

Young People in Bratislava and Prague: National and Supra-National Identities¹

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Young People in Bratislava and Prague: National and Supra-National Identities The split of Czechoslovakia is a challenge for politicians and sociologists even after a decade. An answer is sought to the question of whether the actions of the political elite were justified in the light of the commencement of European integration and the complicated split of the big federations (Yugoslavia and Soviet Union) with the consequences for peace and European stability. An answer is sought to the question of whether the Slovak or Czech public would support or refuse their decision if they had been given a referendum on the matter. In 2003, Slovakia, along with the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Malta, successfully concluded accession negotiations for EU membership (guarantee of implementing the standards of democratic governance), which of begins on May 1st 2004. Being more enthusiastic for the newly independent Slovak Republic does not necessarily translate itself into lesser enthusiasm about Europe and European Union. However, young people from the Bratislava consider being future EU citizens as more important than young people from the Prague. The young citizens of Bratislava have much greater expectations in Slovakia's EU membership at the level of "being" in Europe than "having" something from Europe. Slovakia will gain by EU membership a certificate of democratic country and "the Slovak chair at the European table"

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Introduction

The 'velvet' revolution in former Czechoslovakia and the subsequent split of the Federal Republic into two sovereign states has brought Slovakia and the Slovaks more prominently into the international public eye than has been the case for many decades.

Czechoslovakia began its seventy years of 'cohabitation' after the collapse of Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the World War I in 1918. This represented, at that time, a step forward for the Slovaks in terms of liberation from national and political suppression, educational development and cultural self-determination, although not so much in terms of economic growth and the progress of civilisation. One of the main obstacles of further chances of fully free national developments was the ruling theory and ideology of a unified Czechoslovak nation.

Within the framework of the Soviet bloc after 1945, Czechoslovakia was re-established as the Czechoslovak Socialist Federal Republic in 1968; the fate of the Slovak prominent politician A. Dubček's project to build socialism with a human face is too well-known to need repetition. However, in spite of all limitations of social and political character, Slovakia under state socialism made some not negligible progress towards an equalization of social, economic and cultural conditions with the Czech Republic.

The geographical position of Slovakia evokes in the Slovaks exalted emotions that they are anchored in the very heart of Europe. Slovakia is a small country whose territory measures some 49,000 square kilometres populated by something fewer than five and a half million people. It has five other states on its borders: Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria, and the Czech Republic.

Following the collapse of the Soviet bloc after 1989, Czechoslovakia was plunged into an economic transformation process that had - and continues to have - dramatic consequences for the population. The post-socialist Czechoslovak governmental economic strategies were seen to be producing severe inequalities between the two countries in the Federation. For the Slovaks, this meant that heavy engineering - disproportionately represented in Slovakia's industrial structure - was forced into a rapid conversion process that destabilized the regional economic base and, in general, the unemployment and poverty rate rose much more sharply in Slovakia than in Czech lands (Macháček, L., 1999).

The confrontation between conservative liberalism (V. Klaus) in Czech lands and nationalist populism in Slovakia (V. Mečiar) eventually resulted in the decision to end the Federation in summer 1992. The independent republic of Slovakia came officially into existence at the beginning of 1993.

Though the split of the Czechoslovak federation occurred without giving the people of both nations concerned the opportunity to express their opinion (which at that time was not too favourable for the decision taken by the leading personalities of the political elites) the mutual emancipation of these two nations can be

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seen as a positive outcome from the point of view of a long struggle of both the Slovaks and Czechs for their national sovereignty and dignified position among European nations. One can even say that the relationships between the two nations have gradually relatively improved since the dissociation. This point of view seems to be prevailing in the both populations public opinion by now.

Project Methodology and Sample: Bratislava - Prague

As Jamieson notes, "Since the 1970s, the idea of European citizenship and a 'People's Europe' has been promoted by politicians, intellectuals and bureaucrats of the European Community (2002, p. 508). She emphasizes that it can be "useful to distinguish the possibility of a European identity as a type of supra-national identity from a sense of European citizenship, a citizenship identity rather than a national identity... Unpacking the distinction between 'national-identity' and 'citizenship-identity', however, requires a review of debates about nationalism and citizenship on the one hand³ and deeper scrutiny of the concept of 'identity' on the other" (Jamieson, L. 2002, p. 509).

The research project 'Orientations of Young Men and Young Women to Citizenship and European Identity' provides new insight into the orientations of young people to 'being European' and to European citizenship, including better insight into the possible sources of variation between and within nations and regions: In the case of this article, those between Bratislava and Prague in the Slovak and Czech Republics.

In each of these sites, we have identified two groups of young people aged 18-24: a random sample drawn from all social backgrounds, and a highly educated group who are on a career path which orients them to Europe, such as European Law or studying several European languages. This sampling allows us to compare 'ordinary' young people with those who have particular reasons for being pro-European. In both cases, we have recruited equal numbers of young men and young women and only those young people who have grown up in the region and nation. Our random samples consist of young people aged 18 - 24 years old: Prague n = 396 and Bratislava, n = 397. Our target group is made up of young people from Prague (n=89) and Bratislava (n=98), again aged 18-24 years old.⁴

The Prague and Bratislava random samples are similar in almost all important socio-demographic indicators (see tables). This is especially true for the proportion of men and women in the samples from both cities. In the case of the age structure, the proportion of young people aged 18-21 in the Prague random sample (43.8%) is slightly higher than in the Bratislava random sample (39.3%). It is also higher than the proportion of the 18-21 age group in the population of Prague. When looking at the highest educational qualification obtained by the participants, in the Prague random sample there are more people with the general high school qualification (31.8%) than in the Bratislava random sample (22.7%). The proportion of young people from the Bratislava random sample with a vocational/apprenticeship qualification is slightly greater than in Prague, especially those with the lower vocational/apprenticeship qualification (23.4% in Bratislava vs. 15.7% in Prague). In the Bratislava random sample there is a higher proportion of young people with at least one parent in a managerial or senior official position (18.3%) than in Prague (10.0%).

