

MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA



ERUDITIO
MORIS
FUTURUM

umb

MATEJ BEL
UNIVERSITY

TEXTBOOK

TRADE UNIONS POLITICS IN SLOVAKIA AFTER 1989

MONIKA UHLEROVÁ

MONIKA UHLEROVÁ

TRADE UNIONS POLITICS IN SLOVAKIA AFTER 1989

TEXTBOOK



Európska únia
Európsky sociálny fond



VÝSKUMNÁ
AGENTÚRA

Innovative Steps in University Education
in the 21 Century
ITMS: 26110230109

Modern education for the knowledge-based society / Project is co-funded by the EU

ISBN 978-80-557-0963-5



9 788055 709635

BELIANUM

BANSKÁ BYSTRICA
2015

čistý formát 146x206 mm

4282_26_A5_Trade_164s_100ks_OBALKA_MLD

**Publishing house of the Matej Bel University
in Banská Bystrica
Belianum**

Monika Uhlerová

Trade Unions Politics in Slovakia after 1989



**Banská Bystrica
2015**



This textbook is a result of the Innovative Steps in University Education in the 21 Century project (ITMS: 26110230109) in compliance with the Operational Programme Education. The project is co-funded by the European Union. Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica is the grant receiver.

Title: Trade Unions Politics in Slovakia after 1989

Author: Monika Uhlerová, PhD.

Reviewers: prof. Peter Kulašik, CSc.
doc. Daniela Škutová, PhD.

Science Editor: prof. Peter Terem, PhD.

Approved by: Textbook approved January 13, 2015 by the Editorial Board of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica

© Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, 2015

ISBN 978-80-557-0963-5

Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Trade Unions as a Case of “Large” Interest Group and Their Possibilities and Limits of Influencing the Public Policy | 8 |
| The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic as a New Political Player in the Democratic Regime | 26 |
| Personnel Resources of the KOZ SR: Membership and Leadership | 38 |
| Economic Resources of the KOZ SR..... | 52 |
| The Trade Unions Relations with Political Parties and Movements in Slovakia | 65 |
| The Relations between the KOZ SR and Social Partners within the Tripartism: Government and Employers | 87 |
| The Relations between the Trade Unions and the Employers at the Bipartite Level: The Case Study on Collective Material Benefits ... | 131 |
| The Summary and Conclusions | 143 |
| Bibliography and List of References..... | 149 |

Introduction

Trade unions are one of the specific interest groups that are classified as economic, sectoral or protectionist because they protect (mainly the economic and social) interests of their members actively. Compared with other interest groups, trade unions typically have a mass membership and hierarchical form of organisation. Currently, trade unions in Slovakia and abroad are still the greatest mass organisations of workers to have pursued their interests and rights in employment and social policy fields during their whole historical process. The official position of trade unions in relation to government policy is presented as a “non-compliance level” of employees or civil interests, especially in matters of full employment, active employment policy, issues of wage and pension policies, in relation to the level of salaries and pensions, to inflation and the impact on the standard of living of citizens. In this respect, their interest also concentrates on issues of economic prosperity, economic growth and the stopping of stagnation. They present their program objectives of the trade union policy, express their participation in creating the economic and social policy and effective legislation as the government initiatives’ reviewers.

The main aim of this publication is to outline the position of trade unions in the political system of the Slovak Republic from their “post-revolutionary” transformation to the present, to examine their strength and degree of influence or weakness, the relations with political parties and movements with the government and social partners, and to seek and analyse possible causes that affect their position and functioning after 1989. The publication focuses primarily on the ability of trade unions to ensure material benefits for its members through an institutionalised social dialogue, to determine their status and power in business, sectoral and national levels, while exploring the implications of these relationships to their own position. Furthermore, the publication aims to define the limits and possibilities of influencing the public policy by means of trade unions (through their own sources of influence) and to analyse the mechanism of social dialogue at national and sectoral levels.

We assume that the position of trade unions in Slovakia is weak due to the insufficient use of their relatively good resources and the

consequent undermining of these resources, including in particular the membership base, economic strength, institutional and legislative framework that enable the trade unions to participate in the government policy-making, quality of the trade unions management and their organisational structure, namely its flexibility. The membership of trade unions has been continuously declining, mainly because the trade unions are “unattractive” (due to various internal and external factors) and not motivating to people, resulting again in the weakening of their own position in the political system and becoming the low-status actor towards social partners as well as other elements of the political system. The loss of sufficient representativeness threatens the trade unions’ exclusive access to the government under the current institutional arrangements of social dialogue, as well as their negotiating position against employers. The assets of trade unions are also one of the sources of their influence, but in the case of unions in Slovakia, despite their size, the assets do not guarantee them a strong position towards their social partners because of the way they were transformed and are managed at present.

Seeking a natural ally of trade unions among the political parties, which preceded the debate on (non)cooperating with political parties, distracted trade unions from the need of internal reform and transformation of the structures, resulting in the weakening of their own position within the political system as well as towards their social partners.

Through the tripartite model, trade unions have an exclusive access to the government with the opportunity to comment on the major political, economic, legislative and social issues. Being one of the social partners of the tripartite, the government influences, to some degree, the level of social dialogue at the national level, but does not have a decisive influence on the results of collective bargaining (in wage increases) and the benefits of collective agreements. The tripartite does not discuss and negotiate the wage growth across the board (except for state and public administration), only the minimum wage growth and the wage indexation of the state, with public administration employees being negotiated here. Therefore, the relations of trade unions with the government are not decisive for the results of collective bargaining at bipartite level (in the manufacturing or private sector). At the sectoral level, the relationships

with other social partners, employers, are important. The positive relationship of government towards one of the social partners (government - trade unions, government - employers) may have a negative impact on trade union relations with employers, which determines the bipartite social dialogue, and thus weaken the effectiveness of collective bargaining.

Material benefits for union members and the effectiveness of collective bargaining are among the factors that determine the position and strength of trade unions at the national and enterprise levels. Despite the fact that collective bargaining can provide some increase in minimum rates of pay, as well as other social benefits and compensation of employees, this factor is not able to affect positively the membership of trade unions or to strengthen trade unions at the enterprise and national levels.

The content, findings, and conclusions drawn in the publication will contribute to the study and development of the theory of industrial relations, the behaviour of the different actors of social dialogue and the functioning of social partnership in Slovakia, they will also contribute to the development of the theory of functioning and the status of trade unions in Slovakia after 1989 and will initiate further research into this field in other post-communist countries. The content analysis of collective agreements can help representatives of trade unions and collective negotiators define new strategies for collective bargaining and the content of collective agreements, which would represent an incentive tool for attracting new members and strengthening the position of trade unions in the workplace and in society.

This publication is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the status and functions of trade unions as a specific case of "large" interest groups in general and consequently to the comparison of positions of trade unions in Western Europe and the relatively weak position of the trade union movement in post-communist countries. At the end of the chapter, we name the important resources, through which the trade unions, as an interest group, can influence public policy. The second chapter is dedicated to the transformation and organisational construction of the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR) as a new political actor after 1989. The third and fourth chapters analyse the economic and personal resources of KOZ SR. The next chapter

describes and analyses the genesis of political relations of KOZ SR and the search for political allies among the political parties and movements in order to strengthen its own position towards the social partners in the tripartite. Institutionalised social dialogue at the national level (tripartite), the mechanism of its functioning and its effect on the position of trade unions in Slovakia from 1990 to present are the subjects of the sixth chapter, followed by the last, seventh chapter, focusing on the analysis of relations of trade unions with employers and the sectoral capacity (bipartite) of the social dialogue. The given chapter presents a case study of collective material benefits that unions bring their (non)members. By analysing collective bargaining at sectoral level and examining collective agreements of selected trade unions of the production and non-production sectors we point out the main mission of current trade unions in the spirit of “bread-and-butter” unionism. The case study is to describe the minimum rates of pay increase in selected production and non-production sectors because we consider the increase in wages through collective bargaining to be an important and key incentive factor for potential members to enter the trade union, as well as a potential tool for improving the attractiveness of trade unions, i.e. a tool which largely determines the level of other sources of influence by trade unions (particularly personal, economic, social, institutional).

Trade Unions as a Case of “Large” Interest Group and Their Possibilities and Limits of Influencing the Public Policy

According to various theoretical concepts and definitions of interest groups (Alemann, 1995; Grant, 1999; Shively, 2000; Kubát, 2004; Kulašik, 2007; Uhlerová, 2013) trade unions could be classified as being formal (formalised) economic (material), pressure, protectionist, sectoral, political, right interest groups that can play both the role of insiders and outsiders. They represent in particular the economic and social interests of their members (but often declare also the representation of the interests of the general public not always of a purely economic or social nature¹). As their primary objective is to protect mainly the economic and social interests of certain groups in society (employees, workers), we rank them among the protectionist and sectoral groups. To pursue their interests, they can also choose coercive forms, especially in a situation when bargaining and negotiations (with government, employers) fail. Since, while enforcing the interests, they come into direct contact with the political elites and institutions, the state authorities, the government (e.g. in the tripartite), they are the political (and thus by Shively, 2000, also the so-called proper) interest groups. In the spirit of the neo-corporatism model of interests mediation, the trade unions, which are granted exclusive access to the political decisions (for example through tripartite), can be considered the so-called insiders (according to the classification of W. Grant, 1999). The organisations gain the status of an insider by anchoring in the standards or special law, therefore by strengthening or “monopolising” an insider status (Kunc, 2008).

Trade unions arose as a consequence of industrialisation in order to defend the rights of workers. The protection of economic and social interests of workers and citizens has become the primary objective of

¹ Recently, a variety of environmental topics, discussions on the use of nuclear energy, nuclear weapons, human rights and the like, entered into the “agenda” trade unions. For example in 2010, the International Trade Union Confederation initiated a petition campaign “No to nuclear weapons”, which was to be a part of the global campaign for the cessation of production of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

unionisation. Unions are made up of citizens who satisfy their economic interests mainly by income from employment, i.e. wage². The primary means of meeting those interests became collective bargaining, which aims to conclude a collective agreement and achieve such commitments within it as to ensure the optimal level of satisfaction of wages and working conditions. Thus a fundamental interest of the trade union movement has been and, as the highest priority, remains the fight for the protection of workers' rights, efforts to form and join independent and free trade unions and bargain collectively with the employer. The main activity of the international trade union movement is to defend the national trade unions and their rights from the attacks of governments that are not in favour of trade unions. The basic trade union rights include the right to form and join unions, the right to bargain collectively and to strike.

