

## Political Knowledge and Participation of the Youth in Two Locations Slovakia and Hungary

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**Political Knowledge and Participation of the Youth in Two Locations, Slovakia and Hungary.** MYPLACE is the abbreviation for Memory Youth Political Legacy and Civic Engagement. The project analyses how shadows of totalitarianism and populism in Europe shape engagement of young people. According to the project, the present generation of young people shares the experience that they grew up in Europe where there are basically no right-wing or left-wing authoritative governments. The Myplace (2012) survey contributed to the Commission's initiative by its specific approach testing urban-rural division line of political participation by selecting representative survey samples of young people in two different regions in two countries. Comparison of survey sets in Slovakia and Hungary plays an especially important role with regard to historical and political contexts of relation of the two member states of the EU.

**Key words:** political knowledge, young people, participation, experience, electoral behavior, civic knowledge

**Politické vedomosti a participácia mladých ľudí v dvoch lokalitách, Slovenska a Maďarska.** MYPLACE je skratka pre pamäť mládeže v kontexte politického dedičstva a občianskej angažovanosti. Projekt analyzuje formovanie a zapájanie sa mladých ľudí v kontexte s participáciou. Podľa projektu je súčasná generácia mladých ľudí nezaťažená skúsenosťami s pravicovými alebo ľavicovými autoritatívnymi vládami v Európe. Myplace (2012) sociologický výskum prispieva k iniciatíve Európskej Komisie a to špecifickým prístupom testovania medzi mestom a vidiekom v kontexte politickej participácie, porovnáva reprezentatívnu vzorku mladých ľudí v dvoch rôznych regiónoch v dvoch vybraných krajinách. Výber krajín – Slovensko a Maďarsko – hrá osobitnú významnú úlohu a to najmä pokiaľ ide o historické a politické súvislosti dvoch členských štátov EÚ.

**Kľúčové slová:** politické vedomosti, mladí ľudia, participácia, skúsenosti, volebné správanie, občianske vedomosti

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The establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993, after the split of Czechoslovakia, was a political action completing, at extraordinarily unfavourable conditions, the historical process of national self-determination of the Slovaks in the form of a separate state. It was only upon its completion, when the battle of relatively weak democratic and liberal oriented political forces against the legacy of nationalism, chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism could start. (Macháček 2004).

After 1993, the political parties did not meet the necessary level of political culture also because that civil society did not have sufficient experience and knowledge of a more efficient application of the right to vote (e.g. priority vote), freedom of citizens to assemble and associate or express their opinions by means of a petition in the period between elections. Partocracy with internal mechanism of nominations of voting ballots in the system of a single constituency with their corrupt link to the business sector has become a threat to operation of the parliamentary democracy.

One of the first comprehensive textbooks of civic education for secondary school students after the “velvet” revolution in Czechoslovakia (1989) prepared in Slovakia states that protection and development of democracy can be successfully managed by young generation, which will acquire necessary civic knowledge and its members will act in public as ethically advanced citizens. According to authors, it indicates that they should learn how to develop civil initiatives and movements and make effort to have influence of the public life as citizens.

Few years later, having learnt lessons from real operation of democratic pluralistic system and market economy in Slovakia, sociologists started to appeal to citizens to not succumb to pessimism. “All of us should focus on enhancement and development of personal civil potentials. It means, in particular, to not combine our civil courage, activity and vigour with the vice to bypass or disrespect existing legal and ethical standards.” (Roško 1995).

Similarly to other Central European countries, the demise of state socialism in 1989 – 1990 created the legal and institutional conditions of democratic political socialization in Hungary. This date, however, was not a clear-cut caesura in people’s political conduct and political concepts. The reasons for this lack of substantial change are of at least two kinds. Firstly, the political transformation in Central European countries (and especially in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic) was peaceful and constitutional this time. Secondly, the political transformation was not a caesura in people’s political conduct because the former traditions of civic culture persisted. (Szabó and Falus 2000).

