*Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic*
*Department of Czech Border Regions*

# CZECH-GERMAN CONNECTIONS

*THE BULLETIN OF THE PROJECT, "THE CIVIC DIMENSION OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS IN THE PHASE OF THE ACCESSION OF THE CR TO THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE BORDER AREAS" WHICH IS FUNDED BY THE CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCE'S SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR TARGETED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.*

Volume II. No. 1/June 2004

## CZECH-GERMAN BORDERLAND AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF THE EASTERN ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The opening of the frontiers between West Germany and the former Czechoslovakia produced an atmosphere of social euphoria among the population of the border areas not only on the Czech but also on the German side. There was a major increase in the frequency of contacts and the creation of new ties between the Czechs and Germans border populations. A number of organisational connections involving co-operation between territorial units have been set up, and these include the establishment of euroregions, and the ground has been prepared for the gradual integration of the territorial systems The reunification of Germany and its return to the role of continental power substantially altered the role of the Czech border areas.

The border territories nevertheless continue to suffer from the consequences of the long-term development of two different social systems. One such consequence is the asymmetry of Czech-German relations, which is particularly strongly felt in those parts of the borderlands where there is frequent and direct contact between the populations on the two sides. Mainly the product of history, the lack of symmetry is manifest in the difference between the activities and motivations of the Czechs and the Germans with whom they are coming into mutual contact. Its effects are beneficial in the sense that it inhibits direct competition between Czechs and Germans, whose motivations tend to be more complementary in character and provide a basis for mutually advantageous co-operation. In these circumstances, however, the activities and historical reminiscences of the Sudeten-German organisations are having a negative impact. Inequality of the mutual relationship and the strivings of these organisations are indeed, having an effect on the everyday life of citizens in the border areas and are factors moulding and modifying their attitudes both to Germany and to the actions of Czech leaders.

***Václav Houžvička***

## THE BASIC GOALS OF THE PROJECT THE CIVIC DIMENSION OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS

Starting in 2003, the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic-Department of Czech Border Regions has launched a three year research project entitled "The Civic Dimension of Czech-German Relations in the Phase of the Accession of the CR to the European Union with an Emphasis on the Border Areas. " The project is funded by the Czech Academy of Science's Programme of Support for Targeted Research and Development, and it's goal is the comprehensive empirical identification and documentation of the perception and image of Germany in the views and attitudes of the population of the Czech borderlands. The project follows on from the systematic study of the theme that the Ústí nad Labem department of the Sociological Institute has been conducting since the beginning of the 1990s.

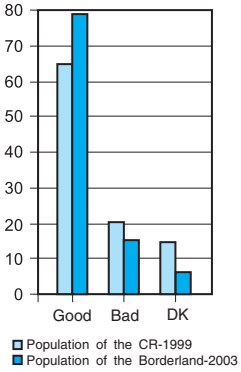
Although Germany is for the first time in modern history an ally of the CR in NATO and an important actor in the imminent accession of the CR to the European Union, mutual relations are still marked by a certain tension that has proved impossible to eliminate either by the Agreement on Good Neighbourship and Peaceful Co-operation of 1992 or the Declaration signed in 1997. The main reason is historical memory primarily of the tragic events of the Second World War. They remain latently present in mutual relations (as a result inter alia of the activities of the organisations of the displaced Germans), and present a risk factor in bilateral relations.

Despite this, the fourteen years since the fall of the Iron Curtain on the Czech-German border have brought dynamic progress in co-operation along the whole border, which today is covered by Euroregions that encourage the establishment of contacts between institutions and people on the West European model. The funding for projects encouraging closer Czech-German relations that has been provided by the Fund for the Future, set up together with the Co-ordination Council of the Czech-German Discussion Forum on the basis of the Declaration, has likewise been having

**BASIC FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH INSIDE THIS ENLARGED ISSUE**

RELATIONS OF THE BORDERLAND INHABITANTS TO GERMANY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.
FEELINGS OF PRIDE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
ATTITUDES TO OTHER NATIONS
EVALUATION OF CURRENT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY.
CONTACTS OF INHABITANTS LIVING NEAR THE BORDER WITH GERMAN INHABITANTS.
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE QUALITY OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS
VIEW OF THE PAST AND THE SUDETEN-GERMAN ISSUE.
CURRENT ATTITUDES TO PROBLEMS OF THE SUDETEN GERMANS.

**Figure 1. Rating of Current Relations between the CR and FRG (in%)**




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Science of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003

*Three quarters of respondents are of the opinion that the relations of the Czechs to Germany and the Germans have improved after 1989. They also show their satisfaction with the fact that the partnership with Germany has got a new dimension of the European Integration. The position of the Czech Republic is predominantly perceived in the European Context.*

positive effects.

The now imminent accession of the Czech Republic to the EU means that there is a day-to-day need for institutions, politicians and also citizens to take steps to create instruments of co-operation and closer rapprochement on the basis of a deeper understanding of the views and attitudes of the public in the border areas. Our project aims to be one source of such understanding, and this bulletin (usually twice-yearly, timing depending on availability of research results) will provide regular news on the results of the project. In this issue we bring you the first part of the results of research conducted in September 2003 in collaboration with the TNS Factum agency in all the districts lying on the frontier with Germany. It covers most of the territory (known as the Sudetenland) affected after 1945 by almost complete change of population as a result of the transfer of the German-speaking population of Czechoslovakia.

The process of the gradual interlink age of the border areas as a result of their integration into the common space of the EU, together with the decline in the role of the border as a sharp divide between "two worlds", may be expected to strengthen trends leading to the renewal of a territory that has hitherto lived on the edge of the interest of the centre, and open up new possibilities of rapprochement with our western neighbour. We hope the project will be a contribution to this process.

*Václav Houžvička*

## THE REFLECTION OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE CR IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

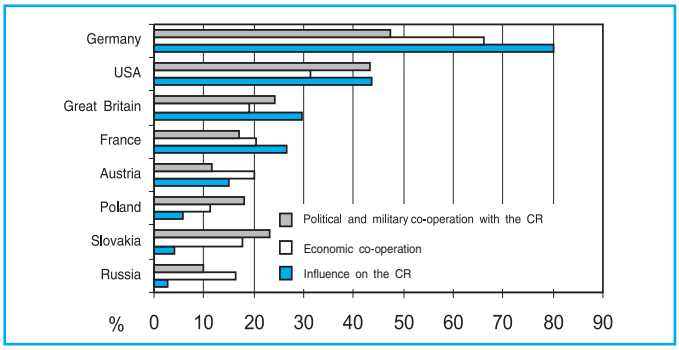
The public in the border areas with Germany sees the position of the Czech Republic primarily within a European context. Only one non-European country, the USA, figures among the eight countries most often mentioned by corespondents as countries with which the CR should have the closest economic, political and military co-operative links.

Germany is clearly the most often mentioned as the country with which the CR should have the closest economic ties, and this essentially corresponds to the real situation. The USA emerged in second place in the preferences of citizens. It is these two powers - the superpower USA and the regional big power Germany - that are regarded by the section of the Czech public surveyed as the decisive foreign partners having the greatest influence on the CR. This finding is confirmed by answers on the ideal closest political and military partnership, where once again it was these two countries that were most frequently mentioned.

On the basis of these findings we might well take the view that the public in the Czech borderlands has quite a sensitive perception of the need to balance the regional influence of Germany by closer Czech political and military orientation to the USA.

