

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S ACCESSION TO THE EU – COMPARISON OF CITIZEN'S OPINIONS AND OPINIONS OF THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**

### Technical Characteristics

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In this research, citizens were offered by particular options of advantages and disadvantages and then they were questioned, whether a informant thinks that our membership in the EU shall bring or not ... (see table1).

**Table No.1:** "Do you think that our membership in the EU shall bring to citizens ..."

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DO NOT KNOW</b>
<b>Partial loss of country's sovereignty</b>	<b>68</b>	17	15
<b>Greater country's safety</b>	<b>65</b>	17	18
<b>Dangers related to migration of people</b>	<b>60</b>	22	18
<b>Greater economic problems</b>	<b>58</b>	22	20
<b>Greater legal certitudes</b>	<b>53</b>	22	25
<b>Greater democratic certitudes</b>	<b>52</b>	22	26
<b>Complexified administration</b>	<b>52</b>	23	25
<b>Improved quality of Czech legislature</b>	<b>42</b>	26	32
<b>Economic advantages</b>	<b>41</b>	37	22
<b>Higher living standards</b>	<b>35</b>	44	21

*100% in one line*

Interviewees are mostly convinced of a partial loss of country's sovereignty. In addition, people more frequently think that the Czech Republic's membership in the EU shall bring greater safety, greater legal and democratic certitudes, improved quality of Czech legislature, and economic advantages on the one hand, but on the other hand also dangers related to migration of people and economic problems including decrease of living standards. In the majority of cases, it is worth to mention the large group of citizens being hazily.

Certainly, great differences were between those, who support the Czech Republic's accession to the EU, and those, who are against this accession<sup>1</sup> (see Table No. 2). Advantages were mentioned considerably more frequently by those interviewees, who should vote in a potential referendum for the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, and on the contrary disadvantages by those, who should vote in this referendum against this accession.

<sup>1</sup> In October, 49 % of interviewees voted aye in case of country's accession to the EU, 18 % voted nay, 22 % were undecided, 5 % should not vote, 6 % did not know, whether to vote or not.

**Table No. 2:** Opinion about contributions of our membership in the EU - according to attitudes to the accession

<b>YES, IT BRINGS (%) :</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>For accession</b>	<b>Against accession</b>
<b>Partial loss of country's sovereignty</b>	68	57	93
<b>Greater country's safety</b>	65	83	37
<b>Dangers related to migration of people</b>	60	51	80
<b>Greater economic problems</b>	58	41	90
<b>Greater legal certitudes</b>	53	75	24
<b>Greater democratic certitudes</b>	52	77	20
<b>Complexified administration</b>	52	43	81
<b>Improved quality of Czech legislature</b>	42	64	17
<b>Economic advantages</b>	41	67	9
<b>Increased living standards</b>	35	58	7

With regard to the fact that this question was put to common population not only in our November research in the last year, but also in the Sociological Institute's research "Opinions of Political Elite" among Members of Parliament and Senators in the last year, we can carry out several comparisons (see Table No. 3).

Results gathered in our researches differ only slightly; this year the pessimism regarding the Czech legislature's improved quality, economic advantageusness, and increases in living standards has deepened. In addition, those people being convinced of partial loss of sovereignty were less frequent.

If we look at the comparison of opinions of our informants and opinions of Members of Parliament and Senators, it is clear that the opinion of Members of Parliament is unambiguously more positive, and Senators' opinion is even more positive. Members of Parliament and Senators are moreover increasingly convinced on partial loss of sovereignty, and they are practically in agreement with common population in case of complexified administration.

