

POLICY PAPER



PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENTAL APPROACHES TOWARDS TTIP IN THE V4 COUNTRIES

September 2016

A study by Political Capital Institute



POLITICAL CAPITAL
POLICY RESEARCH & CONSULTING INSTITUTE



CSABA MOLNÁR,

quantitative analyst at Political Capital. He has a degree in Mathematics and Physics. He also studied computer sciences. He deals with formulating the methodology of research projects, the quantitative analysis and the modelling of political and societal processes, creating indices, data visualisation and new media analysis.



EDIT ZGUT

is a foreign policy analyst at Political Capital. She has an MA in Political Science. Her main fields of interests are European integration, Visegrad cooperation and illiberal tendencies within the CEE region. She also teaches at Pázmány Péter Catholic University as a guest lecturer.

We would like to thank Ákos Erzse, who contributed to the study and helped us with his desktop research.

Table of contents

Introduction	04
Executive summary	05
Public opinion on TTIP	06
Trends	06
Opinions on TTIP in different groups	10
Socio-demographic groups	10
Political ideology	13
Awareness	14
Opinions on the EU	17
Opinion on free trade, globalisation and protectionism	21
Refugee wave	24
Main concerns of the Hungarian political and economical opinion leaders, decision makers	25
Political opinions on TTIP within the V4 countries	27
Cautious position of Fidesz and the government	27
Poland: no TTIP-light	30
Slovakia: mainly supportive	30
Czech Republic underlines security interests	31
Conclusion	33

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyse the stance of civic and political actors in the Visegrád countries on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Based on surveys conducted by the European Commission on public opinion on TTIP we describe how TTIP's support changed between November 2014 and May 2016 in these countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland).

We've observed how the share of those for and against TTIP changed in certain socio-demographic and political ideology groups and among those with different views on the European Union. Based on our desktop research we've analysed how the rhetoric and attitude of national governments have changed on the issue and what were the most prominent information about TTIP in the media.

To supplement this, we organised a background discussion with the participation of Hungarian political and economic opinion formers and decision-makers about what they believe the economic and political effects of the TTIP agreement would be on Hungary.

The study has been made under the support of Friedrich Naumann Stiftung.



Executive summary

- While public opinion in the **Visegrád countries is supportive towards a free trade agreement between the US and the EU, the governmental actors and the media are rather cautiously optimistic** about the issue, especially in Hungary and Poland.
- The Hungarian government's and the governing party's position towards the TTIP is generally ambivalent: while at the level of official and international policy statements and actions the government is rather supportive, at the level of political declarations, the government has often been discouraging, not to mention the fact that there are openly different opinions within the government, as János Lázár, Minister for the Prime Minister's Office has signed a Stop-TTIP petition, while the government officially supports the negotiations. Among Hungarian opposition parties, LMP and Jobbik, and less visibly PM, firmly oppose TTIP, while MSZP cautiously, DK, Együtt and the Liberals solidly stand behind TTIP.
- **Among the governments of the Visegrád Group, the most criticism was directed at the details of TTIP negotiations by the Hungarian and Polish ones.** The two leaderships raised concerns about the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism and GMOs. The Polish side was also worried about food safety, while the Hungarians insisted that the agreement must be ratified by nation states. The approach of the Czech government towards TTIP is rather positive, but according to the government's statements the Czechs will not sign a 'blank check'. In terms of rhetoric, the Slovak government has been the most positive about TTIP recently. **One of the main differences between the Hungarian government and the other members of the Visegrád group was that the Hungarians did not urge the swift conclusion of negotiations.**
- In May 2016 the **majority of Europeans (51%) supported TTIP**, while the share of opponents was 34 per cent. On the other hand, the pro-TTIP camp decreased constantly in every survey since the autumn of 2014, while the share of opponents increased steadily.
- Among the Visegrád Group **Polish society is the most supportive of TTIP**. Six out of ten people support it and only 23 per cent are against the partnership. Among Czechs and Hungarians the advantage of supporters is more moderate than that, but still over the EU average. The Slovaks are the most divided on the issue, 39 per cent are opposed to the agreement, which is only slightly less than the size of the supporting camp (47%).
- **Europeans who place themselves on the right-wing politically are more supportive of TTIP than those on the left. Within the V4, this trend is, however, less pronounced, with only the Czechs showing significant correlation.** Self-identified right-wingers in the Czech republic support TTIP (67 per cent for, 25 against), while most of those who identify themselves as left-wing voters are against the treaty. Their share is 45 per cent, while that of the supporters is 39.
- **The more informed Europeans are on the EU the more they support TTIP**, however, the share of opponents is also higher in this group. In the V4 there is a higher portion of supporters and less opponents than the average among the most informed. In Poland and Hungary those for TTIP are in the relative majority even among the least informed. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic those who could only give a correct answer to one of the questions are either divided on the issue or they oppose TTIP to a small degree.

- **Trust in the European Union is strongly correlated with the support of TTIP.** Those Europeans who rather trust the EU support the planned agreement between the EU and the USA in general. The distrustful are quite divided on TTIP. This phenomenon is more pronounced in the V4. **In all four member states at least seven out of ten who trust the EU support the planned partnership.** The share of those against TTIP is relatively low, between 16 and 23 per cent.
- Those who believe that things in the union are currently heading in the right direction are generally supportive of TTIP. **People optimistic about the European Union's future are also mostly supportive of the partnership,** while the pessimists are generally divided. In the Visegrád countries people optimistic about the EU's future also support TTIP convincingly. Among those who are pessimistic about the future we find more opponents than supporters, except for Poland.
- Europeans, **who feel positively about free trade are significantly more pro-TTIP** than those who are negative about the concept. Similar results can be measured for globalisation.
- **Based on the background discussions we organized with representative Hungarian political and economic opinion leaders and decision-makers, we have found that most of them are cautious about TTIP,** even the ones who are basically supportive of free trade and increasing the intensity of transatlantic trade. Their main concerns were whether the EU could keep its current **food safety standards** on this level, the **transparency** of the negotiations, the **raison d'être of the ISDS**, the **competitiveness of Hungarian SME's** and if it is possible to have a **TTIP-light** at the end of the negotiation process. Respondents often had completely **contradictory views**, which is partly the consequence of the lack of relevant knowledge on TTIP and partly the result of the divisiveness of the topic domestically.

Public opinion on TTIP

The European Commission surveyed public opinion on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) every half a year as part of the standard Eurobarometer (EB) since November 2014. In this they asked the almost 28 thousand respondents from the EU whether they are for or against a free trade and investment agreement between the EU and the USA. There are only two options to give as an answer: 'for' or 'against'. The research makes it possible to, first of all, observe the trend of changes in public opinion and, additionally, to compare the attitude of the population in different member states. In our analysis we focus on the Visegrád Group's (V4) four member states¹. First, we describe how TTIP's support changed between November 2014 and May 2016 in these countries. Afterwards, we observe how the share of those for and against TTIP developed in certain socio-demographic and political ideology groups and among those with different views on the European Union. Here, we write about results in the EU28 and the V4 from the EB wave in November 2015. This is where a detailed database needed for the research is available.

TRENDS

Europeans were first asked about their support for a free trade agreement between the EU and the USA in November 2014 as a part of the EB public opinion surveys². At that time, TTIP was not as well-known to the public, which is indicated well by the fact that 17 per cent could not answer the question. The 58 per cent of support for TTIP was well over the 25 per cent of those against the agreement. In the next three waves of EB the share of supporters declined continuously and, at the same time, the camp of opponents grew. Even taking that into account – as of May 2016 – every second European supports TTIP and every third is against it. Therefore, the pro-TTIP value³ is +17 percentage points (pp). It is important to emphasise that the share of people uncertain about the partnership did not decline significantly over one and a half years (from 17 to 15 per cent), thus the number those who are able to take a stance on the issue only increased minimally.

¹ Czech Republic (CZ), Hungary (HU), Poland (PL) and Slovakia (SK).

² <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart//themeKy/29/groupKy/179/savFile/646>

³ An indicator we calculated, the result of the difference between the share of supporters and opponents. It shows how much the advantage of those answering 'for' to the question featured in our study is in percentage points over those answering 'against'. If the value of the pro-TTIP value/TTIP support is positive, the supporters of TTIP are in the majority and if it is negative it means that the number of opponents is higher than that of supporters.

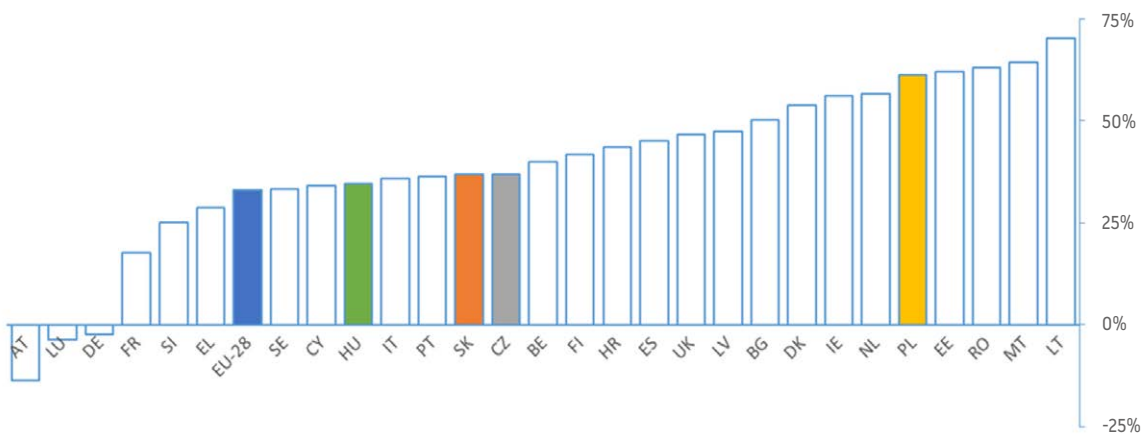
Table 1. Changes in opinion on TTIP between November 2014 and May 2016



The share of TTIP supporters was extraordinarily high in the V4 member states⁴ in November 2014. The partnership was backed by 62% of the voters in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. The share of those opposed to it was between 25 and 27 per cent. Three out of every four (73%) Poles favoured the agreement and only 12 per cent of them had a negative view. Therefore, the pro-TTIP value was 61 percentage points. This was measured at 37 in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and at 35 in Hungary. The EU average was 33 percentage points, lagging behind the results for these countries. Polish support was fifth highest after Lithuania (70), Malta (64), Romania (63) and Estonia (62). At that time, there were three member states where more people were against TTIP than those supporting it: Austria (-14), Luxemburg (-4) and Germany (-2).

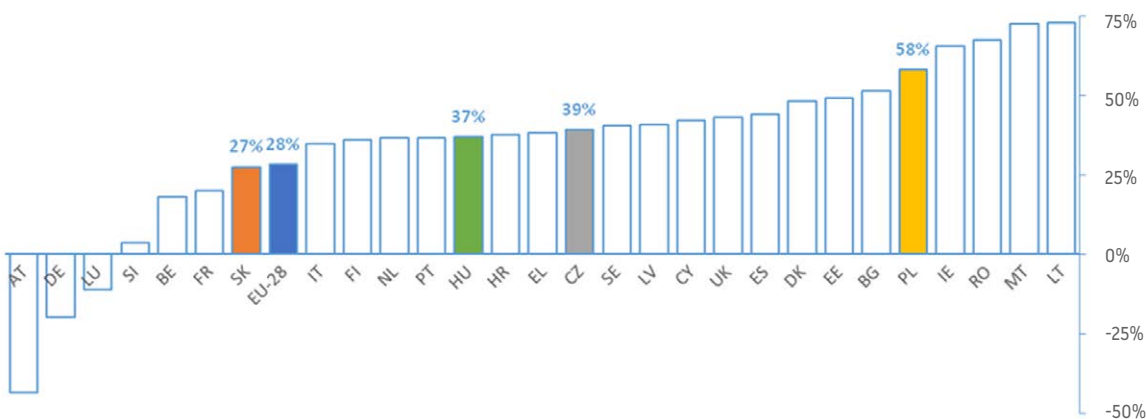
⁴ The question on TTIP in these countries were the following: CZ: Jaký je Váš názor na každý z následujících výroků? Řekněte mi prosím u každého z nich, jste-li pro, nebo proti tomuto výroku. Dohoda o volném obchodu a investicích mezi EU a USA. HU: Mi a véleménye a következő kijelentésekkel kapcsolatban? Kérem, mindegyik állításról mondja meg, hogy támogatja vagy ellenzi azt. Szabad kereskedelmi és befektetési megállapodás az EU és az USA között. PL: Jaka jest Pana(i) opinia na temat każdego z poniższych stwierdzeń? Dla każdego stwierdzenia proszę powiedzieć, czy jest Pan(i) za czy przeciw. Umowa o wolnym handlu i inwestycjach między UE a Stanami Zjednoczonymi. SK: Aký máte názor na každý z nasledujúcich výrokov? Povedzte mi, prosím, pre každý výrok, či ste "za" alebo "proti nemu". Dohoda o voľnom obchode a investíciách medzi EÚ a USA.

Figure 1. TTIP support in member states, November 2014.



In half a year, the amount of supporters fell by two percentage points EU-wide, while the camp of opponents grew by three. Thus, the support of TTIP decreased to 28 percentage points. Among the four Visegrád states this value eroded the most in Slovakia (10 percentage points), which now lagged slightly behind the EU average. Contrary to that, in the Czech Republic and Hungary – even if only by a couple of percentage points – support for TTIP grew. In Poland the value fell to 58 pp from 61, but despite that the country managed to keep its fifth place among the 28 EU members. The list of countries where the pro-TTIP value was negative stayed the same, but in all three of them the camp opposed to TTIP grew significantly. In Austria support for TTIP went from -14 to -44, in Germany from -2 to -20, and in Luxemburg from -4 to -11.