After the change of regime, a number of research results of social science research are not in contradiction with the results of previous researches which

aimed at exploring how young people in Hungary see the post-1989 political system and politics in general. These researches indicated that the assessment of the young generation is generally negative about the entire political and economic system in Hungary (Stumpf 1995, Szabó and Örkény 1998, Gázsó 2003, Csákó 2000; 2004).

One of the paradoxes of the research of political socialization over the past twenty years is that the younger generation do not reject the fundamental democratic values but they rather reject political parties and politicians. For them most important is that the individual's, that is, their own rights are respected and least important for them is whether others' rights or the rights of minorities are respected or not. They do not understand this contradiction: how could the observation of our personal rights be expected when, parallel, we ourselves consider it least important that other people's rights or the rights of minorities are observed? They consider the ability and the possibility to influence political decisions less important and the fundamental importance of this factor in defining the quality of the system of democracy is completely unknown to young people. This phenomenon also shows that the attachment to the most important value has not been formed among the Hungarian younger generation - which should be formed in the process of political socialization.

The most recent large sample national survey (Hungarian Youth 2012) also clearly indicates the malfunctions in political socialisation and the problems concerning democratic participation. The political activity of young Hungarians gives no cause for optimism; 25 per cent of respondents are certain that they will not take part in elections, 9 per cent would probably not cast their vote and 17 per cent are undecided on whether or not to attend polling stations. In total, half (51 per cent) of Hungarian young people interviewed are characterised by an inactive disposition towards voting (Oross, 2013).

In this historical context, both in Slovakia and Hungary we are raising a question if new generations of young citizens bring civic knowledge about operation of the democratic political system to the political life and thus if they represent the hope for respect and application of principles of democratic governance. In traditional pluralistic democracies, becoming a "good citizen" is usually connected to transition of the young maturing to the full age (Chisholm and Hurellman 2005). Upon reaching the age of state citizenship (18 years of age), young people do not become "citizens" automatically. Good citizens can recognize if the government works below the level of our civil possibilities and, at the same time, they not only want but, in particular, they have learnt how to pronounce their opinions and attitudes in acceptable public forms (parliamentary elections, petitions, civil associations and civil movements) of power legitimization in order to achieve or prevent changes in the operation of government and self-government authorities. That means that citizens dispose

of knowledge but also of competences how to apply it in the political life of their country. This may surprise many but a comprehensive modernisation process does not only rest in information technologies and globalisation of the capital but also incorporates processes of civil modernisation. P. Lauritzen (2011) warned to the fact that it is the youth policy that plays an important function of modernisation of the functioning of national states in Member States of the Council of Europe.

The notion civil literacy<sup>3</sup> includes at least 4 elements:

- Civic knowledge, e.g. how parliamentary democracy and civil society work.
- Civil and political opinions and attitudes, e.g. expressing interest in social and political affairs of one's country
- Intellectual abilities to understand one's way in politics; e.g. express and defend one's own political opinions
- Civil participating behaviour, e.g. co-decide, by taking part in elections, about handing over of the power to individual political parties and their candidates.

The effort to induce and enhance engagement of the youth in civil and political life of the society, more precisely in European governance, results from the commitment taken over in 1997 by government of member States of the Council of Europe, when they accepted the Education for Democratic Citizenship as a political priority. Due to the fact that individual countries adopted different terms for "education to democracy": political education, civic education, education to citizenship, social education, personal and social development, societal science, a new unifying notion education for democratic citizenship has been adopted. Its definition in English original wording reads: Education for democratic citizenship is a set of practices and principles aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In line with the OECD PISA 2003 study, we understand the notion "civil literacy" as abilities of pupils and students to apply knowledge and skills, analyse, efficiently communicate one's opinions and attitudes, solve and interpret problems in life of the school and its functioning in the society.

<sup>4</sup> Source: All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies. Council of Europe co-ordination: Angela Garabagiu, Administrator, DG IV, 2005.

