

SELECTED MILLENNIALS' VIEWS ON THE CZECH REPUBLIC AS A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

This article aims to compare selected millennials' views of the Czech Republic as a member of the European Union. Its *introduction* describes the position, overall results, and benefits of the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union and looks into what role it should play in Europe's current integration challenges. Its *second chapter* presents the methodology used and interprets the empirical data obtained from a case study that was performed via an empirical survey among selected millennials at the Silesian University of Opava School of Business Administration in Karviná during the 2018/2019 school year. Its *third chapter* discusses the current challenges for European integration through the lenses of Europeanization and European conservatives and reformers. Its *Conclusions* use the example of the selected millennials as a foundation for confirming that they have both converging and diverging viewpoints on what kind of European Union they actually desire.

Keywords

Czech Republic, European Union, Europeanization, Millennial

I. Introduction

This article aims to compare the stances of selected millennials, as grouped by their university study programs, towards the role of the Czech Republic (CR) as a member of the European Union (EU). In connection with the position of the CR within the EU, we look at the CR as an EU member from two standpoints. *Firstly, whether, and how strongly, the selected millennials perceive the CR within the EU. Secondly, what kind of EU they desire.* This article's theoretical foundation lies in a conception of the position, overall results, and benefits of the CR's EU membership, as contained in Kratochvíl and Sychra (2019). We combine the position, overall results, and benefits of the CR's EU membership and use these as our starting point for approaching the current challenges of European integration. *In the opinions of our selected millennials, what role should the Czech Republic play in the current challenges of European integration?* A case study implemented via an inquiry in the form of an empirical survey is the basic research type used for this article. Under the concept of Europeanization in Hloušek and Pitrová (2009), *one can expect that the selected millennials will have differing viewpoints towards the role of the CR in the current challenges in European integration.* Also, by reflecting on the current challenges of European integration and thinking critically about the CR's role as an EU member, these millennials selected based on their type of university study program can mold their own views with an expectation of *what kind of EU they actually desire. What are the facts on the CR's position within the EU?* According to Kratochvíl and Sychra (2019), the Czech Republic is among the EU's medium-sized countries. Since its EU entry in 2004, the CR has been a net recipient of membership's benefits. It is still outside of the eurozone. In 2007, it entered the Schengen Agreement, and in 2009, it held the presidency of the Council of the European Union. It has a relatively small representation in EU institutions. According to Kratochvíl and Sychra (2019), European topics are politicized in the CR, and Czech euroscepticism prevails. *What are the overall results of the CR's EU membership so far?* From

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the political standpoint, the CR has shifted part of its sovereignty to the EU and is sharing coordination with it. The CR is seeing gradual Europeanization, because the key impacts of EU membership for the CR are its soft impacts. The CR's strategic participation in the Western sphere is assured by its active membership in the Visegrad Four as the EU's Central European platform, wherein, according to Kratochvíl and Sychra (2019), the CR presents itself as a parliamentary democracy within the consensus of common rules for protecting constitutionality. However, the question of using the potential of the CR's EU membership more effectively still remains.

What are the benefits of the CR's EU membership as regards costs? According to Kratochvíl and Sychra (2019), the CR still receives significant benefits from its EU membership. It has a strong commercial and ownership link to the EU market. For the CR, the EU is a strategic commercial partner not only on the internal market, wherein cohesion prevails, but also in agriculture. The CR has a good net budget position in the EU, but its real convergence is fairly weak. The CR's cyclical economic harmony with the EU can be assessed positively, while its structural economic synchronization can be judged more negatively. From the financing standpoint, the CR's budget position in the EU in 2004–2017 was beneficial for it (515.8 billion CZK vs. 1.211 trillion CZK). The CR has had a problem, however, with the targeting of its funds and the configuration of the financing system. The new financial framework has brought a roughly 5% drop in financial subsidies. The main Czech themes within the EU include defense policy, reverse charge, dual food quality, the EU mobility package, wage convergence, migration policy, digitalization, and the liberalization of the internal market. According to Kratochvíl and Sychra (2019), the following can be counted among the main causes of Czech euroscepticism: low support for the EU among the Czech public, the traditional division of Czech society into “us” and “them,” the perception of the EU as a distant organization with little Czech influence, the rise of the debt and migration crises, criticism by Czech political elites, and irrational discourse among member states. Sychra and Kratochvíl (2019) see the rift among member states, security risks (terrorism), and the growth of support by populist, radical, and anti-immigration movements as the EU's most serious political problems. Here the CR takes on a dissident role, because the EU's relocation mechanism remains a conflict-ridden topic leading to a need for reforming the EU's migration and asylum policy.

