



### Press Release

#### Opinions on European Integration – April 2017

- ⊙ The Czech public believes that democracy and cooperation are the values that are upheld most in the EU (65% for both values) and equality is the value that is adhered to least in practice (36%).
- ⊙ The prevailing opinion among the Czech public is that European integration has benefited all the areas examined in the survey, with the biggest benefit in the area of defence (65%) and the least in politics (38%).
- ⊙ On the question of whether EU decisions are in the interest of the CR and in the interest of Czech citizens, public opinion is prevalingly negative, with 66% of Czechs claiming that EU decisions are not in the interest of the CR and 69% claiming that they are not in the interest of people like them.

Prepared by:

Veronika Pešková, Naděžda Čadová

Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences

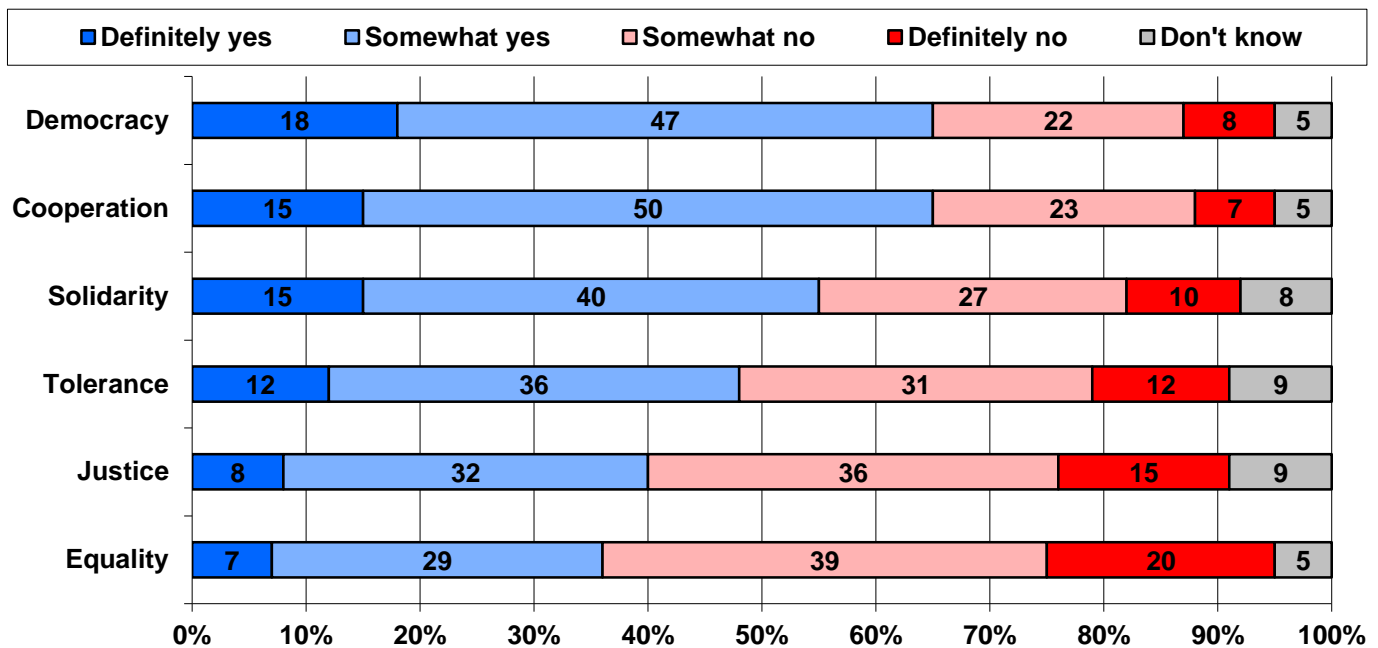
Tel.: 210 310 588; e-mail: nadezda.cadova@soc.cas.cz



The Public Opinion Research Centre included questions on the subject of European integration in the representative survey it fielded in April 2017. The survey asked respondents for their opinion on whether the European Union upholds each of the following values: democracy, equality, cooperation, tolerance, justice, and solidarity. It also asked respondents for their opinion on whether European integration has had a beneficial or harmful impact on the economy, politics, culture, defence, and the environment, and it examined whether respondents believe that the European Union's decisions are in the interest of the Czech Republic and in their own interest.