Both random and target samples from both cities have a very high proportion of young people born in that city or elsewhere in the respective countries. There is also a very high proportion of single people with no children. A large proportion of the participants' parents were born in the cities where the participants now live. The overwhelming majority of parents, both of the random and target samples, were born in the respective country.

Both the Prague and Bratislava samples contain only a small proportion of ethnic/national minorities and people with a non-Czech/Slovak ethnic/national background. In the Prague and Bratislava random samples respectively, 91.3% and 93.0% of participants report not having a parent of a different ethnicity/nationality⁵. In the Prague and Bratislava target groups it is 82.0% and 82.0%, respectively. The most represented "different" nationality in both Prague random and target samples is Slovak (about 2%) and in both the Bratislava random and target samples group, it is Czech and Hungarian (about 2% each). Traditionally, Bratislava has a relatively high proportion of inhabitants of Hungarian nationality. Those parents with Czech nationality in the Bratislava samples and those parents with Slovak nationality in the Prague samples are

³ The issue of European, National and Ethnic Identity has traditions in sociological literature in former Czechoslovakia (Laiferová, E., 2000, Turčan, L., 2000).

⁴ The selection of the participants in the target group was based on the assumption, that their educational qualification or their current profession make them more likely to have a European career. The Bratislava target group is a bit younger than the Prague target group. The majority of young people from both target groups are still studying (65.2% in Prague and 68.5% in Bratislava). In comparison to the random samples from both cities, significantly more main earners in the families of the target group respondents work in professional occupations.

⁵ In Slovakia, the term "nationality" is commonly used as a synonym of ethnicity, but we make a distinction between nationality and citizenship. It means that a person who has, for example, Hungarian nationality can be a citizen of the Slovak Republic.

probably people who came to Prague/Bratislava to work during the existence of Czechoslovakia or who then married a Czech/Slovak.

A structured questionnaire was used to explore the salience and meanings of 'being European' and respondents' ideals and practices of citizenship. The questionnaire began to explore the understandings, experiences and practices involved in constructions of self in relation to others, social obligation to others, and sense of social inclusion and exclusion that may be the building blocks of racism or tolerance, civic or ethnic citizenship. The questionnaire includes further analysis of how personal, family and locally based understandings, experiences and practices connect to orientations to being 'European' and European citizenship.

Table 1: **Socio-demographic structure of Prague and Bratislava samples (in %)**

	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
Men	47.5	40.4	49.6	49.0
Women	52.5	59.6	50.4	51.0
Aged 18-21	57.1	38.2	53.4	46.9
Aged 22-24	42.9	61.8	46.6	53.1
Born in the city	81.6	78.2	79.6	80.6
Born in the country (CR/SR)	99.0	97.8	97.7	100.0

Table 2: **Highest educational qualification of participants (in %)**

	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
Has not left full time education	46.0	65.2	54.2	68.5
General high school	31.8	52.8	22.7	65.3
Lower vocational/basic initial apprenticeship qualification	15.7	0.0	23.4	2.0
Higher vocational/basic initial apprenticeship qualification ⁶	29.5	23.6	33.2	17.3
First University degree (BA)	9.1	14.6	6.3	5.1
Higher postgraduate/university degree (PhD, MA)	4.5	5.6	6.0	1.0

The Czech, Slovak and "Czechoslovak" Identity

Our data enables us to compare the strength of attachment to locality, country and Europe (Table 3). As already mentioned, a high proportion of participants (overall about 80%) contacted in Prague and Bratislava were also born there.

In both random samples, the participants feel slightly more attached to their native country than to their city of birth. It is the opposite for the participants of the target groups, the difference being more pronounced in Bratislava than in Prague.

As the Slovak and Czech Republics were, until 1993, part of a common state (Machonin, P., 2002) we also wanted to know whether the participants felt any attachment to the actual territory of "the other republic" (Slovak Republic for Czech and Czech Republic for Slovak participants). This attachment is relatively low across all the groups of participants. It might be due to the fact that we asked, in this particular case, about the attachment to the territory of the actual Czech/Slovak Republic. In fact we do not know what people actually perceive when asked about this attachment. For instance, attachment to his/her native city might be mainly about the attachment to the family or friends who live there, meaning, not actually to the territory of the city itself, but to what this territory represents for the participants. If we were to ask, for example, about "Czech/Slovak culture", the attachment would be probably higher, especially in the case of young people from Bratislava, who are still very much in contact with Czech literature, music and cinematography. Overall, the attachment to Europe is higher than the attachment to "the other republic". In both the Bratislava and Prague cases, there is no statistically significant difference between the attachment to Europe expressed by the target groups and random samples.

⁶ In the Slovak and Czech Republics both 'General high school' (leading to a general A-level) and 'Higher vocational/basic initial apprenticeship qualification' (leading to a professional A-level) are university entry qualifications.

Table 3: Percentage of people with 'strong' or 'complete' attachment to city, nation (Czech Republic or Slovak Republic), the other nation within former Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic for the Slovaks and Slovak Republic for the Czechs), and to Europe

	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
To your city of birth	70.3	75.0	67.5	75.3
To your native country	77.5	70.4	71.8	66.2
To the Czech Republic	-	-	14.8	20.0
To Slovakia	15.4	17.3	-	-
To Europe	41.6	50.6	43.5	47.7

We also asked the participants to what extent 'being from Prague/Bratislava' and 'being from the Czech Republic/Slovak Republic' was important for them as a source of their overall identity. As table 4 illustrates, these items are endorsed as important by a relatively high proportion of participants, but are not considered as the most important aspect of self. Participants were offered a list of items and asked: 'How would you rate the importance of the following in terms of who you are, that is, how you feel or think about yourself as a person?'