## **1 Survey of political knowledge, opinions and attitudes of young people in regions of EU Members States (MYPLACE)**

MYPLACE is the abbreviation for Memory Youth Political Legacy and Civic Engagement. The project analyses how shadows of totalitarianism and populism in Europe shape engagement of young people. According to the project, the present generation of young people shares the experience that they grew up in Europe where there are basically no right-wing or left-wing authoritative governments. They also miss any direct experience of the cold war and related concerns and prejudices that divided Europe and any direct experience with life in communist, authoritative or fascist political regime. At the same time, they share the experience they grew up in the first global economic crisis after WW2 that could, based on all indicators, provide extreme right with the room to “strengthen”. Moreover, as the present generation of young people in Europe has little or no experience with extreme and populist politics, they can be especially receptive to radical political agendas.<sup>5</sup>

In each country two locations had to be selected, which could be contrasted in terms of economic and social factors. (The exception to this was Germany where two locations selected were in the two regions – in eastern Germany and in western Germany). One location had to be economically vibrant and the second had to be in economic decline or going through a significant restructuring. The selection of each location within a country aims to maximize the contrast in terms of the conditions within which young people grow up. Regional samples, while not representative of each country, are better to highlight the local context of political issues. National samples (certainly in large countries) would easily dilute hot spots of activity and could potentially underestimate emergent political forms.

The selection of localities in Slovakia was based on the fact that the most important factors for the growth of extremism and radicalism is the social and economic deprivation of regions and communities on the one hand and the possibility of potential ethnic conflicts on the other hand. These two factors played a crucial role in the selection of relevant localities. As for both given characteristics, the localities selected differ significantly. On the one hand, there is the city Trnava with a homogenous ethnic structure and a relatively low level of social and economic deprivation, and on the other hand, there is the district of Rimavska Sobota, which is characterized by a high ethnic heterogeneity rate as well as, considering Slovak conditions, an above-the-average level of social and economic deprivation.

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<sup>5</sup> European policy brief. Myplace, February 2013, <http://www.fp7myplace.eu/index.php>

In Hungary we suggest two towns for research locations: Ózd, with a highly disadvantaged economic situation - it is a typical socialist industrial Hungarian town, located in the northeastern industrial area, near the border between Hungary and Slovakia - and Sopron, one of the westernmost towns of Hungary with a developed service sector and tourism, historical and civic traditions. The proportion of the Roma population is one of the most important criteria in the selection of the two locations for the survey in Hungary as in Hungary there is a close connection between the percentage of the Roma population of settlements (and regions) and the disadvantaged situation of these settlements according to several indicators (economy, labour market, infrastructure, health care and services).

## 2 Political knowledge: methodology aspects of the measurement

We only included those questions to the sociological questionnaire in the MYPLACE survey that refer to the level of elementary political knowledge. In particular, there were three questions in unit 28. It is necessary to mention that, compared to the EUYOPART (2005) survey, it is a unit focused only on issue so of national politics of individual countries. In the conditions of existence of the European Union is means a material weakening of the level of civil and political knowledge of the young generation. The second limitation rests in the fact that the questions identified only the elementary knowledge of facts. The third limitation is that their selection is systemically not consistent, e.g. form the viewpoint of distribution of power institutions of governance in parliamentary democracy (decision making power, representative power and judicial power). Slovakia was interested in adding, to the question about the Prime Minister, questions about the President or the Chairman of the Parliament. Eventually, we appreciated that the survey team spontaneously accepted our proposal and included also the “knowledge” indicator to the research tool of the sociological survey.

**Table 1.** Correct answers to questions about elementary political facts (percentage)

Three questions	RS	TT	SOP	OZD
Who is the Prime Minister in Slovakia (Hungary)?	90.6	94.8	95.2	99.0
Who is the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Slovakia (Hungary)?	47.5	63.1	50.1	45.3
What is the principal ruling party in Slovakia (Hungary)?	88.1	94.4	87.9	94.1

Note: RS – Rimavská Sobota, TT – Trnava, SOP – Sopron, OZD – Ózd

At the first sight, it is obvious that the respondents were mostly able to answer the question about the Prime Minister and they also knew well what the

ruling party in the country was. In both cases, the persons (R. Fico and V. Orban) and political parties (Smer and Fidesz) had strong media presence in both countries as the ruling parties. There was significantly lower number of respondents who could identify the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in certain case such as RS (SK) and OZD (HU), it was less than one half of the surveyed people. Miroslav Lajčiak in Slovakia and János Martonyi in Hungary are really less present in media and only a smaller part of the public could identify them. Thus, it was a well selected indicator for structuring the set of respondents from the viewpoint of intensity of their interest in politics.

