ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY IN ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND MINORITY POLICIES:
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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DRAFT: HANDLE WITH CARE

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1. Introduction

The data presented in this paper has been collected with a view of producing a more extensive analysis of four national policy domains in the Czech Republic and of the involvement by private actors and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in these domains. Such a full policy-analytic account, to be supplied in short time, would need to provide more detailed information about policy cycles, and thick descriptions of actors and of coalition building in specific events and more encompassing policy domains. This is not what is done here. For the present purpose, attention will be limited to a smaller portion of the data and to a couple of, albeit crucial arguments.

One of the most influential labels given to characterize the performance of Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) in the transposition and implementation of EU norms, particularly in the field of environmental policies, has been the one of a "double paradox of weakness" (Börzel 2007; Börzel, Buzogany and Guttenbrunner 2008). It consists in the fact that the lower the capacity of the state, the greater the need for new modes of governance and, hence, of civil society involvement, to compensate for state weakness but the more difficult are they to emerge. The existence of such a paradox (see also: Sissenich 2008), which shall not be questioned, owes its identification to compliance research concerned with the initial steps of having made it to European Union membership. The pre-accession and first accession period has indeed been exceptional. It has been heroic – may be too heroic - from the point of view of European and domestic institutions and turned out to be quite a disaster for non-governmental actors – at least when measured against the latter's early aspirations a propos empowerment, stronger participation and the inflow of resources. What shall be tried in this paper is to describe the transition from pre- to post-accession in terms of a shift from discriminative and partially exclusionary practices to the "normal politics" of advocacy in inclusive networks.

Network structures have not played a significant role in research on state-society relations in CEE (but see: Osa 2004; Grabher and Stark 1997). Most scholars have preferred to compare individual or group-level indices when judging the performance of civil society in that region. The emphasis has been, most of the time, on comparing the state of affairs from early transition and pre-transition to democracy with that of accession and pre-accession to the European Union. The claim made in this paper is that looking at the everyday engagement in the normal politics of post-accession may reveal a more variegated and richer mix of activism and advocacy by CSOs than either individual level data of case studies or group-level indices of membership and density are able to provide. The argument is organized as follows: after a brief excursion into comparative research on civil society in CEE and the Czech Republic drawing its
evidence from attributive information at the individual and group-levels, a relational perspective will be introduced and further developed. Thirdly, essential, albeit limited parts of a dataset will be presented that is taken from interviews with representatives of important consequential actors (Laumann and Knoke 1986) in four policy domains: health, social, environmental and minorities' policies. Finally, an attempt will be made to evaluate both the EU's impact on advocacy actors and coalitions among CSOs and the latter's reaction to external steering in terms of how they perceive and judge the influence of the European institutions in domestic politics and policies.

2. Brief notes on civil society in the Czech Republic in comparative perspective

There are many ways of measuring and reporting civil society performance across countries. One of the most established and most often quoted international reports is CIVICUS – The Civil Society Index in Post-Communist Europe. Research in this context is continuous and has been carried out over time since the late 1990s. CIVICUS makes use of a compound indicator made up of properties such as Structure (of CSOs), of (their operational) Environment, of Values (of individuals and groups), and of Impact (in policy-making). None of these actually considers the nature of state-society relations in a more distinct way, although impact could eventually be taken as a proxy for influence and the quality of political exchange among public and private actors. At least, this has been suggested by Fioramonti and Finn Heinrich (2007) who have tried to re-interpret and re-analyze the CIVICUS data precisely in these terms. Following the suggestions made by RAPID – the Research and Policy in Development program of the Overseas Development Institute – they evaluate the scope and width of influence on public policy by private actors.

**Tab.1:** Four key indices of civil society performance (data for 1999)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>STRU</th>
<th>ENVI</th>
<th>VAL</th>
<th>IMP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fioramonti and Finn Heinrich 2007

Their results suggest that the Czech Republic, looked at from the perspective of all four of the above measures, may have left the camp of post-communist countries behind and is slowly approaching the standards of its West European neighbors. In any case, on all accounts, the country ranks closer to the latter than to the remaining eight members of CEE considered in the analysis (see Table 1). This does not necessarily come as a surprise – at least to those
acquainted with large-scale international comparative research on varieties of capitalism and the performance of welfare states. In their path-breaking analysis of families of nations, Castles and Obinger (2008) have found, among other things, that the Czech Republic is the only Eastern country having left its – otherwise rather compound - former family and has now been adopted by the continental one – albeit, for the time being, by the continent's Southern relatives.

