

2021

YOUTH STUDY CZECHIA

SECURE PRESENCE, CHALLENGING FUTURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study focuses on the youngest generation of Czech citizens by exploring a broad range of important elements in their lives, including their current housing situation, educational status, life ambitions, and opinions on politics and political participation. This study is inspired by a slate of similar surveys of youth in other European countries over the last couple of years. Czech youth were surveyed simultaneously with youth peers from other countries of the Visegrád group (V4 - Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary) and from the three Baltic states in April, June and July 2021.

Both quantitative – surveying 1,500 respondents 15–29 years of age through online questionnaire – and qualitative – conducting three focus groups and ten in-depth interviews – methods were used.

MAIN SURVEY FINDINGS

- The long-run demographic development of Czech society becomes evident when looking at the proportion and number of the Czech youth. The share of Czechs aged 15–29 years is in a long-term decline, which contributes to the overall ageing of the Czech population.
- The Czech labour market and employment situation create a mostly secure and stable environment for most of the Czech youth rather than being a source of discontent we see in the southern European countries. However, there are still important setbacks regarding the Czech labour market with the most distinctive being comparatively lower wages and wide offer of low-skill jobs.
- Majority of young Czechs live with their original family. The share of youth living single or with their partner increases with progressing age. Household composition of Czech youth influences their ability to secure economic stability. Almost 90 per cent of youth living with both parents are provided with means for a comfortable life. This is compared to households of single youth or lead by a single father, which secure a comfortable life for only about 57 per cent.
- Most Czech youth are generally satisfied and content with their current living situation. Satisfaction with family life vary by the structure of household; the most content are those living either with their partner or with both their parents.
- Czech educational system conserves and reproduces hereditary social capital and hierarchy to a significant extent. Parental educational attainment plays a substantial role in shaping the educational trajectory of Czech youth. Czech youth with highly educated parents are both more likely to further continue their studies and to obtain university education themselves.
- In terms of employment, many Czech youth report working in a position or profession that is different or subpar to what they studied and/or trained for. Only one quarter of Czech youth has a job that matches their previous studies. One-third of Czech youth also report working in a position that requires a lower level of formal education than they actually possess.
- Czech youth see little connection between their personal, individual success and how their society fares overall. For Czech youth, personal success in the future is possible despite a perceived overall worsening of the societal situation.
- Czech youth are mostly concerned with pursuit of individualistic goals and aspirations. Civic actions or initiatives and participation in politics are largely seen as unimportant by Czech youth; establishing one's independence and securing a successful career are seen as far more important life goals.

- Pollution and climate change, social injustice and worries related to a global pandemic situation scored highest among the tested threats for Czech youth. Young Czech women are significantly more likely than men to express worries about being victims of physical violence.
- Czech youth are exceptionally disconnected from religion and the political party system in the country. While in many other areas the beliefs and opinions of youth across the V4 countries are very much alike, Czech youth is a stark outlier from the rest of the region's youth population when it comes to religious matters.
- Czech youth have very little interest in politics, do not want to take political functions, and largely avoid discussing it; additionally, very few young people believe that the interests of youth are well represented in Czech national politics.
- Czech youth stand firmly in favour of both the European Union and NATO. Opposition to the EU is exceptionally low among the Czech youth, especially when compared to Czech society's overall ambivalent stance towards the EU.
- Distrust towards all national and international institutions increases with age within the group of Czech youth; especially so in the case of the Czech parliament, domestic media and the European Union.
- Despite the low level of youth relating to the current state of public and political affairs, there is a substantial support towards more possibilities of speaking out for young people in politics. Less than half a year before Czech parliamentary elections, Czech youth's intent to vote was higher than the actual youth turnout in the previous parliamentary elections in 2017.

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