II. Methods and Data

The research method used for this article was an inquiry in the form of an empirical survey performed within a case study. Yin (1994) states that case studies cover specific situations intensively and in depth. Case studies can be divided up into *teaching* and *research* case studies. *Teaching* case studies are used for developing respondents' knowledge, and they help to solve problems surrounding real-life practice. They are primarily educative, because they motivate respondents towards further study and support the development of their discussion abilities, critical thinking, and teamwork. They are designed so as to draw their respondents into the problem being surveyed and leads them towards an answer regarding how they would decide in a specific situation. *Research* case studies are more precise than teaching studies. *Within the interactive teaching of sociology and organizational sociology, we can safely treat teaching and research case studies as interchangeable.* This case study is a variant of the inquiry research method performed using the questionnaire research technique in the form of an empirical survey. Within the framework of Featherstone and Radaelli (2003), we performed our empirical survey as participant research in a single location with the goal of breaking more deeply into the opinions that shape respondents' views of a specific situation.

In our case, these respondents were selected millennials at the Silesian University of Opava School of Business Administration in Karviná (SU SBA). Concerning millennials, Coupland

(1991) refers to the unfulfilled expectation that they will be bearers of changes, democracy, and societal engagement. However, millennials are not always willing to accept responsibility for their personal and group decisions. They do not perceive cohesion within their cohort, because nothing there is nothing fundamental to socially connect them; they are self-centered, and their personalities grow past the bounds of their social groups. They are not motivated to resolve conflicts, stand up against anything significant, change society, topple totalitarianism, or win wars. They seek paths and ways to fulfill their own expectations—for some, to secure their welfare, for others, to travel the world. According to Buchtík and Veithová (2016), millennials cannot be grouped into one single generational bucket. The reason is that their lifestyle-based subcultures do not tie into specific social classes. Millennials are brought face to face with various generations. They were born into an era when the internet did not yet function in the way we see today. Thanks to this, they are accustomed to reality, practical activities, and outdoor activities. Computers, technologies, and the internet only became a part of their lives over the course of their elementary education. The world opened up to them in its full development, and the internet became the safest global place, where everywhere is near. They have freedom and possibilities for realizing their expectations, as well as independence, because a number of past conventions and traditions have fallen away. They do not commit themselves, and the internal fragmentation of their personalities leaves them without anchoring in the traditional family as spouses and parents. They have no instruction books for life, because they already have everything they need for real life. They are satisfied and successful within their (un-)system, with the ability to utilize this (un-)system to their benefit. According to Buchtík (2017), some millennials are lost in relationships and are seeking places and ways to leave an imprint in the world and cope with various expectations. Above all, however, they need to find a balance in life. At the same time, they have never been materially lacking, and between the ages of 20 and 30, they have gained an extra decade for themselves. Millennials need not have any existential fears of failure, because they have the possibility for professional self-realization elsewhere. They long for work that will leave them with room for personal time off. According to Wecker (2017), millennials tend to look back on their first employment after their university studies as a tragedy and disappointment that cast them down and spurred them to try something new. Money is not the most important thing for them, because they only need enough to pay their debts and travel. Benefits are a priority, because they want to enjoy themselves and get to know the lives of locals while traveling the world. They do not seek to save up money that they will only enjoy after retirement. What is important for them is to do something that they believe in and that excites them. They are not *different*; they are simply in a fast-changing world. They wish to live in the present, and they do not believe that one profession will suffice for their entire productive lives. They are aware that different work awaits them in the future—work that can offer the same product in multiple variants. Some people are able to keep up with developmental trends, while others are not.