In any case, the high correspondence between the results of data such as GDP, poverty indices, levels of education, welfare expenditures, labor markets and gendered employment patterns, etc. on the one hand and attitudes, structures, political environments and the political influence of CSOs on the other is impressive. Looking at influence and advocacy more in particular, the RAPID framework stresses the importance of essentially four factors to be operationalized for the purpose of future research. These are External influence (international actors, economic and cultural influence); Political context (institutional structures); Links between policy-makers and other stakeholders; and Evidence (credibility and relevance).

Again, it turns out to be the Czech Republic coming out best on most of these accounts. Corroborating their findings, Fioramonti and Finn Heinrich describe a couple of success stories drawn from that country. They pick, firstly, environmental movements and, secondly, advocacy and activism in the field of human rights and minorities' policies. Regarding the former, they emphasize that "environmental organizations utilize their research capacity and networks to run advocacy campaigns […] not […] limited to environmental problems […] that regard broader societal issues, such as respect for human rights and democratic values as well as transparency of policy-making processes." In the field of minorities' policy, they find that "Czech CSOs confirmed to be able to form alliances and networks" (emphasis added by the author) that had substantial impacts on the media, on public opinion and on public authorities.

Similarly, under the rubrique of impact and influence, Tereza Vajdova one of the key members of the Czech CIVICUS team, points to three "civil society flagship areas" that stand out in terms of organizational saturation and organizational clout. These are protection of the environment, social services, and human rights issues. 96 per cent of respondents of the CSO sample studied by her assessed that groups working in the field of environmental sustainability were very active and a further 75 per cent felt that they were successful. The assessment by groups working in the social services area showed similar patterns with 89 per cent of respondents considering these organizations to be active and 74 per cent stating they were successful. Turning to a couple of particularly interesting examples in that respect, Vajdova mentions the so-called Social Services Bill for the social policy domain and the protection of rights of the Roma population in the domain of minorities' policy.
We have taken account of these fields (social services, rights of Roma, and environmental policy) when choosing policy events for a more detailed analysis and have included all of them in the following empirical study. In addition, we have added a fourth domain (health policy) where a specific event related to drug prevention has been identified to be particularly interesting. Of course, this may not give a complete picture of the relative strength of civil society in public policy processes. Yet, the fact that two of these events are under close scrutiny by international and European authorities and organizations opens up the possibility of assessing courses of action participatory performance along the lines of relatively indigenous versus more external patterns of determination and influence.

3. Forms of activism: individual and group-based versus relational and transactional

Leaving the Czech Republic aside for a moment, in general, most surveys undertaken on the state of civil society in post-communist societies and Central and Eastern Europe tend to deal with the individual and group-based dimensions of interest politics. The focus is either on attitudes prevailing in the population with respect to societal and political activity or on the resource base of groups and organizations aggregating civic concerns and representing them vis-à-vis the public realm. The general verdict is unequivocal in both cases. On the one hand, scholars have observed one or more of the following: low levels of individual participation (Sztomka 1991); lack of inter-personal trust (Crawford and Lijphart 1995; Nichols 1996; Osgood and Ong 2002); increasing political apathy (Rose 2001); pronounced individualism coupled with amoral cynicism and paternalism; oversupply of greed and envy (Theesfeld 2004); lack of trust in institutions (Camaghan 2001; Crotty 2003); deficient inclination to join voluntary associations (Raiser et.al. 2001) – most of which are taken as a proof of pathologies inherited from communism. On the other hand, results achieved with respect to organizational density, to organizational membership (Howard 2003) and resources, to legal rights and entitlements, to employment share of the NGO and civic sector, and to the prevalence of inter-organizational competition rather than joint policy-making (Evans 2002; Henderson 2002) tend to be equally negative.

Without doubt, indices like these are relevant when evaluating the political clout of the civil society sector. They may fail, however, to capture another important dimension better known from collective action research and (policy) network analysis: the one of organizational properties and of the embeddedness in public policy processes. From the perspective of studying civil society, this may be less exotic and less exciting a task than looking at the underlying reasons and various expressions of altruistic behavior. Scholarly dealings with grass-
root activities and with concerns that often escape system-conformity tend to be enchanted by
the expenditure of the raw, organizationally unprocessed, and therefore spontaneous readiness
to help others – or indeed by the outburst of civic turmoil. Although this is of course interesting
and probably more exciting to study, one should not neglect, however, that the more the
societies we are living in assume the character of "organizational states", the more is it
important to getting organized and acting collectively through organizations and, accordingly,
to study organizational performance and organized collective action.

The latter, in particular, has both an internal and an external dimension. Internally, it is the
capacity of a professional leadership and the relations established between the leading personnel
and the membership base that count when it comes to building up abilities of voicing unpopular
decisions or advocating common concerns. Externally, it is access to decision-making bodies
and the capacity of an organization's leadership to guarantee membership compliance with
decisions mutually agreed upon by the leaders of private collective entities and officials of
public institutions. In interest group research, the first of these have been labeled the "logics of
membership" while the latter, accordingly, are commonly perceived in terms of the "logics of
influence".