Among the theoretical issues of development of trade union activities, it is the key position that holds the question of their social nature and their essence as a social phenomenon. The position of an element in the system means its place among the other elements of the system and its relation to these elements. Therefore, by the factual position of trade unions we mean their place among the other elements of the political system, their relationship to political parties, state and other parts of this system. Trade unions essentially position themselves as the opposition putting pressure on the government (ruling coalition), whereas they belong to the interest groups not seeking to gain direct political power, only to influence it. They seek to influence government, but not to become a part of it. The relations between trade unions and policy are related to historic traditions and to common or different approaches of political parties, their programmes and approaches of the trade unions to fill the positions in parliament or engaging in executive activities. The historical view may formulate some trends, especially frequent social democratic orientation of the trade unions, the pursuit of independence of trade unions from political parties with social democratic

² In recent years, the loss of union members from the so-called traditional sectors, i.e. the sectors where the trade union membership was the most concentrated can be observed. The employees using the so-called non-standard forms of employment (freelancers, part-time employees, the unemployed, students, pensioners, etc.) are becoming members of unions, though.

current, or vice versa the cooperation of some trade union fractions with political parties, including their share in the management and leadership of the party³. Therefore, trade unions cannot be apolitical, even though sometimes the clear answer to their activity in politics does not exist. Their objectives are political, especially in the social and economic policy. Ignorance of some right-wing parties in relation to social, economic rights, to the tripartite, force the trade unions to seek the relationships with the political entities that recognise these values (for example Slovakia).

In terms of activities of trade unions in elections to the parliament, there are direct and immediate interests of unions to operate through political parties and to send their representatives to parliament, including financial support (e.g. Norway, Austria); the support of social democratic parties in elections is also traditional⁴. Understanding the place of trade unions in the political system of society, understanding their function and structure, methods and forms of their work depends on the proper clarification of the question of the nature of trade unions as a social phenomenon. Deep and comprehensive analysis of the nature of trade unions and their political systems is also of great practical importance. It helps to reveal better the potentialities of this association, reinforce the impact of trade unions on social life, apply their progressing in current conditions more successfully and define the prospects for their development more precisely.

At least for the last three decades, we can talk about the crisis of the trade union movement, not only in Central and Eastern Europe, although many studies focus just on the post-communist region and functioning of trade unions in new, qualitatively different political, social and economic conditions. Jan Keller (2011a) identifies several causes of the crisis of the

³ Here we can already talk about the so-called political unionism. Political unionism involves multiple relations between political parties and trade unions to form the mutual sharing of ideologies, ideas and views on various policies to explicit cooperation and shared leadership, which often leads to situations where unions are used by a political party to the political objectives irrelevant to interests of employees and workers (Uhlířová, 2012c).

⁴ In the history of Great Britain, there are known cases where up to one third of the candidates for the Labour Party were proposed from among trade unionists, currently the trend of participation of trade unionists in Parliament is reduced. However, it should be noted in this context that the members and supporters of trade unions are at the same time voters and trade unions should respect their interests.

trade union movement in “post-industrial” society.⁵ According to him, the crisis of the trade union movement lies primarily in companies undergoing organisational changes for the new economy; further, the crisis of trade unions is the result of a new wave of economic globalisation; which also has a psychological impact on employees’ behaviour; and last but not least the trade unions are influenced by the change in the strategy of investing capital in the de-industrialisation process.

There are several possible explanations why trade unions in Eastern Europe have not become influential social and political actors at the time when the various reforms with negative impacts on living standards which, especially in the first years of economic transformation, decreased significantly in most countries, were and are still ongoing. Although the impact of the ideological heritage on trade unions in the past decade changed considerably, during that time, the unions began to consolidate institutionally as much weaker organisation. Even though the majority of new studies on work and industrial relations in the post-communist countries try to point out that the position of trade unions in these countries is weak, some argue that, in some countries of Eastern Europe, the position of trade unions is stronger than in other countries. Poland, where a sharp collective protest and wave of strikes affecting all sectors of the economy were recorded in the early post-communist period, might be an example. Regarding the corporatist institutions (in the form of tripartite institutions), which essentially all post-communist societies sought to establish, E. Ianková (1998) speaks of the so-called transformative corporatism, which maintained social peace in the region despite the painful transformation of the economy; D. Ost (2000) argues that the post-communist corporatism is only illusory, false and misleading.

Could we then say that trade unions are weak political actors in Central and Eastern Europe? According to S. Crowley (2004), there are several explanations regarding the relative weakness or strength of the trade union movement in post-communist countries. The first explanation

⁵ According to J. Keller (2011), the decrease in the rate of profit from investments directed to the industry in the 70s and 80s of the last century led investors to explore new ways of applying their funds. They found different ways, all of which converged in the process of de-industrialisation.

focuses on the aforementioned *corporatist institutions*, which were established according to the functioning model of the so-called Western democracies in the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, mainly from government initiatives, as the preventive measures to eliminate expected social unrest during implementation of economic and social reforms. Another explanation is based on the *theory of competition* between trade unions, arguing that a more fragmented trade union movement will be more active in its activities and in order to obtain a potential member. The third cause of weakness of the trade union movement in the post-communist region is seen in the fact that *individuals prefer to leak into the informal economy* before using the option of collective action. Another argument to explain the weaknesses of the trade union movement in that region is based on the *theory of exchange, economic theory of strikes and evolutionary theory*.

Post-communist society sought opportunities to build corporatist institutions. The quick establishing of a tripartite is quite an unexpected result of post-communist transformations. In Western Europe, similar structures were created as a result of strong pressure from the socialist and social democratic parties, which sought official representation of trade unions in the political process for decades. Many changes and decisions in the post-communist transformation can be called a “transformation by replica”, i.e. the transplantation of democratic institutions and organisations that have proven themselves in Western Europe. The post-communist countries that have some historical tradition in social partnership and organisation of corporate structures have (and had) also the greater tendency towards re-creation of corporate mechanisms at the present. Corporatist tendencies in association, representation and mediation of interests are the result of the interplay of historical, international, institutional and cultural factors that accompanied the transformation of the former regime (Malová, 1997). Models of tripartite negotiations between government, employers and employees have been successful in maintaining social peace, thus acceptable and desirable for the post-communist reformers. Tripartism, as institutionalised mediation of interests of labour, capital and the state, is becoming a common feature of the social environment in the whole of Eastern Europe. The question of corporatism is crucial not only because the newly entered EU countries needed to acquire European institutions,

but also because of “the future of social Europe”, which lies largely in the quality of the representation of interests among the new EU member states. A number of authors argue that tripartism, indeed contributes to social reconciliation in the region and that they have been and are successful in their pursuit of social peace through compromise, on the basis of consensus among all actors involved. Some authors state that tripartism is strong corporatism, while others argue that it is a second government or parliament enemy (Crowley, 2004, p. 409). A number of studies of post-communist corporatism, however, consider these institutions to be quite weak and ineffective.

Historical development in Western Europe suggests that the governments supported the creation of a corporate arrangement of the relations between the state and the representatives of labour and capital with the expectations that the involvement of different actors in the policy making would minimise the social and political conflicts, and that the organisational discipline especially of trade unions, as well as employers’ organisations, would mitigate any potential negative reaction of dissatisfied groups in enforcing unpopular measures. The corporatism in this region is often described as paternalistic, misleading and a sham, as fragile tripartism subject to the dictates of neo-liberalism or the political armor of neoliberal economic strategy (Crowley, 2004, p. 411).

In their empirical study of protests in the post-communist countries, G. Ekiert and J. Kubik (1998) posed the question of why there were more strike activities in Poland than in Hungary in the 1990s. They argued that protest is a rational response to the lack of access, the lack of corporatist inclusion and hypothesise that fewer strikes could be expected where an institutionalised system of tripartism exists (Ekiert; Kubik, 1998, p. 562). They also state that the difference between the Poland in strike and a “peaceful” Hungary is the social democratic party and an institutionalised approach to policy making. Moreover, the number of strikes in Poland decreased dramatically after the establishment of the tripartite and after the leftist social democratic party entered the government. By contrast, in Hungary in 1995, the government abandoned talks whose goal was to provide a social pact, where the agreement seemed unattainable, and various austerity measures in the spirit of

neoliberal policies were imposed unilaterally⁶. It follows that, on the one hand, if corporatism is able to explain social peace, on the other hand, it is not a guarantee for inducing social unrest, strikes and protests as long as the institution of tripartite fails (the similar example is Slovakia). Corporatism is therefore not able to explain the cause of the low rate of mobilisation in Eastern Europe in relation to Western Europe. Corporatism in Eastern Europe played an important role in the post-communist transformation process and is simply different from the same kind of the corporatism in Western Europe.

Further explanation of the weakness of trade unions in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe is based on the laws of competitive struggle that we could call "*competition between unions*", which means that unions would be more radical on the assumption of the existence of large amounts of trade unions (headquarters) fighting (contesting) for members and potential sources, it thus implies a competition between trade unions or headquarters. According to Ekiert and Kubik (1998), more strikes would be expected where many trade unions "*compete for the same audience*" and a larger number of unions would predict a greater likelihood of strikes. They explain this referring to the case of Poland which had the most pluralistic and competitive trade unions in Eastern Europe. While, according to their opinion, fragmentation leads to competitiveness and consequently to mobilisation, standard views on labour relations suggest that fragmentation leads to weakening and competition undermines solidarity and central sources. Another reverse hypothesis is that fragmentation leads to a significant decline in membership thus depriving some trade unions (headquarters) of critical mass of members required for mobilisation and pressure through sectoral and national measures. Ekiert and Kubik argue that where there are numerous trade unions seeking supporters within the same sector, these unions represent a real threat to one another and

⁶ This was followed by widespread railwaymen strikes, which subsided once a tripartite institution was established again, but negotiations in the tripartite were reduced only to consultations and mutual informing even before 1998 when the right-wing government openly declaring hostility to trade union movement was established. In addition, the establishment of tripartite Poland in 1994 may have contributed to the decline in strikes, but paradoxically, later failure of bargaining and the disagreement of trade union headquarters did not lead to a rebound in strikes or other major protest responses in this area.

therefore will compete for the support of potential members. Hence, it remains questionable, whether the plurality of unions represents both their strength and ability to mobilise and recruit members, or vice versa, which means a splitting of force and threatening the solidarity, a decline in membership and inability of mobilisation. The Slovak case suggests that both the method of transforming the former communist trade unions and the quality of their management contributed most to the gradual weakening of not only the national, but also the enterprise level (Malová - Rybář, 2004).

