



Central European  
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# **Satisfaction with democracy in Czechia in continuous stagnation**

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**Satisfaction with democracy has hardly changed in the last 30 years of building a democratic society in the Czech Republic. However, distrust in democratic governance is not an abstract concept, but has concrete consequences - in civic participation or vulnerability to misinformation. Educational attainment emerges as a key factor influencing the level of satisfaction with democracy.**

The longitudinal CEDMO Trends panel survey included the question "How satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in the Czech Republic?". In April 2023, more than a third of respondents answered "rather dissatisfied" or "completely dissatisfied" and almost a third "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". A slight increase in the number of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with democracy was also captured by the next wave of the survey in May 2023. The trend of dissatisfaction was also captured by the Ipsos survey, also in May 2023, when 42% of respondents were dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy and a further 27% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Ipsos, 2023).

According to data from the STEM Institute, which compared responses to the question of how satisfied Czechs are overall with the functioning of democracy in the Czech Republic from 1993 (May) and 2023 (June), values have remained virtually unchanged despite thirty years of democracy building. In May 1993, 43% of respondents were "very satisfied" and 43% were "quite satisfied". While 46% were "rather dissatisfied" and 11% "quite dissatisfied". In June 2023, approximately 43% of respondents were "very satisfied" and "quite satisfied" and approximately 41% were "somewhat dissatisfied" and 17% were "somewhat dissatisfied" (STEM, 2023).

Dissatisfaction with democracy is not an abstract concept - respondents who subjectively perceive that they do not benefit from their country's democratic system of governance are much more likely to believe misinformation that further undermines their trust in democracy. The combination of gradually declining trust in the 'system', together with the subjective feeling that the democratic system is unable to respond adequately to crises, thus creates a situation where a section of the population starts to lean towards populist or radical solutions.

Data on respondents show that education is a key factor. People with higher education are generally more satisfied with the state of functioning of democracy, and there are also more pronounced differences between generations in the Czech Republic. People under 44 are more satisfied with the state of functioning of democracy than older people. (Ipsos, 2023) It can be assumed that this difference will be influenced by the fact that the younger generation has not experienced the transition from one regime to another. The importance of education as a decisive factor in promoting democracy is also confirmed by the influential study *Why Democracy Needs Education*, whose authors explicitly

state that the correlation between education and democracy is extremely high worldwide. (Glaeser, Ponzetto, Shleifer; 2007) If these conclusions are valid, it can be expected that in the course of a generational change, if the educational level of the Czech population is maintained or improved, satisfaction with democracy should also increase.



## **Bibliography:**

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