Rather less emphasis is placed on having the closest possible co-operation with Great Britain and France, but in both cases there is more frequent mention of their influence on the CR.

Figure 2. Countries with which the CR should have the closest co-operative links and which have the biggest influence on the CR




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

The third category of countries (according to frequency of mention) consists of neighbouring states (with the exception of Germany), i.e. Slovakia, Poland and Austria. In the case of all three it is interesting to note the difference between the desirable (from the point of view of respondents) and the actual state. While of the three, Slovakia is more often sited as the country with which there should be the closest political and military contacts, and is followed in this respect first by Poland and then by Austria, in the case of perception of the influence of these states on the CR the order is the opposite.

Russia emerges as a special case from the point of view of the research, since here mentions of the need for close economic co-operation predominate, but the most important finding in relation to Russia would seem to be that 14 years after the political revolution of 1989, only 2.8 % of the citizens of the border areas believe that this state influences daily affairs in the CR.

Other countries were mentioned too infrequently to be of significance for the survey.

*Václav Houžvička*

## DOES THE POPULATION OF THE BORDERLANDS FEEL THAT THERE IS ANY EXTERNAL THREAT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC?

Among the inhabitants of the borderlands with Germany, the prevailing view on the security system is that the CR has no external enemy that it needs to confront. The belief of most of the border population that Germany is a safe neighbour creates favourable conditions for a relatively smooth accession when the CR joins the EU in May 2004. The absence of serious conflict with neighbouring countries is one of the fundamental requirements for EU membership.

It is true that when respondents in the border areas did in fact mention a country that aroused their fear, Germany was the country most frequently stated (3.9 %). On the other hand, given the past history of conflict and the fact that up to 1989 West Germany was considered an enemy, then it is the low level of that figure that is striking, and indicates positive conditions for further co-operation. The second most frequently stated source of potential threat was Russia (2.8 %).

In this case too, bad experience with the former dominant power has evidently been overriden by the current international political trends (following the break up of the Soviet Union) and the security guarantees implied by CR membership of NATO.

From the point of view of the long-term trend of perception of the international security guarantees of the CR it is clear that the CR's membership of Euro-Atlantic security structures is playing a strongly stabilising role in the context of the Czech-German borderlands.

The sense of threat from other countries is an entirely marginal phenomenon.

*Václav Houžvička*

FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY SEE HTTP:/WWW.BORDERLAND.CZ

# ATTITUDES OF THE BORDER POPULATION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the border areas with Germany generally positive views of the entry of the CR to the EU predominate, and there are indications that this positive attitude has strengthened somewhat in comparison with earlier research findings.

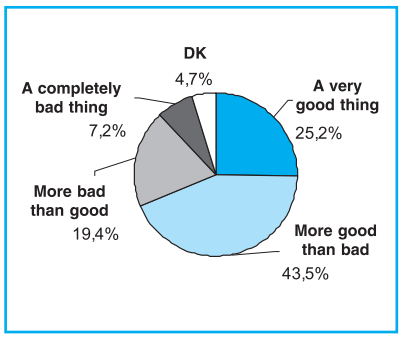
We should take care to note, however, that the borderlands are territorially differentiated on this question. Generally more positive views on Germany and the enlargement of the EU were recorded in the area bordering on Bavaria than in the area bordering on Saxony.

It is clear that the possibility of profits from the dynamic Bavarian economy, the presence of tourists and business activities bringing in German money, all of them helping to overcome local and regional economic difficulties, are the factors behind the more positive view of Czech integration into the EU in the borders with Bavaria,

The attitudes of the inhabitants of the border areas with Saxony are evidently negatively affected by the poorer economic situation in the old industrial regions, where restructuring has been particularly painful, and where in contrast to the Bavarian part of the borderlands there is little economic benefit to be expected from Saxony, which is struggling with the same problems.

A relatively positive view of Czech membership in EU is supported by the fact that the population in the borderland districts definitely has no fears for continuing Czech statehood within the supranational while. Almost two thirds of respondents did not regard it as likely that our state would disappear as a result of entry into the EU.

Figure 3. Rating of the Entry of the CR into the EU in the Czech Borderlands with the FRG




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

Expectations of the results of entry into the EU are not, however, unambiguously positive in the borderlands. The greatest losses are anticipated in the social sphere, both in term of rise in living costs, and increase in the number of unemployed. Attitudes to the question whether a higher standard of living will be achieved after entry to the EU were also mixed. More positive expectations predominate in the economic field, both in relation of access to EU funds for economic development, and in relation to the opening up of new markets for Czech products.

Expectations in the political sphere are likewise not unmixed. The public in the border areas most often incline to the view that the influence of Germany on their region will grow and Czech state sovereignty will be diminished. On the other hand, half the public in these areas believe that after entry into the EU the CR will be regarded as a full-value member with equal rights. Nor was there consensus on the view of the possible expansion of Czech influence in Central and Eastern Europe, or on whether after accession to the EU the CR will be capable of embracing European culture and moral values to their full extent.

*Václav Houžvička*

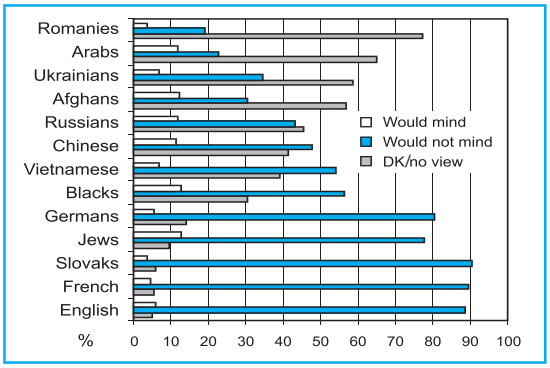
# LEVEL OF ETHNIC TOLERANCE

Apart from a residual close relationship to Slovaks, a considerable degree of trust in "western" cultural conditions is evident in the Czech population of the German borderlands under survey. Even in relation to people from other cultural backgrounds, however, the public is far from closed-minded. Indeed, the level of declared tolerance for having Black, Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian neighbours is significantly high.

A negative attitude prevails in relation to nationalities associated in the public consciousness with some sense of threat to people and property. The population of the border regions expresses by far the greatest reservations, however, on co-existence with Romanies. This is of course a long-term phenomenon, an expression of relatively serious mutual alienation and the very low level of adaptation to the majority population environment shown by a section of the Romany population. In this case the attitudes of the public faithfully reflect a situation that continues in the border areas.

*Václav Houžvička*

Figure 4. The Acceptability of Different Nationalities as Neighbours in Place of Residence




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

# RATING OF CURRENT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CR AND GERMANY

Those who express a rather more sceptical view on the level of mutual relations at present can be generally divided into two basic groups: individuals in vulnerable social strata and people who are alarmed by the activities of the Sudeten Germans. Even in these groups taken as a whole, however, it is actually positive ratings that prevail.

The views of people living on the border with Saxony also show slightly more scepticism, but research did not confirm the hypothesis that the more critical attitude in the north-west border areas was based on greater fear of the demands of the Sudeten Germans than in the Bavarian border areas. The reasons seems to be the generally more radical profile of attitudes in the Saxon border areas, caused both by the tenser political atmosphere in the region and the more problematic social situation.

Nonetheless, as has already been indicated, it is precisely fear of the demands of the Sudeten German organisation that is most frequently behind the rating of relations between the CR and Germany as less good.