As demonstrated in the case of strike activity in some post-communist countries of the region, the economic and social transformation, the conditions of economic crisis, the decline in real wages and high unemployment did not provoke such quantity of labour unrest, as would be expected. The economic theory of strikes argues that employees tend to act collectively not when the unemployment is high, but when it is low, when employees are strong and it is easier to pressure the employer. (Crowley, 2004, p. 414). In the mentioned *economic theory of strikes*, Crowley demonstrates further explanation for the relative weakness of the trade union movement in Central and Eastern Europe.

During the implementation of painful economic changes in the region one would intuitively expect a significant amount of labour unrest and intense strike activity, at least in some countries or industries, if not universally. The relative robustness, or the number of workers involved in labour disputes compared with the total number of employees, respectively, is a good indicator for national comparisons of strike alert and activity statistics. The results of these comparisons in Eastern and Western European countries are surprising. The rate of strike activity in Western Europe is 100 days not worked for every 1,000 employees per year. A comparable value for the countries of Eastern Europe is 25 days not worked for every 1,000 employees per year (Crowley, 2004, pp. 404-405). Certainly, a significant difference can be seen between the strike activity in Eastern and Western Europe. Thus we can see that the scale of protests in Central and Eastern Europe is much lower than in many recognised democracies of Western Europe (Ekiert - Kubik, 1998).⁷

⁷ Theoretically, a high rate of strike activity could rather be an indication of despair of trade unions than their force and, on the other hand, strong trade unions would not need to strike if they could get privileges without protest activities. Nevertheless, it would be necessary to

Another reason, which Crowley highlights in researching the status of trade unions in Central and Eastern Europe, is the phenomenon of the so-called individual leakage, i.e. *the individual leakage of individuals into the grey (informal) economy*. The individuals prefer such individual escape from the collective voice, or collective action, respectively, to achieve their economic and social interests. According to Crowley, it is the leakage rather than a common voice, which is the dominant model of social response to the economic pressure on the east. And the most frequent response to economic difficulties is not involvement in a strike, but to move into the informal economy. (Crowley, 2004, p. 415). For example, he mentioned Russia or Ukraine, where the level of the informal economy is high, but despite the harsh economic conditions there were relatively few protests reported. Another argument explaining the weakness of the trade union movement in Central and Eastern Europe is based on the theory of *political exchange*, which implies that the trade unions mobilise and protest only if they do not have political partners in government. Conversely, when the ruling parties are politically close to trade unions, those, in exchange for political concessions, do not organise collective protests.

A final clarification of the weakness of the trade union and labour movement in post-communist countries is based on evolutionary theory and highlights *the legacy of communism*, especially the institutional legacy of the trade unions of the communist era and ideological legacy of the regime as well as looking for identity in post-communist period. Probably, there was not any other area where a more significant impact of the communist heritage was noted just as in the trade unions. The impact of this heritage is twofold: institutional and ideological. Under institutional we mean that the trade unions were built as a completely different organisation to operate in a very different economy. Trade unions were considered to be the allies of management and often functioned as social agencies providing “welfare” for their members, granting them various benefits, which often seemed to be the only benefit of membership. In a

obtain evidence for the claims that unions in Eastern Europe are strong, despite (or because of or thanks to) the low level of strike activity. However, the available evidence shows rather the opposite. During the 90s, a sharp decline in real wages throughout the region was recorded, and while wages kept increasing in many countries, they are still relatively low in the new EU member states compared to the “old” members of the European Union.

market economy, trade unions should ensure benefits like higher wages, job security, better working conditions and necessary restrictions of managerial authority. The post-communist trade unions had to face the challenge of shifting to a market economy under the conditions of capitalism just at the time of economic decline, but also under the pressure of globalisation. Union members faced this problem for the first time and simultaneously responded to the legacy of the communist era left in trade unions. After the departure of communist parties, trade unions became the largest institution that survived the previous regime, and thus faced significant challenges to their legitimacy. The problem was not only that union members were suddenly not sure what trade unions should do in new conditions, but the trade-unionist “leaders” and activists remained uncertain what position to adopt towards capitalism, whether to defend workers against capitalism or to assist in its implementation. It is the legacy of the former regime, which best explains the relative lack of trust in trade unions, as well as the general weakness of trade unions in post-communist societies. And this legacy is the least permissible for change - economic conditions, unemployment, the extent of the informal economy can change over time, corporatist institutions can be rebuilt or expanded, but the impact of the heritage of the communist period is much more durable and less accessible to policy changes. This impact shaped (and apparently, is still shaping) the approach of employees towards trade unions, their perception of the trade union leaders and their role in a market economy. In Western Europe, where trade unions met with the global post-Ford economy from the institutional position of strength, thanks to the heritage of the communist period, the trade unions in Eastern and Central Europe faced the introduction of capitalism and global pressure from the beginning of the weak position. Indeed, some authors believe that the post-communist countries follow more trends of “Americanisation” in the field of industrial relations and social policy. In many cases (privatisation, pensions, tax policy, working time, the welfare state, wage disparities, etc.) post-communist countries rather follow the North American way than the European social market economy. (Meardi, 2002, p. 79). In terms of the size of membership, structure and quality of collective bargaining and industrial relations in general, working arrangements in post-communist societies did not reach the practices of the European Union, but radically transformed the rigid control of the

Communist era to dramatically more flexible system, similar to that in the United States of America. (Crowley, 2004)⁸.

Crowley defines the strength of trade unions as the ability of trade unions to ensure material reward for their members, and as the degree of application of authority in the workplace as well as in national politics (Crowley, 2004, p. 400). The size of membership and the scope and effectiveness of collective bargaining and strike intensity (Crowley, 2004), the success of which may be to some extent determined by the organisation and representativeness of trade unions (Uhlerová, 2012a), can be regarded as the most common tools to measure the strength of trade unions. Also, the International Labour Organisation regards the fact of being organised (i.e. the size of membership and its percentage of the total number of employees), the coverage by collective agreements and the effectiveness of collective bargaining (Lawrence - Ishikawa, 2005) as the indicators of social partnership in the trade unions.

The size of membership is usually used as the primary and most elementary tool possible to measure the force of trade unions, since it is an important indicator of the ability to organise, gain mass support and the potential to mobilise workers for industrial action. While the size of membership inexorably decreased (and is still decreasing) in post-communist countries, this situation was expected. Trade union membership was quite high during the communist period, but in many cases it was actually prescriptive. It could be argued that, by the decline in membership, the former communist countries simply got closer to the standards of Western Europe. Some theorists say that membership in some Eastern European countries is close to the standard of the Nordic and Northern European countries⁹. The significant ageing of the

⁸ Here it could be argued that whether Western Europe is the best example for comparison with post-communist societies. Not only do labour relations appear very similar to those in the United States, but also the level of economic development is more similar to developing countries than to the developed capitalist countries. Some theorists equate the trade union (labour) policy in Eastern Europe to the countries of Latin America.

⁹ According to surveys of ILO, the average membership in Eastern Europe in 1995 was 49.2% and 38.1% in Western Europe; hence, compared with Western Europe, the trade union membership in post-communist countries was still higher. ILO data, however, are based on the assessed numbers of and by the individual trade unions' headquarters where there is a certain inclination to "inflate" the results. Survey results show considerable differences, namely 33.7% in Western Europe and the rapid decrease of the values of their own data in

membership base is an important but not a new recognition, while the average age of union members is higher than non-members¹⁰ irrespective of the overall negative demographic trends (Uhlerová, 2009). The membership, its robustness and ability to act in particular, are among the main sources of trade union influence on public policy and the steadfast reduction and factors causing this decline are constantly being researched. There may be few a complementary (and causing) reasons.

In general, the justification of the decline in the degree of union membership includes external threats and internal system errors or failures of the trade unions themselves. We could say that the potential union members are more individualistic than in the past and are less inclined towards the idea to become unionised (or members of any group at all). Their attitude towards trade unions is more utilitarian, which means that if they are to become members of trade unions, trade unions must demonstrate the so-called added value. Essentially, their behaviour reflects the economic theory of rational choice. Many potential members feel that they know much better how to negotiate with their employers than to be represented by someone. Another aspect of such an individualistic mentality is that trade unions should show an interest in such “individual potential member” offering him a service package, thus flexibly reflecting, responding and satisfying his/ her requirements in the form of the desired value added or a by-product. At the same time, these services should vary depending on the geographical location of the employer, the position of an employee in the company (society) and the individual characteristics of potential members. Trade unions with such a heterogeneous profile should offer several “packages” of value added in order to accommodate the various groups among their members, instead of offering only a single series of universal benefits.

External threats also played a role in relation to trade union membership. External factors are difficult to influence and an organisation

post-communist countries to 29.7% according to statistics, accounting for a nearly 20 percent difference between data that state statistics of trade unions and those which state surveys and official statistics. By the size of membership, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe got closer to the Anglo-American level than to the countries of Western Europe. Based on the ETUI research (European Trade Union Institute, 2009), the decline in union membership has been observed since the 70s of the last century, with an increasing number of those who have never been union members.

¹⁰ This trend is particularly significant in Germany and Italy.

can set up its functioning in order to adapt them, or to eliminate their negative consequences as far as possible, respectively. Among these threats, we could include in particular the transformation of the economy and with it necessarily related changes and trends in the labour market¹¹ and social security, as well as social changes that occurred in the post-communist region in early nineties of the 20th century and certainly affected the situation in the trade union movement¹². There are also several external factors contributing to the membership base within trade unions: a rising unemployment rate¹³, the employees'¹⁴ and employers' attitude towards trade unions¹⁵, the individualisation of work, the

¹¹ The labour force from the so-called traditional or industrial sectors, where the membership in trade unions used to be higher, concentrated into the private sector, where a lower membership is reported. Moreover, partial or atypical jobs, work in small companies, new forms of labour relations, ridiculing of work, are assigned to this shift.

¹² The changes in the social structure of current society, the process of de-industrialisation and the transition from industrial to a post-industrial society, the impact of globalisation on the current situation of the welfare state and its prospects in an environment of globalised economy, new social risks that these phenomena and changes bring, which certainly has an impact on membership and functioning of the labour movement not only in Europe, are discussed in detail by J. Keller in his publications: *The Twilight of the Welfare State*, 2011; *New Social Risks*, 2011; *Three Social Worlds*, 2012.

¹³In many countries, trade unions do not provide their services to the unemployed. In Slovakia, for example, even an unemployed person can be a trade union member, with her/his being obliged to pay a token charge, also called „maintenance charge“. By means of this charge, the member is still considered a part of the respective union with the aim not to discontinue her/his membership. Sometimes, the membership is purely a sentimental sign of belonging to an interest group. Moreover, the organisation within trade unions seems to be larger thanks to the unemployed members. In most cases, however, once the worker loses her/his job, s/he resigns her/his membership of trade unions.