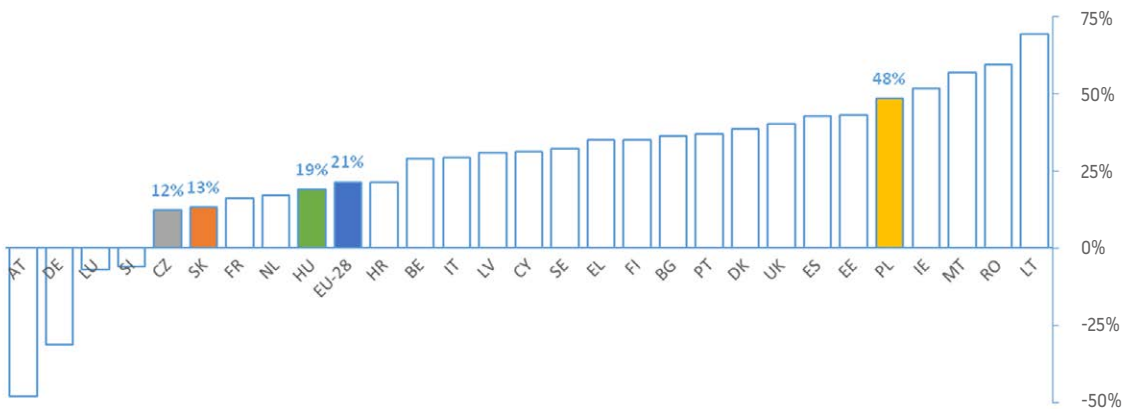
Figure 2. TTIP support in member states, May 2015.



In November the weakening of the partnership's support continued on the EU level. The pro-TTIP value declined by 7 percentage points to 21 pp. This trend surfaced in every V4 nation and it was even more pronounced than the EU28 on average. In the Czech Republic, there was a very marked change in public opinion. The share of those supporting TTIP declined from 62 to 29 per cent, while the camp of opponents grew from 23 to 34 per cent. Therefore, pro-TTIP views fell from 39 to 12 pp altogether, which is the fifth lowest in the EU. Among the Slovakian population this value fell by twice as much as the EU average

(by 14 percentage points), leading to a result one pp higher than the Czech result, placing it as the sixth lowest in the union. There was a massive alteration in public opinion in Hungary as well. Support for TTIP fell by 18 pp, which was now less than the EU average and the ninth lowest value in Europe. In Poland there was a decrease of 10 percentage points, but the advantage of those backing the partnership remained convincing (48 per cent). Poland did not lose its position, it remained fifth in the ranking of the member states. Slovenia joined the previous four states where TTIP's support was negative. In Austria and Germany views on the partnership eroded further. In the former, the pro-TTIP value fell from -44 to -48, in the latter from -20 to -32. In Luxemburg TTIP backing strengthened slightly, from -11 to -7.

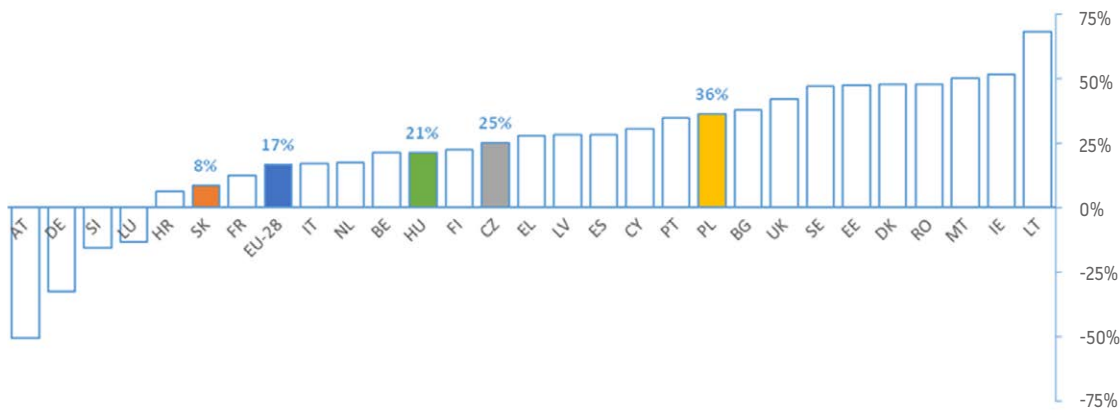
Figure 3. TTIP support in member states, November 2015.



In 2016 the erosion of support for TTIP continued but at a slower pace than it had before. In the Eurobarometer in May, 51 per cent of Europeans were for and 34 were against the partnership. Thus, the pro-TTIP value fell to 17 percentage points. Diverse alterations can be observed among the V4. In the Czech Republic – after the significant increase in the anti-TTIP camp previously – the share of people supporting TTIP grew meaningfully, while the camp of opponents shrank. Thus, TTIP support rose from 12 to 25 per cent, well above the EU average. In Hungary the support for the partnership also increased, albeit only minimally. The pro-TTIP value grew to 21 per cent, which is above the EU average and the eleventh lowest in Europe. In Slovakia – similarly to the EU-wide trend – support for TTIP fell. The share of supporters is only 8 per cent above that of opponents. This difference is lower in only five member states. In Poland the largest decrease happened so far, leading to a 12 pp decrease in TTIP support, to 36 percentage points. Although Polish society was now just the tenth most pro-TTIP in the EU, however, it can still be considered strongly supportive, since every six out of ten Pole support the partnership and only 23 per cent are against it.

In May 2016 it was the same four countries from half a year ago where TTIP supporters were in the minority. In Austria opposition to TTIP grew, the value fell to -50. In Germany there was no meaningful change. In Luxemburg and Slovenia the decline in TTIP support was significant and in the double digits.

Figure 4. TTIP support in member states, May 2016.



OPINIONS ON TTIP IN DIFFERENT GROUPS

In the following we observe if differences can be measured in opinions on TTIP within socio-demographic groups in the database⁵ compiled during the November 2015 Eurobarometer public opinion survey. Furthermore, we inspect answers given to questions about the European Union and its perception and look for similar dissimilarities. Finally, we describe how much views on TTIP are interconnected with feelings about different phrases connected to economic policy (free trade, globalisation, protectionism). In every case we interpret the connections within the Europe-wide sample and, afterwards, detail the results among the V4.

Socio-demographic groups

Gender

In the European Union, there is no significant difference between the opinion of men and women on TTIP. However, it can be observed that women are more uncertain on the matter, as every one in five woman (20%) could not or did not answer the question. Among men, the same share was only 11 per cent.

The same can be said about V4 member states. The uncertainty deficit of women was the highest in Poland (24%, compared to 10 among men). The lowest discrepancy was measured in Slovakia (14 and 11%). The difference was six percentage points in Hungary (15 and 9%) and four in the Czech Republic (16 and 12).

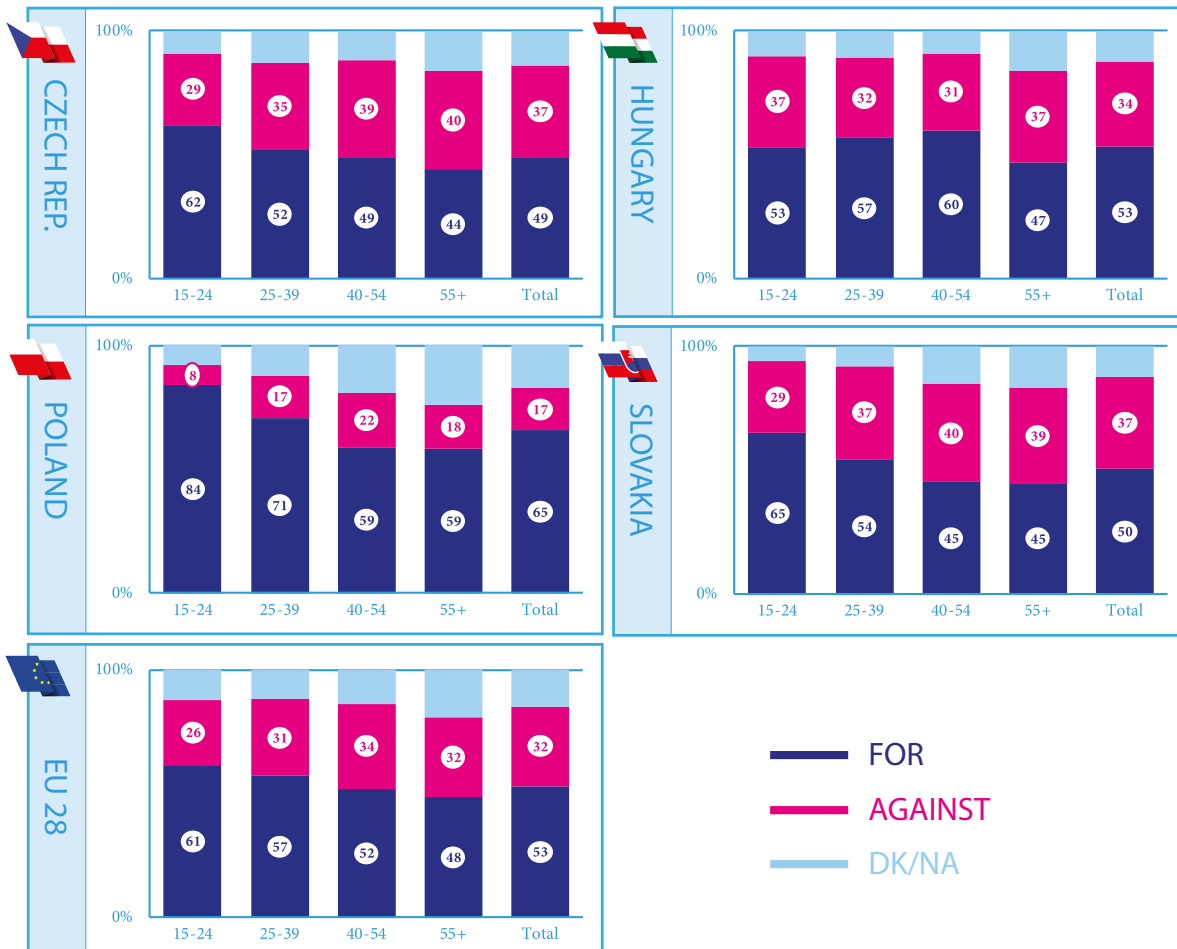
Age

Young Europeans are the most supportive of TTIP. 61 per cent of respondents between 15 and 24 years of age said they supported the initiative, which is significantly higher than the overall 53 per cent result. Uncertainty on the matter is also the least prevalent among the youth.

A similar situation is present among the V4, only in Hungary are the discrepancies not significant. In Poland most young people are pro-TTIP (84%), only 8 per cent of them are against it. Poland is the country where the difference between the opinion of the aforementioned group and the whole population (15 years of age and over) differs the most, by almost twenty percentage points. Almost two-third of Slovakian and Czech youth are pro-TTIP and in both countries 29 per cent are against it.

⁵ European Commission, Brussels (2016): Eurobarometer 84.3 (2015). TNS opinion, Brussels [producer]. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA6643 Data file Version 2.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.12539

Table 2. Opinions on TTIP in different age groups



Education

Support for TTIP is strongest among students in the European Union. In light of the already presented results among age groups, it is not surprising that within groups by attained education, TTIP is the most favoured among those who are still studying. 61 per cent of them are for TTIP, while only 27 per cent oppose the initiative. Among those who have completed their studies, one-fourth of people who attained only a low-level education could not form an opinion, but even in their case, the relative majority is pro-TTIP. Among those with secondary or tertiary education, no significant difference of opinion can be observed in Europe. In both groups the advantage of those supporting TTIP is 21 per cent.

In the Visegrád states, the differences measured between education groups are only significant in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In both member states, it is those still studying and the highly educated who support TTIP more than the average. The measured shares for those leaving education after the age of 20 are practically the same in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The portion of supporters is 58-59 per cent, which is considerably higher than those opposed to the treaty (33-32 %). Among those still studying, the support of TTIP is even more convincing, especially in Slovakia, where 8 out of 10 from this group are pro-TTIP.

