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PRESS RELEASE

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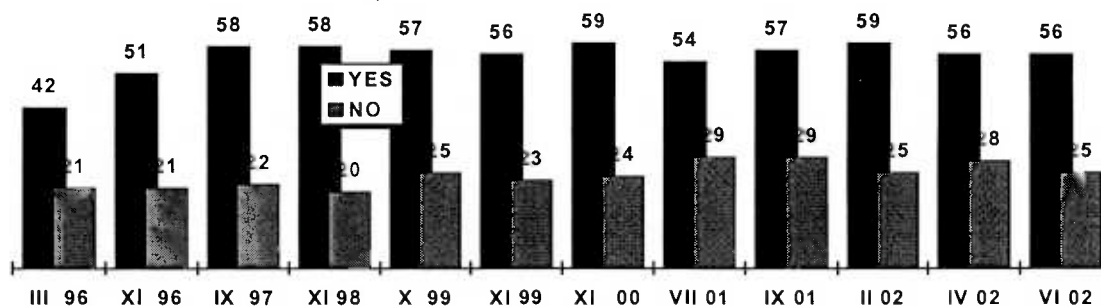
Integration of CR into EU – Current Attitudes and Opinions

Technical parameters

Research:	<i>Our Society 2002</i>
Questions:	PM.1, PM.2, PM.20, PM.21
Term of the field research:	5 – 12 June 2002
Number of respondents:	1103
Representative cross-section:	inhabitants of the CR older than 15
Selection of respondents:	quota selection
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In June, 56 per cent of the population supported our state's effort aimed at its integration to the European Union, 25 per cent did not agree with it, and 19 per cent had not adopted any opinion¹. The results correspond to the long-term findings characterized by a distinct excess of support given to our state's integration into the EU as compared to the opposite attitude – see the Chart 1.

Chart 1: Should the Czech Republic strive for its admission to the European Union?



YES: the sum of the "Yes - absolutely" and "Rather yes than no" answers; NO: the sum of the answers "Rather no than yes" and "No - absolutely". The remaining part to complete the 100 per cent sum in case of each data couple is formed by the "Do not know" answers. The size of accidental statistical discrepancy is + - 3 per cent.

¹ The wording of the question: "Do you think that the Czech Republic should strive for its admission to the European Union?" Following is the collection of answers offered for selection: Yes – absolutely, Rather yes than no, Rather no than yes, No – absolutely, Do not know. For the purpose of interpretation, the positive answers have been merged as 'YES' answers, and the negative answers as 'NO' answers.

Should the inquired people express their opinion on the EU in a referendum², the survey repeatedly proves that many of them (41 per cent today) would still consider it. According to the opinions expressed by the people, about seven per cent are sure not to participate in the referendum; other 13 per cent are likely not to come to vote in the referendum. Among those who did not rule out their participation in the referendum, about one fifth (21 per cent) do not know how they would finally vote. Nowadays, 59 per cent have adopted a fixed decision – among those 17 per cent would vote against the admission and 42 per cent would vote in favour of the CR's admission to the EU.

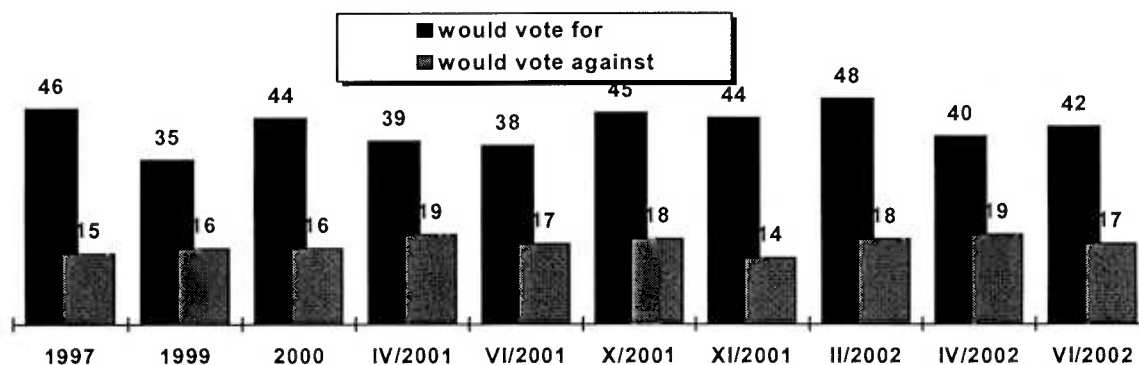
It is possible to state that since the last survey realized in April the general public attitudes have almost not changed; the slight variances that have been detected ran within the frames of a statistical discrepancy (see Table 1 and Chart 2). However, overall range of responses belong to the category of more reserved replies, especially when compared to February this year. They probably reflect the going-on discussions on Benes Decrees and – in relation to that – the emphasis given to national interests by so many political parties during their pre-election campaigns. Also the information about the impact of EUR introduction on the level of consumer prices in the member states of the EU may have influenced the opinions.