¹⁴There is a negative point of view on trade unions in post-communist countries, including Slovakia. The general public still thinks that trade unions were an exclusive part of the communist regime without being willing to accept the fact that trade unions were being established during the industrialisation of society as early as the 19th century. This point of view might also be influenced by the fact that trade unions are evaluated by means of management activities and statements. Moreover, the existing mechanism of social dialogue and collective bargaining at corporate and sectoral levels that is actually beneficial to all members and workers thanks to commitments embodied in bargaining might be a cause of the ongoing decrease in the membership base as employees are quite often „calculating“ and do not see any advantages in membership (Uhlerová, 2012a).

¹⁵Many employers are acting against trade unions nowadays. These tendencies are seen namely within American and Eastern Asian companies already established in Europe, especially in the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, collective bargaining coverage is decreasing in both old and new EU countries. Employers aim to

dualisation of working conditions, the widespread occurrence of inadequate work types related to the desired workforce productivity as proposed by the owners and shareholders who aim to appropriate their respective shares at the expense of employees; and generally speaking, the increase in inequality resulting from the capital owners' offensive against work; a swift increase in management financial bonuses with moderate and lower wages stagnating; and profound differences between the economically active and those permanently or temporarily excluded from the labour market due to their age or their being unemployed (Keller, 2012). Related to the newly adopted work types, the increase in social inequality within the post-industrial society is a part of more profound social changes – the shift from formal organisations to network arrangement of production and services (ibid., p. 27). The aforementioned changes in the labour market aim to transform work into a product that is likely to be as fluid as capital (ibid., p. 29).

Trade unions (as most interest groups) may possess a fair number of resources to use in order to influence politics. Among these, we can cite economic, human, institutional, legal, and social resources, international support and others. There are other resources influencing the way trade unions work and are effective in advancing and reaching their goals. We can cite the organisational structure, the culture of trade unions as a part of interest groups, which affects positively the communication flows between management and the membership base; the decision-approving and its execution, the relations between the management and the membership base, etc.; cognitive resources, e. g. know-how, the degree of accumulated information, etc.; technology resources, e.g. the progress with the use of marketing communications that affect considerably the liaison between the trade union management and its membership base, potential members or public by presenting the group, etc.; and last but not least a historical legitimacy and „heritage“ of trade unions.

Economic resources that enable the continuous existence and functioning of any organisation might be considered an important trace of influence within political spectrum. These include financial resources and property that is owned by the respective interest group. Financial

decentralise collective bargaining; that is why trade unions face new coordination mechanisms which they fail to provide.

resources are acquired by means of membership fees, presents and property income (by sale and/or lease). Since it is quite often that the membership fees represent the largest share of income (sometime the only income) within interest groups, they are related to the membership base extent and the members' will to financially support the organisation.

Human resources represents the membership base, its abilities and action readiness, along with the trade union leadership and its quality (education, charisma, experience, ability to be a leader, managership, organise, contacts with the leadership power, relations between the management and decision-makers, etc.). All interest groups based on membership aim to have as large a membership base as possible. Their objective is to wield the most considerable power and support for interests within society, the legitimacy of demands and thus the representativeness of the organisation. The state, extent and action of readiness of a membership base is among the substantial resources regarding the influence of interest groups. The membership base is the indicator of how powerful and capable the interest group is. It also shows the appropriate legitimacy of demands and thus its representativeness. The criterion of representativeness is usually the only precondition regarding the acceptance of the respective group when bargaining. We talk mainly about the sector interest groups (e.g. trade unions and employers' associations) that seek to find their way to the government by means of membership fees. The representativeness and proving the vast membership base is to balance the essential disadvantage of interest groups, namely their inability to participate in electoral competitions (Kunc, 2008, p. 84), as – considering the neo-corporative model of interest policy - the groups contribute to the creation of government policies without being eligible to do so, which might question the legitimacy of such a process. On the other hand, trade unions show their representativeness to become a part of the tripartite or to be able to bargain collectively with the employer. The representativeness is demonstrated by the ratio of the respective subject members to the overall number of potential members (i.e. the whole social group, profession, companies of a certain sector, etc.). The extent of a membership base is, when talking about trade unions, the first and perhaps the most essential indicator that may be determinative of the considerable power of the respective interest group since it is also an

important tool aimed at organising and attracting a vast amount of individuals and potential concerning mobilising workers within the industrial action. The membership base is also an important factor determining the influence of the organisation as well as its status as an interest association, a pressure group towards other partners, subjects of the political system, bearer of policy decision making or players in the political process.

Privileged interest groups that enter into relations with the government represent the interests of producers rather than consumers. Among the most common partners, we can mention business and employers' associations, trade unions, and professional organisations. It is trade unions and employers' associations that enable the connections between the state and its economy and serve as a buffer against social conflicts. It is then logical that there are negative impacts on the quality of democracy and state administration as there is oligarchisation of power related to the one-sided agreements proposed by powerful individuals from the privileged groups. This is also a cause of inequality concerning the representation of interests. Parliament ceases to be an active proposer of policies, instead it is to register and approve the policies as proposed within collective bargaining (Müller, Laboutková, Vymětal, 2010).

Institutional resources may be understood as an approach of the interest group towards decision-makers and their participation in the lawmaking process. This approach is regulated by laws and institutions and formalised. It determines the status of insider within interest groups.

It is by norms or special acts that organisations acquire the position of insider, which leads to its strengthened or monopolised place (Kunc, 2008, s. 88). The institution of the tripartite is an example of such relations with the government. In the Slovak Republic, its functioning has been regulated by the Act on the Tripartite since 2007. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the tripartite is an economic and social partnership between the state (represented by the government), employers (represented by unions and associations) and workers (defended by trade unions). It is a partnership whose aim should be to bring collective bargaining and agreements regarding the employment rate, remunerations, and workers' social assurance and working conditions. Such partnership is to result in cooperation when it comes to promotion and realisation of the conventions and agreements, and to

effective dispute working resolutions with the aim to prevent social unrests.

Collective bargaining is another example of institutionalised forms of bargaining (usually at the bipartite level). In the Slovak Republic, it is regulated by the Act on Collective bargaining from 1991. Collective bargaining agreements (e.g. sector or corporate CBAs) are the respective forms of collective bargaining. We may say that freedom of collective bargaining is among the fundamental social rights.

Moreover, according to ILO Convention no. 87 and 88, workers have freedom of association, collective bargaining and the right to organise. ILO Convention no. 154 characterises collective bargaining as a relation between employers or their organisations and a workers' organisation or workers' organisations. The objective of the collective bargaining is to determine the working conditions and those of employment along with the changes concerning employers or their organisations and workers' organisations (Čambáliková, 2008).

Legal resources represent the legal framework or context within which interest groups can function and enhance their activities. As for the Slovak Republic, we talk about the international agreements and conventions that were ratified by Parliament and consequently became a source of international law¹⁶. Social resources might be regarded as a broad spectrum of the trade union management relations and contacts

¹⁶Here we can mention for example the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union where Article 12 guarantees the freedom of assembly and of association and Article 28 defines the right of collective bargaining and action in cases of conflicts of interests and the right to defend the workers' interests, including strike action. The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms which is part of the constitutional system of the Slovak Republic guarantees that there is no suppression of trade unions or no preference to any within the company or the sector. The ILO Conventions and Recommendations are also important, e.g. ILO Convention no. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to organise from 1948 or ILO Convention no. 98 concerning the Application of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively from 1949. In Slovakia, it is primarily the constitution that guarantees the freedom of association. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees the right to organise to protect one's economic and social interests, to establish trade unions independently, and strike action. Within the Slovak legislative framework, we can cite a number of acts and precepts which are related to interest groups directly or indirectly (the Public Assembly Act, the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Labour Code, the Act on the Tripartite, the Act on Collective Bargaining, the Commercial Code, the Income Tax Act, etc.).

with decision-makers, with regards to their quality and level. Therefore, we can mention the contacts with legislators, the executive power, the judiciary, constitutional institutions, the state administration, media, political parties, employers' and professional associations, interest groups, etc. The relations or contacts might be either formal or informal.

The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic as a New Political Player in the Democratic Regime

The 10th of April, 1990 is believed to be the day of the establishment of the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as KOZ SR). The changes after the 17th of November, 1989 affected the functioning of the then-trade union Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (hereinafter referred to as ROH) and influenced the shaping of the character of the present-day KOZ SR, with some of the current problems of the Confederation having originated precisely in that period (Barinych, 2002a). The Czech and Slovak Confederation of Trade Unions replaced the centralised ROH on the federal level. It became an umbrella organisation for the newly created Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions regarding the Czech Republic, and the Confederation of Trade Unions regarding the Slovak Republic. The Slovak congress considering both the First Slovak Congress of Trade Unions and the founding congress of the Confederation of Trade Unions, continued on the 9th and 10th of April, 1990.

The establishment of trade associations or organisations or their associations is governed by Act. 83/1990 Coll. on Association of Citizens, as amended. Civic associations, as well as trade unions, are subject to registration with the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic. Nonetheless, in accordance with the International Labour Organisation Conventions, trade unions are subject only to registration with no possibility for the State to intervene in the creation and the activity of a trade union. Limiting the number of trade unions or favouring some of them in a particular field or enterprise is prevented by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms, being a part of the legal system of the Slovak Republic. The rights of trade unions are regulated through the several legal rules, the ILO Conventions ratified by the Slovak Republic, and some other international treaties, conventions, etc.

The congress of all trade unions and associations was held in Prague on the 2nd and 3rd of March, 1990, with the main aim being to establish the means for putting an end to the existence of the ROH and to

establish its successor organisation in such a way as not to lose the property of trade unionists, with the value exceeding 16 billion of Kčs. This resulted in the creation of the Property Managing, Administrative and Delimitation Union of Trade Unions as a legal successor of ROH whose demise was agreed by the Congress. The Congress established the organisational structure of the new trade union headquarters, too. Above all, the independence of the political parties, movements, public authorities and the employers' organisations, internal freedom of opinion and democratic order may be regarded as the essential features (as defined in the programme documents) of the new umbrella trade union organisation.