Figure 1 shows that people believe that the values that the EU adheres to most in practice are democracy and cooperation (65% of respondents in both cases). More than one-half (55%) of the Czech population over the age of 15 believe that the EU also practices the value of solidarity. On the question of tolerance the Czech public is somewhat divided, as 48% believe that the EU does practice this value, while 43% take the opposite view. Conversely, the public takes a negative view of the EU's respect for the values of justice and equality, as one-half of people (51%) believe that the EU does not uphold the value of justice, while 40% on the contrary believe that it does, and similarly almost three-fifths of Czechs do not think the EU practices the value of equality (59%) while 36% of respondents believe that it does.

Figure 1. The EU's adherence to selected values (%)<sup>1</sup>



Note: The data are ordered according to the sum of responses 'definitely yes' + 'somewhat yes'.

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.

Those who tend to most strongly believe that the EU adheres to the majority of the values examined in the survey are people who consider their living standard as good, university-educated people, residents of Prague, people who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum, and young people between the ages of 15 and 29. Those who felt most that the EU does not adhere to these values were undecided voters, people over the age of 60, and people who describe their living standard as poor.

Across all of the values surveyed there was a significant increase since April 2016 (see Table 1) in the belief that the EU adheres to them. The biggest increase was in the Czech public's belief that the European Union adheres to the value of cooperation (by 7 percentage points), followed by justice and equality (in both cases by 5 percentage points). People also believe more than they did in the past that the EU adheres to the values of democracy, solidarity, and tolerance (in each case there was an increase of 4 percentage points).

The belief that the EU upholds the value of democracy is currently at its lowest level since 2002, when the question was included in the survey for the first time. The results for the other values are comparable to the results from 2015.

<sup>1</sup> The question read: 'Do you think that the European Union currently adheres to the following values? a) democracy, b) equality, c) cooperation, d) tolerance, e) justice, f) solidarity.' The response options were: definitely yes, somewhat yes, somewhat no, definitely no.

**Table 1. The EU's adherence to selected values (a time comparison in %)**

	X/02	IV/06	IV/07	IV/08	IV/09	IV/10	IV/11	IV/12	IV/13	IV/14	IV/15	IV/16	IV/17
Democracy	73/14	75/18	70/23	72/21	74/20	75/18	73/23	66/29	68/27	72/24	69/26	61/33	65/30
Cooperation	72/17	68/25	60/34	72/21	68/24	63/29	65/31	59/36	67/28	71/22	68/27	58/35	65/30
Solidarity	63/22	56/32	48/43	55/32	55/32	58/32	60/36	49/43	54/39	59/33	56/37	51/40	55/37
Tolerance	51/29	49/38	44/46	47/40	51/38	50/39	51/42	44/46	49/43	53/37	51/42	44/47	48/43
Justice	45/33	37/51	33/57	38/48	41/47	39/50	40/53	35/56	38/54	43/48	39/53	35/58	40/51
Equality	41/44	32/60	27/67	36/57	39/53	37/55	39/56	33/63	34/61	39/55	37/58	31/64	36/59

