



Press Release

The Czech public on the future of the EU and adopting the euro – April 2017

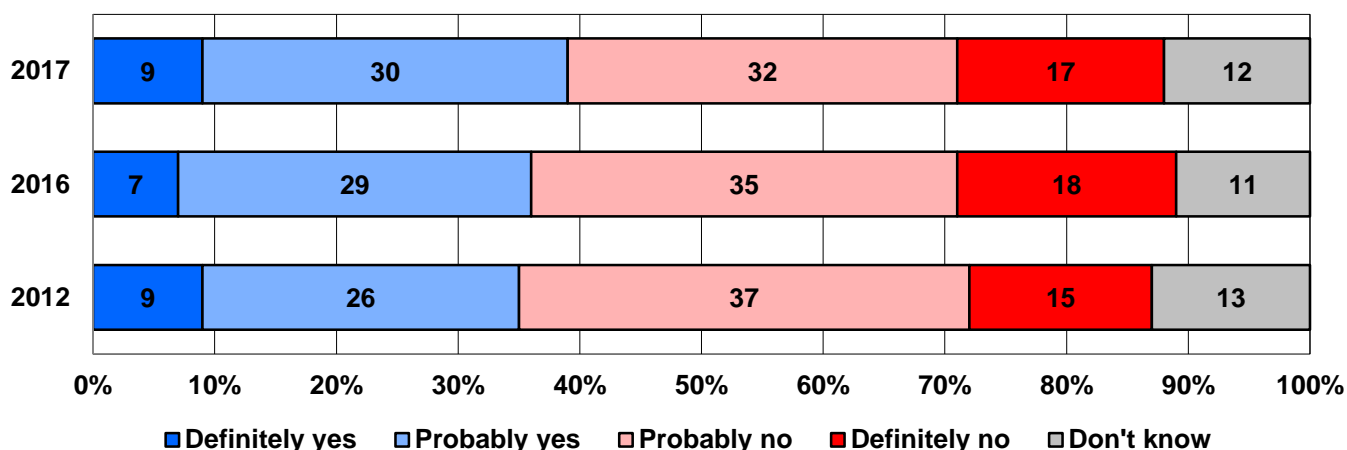
- ⦿ The Czech public is somewhat sceptical in its view of the future of the project for a united Europe.
- ⦿ Most people think that the current level of EU integration and the extent of the Czech Republic's engagement in the EU are sufficient, and more people would prefer less EU integration than more.
- ⦿ Only 21% of Czechs support introducing the euro as the currency of the Czech Republic, while 72% are opposed.
- ⦿ Czechs' scepticism about the EU has decreased slightly since last year.

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In April 2017 the Czech Society survey asked the public about their opinions on EU integration and the Czech Republic's role in this process. Respondents were also asked how much they believe the project of a united Europe has a future and whether the Czech Republic should adopt the euro as its currency.

Figure 1. Belief in the future of the European project¹



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.

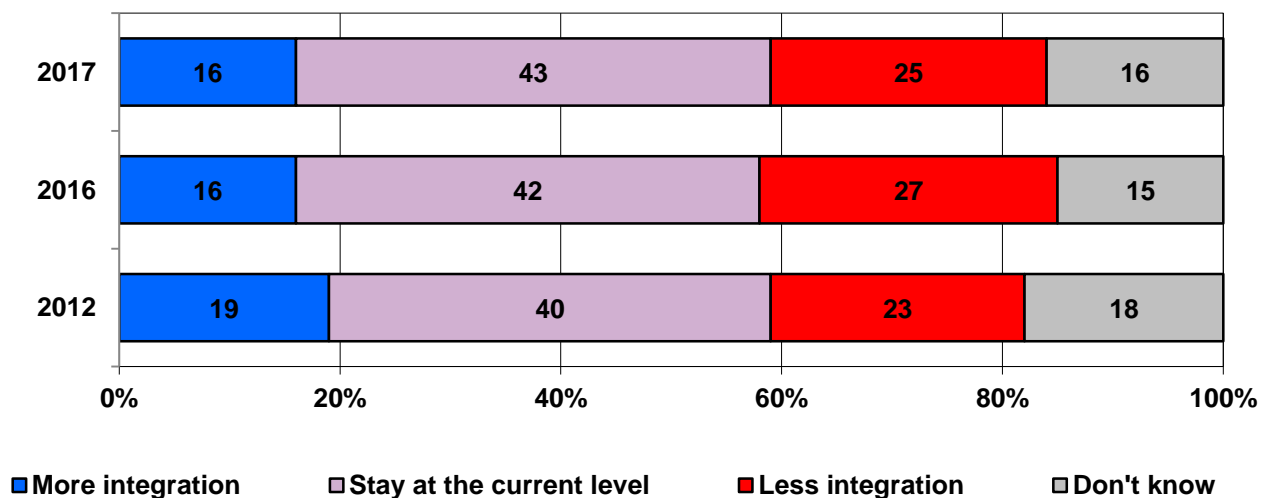
¹ The question read: 'When you think about it very generally, do you believe that the project for a united Europe has or does not have a future?' Response options: definitely yes, probably yes, probably no, definitely no.