Compared with 1999, there seems to have been a strengthening in positive ratings of the development of Czech-German relations, and so the

trend is also positive, with good relations with Germany also regarded as having a relatively major importance in the borderlands. According to the majority of their inhabitants, good relations with Germany are considered among the most important of relations with surrounding states, and a quarter regard them as the most important of all relations with surrounding states. A similarly positive attitude prevails on the effects of the unification of Germany on mutual relations.

If we look at the way inhabitants of the different areas of the borderlands rate the unification, it is clear that people living close to Bavaria have a tendency to give a more positive rating than people living close to Saxony.

Throughout the whole borderland area there was a general tendency to the view that the relationship of Czechs to Germans and Germany had improved since 1989. From the results of the survey it is clear that the public is to a considerable extent immune from the effects of the regularly occurring media "exchanges of fire" and disputes at the bilateral level of Czech-German relations. There are several possible explanations for this, including insufficient information and so inability to understand the basis of the problem, a pragmatic distance of the "that's what politicians are for" variety, or an indifferent attitude rejecting any personal engagement in "matters of so-called high politics, which anyway I can't influence". The weariness of Czech society with the continual stream of changes (political and economic) that followed 1989 may also be playing a role here.

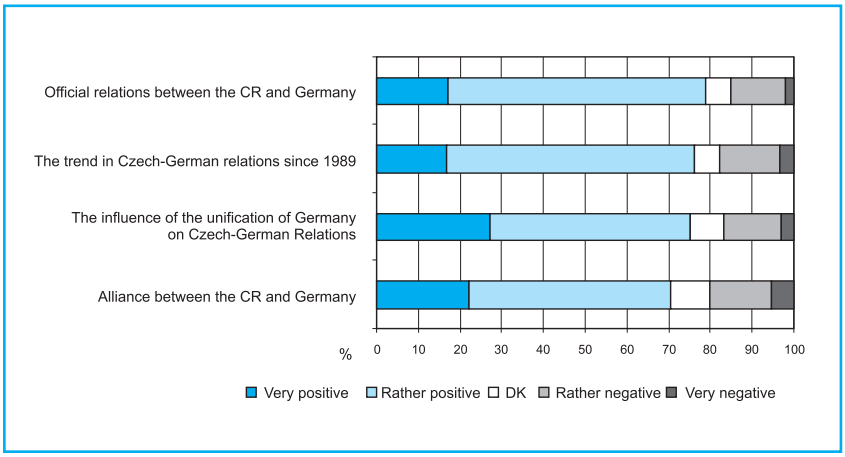
As in previous cases, the inhabitants of the Czech borderlands with Germany are also generally satisfied with the fact that Germany has become our ally with Czech entry into NATO and the EU.

The level of satisfaction with alliance with Germany is strongly politically motivated, i.e. varies with political affiliation. It is not surprising that left-orientated respondents are substantially less satisfied with the alliance than right-orientated respondents. Likewise inhabitants of the Bavarian border areas more often express a positive view of the alliance. For the sake of comparison we might mention answers characterising the situation in the borderlands before the entry of the CR into NATO. In a survey conducted in October 1996 Germany figured in first place among states with which it was desirable to co-operate. It was followed by the United States, and then France and Great Britain.

If in this context we take into account the sharp fall in the feeling of threat from the German side (in 1996 18.4 % thought that there was a potential threat, while in 2003 only 4 % felt this way), it is clear that the potential for trust in the western neighbour is growing consistently.

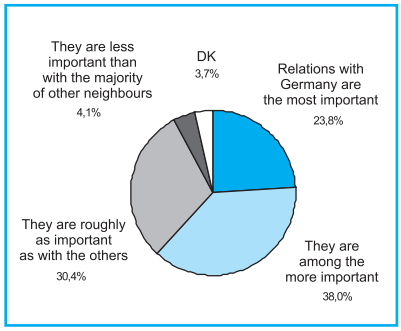
*Václav Houžvička*

**Figure 5. Rating of Selected Aspects of Czech-German Relations**




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

**Figure 6. Rating of Relations with Germany in Comparison with the Other Neighbouring Countries**




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

## WE BRING INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONS OF CZECH-GERMAN COOPERATION:

- *The concrete result of the content of the Czech-German Declaration, signed on 21st January 1997 was the establishment of the institution (of the Foundation Fund under the Czech law, with the registered office in Prague) of The Czech-German Fund of the Future. The main aim of the Fund is to support various forms of understanding between Czechs and Germans, namely by means of a financial support given to joint bilateral projects, a considerable part of which is focused on the Czech-German Borderland. A significant area of the project focused on the youth is formed by exchange programmes (e.g. the TANDEM Project), study stays and school partnerships (such as the Czech-Bavarian Exchange School Year in the Euroregion Chebsko /Ergensis, etc.).*

- *Since 1999 the Fund is a partner organization of the FRG Foundation called "Recollection, Responsibility and the Future", which contributes to reconciliation by the "Social Project in favour of Victims of National-Socialist Violence."*

- *In the area of culture the Fund supports the holding of exhibitions, concerts (e.g. the music festival called In the Centre of Europe), the meetings of artists, publications of translations of significant literary works and research studies. The Fund also supports the redevelopment within the Borderland area.*

- *The project called Czech-German Discussion Forum, directed by the Co-ordinating Council , the mission of which is to provide opportunities for negotiating key issues of mutual cooperation, including the problem issues of the past, also contributes to the extension of the dialogue between both the countries.*

## PERSPECTIVES OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS

The important factor of peaceful coexistence of Czechs with Germans is based on mutual efforts to become better acquainted with one another and develop bilaterally advantageous cooperation. Only this kind of relationship may help both of these nations get rid of the burden of negative experience from their most recent mutual coexistence as well as that in the past.

The political change at the end of the 1980s and that subsequent to this time in the geopolitical structure of the world has created some basic conditions for convergence and greater diffusion of individual nations, both inside and outside Europe. This fact can be characterised as neither uniquely positive, nor negative. It simply becomes a more significant reality, even in new or re-established central- and east-European democracies. With a certain amount of hyperbole it would be possible to say that the "wandering" of unanchored individuals and national minorities from all over the world, to Europe in particular, is a "litmus test" that reflects the condition and social and political health of the entire human population.

Czech and German cross-border areas also went through a complicated development after the year 1989, which was not without negative consequences (a high level of unemployment in Czech and Saxon cross-border districts, massive departure of people, namely very young people, from the Saxon cross-border area, etc.) It is not possible to rule out that, under certain insecure circumstances, even relatively stabilised areas of Europe, to which Czech and German cross-border areas can be ranked, may become areas of a lower social, political, economic and demographic stability, and even those of instability.

It is in the clear distinct interest of Czech and German inhabitants of border areas, as in any other territory located near the frontier, to live in a non-conflict relationship with the respective neighbours and to create conditions for sensible and dignified life. If this is projected into Czech-German relations, it means that it will be necessary to get used to one another in everyday contact, mutually respect one another and be reliable and advantageous economic partners. If this happens, the purely human relations between the Czechs and the Germans will continue developing.

*Václav Houžvička*

## FACTORS HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF CZECH-GERMAN RELATIONS

To be able to build mutual Czech-German relations on solid foundations, it is necessary to identify all factors that may influence them either positively or negatively, to look for real cores in them, and at the same time analyse what is being added to this real base in the form of prejudices, unrealistic expectations, etc.