The millennials selected for this case study are students of two bachelor's study programs at SU SBA: Economics and Management (ECOMAN) and Economic Policy and Public Administration (ECOPOL). In accord with § 45 of Czech Act no. 111/1998 Sb., the Higher Educational Act, these bachelor's study programs are focused on providing the qualifications for practicing a profession. They utilize contemporary methods and provide the needed theoretical knowledge in an adequate scope. Their standard study period, including professional practice, is 3–4 years. Students complete their studies by passing a final state exam, including a defense of a bachelor's thesis. Graduates are granted the academic title of bachelor. *The ECOMAN bachelor's program at SU SBA contains a Business Economics and Management study field with several specializations: Enterprise, Marketing and Business, Enterprise Finance, and Travel Economics and Hotel Management. It also contains a second study field, Accounting and Taxes. The ECOPOL bachelor's program at SU SBA contains several study fields as well: Banking, Public Economics and Administration, and Social Management.*

Two samples of millennials were composed for our empirical survey via *deliberate sampling*. We chose the number of respondents for each sample separately, based on the defined groups in the basic set. According to Shipman (2014), an explanation of the differentiation criteria based on which the groups of millennials in the basic set differ is a prerequisite for our application of deliberate sampling. In our case, it was the bachelor's study programs at SU SBA that served as the sole criterion. (Table 1)

Table 1 The basic set of millennials at SU SBA 2018/2019

Study program – total	853	100.0 (%)
ECOMAN	642	75.3 (%)
ECOPOL	211	24.7 (%)

Source: SU SBA (2019)

The case study's samples were recruited from among millennials in the ECOMAN and ECOPOL bachelor's study programs who had signed up for either the *Sociology* subject in the 2018/2019 winter semester at SU SBA or the *Organizational Sociology* subject in that same semester. A total of 53 (100.0%) respondents were acquired for these two samples. 23 (43.4%) respondents out of this total were studying in the ECOMAN program, and 30 (56.6%) respondents were studying in ECOPOL. These selected millennial respondents provided empirical material for comparing their views of the CR as a member of the EU. (Table 2)

Table 2 The sample of millennials at SU SBA 2018/2019

Study program – total	53	100.0 (%)
ECOMAN	23	43.4 (%)
ECOPOL	30	56.6 (%)

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. *Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU*

Our empirical material for comparing the views of selected millennials of the CR as an EU member was obtained via the inquiry research method. A questionnaire was the technique used for our research. According to Folz (1996), questionnaires are used for surveys of public opinion and, depending on their form, may be written or online. Political parties use questionnaires to determine their future orientation and whether their platform will bring them electoral success. Questionnaires are used for acquiring information in a population overall or in smaller groups of respondents. The party then evaluates the questionnaire survey and the respondents' opinions, stances, and preferences and directs its future steps. Our questionnaire had the shape of a single-purpose form, and its goal was to gain the respondents' answers to its core research question: *What role should the Czech Republic play in the current challenges of European integration?* In connection with the concept of Europeanization provided by Hloušek and Pitrová (2009), we verified *our assumption of differing views by the selected millennials towards the CR's role in the current challenges of European integration based on their different university study programs.* Our assumption of differing views of the CR's role in current European integration challenges was operationalized into thirteen questionnaire questions, which the selected millennials in the two samples answered as respondents. The selected millennials viewed the CR's EU membership relatively positively, regardless of their bachelor's study program. For example 10.0% of the selected ECOPOL millennials expressed a neutral stance, and only 4.3% of the selected ECOMAN millennials stated a somewhat negative stance. None of the selected millennials expressed a strongly negative stance towards the CR's membership in the EU.

Table 3 Is the CR's EU membership a good thing?

	definitely	probably	I don't know	probably not	definitely not
ECOMAN (%)	21.7	73.9	0.0	4.3	0.0
ECOPOL (%)	30.0	60.0	10.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. *Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU*

Overall, the selected millennials uniformly either definitely or somewhat agreed with the CR's EU membership. Only 17.4% of the selected millennials in ECOMAN and 3.3% of those in ECOPOL expressed a neutral stance towards the CR's EU membership. Only 4.3% of the selected millennials in ECOPOL expressed a somewhat negative stance towards the CR's EU membership.

Table 4 Do you agree with the CR's EU membership?

	I definitely agree	I somewhat agree	I don't know	I somewhat disagree	I definitely disagree
ECOMAN (%)	30.4	47.8	17.4	4.3	0.0
ECOPOL (%)	43.3	53.3	3.3	0.0	0.0

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. *Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU*

Regardless of their bachelor's study program, the selected millennials tended to believe that the EU's decisions are in the CR's interest. Here 34.8% of the selected ECOMAN millennials and 40.0% of the selected ECOPOL millennials expressed a neutral stance. 17.4% of the selected ECOMAN millennials and 16.7% of the selected ECOPOL millennials reflected their view that not all EU decisions are necessarily in the CR's interest. Here we see a segue: the selected millennials did not unambiguously confirm that all EU decisions are in the interest of the CR, i.e. to the CR's advantage.