In what follows, we shall exclusively be concerned with influence. The focus, therefore, is on
the format and quality of relations bridging the public and the private sphere. Developing the
key argument in that respect has substantially profited from a recent contribution by Tsveta
Petrova and Sidney Tarrow (2007). The authors examine the potential for concerted collective
action of CSOs in CEE. At the heart of their analysis lies a methodological problem: "How well
do the methods that scholars have used to examine mass participation tap the practices of
activism that citizens of East-Central Europe have developed since the fall of state socialism?"
Without neglecting the generally accepted wisdom of civil society in CEE as being
comparatively weak both in terms of individual and of group level indices, they question the
ability of these dimensions to reflect the full range of what participation is all about. Beyond
what could be termed the "attributive" properties of individuals (personal inclinations and
preferences, attitudes and activities) and of single organizations (resources and organizational
capacity), they identify and emphasize a third, "relational" dimension of participation which
they call "transactional activism" (Petrova and Tarrow 2007:79). "We see signs of the
development of a civil society that is stronger in the development of lateral ties among civil
society groups and vertical ties between these groups and public officials than it is in the
potential for broad citizen activism" (ibid.). Or, re-phrasing it in terms of social capital research
(R. Putnam), mainstream analysis of civil society has largely been concerned with "bonding" and, exceptionally, with "bridging" but has hardly ever looked more systematically at "linking."

If, as argued above, collective action has at least two dimensions, namely individual participation and the relational aspects of activism, there then are two types of activism open to empirical investigation: participatory activism (i.e. the magnitude of individual and group participation in civic life, etc.) and transactional activism (i.e. the ties among organized non-state actors and between them and political parties, power holders, and other institutions). Since both may vary independently of one another, these two dimensions should be kept analytically distinct. Indeed, "weakness at the individual or group level does not necessarily imply a lack of societal capacity for weaving relations" among civil society groups and between them, political parties, government, administration and other public institutions. All of these "may flourish in the face of a low level of mass participation" (ibid; 80). The authors conclude their contribution by claiming that, "when we examine the actual relations among challengers and authorities, we find a more variegated and richer mix of activism than either the individual level data or case studies of civil groups reveal" (ibid; 88).

Although there are no explicit references to the potential of network analysis in the study of advocacy politics in Petrova and Tarrow's contribution (for this, see, for example: Ansell 2003; Diani and Baldassari 2007), the authors adopt a perspective and suggest a research strategy that, actually, would make empirical network analysis mandatory. In this paper, their claim will be taken seriously and empirically be addressed from the angle of two types of inter-related problems. Firstly, we turn to an analysis of national-level policy-networks in the Czech Republic comprising a total of four policy domains (social policy, environmental policy, health policy and minorities' policy). We present data on how network participants characterize the quality of their relations and then further analyze, for each policy event separately, the concrete pattern of inter-relationships among key actors. Secondly, we turn to evaluating the incidence, the frequency and the quality of ties connecting domestic actors and their networks to European Union institutions and organizations in order to arrive at judgments about the present state of Europeanization in the Czech Republic.

Just as suggested by the authors from whom we have drawn the present research perspective, the main questions to be asked with respect to the domestic level are these: "Whether and how voluntary associations and advocacy groups interact with one another, with political parties, and with power holders [...]? Do they coalesce around interests of common concern [and] form loose networks that communicate regularly and share information?" Finally, do they "combine for joint pressure on policy makers?"
Concerning the EU, accordingly, the question to be asked is whether transactional activism "reaches upward from the local level to the national and international levels of decision-making?" While sharing the authors' verdict that the EU, "with its glaring democracy deficit, [...] is hardly the paradigm of participatory politics that Western scholars who criticize East-Central Europe seem to implicitly assume" (ibid.:88), the question could also be re-framed in terms of the political economy of advocacy politics. What about the demand-side of collective action both at the domestic and the European level in a situation where institutions at neither of these levels are able or willing to supply the requisite resources, grant access, and explicitly empower organized civil society?