### 3 Political knowledge and political attitudes

We managed to divide the set of respondents in each region depending on their ability to correctly answer all three questions asked. With the exception of Trnava (45.4 per cent); the other sets were less successful. On the opposite side there are regions with the highest share of respondents who could not answer a single question correctly: RS(SK) and OZD (HU).

**Table 2.** Correct answers to three questions in Hungary and in Slovakia (percentage)

Number of answers depending on their correctness	TT	RS	SOP	OZD
No correct answer and one correct answer	15.3	28.7	19.8	25.3
Two correct	39.3	46.7	51.8	57.1
Three correct	45.3	24.7	28.5	17.6

For the purposes of further analysis of the relation between the level of civic knowledge and political opinions and attitudes of respondents we had to put together the success rate at the lowest level, i.e. one correct answer with a small group of absolutely unsuccessful respondents (no correct answer). This is how we formed a sufficiently big group of respondents whose level of knowledge we will be able to interpret as the lowest one (15.3 per cent TT SK and 19.8 per cent SOP HU, 25.3 per cent OZD HU and 28.7 per cent RS SK). The difference in this case confirms a positive influence of advantageous environment of Trnava a Sopron to the level of civic knowledge of young people, unlike Ozd and Rimavská Sobota (disadvantageous environment).

The following two groups with different levels of knowledge are sufficiently big for statistical analyses. The decisive one of them for comparisons is the one where respondents could answer correctly all three knowledge questions. It is because that is the group that could correctly answer also the question about the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Its share in particular regions in Slovakia and Hungary is very similar with the exception of the city

of Trnava (45.3 per cent), which ranked best in the third group. Sopron (28.5 per cent) only reached the level of political knowledge similar to rural regions of Rimavská Sobota (24.7 per cent) and Ozd (17.6 per cent), where the share of the most successful respondents was the lowest one. (see Table 2)

The analysis of the relation of the level of “knowledge about politics and politicians in the country” with certain civil opinions and attitudes has shown that it is a case of differentiated structure. Above all, we have confirmed that respondents with a high level of knowledge about politics:

1. Identify themselves and their friends as people interested in politics. Especially, it applies to the city of Trnava.
2. Differentiate from others by collecting information about politics on the internet or in newspapers. Media such as radio and television do not have such differentiating position.
3. Are, more than other respondents, interested in various issues of national politics in the country where they live. In the regions that are close to Austria (Sopron, Trnava), they are also more interested in EU issues.

However, the level of political knowledge of respondents does not express in how they assess politicians and current politics in their country. It especially applies to their statements that a/ politicians act in a corrupted manner, b/ the rich have too high influence on politics and, last but not least, that c/ politicians are (not) interested in young people. In all above cases the level of political knowledge has no impact on opinions and attitudes of young people. Thus, results confirm the fact that civil and political opinions and attitudes are not influenced by the level of civic knowledge of respondents. The overall awareness of young people of politicians, political parties and mechanisms how politics is made is equal among all groups of respondents from the regional as well as urban-rural environments. Eventually, there is a rare concord between two neighbouring Member States of the EU.

#### **4 Election behaviour in advantageous and disadvantageous regions of Slovakia and Hungary**

Political parties and movements of the extreme right are making themselves increasingly more visible in the situation of economic downturn. In the 2009 European Parliament Elections, right-wing extreme parties received significant level of support in several Member States of the EU. They managed to accomplish parliamentary representation also in those countries where they previously experienced little success. That is the case of only some European countries in national and regional elections. For example, it is Jobbik party in Hungary. At the same period of time, a reverse process occurred in Slovakia when voters managed to push out some populist (HZDS) and radical-

nationalistic parties (SNS and SMK) from the National Council of the Slovak Republic in 2010 and 2012 parliamentary elections.

