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YOUTH STUDY

PERSONAL OPTIMISM, NATIONAL PESSIMISM, TRUST IN EUROPE.

**A COMPARISON OF VALUES, ATTITUDES AND
PLANS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CZECH
REPUBLIC, ESTONIA, HUNGARY, LATVIA,
LITHUANIA, POLAND, AND SLOVAKIA**

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MAIN FINDINGS

EDUCATION

- The pursuit of higher education qualifications is particularly strong among young people in the Baltic States. Adolescents in Central Eastern Europe, on the other hand, tend to orient themselves towards a middle level of education.
- Both young people from the Baltic States and from Central Eastern Europe align their educational aspirations with the economic requirements of their home countries.
- Young people from the Baltic States show a higher level of satisfaction with the education system than the young generation in Central Eastern Europe.
- Scepticism about the corruptibility of educational qualifications is more pronounced among young people in Central Eastern Europe than among their peers in the Baltic States.

WORK AND MIGRATION

- Opportunities on the labour market and the individual economic situation are largely determined by the level of education and training young people have.
- Young people in economically weaker countries are more likely to be affected by unemployment.
- Girls and young women are significantly more likely to be exposed to unemployment compared to their male peers. In the Baltic States in particular, the percentage is over 70%.
- Young people from Poland and Hungary disproportionately regularly express the wish to leave their home country.
- Compared to all other countries included in the study, young people in Lithuania report having already had a migration experience of their own.
- Male adolescents are more likely to have spent time abroad.

FAMILY

- The majority of young people in Central Eastern Europe and the Baltic States grow up in traditional family structures. The nuclear family is still the most common form of family life. This is most common in Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic and least common in Latvia.
- The majority of young people express a high level of satisfaction with their own family.

- Adolescents in Estonia are most satisfied with their own family life. In Hungary, the corresponding satisfaction rates are significantly lower. There is also a disproportionately high percentage in Poland and Latvia who have an ambivalent attitude towards their own family.
- The socio-economic situation is a decisive factor in determining how people judge their own family: the more precarious the financial situation within the family, the more stressful the relationship with parents is assessed yet with clear differences between the countries in terms of the level.
- Young people move out of the parent's home earlier in the Baltic States.
- The reasons for staying longer in the parents' home among young people in Central Eastern Europe are not so much based on convenience and securing comfort, but rather, it is their own financial situation that prevents them from moving out.
- Starting a family of one's own is a central goal in life for the vast majority of all young people interviewed across all countries surveyed. Most of them are oriented towards traditional ideas of family, e.g. marriage and the desire to have children.
- However, having children is considered more important than getting married. Young people in the Baltic States, in particular, do not see marriage as a prerequisite for partnership and having children.
- In Poland, the opposite picture tends to be true: marriage takes precedence over the desire to have children. Among the members of the Visegrád Group, child planning is most often postponed among the following youth generation in Poland.
- When it comes to starting a family, an urban-rural divide is apparent. The desire to get married and have children is significantly less pronounced among young people in urban structures than in rural regions.
- Young people in the Baltic States tend to plan to have children earlier and more than is the case among their counterparts in the other Visegrád countries.

GENERAL VALUES, ATTITUDES AND WISHES

- The young people surveyed are a satisfied generation across all countries.
- The view of the future among young people in all the countries surveyed is optimistic, at least with regard to personal development. In contrast, the development of their own country over the next ten years is assessed much more pessimistically.
- Independence, taking responsibility and a successful career represent the three most important life goals of young people.

- Religion plays a rather subordinate role for the majority of young people, although a religious orientation is even more pronounced among young people in Central Eastern Europe. The feeling of belonging to a denomination is widespread among them.
- Religious young people's life goals are somewhat more closely aligned with traditional values such as starting a family and getting married and tend to be more involved in society.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND INVOLVEMENT

- Political interest tends to be stronger among young people in Central Eastern Europe and lower in the Baltic States.
- Young males show a higher interest in politics compared to young females. Moreover, interest increases with growing age.
- On political issues, young people in Central Eastern Europe tend to be more conformist than those in the Baltic States.
- At the national level, the highest rate of conformity between the parents' and young people's generations can be found in Hungary. 40.5% of Hungarian young people agree with their parents on political issues. In Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, this applies to only one-fifth of all young people.
- Compared to young people in Central Eastern Europe, young people in the Baltic States are significantly less likely to express the intention to vote in the future.
- The vast majority of young people in the Baltic States and Central Eastern Europe show a clear tendency towards the political centre.
- A great deal of trust is placed in state organisations of the judiciary and the executive branches. Especially among young people in the Baltic States, the judiciary branch and the police receive high approval ratings. In contrast, governments and parliaments at the national level, the media in the respective countries, as well as the Church and other religious institutions are viewed much more critically. Political parties receive the lowest scores when it comes to trust.
- A great deal of trust is placed in international alliances such as the EU and NATO.
- Democracy is a viable and favoured form of government for three quarters of all respondents. Indeed: Every tenth person categorically rejects democracy. Every fifth person even considers dictatorship to be the better form of government under certain circumstances.
- Economic and socio-economic aspects are seen as the central challenges of the future.

- With regard to nation-state attitudes, clear differences can be observed between the young people in the seven countries studied. The majority of young people in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are against more immigration. Young people in Poland and the Baltic States show a much greater welcoming culture and less xenophobia.
- A clear majority of all young people both in the Baltic States and in Central Eastern Europe reject an exit from the EU.

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