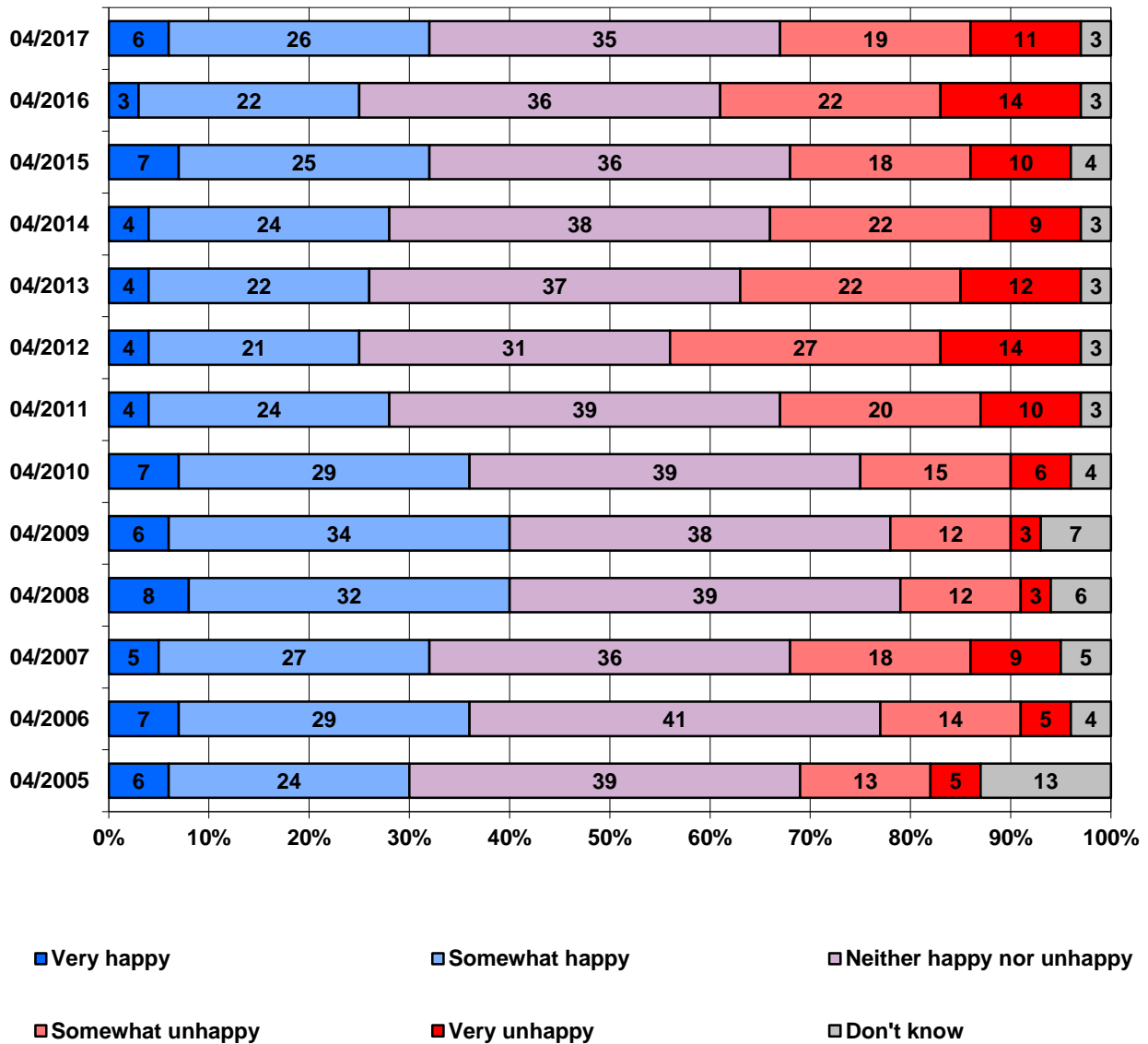


In April 2017 the Public Opinion Research Centre's regular Czech Society survey examined the Czech public's opinions on the European Union. It specifically surveyed how happy Czech citizens are with EU membership, views on European citizenship, and opinions on whether the Czech Republic should or should not be a member of the European Union.