While asking these questions, two restrictions need to be added. Firstly, we need to take account of the Czech Republic's comparatively good performance in terms of individual and group-level indices which may exert influence on the quality of state-society relations in the domestic realm. Secondly, regarding the external dimension, we take account of the fact that the phase of a partially "brutal imposition" (Vachudova 2005: 183) of rules by the EU during pre-accession and accession, which has degraded the role of domestic policy-making (Cameron 2003: 25), has been a threat to domestic identity (Tesser 2003), has empowered the executive at the expense of bottom-up concerns and social movements (Williams 2001), and has "exported aspects of its own democratic deficit" (Grabbe 2001) to the candidate countries is now over. Five years after accession, the gravity of these perversions may have evaporated and the Czech Republic, as other countries of the region, have had "time to establish their own domestic policy-making processes and grapple with alternative reform strategies through lively competition among political parties" (Vachudova 2005: 228) and CSOs.¹

4. The data

Four policy domains have been singled out for analysis: social policy, environmental policy, drug prevention, and minorities' policy. Within each of these domains, specific events have been identified and then been analyzed with the help of structured questionnaires. The study of the following five events has turned out to be particularly promising from the point of view of evaluating the capacity of advocacy actors and coalitions to exert voice and promote solutions in their and their members' specific interests:

- The Social Services Bill according to which NGOs are accorded substantial influence and now carry the same status as public and other organizations;
- The Decade Action Plan for Roma Inclusion (DAP) under whose umbrella many NGOs active in the protection of minorities carry out projects and deliver statements in consultation procedures;
• The National Drug Policy Strategy (Re-codification of the Czech Penal Code) which has been heavily influenced by non-governmental actors;

While two of these events are an entirely domestic affair without any noteworthy activity or engagement by external actors, both government institutions and private actors are under significant international surveillance in the cases of the DAP and the two NAPs. That opens up the possibility of comparing the structures and the behavior of actors in domestically encapsulated with internationally more exposed policy fields.

The questionnaire used for the purpose of arriving at first-hand information, essentially included the following types of questions:

• General data on organizations;
• Relevance and reputation of other organizations in the field;
• Contact and information exchange among key actors within the domain;
• Event cleavages and shared positions among key actors;
• Frequency and quality of cooperation between the private and the public sphere;
• Role and significance of EU involvement in Czech politics;
• Frequency and quality of contacts between domestic organizations and EU institutions.

Before embarking in fieldwork, a first step has been to carefully delimit and specify the boundaries assembling the most relevant and consequential actors within each domain. A strategy was used consisting in a combination of initial expert interviews and of subsequently approaching organizations named by the experts for more in-depth information. The latter have then been sent a preliminary questionnaire whose purpose has been to creating an unequivocal sample of really relevant actors to work with. Of the 69 organizations originally approached, 79.7 per cent agreed to participate in the study. We thus possess complete responses to all sections of the final questionnaire by a total of 55 organizations. While this may not be impressive at first sight, given the criteria of event participation and of high reputation, we know that we have managed to sample virtually all organizations whose activities needed to be taken account of by others active in the respective policy. The majority of organizations are Prague-based (71 per cent), while only 16 (29 per cent) have their headquarters outside the capital. 56 per cent of the respondents are directors, deputy directors and heads of department while 44 per cent are lower level employees and volunteers. Quite obviously, the latter were found more often in NGOs and civic groups than in ministries and other public entities. In terms of the division of respondents’ institutions and organizations between bodies with less than 30
(44 per cent) and more than 30 employees (56 per cent), we arrived at precisely the same figures. Due to our objective of including as many CSOs as possible, the share between public (51 per cent) and private organizations (49 per cent) turned out to be quite balanced. In terms of employment, 74 per cent of the first group were larger organizations (>30 employees) while the proportion of smaller (58 per cent) and larger organizations (42 per cent) is relatively equal in the case of CSOs. With respect to the policy processes in which these organizations are involved, 75 per cent indicated to be active in agenda-setting, while 11 per cent occupied important positions in the phase of decision-making. Only 6 per cent played a role in implementation.³

5. Transactional forms of collective action in domestic policy networks

Trying to evaluate both the frequency and the quality of relations between the public and the private sector let us first look at the respondents' own evaluations. Initially, the focus will be on characteristics of the entire policy domains in question rather than on the events selected within each of the domains. In a second step, we then describe the patterning of inter-relationships emerging from a more detailed event analysis.

**Table 2: Types of cooperation by types of organization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of organization</th>
<th>Frequency of cooperation</th>
<th>Full-time staff</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data

Concerning the overall picture in terms of frequencies of relations among key domain actors, the results are not discouraging (see Table 2). 69 per cent of the public and 33 per cent of the private organizations of the sample report the existence of frequent contacts between representatives of the two societal spheres. One should consider that public authorities may tend to over-emphasize and CSOs to underrate the occurrence of such relationships. More than half of the overall organizational population asserts the existence of dense relationships between state and society. Less convincing is that, from the point of view of the substance of these relations, it is only about 50 per cent of state authorities and the overwhelming majority of CSO representatives (close to 80 per cent) which judge state-society relations to be deficient in terms of their quality. This is a strong result which may hinge, however, on the fact that we have
selected actors on the grounds of high event reputation and not in terms of whether or not they are relevant in the overall domain of the respective policy event.