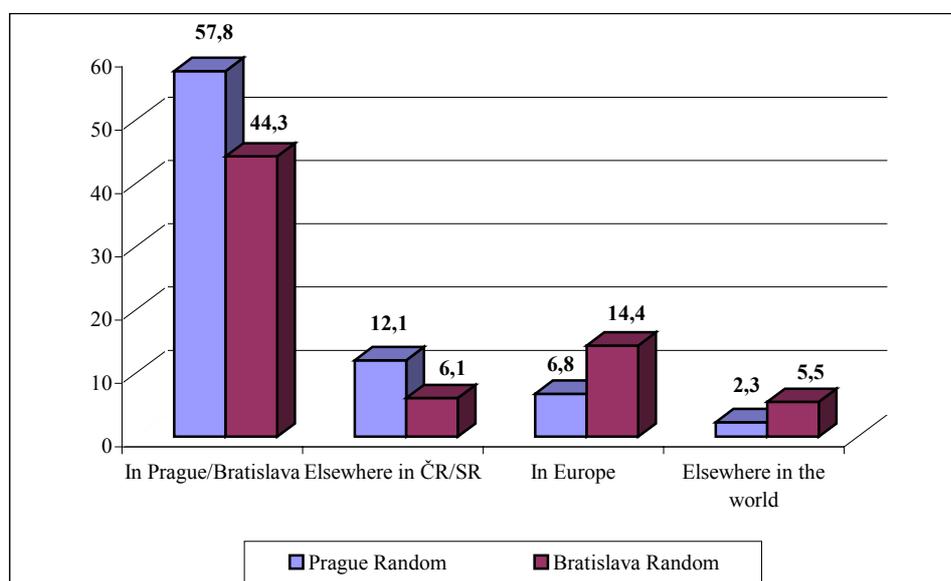
The table shows the percentage of interviewees in Prague and Bratislava rating items on the highest two points on a five-point scale of importance. Friends, family, partner, professional career and education are clearly rated by our participants as the most important sources of their identity (Macháček, L. – Lášticová, B., 2003). More young women than young men in both Prague samples consider family relationships important for their overall identity (as resid > 1,96).

The above-mentioned sources of identity (specify which) are more important than 'being from' the Czech Republic/Slovakia and 'the place of birth'. Bratislava target group participants rate 'being from the country' as less important than other items. Being from Slovakia is more important for young people from the Bratislava random sample than for the young people from the target group (as resid > 1,96).

Table 4: Percentage of interviewees rating items as "important" or "very important" for their overall identity, with gender differences

	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
Place of birth	46.2	48.3	47.7	47.9
Being from Prague/Bratislava	67.5	71.9	65.0	58.8
Being from CR/SR	68.1	68.2	60.0	48.4
Being a future EU citizen	44.0	68.5	59.5	69.5

Graph 1: Where do you plan to live when you are 30?



We can observe the same pattern for the Bratislava random sample and target group, but the differences are not statistically significant. The high preference for their own cities in the random sample could be partially explained by the fact, that Prague and Bratislava are capital cities offering a relatively high level of opportunities for work, education and entertainment. In Slovakia, in particular, the cultural and educational life is still very much concentrated in Bratislava.

The proportion of those who plan to stay in their own city is higher in the Prague random sample, Prague being probably considered an 'attractive place to live in'. In contrast to Bratislava, Prague is a metropolis of European or even world calibre. For the young citizens of Bratislava, it may be one of the primary destinations on their way to residing in Europe (14.4%) (Graph 1).

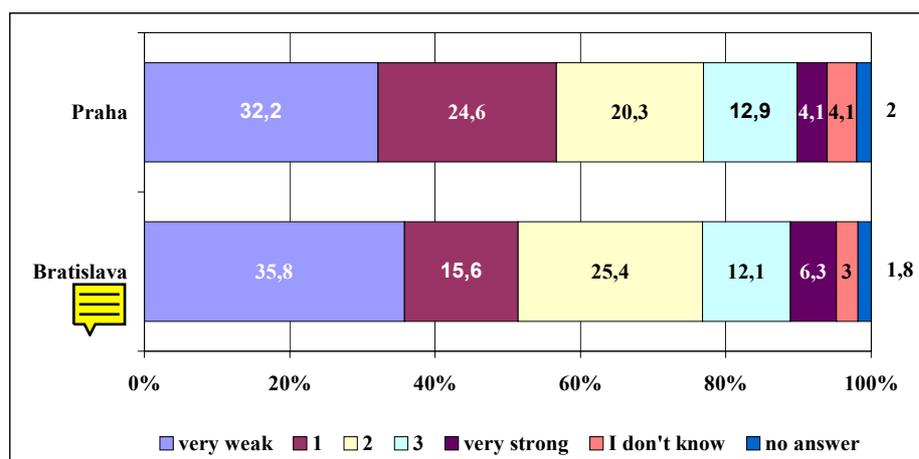
The Czechoslovak: from national feeling to feeling of reciprocity

In our study we asked not only about 'strength of attachment to' particular geographical entities, but also about 'strength of feeling about' particular nationalities. These questions show a similar pattern of variation in terms of people's feelings about their country and their nationality.

Despite the split of Czechoslovakia, our participants were asked to express also the strength of their feeling about being "Czechoslovak" (Graph 2). It should be noted that recognition of Czechoslovakia by the victorious great powers as an independent state in 1918 was associated with the concept of a "unified Czechoslovak nation". At the stage of political negotiations after the fall of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire aimed against its dominant non-Slav Austrian and Hungarian governments, the argument on cultural and language closeness (identity) was not only tactical but also truthful. Nevertheless, there are various accents and meanings for the Czechs and Slovaks. "The first Czechoslovak Republic represented for majority of the Czechs a symbol of success of the Czech national emancipation movement. ... The integration of "the Slovak national segment" was an extension of the Czech historical statehood towards the east rather than its new definition" (Pauer, J., 2003, p. 23).