The fundamental output of the First Congress in 1990 was the Charter of KOZ SR. The fact that it was signed by the representatives of the individual trade unions had an impact on the actual establishing of the KOZ SR. It was both the first legal document of the Confederation and the base of its activity. The document read that the Confederation was both independent but also non-partisan. It was thus forbidden to create groupings according to political affiliation. Such a decision sought to prevent internal disturbances within an organisation with a broad range of opinion, or even to avoid possible politicisation of the entire trade union movement, which was undesirable, considering the prevailing atmosphere in society and the status of trade unions in the former regime. In addition to the Charter, the Congress also ratified the Confederation programme that respected the programme objectives of trade unions, associated in the KOZ SR, and assumed the creation of a common platform for negotiations with the state government, federal government and legislative bodies. The Congress also discussed quite an important aspect of the future functioning of trade unions, namely financing and the property of the Confederation. In accordance with the Charter, a simple system of the Confederation authorities was established¹⁷:

¹⁷ The KOZ SR Congress, the KOZ SR Assembly, the KOZ SR Review Commission, and the first KOZ SR officials. Roman Kováč was elected President, while Alojz Engliš, Svetozár Korběl, Ladislav Polka and Dušan Jamrich were elected Vice-Presidents. The KOZ SR was defined to be a free, separate, voluntary, open, non-partisan, independent and democratic organisation of the separate, equal and independent trade unions and the trade union associations made equal to trade unions in the territory of Slovakia. (Práca, 1990).

The period between the first and the second congress resulted in several important events of a personal and organisational nature. The Framework of the KOZ SR programme was approved with commissions of the KOZ SR Assembly having been established as early as 1990. Since some leaders were elected to the functions in the federal trade union structures or to the Slovak National Council respectively, there were some changes in the top management, too. The Confederation also reacted to the organisational issues arising from the Dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless what became the important role of the Confederation was the work in the Economic and Social Concertation Council (hereinafter referred to as RHSD) and negotiations on the individual general agreements.

This is how the First KOZ SR Congress put an end to the first period of the transformation process of trade unions in Slovakia after 1989. The period was affected mainly by the disputes regarding the form of transformation of both the umbrella organisation and the very functioning of trade unions in Slovakia as an element of the political system and the new political regime to democratise itself (being democratic). What can be regarded as essential is the transition from the centralised form of the trade union movement dependent on and linked to the ruling political party that was had a major impact on politics in the former regime, to a more confederative-like type, base of which a new umbrella organisation, independent of any political party or another trade union political subject had been established. It had maintained, whether it be for financial, property and organisational reasons, the legal continuity with the former ROH trade union organisation. It should be noted that despite the first positive evaluation of the transformation of the trade union movement in Slovakia in 1990, some of the fundamental problems that are still present today root in the very emergence of the KOZ SR. These are in particular the issues of financing, property, and the free confederative form, significantly restricting the capacity of the KOZ SR to act; application of its decisions in the practice, as well as the enforcement of the resolution implementation by the very trade unions it covers.

The Second KOZ SR Congress was held on the 24th and 25th of June, 1993 and brought in particularly significant changes in the organisational structure of the Confederation. The newly adopted statutes extended the system of authorities by the Management Board and the

Board of Arbitration that had the jurisdiction over disputes concerning the rights and obligations arising from the membership in the Confederation between the Confederation and its members. The Congress constituted the functions of the President and four Vice-Presidents¹⁸. Along with the representatives of productive and non-productive unions, they formed the Management Board that, being the executive and management body, meets at least once a month. Its duties include, for example, proposing the suspension of membership and the exclusion of a member from the Confederation, approving the proposals in the field of international relations, and taking a position on legal proposals (Dokumenty II. zjazdu KOZ SR, 1993).

The delegates approved a new KOZ SR programme that defined several areas of objectives in the field of trade union policy in relation to the State and its bodies, political parties and movements, in relation to the employers associational partners, and to the regional authorities¹⁹, too.

In the field of internal activities, the prime task was to support the efforts to maintain and expand the membership, as the Confederation experienced a decrease in members - from 2.5 million to 1.5 million during - the first four years of its existence.

¹⁸ Alojz Engliš was elected President, Michal Radev, Václav Števko, Juraj Blahák and Daniel Repáš became Vice-Presidents.

¹⁹ The KOZ SR Program, material of the Second KOZ SR Congress, June 1993. In relation to the State and its bodies, Confederacy claimed the right of co-decision on minimum wages, living wage, other living and working conditions, and the right to conclude the agreements concerning these issues with the public authorities, in particular with the government and the central government authorities, also the right to participate in decision-making on the structural changes in various areas of the economic and social life, and the right to influence the content of legislative and regulatory activities regarding the trade union members and their interests. In relation to political parties, movements and social organisations in full respect of the principle of being non-partisan, the Confederation tried to implement its own interests into the programs of political parties and movements, to gain the support of the elected Members of Parliament for the ideas, programs and objectives of trade unions and to promote the trade union officials as the candidates of the chosen political parties. In relation to employers as a social partners, the Confederation was to consolidate the interests concerning the employment and social status of the employees, to promote and coordinate the common interests in relation to the government and to use the collective bargaining on behalf of its members. In relation to the regional government authorities and local governments, the Confederation set itself the objective to affect the establishment and functioning of the regional tri-partites and to promote the active policy of employment and economic development of the respective regions of Slovakia.

The Confederation also wanted to unify the opinions of trade unions regarding solving the home affairs and the opinions of the individual trade unions on the society-wide questions. In addition to the programme, the Congress also approved several resolutions²⁰²¹, in which KOZ SR calls on the government, parliament, political parties and movements to find a constructive solution to problems related to the transformation of the political and economic system of the Slovak Republic, to take the measures that will alleviate the related effects on the underprivileged segments of population and to develop urgently the concept of the new social system and employment. However, the results of the Congress did not meet the expectations. The following days showed that no positive regrouping had been made on the Congress and that the Confederation had not found the means to get rid of its cumbersomeness, inconsistencies and powerlessness (Barinych, 2002a).

The Third KOZ SR Congress, held in Bratislava on 11 and 12 October, 1996, was to close a longstanding debate on the change in statutes, at the proposal of which two groups of trade unions evolved with differing views on the structure of the bodies of Confederation, their power, representation of the individual trade unions in these bodies, system of financing the KOZ SR headquarters, strengthening its competence and bindingness of the decisions taken. As far as the KOZ SR bodies are concerned, the Congress approved their enlargement to the Board of Presidents of Trade Unions, the KOZ SR Bureau and the regional KOZ SR authorities, the change in the composition of the convention and the bindingness of the resolutions of the Confederation bodies. The Congress imposed the conditions to increase the operability of the Confederation, yet it did not resolve the fundamental question of financing. This is what made it impossible to make fundamental changes mainly within the professional background of the trade union headquarters and the KOZ SR as a whole. The most fundamental changes

²⁰The Resolution on the Social Situation and the Social Reform in SR, Resolution on the Economic Situation in SR

²¹The Resolution on the Czech and Slovak Confederation of Trade Unions (hereinafter referred to as ČSKOZ SR) transformation and on taking over its rights and obligations - here KOZ SR declares its preparedness to become independent as well as to envisage the definite solution of the situation at the ČSKOZ SR Congress in November 1993 that decided to stop its existence and, as a result, ČSKOS and KOZ SR were established.

made by the Third Congress concern the organisational and personnel fields. The new system of the Convention arrangement can be regarded as the most significant organisational change. While until then every trade union was sending just one representative, usually the President of the trade union, the number of representatives in the new system depended on the strength of the membership. What seemed to be a beneficial change was the involving of trade unionists from the individual basic organisations of the union that had not held leading positions, allowing introduction of the presumption for better awareness from the trade union headquarters through the trade unions to the basic organisations and vice versa.

The new leadership sought not to confine itself only to challenges, statements and opinions, but to involve the entire membership and thus vigorously enforce its (and their) interests. Contrary to the lighter promoting of the interests by the previous KOZ SR leaders, the new management took a much sharper attitude towards the government that jeopardized, within a short time, the privileged position of KOZ SR in the role of the tripartite partner and led to the disruption of the social dialogue in 1997. The change of direction of the new top management can be illustrated by the words of the President of the KOZ SR I. Saktor: "We said clearly we won't proceed with the alibi phenomenon of the previous top management, saying that the trade unions are apolitical. They have not and will never be." (*Odborárske spektrum*, 22/1998, p.6) After the disruption of the social dialogue in 1997, the Confederation rightly gained the impression that - at least - its privileged position, if not its very existence, in the tripartite was jeopardized, which might be considered a reason for more vigorous approach of the Confederation towards political issues. Pursuing its programme since 1996, the Confederation increasingly expressed both its political and the socio-economic demands. Its main concern was to preserve all democratic institutions and the mode of governance²².

²² These efforts were manifested, for example, in rejecting the amendment of the Criminal Code, in expressing, through the Convention, serious concern regarding the escalation of internal political tension in Slovakia caused by the arrogance in the enforcement of power and disrespect for the basic rules of democratic society, in supporting the requirements of the open forum *Save Culture!*; the President of the KOZ SR I. Saktor also spoke at the event *Save Slovakia!* organized by the opposition, the Confederation further signed the cooperation

The Fourth KOZ SR Congress was held in Bratislava on 13 and 14 February, 2000 and, contrary to the previous Congresses, did not deal only with procedural issues, such as statutes, but focused primarily on the programme of Confederation for the next period. In addition, the delegates of the Congress adopted several resolutions²³ along with the Call on the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Federation of Employers' Associations of SR (hereinafter referred to as AZZZ SR) which clarified the requirements laid down in the programme. Slight alteration in statutes concerned primarily the strengthening of competencies of the Board of Chairmen of Trade Unions as well as the funding mechanism. Briefly speaking, the election of the Confederation management confirmed the old-new leadership²⁴. Congress also dealt with other topical problems of the Confederation, such as a continuous decline in membership meaning the weakening of unions as a partner in social dialogue along with an unsatisfactory public opinion on trade union activities and the lack of trade union solidarity not only between the individual trade unions, but also inside them, leading to a lesser capacity of trade union headquarters to act. Despite the significant changes within the Slovak political scene which took place after the 1998 election and in which was the KOZ SR considerably involved, the Confederation failed to take its planned role and there had been no fundamental change in its status (or strengthening) either towards the social partners, or the public mind. Even the Fourth Congress did not come up with a necessary reform of the Confederacy as the delegates were not willing to do it.

The Fifth KOZ SR Congress was held in Bratislava on 13 and 14 November 2004. In addition to the normal agenda²⁵ and election of the

agreement with the Gremium of the Third Sector and negotiated various issues with political parties. The most important activity was, however, participation in the election campaign before the election in September 1998.

