



Central European
Digital Media
Observatory



Institutional Trust: Civil Service

Coffee Beans

In the second microblog about institutional trust, we will focus on some of the most important institutions of state administration - offices, police, courts, and the army. They cannot be dispensed with in a democratic society without citizens' trust, or their effectiveness drops significantly, resulting in even lower public confidence. Thus, mistrust begets mistrust, and a downward spiral is created that leads to serious social problems, such as the emergence of parallel structures, the growth of corruption, the rise of anti-system sentiment, or, in critical cases, the failure of the state. Fortunately, this does not yet apply to the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

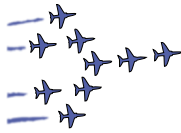
The World Values Survey (7th wave, 2022) investigated the state of trust in these institutions in both countries.

The sum of the % of respondents who answered "I trust a lot" and "I mostly trust"	1990 (WVS)		1998 (WVS)		2022 (WVS)	
	SR	ČR	SR	ČR	SR	ČR
Police	27,3	34,1	39,0	43,4	52,4	69,3
Armed Forces	37,2	39,8	65,7	42,2	58,0	51,1
Civil Service	30,1	33,5	38,9	38,3	51,3	54,1
Justice System (Courts)	37,6	45,6	40,9	28,4	38,7	59,8

As with trust in government institutions, it is true that Czechs trust their institutions more than Slovaks.



The citizens' trust in the **security forces** (Police and Armed Forces) and the authorities at various civil service levels has increased significantly compared to the results in 1990. It can be assumed that this is a change in the understanding of these institutions on the part of the citizen. Few people have fond memories of the authorities at any time, but nowadays, they provide significantly better services than 30 or 20 years ago. In the case of the security forces, it is also true that during the Communist regime, they were perceived as an institutional tool of persecution, while today, they are increasingly understood as protectors of public order (police) or territorial integrity of the country (army), and much less as a tool of political oppression.



The **army** is the only institution that, as measured in 2022, turned out worse in Slovakia than in the previous measurement. It can be assumed that this results from the army's involvement in the government's programs during the pandemic and, subsequently, the clear condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine by the army's central command. This "politicized" the army in the eyes of part of the population and slightly reduced its credibility. A similar dynamic can be expected in the case of the Czech army; notice the surveys about its trustworthiness from the years before the pandemic, when it was usually over 70%, although differences in the measurement method may cause the difference.



The biggest difference between the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic is trust in the **justice system**, specifically the courts. While trust in the courts has practically not changed in Slovakia over the past 30 years, which is a significantly negative result for the Slovak judiciary, the trust of Czechs in their justice system has significantly improved, as have other parts of the Czech state administration.

A massive fluctuation in the data from 1998 in the case of the Czech Republic can be attributed to the contemporary situation in the Czech Republic, described in the last microblog.

In principle, it can be concluded that trust in state administration is improving in both countries, and suspicions of politicization of specific institutions cause the strongest negative effects on trust.



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