



# **Nonprofit-government relations: The public policy and advocacy perspectives**

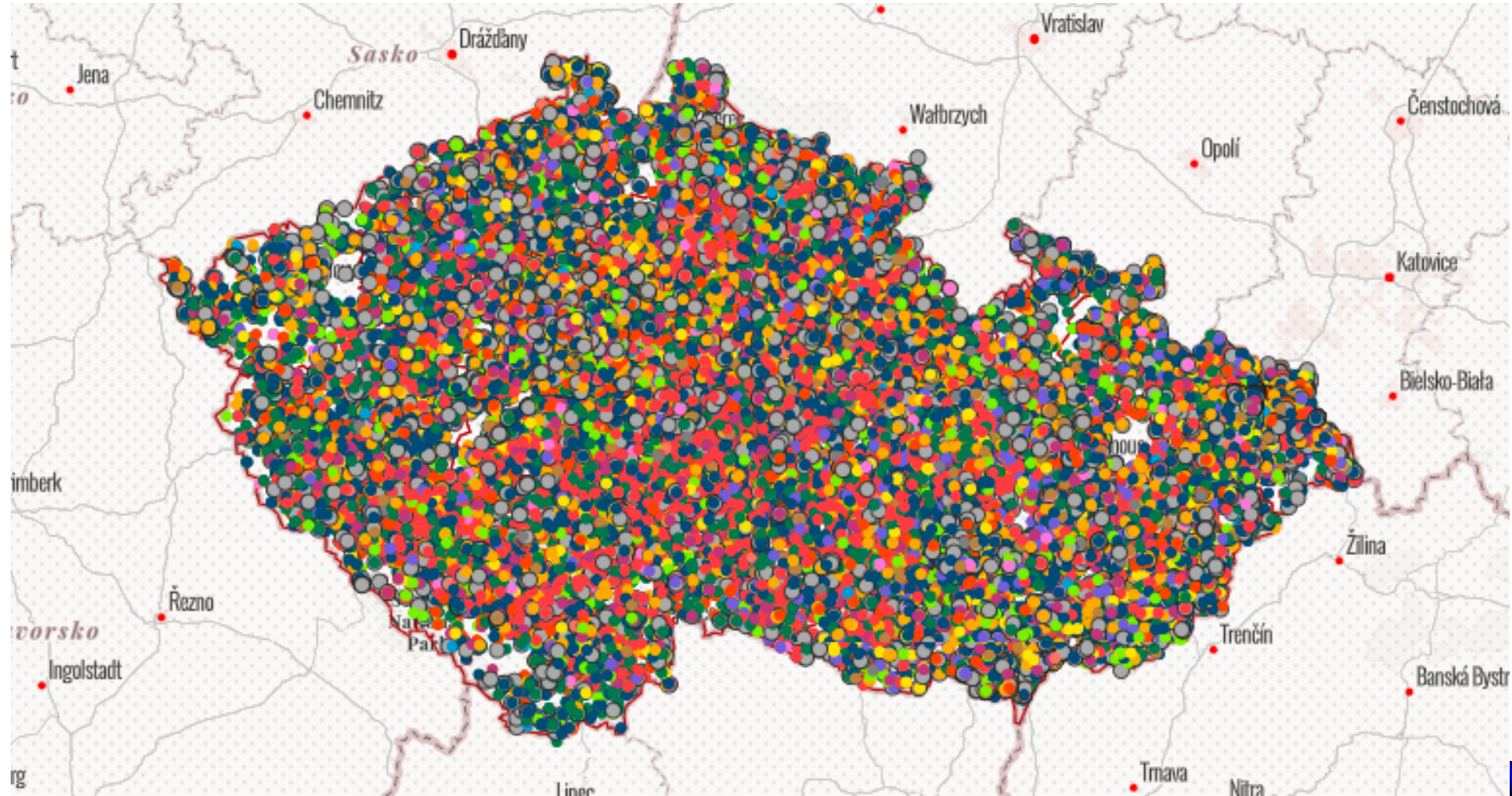
# Content

- Roles of CSOs
- Government, Advocacy and Civil Society: Overview of the Government-Nonprofit Relations
- Public policy perspective
- Advocacy perspective