The strong assimilation pressure after the Austrian-Hungarian compensation (1867) and the situation at the end of the World War I manifested themselves in the fact that the concept of unified state-forming Czechoslovak nation⁷ gained a decisive political support. For the Slovaks, it was primarily protection against Hungarian assimilation. However it was also a chance for national emancipation and the first major experience of a functioning parliamentary democracy. Democratic experience was especially important because it was rather a unique case than the norm of the day in the region of Central Europe. The countries bordering Czechoslovakia struggled in the same time with fascist and authoritarian rule (Germany, Poland, Hungary and Soviet Russia). However, the Slovak national emancipation was not going to be further developed under the conditions of parliamentary democracy.

Graph 2: How intensive is the feeling to be Czechoslovak



It was signalled by events connected with World War II (the establishment of the war-time Slovak Republic⁸ in 1939) and with the course of the democratisation process in Czechoslovakia (federalisation in 1968).

Czechoslovakism has been for the Czechs a significant component of the national identity even

after 1990: they have kept the state flag, and still commemorate with a State Holiday, the day when Czechoslovakia was established.

⁷ The concept of unified state-forming Czechoslovak nation proliferated through the common political and educational usage of the naturalising metaphors such as the "the (Czechoslovak) trunk with two branches (Czech and Slovak)".

⁸ War-time Slovak Republic (1939-1945) was Nazi-controlled, "puppet" authoritarian regime.

Even after 1993, the concept of “Czechoslovak reciprocity” for the Slovaks still has its followers among the cultural elite as well as the wider population. It has not only the traditional historical and cultural (language), but also many social-structural (mixed marriages of Slovaks and Czechs and their children in Bratislava and Prague) and economic-political (a pillar in the processes of European integration and the advantageous interconnection with the economic market) sources and causes.

As shown in the scale above (Graph 2) as many as two-thirds of the young generation we interviewed perceive the reciprocity and solidarity of the Czechs and Slovaks to some degree. This is demonstrated in various positive phenomena of cooperation in independent republics and in European institutions.

If we compare the strength of feeling about the “Czechoslovak” nationality with the strength of attachment to the partner republics within former Czechoslovakia, we see that the patterns of responses to these two questions are similar in young people from both cities question and from both random samples and target groups.

The feeling of his/her nationality is equally strong in all the groups of participants and seems to be stronger than the attachment to their countries. In spite of the fact that our participants have lived for 10 years (for some of them half of their lives) in the independent Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, there is almost one fifth of persons in both random samples and in the Prague target group and almost a quarter in the Bratislava target group who feel strongly about the “Czechoslovak” nationality. (Table 5)

Table 5: Percentage with ‘strong’ or ‘very strong’ feelings about national identities (in %)

	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
Slovak	-	-	87.2	88.7
Czech	87.5	87.5	-	-
Czechoslovak	18.1	17.5	19.3	24.0

Table 6: Feeling strong or complete attachment to (in %)

	Czech Republic	Slovak Republic	Spain		Britain	
	Prague	Bratislava	Bilbao	Madrid	Edinburgh	Manchester
Study localities						
Study City	77	77	82	98	79	68
Region or sub-nation	Not asked	Not asked	77 Euskadi	75 Madrid	87 Scotland	81 England
Nation/federal nation	78	72	41	80	46	72
Europe	42	44	39	54	32	39

Question asked: ‘People may feel different degrees of attachment to their city, town or village, to their region, to their country or to Europe. Thinking about your own attachments, and using the scale on this card (0=not at all attached – 4=completely attached), please tell me how attached you feel to...?; a. r.= autonomous region

In contemporary Great Britain and Spain, being multinational federal states, “British” and “Spanish” have a different quality from “Czechoslovak” for the present day Slovak and Czech Republics. It may be presumed though that identity with the logo of “Czechoslovak” in case of the Slovaks would be analogous to the Scots with a brand of “British” or the Basques with a brand of “Spanish”. (Table 6)

Identification with Europe or the European Union

The measurement of the attachment to Europe and of the attitudes of young people toward European citizenship and European Union is a useful means of investigating ‘European identity’. However, each of these indicators measures different aspects of the latter. Thus European identity cannot be reduced to only one of these indicators.

That is why, in the qualitative part of our research, it will be necessary to explore the meanings of the terms ‘being European’, ‘being a European citizen’, etc.

We asked our respondents about the strength of the feeling of being ‘European’. As we can see, the proportion of the respondents with very strong or strong feelings about being European (Table 7) is overall lower than the proportion of the respondents with very strong or strong feelings about being Czech/Slovak. However, this feeling was expressed by at least 59.7% of participants in both studied groups and in both cities.

Table 7: **Feelings Strong or Complete ‘Being European’ versus Other Nationalism** (in %)

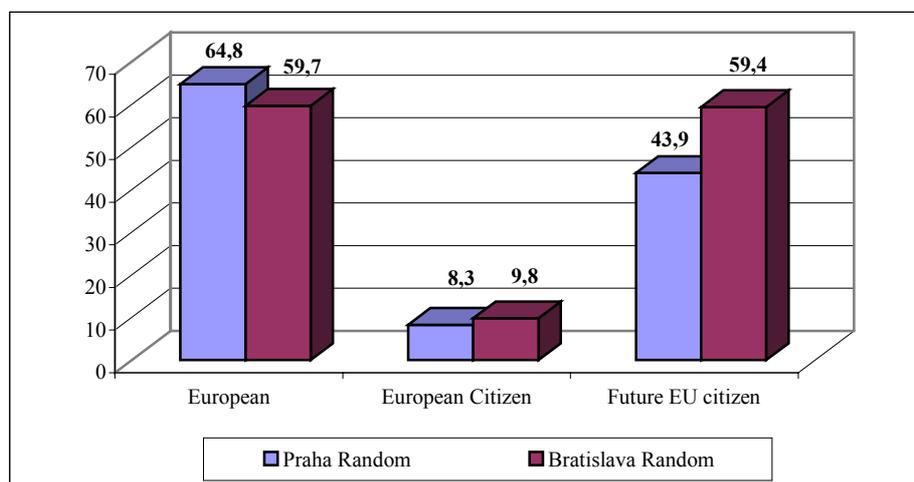
	Czech Republic	Slovak Republic	Spain		Britain	
Study localities	Prague	Bratislava	Bilbao	Madrid	Edinburgh	Manchester
Region/sub-nation	Not asked	Not asked	68 Basque	67 Madrilenian	85 Scottish	80 English
Federal nationality	88	87	31 Spanish	68 Spanish	43 British	77 British
European	65	59	28	38	23	30

Question asked was ‘Now I would like to ask you about the strength of how you feel about being different sorts of nationality? On a scale of 0-4 (0=no feeling at all, 4=very strong feeling) how do you feel about being... (for instance) English/Scottish, British, European?’