Table 3. Opinions on TTIP by attained education

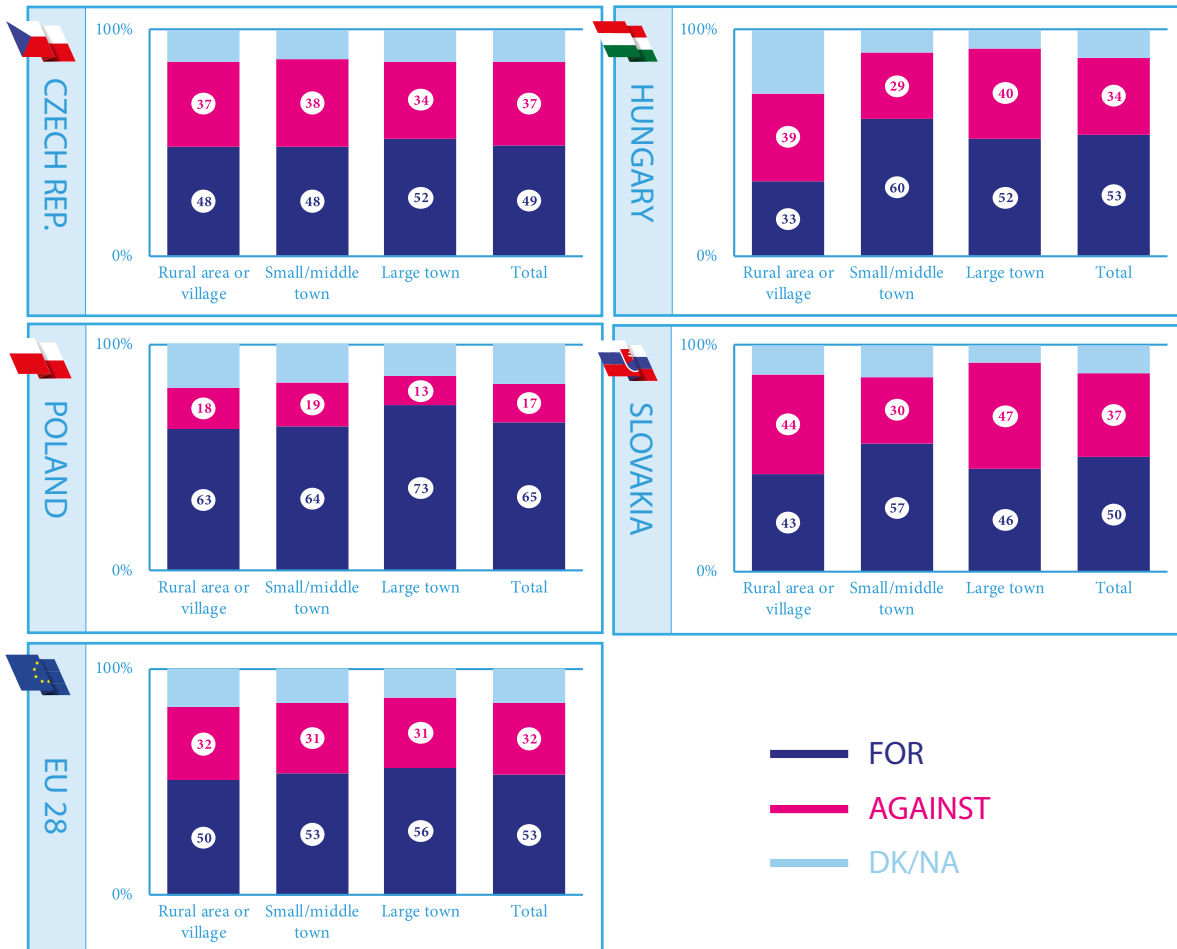


Type of community

People living in the large towns of the European Union are more supportive of TTIP than those living in rural areas or villages, but the difference is not significant. People living in small or medium-sized towns support or oppose the partnership as much as the EU average (53%). The share of those supporting the treaty is higher in large towns (56%) and lower among people living in villages (50%).

Only the discrepancies in Hungary and Slovakia can be considered significant in the V4. In Hungary, the population of small and medium-sized towns are the most pro-TTIP. 60 per cent of them support the treaty, 29 per cent oppose it. Overall, those living in large town are supportive of the partnership as well, but the sizes of the pro- and anti-TTIP camps are not that different (12 percentage points). The relative majority of those living in villages are opposed to the partnership (39% against 33%), but the share of uncertain people is really high in this community (28%). In Slovakia, it is also the dwellers of smaller towns who are the most supportive of TTIP. Almost twice as many support it (57%) as oppose it (30%). The population living in villages and large towns are quite divided on the topic. About as many support the treaty as oppose it.

Table 4. Opinions on TTIP by type of community



Political ideology

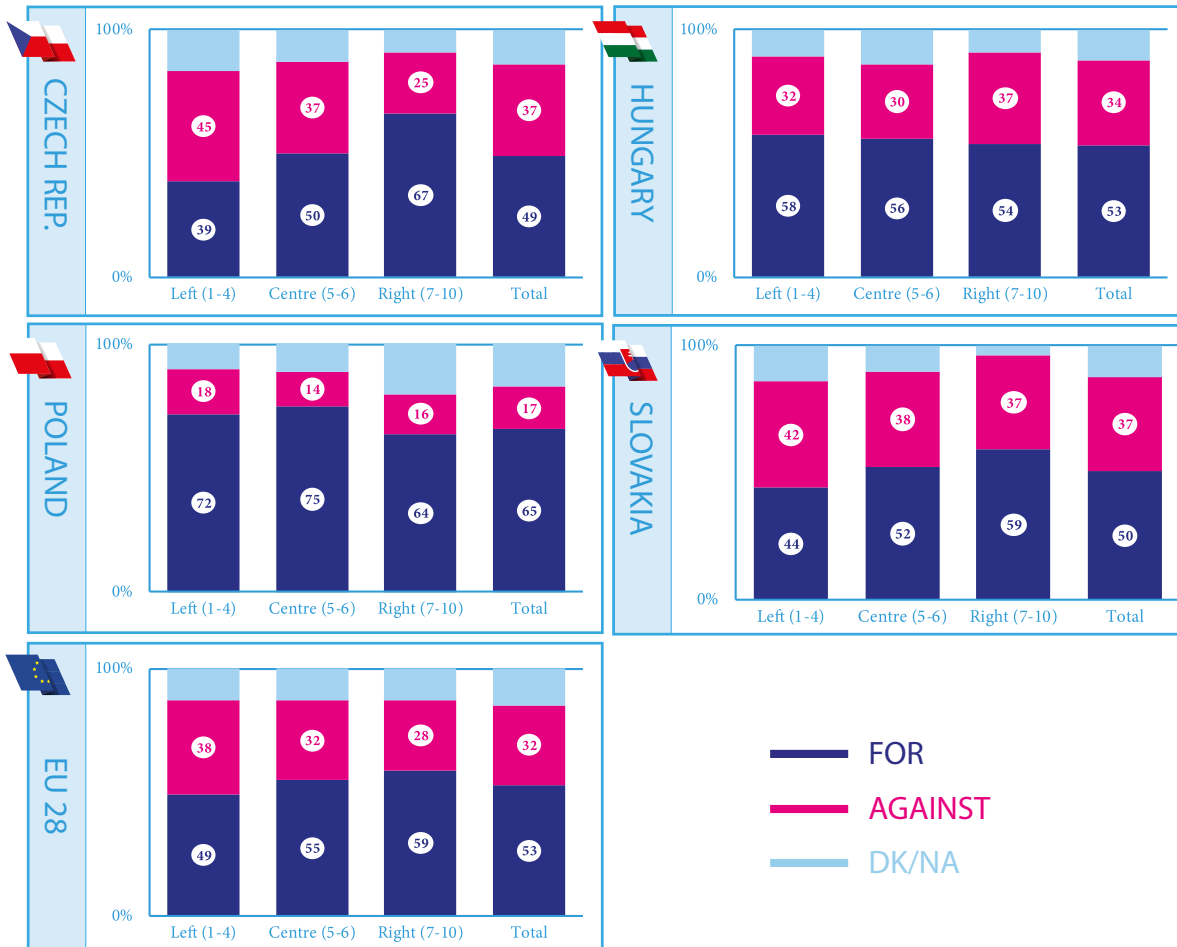
Left-right placement

Those who considered themselves politically right-wing are more supportive of TTIP than those on the left. In the survey, they were also asked where they placed themselves on the left-right scale⁶. It is mostly right-wingers who support the partnership. 59 per cent are pro-TTIP, which is 31 per cent higher than the share of those against the treaty. Compared to this, we find less supporters and more opponents of TTIP among left-wingers. In that group, the advantage of supporters is only 11 percentage points. The people in the political centre are between the left and right wings in this question as well.

Within the V4, this trend is, however, less pronounced, with only the Czechs showing significant correlation. Self-identified right-wingers in the Czech republic support TTIP (67 per cent for, 25 against), while most of those who identify themselves as left-wing voters are against the treaty. Their share is 45 per cent, while that of the supporters is 39.

⁶ The original question was: In political matters people talk of “the left” and “the right”. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 (left) - 10 (right).

Table 5. Opinions on TTIP by political self-identification



Awareness

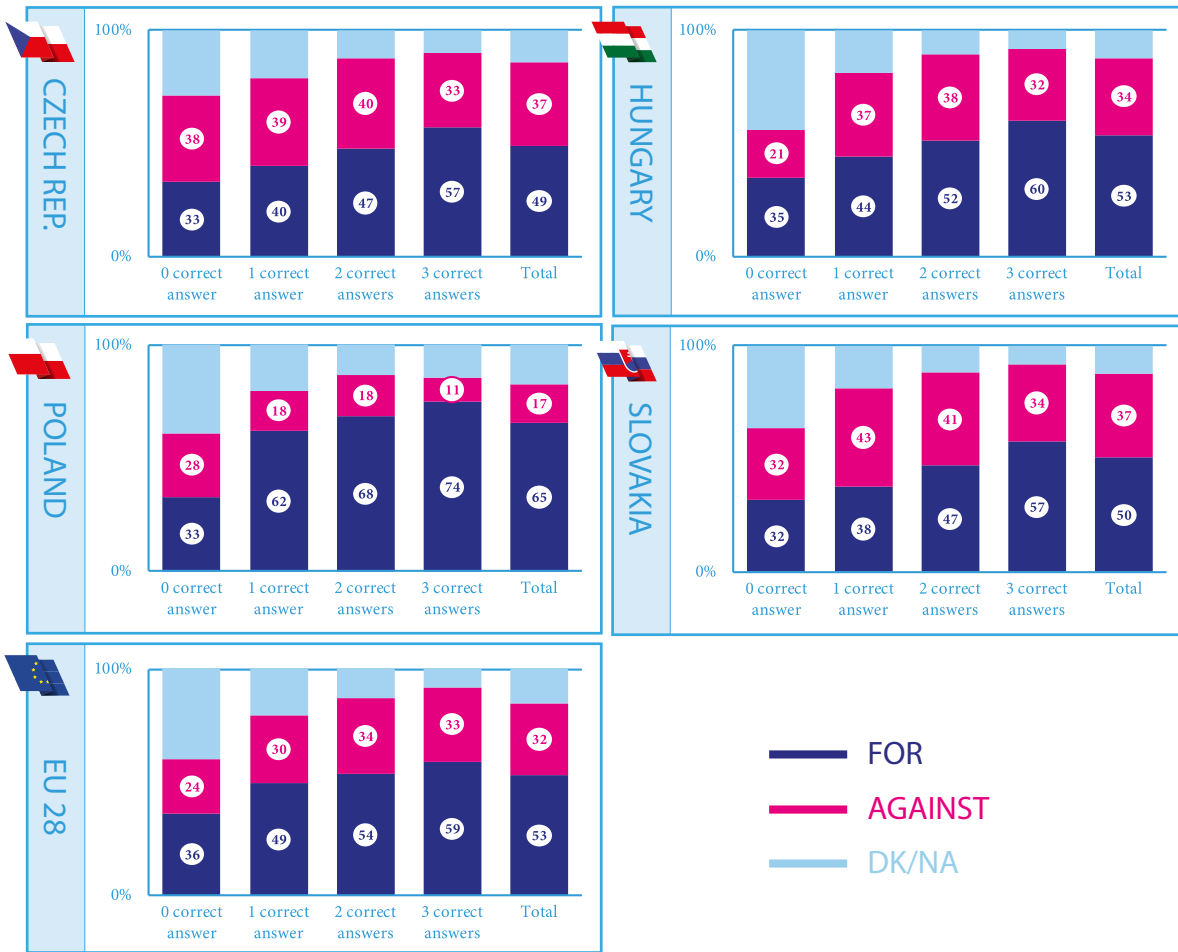
Knowledge about the EU

The more Europeans know about the EU⁷, the more likely they are to support TTIP. Eurobarometer tests how much citizens know about the European Union on three questions. The respondents have to decide if it is true or false that the EU currently has 28 member states, the Members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of member states, and Switzerland is a member of the EU. TTIP's support is strongest among those who gave a correct answer to all three questions. Even in this group, every one in three opposes the planned partnership. With the decline in the number of correct answers, the share of those who are uncertain on TTIP grows and among those who could not give a single correct answer to the questions 40 per cent were unable to form an opinion on TTIP either. Additionally, the advantage of supporters over opponents is constantly falling as well.

⁷ Based on the number of correct answers to the following three true-false statements: (1) The EU currently consists of 28 Member States; (2) The members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each Member State; (3) Switzerland is a Member State of the EU.

A similar situation is present in the V4 as well. Among the most informed, we find more supporters and less opponents than the average. In Poland and Hungary, those supporting TTIP are in the relative majority even among the least knowledgeable. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, those who could only give a correct answer to not more than one question are either divided on the question, or those against TTIP have a slight advantage.