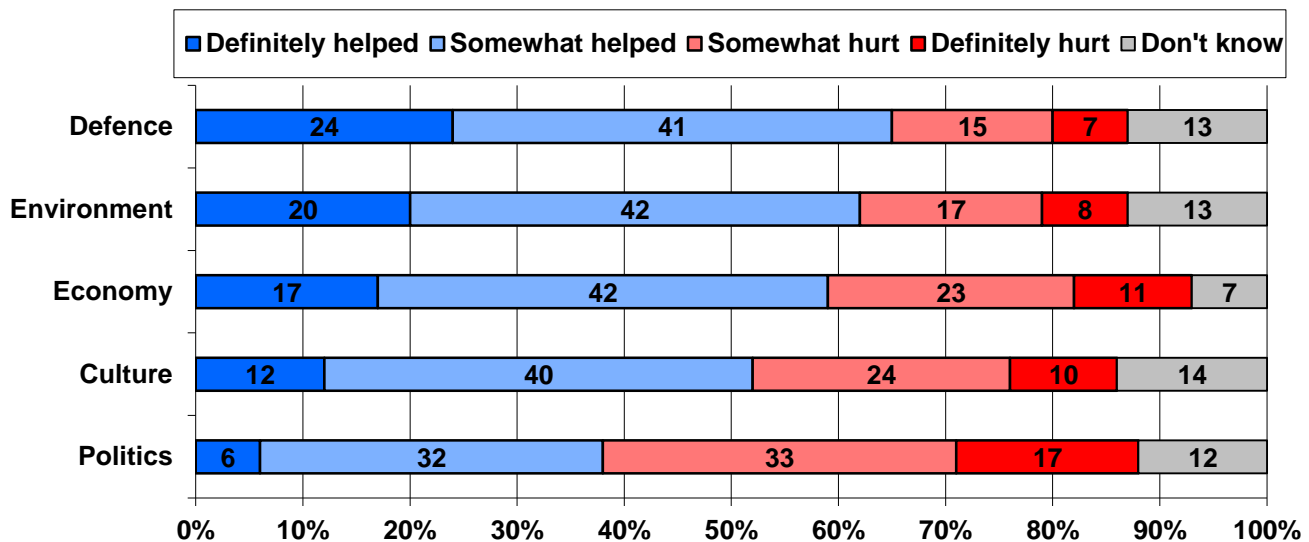
Note: The table presents the sum of positive responses ('definitely yes' + 'somewhat yes') and the sum of negative responses ('somewhat no' and 'definitely no'). The difference to 100% is formed by the response 'don't know'.

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

The survey also examined whether the Czech public sees European integration as having helped or hurt different areas of society (see Figure 2).

The prevailing opinion among the Czech public is that European integration has had a positive impact. The areas of society that are most often seen as having benefit from EU integration are defence (65%) and the environment (62%). Approximately three-fifths of the Czech public believe that European integration has helped the economy (59%) and more than one-half that it has helped culture (52%). The most sceptical view is of the benefits of integration on politics, where exactly one-half of respondents believe that integration has had a negative impact (50%) and only less than two-fifths think it has had a positive impact (38%).

**Figure 2. Opinions on how much EU integration has helped or hurt selected areas of society<sup>2</sup>**



Note: The data are ordered according to the sum of responses 'definitely helped' + 'somewhat helped'.

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.

<sup>2</sup> The question read: 'In your opinion has European integration helped or hurt the following areas: a) the economy, b) politics, c) culture, d) defence, e) the environment?' The response options were: definitely helped, somewhat helped, somewhat hurt, definitely hurt.

Those who tend most to believe that European integration has had a positive impact on all the areas examined in the survey are people who describe their household's standard of living as good, university-educated respondents, and respondents who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum. Respondents who rated European integration as having helped every area study also more often claimed to be happy with the country's EU membership.

