



PRESS RELEASE

**Public Opinion Research Center
Sociological Institute of Academy of Sciences
of the Czech Republic**

V Holešovičkách 41, Praha 8
Tel./Fax: +420 286 840 129, 130
E-mail: seidlova@soc.cas.cz

Czechs – European Citizens

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<i>Researcher-in-Charge:</i>	<i>Ms. Adéla Seidlová</i>

The utmost attention is drawn to the citizenship in case of elections. Concerning the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, the first and most important election is the question of the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU, i.e. participation and voting in a referendum, which should take place sometime in next year's spring. The question, whether our citizens should participate in a referendum on the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, and how they should vote in such referendum, has been asked by the Public Opinion Research Center regularly since 1997 (see Table No. 1)

Table No. 1: "If a referendum on whether the Czech Republic should access the European Union shall be held tomorrow, should you vote aye or nay?" (in %)

	1997	1999	2000	IV/01	XI/01	IV/02	X/02
For membership	46	35	44	39	44	40	47
Against membership	15	16	16	19	14	19	18
Not decided, how to vote	19	22	18	21	27	22	23
Not voting	12	8	9	7	6	6	5
Do not know, whether to vote or not	8	19	13	14	9	13	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>ratio aye/nay</i>	<i>3,07</i>	<i>2,19</i>	<i>2,75</i>	<i>2,05</i>	<i>3,14</i>	<i>2,11</i>	<i>2,61</i>

At first sight, data identify that Czech citizens increasingly support and agree with the Czech Republic's accession to the EU, however, any conclusions should be premature now. CVVM identifies the support for the Czech Republic's accession to the EU among our public in three different questions, which we shall put to informants in the next research. Results of this research could definitely prove positive trends in attitudes to the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union.

Other decisions of European Union's new citizens shall be the election of Members of European Parliament representing the Czech Republic. In last year, we asked for the first time, whether interviewees should participate in elections of Members of European Parliament. The same question was asked in the research being held at the end of October 2002.¹ For comparison, we submit also answers of informants, whether they should participate in our parliamentary elections (see Table No. 2)

Table No. 2: Declared participation in elections to the European Parliament and National Parliament. (in %)

	2001		2002	
	Elections to EP		Elections to EP	
	Elections to NP		Elections to NP	
Definitely yes	29	34	28	32
More likely yes	34	38	34	35
More likely no	10	12	8	13
Definitely no	8	10	8	10
Do not know	19	6	22	10
Total	100	100	100	100

In the 2001/2002 comparison of declared participation in elections to the European Parliament, no shifts had occurred, if we do not consider the

¹ Question: "One of European Union's bodies is the European Parliament. If we shall access to the European Union on 1.1.2004, we shall elect our deputies as Members of European Parliament already in Autumn 2003. Shall you vote? Definitely yes, rather yes, rather no, definitely no, or you do not know?"

statistical discrepancy in sampling of ± 3 percentage points. The number of those, who should participate in elections to the European Parliament in comparison with those, who should participate in elections to the National Parliament, is rather lower, 62 in comparison with 67 percents of declared voters. However, we may not forget the difference in comparison with declared and actual participation in elections, which is still some 10 % of voters, how it was identified in the June Parliamentary elections.

What types of candidates have a chance to gain, in elections to the European Parliament, the most of votes? Voters shall likely incline to one of models being used by them in national Parliamentary elections. Thus, they shall vote either according to candidate's party affiliation, or according to particular personality, as it usually is in case of senate elections. To what degree it is, according to citizens, important that future Czech Members of European Parliament should be members of political parties, or, on the contrary, should be independent personalities,² it is shown in Table No. 3.

Table 3: What type of a politic should be the Czech Member of European Parliament? (in %)

	2001	2002
Member of a political party	11	15
Independent personality	77	71
Do not know	12	14
Total	100	100

Henceforth, there is a marked superiority of the opinion that any Czech Member of European Parliament should be more likely an independent personality. However, in comparison with the last year, we can identify a slight increase in numbers of those, who think that such deputy should be a member of a political party. Among those, who should like to see members of political parties in the European Parliament, adherents to ODS and KSČM prevail. The same applies to adherents to KDU-ČSL, however here the number is only slightly over the average. Adherents to party elections are either among those, who should vote aye in a referendum on the accession, or among those, who should vote against the our country's accession to the EU. On the contrary, more supporters of independent personalities can be found among those, who likely should not participate in a referendum.

Another next and very important decision, which could be made by citizens of the Czech Republic as European Unions's new citizens, shall be the decision on common European currency. Therefore, we put, in our research, the following question to informants: "If a referendum on accession to the common European currency should be held, should you vote for such common currency,

² Question: "What of type of a person should be the Member of European Parliament representing the Czech Republic? Should he/she be rather a member of a political party or rather an independent individuality?"

or against it?" Last year's answers as well as answers of the recent research are shown in Table No. 4.

Table 4: Consent to the accession to the common European currency. (in %)

	2001	2002
For common currency	52	53
Against it	23	24
Do not know	25	23
Total	100	100

Supporters of the common European currency are more represented among adherents to the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, where 80 % of them are for implementation of Euro, the European currency. As regards opponents of the Czech Republic's accession to the EU, only 18.6 % of them should vote aye for the common European currency. The most interviewees supporting common currency are among adherents to ODS and US-DEU (74 and 73 % respectively). Adherents to ČSSD and KDU-ČSL have an average attitude to the common currency issue (57 and 45 % respectively). Adherents to KSČM stood out against the European currency, where only 14 % of them agreed with Euro. Those, who should not participate in elections, support the acceptance of European currency in 43 % of cases.