Table 6. Opinions on TTIP by the amount of correct answers given to three questions measuring knowledge on the EU

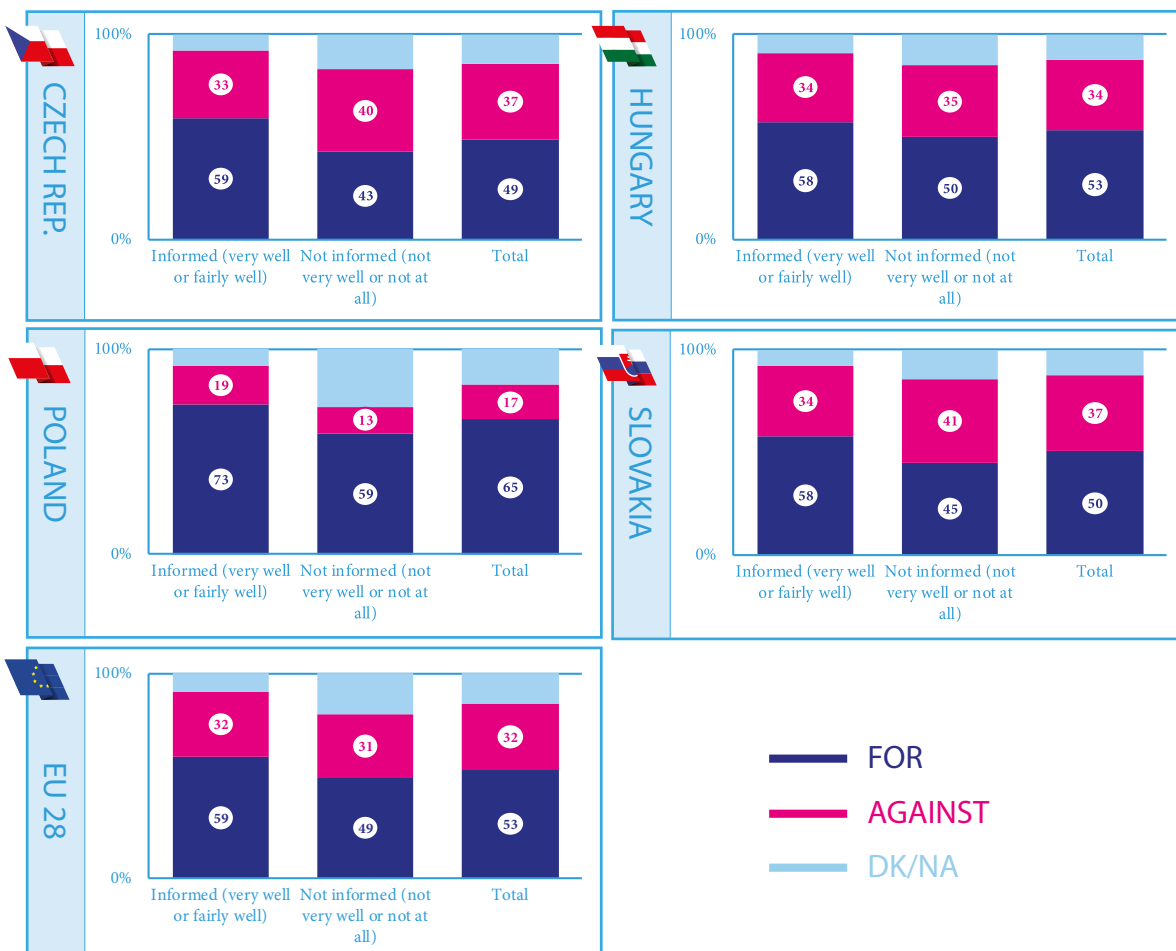


Informed about European matters

Those Europeans who consider themselves somewhat informed on European matters⁸ are more supportive of TTIP than those who consider themselves uninformed. At the same time, the group of those against TTIP is quite similar in size. Thus, knowledge about EU matters does not raise anti-TTIP sentiments, but it does raise its support.

Among the V4, the relationship observed for the whole sample only turned out to be significant in the case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In these two countries, being informed does not only bring about the larger share of supporters, but it leads to a decline in the portion of opponents as well. Thus, it is not surprising that among the uninformed the advantage of supporters is 3 and 4 per cent in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, while the advantage grows to 26 and 24 per cent among the well-informed.

Table 7. Opinions on TTIP by information on European affairs



⁸ The original question was: Overall, to what extent do you think that you are well informed or not about European matters? The answer options were Very well informed, Fairly well informed, Not very well informed and Not at all informed.

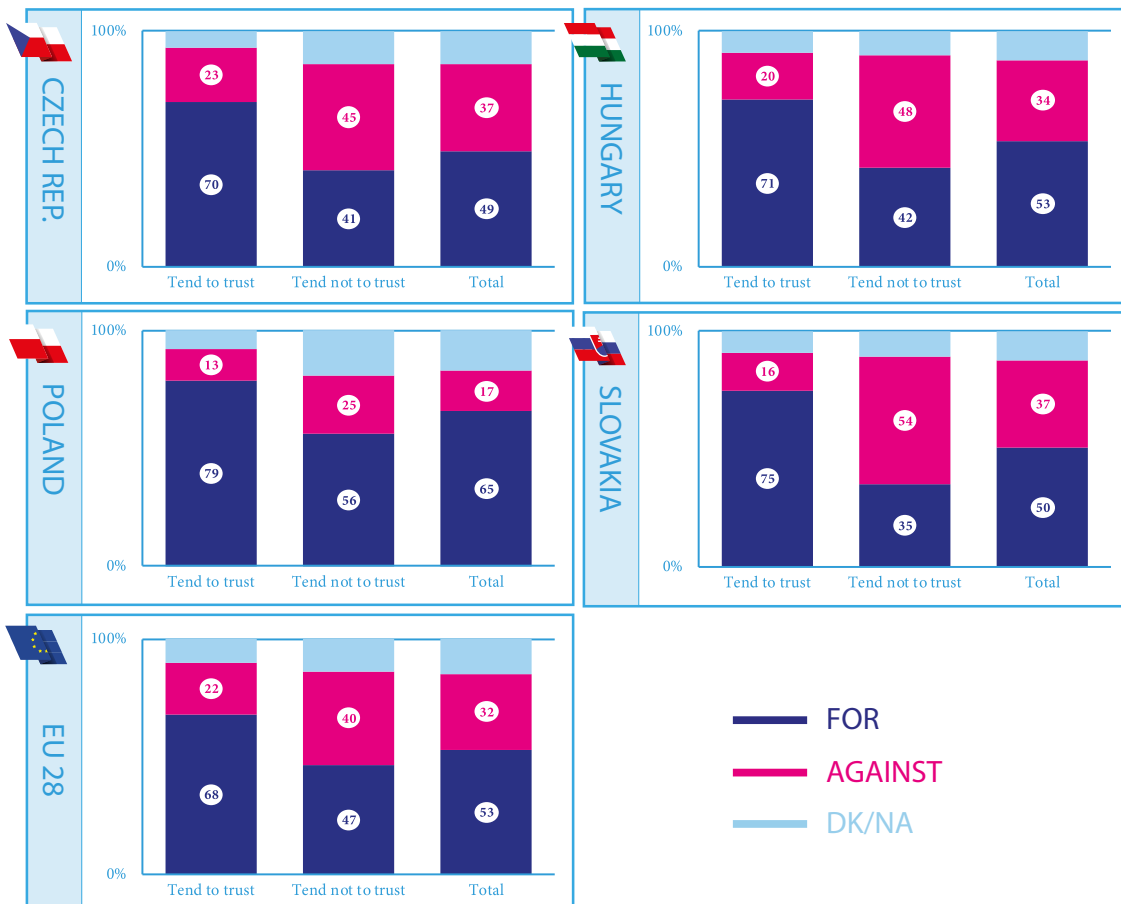
Opinions on the EU

Trust

Trust in the EU is strongly correlated to the support of TTIP. Those Europeans who trust the EU⁹ support the planned agreement between the EU and the USA in general as well (68% against 22% of anti-TTIP opinions). The distrustful group is quite divided on TTIP. Although the share of those supporting the treaty is almost 50 per cent (47% to be exact), the portion of those against TTIP only lags behind slightly in size with 40 per cent.

This phenomenon is even more pronounced in V4 countries. In all four members, at least seven in ten of those who trust the EU support the planned partnership. The share of those against TTIP is relatively low, between 16 and 23 per cent. Within those not trusting the EU, the situation is the complete opposite. In the Czech Republic and Hungary, the relative majority is anti-TTIP, and the absolute majority of Slovaks take that stance as well. Here, 54 per cent oppose TTIP. In Poland pro-TTIP opinions have an advantage even in this circle, but their advantage is much lower.

Table 8. Opinions on TTIP among those who trust and distrust the EU



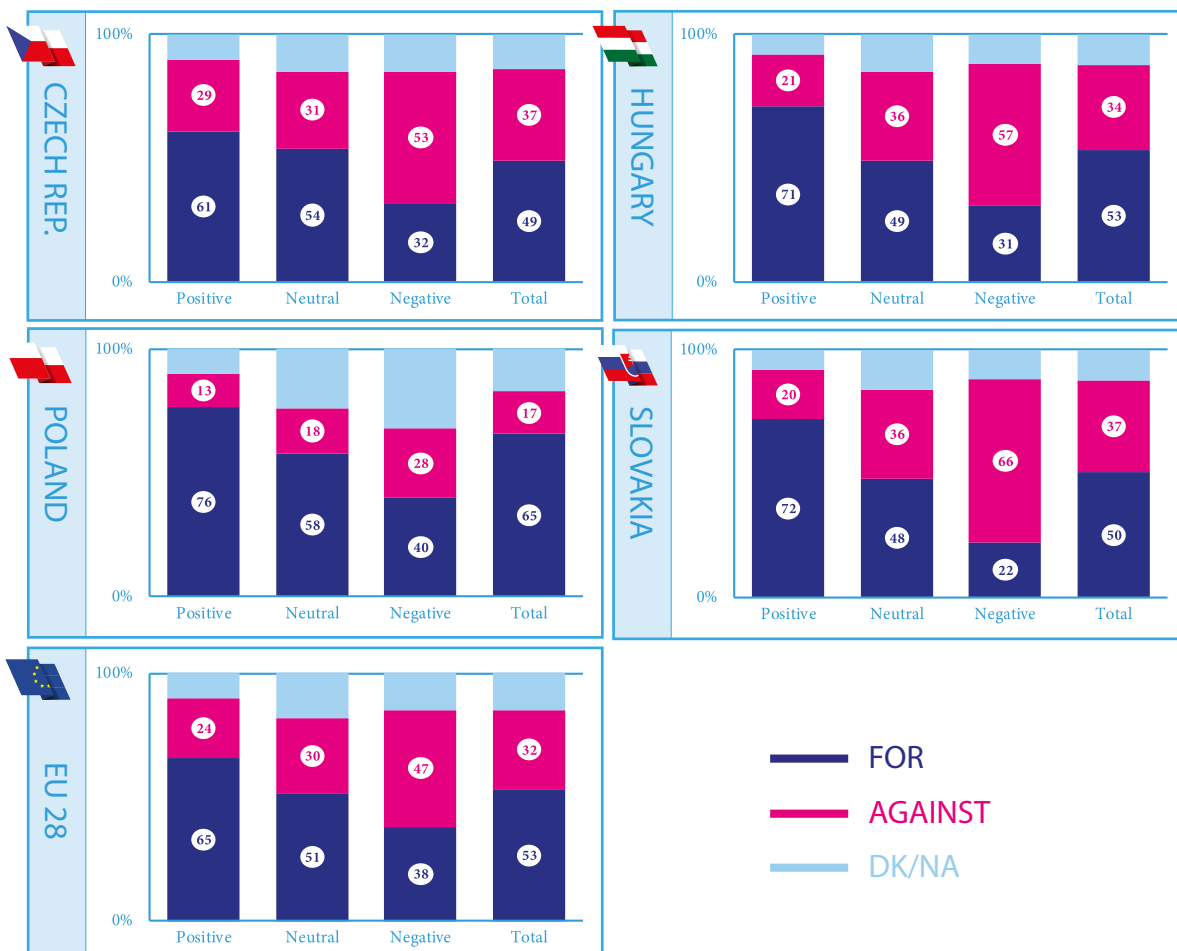
⁹ The original question was: I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain media and institutions. For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. The European Union.

EU image

The more positive the European Union's image is for people¹⁰, the more they support TTIP and the less they oppose it. 47 per cent of Europeans who see the EU's image as negative or rather negative oppose the partnership. The share of supporters lags behind with only 38 per cent. People who see the union's image as neither negative nor positive (neutral) are more supportive of TTIP with 51 per cent for and 30 against. This is about the same as the share measured in the whole sample in Europe. Who see the EU in a positive light are in general supportive of the planned agreement. Two-thirds are for and one-fourth are against.

Similar results could be found among the V4, albeit with slight differences. Since Polish society is the most pro-TTIP, here the share of supporters is larger than that of opponents even among those having a negative image of the EU. In the other three countries, anti-TTIP sentiments have an absolute majority in this group. The largest discrepancy can be observed in Slovakia. Here, two-thirds (66%) of those with a negative view are definitely against TTIP, while only 22 per cent are for it. At the same time, Slovaks with a positive view of the European Union think the exact opposite, 72 per cent are for the treaty and only one-fifth against.