Table 5 Do you believe that the EU's decisions are in the CR's interest?

	definitely	somewhat	I don't know	somewhat not	definitely not
ECOMAN (%)	4.3	43.5	34.8	17.4	0.0
ECOPOL (%)	6.7	36.7	40.0	16.7	0.0

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. *Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU*

30.4% of the selected ECOMAN millennials and 60.0% of the selected ECOPOL millennials somewhat believed in the EU's future. 21.7% of the selected ECOMAN millennials and 10% of the selected ECOPOL millennials strongly believed in its future. 26.1% of the selected ECOMAN millennials and 23.3% of the selected ECOPOL millennials expressed a neutral stance towards its future. 21.7% of the selected ECOMAN millennials and 6.7% of the selected ECOPOL millennials somewhat disbelieved in its future.

Table 6 Do you believe in the EU's future?

	definitely	somewhat	I don't know	somewhat not	definitely not
ECOMAN (%)	21.7	30.4	26.1	21.7	0.0
ECOPOL (%)	10.0	60.0	23.3	6.7	0.0

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. *Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU*

Selected Millennials' Views on The Czech Republic as a Member of the European Union

Regardless of their bachelor's study programs, the selected millennials saw migration policy as the most important Czech topic in the EU. Defense policy stood in second place, while dual food quality was their third most important Czech topic. A significant difference can be seen in the groups' perceptions of wage convergence: 16.7% of the selected ECOPOL millennials saw it as important for the CR. Only 4.3% of the selected ECOMAN millennials saw digitalization as important, and 3.3% of the ECOPOL millennials saw importance for the liberalization of the internal market.

Table 7 What Czech topics within the EU do you see as the most important?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
defense policy (%)	26.1	30.0
reverse charge (%)	0.0	0.0
dual food quality (%)	26.1	16.7
EU mobility package (%)	8.7	0.0
wage convergence (%)	0.0	16.7
migration policy (%)	34.8	33.3
digitalization (%)	4.3	0.0
liberalization of the internal market (%)	0.0	3.3

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

Larger differences between the two samples can be seen in perceptions of the main causes of Czech euroscepticism. For the selected millennials from ECOMAN, the CR's weak influence in the EU was the main cause of Czech euroscepticism. The debt crisis took second place, and third and fourth place went to migration and the "us" and "them" problem. Meanwhile the ECOMAN respondents were significantly less likely than the ECOPOL respondents to perceive low public support and criticism by Czech political elites as the main reason behind Czech euroscepticism. The selected ECOPOL millennials saw both the CR's weak influence in the EU and the debt crisis as the main cause behind Czech euroscepticism. Unlike the ECOMAN millennials, they did not underestimate low public support. They were less likely here to note migration and the "us" and "them" problem, and similarly even less likely to mention criticism by Czech political elites. In contrast with the selected ECOMAN millennials, 3.3% of the selected ECOPOL millennials noted irrational discourse within the EU as an important cause of Czech euroscepticism.

Table 8 What is the main cause of Czech euroscepticism?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
low public support (%)	8.7	20.0
the "us" and "them" problem (%)	17.4	13.3
the CR's weak influence within the EU (%)	30.4	23.3
the debt crisis (%)	21.7	23.3
migration (%)	17.4	13.3
criticism by Czech political elites (%)	4.3	3.3
irrational discourse within the EU (%)	0.0	3.3

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

The differences between the two samples in their views of the most serious political problems that the EU is currently addressing are smaller. The two groups uniformly perceive security risks, and especially terrorism, as the EU's most important political problem. For both groups,

divisions among EU member states stood in second place among the EU's serious political problems. More significant differences between the groups can be seen in their views of populist, radical, and anti-immigration movements: 4.3% of the selected ECOMAN millennials saw these as the EU's most important political problem, compared to 13.3% of the ECOPOL millennials. There is a visible difference here between the two samples' respondents in their view of asylum policy reform. 13.0% of the selected ECOMAN millennials gave this point the highest importance, but only 3.3% of the ECOPOL millennials did so.