**Table No. 3:** Consent that our membership in the EU shall bring to citizens ... – comparison

<b>Concurring Opinion (%):</b>	<b>Citizens 2001</b>	<b>Citizens 2002</b>	<b>MPs 2001</b>	<b>Senators 2001</b>
<b>Partial loss of country's sovereignty</b>	73	<b>68</b>	85	87
<b>Greater country's safety</b>	63	<b>65</b>	74	79
<b>Dangers related to migration of people</b>	63	<b>60</b>	47	49
<b>Greater economic problems</b>	57	<b>58</b>	38	31
<b>Greater legal certitudes</b>	50	<b>53</b>	77	82
<b>Greater democratic certitudes</b>	51	<b>52</b>	70	80
<b>Complexified administration</b>	54	<b>52</b>	57	51
<b>Improved quality of Czech legislature</b>	50	<b>42</b>	76	86
<b>Economic advantages</b>	46	<b>41</b>	85	89
<b>Increased living standards</b>	39	<b>35</b>	77	82

IN ADDITION, WE WERE INTERESTED IN THE **ROLE, WHICH PEOPLE ATTRIBUTE TO VARIOUS ASPECTS WHEN NEGOTIATING LAWS RELATING TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S ACCESSION TO THE EU<sup>2</sup>** (SEE TABLE NO. 4).

**Table No. 4:** Citizen's opinions in case of the role, which is played by following aspects, when laws relating to the Czech Republic's accession to the EU are negotiated in parliament

	<b>11/01</b>	<b>10/02</b>	<b>Difference of Averages 11/01 - 10/02</b>
<b>Sectional Interests, Lobby</b>	5.35	<b>5.06</b>	0.29
<b>Consent to Requirements of European Laws</b>	5.07	<b>4.95</b>	0.12
<b>Party Aspect</b>	5.12	<b>4.67</b>	0.45
<b>Professional Aspect</b>	4.29	<b>4.48</b>	-0.19
<b>National Interests</b>	4.20	<b>4.46</b>	-0.26

*average values, where 1=no role to 7=utmost role*

Interviewees think most frequently that the greatest role in negotiations of laws related to the Czech Republic's accession to the EU in parliament are played by sectional interests, lobby. Only behind this opinion, there is "consent to requirements of European Laws". In addition, people think that, in negotiations, a party aspect is more important than professional aspect, and interviewees think that Members of Parliament take into account national interests least frequently.

<sup>2</sup> Question: "What role is, in your opinion, played by following aspects, when laws related to the CR's accession to the EU are negotiated in the Parliament? No role = 1, 7 = utmost role"

In last year's November, when we asked this question in our research for the first time, citizens' attitudes were quite similar. They stressed a little bit more the aspects of sectional interests, requirements of European Laws, and especially the party aspect; even smaller role they attributed to the professional aspect and national interests.

A very similar question was asked in the above-mentioned research "Opinions of Political Elite", however, with the difference that Members of Parliament and Senators ranked aspects according to their importance from the most important aspect to the least important ones<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, comparisons of results with the entire population can be carried out here only as an indicative value. Despite of it, I think it is clear (see Table No. 5) that, while citizens attribute important roles to sectional interest, lobbies, and party interest, when laws relating to the Czech Republic's accession to the EU is negotiated, our legislatives do not see it this way, and they give priority, on the contrary, to national interests, professional aspects and consents to requirements of European Laws.

**Table No. 5: Opinions of Members of Parliament and Senators about the role played by following aspects in the Parliament, when laws relating to the Czech Republic's accession to the EU**

	<b>Members of Parliament PS</b>		<b>Senators</b>	
	<b>% of placements on 1./5. place<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Average placement<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>% of placements on 1./5. place<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Average placement<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Professional Aspect</b>	49 / 1	<b>1.67</b>	49 / 1	<b>1.70</b>
<b>National Interests</b>	48 / 4	<b>1.75</b>	53 / 4	<b>1.91</b>
<b>Consent to Requirements of European Laws</b>	41 / 2	<b>1.78</b>	49 / 1	<b>2.04</b>
<b>Party Aspect</b>	3 / 20	<b>3.53</b>	4 / 22	<b>3.50</b>
<b>Sectional Interests, Lobby</b>	1 / 49	<b>3.89</b>	3 / 53	<b>4.19</b>

1) percents of aspect's placements on the 1<sup>st</sup> place = most important, and on 5<sup>th</sup> = least important.

2) average value of aspect's placement, where 1 = most important, and 5 = least important

<sup>3</sup> Question: Rank please following aspects according to their importance in relation to their role played by them, when legislature concerning the CR's accession to the EU is negotiated and passed. Scale 1-5, where 1 means the utmost importance and 5 least importance.