This proportion is also much higher than the proportion of the participants feeling themselves to be Czechoslovak (Table 5).

In both Bratislava and Prague, more young people from target groups than from random samples reported very strong or strong feelings about being European (as $\text{resid} > 1,96$).

Graph 3: **Percentage of those with very strong or strong feelings (3-4) about being**



We also asked the participants to say, ‘how frequently they think of themselves as a European citizen and as a global citizen’. Only 8.3% of participants in the Prague random sample and 9.8% in the Bratislava random sample chose the answer ‘often’ and ‘always’⁹. However, in both the Prague and Bratislava target groups, a significantly higher proportion of the participants chose the latter answer.

Also slightly more young people in the Prague than in the Bratislava target group chose the answer ‘often and always’, but this difference is not statistically significant. It seems that ‘being European’ and ‘being European citizen’ means different thing for our participants.

Overall, but especially in the random samples from both cities, the proportion of young people who feel a ‘strong’ or a ‘complete’ attachment to Europe (Table 4) is higher than the proportion of those who ‘often’ or ‘always’ think of themselves as European citizens.

Finally, we asked our participants to rate on a scale from 0 to 4, how important ‘being a future citizen of the European Union’ is in terms of how they feel or think about themselves as a person. 43% (Graph 3) of young people in the Prague and 59% in the Bratislava random samples rated European citizenship as of ‘high’ or ‘very high’ importance. In Prague, it was rated as such by a significantly higher proportion of young people from the target group, than from the random sample. The difference between the Bratislava samples is not significant, but considerably more target group participants seem to consider being future citizens of the EU as important.

⁹ We don't know what is the perception of the label ‘European citizen’ in the EU member states. In Slovakia and in the Czech Republic, it is not often used. On the other hand, the term ‘global citizen’ has a slightly negative connotation in Slovak language (cosmopolitist). It denotes a person ‘without the homeland’ who can be at home anywhere in the world. This term was often used in this negative sense by Slovak nationalist politicians to denote the people whose Slovak ‘national feeling/national identity’ was not ‘strong enough’ (no patriot).

Only in Bratislava, were the majority of interviewees equally likely to identify (anticipated) citizenship of the European Union and national identity as important to ‘how I feel or think about myself’ (60% & 60%). There is a surprisingly large difference (Jamieson, L., et al, 2003) in the proportion placing importance on European citizenship between Bratislava and Prague (60% & 44%). A finding could be predicted from other answers, mainly from “understanding of Europe” and “what Europe means”.

The meaning of Europe

The ‘geographical’ representation of Europe

We wanted to know what Europe meant for young people. First we explored what was the geographical representation of Europe. We made it clear that there was no ‘right’ list of countries in Europe and that Europe meant different things to different people.

Participants were offered a list of seven countries, including accession states to the European Union (the Czech and Slovak Republics, Estonia, Turkey), countries that are not EU members (Iceland, Russia) and one member state (Britain/UK). The countries were chosen to represent the geographical ‘edges’ of Europe, the North Atlantic extremes delimited by Iceland and the UK and the continental ‘edges’ by Russia, Estonia and Turkey. The countries were listed in a random order. The participants were asked to say whether they considered each country as being part of Europe or not.

The overwhelming majority of participants in both studied cities and both in the random samples and target groups see the Czech and Slovak Republics as part of Europe. In fact, it can be explained by countries’ common history and cultural traditions, close languages, geographical location and mutual interaction in various fields, for example, on the governmental level in the integration processes into EU and NATO.

Table 8: **Percentages of participants who think of the selected country as part of Europe**

Country	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
UK	90.4	95.5	81.1	90.8
Turkey	27.5	31.5	50.4	31.6
Czech Republic	90.7	92.1	96.7	100.0
Estonia	60.9	75.3	49.4	64.3
Iceland	55.1	73.0	52.6	67.3
Slovakia	93.4	96.6	96.0	98.0
Russia	49.0	40.4	55.9	56.1

On the other hand, Turkey has the lowest ranking from all the countries listed. Turkey obtained the highest rating in the Bratislava random sample (as resid >1,96), but even here only one half of participants see it as part of Europe. This low ranking can be explained by the country’s geographical distance from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, but mainly by the cultural differences and differences in religion, Turkey being a Muslim country.

In both cities examined, Estonia and Iceland are considered as European countries by a significantly higher proportion of respondents from target groups than from the random samples (as resid >1,96). Estonia obtained the lowest ranking in the Bratislava random sample. In fact, the differences can be explained by the fact that the Baltic States are relatively unknown amongst the general population, which leads to perceptions of them as homogenous states and still part of the former Soviet Empire.

The target group participants seem to be more acquainted with Estonia’s economic and political achievements, which have played a large part in Estonia’s accession to the EU.

Russia is excluded from Europe by a substantial part of both the Prague random sample and the target group participants. However, more than half of the participants both in the Bratislava random sample and the target group consider it as part of Europe, more so than Turkey, for example. The perception of Russia in the Slovak and Czech Republics has been considerably influenced by the experience of 40 years of the communist regime, Russia being the most powerful heir of the former USSR.