**Table 3.**

Tnava Political knowledge – correct answers to 3 questions	Did you take vote in the last elections?	
	Yes Parliamentary	Yes Local
None, only one	12.8	4.5
Two	19.4	12.6
Three	21.4	29.3
Total (Abs. %)	255 (43.5)	110 (19.1)

In the MYPLACE survey we also noticed civil and political engagement of the youth, in particular, its election behaviour. Overall, 43.5 per cent of respondents in Slovakia took part in parliamentary election and 19.1 per cent in local elections in TT and, analogically, 40.2 per cent of respondents took part in parliamentary and 18 per cent in local elections in R.S. In Hungary, it was 39.8 per cent for parliamentary and 32.3 per cent for local elections in Ozd and, in Sopron, 36.3 per cent turnout in parliamentary and 31.6 per cent in local elections. The difference between a higher turnout of respondents in the big (parliamentary) election and lower turnout in small (local) elections is visible in both countries, however, the difference much more distinct in Slovakia.

**Table 4.**

Rimavska Sobota Political knowledge - correct answers to 3 questions	Did you take vote in the last elections?	
	Yes Parliamentary	Yes Local
None, only one	33.7	12.8
Two	40.7	19.4
Three	46.6	21.4
Total (Abs. %)	237 (40.2)	104 (18.0)

The most important difference in election turnout from the viewpoint of civic knowledge was manifested in Slovakia between TT and RS. In TT, there is a significant difference, in both cases, in engagement of respondents depending on their level of political knowledge. In RS, the turnout is not driven by the level of civic knowledge of respondents in neither type of elections. That difference can result from the fact that, in RS, there is a significant group of respondents who are members of the Hungarian ethnic minority, which, in

principle, votes for one of two ethnic political parties – one more loyal to the Slovak government, MOST(HID), or populist-radical SMK, more loyal to the government of Hungary. Also the survey of election turnout in the ENRI EAST project has confirmed that member of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia have had, traditionally, a slightly higher election turnout than the majority population (Macháček 2011).

## **5 Authoritarianism and civic knowledge of the youth**

In our analysis, our starting point is that there is still continuing perception of Slovakia as a country that has been, more or less, successfully overcoming “authoritative” past times of brown clerical-fascist (1939 – 1945) and red (1948 – 1989) communist dictatorship. Therefore we paid separate attention to verifying the relation of the level of political knowledge of the young generation to their attitudes concerning the manner of governance in the country. The survey statement “to have strong leader who is not limited by the parliament” belongs to those attitudes that are usually associated, in the discourse about public politics, with the so called “strong hand” or “strong personality” and with the concept of authoritarianism in the political theory. Authoritarianism still resounds among Slovak citizens, along to other extremist value orientations and stereotypes, especially those such as: anti-Gypsyism, homophobia and anti-Semitism. Results of representative sociological survey of openness of the Slovak public to ideas of right-wing extremism in 2012 confirmed that 4 per cent of the population in Slovakia share ultra-right ideas and, at the same time, they expressed their willingness to support political parties offering radical solutions by their votes in elections. At the same time, 7 per cent of the population share ideas characteristic for right-wing extremism and they are willing to support them by their active participation in gatherings of citizens. (Stefancik and Macháček 2013). In particular, authoritarianism is revived by inability of Slovak governments after 1989 to deal with social and education situation of Roma minority and its coexistence with the majority population.

Authoritativeness can be observed in present-day Hungarian society as well. Our latest research aimed at revealing what characteristics authoritativeness bears as compared to the results of previous ‘classic’ examinations. The “classic” Californian examinations found that anti-Semitism is the symptom of a “broader ideological framework” whose agent was labelled as an “authoritarian”, “anti-democratic” and “irrational” personality. In our research we could also prove that the essence of prejudicial knowledge related to some social groups is not to be found in the prejudicial representation of those groups but in the verification of category-based social inequalities. We identified the

source of new authoritarianism, the explanation for anti-democratic ideological worldview as an orientation of ethnicity-based social dominance.