Table 9 Which of the EU's political problems do you consider to be the most important?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
divisions among member states (%)	26.1	20.0
security risks – terrorism (%)	56.5	63.3
populist, radical, and anti-immigration movements (%)	4.3	13.3
the relocation mechanism (%)	0.0	0.0
asylum policy reform (%)	13.0	3.3

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

The two samples' views on the usefulness of various approaches towards strengthening the CR's position within the EU are quite interesting. Here the selected ECOMAN millennials recommended better protecting the EU's external borders, not providing EU funds to refugees, and helping to resolve crises within refugees' countries of origin. The ECOPOL millennials instead considered helping to resolve crises in countries of origin to be the most important, alongside not providing EU funds to refugees and preserving the Schengen Area. Meanwhile, none of the ECOMAN respondents mentioned preserving the Schengen Area here. They were in contrast more willing to support a larger Czech financial contribution towards preserving the EU and supporting refugees outside Europe's borders. Neither preservation of the EU's current asylum regime nor a shared asylum policy were seen as strongly useful for strengthening the CR's position in the EU. The ECOPOL millennials were the least willing to have the CR financially contribute towards protecting the EU and more strongly wished to see it contribute financially towards refugees outside the borders of the EU and preserving the current European asylum regime.

Table 10 What do you consider to be the most useful for strengthening the CR's position within the EU?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
better protecting the EU's external borders (%)	26.1	13.3
willingness to financially contribute to protecting the EU (%)	13.0	3.3
preserving the Schengen area (%)	0.0	16.7
no EU-funded aid to refugees (%)	21.7	23.3
no shared asylum policy (%)	4.3	6.7
preserving the EU's current asylum regime (%)	4.3	6.7
supporting refugees outside the EU's borders (%)	13.0	6.7
support for resolving crises in countries of origin (%)	17.4	23.3

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

The two groups of millennials shared strongly similar views on the CR's position relative to the eurozone. The Eurozone stands as the core of European integration, and it can be expected that it will develop further. The group of EU states without the euro—which includes the CR—has a limited influence on the eurozone's direction. The selected millennials recognized that the Czech public and a portion of its political elites do not wish to see the country enter the eurozone. According to the ECOMAN respondents, the CR has not set a date for accepting the euro. The ECOPOL respondents perceived a strong economic integration between the CR and the eurozone. In a similar spirit, respondents from both groups agreed that the CR is not economically prepared to enter the eurozone. But in contrast with this, the selected ECOPOL millennials reflected a more significant difference of opinion on financial aid as an ideological argument here than their ECOMAN colleagues did. The ECOPOL respondents better reflected the long-term stability of the eurozone as an unresolved question than the ECOMAN respondents did. They were more aware than their ECOMAN colleagues that the eurozone may not be stable long-term and might not provide the CR with long-term financial security. A smaller group of respondents was satisfied that the CR is only in a temporary-exception mode, with this satisfaction being greater among the ECOPOL millennials than among those in ECOMAN.

Table 11 How do you see the CR's position relative to the eurozone?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
CR only among temporary exceptions – “pre-ins” (%)	4.3	10.0
no Euro acceptance date has been set (%)	30.4	20.0
the CR is prepared economically (%)	0.0	0.0
strong economic integration with the eurozone (%)	17.4	23.3
the eurozone's long-term stability is an unresolved question (%)	13.0	16.7
the public and part of the political elites are against entry (%)	34.8	23.3
financial support as an ideological argument against entry (%)	0.0	6.7

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

Neither sample of millennials supported the CR's moving on to accept the Euro, with the emphasis on rejecting it being stronger among ECOMAN respondents than among ECOPOL respondents.

Table 12 Do you support the introduction of the euro in the CR?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
I am for it (%)	8.7	20.0
I am against it (%)	91.3	80.0

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

Brexit's impact may affect the CR more than is generally expected. The EU is negotiating with the British government based on a mandate of its member states. After the UK's exit, the EU wishes to cooperate with the UK on defense and interior affairs. Brexit can have negative impacts for both the EU's overall budget and the budgets of individual net-recipient member states. Differences were present in the two groups' views regarding what the CR should emphasize during Brexit negotiations. In the view of the selected ECOMAN millennials, during Brexit negotiations, the CR should most strongly emphasize free access to the British market for goods and services. The selected ECOPOL millennials, meanwhile, most strongly emphasized protecting the rights of Czech citizens in the United Kingdom. The two sample groups displayed similar opinions, meanwhile, towards an emphasis on forming the closest possible business agreements between the CR and the UK during Czech Brexit negotiations. Meanwhile, both groups of millennials most weakly emphasized the indivisibility of the internal market, with the selected ECOPOL millennials still accenting indivisibility more strongly than did their colleagues from ECOMAN.