Almost one-third of Czech citizens (32%) indicate they are happy that the Czech Republic is a member of the European Union, with just 6% saying that they are 'very happy' and 26% that they are 'somewhat happy'. More than one-third (35%) have a neutral opinion and are 'neither happy, nor unhappy' and just under one-third of respondents (30%) are unhappy with EU membership, 19% of whom are 'somewhat unhappy' and 11% of whom are 'very unhappy'. The remaining 3% of respondents were unable to answer the question. Almost equal shares of the population are happy and unhappy with EU membership, which is a difference from 2016, when the share of people unhappy with membership was significantly larger.

A comparison of results over time shows that since the survey conducted last year (April 2016) the share of the Czech public who are happy with the Czech Republic's membership in the EU increased by 7 percentage points and the current share is comparable to the share of people happy with EU membership recorded in 2015. Conversely, there was a significant decrease in the share of people who are unhappy with EU membership, which fell by 6 percentage points.

Figure 1. How happy are people with the Czech Republic's EU membership¹



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 over the age of 15, face-to-face interviews.

How happy or unhappy people are with EU membership links to age, education, and standard of living. Young people are more likely to be happy with EU membership, and with age the share of people happy with membership decreases while the share of people unhappy decreases. People with a good standard of living are more likely to be happy with EU membership, while those with a poor standard of living are more likely to be unhappy. People with university education are also more often happy with EU membership, as are students and people in managerial occupations. Conversely, senior citizens are more likely to be unhappy with EU membership. In terms of political orientation, people who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum are more likely to be happy with EU membership, and according to party preferences supporters of the Christian and Democratic Union – Czech People's Party (KDU-ČSL),

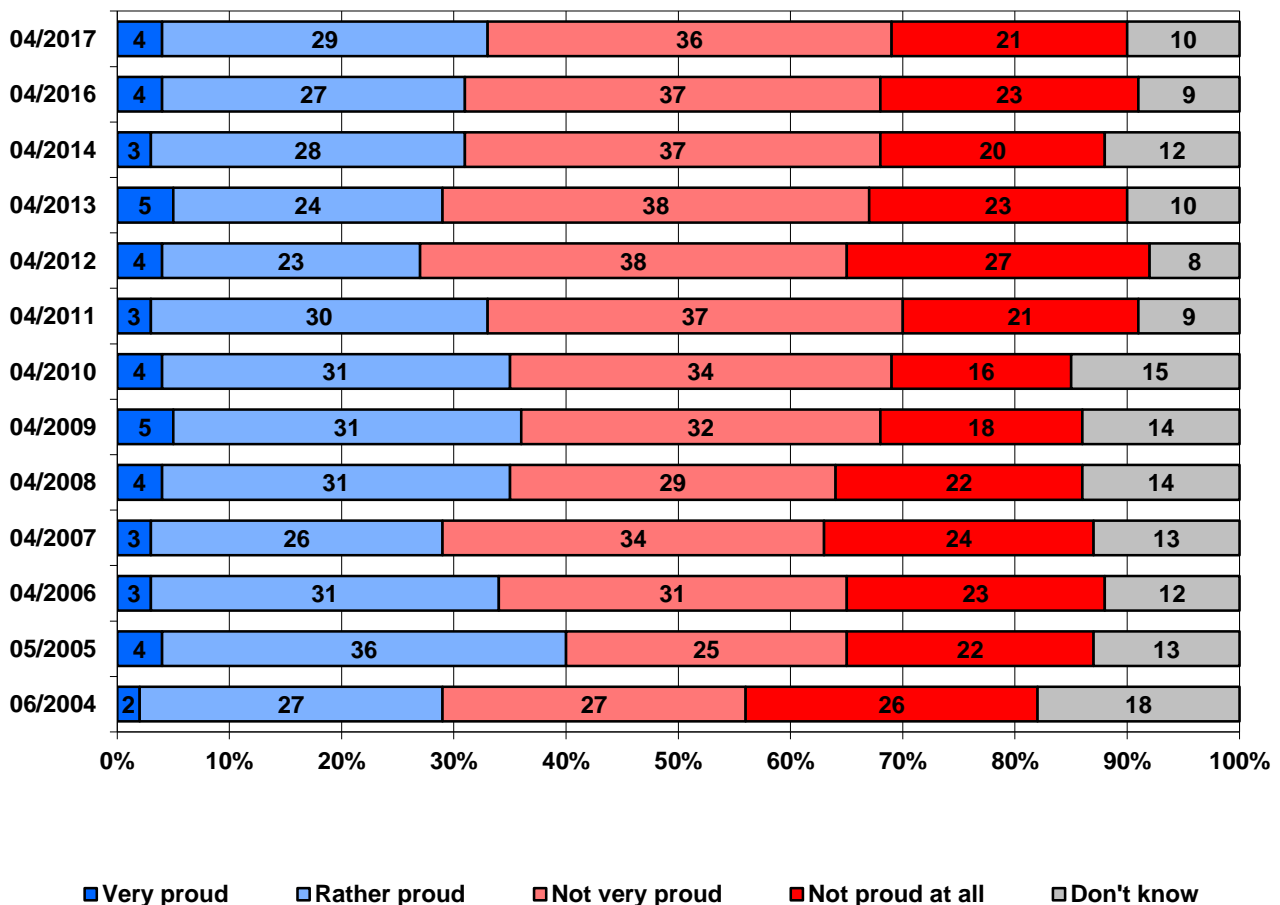
¹ The question read: 'How happy are you with the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union?' The response options were: You are – very happy, somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy, very unhappy.