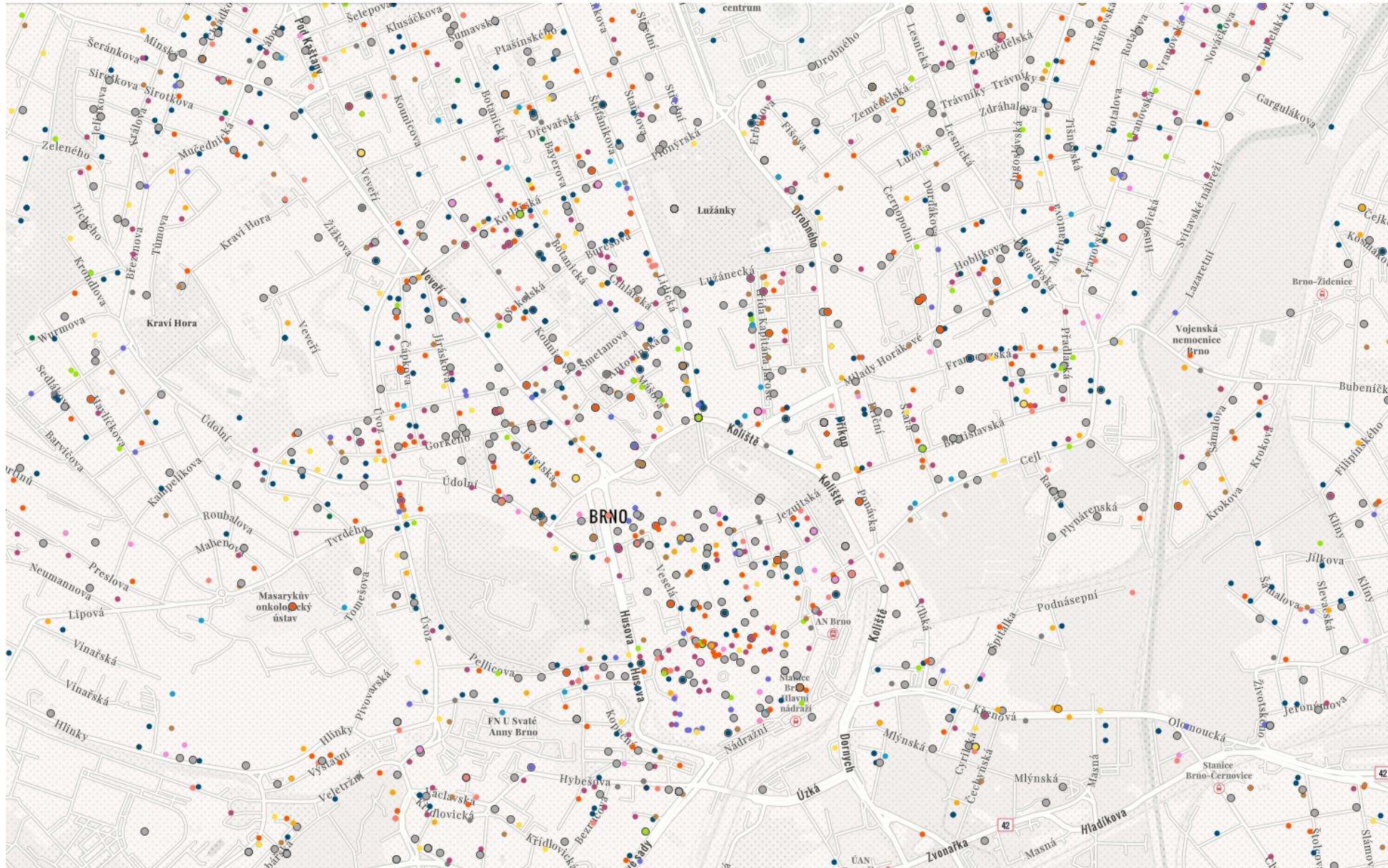
# Civil society organizations

- CSOs: non-state, non-for-profit groups that are separate from the state and the market
- Non-profit organizations, interest groups, professional chambers, labor unions, social movements
- NPOs: organizations that are privately incorporated, but serve some public purpose (social responsibility)