²³ The Resolution on Health Financing in 2001, The Resolution on Working Conditions and Remuneration of Employees in Public Sector

²⁴ I. Saktor was re-elected President, E. Škultéty became Vice-President for Trade Union Policy, P. Gajdoš Vice-President for Economic Policy and Social Partnership, J. Blahák Vice-President for Productive Trade Unions, and I. Lenský was elected Vice-President for Non-productive Unions.

²⁵ The KOZ SR program for the period 2004 - 2008 and the Resolutions: The Resolution on the Situation in the Social Dialogue, The Resolution on Education of Trade Unions, The Resolution on Integration of Trade Unions.

KOZ SR representatives²⁶, the Congress was to address the reform of trade union structures towards a greater capacity to act and seeking solutions for the steadily declining membership and the resulting weakening of the KOZ SR position. In the Resolution on the Integration of Trade Unions, the congress delegates expressed the necessity to combine and integrate the trade unions as a prerequisite for their being able to act, as well as the professionalisation of unions, the reform of their structures along with avoiding fragmentation of power. The trade unions failed again to deliver the content of this resolution. There was no qualitative change²⁷ in personnel matters; the KOZ SR structure and funding system remained unchanged, no significant shift in the integration of trade unions occurred²⁸. Through the statutes, the establishment of the regional authorities (regional KOZ SR councils) depended on the will of the trade unions members operating in the respective region, which weakened the position of KOZ SR in regions, with the establishment of regional structures being built on a voluntary basis²⁹. On the other hand, the position of the Board of Chairmen of Productive Unions and the Board of Chairmen of Non-productive Unions was strengthened through statutes in relation to the collective bargaining and social partnership.

In addition to these topics, an animated discussion on the relation of KOZ SR to political parties was opened. Being aware of the fact that, after 2002, the social partner of trade unions was the right-wing liberal government, which sought, in accordance with its programme, to eliminate the effect of the social dialogue on the community-wide

²⁶ With no other candidate, I. Saktor was re-elected President, E. Škultéty Vice-President for Trade Union Policy, V. Mojš Vice-President for Economic Policy and Collective Bargaining, J. Schmidt Vice-President for Productive Trade Unions and J. Gašperan Vice-President for Non-productive Unions.

²⁷ After I. Saktor's leaving from the KOZ SR presidency in October 2006, the Convention elected M. Gazdík, who was unable to raise and deal with the issues of reform, funding and professionalisation of trade unions.

²⁸ In 2007, the KOZ SR has 35 trade unions member, in some cases we talk about the unions concerned with as little as a few dozen members: see the Table 2.1 Changes in membership ... The merging congress between the Metal Trade Union Association (OZ KOVO) and the Trade Union of Services took place at the end of 2007, between OZ KOVO and the Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport in 2008, the other integration efforts of some trade unions had also been made (see below).

²⁹ The absence of regional structures of the social partners contributed to weakening, even non-functioning of a regional social dialogue (Uhlerová, 2012d).

processes and to eliminate the elements of corporatism in promotion of the interests of workers, the delegates agreed on the need to cooperate with political parties and political entities close to the views of the Confederacy. Despite some trade union representatives' efforts to promote the congress resolution supporting cooperation with the political party SMER-SD, the message of Delegates of the Fifth Congress rejected this effort and expressed support for efforts to work with those political entities whose programmes are close to the programme and objectives of the Confederation and those that would show an interest in cooperation, considering the diversity of political views of trade union members³⁰³¹.

The trade union activities between the Fifth and Sixth Congress focused mainly on seeking the political allies and participating in the election campaign in mid-2006. After the 2006 parliamentary election, when the governing coalition under the leadership of the political party SMER-SD - which favoured trade unions and their requirements - was formed, the trade unions, addressing the issues and achieving the objectives of the socio-economic KOZ SR agenda, focused on integrating its requirements into the Government Policy Statement and its fulfillment. The amendment of the Labour Code (though not all trade union requirements were implemented there), the increase in the minimum wage, the resumption of the negotiations at the tripartite level in the Economic and Social Council and, eventually, the acceptance of trade unions as the full government partners regarded as a partial victory by the trade unions.³² However, the unions had to tackle the serious internal problem concerning the membership decline; even the Fifth Congress failed to reverse this problem. Trade unions focused more on strengthening its external position, where the Western European model of acceptance of trade unions by government succeeded, but that delayed the needed reform of their organisations and structures again.

³⁰ The Message of Delegates of the Fifth KOZ SR Congress to trade unionists, employees - citizens of the Slovak Republic from 13th November 2004.

³¹ A further relationship of the trade unions (KOZ SR and the individual trade unions respectively) to the political parties after the Fifth Congress is referred to in the next part of this chapter.

³² Some opponents of the cooperation KOZ SR - SMER-SD, though, do not consider the trade unions in this relationship a partner, but a need.

The Sixth Congress, held in Piešťany on the 13th and 14th of November, 2008, did not bring any significant changes neither in the structure of bodies, nor in the programme priorities and objectives. More or less the same officials were confirmed by the delegates' votes. The last Seventh KOZ SR Congress, held in Bratislava on the 15th and 16th of November, 2012, can be regarded only as the strengthening of the "status quo" in the organisational and personal³³ structure of the Confederation without any actually demonstrated and clearly formulated effort, enshrined in the basic Confederation documents to change anything.

Summarizing the above brief excursion into an almost quarter of a century long existence of KOZ SR shaped by its constitutional documents (programme, statutes, resolutions, messages, etc.) it may be said that, in general, based on its programme, that the Confederation focused mainly on three issues: defining its attitude to political parties and movements (or other elements of the political system); defining its position in the tripartite; and encouraging the membership. In the first years of its existence, the Confederation focused mainly on building its structures in the new conditions of democracy and its own transformation, transferring of assets from the former ROH as well as engagement in a tripartite body, the Economic and Social Treaty Council (RHSD). Thanks to the negative "legacy" of the former regime, the Confederation focused on its political neutrality for a long time, regardless of the definition of the meaning and the content of this concept. As early as the period before the 1998 election, the Confederation participated, for the first time, in an election campaign aimed at mobilising its members to engage in election, thus contributing to the effort to change the mode of governance in Slovakia. After the "good" outcome of the election, the Confederation focused on putting forward a legislative anchoring of tripartite, in which it succeeded. Nonetheless, the gradual deterioration of relations with the government, which had even enshrined the removing of corporatist elements in the representation of interests in the economic and social spheres of its Government Policy Statement, the activities of the Confederation were aimed at shortening the electoral period of M. Dzurinda's cabinet by co-organising the petition and subsequent referendum. That situation forced

³³ Even though, J. Kollár (up to then operating in the trade union SLOVES) was elected new President of KOZ SR, and S. Manga Vice-President, unknown within the trade union structures.

trade unions in Slovakia to seek their political allies among the relevant political parties, which launched a debate within the union on whether to cooperate with political parties or not and, if so, to what extent. It seemed that the unions had found this political ally, resulting in a multiple signing of a cooperation agreement between the KOZ SR and SMER-SD. After the 2006 election, when party SMER-SD won, and again after the 2012 election, it seemed that this "partnership" could provide trade unions with some benefits, though this issue also causes the fragmentation of a common opinion within the unions and among their representatives. These external effects on the activity of the Confederacy seem to "divert" its attention from the need to solve internal problems, its own reorganisation, qualitative analysis and the internal audit for the purpose of naming the causes of problems and finding new and modern forms of appropriate solutions.

Based on the content analysis of the basic KOZ SR documents it can be noted that, during almost 25 years of its independent existence, the authorities³⁴, structure, powers and programme objectives of the Confederation did not undergo any significant revision, restructuring or reform. The authorities of the Confederation have had their present form since the Third Congress was held in 1996³⁵. Since then, they have undergone only minor "cosmetic" changes. During the next period, the KOZ SR focused more on programmatically defining its objectives and defining its attitude to other actors within the political system, and focused less on internal problems and their solutions.

A relatively strong factor of inertia remains in this area as well as within the large personnel continuity, which generally weakens the

³⁴ The supreme body of KOZ SR is the Congress, while the Convention is the supreme body of the Congress. The statutory and executive body is the KOZ SR Management Board. The body of operational management is the KOZ SR Bureau, the coordinative body of KOZ SR members is the KOZ SR Board of Chairmen. Other KOZ SR authorities include the auditors, the Board of Arbitration and advisory KOZ SR bodies (KOZ SR Statutes, Material of the Seventh KOZ SR Congress, November 2012).

³⁵ The First 1990 Congress approved these bodies: the Congress, the Convention, the Review Commission.

During the Second 1993 Congress: the authorities of Management Board, Board of Arbitration, positions of President and Vice-presidents were added.

During the Third 1996 Congress: the authorities of Bureau, the Board of Chairmen and the regional authorities were added. Essentially, the authorities work in this form even nowadays.

position of trade unions in Slovakia. The unwillingness and reluctance of the union representatives to change the situation at all, too weak “voices from below”, which would encourage and started internal reform, and a predominant focus of the Confederation on the external influences on KOZ SR activity might be considered the main reason regarding the above-mentioned.

Personnel Resources of the KOZ SR: Membership and Leadership

At the beginning of this part, we briefly touch the Theory of Group Formation, the Theory (Logic) of Collective Action and the Social Choice Theory, which deals with motivation and reasons for the entry of individuals into the interest group. The so-called *Black's theorem*, which poses two fundamental questions: why individuals enter into interest groups, and why and in what amount they are willing to pay membership dues, is also a part of the theory. In answering these questions, it uses two variables, namely the amount of membership dues and the benefits, which a member of the group possesses (seeks). It follows that the size of the membership is closely linked to (or contingent on) the amount of membership fees to be paid. Each member may have an impression that the given amount of the membership fee is either too high or too low. If the contributions are too low, the interest group becomes ineffective and does not bring the expected benefits for some members. Conversely, if the contributions are too high, they might be regarded as high costs for the potential member, thus making a group unattractive (Ainsworth, 2002).

Let us return for a moment to the work of M. Olson (1995) and the Collective Action Theory, which highlights the question of individual motivation to membership, involvement in joint activities, a free-rider problem and the mechanisms of internal mobilisation. His analysis was built on the model of the rationally and economically behaving person, which is based on the logic of the greatest barriers to growth or maintaining the membership of a group, namely *a free-rider problem*. According to Olson, being a “free-rider” is a rational choice of individuals not to participate in the cost sharing that would have resulted from the membership (time, charges), as it can take the benefits without being a member. It follows the assumption that those groups that represent the so-called group (collective) benefits, i.e. benefits, from which the whole society or a particular segment of it is benefiting, regardless of whether they are members of the group or not, have particular difficulties with their own forming and the very survival. The free-rider problem is even more serious for large groups (e.g. trade unions), for the bigger the group is, the less the individual perceives their individual contribution having

impact on the success of the group. Therefore, the key to maintaining and survival of the interest group is the so-called selective benefits that would differentiate members from non-members, and their effect would be felt only by members of the group. Olson distinguishes three types of benefits, emphasising in particular the *material benefits* as a tangible reward or benefit of membership (financial reward, services, etc...). Another group is the so-called *solidarity benefits* that are socially derived intangible benefits of membership (e.g. sense of belonging to the group, social status, prestige, self-realisation, etc.). The last benefit of membership is the *opportunity to comment* (the problem, affair, etc.). Intangible benefits can help profile the highly politicised groups where political preferences and objectives are a more determining factor of their formation and existence.