the Green Party, and TOP 09 tend to be happier with EU membership. People who rank themselves on the left of the political spectrum, especially supporters of the Communist Party (KSČM), and undecided voters are more likely to be unhappy with EU membership,.

Pride in being a citizen of the European Union was observed as a measure the strength of people’s relationship to the European Union (see Figure 2). Approximately one-third of Czechs (33%) say they are proud to be European citizens, 4% of whom stated that they are ‘very proud’ and 29% that they are ‘rather proud’. However, the prevailing sentiment in the population is different, as almost three-fifths of Czechs (57%) do not feel proud of being EU citizens: 36% are ‘not very proud’ and more than one-fifth of the Czech population (21%) are ‘not proud at all’.

There were no significant changes in the results of the current survey compared to April 2016, but since 2012 it has been possible to observe a very slight and gradual increase in positive responses as the share of respondents who claim to be very or rather proud of being European citizens has risen gradually from 27% in 2012 to the current 33%.

Figure 2. How proud are you that you are a citizen of the European Union?²



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 over the age of 15, face-to-face interviews.

Pride in EU citizenship correlates with certain socio-demographic characteristics, which break down into a distribution very similar to what is observed on the question of how happy people are with the Czech Republic’s EU membership.

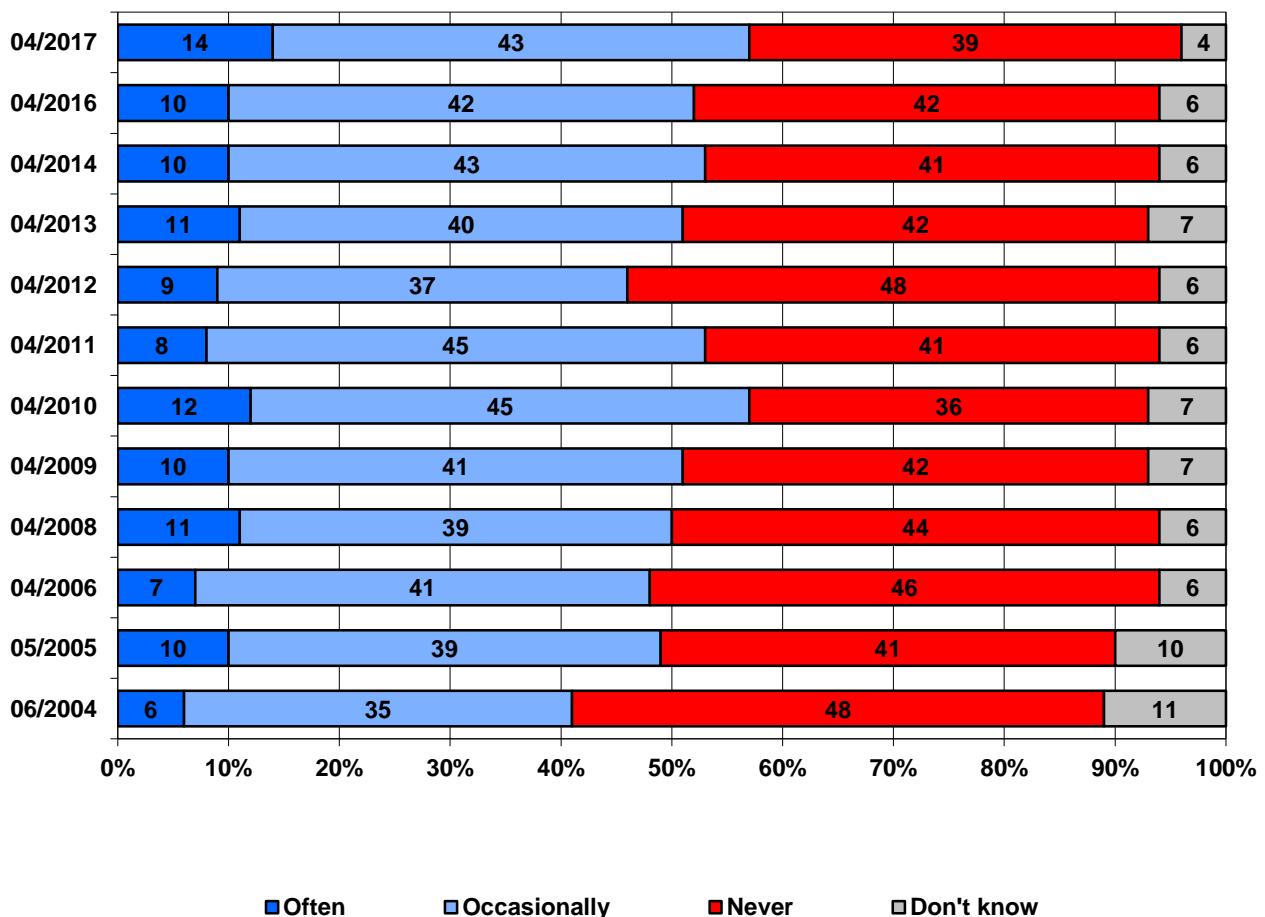
² The question read: ‘Are you proud to be a citizen of the European Union? Would you say that you are ...’ The response options were: very proud, rather proud, not very proud, not proud at all.

Those most often proud of being EU citizens are young people up to the age of 29, students, people in managerial occupations, respondents with university education, respondents who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum, and supporters of the political party TOP 09. Those who say they are 'not proud at all' tend to be people with a poor standard of living, senior citizens, respondents who rank themselves on the left side of the political spectrum, respondents with lower secondary or vocational education, supporters of the Communist Party (KSČM) and the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD), and undecided voters with no party preference.

Almost three-fifths (57%) of the population feel that they are not just citizens of the Czech Republic but also of the European Union. However, only a minority of them (14%) have this feeling, in their words, 'often', and more than two-fifths (43%) have this feeling 'occasionally'. A further approximately two-fifths of the population (39%) 'never' feel that they are European citizens.

There has been a slight increase in the number of people who often feel that they are citizens of the European Union as well as the Czech Republic compared to the results from the year before (an increase of 4 percentage points). Overall it is possible to observe a gradual increase since 2012 in the share of respondents who often or at least occasionally feel they are also citizens of the European Union (an increase of 11 percentage points since 2012) and, conversely, a decrease in the number who 'never' have this feeling (by 9 percentage points since 2012).