On the basis of some findings from the latest research in Czech-German border districts, a strong representation of the pragmatic view is evident, namely when people perceive Germany as an economically strong partner, with whom it is desirable to cooperate. Equally, we could register a high ratio of consent with the assessment of Germany as a state with which we can live in peace and contentment (86.4 %). These attitudes suggest that the neighbouring state is understood as a trustworthy and perspective partner.

However, this positive attitude to the western neighbour is also accompanied by certain constraints, which are evidently anchored in the form of historical memory in the deeper strata of our social conscience (we must be cautious 67.4 %, we must not forget the Autumn of 1938 81 %) reflecting the inequality of both the countries in terms of power. This can be indicated in short by the expression " cautious friendship". This statement is also supported by the finding that only a partial consent was observed for a longer period of time and with the majority of statements repeatedly assessing the current role of Ger-

Table 1. Survey Showing Development of Opinions about Factors that Influence Czech-German Cooperation

| | 1993 | 1994 | 1996 | 1997 | 1999 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Different Language | 44 | 39 | 47 | 43 | 36 | 42 |
| Different National Character | 52 | 46 | 50 | 55 | 42 | 47 |
| Efficiency of National Economy | 83 | 73 | 79 | 78 | 70 | 70 |
| Conflict Character of the Past | 40 | 44 | 57 | 62 | 69 | 70 |
| Political System/State Interests | 30 | 34 | 30 | 45 | 42 | 38 |
| Insufficiently Developed Roads and Highways | 41 | 33 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 23 |
| Insufficient Information | 55 | 30 | 25 | 27 | 27 | 25 |

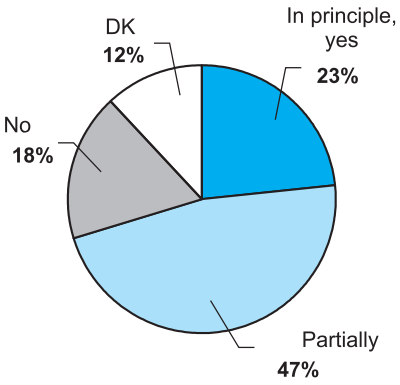
*Note: affirmative response ratio; research activities carried out in 1999 in the districts of Czech -German border regions, where the data are given.*

Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG 1993 - 2003

## Most Significant Items:

- *The Czech public in Czech-German cross-border areas can still find reserves in the process of rectifying Czech -German relations.*
- *The Sudeten German issue is a subject of prime interest of only part of inhabitants living in the cross-border territory. One-tenth of the population is highly interested in these issues, one third only partially.*
- *In the assessment of seriousness of the Sudeten German issue in Czech - German relations their opinions split. One part considers this problem very serious or rather serious, the other as quite marginal.*

Figure 7. Have Czech-German Relations Been Reconciled?




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

many positively.

The Czech society's awareness (mentality) of its interconnected national identity has a strong historicist character (it also supports all previous findings that 85 % of Czech respondents see the reason for this in their pride in the history of the Czech Republic), which arises from a long and complicated effort to acquire cultural and national identity, as well as from repeated loss of national autonomy in modern history. The current positive relationship to Germany and its inhabitants is even more valuable because the Czechs had to fight for their political, cultural and economic emancipation and compete with the German environment (both inside the Czech lands and in the relationship to the German-speaking states of Austria and Germany).

The inhabitants living in the border territory mentioned differences in the standard of living, differently functioning economic systems and the conflict-ridden past among the negative factors (such as cooperation barriers) that influence the quality of Czech-German cooperation.

In the long-term view of the development of the ratio of individual factors in the development of the quality of Czech-German relations it is surprising to find that there is a radical growth of the conflict-ridden past factor, which contrasts with the targeted efforts of political elites to cultivate the Czech-German dialogue directed towards the process of overcoming the past problems.

Although the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood Policy and Friendly Cooperation was signed between the CFSR and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1992, followed by the Czech-German Declaration of Mutual Relations and their Future Development in 1997, it is evident that there has been no success in removing the conflict potential of modern history so far (i.e. the rejection of being integrated into Czechoslovakia by the Czech Germans in the years 1918-1919, gradual nazification of the political representation of the Sudeten Germans in 1930s, the break-up of democratic Czechoslovakia in 1938, occupation of Czech lands in the years 1939-1945 and the post war eviction of the German-speaking population living in Czechoslovakia). Destructive attitudes of view of the Sudeten Landsmannschaft repeatedly irritate Czech society and political elites of the Czech Republic and complicate otherwise favourably developing relations between the Czechs and the Germans at the local and regional levels in cross-border areas. Similar development can be observed at the nation-wide level.

In all probability the radical growth of the reminiscence factor (from 49 % in 1993 to 69 % in 2003) can be attributed mainly to the handling of negotiations in the Sudeten-German question and the demands of the Sudeten Landsmannschaft (e.g. the right to mother country, property restitutions, the right of return, abolishment of the President's decrees, etc.) As if history had repeated itself out of spite to all efforts to all dialogue concerning the "rectification" of relations in a more intensive form. It is possible to reach the conclusion that the effects of the dialogue remained restricted to a small group of CR inhabitants, and within the wider context of Czech-German relations, they have rather a disturbing influence.

If we skip over the historical baggage in Czech-German relations and do not take into account the efforts of the Sudeten Landsmannschaft, the attitudes of the general public in Czech border districts, as shown in the attached tables, are quite favourable.

In view of the fact that some statements indicate how these inhabitants perceive and assess Germany, the political, cultural and economic dimension.

*Václav Houžvička*

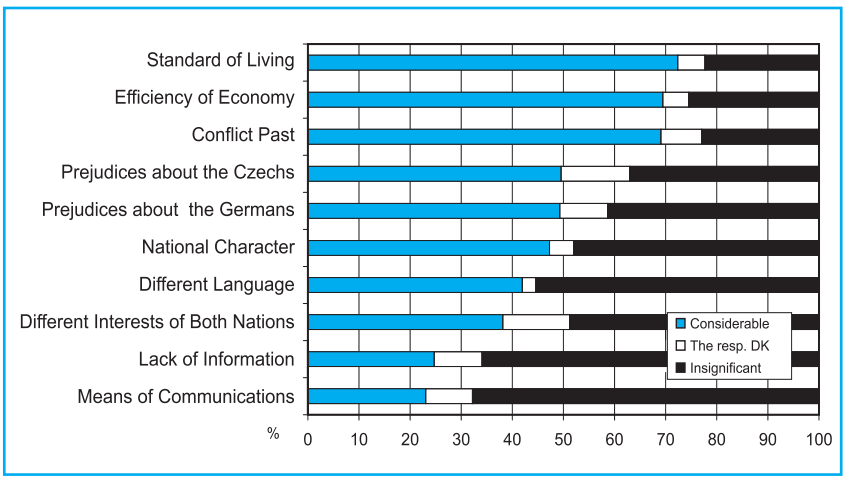
Table 2. Development of Assessment of Some of the Statements concerning the Relationship to Germany

| | 1996 | 1999 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|
| We can live with the Germans in peace and harmony | 91 | 78 | 86 |
| Neighbourhood with the Federal Republic of Germany is economically advantageous | 94 | 70 | 89 |
| Germany has the strongest influence on CR of all European states | 92 | 62 | 83 |
| We should show more pride towards the Germans | 88 | 71 | 84 |
| It is in the state's interest to develop close cooperation with Germany | 93 | 67 | 82 |
| It is impossible to forget about what Germany caused our country after the Munich Agreement | 83 | 78 | 81 |
| We should strive more for cooperation with the evicted Germans | 94 | x | 38 |
| The Germans are our friends | 88 | x | 71 |
| German culture is quite familiar to our inhabitants | 52 | 33 | 54 |
| We must always be cautious where Germans are concerned | 84 | 59 | 67 |
| Fascism and nationalism may appear in Germany again | 79 | 51 | 58 |
| Germany could still endanger the Czech Republic | 49 | 21 | 42 |
| We are always powerless whenever the Germans are concerned | 40 | 21 | 36 |
| We can always learn something from the Germans | 75 | 67 | 67 |