The results of our new investigation into the attitudes toward the Jews and national identity seem to corroborate the hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between anti-Semitism and the love for the national ingroup. Anti-Semitic love, consequently, is an undifferentiated affection directed toward the national ingroup and it has nothing to do with the love of individuals, rather, it is a passionate love for the imagined nation seen darkly in the glass of national ideology. (Csepeli et al. 2011).

As for young people's priorities with respect to political values, received data reflect the decreasing relevance of traditional ideologies (Left-Right, liberal-conservative, moderate-radical) and blurring distinctions between certain categories, with an overwhelming majority of respondents indicating their sympathy for centrist attitudes thought of as neutral positions. The comparison of figures with earlier waves of research revealed that although changes under way among the young Hungarian population are following a long-term negative trend, increasing discontent accumulating in the deep structures of society continues to lack manifestation in political activities; on the basis of received data, there still is no evidence of young people organising themselves into a political generation (Oross, 2013).

It has specific expressions in the context of present-day political situation in Hungary and Slovakia. At the time of data collection for MYPLACE by means of sociological questionnaire at the end of 2011 and beginning of 2012, the 4-member coalition of liberal and Christian-conservative democratic parties (SDKU, KDH, SAS, MOST) fell apart in Slovakia. Preterm elections were won by opposition party SMER-social democracy, which received, to the surprise of all political parties, such a high number of votes of citizens that it did not need to enter into coalition with other political parties.<sup>6</sup> In 2012 Smer formed a "single party government" with the support of its 85 deputies in the NR SR (out of 150), which, naturally, strengthened the position of R. Fico, the chairman of the party and the Prime Minister.

In the last parliamentary elections in Hungary (2010), the Fidesz party got 2/3 of seats in the parliament as a response of citizens to inactive a corrupt coalition government led by the Socialist party. So, there has also been a single political party government also in Hungary, even with such majority in the parliament that it is making constitutional changes raising critical attention of

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<sup>6</sup> That happened in 2006, when SMER, after unsuccessful attempts to set up a big coalition (SDKU, KDH, MOST) or a small coalition (KDH) invited to his coalition nationalist SNS (J. Slota) and populist HZDS (V. Mečiar). That was subject to criticisms by the EU and EP, above all by the association of social-democratic parties in the EP.

institutions of the European Union and, more recently, also of the European Parliament.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 5.** For ruling the country it is better to have one strong leader not limited by the parliament ... (percentage)

Slovakia-Trnava		very good	good	neither good nor bad	bad	very bad	Total
Correct answers	None, one	22.5	33.8	17.5	10.0	16.3	100
	Two	8.4	19.1	26.0	21.4	25.1	100
	Three	8.3	20.2	22.2	25.8	23.4	100
Total		10.4	21.8	23.0	21.8	23.0	100

In both above cases it is important that the position of leaders – the Prime Ministers stems from a strong position of the political parties in parliaments, which is the result of their support by citizens-voters in parliamentary elections. Outputs of our survey de facto certify if the position of the leader – Prime Minister is legitimized by the public opinion of the youth aged 15 to 26 years. (See Table 5-8.)

**Table 6.** For ruling the country it is better to have one strong leader not limited by the parliament ... (percentage)

Slovakia – Rimavska Sobota		very good	good	neither good nor bad	bad	very bad	Total
Correct answers	None, one	13.2	27.1	27.8	21.5	10.4	100
	Two	10.2	19.3	30.7	24.0	15.7	100
	Three	8.6	19.3	45.7	13.6	12.9	100
Total		10.4	10.6	21.4	33.8	20.6	13.6

In Slovakia, the overall support to the “authority” of the leader is the same in the city of Trnava (32.2 per cent) as in rural areas of the city of Rimavská Sobota (32.0 per cent). There is a more evident traditional urban-rural dividing line rather in the case of intensity of “resistance to the authority” and strengthening of the position of the parliament: in Trnava it was 44.8 per cent of respondents but in R. Sobota only 34.2 per cent. In Trnava, proponents of the “strong position of the leader” are, above all, respondents with the lowest level of civic knowledge (22.5 per cent for very good), while the statement

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.euractiv.com/video/viktor-orban-angry-eus-criticism-529065>

gained the lowest support among respondents with the highest level of civic knowledge (only 8.3 per cent for very good). In Rimavska Sobota, the attitude of “resistance” to the authority is weakened also by the fact that even respondents with a high level of civic knowledge (45.7 per cent) declare that the relation between the personality of the leader and parliament does not matter. That claim was adhered to only by 22 per cent of respondents of the type in Trnava.