The status, frequency and agility of membership are one of the elemental sources of influence of the interest group and thus the trade unions, too. Through its membership the interest group demonstrates not only its strength, robustness, but also the legitimacy of the demands and the representativeness of the organisation. The criterion of representativeness is often the condition for the acceptance of the group in negotiations. This is particularly the case of sectoral interest groups (e.g. unions and employers' associations), which seek to legitimise their relation to the government through the height of membership. Representativeness and reporting of the extensive membership base balances the lack of interest groups persisting in the absence of direct participation in the electoral contest (Kunc, 2008, p. 84), since, in the existence of a neo-corporative model of mediation of interests, they are involved in the formation of government policy without having obtained a mandate from the voters, which may question the legitimacy of participation in the creating of government policies. Trade unions demonstrate their representativeness in order to be members of the tripartite, or to negotiate a collective agreement with the employer. Representativeness is demonstrated by the ratio of the number of members to the total number of potential members (the entire represented social group, profession, companies operating in a particular sector, etc.).

The membership is usually considered to be the first and perhaps the most basic tool to measure the power of a trade union, since it is an important indicator of the ability to organise and deliver mass support

and the potential to mobilise workers for industrial action. The membership is one of the important factors that determine the KOZ SR influence and hence its status as an interest group, pressure group against the other partners and actors within the political system. Firstly, we have to state that the membership of trade unions united in the KOZ SR has been steadily decreasing since 1990 and this condition has not ceased, nor reversed yet. The given situation is contingent upon the impact and interaction of the amount of internal and external factors. This significantly affects the status of individual trade unions and the KOZ SR itself in the political and social system, as well as toward its social partners, the ability to organise pressure events, to influence the government or to gain respect from the social and political partners. Monitoring the development in membership from 1990 to the present has proved its continuous character with a tendency to decline. In 1990, the KOZ SR assembled nearly 2.5 million members, while at the end of 2014 there were for about 10 percent of that number. During a quarter-century of the KOZ SR existence it has lost almost 90 percent of the total number of members in 1990 (see Table 1). If the size of membership is a fundamental resource and tool for measuring the trade union force, it is evident that the given source is weakening considerably, and it is more than necessary to deal with this negative development.

Table 1: The development of KOZ SR membership within the period 1990 - 2014

| Year | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Number of Members | 2,443,977 | 2,027,910 | 1,759,728 | 1,574,258 | 1,444,805 | 1,225,960 | 1,116,923 | 977,751 | 830,542 |
| Year | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Number of Members | 751,791 | 702,419 | 655,178 | 603,993 | 570,385 | 506,682 | 458,510 | 416,404 | 394,162 |
| Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | | |
| Number of Members | 365,541 | 336,627 | 310,649 | 295,916 | 286,159 | 272,911 | 262,304 | | |

It is thus logical that - considering the resources of the individual trade unions and the Confederation itself - a lot of material evaluating the state of organisation of the trade unions, defining the factors influencing

this situation and proposing measures to improve or reverse this state was released. In 1994, the Management Board discussed the KOZ SR material entitled “The Situation in the Trade Union Movement in Slovakia and the Implementation Procedure to Influence its Membership” („Stav v odborovom hnutí na Slovensku a realizačný postup na ovplyvňovanie jeho členstva“), which was intended to stimulate both the discussion and action to prevent personnel weakening of trade unions associated in the Confederation. Since the Confederation had to deal with the crisis in the functioning of tripartite at that time, the measures resulting from this study had not been given sufficient attention.

In 1998, the KOZ SR produced the like material “Project for Mobilisation of Membership” („Projekt na aktivizáciu členskej základne“), which aimed at the evaluation of the status of membership and recommended measures, to stop its decline and then give rise to its growth. Based on different materials coming from the sociological surveys conducted by the Confederation between 1998 and 2000, the experiences of trade union headquarters in Central Europe³⁶, the results of workshops³⁷ on the strategy of organising new members, the experience of young people in the trade unions³⁸ and, last but not least, the experience of individual trade unions, a comprehensive strategy to increase membership was established, including the organising of new union members, an implementation project of the campaign³⁹ (the so-

³⁶In mid-1999, there was a conference of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions on Organising and recruitment in Central and Eastern Europe held under the auspices of the KOZ SR.

³⁷ In September 2000 a workshop on “Organising new members” was held in Budapest.

³⁸ In October 2000, the KOZ SR established the Youth Commission (later the Youth Council) as its advisory body whose task is to express an opinion on the issues of young people organised in trade unions, especially on the ready-to-handle legislation on education, social policy relating to youth and, last but not least, seek to attract young people into unions. This authority was based on the recommendations and experiences of the partner trade union headquarters. The so-called youth commissions or committees had already worked with some trade unions.

³⁹ Within the Action Strategy, the target groups which should be given special attention, and specified methods that should be applied in reaching potential members of the target groups were identified. Among these target groups, on which the Confederation should focus its attention, were included: 1. employees who are not organised in unions where a trade union does not work, but also where it already operates, 2. newly employed staff, 3. the youth, 4. employees (union members), with whom the employer terminates the employment contract,

called Action strategy)⁴⁰ and the methodological guidance, i.e. a sort of guideline, "how to organise".

According to the findings of the authors (Barinych - Habšuda - Chovančík, 2000) of the given material, the form and the trade union activities substantially reflected the socio-political and economic changes that took place in the Central and Eastern European countries in the last decade of the 20th century. They came along with a significant decline in union members, with consequences in the defense and enforcement of the requirements and interests of workers. Most trade unions have, regardless of the assembled workers' industry, a very difficult position in the organisation of members in the emerging private companies, in particular those that have never been part of the sector. The ability of trade unions to influence governments and political parties in these countries can be seen as very limited. After a number of years, there are still clearly evident consequences that the representatives of the "new" unions in Slovakia failed to defend many important rights (e.g. the right to participate in the management of enterprises) in 1990. This - along with other mistakes - leads to the reluctance of officials and ordinary members to become personally involved in the struggle for the interests of the requirements of workers, the loss of prestige of trade unions and ultimately to the dramatic decline in their membership. A considerable part of union members are approaching their retirement age, thus there is a real danger that the membership will fall, after their departure, to a level that will no longer be sufficiently representative for the social partners.

The situation concerning membership in trade unions in Slovakia in the last decade of the 20th century was harmed by various external and internal factors. The external causes are, in general, present in most post-communist countries that have already undergone a transformation process. These involve mainly the atomization and networking of businesses, the ownership and the change in it, and they also arise from globalisation. After 1989, Slovakia underwent profound political, social and economic changes that were significantly reflected not only in the state of membership, but also in the overall position of trade unions in the

5. unemployed, 6. women, 7. temporarily unemployed union members, 8. pensioners - trade unionists.

⁴⁰ Since 2002, the issue of organising new union members and activation of membership has been included in the KOZ SR Program and its main tasks.

new social, political and economic conditions. It is these changes that can be listed among the external factors influencing the organisation of trade unions. Other relevant external factors might include the consequences of applying the results of scientific and technical progress, reflected in the structural changes throughout the industry and individual national economies and in the elicitation of the pressure on staff reductions, change of their structure and qualification requirements. The globalisation and the growing tendency to individualism may be crucial factors influencing the situation of the membership. Globalisation means, *inter alia*, that capital goes beyond the national boundaries and moves towards a cheaper labor power. This often comes along with the destruction of jobs; capital has no interest in the activities trade unions may develop, which may prevent it from its movement; and it has sufficient funds to paralyse them, or at least hamper their activities. Growing tendencies towards individualism result from the efforts of individuals to succeed in a competitive environment. The transformation process in Slovakia was marked by a new society stratification caused by the privatisation of the means of production, which was also reflected in the reduction of the number of employees. Since 2008, the state of membership has been affected also by the economic crisis and its consequences, such as unemployment, decline in real wages, inflation and so on. The rationalisation of public spending leads to job losses in the public sector, which results in the outflow of trade unionists working in the public sector. The halt of economic growth, decline in purchasing power due to job losses, wage cuts, price increases, drop in demand in the market and so on, is reflected in decreasing production and private sector efforts to eliminate costs, with a significant proportion of them being wages, resulting again in job losses without creating new jobs, and unemployment. As a result, the state of unemployment refers to the reduced possibility for trade unions to expand and broaden their membership⁴¹; on the contrary, it represents a reduction in membership

⁴¹ The National Program for Organising New Members identified a number of other external causes, for example the asset stripping, bankruptcies of businesses, political instability, poor economic performance, high share of the informal economy, undeclared work, unfair privatisation, anti-union attitudes of employers, weakened position of trade unions in the legislation, disappointment with the policies of left-wing parties when they were in

(cf. Čambáliková, 2008, p. 48 – 49). Indeed, the external causes can hardly be influenced by one institution, but knowing and defining them allow adopting and implementing such measures that would at least adapt to the situation induced by these causes or to take steps which would lead to a reevaluation of the efficiency of operation of the institution or, where appropriate, to the elimination of the negative impacts coming from outside.

