



Central European
Digital Media
Observatory



Institutional Trust: Non- State Actors

Coffee Beans

In the third microblog on institutional trust, we will leave the state sector and look at institutions in the civil sector, education, and the economy. Important social authorities that produce influential social elites include business and industry, churches, religious organizations, and the media.

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)	
	SVK	CZE	SVK	CZE	SVK	CZE
Churches and religious organizations	50,2	39,4	57,3	31,7	50,4	32,4
Press	36,7	45,9	41,4	42,6	34,2	42,8
Television	53,2	70,0	49,8	49,1	44,2	53,0
Large businesses and companies	30,2	24,8	28,9	34,1	49,4	51,5



The most striking difference between the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic is in their relationship with churches and institutionalized religion in general. While the Catholic or Evangelical Church was to a large extent the source of Slovak national founder figures, and the churches were thus perceived as an ally in building a national identity, in the Czech Republic, the churches, primarily Catholic, were allies of the imperial Vienna (Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire), against which the Czech national representatives struggled. In terms of building a national identity, the relationship to the church in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic was the exact opposite.



Trust in mainstream media is declining. In the case of the press, it is a slight decrease of a few %. However, television in the Czech Republic experienced a massive decline of almost a third of its original value. The measurement does not capture the dynamics of the rise of alternative media, which is crucial in today's analysis of the media environment, and thus has a limited informative value.

It can be expected that the decline in trust in standard media spilled over (at least to a certain extent) to their alternative competition. Part of the public today perceives mainstream media as a part of the "system," preferring to draw information from social networks and alternative media.



The clear winner in this category is the economic sector - it was viewed with distrust after the fall of the Communist regime due to the contemporary suspicion towards the market economy, and the "wild" 90's economic transformation into a market economy did not help much. Still, after stabilization, it became an important and relatively trustworthy part of society.

In 2022, the World Value Survey measured trust in institutions, which in 1990/98 were not part of the survey, so we cannot capture trend lines. Today, these institutions are among the most trusted in both countries.

The sum of the % of respondents who answered "I trust a lot" and "I mostly trust"	2022 (WVS)	
	Slovakia	Czech Republic
Universities (no.1. in CZE and SVK)	71,6	75,6
Police (no.2. in CZE)	52,4	69,3
Charities and humanitarian org. (no.2 in SVK)	60,7	56,9
Banks (no. 3 in CZK and SVK)	59,0	63,6



The most trusted institutions in both countries are universities. It can be assumed that there is a combination of a certain trust in science, the awareness that science has real results, and, at the same time, certain positive feelings associated with the student episode of our life or a sense of prestige associated with higher education.



The position towards banks surprised the survey's authors the most - but it demonstrates the respected position and trust in the economic sector in the lives of the current generation. Trust in banks and trust in the military is one of the most significant differences between the current generation and the generations that grew up during socialism.



Charitable organizations should seemingly be the easiest to explain - they are generally associated with helping others, which is almost universally perceived positively. The only exception is usually the situation when helping others is perceived as happening at "our" expense.



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