*Note: a set of responses "I agree" and "I rather agree"; In 1999 - the whole-nation investigation; In 1996 and 2003 - the investigation in the districts close to the border with the Federal Republic of Germany; x - the question has not bee asked.*

Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG 1996 - 2003

Figure 8. Factors that have an Impact on the Quality of Czech-German Cooperation




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

## LIST OF SELECTED RESEARCH PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN THE BORDERLAND

***1991.*** *The empirical survey "Česko-německé vztahy v názorech obyvatel českého pohraničí" [Czech-German Relations in Opinions of the Czech Borderland Inhabitants]. N=1421 respondents. Project conceived by Social and Economic Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.*

***1993.*** *A sociological survey "Přeshraniční souvislosti sociálních změn v oblasti české části euroregionu Chebsko" [Cross-Border Implications of Social Changes in the Area of the Czech Part of the Euroregion Chebsko]. N=758 respondents. The Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Department of the Czech Borderland, within the project called "Verflechtungsanalyse Nordbayern-Westböhmen". The project coordinator University of Bayreuth.*

***1993-1995.*** *Sociological surveys made within the project "České pohraničí v procesech evropské integrace" [The Czech Borderland in the Processes of the European Integration] supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, identification code 403/93/1085.*

***1996-1999.*** *Empirical surveys "Reflexe sudetoněmecké otázky a postoje obyvatel českého pohraničí k Německu" [Reflection of the Sudeten German Issue and Attitudes of Inhabitants of the Czech Borderland to Germany]. Survey reports. Research project financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.*

***1998-2000.*** *Sociological surveys of the project called "Nositelé vytváření přeshraničního společenství na česko-německé hranici" [Bearers of the Formation of Cross-Border Community on the Czech-German Border]. Supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, identification code 403/98/1420.*

***2003.*** *A representative sociological survey "Pohraničí ČR/NSR" [The Borderland between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany] within the project called "Občanská dimenze česko-německých vztahů ve fázi vstupu ČR do Evropské unie s důrazem na pohraniční oblasti" [The Civic Dimension of Czech - German Relations at the Stage of the Czech Republic Accessing the EU, with an Accent to the Borderland Areas]. N=789 respondents. Programme of support given to targeted research and development of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (IBS7028301).*

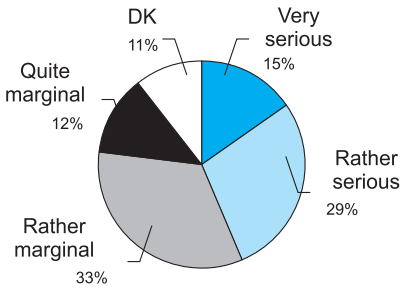
## ATTITUDE OF THE CZECH PUBLIC TO THE SUDETEN GERMANS

For the first time the question of the seriousness of the Sudeten Germans´ issue started to be asked as part of a research project called The Czech Border Land in the year 1991 (the formulation of the question was not identical) and at that time 66% respondents considered it a potential problem of the current Czech -German Relations. In 1999 the responses "very and rather serious" amounted to 61% and in the year 2003 the trend continued to decline to 43.7 %. We can assume that in spite of repeated medial "dramatic emotional reactions" the portion of inhabitants feeling that the "Sudeten German issue is a large problem is slowly rescinding.

In connection with the opinion expressed in the other question (i.e. evaluation of the level of information about the Sudeten German problems in the mass media) we learn that the media make things more dramatic (57 %). It is evident that more than one half of the majority of inhabitants maintains a sober distance from the hectic vocabulary and argumentation of the newspaper headings that haunt people by talking about "the Sudeten threat", which happens even in the situation when the Sudeten Landsmannschaft advocacy of its requirements was given a concrete shape in the votes cast by CDU/CSU members of parliament against the Czech Republic's acceptance in the EU in the European Parliament, Spring 2003.

***Václav Houžvička***

Figure 9. Perception of Seriousness of the Sudeten Germans´ Problem




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

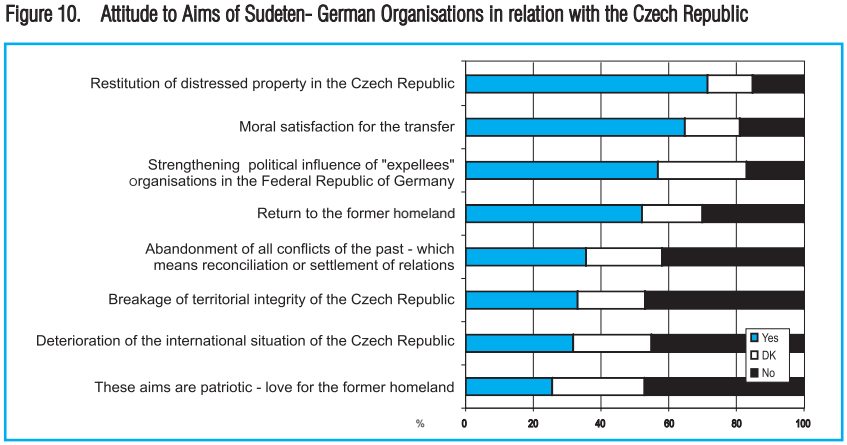
## THE SUDETEN-GERMAN LANDSMANNSCHAFT: FEARS OR HOPES?

The activity of the Sudeten German Landsmanschaft is an important phenomenon in Czech-German Relations, namely with its efforts to reverse the course of events and the decisions made against German inhabitants living in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. The activity of the Sudeten German Landsmannschaft (SL) causes apprehension in two fifths of the population living in the border districts with Germany. The other two fifths of the same population have an indifferent relationship with the activity of this Association - i.e. it recalls neither fears (apprehension), nor hopes (with approximately 5.3 % of inhabitants). Approximately every seventh person was not able to give his opinion when the question was asked.

The results do not show that the society in the Czech border area is influenced by a mass-shared idea of the danger coming from the side of the Sudeten-German Landsmannschaft, which is often pointed to by Clubs of the Czech Border Land. Nevertheless, it is not possible to exclude the idea that those 40 % of examples of neutral assessment might, in case of an ethnically pointed conflict situation, incline towards a negative evaluation. This case is not only an abstract possibility. The media could see it in the pre-election campaign in the first months of 2002, when an intensive campaign developed for the abolishment of President Beneš´s decrees (i.e. De-nazification Acts).