Table 9. Opinions on TTIP by the perceived image of the EU



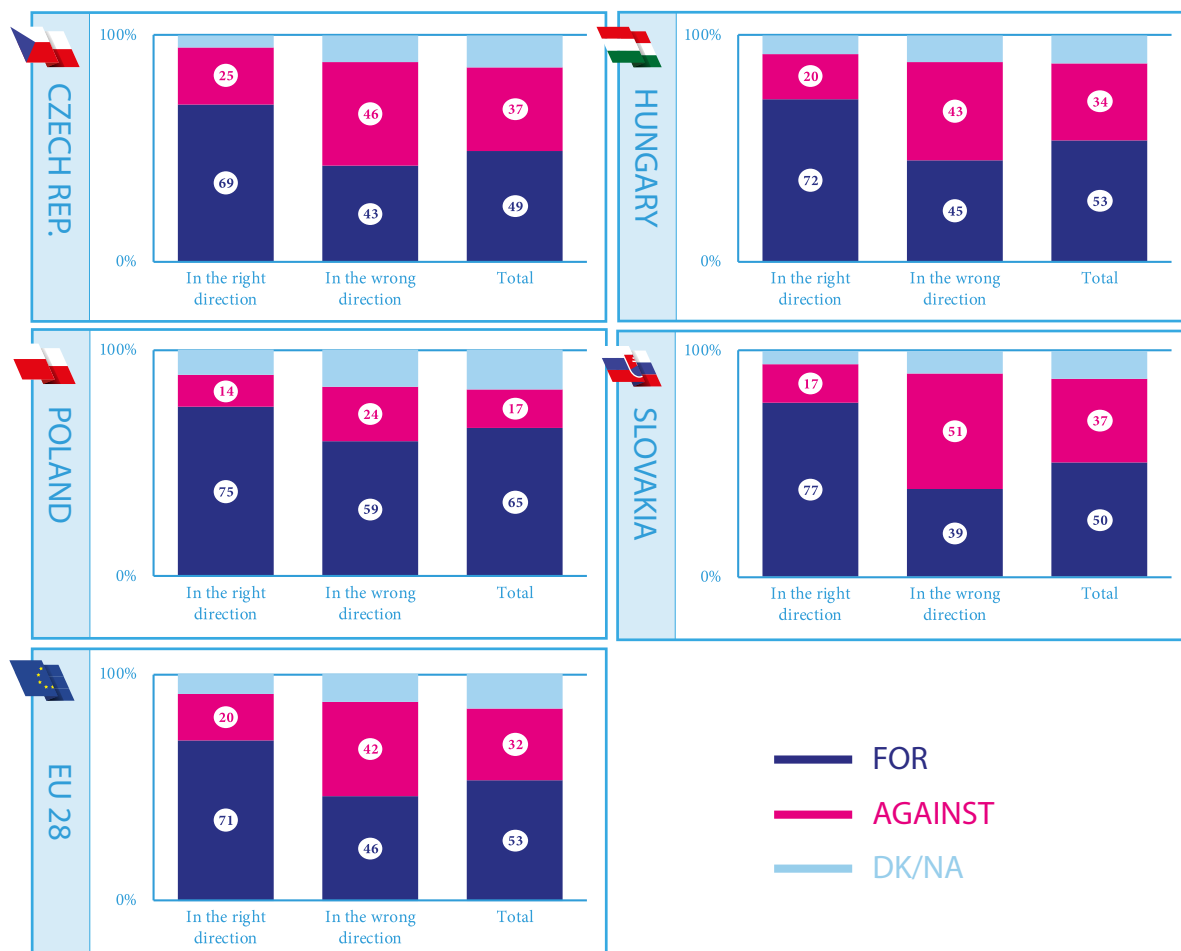
¹⁰ The original question was: In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

Present of the EU

People who believe things are currently heading in the right direction¹¹ in the Union also have a mostly positive opinion on TTIP. 71 per cent support it and a 20 per cent minority opposes it. Those who think that currently things in the EU are heading in the wrong direction have a completely different opinion. They are quite divided on TTIP. Although 46 per cent of them are for the agreement, the camp of those against it is almost the same size (42%).

The population of Visegrád countries does not differ from Europe in this regard. The two groups based on the heading of the EU are markedly separated from each other. The difference is the largest in Slovakia. The divergence between the share of supporters and opponents in the whole Slovakian sample is 13 percentage points. The same difference is 60 per cent among those who think the EU is heading in the right direction, while it is -11 percentage points among those who do not.

Table 10. Opinions on TTIP by the assessment of whether the EU is heading in the right direction



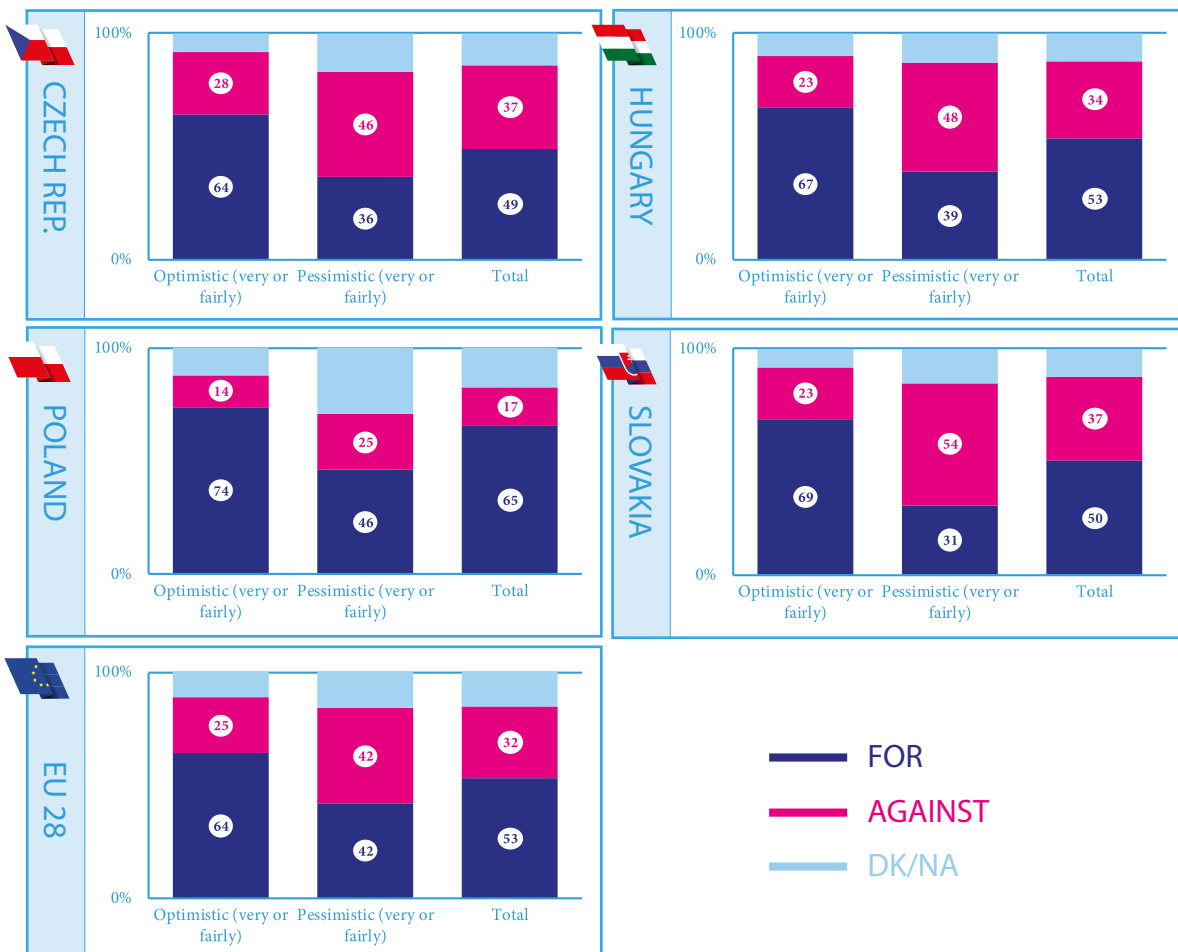
¹¹ The original question was: At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in the European Union?

Future of the EU

Those who are optimistic about the future of the EU¹² are in general pro-TTIP, while the pessimists are completely divided on the issue. Two-thirds (64%) of those seeing the EU’s future in a positive light gave a supportive answer to the question on TTIP, every fourth was against it. Among those with a negative view of the EU’s future the support drops to 42 per cent, while the share of opponents rises to 42 per cent as well. Thus, pessimistic Europeans are completely divided on the question.

Among the V4, those optimistic about the EU’s future are overwhelmingly supportive of TTIP as well. However, in the ranks of pessimists we find more people against TTIP than for it – except for Poland.

Table 11. Opinions on TTIP among those optimistic and pessimistic about the EU’s future



¹² The original question was: Would you say that you are very optimistic, fairly optimistic, fairly pessimistic or very pessimistic about the future of the EU?

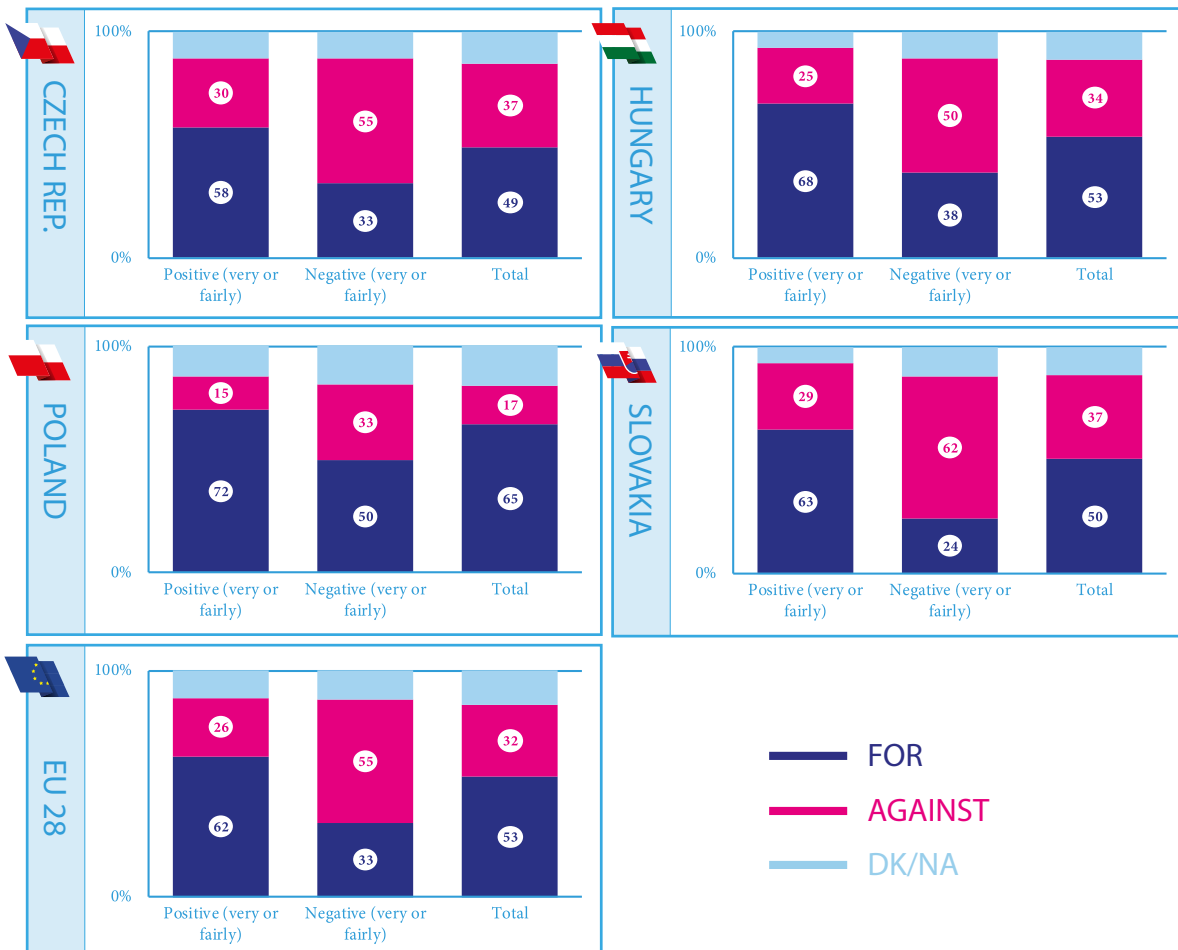
Opinion on free trade, globalisation and protectionism

Free trade

Europeans who feel positively about free trade¹³ support TTIP to a much higher degree than those who feel negatively about it. 53 per cent of Europeans support the partnership and 32 per cent oppose it, while the exact opposite shares can be measured among those who consider free trade to be fairly or very negative. Thus, opponents of TTIP have an absolute majority in this group.

In the V4, the largest differences are present in Slovakia. 63 per cent of those who think positively about free trade are for TTIP, while almost the same portion (62%) of those with a negative opinion of free trade are against the planned EU-USA agreement. Czech results indicate a very similar situation.

Table 12. Opinion on the EU by views on free trade



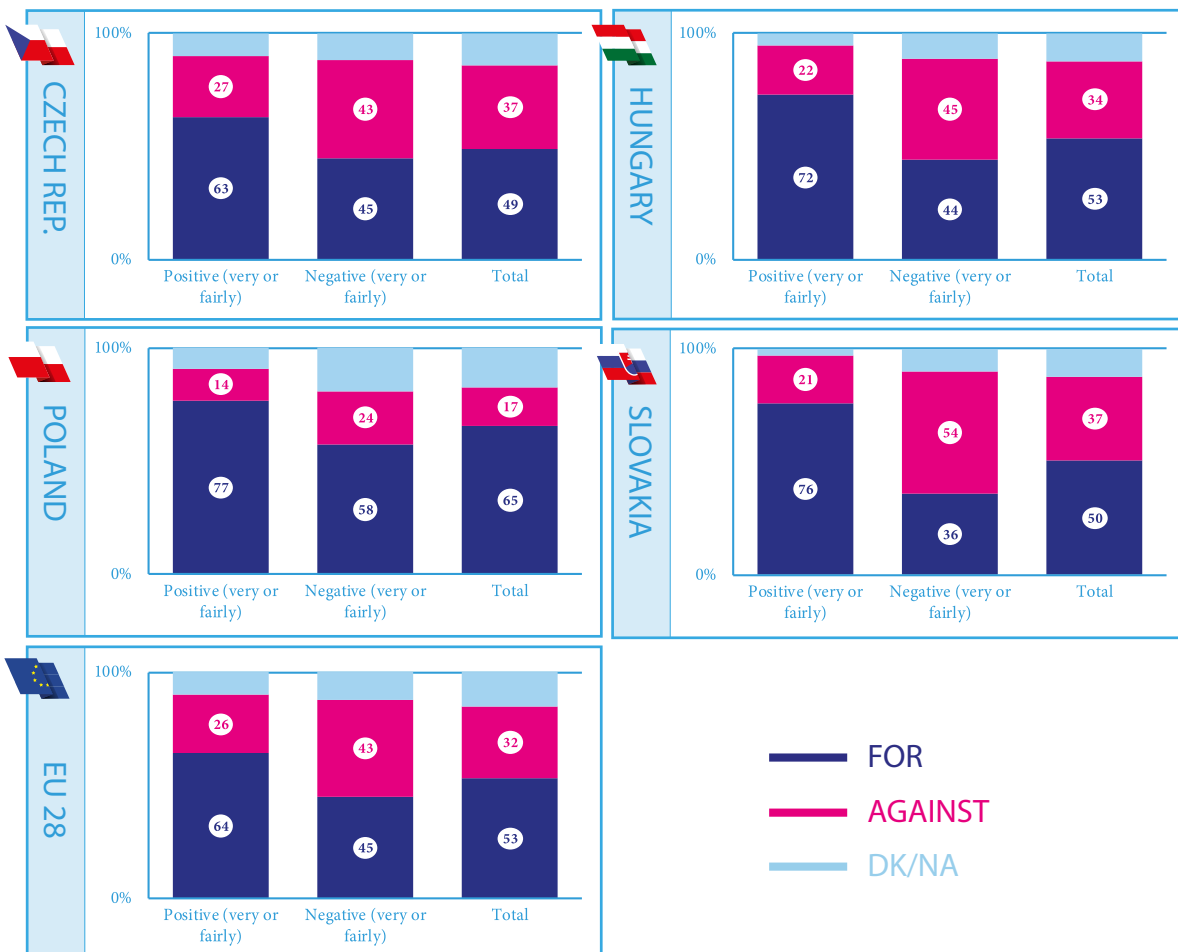
¹³ The original question was: Could you please tell me for each of the following, whether the term brings to mind something very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative? Free trade.