Table 13 What should the CR emphasize most strongly during its Brexit negotiations?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
access to the British goods and services market (%)	47.8	36.7
protection of the rights of Czech citizens in the UK (%)	34.8	40.0
indivisibility of the internal market (%)	4.3	10.0
forming the closest possible business agreements with the UK (%)	13.0	13.3

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

The emphasis on the CR's Brexit negotiations is related to the question of how strongly Brexit may impact the CR. No ECOMAN respondents at all considered Brexit to have a major impact, while 6.7% of the ECOPOL respondents did have this view. However, millennials from both samples sensed that Brexit's impact on the CR may be significant. A part of both the ECOMAN millennials and the ECOPOL millennials saw Brexit as having a limited impact on the CR. Nonetheless, the ECOMAN millennials did so more often than the ECOPOL respondents did. A portion of the respondents assessed Brexit's impact as being low, with more ECOMAN respondents stating a low impact than ECOPOL respondents.

Table 14 What is Brexit's impact on the CR?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
major (%)	0.0	6.7
significant (%)	47.8	56.7
limited (%)	47.8	23.3
low (%)	4.3	13.3

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU

Differences are also visible in the selected millennials' views of the EU's reform measures in terms of their usefulness. From the standpoint of the ECOMAN millennials, it is most useful to do less, but more effectively. From the standpoint of the ECOPOL millennials, it is instead most useful to strengthen security policy. Here, however, the differences between the samples were

not dramatic, because some ECOPOL millennials did see usefulness in effective work here, just as some ECOMAN millennials did see usefulness in strengthening security policy. Things were no different in the case of the usefulness of maintaining the internal market and the Schengen Area. A greater difference between the samples could be seen in their views on the importance of discussion in a format containing all member states of the EU. Here the ECOPOL millennials more strongly emphasized discussion in such a format than did their ECOPOL colleagues. The ECOMAN millennials valued the usefulness of a multi-speed Europe more than those from ECOPOL did, including a stronger role for the European Council and national parliaments. Interestingly, more ECOMAN millennials were for strengthening integration here, unlike the ECOPOL millennials, where none of the respondents supported strengthening integration as something useful.

Table 15 What EU reform measures do you consider to be the most important?

	ECOMAN	ECOPOL
discussion in a format with all member states (%)	0.0	6.7
maintaining the internal market and the Schengen Area (%)	17.4	23.3
strengthening integration (%)	4.3	0.0
a multi-speed Europe (%)	8.7	6.7
a stronger role for the European Council and national parliaments (%)	8.7	3.3
strengthening security policy (%)	26.1	33.3
do less, but more effectively (%)	34.8	26.7

Source: Svobodová, Dagmar. *Questionnaire on the CR as a member of the EU*

III. The Current Challenges of European Integration

In the opinions of our selected millennials, what role should the Czech Republic play in the current challenges of European integration? The EU's political system is made up of the Treaty of Lisbon, intergovernmental and transnational institutions, and treaties, including the exclusive, shared, and supporting competences of the EU. The eurozone and Brexit crises are having negative impacts for the functioning of the EU. We see issues being worked on outside of primary law, and, within economic policy, a general strengthening for the role of the eurozone. In terms of the real situation, the EU is becoming multi-speed. According to White Paper on the future of Europe: Drivers of Europe's Future (2017), the following are becoming challenges for the EU: new technologies, climate change, migration, security threats at its doors and within the Union, the EU's changing place in an evolving world, the legacy of the financial crisis, the aging of the population, and the rise of populist and nationalist rhetoric. The preservation of the single market and the Schengen Area, along with readiness for action and a common budget and foreign and security policy, remains a priority for the EU. *What are the visions and options for reforming the EU?* In its White Paper on the future of Europe (2017) and the way forward, the European Commission presents five scenarios. In the *first* scenario, the EU27 focuses on delivering its positive reform agenda. The *second* scenario is a focus on nothing but the single market. In the *third* scenario, the EU allows willing Member States to do more together in specific areas. In the *fourth* scenario, the EU27 focuses on delivering more and faster in selected policy areas, while doing less elsewhere. In the *fifth*, Member States decide to do much more together across all policy areas.