As Figure 1 shows, the Czech public is generally sceptical about the future of the European project. Just under two-fifths (39%) of the Czech population believe that the project for a united Europe definitely or probably has a future. Almost one-half (49%) of respondents do not believe in the future of this project and the remaining 12% answered 'don't know'. There has been a slight decrease since last year (by 4 percentage points) in the number of people who think that the European project has no future. Current public opinion on the future of a united Europe is also slightly more optimistic than it was in 2012, when this question was included in the Czech Society survey for the first time.

Belief in the future of the European project varies across different social groups, but the responses most strongly reflected the differences in people's opinions about the European Union itself and the Czech Republic's membership in it: people who have a positive opinion on the EU and the CR's membership also believe more strongly in the future of a united Europe. Those people who believe more strongly in the future of Europe or are less sceptical about it tend to be young people (aged 15–19), university graduates, students, highly qualified professionals or people in managerial positions, people who have a good standard of living, are happy with their life and are happy with the current political situation, people who trust the government, and people who rank themselves clearly on the right side of the political spectrum. In terms of party preferences, voters of the Christian Democrat-Czech People's Party (KDU-ČSL) and the Green Party more often believe that the project for a united Europe has a future.

A more sceptical view of the future of a united Europe is observed mainly among people over the age of 60, people with lower secondary or vocational education, senior citizens, the unemployed, people working in labour occupations, people who describe their living standard as 'neither good nor bad' or describe it as bad, people who are unhappy with the current political situation, people who are unhappy or 'neither happy nor unhappy' with their life, people who do not trust the government, and people who rank themselves on the left side of the political scale, as well as voters of the Communist Party (KSČM) or the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD) and undecided voters.

Figure 2. The course of EU integration in the future²



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.

The most common opinion among Czechs on whether there should be more or less integration (see Figure 2) is that the level of European integration should remain roughly the same as it is at present, which was the opinion of more than two-fifths of respondents (43%). Approximately one-sixth (16%) favoured more integration while one-quarter (25%) would prefer less integration. The remaining 16% of respondents had no opinion on this matter and chose to respond 'don't know'. The distribution of opinions on this question did not significantly differ from the results of the

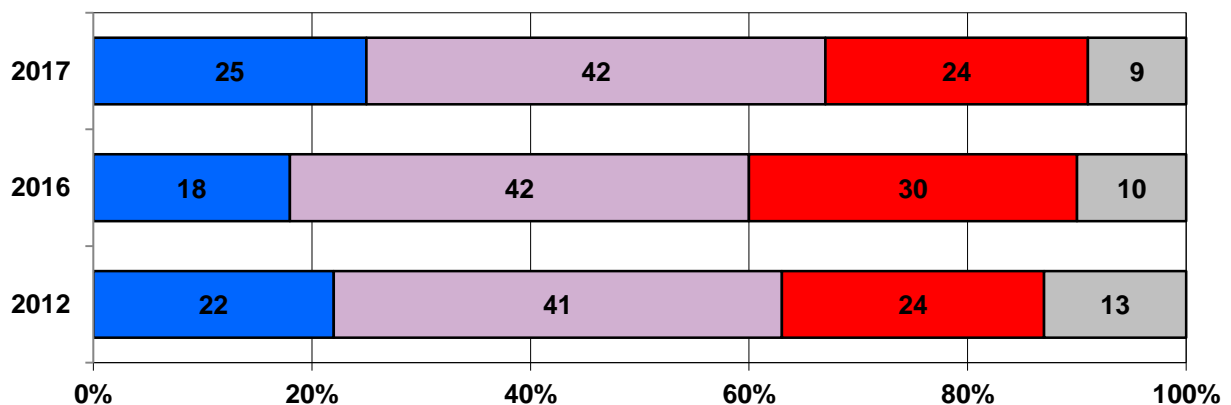
² The question read: 'In your opinion, should there be more or less integration in the European Union in the future, or should we stay with the current level of integration today?' The response options were: more integration / the current level of integration / less integration.

survey in April 2016, nor are there any statistically significant differences from the first comparable survey on this topic in 2012.

From the perspective of individual socio-demographic population groups, those who support more European integration tend to be young people aged 15 to 19, students, people who describe their standard of living as good, people who are happy with the current political situation and happy with their own life, people who trust the government, supporters of the political party ANO, and especially people who think that the project for a united Europe has a future and who tend to have pro-European opinions on other questions. People aged 15 to 19, students, people with a good standard of living, people happy with the political situation and happy with their own life, people who trust the government, people who rank themselves firmly on the political right, voters of the political party TOP 09, and people who believe in the future of the project for a united Europe or have other pro-European views are also relatively less often support decreasing European integration.