***Václav Houžvička***

Figure 10. Attitude to Aims of Sudeten- German Organisations in relation with the Czech Republic




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

# TRANSFER OR EVICTION?

*The theme of the post-war displacement of German-speaking inhabitants in the countries of central Europe recurrently appears at the centre of the Czech -German dialogue. The intensity of the debate inspired by organisations of displaced or transferred persons (such as the Union of Expellees, the Sudeten Landsmanschaft, the Silesian Landsmanschaft, etc.) started to grow, namely after 2000, when these organisations made a requirement to build a Monument against the Expulsion in Berlin. The transfer of the ethnic Germans is brought up in connection with the Czech Republic entering the European Union and in connection with the continuing re-evaluation of a modern history of Germany within the "coping with the past". The Sudeten Germans understand themselves to be victims of the post-war atrocities of the winning parties and fail to reflect on the key destructive role played by Konrad Henlein´s Sudeten German Party, which contributed to the fall of the Czechoslovak Republic. Also President Beneš has become a target of recurrent attacks along with the whole post-war denazification Czechoslovak legislature (decrees), which is presented as an act of injustice and genocide.*

*In connection with the above-mentioned issues it will be suitable to point to the paper of the British historian Martin D. Brown, which returns to the circumstances of the birth of the idea of transfer of the ethnic Germans in Great Britain. He controverts the widely spread and wrong opinion that the "initiator" of the plan to "evacuate" (transfer) the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia was E. Beneš. He hypothesises that it was the British planning that influenced the formulation of the post-war visions of consolidating the situation in central Europe. It was the British planning on which numerous strategies and considerations of all exile governments of the occupied lands, which developed their activities in London, were based. Edward Beneš and his colleagues were considering a great number of various solutions, including the eviction of only those Germans who were active in the Nazi party, the reduction of the number of the Czech Germans, the abandonment of certain areas occupied by the Germans in favour of Germany or the establishment of a federation with Poland, etc,).*

*The material called* ***The Transfer of Minorities****, elaborated by J. D. Mabbot became the most decisive document of the post-war development. It was prepared by a group of experts from the Foreign Press and Research Bureau (formed by the British Foreign Office) and was submitted as early as May 1940. Besides an evaluation of the financial costs incurred for such steps, the most important part of the Memorandum was the hypothesis that the relocation of inhabitants on that scale is possible and should be performed with the consent of the International Community and with its cooperation. That document meant the very beginning and a basis for the decision that was subsequently accepted by the Allies of the Anti-Hitler Coalition and exile governments of all occupied countries. The organised transfer, approved on 2nd August 1945 by the Potsdam Conference, was carried out under the international supervision of the Military Bodies of the Allies and the Red Cross.*

***Václav Houžvička***

*For details see Brown, Martin D.:* ***Forcible Population Transfer - A flawed legacy or an unavoidable necessity in protracted ethnic conflicts? The Case of the Sudeten Germans.*** *RUSI Journal (The Royal United Services Institute). August 2003, Vol 148, No 4. pp.81-87.*

Table 3. Development Survey of the Post-War Assessment of Transfer of German Inhabitants of Czech Lands

| | 1991 | 1996 | 1999 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| It was just - they helped to break Czechoslovakia. | 27 | 30 | 29 | 43 |
| It was just, but I have reservations to the way of the transfer. | 39.5 | 43 | 35 | 29 |
| It was unjust, but the Great Powers decided. | 6 | 11 | 12 | 15 |
| It was unjust. | 6.4 | 2.3 | 4.5 | 2.5 |
| It was unjust and cruel. | 3.2 | 2.6 | 2 | 1.5 |
| I do not know/I have no opinion. | 14 | 8 | 17 | 8 |

*Note: The figures show the ratio of affirmative responses in percentage. The year 1999 includes the data of the emotion-wide investigation.*

Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG 1991 - 2003.

# A CONSENT WITH APPROACHES OF THE CZECH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER AUTHORITIES TO CZECH-GERMAN RECONCILIATION

In border areas with Germany huge support is given to the governmental approach towards the Czech-German reconciliation. The strongest consent to the negotiations on the part of the government and state authorities was given to the rejection of the Abolishment of President Beneš´s Decrees. This opinion has been supported by four fifth of all respondents. Two thirds of the citizens have no reservations concerning the procedure of the government associated with the Sudeten German Issue.

The fact that our government does not express the fundamentals in its approach to the Sudeten German issue was expressed by 59 % respondents (they agree either fully or partially), which signals an impulse on the part of the Czech political sphere to establish rectification. The one-sided act of Congress to accept a resolution on the President's decrees in the spring of 2002 cannot evidently replace any systematic specification of our own political attitudes to problems of "expellees" in the everyday policy of the CDU/CSU. It is impossible not to see that one of the reasons for this assessment is also the small support given to governmental positions by the mass media, which, after all, decide on whether they will mediate government opinions to their citizens employing a sufficiently understandable form.

No wonder that a strong 57 % majority is of the opinion that our government does not sufficiently defend the CR´s interests relating to "expellees" organisations. This fact is probably associated with the previous question and it is possible to suppose that the explanation of the vital interests of our state should also be represented by the regional authorities, which play a key role as the central authorities´ partner (i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Local Development, etc.) in Border Districts with Germany.

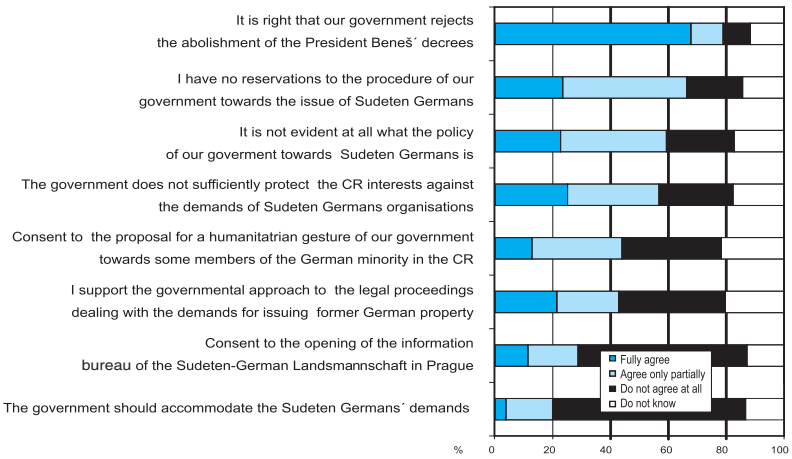
Disapproval of any possible proposal for a governmental humanitarian gesture addressed to some members of the German minority in the Czech Republic, was given only by one third (34 % ) of respondents, which creates a relatively solid space for acceptance of the measure that politicians may consider politically risky. This ascertained fact suggests a gesture of good will to the German-speaking inhabitants of the Czech Republic, which could help pacify Czech-German relations at the European Union entrance phase.

The attitudes of the general public are quite level-headed as regards the support given to the government standpoint on legal proceedings concerning the requirements for the release of former German property, with two fifths (43 %) respondents approving of the government position -i.e. that the restitution claims for the confiscated property can be made only on the basis of post-war contracts with the Allies and President's decrees. Thirty seven per cent (37 %) of all respondents, however, did not agree with this opinion. One fifth did not express its opinion or has no opinion, which is quite a small number of respondents considering the complicated character of these property and legal issues.

The majority of citizens (58,4 %) disagreed with the opening of the Information Centre of the Sudeten German Landsmanschaft and with the fact that our government should accommodate the Sudeten German demands (67 %).