One of the possible reasons of the difference in perception between Prague and Bratislava respondents could be, for example, the crushing of the Prague Spring in August 1968 and the harsher regime in the Czech lands during normalisation. Another factor could be the relative geographical proximity of Slovakia and Russia. A possible factor behind young Prague inhabitants’ exclusion of Russia from the concept of Europe could be the inflow of “new rich” Russians to the Czech Republic and the “invasion” of Chechnya refugees.

All of the differences in perceptions of which countries make up Europe need to be further explored and explained through qualitative interviews in order to be fully understood.

'What Europe means for you'

In addition to this question of which countries are part of Europe, interviewees were asked how important the following are in 'what Europe means' to them: 'membership of the European Union', 'Euro currency', 'geographical location', 'certain values and traditions'. Interviewees were asked to rank each from 0-4, from 'not at all important' to 'very important'.

Table 9: Percentage of participants ranking the following as "very important" in what Europe means to them. In brackets is the sum of percentages of those who answered "important" or "very important" (3-4)

	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
Membership in the EU	28.1 (57.0)	41.4 (66.7)	47.6 (68.7)	47.4 (78.3)
Euro currency	15.4 (40.7)	25.3 (44.8)	29.8 (62.3)	33.3 (62.6)
Geographical location	27.2 (61.3)	37.9 (64.3)	37.6 (64.2)	37.9 (70.5)
Certain values and traditions	39.0 (72.7)	40.9 (85.2)	43.7 (67.7)	45.7 (72.3)

None of the items was placed close to 'very important' ('4' on the scale) by the majority. This may indicate that the judgment of the meaning of Europe is a complex process, combining many different criteria and the ratings are thus not clear-cut. It might also indicate a lack of knowledge or lack of interest in the issues.

Membership in the EU, euro, and the geographical location of the country are considered as 'very important' by more young people in the Prague target group than the Prague random sample (as resid >1,96). In Bratislava, there is no significant difference between the responses of the random sample and the target group in all four categories.

The euro seems to be the least important in both Prague samples. This tendency is even stronger when we look at the sum of the percentages of those answering 'very important' and 'important' (3 and 4). Then, in the case of both Prague samples, the euro currency is the only item that is not considered as 'important' for the meaning of Europe by the majority of respondents. On the other hand, the majority of participants in both the Bratislava random sample and target group, see it as important. Young people from Bratislava, probably more than their Prague peers, link EU integration to the economic development and the economic prosperity of the country that is symbolised by euro.

The results (Table 9) clearly show that for the Slovaks, Europe means much more than for the Czechs all that formally characterize the European Union politically (membership) and economically (common currency - euro). It also means that the Slovaks, being a relatively young nation, grasp very well that they will be definitely labelled and also recognized as the Europeans only as EU members. The Czechs with their rich historical and cultural tradition and autonomous statehood were never faced with such a problem in modern history.

Table 10: Percentage of interviewees including CZ and SK in their 'Europe'

Respondents from listed countries	Bregenz	Vienna	Prague	Bratislava	Chemnitz	Bielefeld	Bilbao	Madrid	Manchester	Edinburgh
Czech Republic	73	81	95	98	90	70	66	64	44	58
Slovak Republic	73	81	97	97	81	56	61	61	37	49

The possible answers were yes (shown above), no and don't know. 'Don't knows' are included in the valid percentages.

Certain doubts on attachment of the Slovaks to Europe are roused among citizens of big cities (Table 10), with exception of Austria and Czech Republic.

Analysis comparing all of the data suggests that those respondents "living in Manchester had a particularly narrow and distinctive view of 'Europe'. The majority of Manchester interviewees included

Turkey (54%) in ‘their’ Europe but only a minority included the Czech (44%) and Slovak Republics (37%). Only a minority of respondents in Edinburgh included the Slovak Republic (49%) in ‘their’ Europe” (Jamieson, L., et al, 2003:21).

The meaning of Europe for interviewees is an area that we hope to explore more thoroughly through in-depth interviews.

Attitudes towards European integration

One of our aims has also been to explore the attitudes toward European integration in young people in Prague and Bratislava. The participants were asked to rate on a scale (0 no impact – 4 a big impact) the impact of the future integration of their country into EU. They were considering, respectively, the impact on themselves, their region (Prague/Bratislava) and their country (Czech/Slovak Republic).

Table 11: Percentage of participants thinking that the integration of CR/SR will have ‘an impact’ or ‘a big impact’ (answering 3 or 4 on the scale)

Impact of integration on	Prague		Bratislava	
	Random	Target	Random	Target
You personally	58.3	78.6	53.7	68.3
Prague/Bratislava	72.5	84.3	68.0	82.7
Czech Republic/Slovak Republic	83.3	94.4	78.6	90.8

The majority of young people from both cities and both samples consider that European integration will have an impact on themselves, their region/city and the country.

As (Table 11) illustrates, the percentage of respondents who think there will be an impact, is highest for the anticipated impact on the country and decreases for the city and again for the anticipated impact on the participant. One possible interpretation of this pattern of answers is that our interviewees do not really understand what EU membership can bring to them as individuals, but they can better imagine its consequences on macro social - economic and political - level. Nowadays, the economic and political consequences are emphasised in media most of all. However, many young people probably do not understand what exactly the costs and the benefits of EU integration are and subsequently see it as relatively distant to their own lives¹⁰.