Conversely, people who favour less European integration or are less often support more integration tend to be people between the ages of 45 and 59, people who describe their standard of living as 'neither good nor bad' or as bad, unqualified or semi-qualified workers, people unhappy with the political situation and unhappy with their own life, people who distrust the government, people who rank themselves on the left side of the political scale, supporters of the Communist Party (KSČM) or the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD), undecided voters, and people who are sceptical of the future of the project for a united Europe, are distrustful of the EU, or otherwise have Eurosceptical opinions.

Figure 3. Increasing the Czech Republic's involvement in the EU in the future³



■ Increase involvement in the EU □ Stay at the current level ■ Decrease involvement in the EU □ Don't know

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.

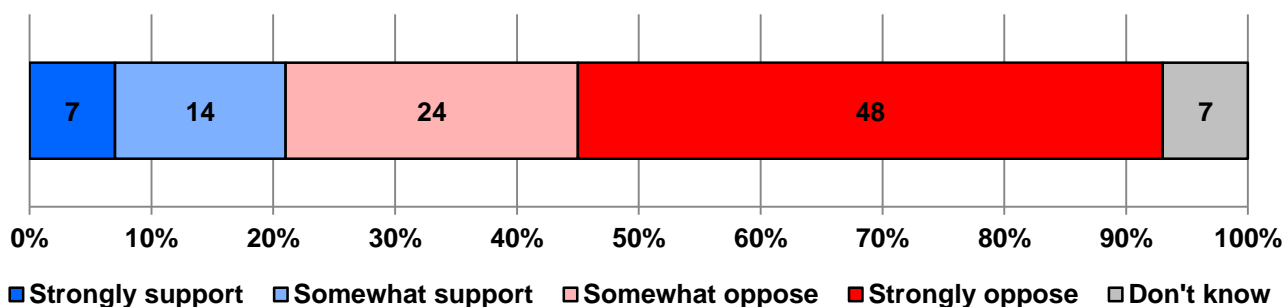
The Czech public's opinions about the level of the Czech Republic's involvement in the European Union in the future, which are summed up in Figure 3, differ slightly from the distribution of opinions on the future integration of the EU as a whole. There is a similarity in that more than two-fifths (42%) want the Czech Republic's level of involvement in the EU to remain at its current level, just like opinions on the future direction of the level of European integration, and also in that this is relatively the most common opinion. However, unlike opinions on EU integration, those who support increasing and those who support decreasing the Czech Republic's involvement in the EU are roughly equal at one-quarter of respondents, which is a noticeable shift since last year, when more people thought the Czech Republic should be less involved in the European Union than thought it should be more involved. Specifically, the share of

³ The question read: 'In your opinion, should the Czech Republic increase or decrease its involvement in the European Union, or should the level of its involvement remain the same as it is at present?' The response options were: Increase involvement in the EU / the CR's level of involvement should stay at the current level / Decrease involvement in the EU.

people in favour of more involvement increased by 7 percentage points, while those of the opposite opinion decreased by 6 percentage points. The overall distribution of opinions on this question thus again resemble the distribution of opinions in 2012, when this question was included in the survey for the first time. One-tenth (9%) of respondents had no answer to the question.

Increasing the Czech Republic's involvement in the EU is supported more by young people aged 15 to 19, students, people with a good household living standard, people who are happy with the political situation and happy with their life, people who trust the government, supporters of the political party TOP 09 or the Pirate Party, people who think that the Czech Republic should definitely stay in the EU, who trust the EU, and who in other questions generally express pro-European opinions. The opinion that the Czech Republic should be less involved in the EU is more often held by people with lower secondary or vocational education, people who describe the living standard of their household as bad or as 'neither good nor bad', people who are unhappy with the current political situation and who are unhappy with their life, people who do not trust the government, supporters of the Communist Party (KSČM) or the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD), people who rank themselves firmly on the left side of the political scale, and people who do not trust the EU, believe the CR should not remain in the EU, and express Euro-sceptical opinions on other issues. People who 'somewhat' agree that the Czech Republic should remain in the European Union more often expressed the opinion that the Czech Republic's involvement in the EU should remain at its current level.