*Václav Houžvička*

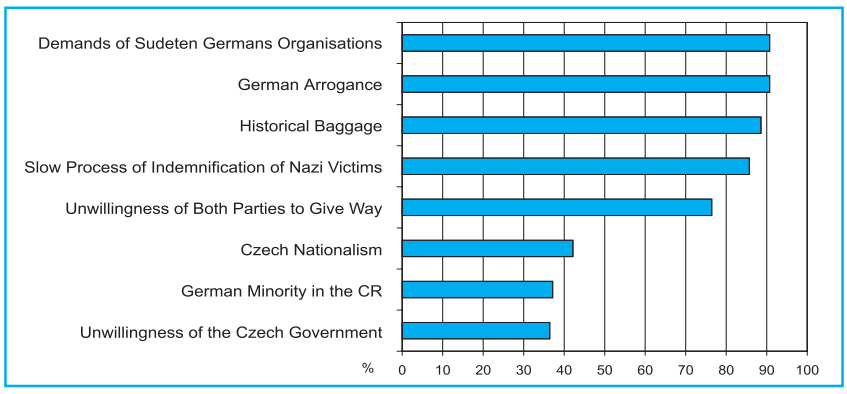
Figure 11. Evaluation of the Attitude of the Czech Republic state authorities to the Demands of Sudeten-German Organisations




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

# THE CZECH-GERMAN RECONCILIATION IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC

Table 12. The Reasons for Not Reconciling Czech-German Relations




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

The 1990s and the first years of the 21th century have been marked by a general effort to rectify the wrongdoings of the Second World War and Czech-German relations could not escape this trend. The process culminated in the Czech-German reconciliation negotiations and a declaration was accepted, which was originally to lead to the termination of all discussions at the highest level. Quite a lot of publicity, with which these negotiations were associated, contributed to the fact that more than fifty per cent of the population living in border territories has an idea about this declaration. However, there is a smaller number of those who know more details about this declaration (nearly one tenth). On the contrary, two fifths of citizens do not know anything about this declaration at all.

*Václav Houžvička*

# OPINIONS ABOUT RECONCILIATION WITH THE PAST

The public living in areas close to the German border is ambivalent about its opinions concerning the importance and consequences of coping with the past. On the one side a strong majority of citizens agrees with the fact that coping with the past contributes to the general improvement of mutual relations between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany (90.9 %), on the other, it believes that punishment for war crimes will prevent people from committing similar crimes and violence in the future (81.3 %).

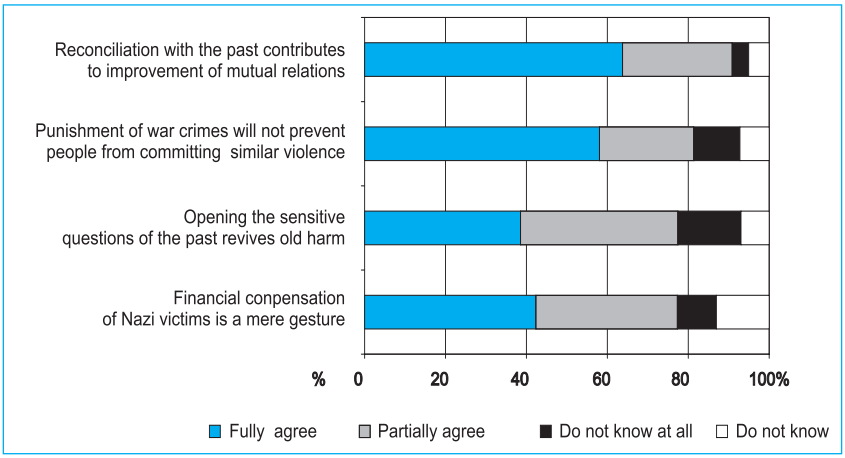
However, the majority agrees, that opening the sensitive questions of the past may revive old injustice and wrongdoings (77.4 %), which sounds controversial, and that financial compensation of the Nazi victims is only a mere gesture (77.3 %).

This apparent contradiction in terms, however, represents both the positive and negative side of the problem, i.e. whether and with what intention it is necessary to come back (some people require re-evaluation) to historical events of recent times. In addition to that, with the awareness that all returns can trigger unwanted consequences, which can, in the final effect, rather complicate the relations than contribute to a final reconciliation with the consequences of the past. In that respect the dispute, which started to be very dramatic in the Federal Republic of Germany, about the Establishment of a Monument against the Transfer in Berlin, whose erection is required by the Union of Expellees and by the CDU/CSU, is characteristic of this situation. One opinion group (H. H. Hahn and others) sees the danger in "the sanctioned re-interpretation of the past within the state", while the other (E. Steinbach, the CDU/CSU Parties, the Sudeten German Landsmannschaft, etc.) claim that "without criticism of the past there is no future". Many people, however, do not see that criticism of the past does not mean only the evaluation of the morality and ethics of the victorious powers of that time, but also the eventual re-evaluation of the Second World War results with all the possible implications for the current European arrangement.

There is no doubt that historical memory and "reconciliation with the past" are ranked among the legitimate political processes going on permanently in the public and political sphere of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Czech Republic and other countries. Nevertheless it is necessary to reckon with the eventuality that emotive and explosive topics and themes trigger its own dynamic of political influence and revive tendencies to fight the battles of the past again (Daniel Cohn-Bendit). The tension in Polish-German relations, due to the dramatic dispute associated with the above-mentioned theme of the Memorial against the Expulsion, furnishes current testimony of the above-mentioned statement.

***Václav Houžvička***

**Figure 13. Attitude to Issues Connected with the Reconciliation with the Past**




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

# "WILD TRANSFER"

*The first weeks after the end of the Second World War, when a spontaneous flight/escape started to appear in some parts of the border area, when the Sudeten Germans were displaced, evicted or transferred to Germany, which had no justification and support in legal acts of the victorious allied forces and was soon stopped by the Czechoslovak government, are well-known as "the wild transfer". This period was terminated by a decision on the organised or methodical transfer of the Ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe. This decision was made at Potsdam Conference on 2nd August, which was attended by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Acceptance of this decision/resolution was announced by Czechoslovakia by means of a letter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 16th August 1945, addressed to the signatories of the Conference.*

***For more details see Legal Aspects of the Sudeten Germans Transfer (Právní aspekty odsunu sudetských Němců).1996. Prague: The Institute of International Relations.***

# TRANSFER OF THE CZECH GERMANS AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE FORMER FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN

Nearly three quarters of the inhabitants living in the border areas or districts think that the transfer was just. Three tenths of the same population, however, understand that this transfer was just; they have reservations about the method or manner of the transfer. Although not all inhabitants have identified themselves with this solution. For one fifth of the inhabitants this solution was unjust, whereby the majority of whom admit that it was within the content of the decision of the victor nations, which corresponded the context of the time. Only four per cent of the border area inhabitants consider the transfer unjust and cruel.

The question focused on the assessment of the transfer of the German-speaking inhabitants of the former Czechoslovakia and was asked at the very beginning of the research of opinions and attitudes of inhabitants of border areas of Czech lands (i.e. the territory of the former "Sudetenland"). The chronological series of data provides a unique possibility to monitor the development. In this case, however, it is rather the "stability" of the view of the historical error that led to the nearly entire replacement of the inhabitants of the border areas and the interruption of hundreds of years of continuity of settlement in this territory.

From the point of view of long-term trends in evaluating the transfer, three basic opinion groups with a different position have formed.

The first opinion group covers approximately 30 % (in 2002 this group reached 43 %) of the inhabitants and approves of the transfer without any reservations.

The second opinion group expresses its consent with a reservation associated with the manner of the transfer (how the transfer was done), namely its "wild phase"). The representation of this opinion has been declining for a longer period of time.