As mentioned by Vajdova (2005), the Czech state supports CSOs, but there is no overall quantitative information on the extent of financial support. Older data reported by Salomon, Anheiner et al. (1999) demonstrates that the Czech Republic’s civil society sector is significantly sponsored by public authorities, at least in comparative terms with other countries of the region. As with respect to the four CSO indices mentioned above, the country, again, is much closer to its Western than to its Eastern neighbors. In the old Member States the average of the fraction accounted for by public sector income (in total income) figures at about 56 per cent. The comparable figure for CEE is 25 per cent while the Czech Republic has a share of 43 per cent.

**Table 3:** Resource transfer by state authorities to CSOs by types of organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource transfer</th>
<th>Status of organization</th>
<th>Full-time staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>public</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insignificant/limited</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate/large</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data

It could not be expected, therefore, that such high a number of CSO representatives of our sample (81 per cent) reports income from public sources to be so relatively insignificant (see Table 3). Less astonishing is that 16 per cent of the better resourced (>30 employees) but only less than half of the weaker organizations indicate state assistance to be large and significant. In order to check the hypothesis by Petrova and Tarrow, let us now turn to the more event-specific structural data which may give a better impression as to whether and where exactly state-society relations are actually thriving or not. The guiding question is whether embeddedness in network structures is able to add to the evidence provided by more traditional measurement instruments. Even if, as mentioned above, 78 per cent of civil society associations and 71 per cent of less affluent organizations report a low quality of cooperation between the public and the private sector (see Table 1), this only refers to the general pattern of state-society relations in the country. It does not necessarily concern the nature of political exchange unfolding in the specific policy events in question (see Figure 1).
**Fig. 1:** Representation of actor status (input: confirmed reputation and confirmed contact)


1.B: Minorities (DAP)

1.C: Social Services Bill


1.E: Environment (NAP 2008-2012)

**Links:**
- Red bold = contact and relevance (both confirmed)
- Red dotted = only contact
- Green dotted = only relevance

**Nodes:**
- Black = public (including political parties)
- White = private
- Node width = degree centrality

**Comment on Procedure:**
- Input: confirmed contact and reputation matrices; diagonals set equal to zero; Status only reflects certified contacts; all other links are added manually; since ties are symmetric and reciprocal, no arrows are attached indicating directions.
While the contact portfolio of organizations in the drug event (1.A) may be relatively deficient, this is likely to result from the high political asset specificity of legislative policy-making and the expertise required for obtaining access to the event. Comparing 1.A with the other configurations demonstrates that a disproportionally high number of actors view each other to be of high relevance while only a small fraction of them actually manages to get in contact. Moreover, the National Drug Policy Strategy is clearly dominated by public authorities. Would we consider as valid only those ties reflecting the simultaneous occurrence of mutual relevance and certified contact, the network would fall apart into three components – one made up of public and the other two of private organizations. Having used the underlying contact matrix as input for the representation of status (thus disregarding the relevance of mutual reputation), it is D15b – the Centrum adiktologie Psychiatrické kliniky of Charles University – which comes out as the best-positioned actor of the network. This is due, in particular, to the fact that this is the only private organization connected to the public cluster around D3a. Albeit the mental institution has spanned contacts, and is itself approached, by relatively many members of the network, these organizations, however, do not recognize each other to be of mutual importance.

The configurations of 1.B and 1.C appear to be more balanced. The events represented by them are less specific in terms of scientific and legal expertise and, hence, involve more general-purpose organizations such as trade unions, business associations and a number of different CSOs. In general, the more one moves through the plots from 1.A towards 1.E, the higher the density of the networks and the more structured the configurations and clusters of actors in the respective policy event. Figures 1.D and 1.E hardly exhibit any tie among organizations which do not report to be mutually relevant to each other. At the same time, the number of certified high reputation ties without the simultaneous occurrence of contact is still considerable even in these best-structured networks.

Turning to minorities' policy, the League for Human Rights (M18b) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (M3a) are the most prominent actors in the design and implementation of the Decade Action Plan for Roma Inclusion. Although not recognizing each other as particularly relevant, and despite the absence of direct contacts, both are well connected to the rest of the network which, in this particular case, almost exclusively consists of private organizations.

The very same Ministry (this time, S1a) occupies the most central position in the social services policy event. However, although the Ministry is most centrally positioned in terms of contact, it does not seem to be particularly relevant for discussions related to the Social Services Bill. It rather is the National Council for the Physically Handicapped (S2a) and the Peak Association of NGOs (SKOK) active in the field of social services (S14b) along which the network appears to
be divided thus falling into two distinct components. At the time of writing, it is not yet clear and would need to be further checked, but it is quite likely that we have to do with two different camps in terms of "pro and con" of the final passing of the Bill.