Figure 4. Opinions on adopting the euro as the currency of the Czech Republic⁴

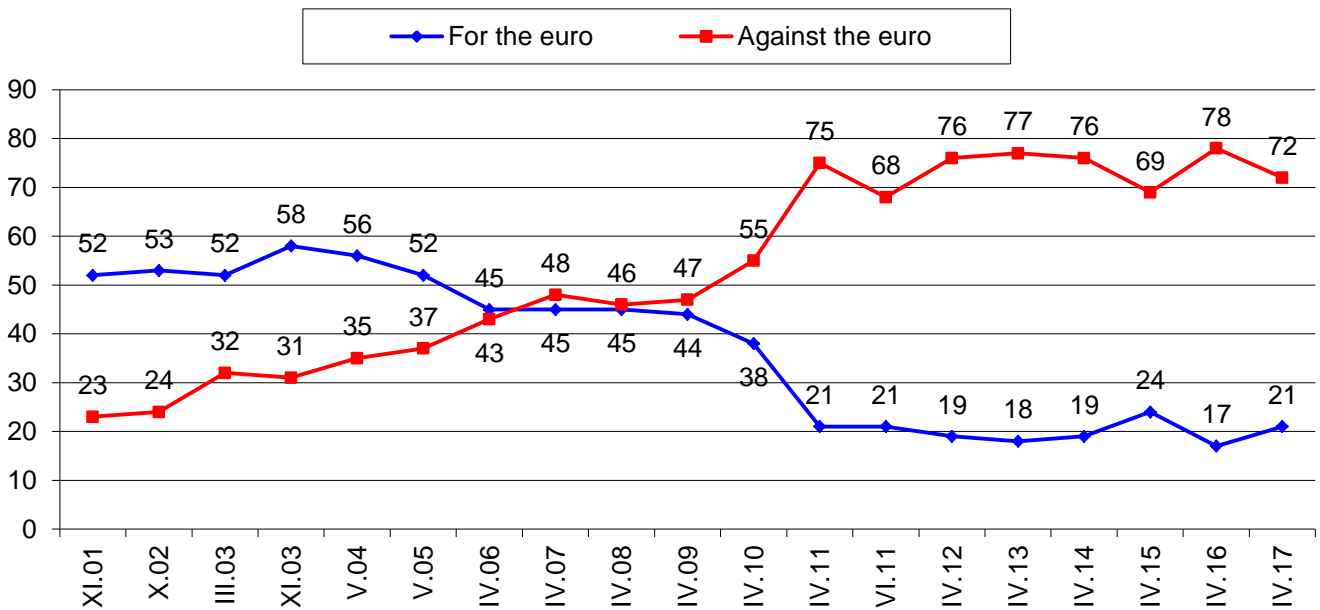


Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost) 3–13 April 2017, 1033 respondents aged 15 and over, face-to-face interviews.

As Figure 4 shows, Czech society is still prevailingly opposed to adopting the euro. Currently just under three-quarters (72%) of Czechs oppose the Czech Republic adopting the euro as its currency, with almost one-half (48%) saying they 'strongly oppose' and one-quarter (24%) saying they 'somewhat oppose' adopting the euro. Currently around one-fifth (21%) of Czechs support adopting the euro, 7% of them 'strongly' and 14% 'somewhat'. The remaining 7% of respondents had no opinion and chose the response 'don't know'.

⁴ The question read: 'Do you support or oppose the Czech Republic adopting the euro as its currency?'

Figure 5. Opinions on adopting the euro as the currency of the Czech Republic – over time (%)



Note: 'For the euro' represents the sum of responses 'strongly support' and 'somewhat support' and 'against the euro' represents the sum of responses 'strongly oppose' and 'somewhat oppose' the Czech Republic adopting the euro as its currency.

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

Compared to the last survey in April 2016, the share of people who oppose the Czech Republic adopting the euro as its currency decreased by 6 percentage points and the share of those who support it increased by 4 percentage points. Current public opinion on adopting the euro is thus similar to public opinion two years ago in April 2015. A long-term comparison shows that negative opinions on adopting the euro began to significantly outnumber positive opinions in 2010 after a period of prevailing support for the euro between 2003 and 2005 and roughly equal shares of people for and against the euro between 2006 and 2009, and since 2011 opposition to the euro has with minor fluctuations hovered at around three-quarters of respondents, twice dropping to just over 70%. Support for the euro since 2011 has hovered around two-fifths and only in 2015 did it approach a level of one-quarter of the population.

Support for the euro decreases with increasing age. The better people rate their household's standing of living and the state of the economy in the Czech Republic, the happier they are with the political situation and their own lives, the greater their trust in the EU and EU institutions, and the more positive they are about the future of the project for a united Europe, EU integration, and the Czech Republic's involvement in the EU, the greater their support for the Czech Republic adopting the euro as its currency. Students, highly qualified professionals or managerial workers, people who rank themselves on the right, supporters of the Green Party or the Pirate Party, and respondents who trust the government at a statistically significant level also more often support adopting the euro and less often rank among opponents of the euro. Opponents of the euro are more often people with lower secondary or vocational education, seniors, people in manual professions, people who place themselves in the middle of the political spectrum or firmly on the left, and people who do not have trust in the government.

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 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.179, PM.180, PM.181, PM.58</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 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 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'.]