Finally, the third opinion group is represented by people who consider the transfer, in all its existing varieties, as unjust (in 2003 it was a total number of 19 %). The frequent statement of some publicists that Czech society maintains in the "national front" a monolith of opinions, will not hold up, since even in such a sensitive and conflict question such as the assessment of the transfer, there has been a strong differentiation of opinions.

We can say that in the complete long-term retrospective structure of the respondents of all age groups and educational categories are regularly represented with all types of answers; with the prevailing representation of people at the retirement age and left-oriented people, who are those who approve of the transfer. In spite of clear opinion diversity it is evident that the whole-society consensus in the matter of giving approval to the transfer has a permanent character. Thus it is possible to hypothesise that attitudes of our political elites represent the opinions of the majority of voters in all segments of the political spectrum.

The general public in the cross-border region understands that the way to solve the Czech relationship to the Sudeten Germans can be seen mainly in humanitarian gestures, which will not be accompanied by financial or any other settlement that requires the abolishment of the Denazification Acts (Decrees).

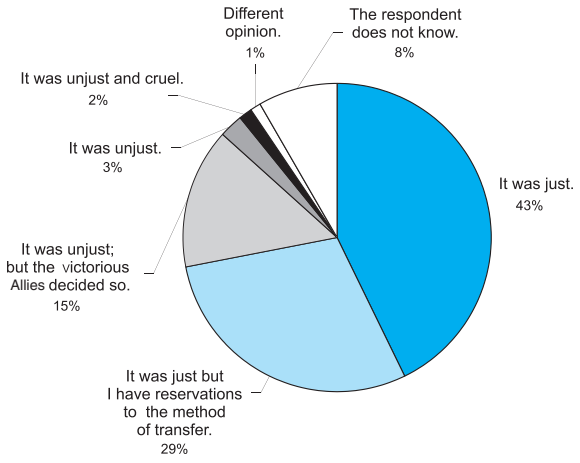
**Table 4. Development of Opinions Concerning Possible Solutions of the Sudeten-German Question**

| | 1991 | 1996 | 1999 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| An apology will be sufficient | 24 | 55 | 46 | 57 |
| Not to deal with representatives of the Sudeten Germans at all | 18 | 18 | 29 | 32 |
| Investment should be supported | 14 | 20 | 28 | 28 |
| Declaration is considered as the basic solution to the problem | x | 33 | 32 | 48 |
| Our dispute will be settled by the CR upon entering the EU | x | 13 | 31 | 30 |
| To give free range to the matter. | 18 | 10 | 26 | 23 |
| To give back property to the transferred Sudeten Germans | 2 | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| Provide displaced persons with compensation for damage. | 3 | 7 | 13 | 15 |

*Note: The figures indicate affirmative responses; The year 1999 refers to the whole-nation research; x - no question has been asked.*

Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG 1991 - 2003.

**Figure 14. Opinions concerning the Sudeten Germans´Transfer**




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG 1991 - 2003.

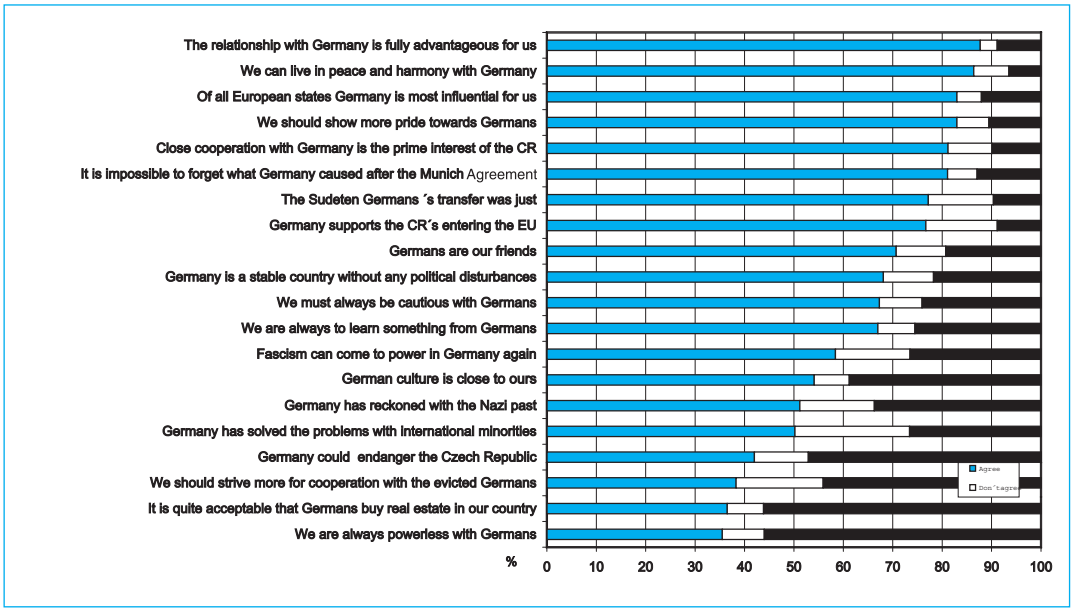
From the attached comprehensive table we can ascertain the main trends in the development of opinions concerning the individual possibilities of solving Sudeten German issues, how they were formulated in the post-November period of time, which meant the opening of the Sudeten-German dialogue.

With the variant of Václav Havel, who came with accusatory formulations addressed to the Sudeten Germans as early as the beginning of his political career at the end of 1989, there was at first immediate rejection (in 1991 nearly three quarters) by the majority of Czech society (see for instance the protest hunger strike of M. Klen at the Old Town Square in January 1990). There came a dislocation in connection with the preparation of the Czech-German Declaration, when suddenly the support given to this standpoint doubled and this trend still lasts.

Society is evidently divided, in answering the question of a possible cooperation with Sudeten organisations, into two nearly identical parts, with a slightly prevailing affirmative response (43 %). It is quite a surprise to suggest that "there is a possible outcome" of the situation in current Czech and Sudeten-German relations provided that evictee organisations do not have requirements for a radical re-evaluation of modern history (the abolishment of Presidential Decrees, property restitution, the right to a homeland and group return to homeland, the right to self-determination, etc.). The growing support for investment possibilities of the Germans evicted from the border areas is closely associated with this pragmatic approach (expectation of economic development of the Czech-German Borderland). The support given to investment has nearly doubled, from 14 to 28 %; nevertheless one half of respondents have still been rejecting these investments.

*Václav Houžvička*

Figure 15. Attitudes of the Inhabitants of Czech-German Border Territory to Germany




Source: Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the CR , research the Borderland CR/FRG - 2003.

**We will be pleased if you send your opinions concerning this issue of Czech -German Relations, your ideas and comments on your experience in Czech-German relations.**

IN THE NEXT ISSUE YOU WILL FIND:
OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES AND THOSE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
OF THE CZECH PART OF NISA EUROREGION TO ISSUES OF
CZECH-GERMAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

**Czech-German Connections**

is the bulletin of the project, "The Civic Dimension of Czech-German Relations in the Phase of the Accession of the CR to the European Union with an Emphasis on the Border Areas" in the framework of the Programme of Support for Targeted Research and Development
of the Academy of Sciences of the CR (identification code IBS7028301).
The bulletin comes out twice yearly and is distributed free in a print run of 600 copies.
ISSN 1214 - 7567
Graphic design and technical processing: printing office, Jiří Bartoš - SLON, spol. s r. o.
Published by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Department of Czech Border Regions.
Address for Correspondence: Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.
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