Figure 3. How often do you feel that you are a citizen of the European Union as well as a citizen of the Czech Republic?³



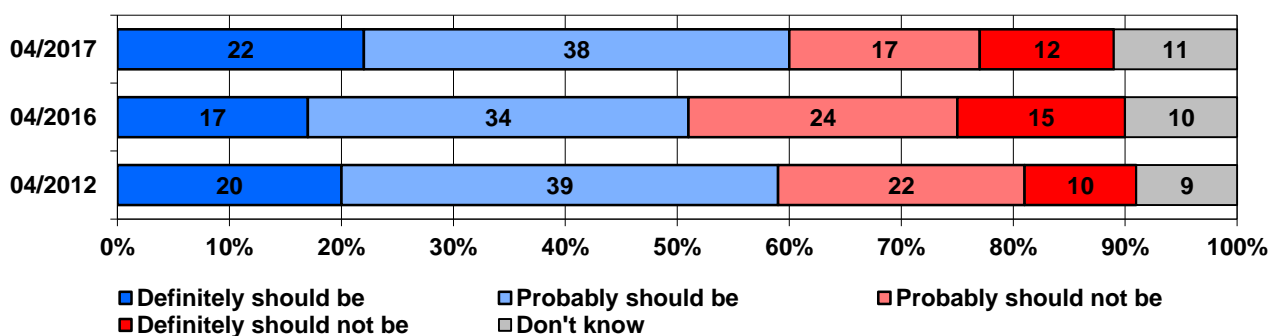
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost) 3–13 April 2017, 1033 respondents over the age of 15, face-to-face interviews.

³ The question read: 'Do you feel like a citizen of the European Union as well as a citizen of the Czech Republic?' The response options were: often, occasionally, never feel that way.

Like pride in European citizenship here again a role is played by age, education, and living standard. The number of respondents who 'often' and the number who at least 'occasionally' feel like citizens of the European Union as well as the Czech Republic decreases with increasing age. People with university education, students, and those who declare their standard of living as good more often feel like they are citizens of the EU. People who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum and supporters of the political party TOP 09 were also more likely to answer that they 'often' feel like EU citizens.

At the close of this block of questions on the European Union and the Czech Republic's membership in the EU, all the respondents were asked whether the Czech Republic should or should not be a member of the European Union.⁴

Figure 4. Should the Czech Republic be a member of the EU or not?



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 over the age of 15, face-to-face interviews.

Three-fifths of Czech citizens (60%) believe that the Czech Republic should be a member of the European Union, 22% of whom think that it 'definitely should be' and 38% that it 'probably should be'. The opposite opinion, that the Czech Republic should not be a member of the European Union, was shared by more than one-quarter of the Czech public (29%), 17% of whom felt that it 'probably should not be' and 12% that it 'definitely should not be'. The remaining approximately one-tenth of respondents (11%) were unable to answer the question and therefore selected the response 'don't know'.

The question about whether the Czech Republic should or should not be a member of the European Union was included in the Public Opinion Research Centre's (Czech Society) survey in April 2012 and again last year. The number of respondents who indicated that the Czech Republic should be a member of the EU increased by 9 percentage points from the previous year. Conversely, the number of respondents who stated that the Czech Republic should not be a member of the European Union decreased from the previous year by 10 percentage points. The current results are comparable to the results in April 2012.

The characteristics of the respondents who most often express pro-European opinions and on this question specifically stated that the Czech Republic should be a member of the European Union are very similar to the characteristics observed in the previous questions. These views are more often observed among people with a good standard of living, young people between the ages of 15 and 29, residents of Prague, people with a university education, highly qualified professionals, people in managerial occupations, and respondents who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum. With respect to party preferences, voters of the political party TOP 09 are more likely to figure among supporters of the Czech Republic's EU membership. Those opposed to EU membership tend to be people over the age of 60, senior citizens, respondents who rate their standard of living as poor, residents of Ústí nad Labem Region, people who rank themselves firmly on the left side of the political spectrum, supporters of the Communist Party (KSČM), and undecided voters.

⁴ The question read: 'In your opinion should the Czech Republic be a member of the European Union or should it not be?' The response options were: definitely should, probably should, probably should not, definitely should not.

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>
Field 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 interviewers:	<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.79, PM.73, PM.72, PM.182</i>
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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 over the age of 15.

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.

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