Relational patterning in the two environmental policy events is characterized by structures that are more clear-cut and also exhibits significantly higher density than is the case in the other events. Almost all actors are either directly connected to each other or can reach others by employing paths of a length no longer than 2. At the same time, the two structures are also the most centralized ones of all other events studied. Hardly astonishing, both focalize on the Minister of Environmental Affairs. Interestingly, it is particularly Industry Associations that occupy particularly prominent positions: the Association of Chemical Industries (E15b), the Union of Paper and Cellulose Industries (E9b) and the National Steel Federation (E11). Furthermore, there are no substantial differences in the contact and reputation portfolios of actors across the time span between 2005 and 2008 which suggests the existence of a relatively closed and stable network.

Overall, what needs to be underlined for the purpose of this contribution is that CSOs and other private actors are well inserted into most of the event-specific political structures. In many cases, they even outperform, or are at least equal to their public counterparts in terms of either reputation or the maintenance of frequent contacts. They also have significant contact density among themselves which points to the existence of intense joint activities and coalition formation. If the argument introduced above is correct, then this type of relational practice should help to ultimately strengthen the civil society sector even in the relative absence or shortage of otherwise important properties such as membership density and financial resources.

6. From pre- to post-accession: the vices and virtues of Europeanization

As already mentioned, the role of the EU in the sponsoring and consolidation of vibrant networks of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe has been ambiguous. From the very beginning of preparing for accession, much was hoped to result from stronger participation and the forthcoming of new modes of governance - particularly with a view towards the simultaneous strengthening of state capacity and collective action capacity of civil society. In reality, the concrete politics of accession, as much as the logics governing the EU's enlargement regime of conditionality (technocratic working ethos; hierarchical norm transfer; expert-biased practices; focus on speed and efficiency; exaggerate concern for top-down control; paternalistic attitude vis-à-vis domestic actors) often contradicted the initial rhetoric of democratization and
undermined rather than supported the capacity of civil society to reap benefits from prospective EU membership (see: Kutter/ Trappmann 2007).

The enlargement procedure familiarized CEE actors not only with new modes of governance. On the contrary, as has been observed also in the domain of regional politics and structural funding (Keating 2006), the technocratic ethos of EU policy-making rather duplicated and further strengthened the traditional patterns of exclusionary top-down ruling common in many countries of CEE. As argued by Kutter and Trappmann, "[...] all this partially undermined impulses for the modernization of governance and for the empowerment of non-state actors as it perpetuated context-indifferent hierarchic government and asymmetric methods of learning" (ibid.).

The virtues of Europeanization, then, are likely to unfold only in a medium- to long-term perspective and they may be more a by-product of membership rather than a result of explicit politics of empowerment and support. This, at least, is suggested by the present survey. While interviews with representatives of CSOs in Prague largely confirm the critical comments by Kutter and Trappmann for the previous period, there are indications that things might have become more evened in the meantime. The discouraging experience with pre-accession notwithstanding, overall, the role of the EU is today perceived to be amazingly positive at least among organizations that have managed to insert themselves into domestic policy processes. This seems to be the case not only for those CSOs with significant organizational properties and resource endowments. The available data does not allow for precise judgments as to whether this be a direct and unequivocal result of Europeanization. As with respect to the distinction introduced in the beginning between attributive and relational properties of actors and systems of action, we again observe the following. Positive attitudes vis-à-vis the EU among domestic authorities and CSOs do not seem to result from norm transfer or the transfer of resources but, rather, from embeddedness in networks at both the domestic and supranational levels in the course of "normal politics".

**Table 4:** General domain contacts to three EU institutions (EP, COM, Council) by types of organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of organization</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General no</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU occasional</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contacts frequent</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data
Information contained in Table 4 reflects general contacts to the three most important EU institutions that are not related to any of the specific policy events in question. While there are significant differences across public and private organizations with respect to the incidence of particularly frequent contacts, overall, civil society actors (55.6 per cent) are only slightly less connected to the EU than are public institutions (64.5 per cent). Noteworthy, also, is the difference between the two actor categories in terms of those indicating no contacts whatsoever.