**Table 2. The public's opinion on whether EU integration has helped or hurt selected areas of society (a time comparison in %)**

	X/02	IV/06	IV/07	IV/08	IV/09	IV/10	IV/11	IV/12	IV/13	IV/14	IV/15	IV/16	IV/17
Defence	71/10	74/9	68/16	71/15	75/9	72/14	72/17	66/18	69/16	73/13	69/17	61/26	65/22
Environment	78/7	70/16	70/16	76/13	73/13	68/16	70/20	63/23	62/23	69/19	68/20	57/27	62/25
Economy	60/25	63/22	47/43	57/26	54/34	52/35	47/46	44/48	46/43	53/38	53/38	52/39	59/34
Culture	70/12	68/14	69/17	74/13	57/25	65/18	61/29	54/31	58/28	58/27	56/30	50/36	52/34
Politics	59/19	55/26	53/32	60/29	52/29	54/28	46/41	38/47	38/48	46/40	44/43	36/52	38/50

Note: The figures in the table are the sums of the responses 'definitely helped' + 'somewhat helped' and the sums of the responses 'definitely hurt' + 'somewhat hurt'. The difference to 100% is made up of the response 'don't know'.

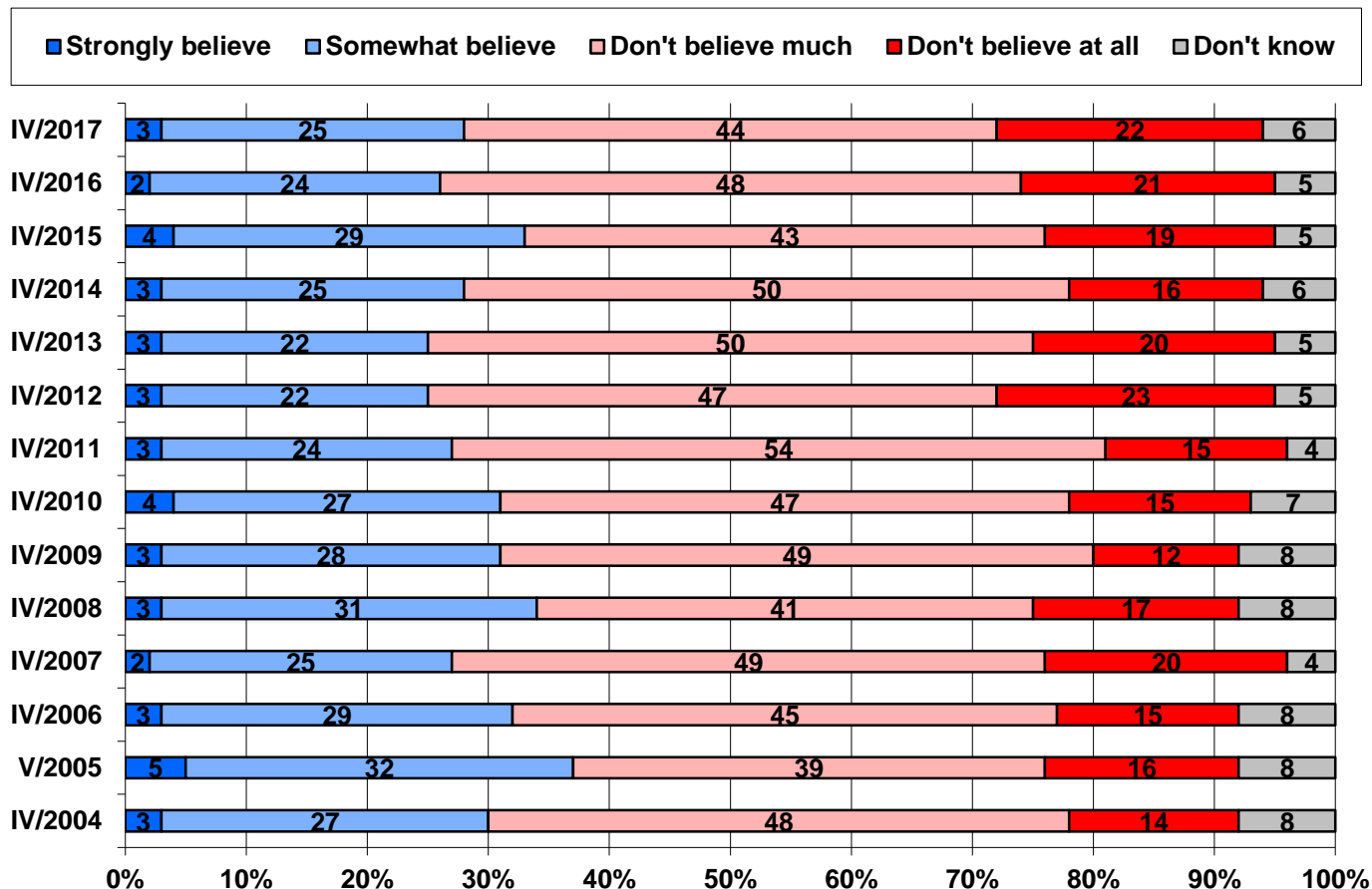
Source: Surveys of the Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Table 2 compares over time the Czech public's views on whether EU integration has helped or hurt selected areas of society. Compared to the survey fielded a year earlier belief in the benefits of EU integration grew stronger in every area surveyed except culture and politics, where the current result is statistically comparable to the year before. The biggest increase in the belief in EU integration's positive impact was recorded for the economy (by 7 percentage points) followed by the environment (by 5 percentage points) and defence (by 4 percentage points).