# Nonprofit organizations in CZ



# NPO in Brno



**Why are they important?**

# Functions of NPOs

- *Social capital* (“the features of social organization, such as *networks, norms, and trusts*, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”)
- *Economic role*
- *Religious role*
- *Service*
- *Policy* (e.g. Implementing public policies)
- *Advocacy* (e.g. Building up civic/civil society. Central to prosperous and successful democracies)
- ...Significant actors at global level (international perspective)

# NPOs and government relations: Overview

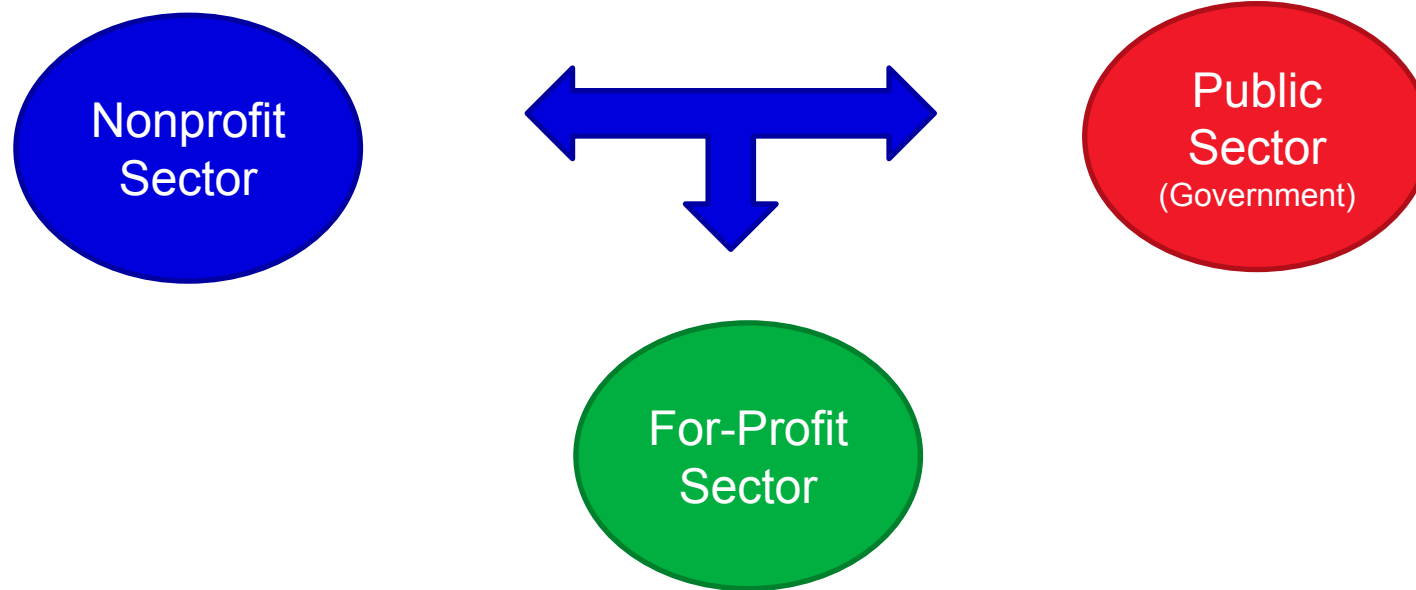
- Complex relationship based on different aspects: funding, tax policy and regulations towards NPOs, direct government support, non-monetary support, involvement in policy and advocacy activities, etc.
- Dynamic relationship
- Legal perspective
- **Public policy perspective**
- **Advocacy perspective**



# Public policy perspective

- Involvement of NPO in policy-making
- One of principal functions of NP sector, major contribution to society, promoting common good
- Pressuring government to respond to disadvantaged groups
- Theoretical models: based on the character of relationship  
Weisbrod, 1988; Douglas, 1987; Salamon, 1995, 2002; Young, 2000; Najam, 2000