Divergence in the occurrence of multi-level ties across the two categories of actors appears to be corrected, if not reversed, if we look at contacts specifically established in the context of the five policy events (see Table 5). Now it is private actors exhibiting a stronger external contact portfolio with regard to their Brussels connections. Exactly half of them report occasional and frequent contacts while the figures for public institutions drop to 42.1 per cent. At the same time, the number of public institutions reporting no contacts at all now increases from 30 to 47 per cent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of organization</th>
<th>general contacts</th>
<th>public</th>
<th>private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>occasional</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contacts</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data

Overall, what could not be expected, especially when considering the negative implications of pre-accession conditionality, is that most members of the sample appear to be well connected to EU institutions. Most importantly, in the vast majority of cases it is the respective domestic organization and not the EU institution which acts as initiator of these contacts. This is particularly pronounced with respect to contacts spanned to the European Parliament. More than 50 per cent of the respondents report that it is them who take the initiative of establishing links to the EP, while only 8 per cent see the Parliament to be more active in that respect. Concerning the Commission, the figures are 46 and 31 per cent respectively. In case of the Council, the situation is more balanced with 22 and 20 percent.

The Czech Republic's civil society sector, at least in as far as its organizations form part of domestic policy networks, is anything but de-connected from the world of supranational policy-making. Above all, frequent and occasional contacting also retroacts on the perception of the quality of influence the EU is ascribed in the sphere of domestic policy-making (see Table 6).
A negligent portion of those who actually maintain network contacts judges the influence and impact of key EU institutions on Czech domestic politics negatively. At the same time, animosity versus the EU is considerably higher among those without any contacts. As has often been noted not only in the Europeanization literature, contacting and bridging possess a socializing dimension. Again, this can be interpreted as a clear sign of Europeanization triggered by domestic network involvement which seems to have implications for external contacts as well. It is not necessarily associated with benevolent attempts of supporting civil society via educational measures, strategic advice and cash flows of various sorts.

**Conclusions:**

None of what has been argued so far precludes the possibility that the two societal spheres in the centre of attention of this paper continue to be characterized by substantial deficiencies. State administration and political parties are likely to perform at levels significantly below the ones of more advanced Western European countries. Similarly, organized civil society probably continues to lack the resources, the expertise, the staff, and the anchoring in a wider part of the population that makes it so relevant for public policy elsewhere in Europe. Lacking state capacity and a deficient inclination of large parts of the population to get involved in collective action, coupled with inadequate resources on the part of those who already have built up organized outlets for advocacy, are indicative of the 'double paradox of weakness' identified by Börzel (2007; Börzel et.al. 2008) in her implementation studies of European environmental policies in Central and Eastern Europe.

The point to be made here is that the practice of policy-making in inter-organizational networks may be able to overcome that paradox, at least in the medium- to long-term. It will do so from within, i.e. bottom up, simply as a result of pressures and exigencies which actors from one single societal sphere alone are unlikely to solve individually. Eventually, the normal politics of muddling through everyday political business will achieve both more participation and higher
efficiency independent of assistance, advise and financial transfers provided for in a top-down fashion from without the domestic political system.

Concerning Europeanization, we subscribe to the résumé by Kutter and Trappmann. "The pre-accession period has changed little to ameliorate the weakness of civil society actors and has left an ambivalent legacy for their future development." However, "post-accession Europeanization still bears the promise of facilitating (differential) empowerment." Since the asymmetric enlargement regime no longer operates, "the marginalisation of civil society actors in domestic policies is no longer externally reinforced, [...] and EU subsidiary and ‘new governance’ models are less likely to be undermined by shifts in funding strategies."

Evidence of positive direct and indirect effects of EU membership is indeed impressive especially with a view to Southern Europe. This also includes the practice of participatory politics. Once a critical threshold of inclusion is trespassed, practices might become self-perpetuating without much further assistance and involvement by external agencies. Much of this, of course, is anchored in legacies and path dependent historical instances that must be present somewhere in the collective memories and past achievements of political actors at some level or in some dimension of the national polity – either in functional (policy domains, economic sectors) or in territorial terms (municipalities, regions). In the complete absence of such legacies, even the most dedicated assistance program is unlikely to be successful. The same, however, may be said with a view to network involvement as well.

Overall, therefore, the encouraging pattern characterizing advocacy politics and the participation in policy networks in the Czech Republic are more likely to result from home-grown experiences accumulated over time – and that includes the period of Communist rule and of the time before - and from a growing maturity and consciousness on the part of political and societal actors of coping with problems of interdependence and interest diversity than to deliberate attempts by external agents of shaping courses of action. As mentioned by Petrova and Tarrow, at least in a long-term perspective, developments within the relational dimension of collective action "may be laying the foundation for civil society developments" in both individual and collective-organizational terms.
A first draft of this paper has been presented at the conference "Enlargement – Five Years After"; DVPW (German Political Science Association) and UACES (University Association for Contemporary European Studies); Central European University, Budapest, May 8-10, 2009.