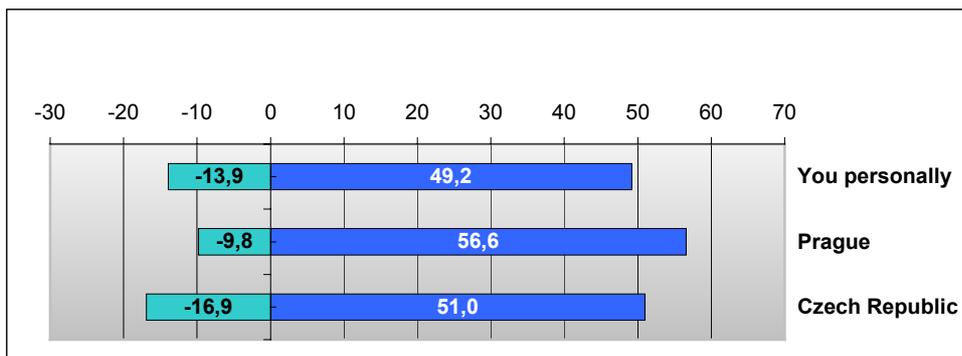
Moreover, the young people in Bratislava and Prague expect that the impact of EU integration will be mainly positive. The Prague target group participants expect it to be almost equally positive for themselves, their region and the country. In both cities, the number of young people expecting EU integration to have a positive impact is significantly higher (as resid >1,96) in the target groups than in random samples. This holds on all the three levels of anticipated impact. There are no gender differences. Moreover, expecting a negative impact of EU integration is very low in Bratislava and Prague. It seems that in both countries the political parties and movements with a Euro-sceptic political agenda do not receive support from the young people. Euro-optimistic expectations clearly dominate, especially those related to personal prosperity, development of regional towns as well as the future of both countries in the united Europe.

Graph 4: Will this impact be mainly positive or mainly negative?

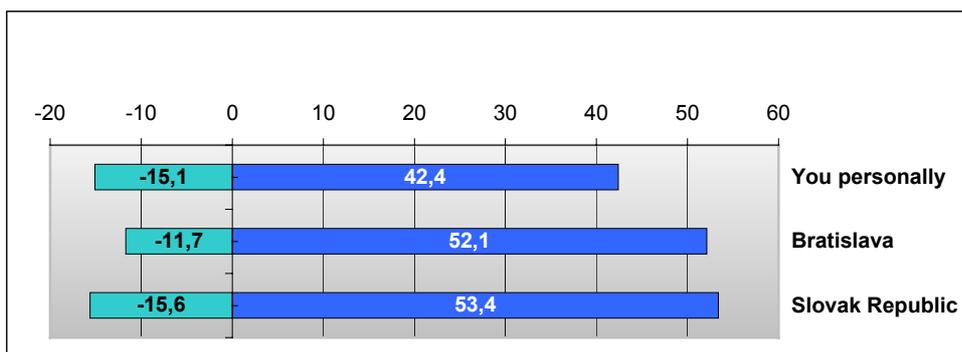
(% respondents in Prague)



¹⁰ It may be documented by comparison of data collected in Austria (Vienna), where the young people give the highest evaluation to the positive impact in EU membership on their individual person (65%) and slightly less to the city and country.



Graph 5: **Will this impact be mainly positive or mainly negative?**
(% respondents in Bratislava)



Conclusion

The split of Czechoslovakia is a challenge for politicians and sociologists even after a decade. An answer is sought to the question of whether the actions of the political elite were justified in the light of the commencement of European integration and the complicated split of the big federations (Yugoslavia and Soviet Union) with the consequences for peace and European stability. An answer is sought to the question of whether the Slovak or Czech public would support or refuse their decision if they had been given a referendum on the matter.

In 1993, public opinion on the split of the CSFR was rather confused. It should be noted that there was no clear feeling amongst the Czech public: 40% were positive, 40% negative, and the rest undecided. The attitude of the Slovak public was less confused: almost a half (47.8 %) evaluated the split negatively, 26% were undecided and only 28.9% evaluated the split positively. The political elite knew that the referendum would certainly mean a rejection of the split with Czechoslovakia and therefore there was no referendum. The 2001 research showed, some facts of the split of Czechoslovakia in the new light:



In opinions on the common state

1. The coexistence in the common state was not advantageous for the Slovaks in the opinion of both the Slovaks (57.1%) and the Czechs (55.8%).
2. The coexistence in the common state was advantageous for the Czechs in the opinion of both the Slovaks (75%) and the Czechs (61.9%).

In opinions on the prosperousness of independent republics

1. The independent development of the Czech Republic after the split was prosperous not only in the opinion of the Czechs (67.9%) but especially of the Slovaks (80.5%).
2. The independent development of the Slovak Republic after the split was prosperous neither in the opinion of the Czechs (74.9%) nor, particularly, the Slovaks (82.7%).

The public in both of the independent republics evaluate the Czech Republic in individual areas of societal life - democratism, possibility of self-realisation, social certainties, social justice, societal moral, freedom of an individual, lawfulness, and standard of life – as better, while the Slovaks give it still higher evaluation than the Czechs.

The critical attitude of the Slovaks to their own situation after the split of the common state (especially to the lower standard of living) does not mean though a negative evaluation of the new political order created in 1989. A surprising finding for the Czech and Slovak publics is that "...unfulfilled expectations in Slovakia bring along almost excessive criticism of the present Slovak situation, but the criticism does not lead to any envy or anti-Czech phobia" (Tuček, M., 2003, p. 19). This is hardly surprising for those sociologists who did some research on Czech and Slovak relations. (Roško, R., 2000; Machonin, P., 2002). Historically, the hatred was never the fundamental part of Czech and Slovak relations. On the contrary, these relations were dominated by feeling of common belonging, solidarity, subtle irony and competitiveness.

It could be expressively expressed that the Czechs do not say any more what they did during the period of the split: That serves them right, they have what they wanted. Today, they are mostly the Slovaks who say so, in a slightly changed form: That serves us right, we have what we did not want, but still we did admit it to happen. The nationally oriented political forces that initiated the process of the split of Czechoslovakia had the possibility to control (1994-1998) the social transformation processes. In the period 1998-2002 they had to retreat to the opposition particularly because they threatened the beliefs held by the younger generation that Slovak membership of the European Union would lead to personal prosperity.