**Table 7.** For ruling the country it is better to have one strong leader not limited by the parliament ... (percentage) Hungary-Ozd

		very good	good	neither good nor bad	bad	very bad	Total
Correct answers	None, one	11.6	32.6	34.7	10.5	10.5	100
	Two	7.7	33.3	34.7	12.0	12.0	100
	Three	3.5	40.0	23.5	20.0	12.9	100
Total		7.7	34.4	32.7	13.1	11.9	100

In Hungary, there is a stronger support to a strong personality of political leader in the city of OZD in the east of the country (42.1 per cent) than in the west in the city of Sopron (29.6 per cent). Respondents with the lowest level of knowledge have the tendency to find support of a strong leader as a more appropriate solution in both environment of surveyed locations (very good SOP 14.8 per cent, very good Ozd 11.62 per cent). It is a remarkable fact that in the area of OZD, the supportive attitude to the “authority” is equally high among respondents with minimum (44.2 per cent) and maximum (43.5 per cent) levels of civic knowledge. Analogous to Slovakia (Trnava), the high level of knowledge is rather connected to resisting the idea of “having a stronger ruling leader at the expense of the parliament” in the city of Sopron (54.2 per cent). In the rural area of the city of Ozd it is substantially lower (32.9 per cent). In this respect, the important factor is the group of respondents who find this fact neither good nor bad. That strange attitude is expressed more by young people in rural than in urban areas of Hungary.

That implies that the population in cities of Trnava and Sopron has clearer attitudes to the political topic than the populations in rural areas of cities of Ozd and Rimavská Sobota, which do not have clear attitudes to the topic. If we apply our hypothesis to it, we need to conclude that the higher level of political knowledge identified by elementary factographic elements of inner policies of national states (Prime Minister, political party, Minister of Foreign Affairs) are expressed in relation to authoritarianism as a method of governance differently depending on the urban and rural environments where young people live.

**Table 8.** For ruling the country it is better to have one strong leader not limited by the parliament ... (percentage) Hungary-Sopron

		very good	good	neither good nor bad	bad	very bad	Total
Correct answers	None, one	14.8	24.1	15.7	16.7	28.7	100
	Two	2.4	24.1	21.0	20.0	32.4	100
	Three	8.3	20.8	16.7	17.3	36.9	100
Total		6.5	23.1	18.7	18.6	33.0	33.0

### Conclusion

In our empirical study we respect the fact that the project of European integration connected to the enlargement of the European Union also for new European post-communist democracies is also carried out by means of educating the young generation for democratic citizenship. Since 1995, education for democratic citizenship (EDC) has been one of political priorities of the EU as a set of practices and principles aimed at preparing the adolescents and adults better for active engagement in democratic life by empowering and defending their rights and responsibilities in the society. Based upon an initiative of the European Commission, the idea of analysing efficiency of education for democracy in national states also occurred in projects of empirical surveys of the youth that focused on the relation of European identity and citizenship (EYI 2002) and political and civic engagement of the youth (EUYOPART 2004).<sup>8</sup> Mainly, it was a response to strengthening of the process of integration of post-communist countries of Europe to the new European community by adopting European democratic values and political culture of European governance by its young generation. Outcomes of international projects (CIVED 1999 and ICCS 2009)<sup>9</sup> indicated that civic knowledge represent an important cornerstone of processes of preparation of young

<sup>8</sup> EUYOPART 2003-2005 Project Reports, <http://www.sora.at/en/topics/political-culture/ceuyoupart-2003-2005/en-reports.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Macháček, L. and Štava, E. (2012) *Občianske vzdelávanie a výchova mládeže k občianstvu: národná správa z medzinárodného výskumu občianskeho vzdelávania ICCS 2009* [Civic education and education for citizenship: National report of ICCS 2009 international survey of civic education] 1. vyd. – Bratislava: NUCEM-Národný ústav certifikovaných meraní vzdelávania.