One should not forget that the implications of EU accession for advocacy politics are ambiguous. There has been a significant number of "bads" particularly in the process of unilateral rule transfer. At the same time, the principles of partnership and subsidiarity, as much as the granting of access to multi-level policy networks and of financial assistance have helped to consolidate civil society to some extent.

This may turn out to become a problem in a more detailed policy analysis of the data set, but is insignificant for this present paper which mainly emphasizes advocacy and the capacity of voice in initial phases of the policy process.

For one of the best arguments elaborating on the change of domestic network structures as a result of an increasing frequency of contacts between national and supranational actors in the absence of structural changes at the level of individual network participants (public administration, etc.), see Harmsen 1999.

The real figures are actually much higher since we also asked for contacts to European-level civic and professional groups, interest associations and consultancies, the results of which are not reported here.

Appendix:

A. List of Policy Events

- **The Social Services Bill**, i.e. a draft law that had been in the pipeline since 1998 and that substantially improved the status of NGOs as service providers. While, until then, NGOs have not formally been admitted to participate in the consultation process of that law, this changed significantly after a series of petitions and other forms of collective action which ultimately led to groups of organized civil society to become key players in the decision-making process. This strengthened cooperation across sector organizations and cooperation between public and private actors. NGOs are now accorded the same status as other service providers.

- **The National Drug Policy Strategy** for the period 2005 to 2009, in particular with a view to the Recodification of the Czech Penal Code with respect to drug offenses. This policy process commenced early in 2001 when private actors, NGOs and health experts suggested the abandonment of Article 187a of the Amendment of Penal Code No. 112/1998 which foresaw that individuals who possess a narcotic or psychotropic substance or poison in an amount "greater than small" are guilty of a criminal offence. Over the years, an increasing number of private organizations and NGOs have been involved in the process making up the event. Key partners of public administration for issues of drug policy are specialist societies and nongovernmental organizations that are specialized in the prevention and treatment of drug addiction. They contribute to the planning, the implementation, and evaluation of measures and activities in the field of drug policy. The Government guarantees independent service providers an equal approach and partnership in the preparation and implementation of drug policy measures.

- **The National Allocation Plan of the Czech Republic** (NAP) for the periods 2005-2007 and 2008-2012 following the EU's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (EU Emissions Trading Scheme; 2002/358/EC). The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for transposing the Directive into national legislation and collaborated with a wide array of public and private organizations. Prior to being submitted to the Government, the drafts have been discussed within the Inter-Sectoral Working Party on Climate Change which also assembles the Czech chambers and the most relevant nongovernmental environmental organizations. Further consultation included representatives of trade unions and business associations.
The Decade Action Plan (DAP) for Roma inclusion for the period 2005-2015. After the self-admitted failure of the head of the Government's Human Rights Council to better integrate the Roma population into public health care, housing, employment and education services, the Czech Republic joined the DAP in February 2005. Quite a number of projects are carried out under the umbrella of that plan which also involves NGOs and civil society organizations active in the field of the protection of ethnic and other minorities. The Government Board for the Roma population equally includes representatives of Roma NGOs and other private organizations.

B. Organization Lists

- **The National Drug Policy Strategy (total: 14)**
  - Národní protidrogová centrála Služby kriminální policie a vyšetřování
  - Ministerstvo spravedlnosti
  - Nejvyšší státní zastupitelství
  - Institut pro kriminologii a sociální prevenci
  - Vězeňská služba
  - Probační a mediační služba
  - Strana zelených
  - KSČM
  - Společnost pro návykové nemoci J. E. Purkyně
  - Centrum adiktologie Psychiatrické kliniky 1. LF UK
  - Asociace nestátních organizací
  - Podané ruce
  - Laxus
  - Semiramis

- **The Social Services Bill (total: 13)**
  - Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí - Odbor soc.služeb
  - Národní rada osob se zdravotním postižením ČR
  - Vládní výbor pro zdravotně postižené občany
  - ODS
  - Česká rada humanitárních organizací
  - ČMKOS
  - Odborový svaz zdravotnictví a sociální péče ČR
  - SKOK
  - Asociace občanských poraden
  - Naděje
  - Fokus Praha
  - Slezská diakonie
  - SKP-centrum

  - Ministerstvo životního prostředí
  - Centrum pro otázky životního prostředí UK
  - KDU-ČSL
  - ČSSD
  - KSČM
  - Svaz průmyslu a dopravy ČR
  - Cihlářský svaz Čech a Moravy
  - Hutníctví železa
  - Svaz výrobců vápna
  - Svaz výrobců cementu
  - Svaz průmyslu papíru a celulózy
  - Svaz chemického průmyslu
  - České ekologické manažerské centrum - CEMC
  - Sdružení Calla
  - Hnutí DUHA - Přátelé Země ČR
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