The Public Opinion Research Centre has been observing over the long term whether the public sees EU decisions as being in the interest of the Czech Republic. Figure 3 shows that currently more than one-quarter of the population believe that EU decisions are in the Czech Republic's interest (28%), while two-thirds of the Czech public (66%) do not share this view.

There were no statistically different differences from the survey fielded in April 2016. The current shares of positive and negative responses are comparable to the results in 2014 and 2012.

Figure 3. Do you believe that EU decisions are in the interest of the Czech Republic? (a time comparison in %)<sup>3</sup>



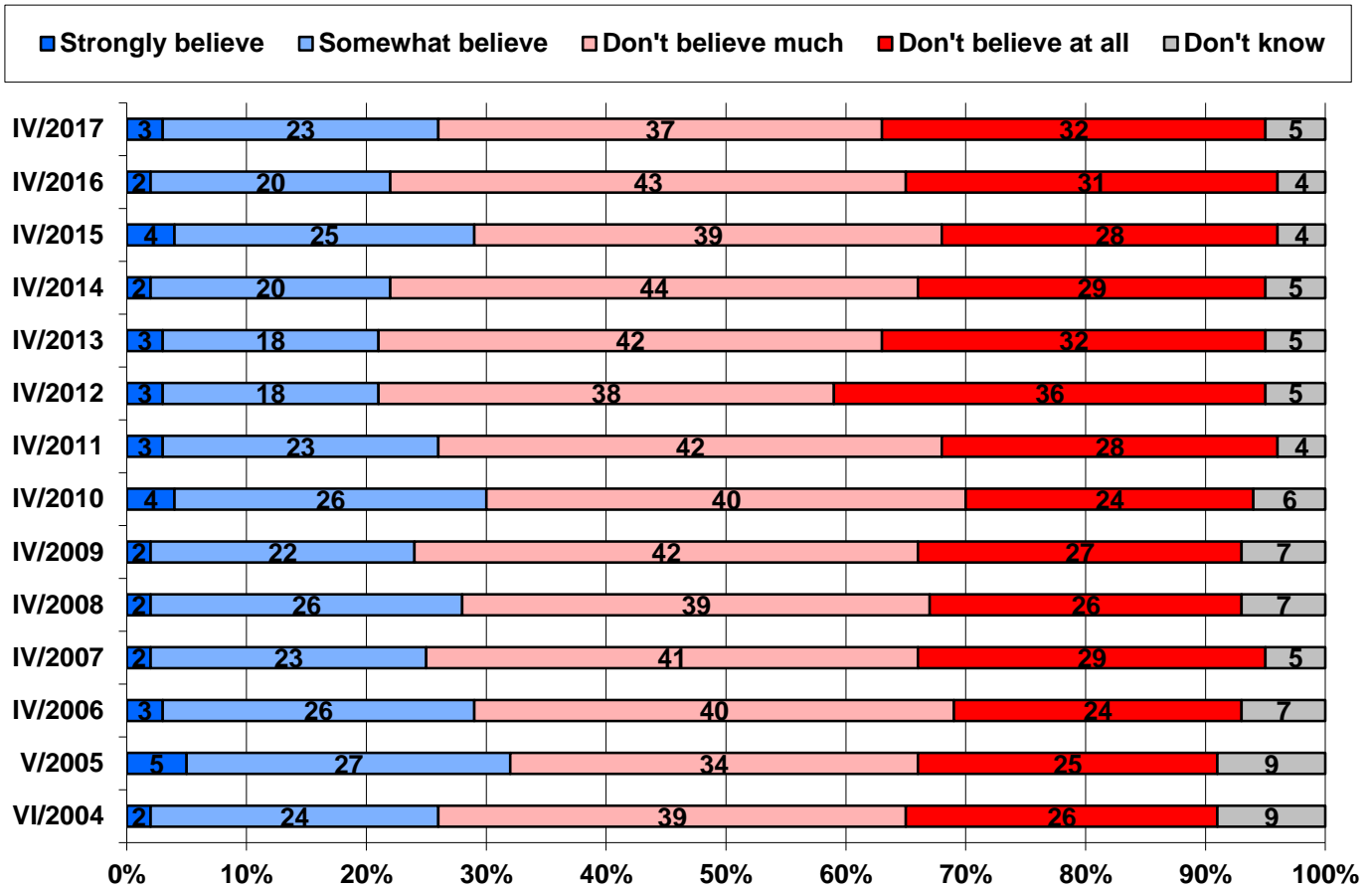
Source: Surveys of the Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