The EU is currently facing cumulative crises that are caused by centralization. It is vulnerable from the outside (globalization and security) as well as from the inside (nationalism and populism). It stands before security, technological, and environmental challenges. The EU's security demands a strategic conception. Migration can be worked on jointly, but besides just repression, a development plan in migrants' countries of origin, including activities and aid, is

needed here. For the above reasons, there is an ongoing intellectual debate concerning the EU's cumulative crises and challenges. Jan Zielonka from Oxford, for example, has set forth to determine whether the EU is doomed to fail. Stefano Bartolini from the European University Institute has stated that although the EU creates a center and opens up room for political representations, it fatally fails in the area of loyalty. Thomas Risse has recommended politicizing debate in the EU. Jürgen Habermas pointed, during his lifetime, towards constitutional patriotism. John Erik Fossum from Oslo's ARENA Centre for European Studies has asked whether EU can make do with just the concept of human rights alone. Michael Keating from the University of Aberdeen has seen the EU's perspectives as residing in a multi-level federation, while George Soros sees them in the form of a multi-track Europe. In his 2017 Sorbonne speech, Emmanuel Macron stated: *"I have come to talk to you about Europe. 'Again,' some might exclaim. People will just have to get used to it, because I will not stop talking about it. Because this is where our battle lies, our history, our identity, our horizon, what protects us and gives us a future. 'Already? Is it really necessary?' others might say. Because for them it is never the right moment to talk about Europe. It is always too early or too late. They have got used to such tactics. It is so much easier to never explain where we want to go, where we want to lead our people, and to remain with hidden arguments, because we have simply lost sight of the objective. It is so much more comfortable to hold long discussions about instruments, without knowing exactly where we are going."* The answers to the questions asked in this intellectual debate can be sought in *two* levels. The *first* level is that of *European policies*; the introduction of certain EU taxes (transaction tax and corporate tax) falls within it, as do the reform of common agricultural policy, the fight against social dumping, and cooperation within the areas of justice, domestic affairs, anti-terrorism, foreign policy, diplomacy, student mobility, and education. The *second* level is made up of *EU institutions*, because the 2019–2024 period offers room for reform. The foundation here lies in values that are not "à la carte", and the tools are political integration, international candidate lists and *Spitzenkandidaten*, shrinking the European Commission, and supporting the expansion of the EU into the Balkans. However, low willingness by Germany is a problem.

What ideas and visions for solving problems do the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) have to offer? What ideas and visions of the European Conservatives and Reformists can be recommended to the selected millennials for critical thinking and reflecting on the CR's role as an EU member to mold their own views of what kind of EU they truly desire? They recommend altering the EU contract to restore the competences of member states and strengthen solidarity, economic competitiveness, and the single market, with a reserved stance towards the eurozone. They also recommend cooperating on security issues, protecting the EU's borders, and strengthening the role of NATO. In the ECR's opinion a flexible integration approach will strengthen a multi-speed Europe, suppress political integration, reassess shared competencies, strengthen the EU's legislative process through national parliaments, and eliminate the requirement of accepting the Euro. Why are only the ECR's views mentioned? Why not the European People's Party (EPP) or the Party of European Socialists (S&D)? The EPP is a European political party with conservative and liberal-conservative member parties. A transnational organization, it is composed of other political parties, not individuals. Founded by primarily Christian democratic parties in 1976, it has since broadened its membership to include liberal-conservative parties and parties with other centre-right political perspectives. The S&D comprises national-level political parties from all member states of the European Union. This includes major parties such as the Italian Democratic Party, the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party, Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. Parties from a number of other European countries are also admitted to the S&D as associate or observer parties. Most member, associate and observer parties are members of the wider Progressive Alliance or Socialist International. The ECR's ideas and visions lean

on common sense and eurorealism. *What is however most advantageous for the CR? Macron's vision, or that of the ECR?*