# What is the character of relationship?



- Substitute and supplement (Weisbrod, 1988; Douglas, 1987)
- Complement (Salamon, 1995, 2002)
- Adversary

# Why should NPO participate in policies and policy-making?

# Involvement of interest groups

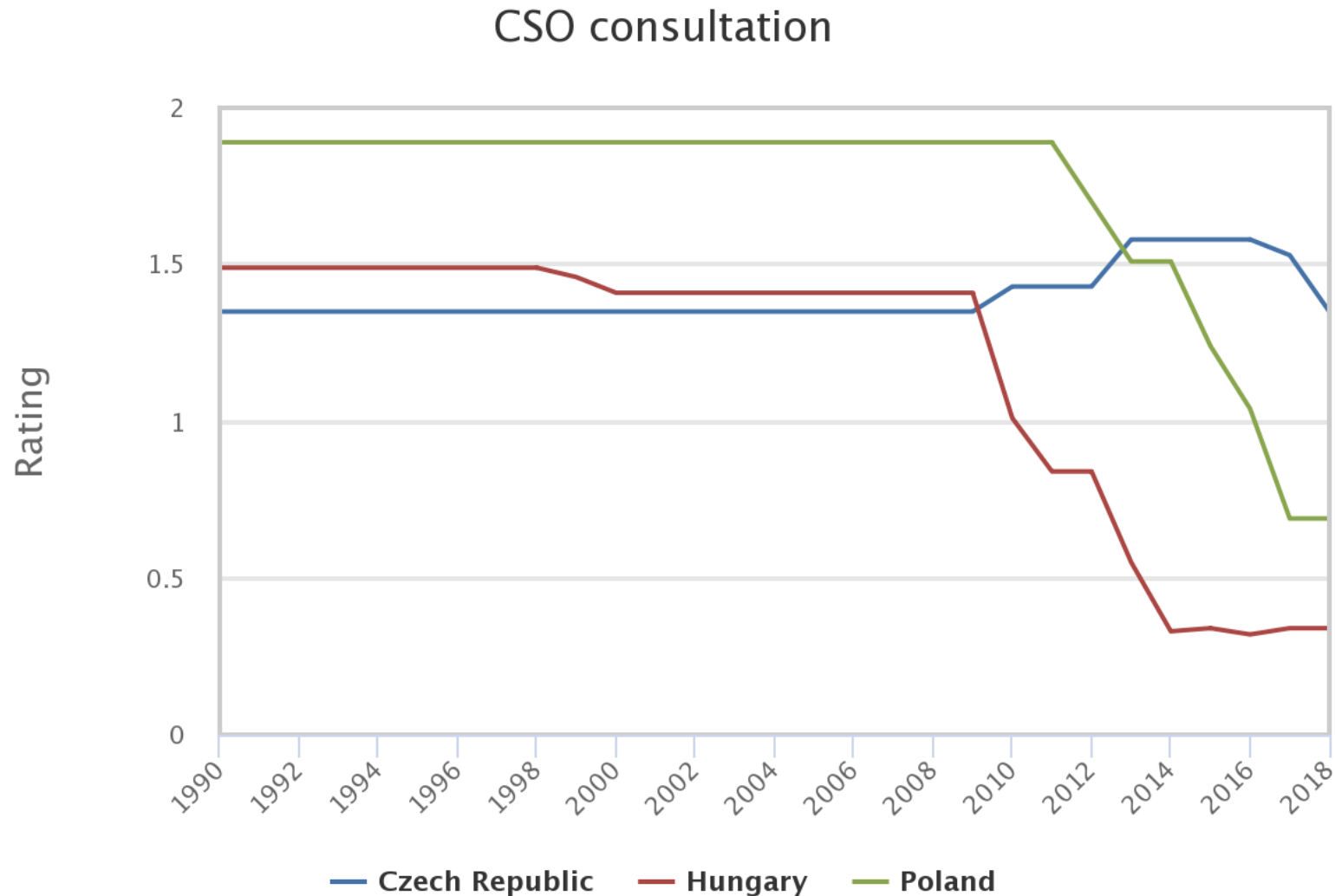
## Pros/benefits:

- Strengthens representation
- Public debate encouragement
- Expanding the space for political participation
- Barriers to abuse of power
- Ensuring political stability

## Cons/critique:

- Lobbying = "buying" political influence
- Consolidating political inequality
- Failure to contribute to political integration
- Exercising Illegitimate power
- Tendency to "secrecy" in politics

# Are major civil society organizations (CSOs) routinely consulted by policymakers on policies relevant to their members?