Table 1: If the referendum on the membership of the CR in the EU was to be held tomorrow:

	1997	1999	2000	2001				2002		
				IV	VI	X	XI	II	IV	VI
Would vote for the membership	46	35	44	39	38	45	44	48	40	42
Would vote against the membership	15	16	16	19	17	18	14	18	19	17
Does not know how he/she would vote	19	22	18	21	24	20	27	18	22	21
Would not vote	12	8	9	7	8	7	6	5	6	7
Does not know if he/she would vote	8	19	13	14	13	10	9	11	13	13

The sum of the percentages in the columns. The size of accidental statistical discrepancy is + - 3%.

Chart 2: If the referendum on the membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union was to be held tomorrow:



² The wording of the question: "If the referendum on the membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union was to be held tomorrow, would you personally vote for or against the membership?" The answers were coded by the respondents into one of the five answer versions – see the Table 1.

Some socially demographic and political characteristics of the respondents are traditionally reflected in their relationship to the integration efforts of the Czech Republic and in the statements they make about their voting in the referendum. The integration is mostly supported by those who support the Civic Democratic Party and the Coalition; those who support the Czech Social Democratic Party express slightly more tepid attitude. Majority of the Communist Party supporters would vote against the integration.

Above-average support in favour of the integration was expressed mainly by people with completed secondary education and especially by university graduates, entrepreneurs or sole proprietors and respondents from the cities with population over 100,000. Voters who voted against the integration include mainly people older than 60 years of age.

The goal of the next inquiry³ was to find out the reasons for the not very strong willingness of our citizens to support admission of the CR into the EU (see Chart 2). All the respondents were asked to mark three possibilities in the range of the responses variations offered to them which – according to their opinion – have the strongest influence on such an attitude of the general public. The inquiry showed that the respondents ascribed the strongest influence to the fact that people worry the second-rate position of the CR within the EU and growing prices. According to their opinion, important role in the adverse relationship of the general public is also played by the general public's concern related to the possibility that foreigners might buy up land and properties. The inquired respondents list among other rather important factors the general public's worries of losing independence and identity, and worries of such social impacts as unemployment. Other reasons – e.g. little knowledge of the impacts caused by our integration and events related to the Benes Decrees – were mentioned less often. It means that the inquired do not see any direct relationship between them and the unconvincing attitude of our general public to the EU.

Table 2: Why – according to the inquired – people in the CR do not want to support the CR integration into the EU (in per cent)

Per cent of the respondents stated as:	1st reason	2nd reason	3rd reason	total
EXPECT GROWING PRICES	26	20	14	60
WORRY OUR SECOND-RATE POSITION WITHIN THE EU	30	12	9	51
WORRY THAT FOREIGNERS WILL BUY UP LAND AND PROPERTIES	12	17	11	40
WORRY LOSING OUR INDEPENDENCE	7	10	17	34
WORRY HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, BANKRUPTCIES OF OUR COMPANIES	7	12	13	32
DO NOT EXPECT ANY PERSONAL BENEFITS	6	10	11	27
HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF OUR INTEGRATION INTO THE EU	6	8	10	24
EXPECT THAT OUR ENTREPRENEURS AND SOLE PROPRIETORS WILL HAVE MORE DIFFICULTIES	2	3	7	12
BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION RELATED TO THE BENES DECREES	2	4	5	11

³ The wording of the question: "Why – according to your opinion – people do not want to support the admission of our republic into the European Union? Select three main reasons out of the offered possibilities."

THINK IT IS MORE ADVANTAGEOUS IF WE DO NOT ENTER THE EU	2	4	3	9
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The respondents were also asked to estimate the reasons why our citizens support the admission into the EU⁴ (see Table 3). Most often they concurred that their main motive is that they especially expect increasing living standards (54 per cent in total expressed that opinion). With the lapse of time they marked the possibility to work freely in the European Union and the assumption of overall economic benefit of the integration in favour of the CR. As far as the reasons marked by the inquired as the most important in relation to pro-European attitudes of the population, there appeared quite a distinctive motive of our country's integration into Europe. The responses to the other reasons offered to the inquired were not so distinctive, but still they were not negligible; e.g. insufficient information about the impacts of our integration appeared among them (24 per cent).

Table 3: **Why – according to the inquired – people in our country support admission of the CR into the EU** (in per cent)

Per cent of the respondents stated as:	1st reason	2nd reason	3rd reason	total
EXPECT THAT IT WILL BRING THEM HIGHER LIVING STANDARDS	19	16	19	54
POSSIBILITY TO WORK FREELY IN THE EU	15	17	10	42
EXPECT OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWS OF OUR COUNTRY	7	15	17	39
WISH A FULL INTEGRATION OF THE CR INTO EUROPE	21	5	8	34
POSSIBILITIES TO TRAVEL FREELY INTO THE EU COUNTRIES	6	10	11	27
ARE NOT INFORMED ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF OUR ADMISSION TO THE EU	13	6	5	24
EXPECT BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND CZECH COMPANIES	9	8	7	24
EXPECT IMPROVEMENT OF THE LEGAL SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRY	4	6	10	20
EXPECT INCREASED RESPECT AND PRESTIGE OF OUR COUNTRY	3	7	6	16
POSSIBILITIES TO STUDY IN THE EU	2	7	4	13
EXPECT INCREASED RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES	1	3	3	7

⁴ The wording of the question: "Why – according to your opinion – people support admission of our republic into the EU? Again, select three main reasons out of the offered possibilities."