Globalisation

A significant majority of those thinking positively about globalisation supports TTIP. 64 per cent of Europeans who have a positive opinion on globalisation said they supported TTIP. The share of those against the treaty was 26 per cent. Thus, the advantage of the pro-TTIP side is convincing. Among people who are rather negative about globalisation the advantage disappears almost completely. The 43 per cent who are against TTIP are barely down on the 45 per cent supporting it.

It is true for every V4 country that most of those who think positively about globalisation think the same about TTIP as well. In general, those against globalisation are divided on TTIP in the Czech Republic and Hungary. In Poland the supporters of the agreement are at an advantage even in this group. At the same time, the opponents of TTIP are in the absolute majority in Slovakia.

Table 13. Opinions on TTIP by views on Globalisation

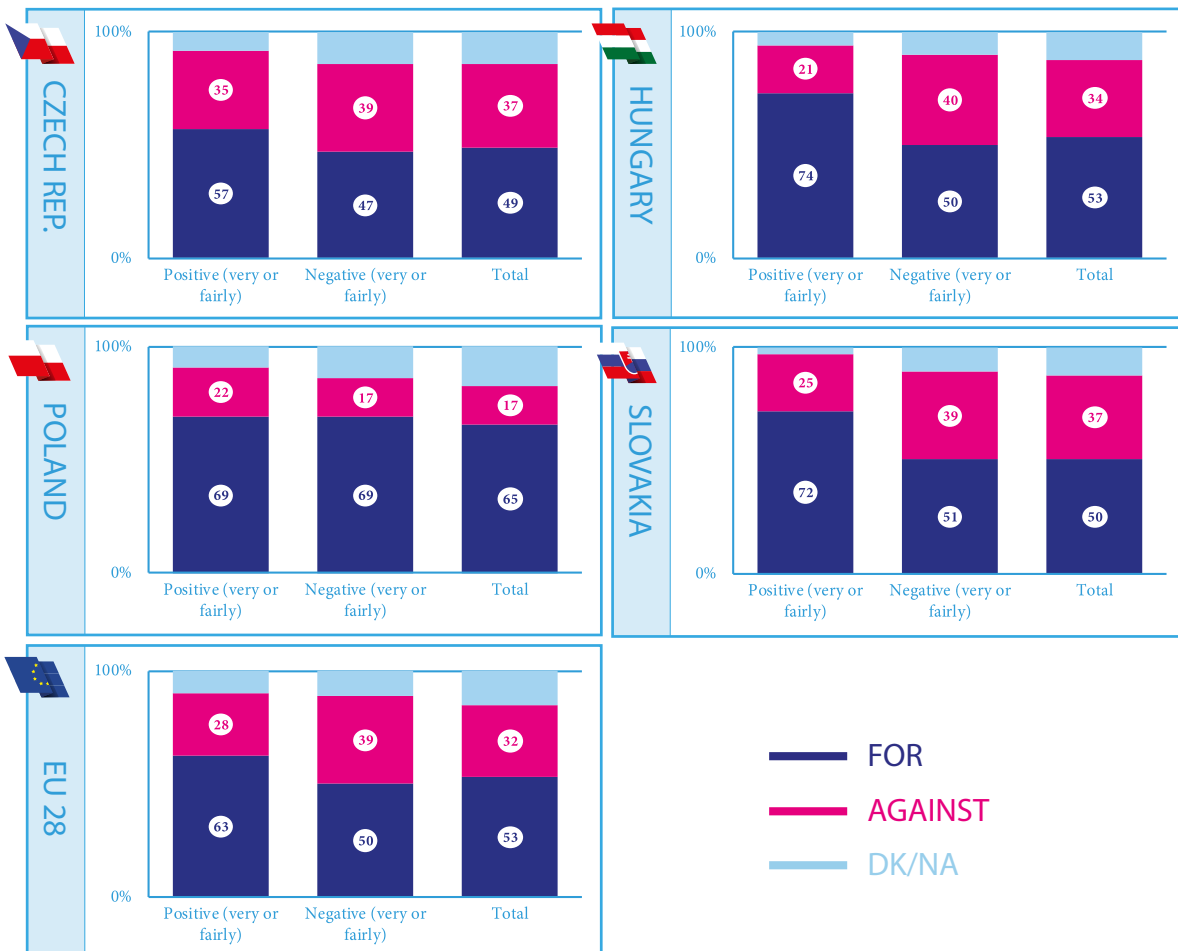


Protectionism

With regards to free trade and globalisation we could see that those thinking positively about these two concepts support TTIP to a larger degree. This indicates that a large part of the population understands the meaning of the two words and what their relationship is with the partnership. In terms of protectionism, it is also shown in the complete European sample that those who think positively about the word are more supportive of TTIP than those who think about protectionism negatively. This is contradictory because protectionism is essentially contrary to free trade and it is an economic policy conflicting with the goals of TTIP.

In the V4 this contradiction is the weakest in Poland, where there is no significant difference between the two groups separated by their opinion on protectionism in terms of TTIP. In the other three member states the Europe-wide differences measured are also present, especially in Hungary and Slovakia.

Table 14. Opinions on TTIP by views on protectionism



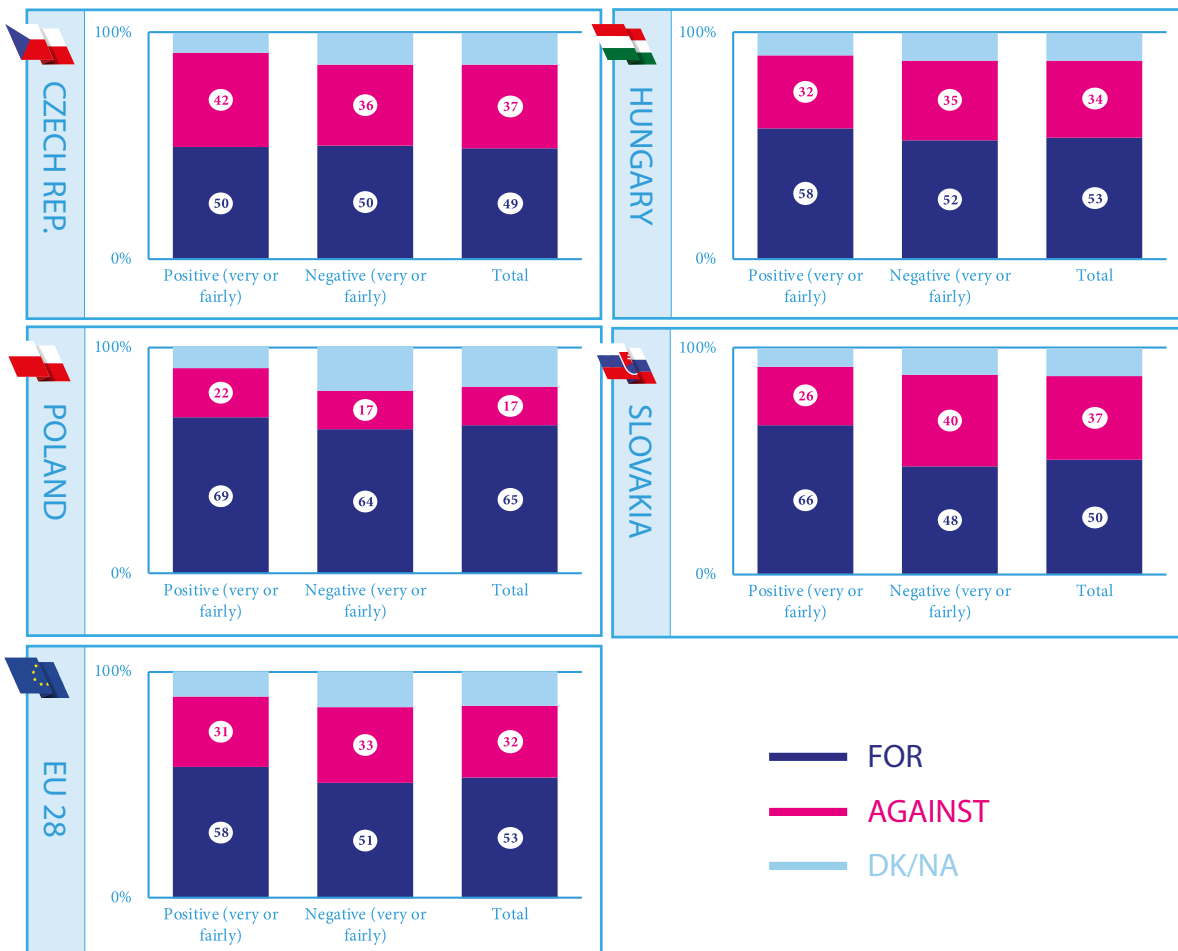
Refugee wave

Immigration of people outside the EU¹⁴

Although there is no direct link between immigration and TTIP, it can be observed among the European population that those with a negative view of refugees arriving to the EU from non-EU countries are less supportive of TTIP, while those in favour of immigration are slightly more supportive than the average.

This is only visible in Slovakia among the V4, albeit quite strongly. In the other three members, opinions on immigration and TTIP are independent of each other.

Table 15. Opinions on TTIP by views on migration



¹⁴ The original question was: Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you. Immigration of people from outside the EU. The answer options were Very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative and very negative.

Main concerns of the Hungarian political and economic opinion leaders, decision makers

Based on our background discussion with Hungarian leading economic and political opinion-leaders¹⁵, it seems that most of them are cautious about TTIP, even the ones who are basically supportive of free trade and increasing the intensity of transatlantic trade. The main concerns are the following:

Food safety standards: One of the most important concerns is that American and European regulations on food and beverages are fundamentally different: European legislation is based on the so-called “precautionary principle”, which entails that the product cannot be sold legally until the producers prove that the given item is not detrimental to the environment or the health of the customer. Contrarily, in the US this does not have to be established before the product hits the market, however, should it fail to meet the required criteria, authorities can issue large fines to the producers. One of the most important details of the European Commission’s mandate to conduct the negotiations is that it cannot negotiate on the food industry standards currently in effect. This was reassured by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s statement in January, declaring that “not a single norm currently in effect in the union can be watered down as a result of the trade deal with the United States. TTIP might serve as an example for other agreements, as it focuses more on ecological and social requirements.”¹⁶ The weakening of European food industry standards mainly worries the representatives of left-wing and green organisations, during our background discussions it was mostly these actors who used this threat as an argument.

Transparency: Transparency during the negotiations was another main concern of the opinion leaders, although there are usually two completely contradictory views on this issue. One of these is that it is being negotiated suspiciously secretly and the silence on this only rises the lack of confidence in TTIP. The other opinion, mostly voiced by economists and international lawyers, is that no free trade deal has ever been negotiated so transparently and publically. The European Commission has been trying to answer calls for more information on the treaty: on its website the commission’s proposals on negotiations are available, together with summaries and position papers about the individual rounds of negotiations.¹⁷ The Council published the guidelines set out by member states in all EU languages.

Protecting investments, or does an elected judge pose a threat: Based on our background discussions, there are also two views on whether Hungary’s sovereignty would be damaged by the dispute settlement mechanism between investors and member states. Under the original ISDS plan created during TTIP negotiations, large corporations would have been able to sue Hungary for government measures that affect them negatively. One of the main argument against ISDS is there is no need for additional dispute settling forums for foreign investors among OECD countries, since their legal order is stable and their judicial system is reliable. In the end, the European Parliament declared they could not support ISDS in its state at the time. Afterwards, the **Commission proposed a fairer and more transparent dispute settlement mechanism**, which respects the decision of international judicial bodies and does not go against the decisions made by governments. Although the Hungarian government raised its voice against ISDS many times, the majority of participating domestic opinion formers were less opposed to implementing an investment protection mechanism, and there were international lawyers who stated that restricting the sovereignty of member states in such cases is actually a reasonable decision.

Hungarian SME's competitiveness: According to our discussions, there are significant concerns about TTIP's effects on Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). One of the main economic concern was that contrary to the previous era of free trade agreements, this time what matters the most is the competitiveness of businesses. Hungary's main areas of export are machinery and transport equipment, agricultural products, consumer goods, chemicals, apparel, textiles, iron and steel, and wine. The most important trading partner is Germany; trade with EU-countries and the OECD comprises over 70-80% of the total.¹⁵ Although the United States is the most significant trade partner of Hungary outside of Europe, all of our interviewees **raised concerns about Hungarian SMEs room for manoeuvre via TTIP**. Economic opinion formers' main anxiety was that Hungarian SMEs' participation in export activities is uncommon and, in addition, one of the most risky aspect of this area is that in the USA, SMEs are limited at 1000 employees, while in Europe this is 250, so therefore different sizes are competing with each other. A direct and positive effect of TTIP could be that increased competition due to the partnership could have a sobering effect on corporations relying mainly on state subsidies.