# Advocacy perspective

- Builds heavily on political sociology
- CSOs crucial vehicles for advocacy and civic participation
- CSOs = an opportunity for citizens to become engaged in politics
- Investigates **whether and how CSOs give citizens a voice for political participation, provide avenues for societal integration**
  
- 1) Mediate and facilitate **participation**
- 2) Engage in **public-interest advocacy** activities

# Social movement theory argument

- Two sectors are deeply intertwined, but conflictual relationship with government
- What are social movements?
- How can we describe a government–nonprofit relationship from social movement perspective?

# A cycle

- 1) First with private concerns, private action (informal, no legal status)
- 2) The movement may evolve into formal organizations – translates public concerns into public issues, lobby government
- 3) Successful SMO may influence government policy
- 4) Government responds
- 5) SMO addresses public issues again





# CSOs during migration crisis

- Refugees welcome movement (across Europe)
- Appeal for humanity (*Výzva k ľudskosti*) (Slovakia)
- Global Migration Journey: #sharethejourney
- ...





# Public interest advocacy

- NPO's crucial civic function: to “correct imbalanced political representation by ensuring that a broader set of interests are voiced” (Jenkins, 2006)
- Goal: To influence government decisions; to shape the policies of private institutions and corporations; or to encourage political participation

# What are reasons to advocate?

# Reasons to advocate

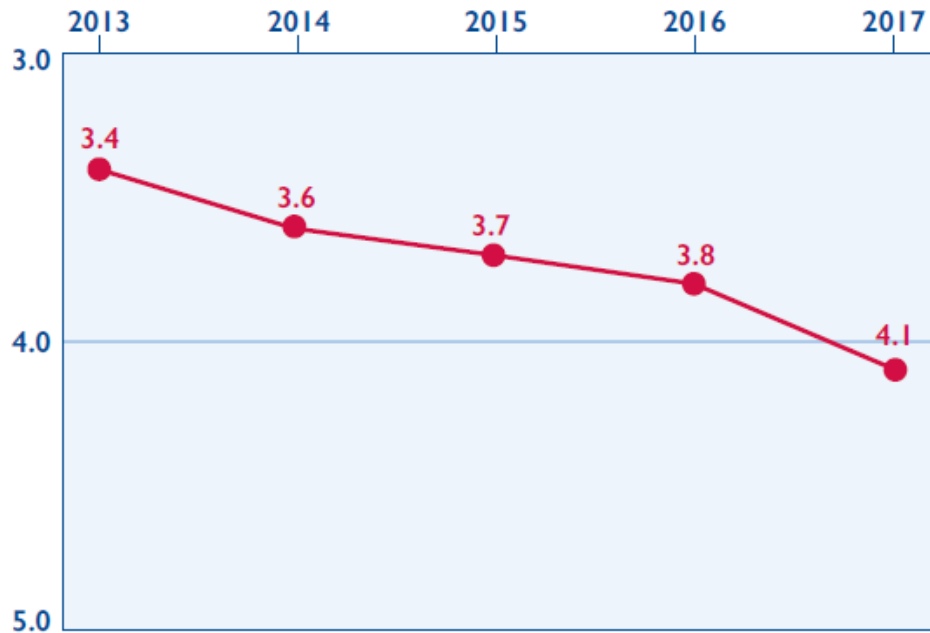
- **Focusing public attention** on key social problems and solutions
- Increasing the **base of knowledge** on which innovative policy is formed
- Policymakers need expertise
- Ensuring access for new and unheard voices
- **Fostering governmental accountability** to citizens
- **Promoting democratic values** (freedom of expression, pluralism, ...)
- Giving citizens a personal sense of **civic skills** in the democratic process (can make a difference, can change laws)
- The views of local nonprofits are important