The Public Opinion Research Centre also surveys whether Czechs believe that EU decisions are in the interest of people like them (see Figure 4). In April 2017 more than one-quarter (26%) of respondents said that they believe EU decisions are in the interest of people like them, while more than two-thirds of the Czech public (69%) expressed the opposite opinion.

Compared to the survey conducted one year earlier (in April 2016) there was a slight increase (by 4 percentage points) in the share of respondents who said that they believe EU decisions are in the interest of people like them. As with the question about whether EU decisions are in the interest of the CR, here too the current results resemble the results from 2012 but not the results from 2014.

<sup>3</sup> The question read: 'How much do you believe that EU decisions are in the interest of the Czech Republic?' The response options were: strongly believe, somewhat believe, don't believe much, don't believe at all, don't know.

Figure 4: Do you believe that EU decisions are in the interest of people like you? (a time comparison in %)



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

A close analysis of the analysis of the data reveals which groups of the population believe most or least that EU decisions are consistent with the interests of the Czech Republic and with their interests personally. However, whether we are asking about the consistency of EU decisions with the Czech Republic's interests or with the respondents' own interests, the distribution of opinions between socio-economic groups is very similar. Those who tend to believe that EU decisions are consistent with the Czech Republic's and their own personal interests are slightly more often found among young people aged 15 to 29, students, highly qualified employees, people in managerial occupations, university-educated respondents, people who indicate their household has a good standard of living, and respondents who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum. Respondents who believe EU decisions are in the interest of the Czech Republic or people like them are also more often happy with the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union.

Those who much less often believe that EU decisions are in the interests of the Czech Republic and with their interests are people with a poor standard of living and supporters of the political left. A less positive opinion on these questions is also observed among senior citizens and people who are unemployed. Those who do not believe that EU decisions are consistent with the Czech Republic's and their own interests are also more often people who are unhappy with the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union.

---

## Technical parameters of the survey

Survey:	<i>Czech Society, v17-04</i>
Survey fielded 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 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>ps.5</i>
Press release no:	<i>pm170524c</i>
Published on:	<i>24 May 2017</i>
Prepared by:	<i>Veronika Pešková, Naděžda Čadová</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 aged 15 and over) 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 aged 15 and over, 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.'**