TTIP light: There was no consensus among the participants on the chances of concluding a less ambitious, TTIP light deal. The possibility of reaching a politically more acceptable, watered down, NAFTA-like agreement in case there was no agreement on sensitive questions (public procurements or food safety) was raised. The issues left open would then be dealt with bilateral agreements. Contrary to this, the sceptical stance is that the more important European lobbies (e.g. in the area of food safety) would then most likely revoke their support of the agreement.

¹⁵ We have organized two background discussion with representatives of the SME sector, economic and political opinion leaders and leftist, liberal and conservative politicians on the 25th August and the 8th September. The discussion has taken place under Chatham House rule so therefore the participants remained under the condition of anonymity.

¹⁶ TTIP wins Merkel's endorsement ahead of 2016 tough deadline. 12th January, 2016. <http://europeansting.com/2016/01/12/ttip-wins-merkels-endorsement-ahead-of-2016-tough-deadline/>

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/documents-and-events/index_en.htm#documents

¹⁸ Hungary exports 1988-2015. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/hungary/exports>

Political opinions on TTIP within the V4 countries

According to the website of the Visegrád Group the question of TTIP is yet to enter mainstream public discourse in the V4, placing the relative silence on it in contrast with the mass protests in Germany and the Netherlands. While public support for the agreement dropped in the Visegrád countries during 2015¹⁹, the V4 governments are supporting the TTIP negotiations.²⁰ Their joint statement, made in July 2015, focuses predominantly on geopolitical concerns and hopes of TTIP boosting their economies.²¹ According to the Hungarian government, the most important aspect of the negotiations is not reaching a quick conclusion but the final contents of the agreement and their connection to Hungarian national interest, however, the government still maintains that TTIP would help the Hungarian economy if it was well planned.²² This statement stands in contrast with those articulated in the other V4 countries, where all parties expressed a desire for the quick conclusion of the negotiations.

CAUTIOUS POSITION OF FIDESZ AND THE GOVERNMENT

According to the government's official statement, Hungary has been supportive towards the negotiations since the beginning, because a balanced deal might benefit the Hungarian economy significantly, which is open and focused on external trade.²³ However, it is important to underline that they are only supporting the negotiations cautiously, which is indicated by their statement concluding that "if a free trade agreement is good for Hungary, we support it, if it is not good for Hungary, then we do not support it". The Orbán-government has been rather silent on the agreement and the general attitude towards TTIP is considerably more negative both in the media and in governmental communication compared to the rest of the V4. While the government expressed its support for TTIP as part of the V4, Hungarian MEPs and their votes in the European Parliament on either TTIP or amendments regarding the agreement seem to show a generally consistent hostile stance in 2015.²⁴ When discussing the report, Hungarian media tended to highlight the issues of competition on the market and the threat posed by GMOs²⁵. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade advised caution in an internal report, emphasising the fact that if Hungary is not careful, the costs of TTIP could outweigh the benefits.²⁶ István Mikola, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, stated in an interview that should the government's concerns over the GMOs and other areas remain, and these areas pose a threat to Hungary, it will veto the agreement between the EU and the USA.²⁷ Nevertheless, TTIP and issues connected to it failed to enter the mainstream Hungarian political discourse; merely 15 MPs showed up for the Parliamentary debate on the agreement.²⁸

¹⁹ http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2098_84_3_STD84_ENG

²⁰ <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/how-are-the-v4-countries>

²¹ <http://www.niedermayer.cz/co-se-deje-v-evropskem-parlamentu/articles/ttip-statement-by-visegrad-members-of-the-european-parliament-08-july-2015>

²² <http://mno.hu/kulfold/magyarorszagnak-nem-surgos-a-ttip-1339915>

²³ Transatlanti kereskedelmi tárgyalások: Még élesek a viták. [Transatlantic trade negotiations: Debates are still sharp]. 24 April 4, 2015. Available at http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/21611/Transatlanti_kereskedelmi_targyalasok_Meg_elesek_a_vitak

²⁴ http://mtvsz.blog.hu/2015/07/09/ttip_igy_szavaztak_a_magyar_europai_parlamenti_kepviselok_a_legfontosabb_kerdesekről

²⁵ Még a századvég sem optimista. October 21, 2016. http://hvg.hu/itthon/20151021_Meg_a_Szazadvég_sem_optimista

²⁶ A külügy sincs elszállva a szupermegállapodástól. October 26, 2016.

http://hvg.hu/itthon/20151026_A_kulugy_sincs_elszallva_a_szupermegallap

²⁷ Magyarország kész megvívótzni a szabadkereskedelmi egyezményt.

<http://mno.hu/belfold/magyarorszag-kesz-megvivotzni-a-kereskedelmi-egyezményt-1266505>

²⁸ 15 képviselő vitatkoztak a szabadkereskedelmi egyezményről a parlamentben. February 26, 2015.

<http://444.hu/2015/02/26/15-kepviselo-vitatkozik-a-szabadkereskedelmi-egyezményről-a-parlamentben>

The political elite within the EU institutions were mainly supportive, largely following the mainstream European Parliament policy lines. Fidesz (with the EPP mainstream) and MSZP and DK (with the S&D mainstream) supported the resolution in the EP in July 2015, while LMP and Dialogue for Hungary (with the Greens mainstream) and Jobbik (with the most of the non-affiliated MEPs) rejected it.²⁹

Regarding certain economic fields, the Hungarian government's priority areas are namely road vehicles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and digital systems.³⁰ According to the government's principle, TTIP, in general, should not decrease the level of guarantees anchored in European and national law. If it comes to the government's criticism, the key points are the following. At a European Council meeting in December 2014, Prime Minister Orbán stated that the question of ISDS relates to the question of national sovereignty and, consequently, a decision on it should be made at the highest level and not by experts. He stated that Hungary is committed to maintaining the system of sovereign national jurisdiction.³¹ Hungary's view is that national jurisdiction is the appropriate forum of settling disputes,³² but since the original concept of ISDS has been dropped and the European Parliament and the Commission have proposed a new and transparent system for resolving disputes between investors and states – the Investment Court System (ICS),³³ the government seemed more optimistic.³⁴ Another matter of importance is the exclusion of GMO-plants from the agreement, although this is mainly the leftist green opposition's main concern. Since Hungary's GMO-free status is anchored in its Fundamental Law, the Hungarian government is committed to keeping up the ban of GMO products. According to Mr. Mikola, TTIP would not endanger the GMO-free status of Hungary, since this topic has been excluded from the negotiations due to the fact that the question of GMOs falls under the competence of the member states of the EU. Similarly, the topics of hormone-treated animals and agricultural subsidies have also been excluded from the negotiations.³⁵ Zsolt Németh also underlined in an interview with András Schiffer, former leader of green party (Politics Can Be Different), that the Hungarian government implemented constitutional guarantees to keep the country's GMO-free position.³⁶

In the beginning of 2016, the Hungarian government allegedly promised its support for TTIP,³⁷ and in May 2016 István Mikola spoke about TTIP again: Hungary would only engage in negotiations if the option of independent ratification by nation states stays on the table. The government seems to be strongly against ISDS, however, it generally supports free trade.³⁸ The situation is the same even after trade ministers participating in the informal EU summit in Bratislava on 23 September admitted for the first time that it is impossible to conclude the negotiations as planned, by the end of this year. After this, on 26 September, István Mikola said "Hungary needs free trade agreements to be able to access all markets in the world."³⁹ The topic of ratification and how the final deal will enter into force seems to be a key condition for Fidesz as well, which was reassured by Tibor Navracsics, who stated that the agreement would enter into force only with the assent of the governments and parliaments of the member states.⁴⁰

²⁹ <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-negotiations-for-the-transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership-ttip-motion-for-resolution-vote-.html>

³⁰ Mikola: Figyelni kell a magyar értékekre a TTIP-tárgyalások során. [Mikola: Hungarian values shall be taken into account during TTIP negotiations]. January 19, 2015. Available at http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150119_mikola_figyelni_kell_a_magyar_ertekekre_a_ttip_targyalasok_soran

³¹ Nem simul bele a brüsszeli irányba Orbán Viktor. [Viktor Orbán does not kowtow to Brussels]. December 19, 2014. Available at http://kitekinto.hu/europa/2014/12/19/nem_simul_bele_a_brusszeli_iranyba_orban_viktor/

³² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is holding a broad discussion about the free trade agreement negotiations. February 20, 2015. Available at <http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade/news/the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade-is-holding-a-broad-discussion-about-the-free-trade-agreement-negotiations>

³³ Commission proposes new Investment Court System for TTIP and other EU trade and investment negotiations. September 16th 2015. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5651_en.htm

³⁴ Dr. Mikola István államtitkár előadása a „Szabadkereskedelmi egyezmények jogi kérdései” című konferenciám.-

³⁵ Transzatlanti kereskedelmi tárgyalások: Még élesek a viták. [Transatlantic trade negotiations: Debates are still sharp]. April 4, 2015. Available at http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/21611/Transzatlanti_kereskedelmi_targyalasok_Meg_elesek_a_vitak

³⁶ Kell-e nekünk „gazdasági NATO”? August 5th 2015. <http://valasz.hu/uzlet/kell-e-nekunk-gazdasagi-nato-114384>

³⁷ Az amerikaiak csendben kilóra megvették az Orbán-kormányt. <http://nol.hu/belfold/az-amerikaiak-csendben-kilora-megvettek-az-orban-kormanyt-1585953>

³⁸ <http://888.hu/article-magyarorszag-ragaszkodik-a-szolasjogahoz-a-ttip-vel-kapcsolatban>

³⁹ Mikola: Kell a CETA és a TTIP. September 26th, 2017. https://gondola.hu/hirek/193977-Mikola_kell_a_CETA_es_a_TTIP.html

At the beginning of 2014 Viktor Orbán stated that TTIP is a necessary tool to boost the competitiveness of the EU: in case the deal fell through, the EU could “hardly maintain its current position in the world”.⁴¹ Later, in December 2014 Antal Rogán provided an excellent example of how to use and exploit the topic for domestic and foreign political gains, placing TTIP in the context of Hungarian-American relations and describing it as a form of US pressure.⁴² It is also very telling that while János Lázár openly opposed TTIP by signing the petition against the agreement, government politicians such as Zsolt Németh⁴³ and Szabolcs Takács⁴⁴ have been supportive of TTIP. Generally, in front of the domestic public leading government officials and Fidesz politicians try to evade the subject, avoid taking a clear position on the proposed treaty and, in fact, often express criticism.

Among opposition parties, LMP and Jobbik, and less visibly PM, firmly oppose TTIP, while MSZP cautiously, DK, Együtt and the Liberals solidly stand behind TTIP. LMP clearly and strongly rejects TTIP (and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA, between the EU and Canada) in accordance with national and international environmental organizations.⁴⁵ Another party that firmly rejects TTIP is Jobbik, whose negative approach is based on the party’s anti-American, anti-globalization, anti-MNC and pro-Russian stance. According to Jobbik, TTIP goes well beyond economy and trade. In effect, the treaty is a coordinated attack by global powers aimed at geopolitical supremacy that “represents the last stage in our colonization and total exposure”.⁴⁶

In the media the negative aspects of TTIP dominated, such as the willingness of the EU to sacrifice environmental standards and allowing GMO technology and GMO food to flow into the continent. LMP capitalised on this when András Schiffer submitted a motion to the parliament in order to force the government to consider TTIP, CETA and TiSA as mixed international agreements, which require individual ratification by nation states. The motion also called on the government not to enter a free trade agreement that would jeopardise the Hungarian environment and the health of Hungarian citizens, food security, or labour rights guarantees, which, in addition, is being negotiated in a largely anti-democratic manner. The motion enjoys the support of the government.⁴⁷ The Hungarian Liberal Party alone called on the government to strongly support TTIP as the country ‘can only win with it’.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ TTIP-vitanap: a kormány szerint a parlamentnek van beleszólása az egyezménybe. [Parliamentary debate on TTIP: according to the government Parliament had a say in the deal]. February 26, 2015. Available at http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150226_ttip_vitanap_a_kormany_szerint_a_parlamentnek_van_beleszolasa_az_egyezménybe

⁴¹ Orbán: kell a szabadkereskedelmi megállapodás az USA-val. [Orbán: free trade agreement with the US is necessary]. February 3, 2014. Available at <http://vs.hu/gazdasag/osszes/orban-kell-a-szabadkereskedelmi-megallapodas-az-usa-val-0203#!s0>

⁴² Rogán elmondta, mi állhat a nyomásgyakorlás mögött. december 29th, 2014. <http://mno.hu/belfold/rogan-elmondta-mi-allhat-a-nyomasgyakorlas-mogott-1265326>

⁴³ Kell-e nekünk „gazdasági NATO”? August 5th 2015. <http://valasz.hu/uzlet/kell-e-nekunk-gazdasagi-nato-114384>

⁴⁴ A transzatlanti szabadkereskedelmi tárgyalásokról. October 29th 2015. <https://pcblogger.atlatszo.hu/2015/10/29/a-transzatlanti-szabadkereskedelmi-targyalasokrol/>

⁴⁵ Schiffer: hazaárulást követett el a Fidesz, az MSZP és a DK. [Schiffer: Fidesz, MSZP and DK committed high treason]. July 9, 2015. Available at <http://lehetmas.hu/hirek/201210/schiffer-hazaarulast-kovetett-el-a-fidesz-az-mszp-es-a-dk/>

⁴⁶ TTIP-vitanap: a kormány szerint a parlamentnek van beleszólása az egyezménybe. [Parliamentary debate on TTIP: according to the government Parliament has a say in the deal]. February 26, 2015. Available at http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150226_ttip_vitanap_a_kormany_szerint_a_parlamentnek_van_beleszolasa_az_egyezménybe

⁴⁷ <http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/tagallamok-szavazhatnak-ttip-rol-727618/>

⁴⁸ Liberálisok: a kormány álljon ki a megállapodás mellett. May 05, 2016. <http://www.hirado.hu/2016/05/23/liberalisok-a-kormany-alljon-ki-a-megallapodas-mellett/>

POLAND: NO TTIP-LIGHT

Generally, the new Polish government has also followed a cautiously supportive approach towards TTIP that was reassured by Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski, who called TTIP an 'economic NATO'. The Foreign Minister, however, expressed the most common concerns as well, namely voicing the government's anxiety over the lack of information regarding TTIP's effects on labour relations, relations between corporations and intellectual property, and the agricultural sector (e.g. GMO). He emphasised that the abolition of the remaining restrictions on foreign trade will not benefit Poland too much, it would be the abolishment of fees Polish companies are required to pay if they want to operate on the US market that could bring significant advantages to the country. An additional issue is the question of visa agreements. Without the visa question solved, Waszczykowski sees little benefit to signing TTIP.⁴⁹ Deputy Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki articulated the position of the government by stating that "Poland is a trade oriented country and a 'softer' TTIP is not an option for us".⁵⁰ Later, however, the Polish Development Ministry announced that it is going to start an awareness-raising campaign on TTIP with the purpose of raising awareness of the need for increased transparency regarding the particularities of the trade deal. Morawiecki said the Polish government is mainly concerned with three areas: farming, chemicals, and dispute resolution between enterprises and states.