# Challenges for (some) CSOs' activities

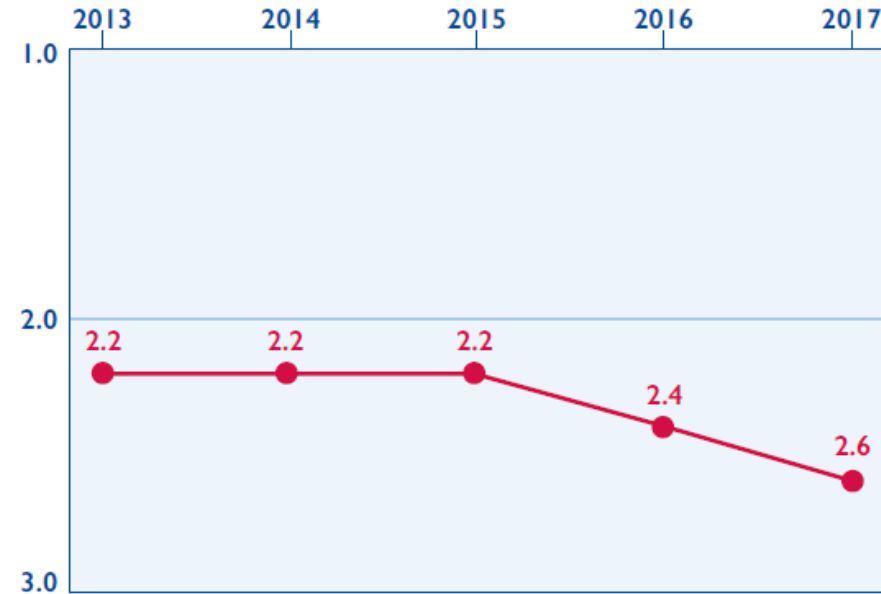
- Negative framing of civil society organizations and NPOs (mostly dealing with human rights or minority issues) by political elites
- Worsening public image (mostly Central and Eastern Europe)
- „Agents of neomarxims“ and liberalism (populist discourse)
- Tools of foreign interests (Soros and „his plan“) – e.g. CEU Uni
- In Czech context: „ngo-ism“ (Václav Klaus)
- Declining civic engagement