Schulz, W., Ainley, J., Fraillon, J., Kerr, D. and Losito, B. (2010) *ICCS 2009 International report: Civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement among lower-secondary school students in 38 countries*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: international Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

people's engagement in democratic governance in countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia.

The Myplace (2012) survey contributed to the Commission's initiative by its specific approach testing urban-rural division line of political participation by selecting representative survey samples of young people in two different regions in two countries. Comparison of survey sets in Slovakia and Hungary plays an especially important role with regard to historical and political contexts of relation of the two member states of the EU. Division of respondents depending on the level of their political knowledge made it possible to confirm that even elementary factographic political knowledge make differences among young citizens from the viewpoint of their overall interest in politics. Respondents with a higher level of political knowledge perceive themselves and their closest friends as people with a higher level of interest in politics, either at national or even European level. Regarding their political opinions and attitudes, we identified an area (corruption of politicians, inappropriate influence of the rich on politics, low interest of politicians in the youth) of critical and negative assessment of politics and politicians that did not depend on the level of political knowledge of respondents.

We have already tested the empirical hypothesis of the relation of the level of civic knowledge and inclination or resistance of young citizens to authoritarianism on several survey sets. Results of EUYOUNG (2004)<sup>10</sup> confirmed that elementary knowledge of democratic principles enable young people understand how democracy works and refuse, more often, authoritative personality in the political life. Results of the Myplace (2012) survey in Trnava confirmed that among proponents of a "stronger position of a leader" were mostly respondents with the lowest level of civic knowledge (strongly agree as many as 22.5 per cent) and the lowest number of respondents with the highest level of civic knowledge (strongly agree only 8.3 per cent). In the rural district of Rimavska Sobota, the overall structure of inclination or rejection of authoritative personality is influenced by the fact that a large share of respondents, even those with the highest level of political knowledge, do not matter if the political personality that is in the lead does or does not depend on the parliament (as many as 45 per cent). The traditional urban-rural conflict was proved in "resistance to an authoritative personality" and "strengthening of the position of the parliament". In Trnava, it was 44.8 per cent of respondents but in the rural area of R. Sobota only 34.2 per cent. Also comparison of results from Slovakia and Hungary makes it possible to enrich our analysis by the finding that the rural area of OZD shows a very high supportive attitude

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<sup>10</sup> EUYOUNG 2003-2005 Project Reports, <http://www.sora.at/en/topics/political-culture/ceuyoung-2003-2005/en-reports.html>

towards an “authority” among respondents with minimum (44.2 per cent) and maximum (43.5 per cent) levels of civic knowledge.

The above implies that the populations in cities of Trnava and Sopron have clearer attitudes to the political topic. There are young citizens there who support authoritarianism less and rather oppose it. That is fully in line with sociological analyses that, in the long run, have claimed that the urban-rural division line in Slovakia is important. Based on the findings, citizens living in rural areas are more conservative, more nationalistic, more religious (Krivý 2013). Verification of the hypothesis that citizens in rural areas are much more inclined to authoritarianism than people living in towns rather means that a significant group of young rural citizens (RS and OZD), even those with high level of knowledge of politics, do not either support or resist the orientation and they do not find it either good or bad.

Based on empirical findings of the Myplace survey we verified the hypothesis that a low level of political knowledge is strongly connected to the highest support to authoritarian procedures in governance. Even though the group of young people in Trnava with the lowest level of political knowledge is the smallest out of all (15.3 per cent), it showed the strongest support to “a strong personality of a leader” (22.3 per cent). That is in line with knowledge of mobilization of a part of the youth in the city of Trnava for radical action groupings of sport fan clubs.

On the other hand, we found out that formal as well as informal civic education of pupils at school and outside it has its significance and should be made more efficient and intense. We confirmed that there is a pedagogical optimism among teachers and people working with the youth in this country as civic and political education is, indirectly, expressed in a higher level of preparedness for civic and political engagement of the youth and even takes part in deepening its democratic political value orientation.

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