The dividing lines within the Polish government also became public in May 2016, when two members of the Polish government, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Jacek Bogucki and Environment Minister Jan Szyszko expressed their opposition to the trade agreement after some documents on TTIP were leaked by Greenpeace. Bogucki stated that negotiations on the trade of foodstuffs have been suspended due to differences in agriculture and food production in the USA and Europe. "Another issue is that there is a price difference, which is generally a disadvantage for Europe. The high quality standards which were imposed, but also the environmental protection regulations, mean that we produce more expensive food." Minister of Environment Jan Szyszko emphasised the danger posed by GMOs, which are "a huge threat to Poland."⁵¹

The media has predominantly focused on the lack of transparency and accessible information in Poland as well⁵², along with the usual concerns with GMOs and hormone-degrading pesticides destroying the labour rights, the ISDS, and threats posed to public services. In sum, the biggest issue present in the Polish press is the lack of transparency of both the negotiations and the contents of the agreement.⁵³

SLOVAKIA: MAINLY SUPPORTIVE

In 2014, Slovak MEPs supported the signing of the TTIP, arguing that it would be overwhelmingly beneficial from an economic perspective, a position held both by representatives from the governing Smer-SD and SDKÚ-DS.⁵⁴ TTIP also received governmental support in the form of a conference focused on the economic benefits of the agreement.⁵⁵ State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Ivan Korcok reaffirmed the government's support for TTIP when discussing the challenges of the upcoming Slovak Presidency in the Council of the EU, claiming that "should the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) continue throughout the Slovak Presidency, we will actively support the work on this major transatlantic agreement."⁵⁶ Furthermore, the government listed "Strengthening

⁴⁹ http://www.chicago.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/minister_witold_waszczykowski_dla_pap_o_zblizajacym_sie_szczycie_nato

⁵⁰ Morawiecki: Poland supports TTIP. March 2, 2016. <http://wbj.pl/morawiecki-poland-supports-ttip/>

⁵¹ Polish government oppose TTIP. May 11th, 2016. <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/457607-2/>

⁵² <http://di.com.pl/rzad-pis-chce-mocnego-ttip-i-wolnego-handlu-ale-sprawa-ttip-to-takze-spor-o-informacje-54568;>

⁵³ <http://biznes.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/892544,co-to-jest-ttip-10-rzeczy-ktorych-nie-wiecie-o-umowie-ue-usa.html>

⁵⁴ <http://enrsi.rtvs.sk/articles/news/69745/slovak-meps-support-transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership>

⁵⁵ https://www.mzv.sk/web/en/news/current_issues/-/asset_publisher/lrJ2tDuQdEKp/content/state-secretary-burian-at-the-final-ttip-project-conference-unique-opportunity-for-business-in-slovakia-to-grow-/10182

⁵⁶ http://www.amcham.sk/publications/connection-magazine/issues/2015-04/272385_the-slovak-eu-presidency-challenges-and-opportunities

transatlantic cooperation and ties with the USA, supporting successful conclusion of negotiations on TTIP” among its list of priorities in its paper entitled ‘Foreign and European Policy Agenda in 2015’.⁵⁷

The government claims to fully support the negotiations, and Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák confirmed that the government would like to see the TTIP negotiations concluded quickly. In this spirit, Slovakia assisted the process by hosting TTIP negotiations in Bratislava on 23 September, 2016.⁵⁸ Before the summit Ivan Stefanec stated that “For Europe, this is a chance, perhaps the last to be able to participate in setting world trade rules [...] The TTIP agreement is not a secret, nor is it transparent. Negotiations are still ongoing, so the final text cannot even exist.” He also reminded that the official position of the Slovak government and Prime Minister Robert Fico is complete support for the agreement. He estimated a 116% growth in exports and up to 27.000 new jobs on the market, especially in SMEs.⁵⁹ At the summit, Slovak Minister of Economy Peter Ziga announced that it’s unrealistic to expect that negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and USA will be completed by the end of 2016.⁶⁰

The media tended to support this stance; particular focus was placed on TTIP’s benefits for SMEs, which make up 99% of the Slovak economy and provide three quarters of the jobs, whereas SMEs account for only a quarter of the total amount of exports each year.⁶¹ The media placed an emphasis on the economic benefits TTIP could bring to Europe, especially for the “pronouncedly export-driven economy” of Slovakia. Business Alliance of Slovakia (BAS) implemented a special project in cooperation with the US Embassy in Bratislava, “TTIP - Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: A Unique Opportunity for corporate Growth in Slovakia”. “The list of risks is shorter than the list of advantages”; the most frequent fear is more intense competition on the marketplace, which is, while beneficial at the market level, might drive profits down or do away with smaller businesses.⁶² This concern has been maintained throughout the years, and the question of transparency (or lack thereof) has been emerging more and more frequently. Jana Kissová, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Economic Affairs argued in an article that the plan of the TTIP agreement should be published and be open to the public.⁶³ The only party that rejected TTIP openly from the start was ‘Vzdor - strana práce’, a Marxist-Leninist political party that argues for leaving NATO and get closer to Russia. Slovak media has discussed TTIP from a consumer protection perspective, arguing against poor food safety standards, although positive media coverage seems to dominate.

CZECH REPUBLIC UNDERLINES SECURITY INTERESTS

The approach of the Czech government towards TTIP is positive, but not unconditional; Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka supported the future agreement, however, he underlined that parts of the agreements that raise doubts will need to be addressed and the Czechs will not sign a ‘blank check’.⁶⁴ In a speech Sobotka gave at Humboldt University in Berlin on 4 May 2015, the Prime Minister called the USA the Czech Republic’s “main political and military ally, and that fact should also be reflected in trade relations. The signing of the TTIP will not only lead to growth in trade, but will also reaffirm the importance of our partnerships”.⁶⁵ The Prime Minister thus linked TTIP with the security interests of the country, clearly signalling the full support of his administration. Sobotka stated that some sections need clarification, and consumer protection and social standards should be included.⁶⁶ At a European Union Council meeting in March 2015, Sobotka emphasised that the Czech Republic would prefer a quick conclusion of TTIP negotiations.⁶⁷

In July 2015, a parliamentary debate was held where the only considerable resistance to TTIP was put forward by the Communist Party. The parliament also settled on how to introduce its support for TTIP to the public, however, the Czechs did not seem to be too interested in the topic. According to the research of the Centre for Public Opinion Research, half of the respondents had never heard about the agreement.⁶⁸ Katerina Konecna, a member of the Communist Party and MEP for the Czech Republic has spoken out against TTIP, placing focus predominantly on the loss of control over harmful substances, the use of which would be enabled by TTIP.⁶⁹

The government's support for the agreement seems to have held up. During a bilateral meeting at Krynica in Poland on 7 September 2016, a member of the Czech Parliamentary Chamber of Deputies Jan Hamáček and Slovak Speaker of Parliament Andrej Danko stated jointly that "Slovakia, as well as the Czech Republic, are the countries that would benefit from the eventual approval of a free trade zone between the EU and the United States," adding that both countries should work towards persuading Western EU members that TTIP is a good idea.⁷⁰ At the Bratislava meeting held on 23 September 2016, the Czech government expressed its full support of both CETA and TTIP.⁷¹

Articles on TTIP mostly consider its economic aspects, like the promise of raising the Czech GDP by 0.1%⁷², and the US pressure on the EU revealed by the documents leaked by Greenpeace.⁷³ Negative attitudes were expressed by a number of Czech economists, for example by Ilona Svihlíková, who argued against the lobby efforts of companies in connection to TTIP, while Jaroslav Ungerma, a macroeconomist at the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, argued that while TTIP is supposedly designed for SMEs, the US market has its own big problems and thus has to be evaluated with caution.⁷⁴ There seems to be a balance of positive and negative views on TTIP in the Czech media.

⁵⁷ Foreign Policy Agenda. https://www.mzv.sk/documents/30297/124861/150108_SK_Foreign_Policy_Agendadoc.pdf

⁵⁸ Bratislava will host talks on TTIP. September 22, 2016. <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20282939/bratislava-will-host-talks-on-ttip.html>

⁵⁹ <http://euractiv.sk/clanky/ttip/ivan-stefanec-slovenska-vlada-by-na-summite-mala-tlacit-na-pokracovanie-rokovani-o-ttip/>

⁶⁰ Concluding TTIP by end of this year unrealistic. September 23, 2016. <https://newsnow.tasr.sk/economy/ziga-concluding-ttip-by-end-of-this-year-unrealistic/>

⁶¹ <http://komentare.hnonline.sk/komentare/560364-malokto-vytazi-z-obchodnej-dohody-viac-ako-slovensko>

⁶² TTIP may increase Slovak GDP by 4,22%. August 1st, 2016. <http://alianciapas.sk/en/ttip-may-increase-slovak-gdp-by-422/>

⁶³ <https://europskenoviny.sk/2016/06/11/jana-kissova-ttip-ked-ciele-nemusia-stacit/>

⁶⁴ <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/sobotka-bianco-sek-ke-smlouve-mezi-eu-a-usa-nedavame/r~70715198a25b11e4b6d20025900fea04/?redirected=1474646182>

⁶⁵ <https://www.vlada.cz/en/clenove-vlady/premier/speeches/speech-given-by-prime-minister-bohuslav-sobotka-at-humboldt-university-in-berlin-on-4-may-2015-129833/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.vlada.cz/cz/media-centrum/aktualne/premier-bohuslav-sobotka-jednal-na-zasedani-evropske-rady-o-podobne-energeticke-unie-127869/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/prime-minister-bohuslav-sobotka-discusses-the-energy-union-at-the-european-council-meeting-128730/tmplid-81/>

⁶⁸ http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/svetovaekonomika/_zprava/1511039

⁶⁹ <http://konecna.cz/evropa-proti-zakerne-smlouve-s-usa/>

⁷⁰ <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20266909/krynica-v4-speakers-of-parliament-to-meet-beginning-october.html>

⁷¹ http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/udalosti_a_media/tiskove_zpravy/x2016_09_20_cr_podporuje_ceta_a_ttip.html

⁷² <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/cesky-hdp-by-si-diky-ttip-polepsil-o-0-1-odhaduje-institut/1373084>

⁷³ http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/svetovaekonomika/_zprava/unikle-dokumenty-k-smlouve-ttip-pry-ukazuji-velky-tlak-usa-na-eu--1608977

⁷⁴ http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/domaciekonomika/_zprava/1580468

Conclusion

- While the public in V4 countries is supportive of a free trade agreement between the US and the EU, the political elite's officially pro-TTIP side seems to generally be more silent than the anti-TTIP group. Firm criticism of TTIP coming from leftist and environmentalist forces on the one hand and right-wing players on the other hand overlap in certain aspects (the basis of criticism is globalization, critical attitude towards multinational companies, the impact of the US in Europe and health and safety issues, GMO-free status, concerns over national sovereignty).
- According to our background discussions, some of the Hungarian opinion leaders and decision-makers only have a superficial knowledge of TTIP, so vague impressions and myths about TTIP are still dominant, although we have also talked to very well-prepared participants as well.
- In the media, negative aspects of TTIP dominated the discussion more frequently. The main concerns were:
 - (1) Competitiveness (European goods might lose markets)
 - (2) Environmental protection
 - (3) Sovereignty of the state
 - (4) Transparency
 - (5) Consumer protection
- Considering all the facts mentioned above, EU institutions and pro-TTIP organizations should make more efforts to make the details of TTIP-negotiations more visible to the public and inform society more efficiently.
- **Since trust in the union is strongly correlated to the support of TTIP, and Euroscepticism is on the rise due to the multiple crises the EU currently faces, more public debate will be needed in the future to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of TTIP-like trade agreements.**



4Liberty.eu is a platform where experts and intellectuals representing liberal environment from Central and Eastern Europe can share their opinions and ideas. Representatives of 15 think tanks from various countries, including Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Georgia regularly publish comments, analysis and polemics concerning politics, economy, social and cultural life as well as the subjects of heated debates in the media shown from a Central European perspective.



<http://4liberty.eu/>



[facebook.com/4liberty.eu](https://www.facebook.com/4liberty.eu)



[@4LibertyEu](https://twitter.com/4LibertyEu)