# Public image of CSOs

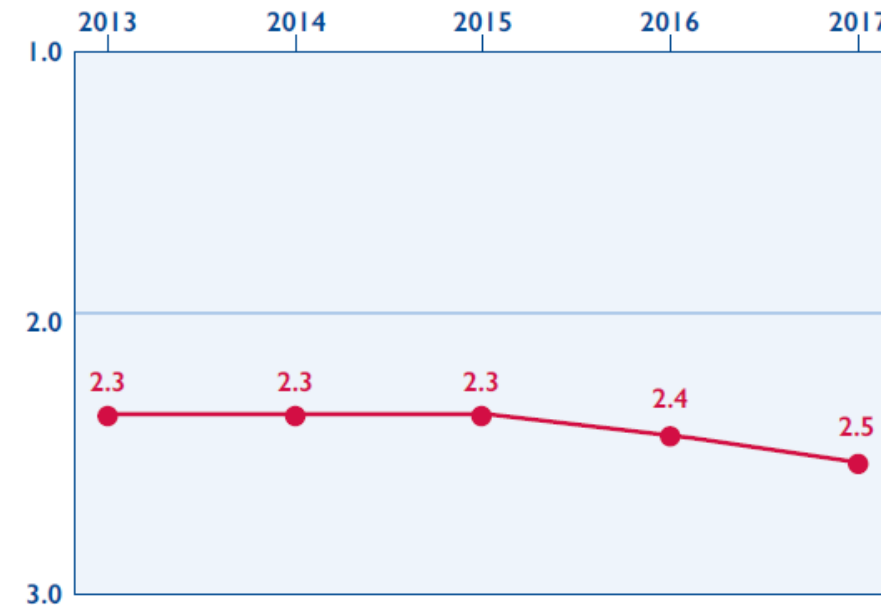
## PUBLIC IMAGE IN HUNGARY



## PUBLIC IMAGE IN POLAND



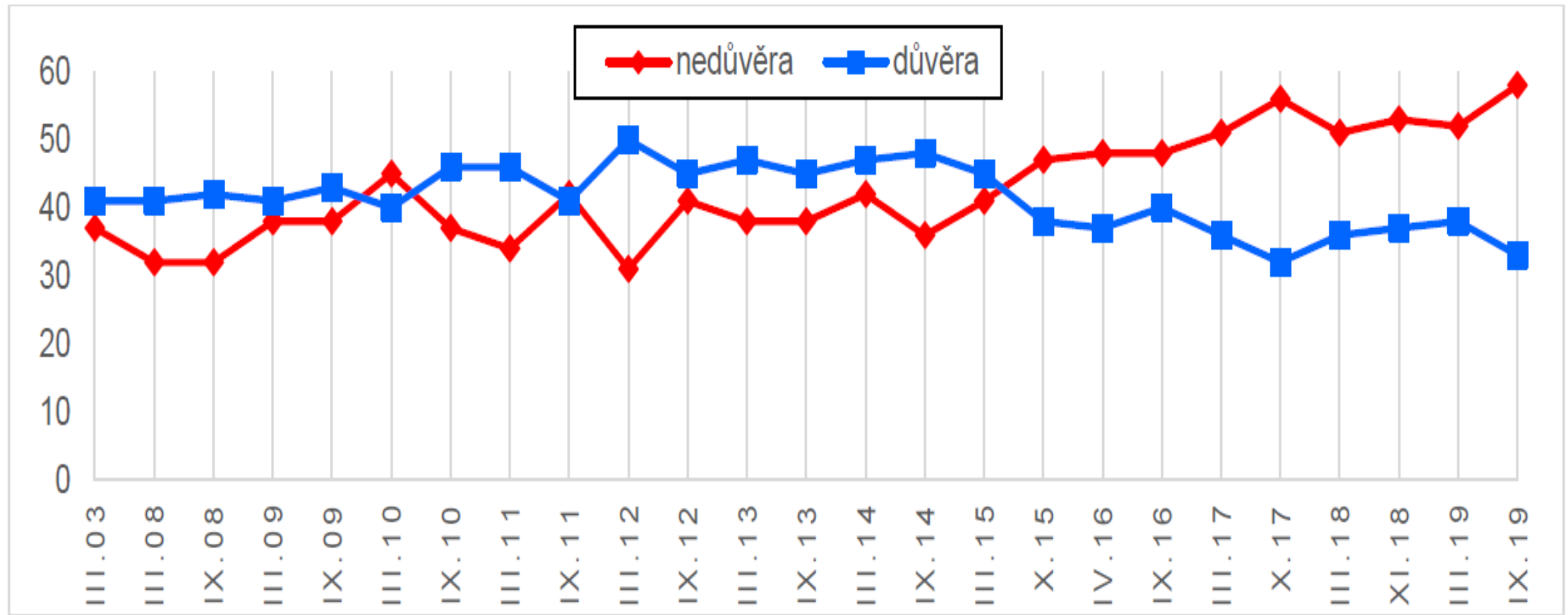
## PUBLIC IMAGE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



Source: 2017 CSO  
Sustainability Index



# Trust in NPOs (CZE)



# CSOs responses

- Have had to become more sophisticated
- Created more complex organizational structures
- Taken advantage of new technologies – Internet activism fundamentally altered civic participation and advocacy
- Invested in effective research
- Increasingly turned to collaborations, including some with business organizations

# **Citizen Lobbying: How Your Skills Can Fix Democracy**

By Alberto Alemanno (at TEDxBrussels)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqNf2OPdu8c>

## **Going the Digital Route**

By Marci Harris, a former congressional staffer, founded Popvox, a non-partisan platform to engage digitally with Congress

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aKyYR-iWpc>

# **Advocacy Through Social Media: Why Trending Topics Matter**

By Karen McAlister (at TEDxUTA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4sGLLaLq-Q>

**MUMI**

**Thank you for your attention**