



Central European
Digital Media
Observatory



Institutional Trust: Government and Parliament

Coffee Beans

Social trust is a key indicator of the "health" of a society. Generally speaking, the higher the trust, the better for the country - higher trust means lower cost of cooperation, better handling of crises, higher willingness to defend the country or a higher tax yield.

Trust works on two basic axes - vertical, and horizontal. Horizontal trust is about interpersonal relationships - that is, trust in family members, neighbors, colleagues or strangers. Vertical trust is about trust in authority - that is, an individual's relationship with institutions and elites in the society. In our cultural space, these are mainly the state and its representatives, but institutions and elites from the academy, business, churches (especially in Slovakia), the media, and in some cases sports, show business, and civil society also have a great influence.

In the next three microblogs, we will look at institutional trust, and in the very first one at trust in government institutions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The World Values Survey (Wave 7, 2022), which is available to Czech and Slovak researchers for the first time in 24 years, asked how much people trust these various institutions.

	The sum of the % of respondents who answered <i>I trust a lot</i> and <i>I quite trust</i>					
	1990 (WVS)		1998 (WVS)		2022 (WVS)	
	SR	ČR	SR	ČR	SR	ČR
Government	34,8	47,8	41,5	29,8	21,3	33,3
Political Parties	34,9	48,1	21,1	14,3	16,0	20,7
Parliament	35,4	47,9	29,0	19,8	19,4	35,1

Several observations are evident from the results:



After the fall of the communist party regime in 1989, there was strong optimism about democracy in Czechoslovak society, which did not recur after a certain sobering up from everyday reality.



Slovaks trust their government institutions significantly less than Czechs.



Both countries have in common that they consider political parties to be the least trustworthy institutions in the whole country (not only when it comes to government institutions).



The largest data disparity between countries is in the trend recorded in 1998. In Slovakia, data collection took place at the time of the first reform government of Mikuláš Dzurinda and the electoral defeat of Vladimír Mečiar, when a large part of society expected a positive change in social order. The Czech Republic, on the other hand, perceived its institutions very negatively in the same period - the collection took place during the caretaker government of Josef Tošovský, which came after the second government of Václav Klaus, right after a scandal with the financing of his ODS party, when the KDU-ČSL and ODA parties left the coalition.



At the same time, it is interesting that Slovakia recorded the lowest level of trust in the government in the country's history in 2023 (14%), but the downward trend can already be seen from the WVS data (21%). The political culture in the Czech Republic is clearly more stable, trust in the government rarely falls below 30%, and even just after the pandemic, which contributed enormously to the rise in polarization of society, it was much higher than in Slovakia.

The last two examples show how important it is to know the context in which the collection of data took place - and why the collaboration of social and data scientists in one team, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, as applied in the CEDMO project, is so necessary.



Funded by
the European Union
NextGenerationEU



CZECH
RECOVERY
PLAN