The low standard of living in the Slovak segment of the former common state is objectively connected with underdeveloped infrastructure (uncompleted highways, express railways, regional airports) with the consequences of conversion of heavy industry (unemployment), etc.¹¹

Under the conditions of the independent Slovak Republic, a natural battle for civic modernisation of the Slovak society has been immediately launched. It is connected with the origin of new civic political parties with more liberal orientation¹², with the origin of right-left democratic coalition (1998-2002) and right-oriented coalition (2002-2005); and with an unprecedented development of civic society and the increase of political and civic participation of youth.¹³

The new national identity is also co-created by traditional instruments for encouraging exalted manifestations of collective solidarity at removing consequences of unjust decisions of international community.

The story of the Slovak ice-hockey team in the period 1993-2003 is a classic example. Its successes are considered as a result of long-year efforts to achieve professional performances and career, but also the outcome of "whole nation's" strive for international recognition, independent existence and the respect of other partners.¹⁴

The European Union is a similar challenge for the Slovak Republic. After 1993 and election results in 1994 (coalition of national political parties: V. Mečiar and J. Slota) all political processes of acceptance of Slovakia as a suitable partner not only for NATO but also for EU, have actually slowed down and stopped. This situation changed in 1998 thanks to the younger generation who grasped that because of their passivity in parliament elections they were enabling the prolongation of the government agony of being unable to guarantee the country prosperity. The government received a mandate to accelerate the processes of the

¹¹ It may be assumed with high probability that these problems would survive in the entire period (1993-2003) of accession negotiations with the EU in the Czechoslovak Federation too. The problem economic situation in some regions of Slovakia, especially in the East, would satisfy the nation-ethnically oriented political parties whose elite would reorient the population's dissatisfaction to the Czech political elite. It would mean a tension in Czechoslovakia and dissatisfaction with negative impact on European integration process.

¹² Alliance of a New Citizen (chairman P. Rusko).

¹³ The volunteer and non-government sector of civil society and its development between 1993 and 1998 has been considered as an important factor of transformation and modernisation of the Slovak Republic. The NGOs in Slovakia "...are now much more than islands of isolated idealists or the so-called islands of positive deviants, as the independent civil activities in late 1980s were called by Slovak sociologists. They created a vivid, vibrant and efficient "civil archipelago", an archipelago of hope and positive action" (Bútorá, M., 1997).

The empowering of young people as voters and as social actors can have important consequences for a political change as we have seen during the 1998 elections. (Macháček, L. 2000) The challenge for the future will be to create and encourage a civil society in which young people will play an active part and which can help to sustain the progress towards democratisation and the development of a market economy in the Slovak and Czech Republic as members of the new European Union after 2004.

¹⁴ The very last presentation of the joint Team Czechoslovakia was the Ice Hockey World Championship in 1992, which was held in Bratislava for the second time in history. Leaving the federation of two states politically and in a hockey way too had a taste of bronze. After the split up the Czech hockey walked to the top goals. Slovak ice hockey started modern independent history (according to the IIHF decision) right from the bottom of the world hierarchy (pool C) letting everybody know of who they were.

Thanks to the skilful diplomacy Slovakia was to participate to the Olympic Qualification in Sheffield in 1993 and to win. Therefore the door to the *Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer in 1994* was open up. Performance of the Slovak National Team was a surprise for many hockey specialists. Team Slovakia under the leadership of *Peter Šťastný* (the only Slovak player, who started with hockey in Slovakia and got to the NHL Hall of Fame), winner of a strong group accompanied by Canada, Sweden and USA was unlucky to lose the game against Russia by 2:3 in overtime period during the quarterfinals. However, the overall 6th place was a great success.

Slovakia must have bit through to hockey elite right from the bottom - C category. The top-level hockey was seen in Spišská Nová Ves and Poprad in 1994 when *Oto Haščák* scored two winning goals during the decisive game against Team Belarus. There was no other obstacle on further way to the higher category for the players under coaching tandem of *Július Šupler* and *František Hossa*. One year later the World Championship Category B was organised in Bratislava.

23 minutes and 45 seconds was the time limit for the premier scoring at the World Championship Category A in Vienna in 1996. It was a benefit of *Eubomír Sekeráš* in game against Team Canada and the first performance of the Slovak players resulted in a tie 3:3. Despite the fact that Slovakia must have fought for its position among the top hockey teams in relegation round during the mentioned championship, the team proved its valid membership to the group in order to proceed higher step by step.

The 2000 IIHF World Championship in St. Petersburg was a demonstration of such effort winning the silver medals under the baton of the Slovak National Team Head Coach *Ján Filc*. Slovak players led by their captain *Miroslav Šatan* returned home with the title of *Vice Champions of the World, 2002* with the title of *Champions of the World* (Sweden) and 2003 with bronze medal after winner match with Czech team.

European integration of the Slovak Republic. In 2002, Slovakia became a member of NATO (security of foreign investments).

In 2003, Slovakia, along with the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Malta, successfully concluded pre-accession negotiations for EU membership (guarantee of implementing the standards of democratic governance), which officially begins on May 1st 2004.

Being more enthusiastic for the newly independent Slovak Republic does not necessarily translate itself into lesser enthusiasm about Europe and European Union. However, young people from the Bratislava random sample consider being future EU citizens as more important than young people from the Prague random sample.

The young citizens of Bratislava have much greater expectations in Slovakia's EU membership at the level of "being" in Europe than "having" something from Europe. Slovakia, which has gained so far only penalty points from the European Union and the Council of Europe¹⁵ will gain by EU membership a certificate of democratic country and "the Slovak chair at the European table" (J. Čarnogurský). Only two weeks before its entrance into the EU, Slovakia held its presidential elections. In their second round, Slovak citizens decidedly withheld Vladimír Mečiar's prospects for becoming the Slovak President for 2004-2009 term.

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¹⁵ Black Peter of nationalism for the split of Czechoslovakia (1993) and Water Power Station Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros. Red cards of visa duty as the only postcommunist country from among Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary as well as for problems with Roma ethnic and its economic tourism in Europe (Belgium, Finland, United Kingdom).

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