IV. Conclusions

The respondent samples are a subset of the base set of millennials at SU SBA in 2018/2019. Their representativeness follows from this, and thus we are formulating this article's conclusions only in regards to the millennials grouped into the samples. On the other hand, the case study's results are comprehensible for millennials as a target group in the university population. *Why are we working only with millennials in the bachelor's study programs of SU SBA, when the generation of millennials is broader than this?* For the target group at SU SBA mentioned herein, the *Sociology* and *Organizational Sociology* subjects were provided during the 2018/2019 academic year, and the case study was implemented within the framework of these subjects. By reflecting on the current challenges of European integration and thinking critically about the CR's role as a member of the EU, the selected millennials formed their own views on *what kind of EU they actually desire*. By interpreting their opinions on the CR's role in the current challenges of European integration, we have confirmed that they have both similar and differing views that followed from the type of their bachelor's study program at SU SBA. The ECOMAN and ECOPOL bachelor's study programs differ in terms of their student profiles. As graduates, the selected ECOMAN millennials will go on to apply themselves in the sphere of corporate finances. Their ECOPOL colleagues will primarily go on to careers in the public sector. Their expectations followed from this and shaped their personal opinions on the CR's role as a member of the EU.

The case study's results showed that the selected millennials did not uniformly find all EU decisions to be in the interest of the CR and to the CR's advantage. Positive here, however, are their majority agreement that the CR's membership in the EU is a good thing and their belief in the future of the common European project. They considered migration policy to be the most important Czech topic, and they had a consistent stance of seeing security risks, especially terrorism, as Europe's most serious problem. The selected ECOMAN millennials saw the main cause of Czech euroscepticism in the CR's weak influence within the EU. Alongside this, their ECOPOL colleagues correctly reflected the Czech public's weak support in their answers. They saw the potential divisions among member states as the second most serious political problem in the EU. In the view of the ECOMAN millennials, during Brexit negotiations, the CR should most strongly emphasize free access to the British goods and services market. The ECOPOL millennials, meanwhile, most strongly emphasized protecting the rights of Czech citizens in the UK. The ECOPOL millennials better reflected the eurozone's long-term stability as an unresolved question than the ECOMAN millennials did. Agreement among both samples, meanwhile, was seen in relation to the CR's Brexit negotiations: they both emphasized the CR's forming the closest possible business agreements with the UK, although the ECOPOL respondents accented the importance of the indivisibility of the internal market more strongly than the ECOMAN respondents did. Brexit can be seen as a highly risky catalyst for debates on a referendum about the CR's exiting the EU (Czexit). The ECOMAN respondents did not consider Brexit to be as important for the CR as the ECOPOL millennials did. The ECOMAN millennials consistently felt it was important for the EU to do less, but more effectively. ECOPOL respondents, in contrast, considered it most important to strengthen European security policy. A more significant difference between the samples could be seen in their views of the importance of discussion in a format containing all member states of the EU. The ECOPOL respondents accepted a greater importance for such discussion than the ECOMAN respondents did. The selected ECOMAN millennials preferred a multi-speed Europe more than those from ECOPOL, including a stronger role for the European Council and national parliaments.

According to Alexandr Vondra (2019), we can expect a more fragmented European Parliament than in past years, because it will no longer be dominated solely by a coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. There may be more room for idea-based politics in this new situation. *In a more varied EU with less constriction and more competition, the CR's role can be activated as an advantageous one.* France serves the CR here as a conflict-filled model and example. At the one pole stands Macron, who wants to build Europe into a unified empire. But it is not possible to regulate everything from one center, to set single taxes and a single asylum policy, to have one army. This will not work within the conditions of Europe. Marie Le Pen, who wishes to shatter Europe, represents the opposite pole. Her influence is growing in reaction to Macron and his ambitions. By the time of the last French election, matters had reached such a point that Le Pen won this election. We can recommend to our selected millennials that they reject both tendencies, as they are both dangerous for the CR. One of the tendencies fits with the saying that *the road to Hell is paved with good intentions*—while the other tendency simply wishes to go there directly. There is no point in forming unrealistic views and expectations, because the CR is a ten-million-person country in a half-billion-person EU. The Czechs will never govern Europe, but they can seek allies for reasonable politics that are in the Czech interest. According to Erik Tabery (2018), the CR is a part of the European project—a project that, while imperfect, has brought Czechs a uniquely long period of peace, freedom, chances for self-respect, and, from the economic standpoint, above all a rise in the standard of living. In the context of bettering the European project, we can refer our selected millennials to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's view of Czech domestic security as being linked with the security of Europe.

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