The internal factors influencing the degree of organisation of trade unions may include the organisational fragmentation of trade unions, lack of conception, predominant voluntarism and subjectivism in decision-making and management activities of bodies and officials at all levels of the organisational structure, lower levels of education of officials and membership, lack of understanding of the role of unions in the newly changed conditions by a considerable percentage of membership and some officials, corruption of some officials in the privatisation process, formalism at work and outdated methods of many officials and basic organisations, little flexibility to respond to emerging challenges and requirements of membership, victory of the managements of undertakings over trade unions in the struggle for communication with employees, weakening of sectoral and regional structures of trade unions, the fact that the organisations of individual undertakings are often inward-looking and are involved in the life of trade unions and trade union centers only as consumers and not as participants in internal discussions, lack of media coverage of efforts and achievements, lack of difference between members and non-members of trade unions in collective bargaining, loss of interest in being organised once the threshold of a particular grade has been reached, fear of job loss as a result of pressure from employers, speculative activities of officials, lack of work with young people, women and the unemployed, tendency of trade unions to become inward-looking (National programme for Organising Union Members, 2001). Despite defining the internal causes having negative effects on the state of union membership, the leaders at every level of their structures have not been able, on the basis of critical evaluation of their organisation and their activities, to realise the steps

government, activities of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, obstacles to the registration of trade unions.

and measures that could at least partially eliminate the impact of these internal factors⁴² (cf Mansfeldová - Kroupa, 2005, p. 129 - 156)

The decentralisation of trade union structures causes clumsiness in organising various activities (especially coercive, protest, promotional actions, etc.). The analysis of trade unions statutes has also shown that there is disunity and differentiation in the structures of the KOZ SR bodies and the individual unions. Most trade unions also lacked and still lack an internal discussion. Moreover, the existence of a large number of small trade unions, which are often made up only by a few dozen or hundred members, causes the drainage of finances to the costs of the executive apparatus without any efficiency, as small unions, by virtue of their smaller forces, are in a rather passive than active position. Other internal factors include the lack of means to ensure greater professionalism in the trade unions, too slow a decision-making process as well as the process of unification of opinions within the Confederacy, lack of legal aid and advice, lack of solidarity with other workers and solidarity between the trade unions themselves. Some unions also operate in one sector without expressing an interest to integrate. This could be justified by two problems: by property and by the trade union officials (Barinych, 2002c). As for the first problem, some unions present fictional members, thus can survive from the redistribution of income from property "inherited" from the former ROH that is allocated in accordance with the set key, which is the number of members of various trade unions in 1990. As for the problem of officials, the question arises, what to do with representatives and officials of those unions which would merge with others. As of 1st January 2000, there were 38 members of the Confederation. In 2007, there were 35 of them. Since 2007, the successful integration efforts of some trade unions can be seen, resulting in a slight reduction in the number of trade unions covered by the KOZ SR; as of 1st January 2012

⁴² In 2007, the evaluation material redefined the internal and external causes of adverse developments affecting the membership, confirming they are not fundamentally different from those named in the National Program of Organising in 2001, despite the fact that it is almost a seven year distance, the situation having changed in many ways. As compared to the National Program, the internal causes are repeated again, for example the argument about the consequences of applying the results of scientific observation and technical progress, or the change of structure and qualification requirements for employees, which gives the impression of repeated justification of internal weaknesses of the organisation.

there were 28 of them⁴³. The trade union integration is a natural process which should allow a more successful procedure, especially for the rising unemployment rate, inflation in times of crisis, and social unrest. It is also to help trade unions to face adverse trends, such as the reduction in membership, financial difficulties, changes in industrial organisation and technology. For many trade unions it could be a way to face the impending doom (Tomeš - Tkáč, 1993).

With regard to the steady decline in membership, resulting in the gradual reduction in the rate and severity of the KOZ SR representativeness as a social partner of the government and the employers, the leaders of the Confederation started to defend the interests of other social groups, especially of the elderly. In the social dialogue negotiations, the representatives of the Confederation raise questions that relate to those social groups. In doing this, however, the Confederation changes quite significantly the missions of trade unions in general and its own mission, which is defined in its basic documents, as the obligation to protect, defend and promote workers' rights. In most EU countries, the

⁴³ In 2007, the Metalworkers' Federation of the Slovak Republic (OZ KOVO) merged with Slovak Trade Union of Services and, in 2008, OZ KOVO merged with the Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport. After the merging, the name OZ KOVO was maintained. In December 2009, the Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration (SLOVES) merged with the Trade Union of Culture and Social Organisations (SOZ KaSO) and the Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration and Culture (SLOVES) was established. On 1 January 2010, the Slovak Trade Union of Energy Workers and OZ Chemistry merged and created the trade union called the Energy Chemical Trade Union (ECHOZ). On the same date OZ KOVO and the Metallurgy Trade Union Association (OZ Metalurg) merged, maintaining the name OZ KOVO. Since 2008 there has been the Integrated Trade Union (IOZ), resulting from the merger of the Textile, Clothing and Leather Union (SOZ TOK), the Public Transport Union and the Construction Trade Union Association.

However, there were attempts to merge already, for example, OZ Chemistry with the Slovak Trade Union Association of Glass Industry, OZ KOVO with SOZ TOK etc., but these attempts failed mainly because of the personal ambitions of the officials, whose fear of the loss of their status prevailed, as well as due to the fear of loss of the "identity" of union, which would be "absorbed" by a greater union, or by the property grounds. The Trade Union Association of Agriculture Workers and the Trade Union Association of Wood, Forestry and Water Management, OZ Chemistry and the Trade union of Food Workers expressed the interest in integrating, too.

unemployed and pensioners have their own organisation and only cooperate with the trade union headquarters⁴⁴.

Trade unions in Slovakia also offer two basic kinds of material benefits in the framework of recruitment activities, namely services⁴⁵ and financial benefits⁴⁶. These could be classified as selective advantages, as they are to be beneficial only for members, featuring a sort of added value benefits of union membership. Indeed, we cannot deny the existence of solidarity benefits and the opportunity to express the opinion on particular problems thanks to union membership (according to the typology of benefits by Olson), but to specify the role they play in the motivation to be a union member would require a separate research directed towards the membership. Nevertheless, we will present at least the results of the European Trade Union Institute research (ETUI, 2009) aimed at increasing the knowledge of preferences and motivational factors for young people to enter the trade union. The results revealed that all three sets of benefits are represented among the most attractive advantages, with the domination of material (financial and services) benefits. The better wage and better working conditions are in first place, the benefits which, when enshrined in the collective agreement after collective bargaining, apply to all employees, not just union members. If the most motivating thing is the higher wage which can be achieved

⁴⁴ An example of such a cooperation in Slovakia is the Partnership Cooperation Agreement between the Union of Pensioners of Slovakia and KOZ SR signed in 1999, with the aim and purpose being the agreement and implementation of mutually beneficial cooperation in ensuring and improving the care of the elderly. While the Confederation gives the possibility of extending the number of the represented and thereby strengthening its bargaining position, the Union of Pensioners deals with the ability to substantially improve the chance to pursue their interests, because it would apparently never reach the same bargaining power as the KOZ SR possesses.

⁴⁵ For example, organising of sporting and social activities for young employees, discussion events within the secondary vocational schools, educational activities, youth apprenticeship competitions, trips to the basic organisations, addressing the employees by a letter of Chairman of the organisation, distribution of leaflets and promotional materials, issuing the magazines of the union, gaining experience from foreign colleagues, promoting its business through a website, meeting young people, free legal advice, methodological assistance in collective bargaining, monitoring of the implementation of Occupational Health and Safety, organising of tours, children's camps, and so on.

⁴⁶ For example, financial contributions at various family events, financial contribution to recreation of children and family vacations, discounts on insurance and banking products, and so on.

through collective bargaining (and the right to negotiate a collective agreement belongs only to the trade unions), why is union membership (in most European countries) declining? The answer can be found precisely in the free-rider problem and the Rational Choice theory. If the biggest motivation is the benefit that falls into the category of collective benefits, and potential member behaves rationally (and not with solidarity), this benefit will not make him/her become a member of the organisation, thanks to which the benefit was provided. In this case, the selective advantages would have to be more attractive than the collective ones. Another answer may be that the rising of wages through collective bargaining is not so high that it could actually be sufficient motivation for joining the trade union (even once the rational choice of a free-rider has been overcome). At the same time, we can assume that selective benefits⁴⁷ offered by trade unions for their members are not attractive enough (or are absent) to encourage membership in the interest group.⁴⁸

All of the above mentioned internal factors would be summarised into six distinct groups of internal issues that have an impact on the organisation of trade unions in Slovakia and also the perception of their functioning by the public, which interacts mutually: firstly, it is the unsatisfactory structure of trade unions at all levels that causes insufficient and ineffective communication within the union in both directions between the members and officials, the unions and the Confederation, as well as between the unions themselves, and complicating the transmission of information; secondly, the lack of analysis of the individual members' needs with respect to a qualitative change in the labor force in the labor market, and unadjusted offer of selective benefits; thirdly, a non-existing distinction between trade union members and non-members in collective bargaining and the free-rider problem; fourthly, the insufficient marketing incorporating promotion, presentation, relation with media, building a relation with the public;

⁴⁷ The so-called services for union members were perceived rather as the classic benefits of collective agreements such as free legal assistance, education, ensuring occupational health and so on. After 2008, the Confederation has developed a project of the so-called "loyalty system" in order to benefit union members against non-members and to make the trade unions attractive as a whole. The loyalty program includes discounts and benefits in the field of recreation, banking and insurance services, and the purchase of motor vehicles.

⁴⁸ In 2010, the Confederation initiated its own campaign to recruit new members entitled "20 years together - Join us". This campaign failed to reverse the negative development, too.

fifthly, the insufficient use of proceeds from assets of trade unions to strengthen and finance the functioning of trade unions and the KOZ SR; sixthly, personal failures at all levels of organisation and management.

Summary

The issue of trade union membership (united in the KOZ SR) in Slovakia can be summarised as follows: while the Confederacy managed to stabilise its membership, namely trade unions it covers (as of 1st January 2015 it covered 28 trade unions), the number of members associated in each trade union failed to be stabilised, let alone raised. Trade union membership is continuously decreasing, which can be caused by external and internal factors. The loss of membership is also a major barrier to the development of social dialogue. To avoid weakening of their bargaining position in a social dialogue with the government and employers, the trade unions entitled themselves to represent the interests of other social groups, namely the unemployed and pensioners. This solution, however, seems more like a postponement of the real threat of weakening the force of the Confederation as a pressure group, since it does not address the causes of the decline in membership, but rather delays the resulting consequences.

Despite the fact that, since 2000, the trade unions have begun to address the issue of loss of membership, the adopted measures and implemented techniques were not sufficient to make them successful. One of the internal causes affecting this state may lie in the inadequate trade union structure, which has not undergone any more marked revision for more than 20 years of existence of the Confederation of Trade Unions and the individual trade unions, resulting in inefficient operation and internal communication within the structures of the Confederation as well as between its members. Although this problem is familiar, the trade union representatives did not express sufficient will regarding the need of their reformation, which would include not only the reforming of existing structures, but also transformation to the functioning, modern-minded organisation flexibly responding to external social, economic and political changes and impacts, while fully preserving the core mission of trade unions. Other causes can be sought in the long-lasting overriding negative

view of the public to the trade union functioning, presenting of their negative actions in the media⁴⁹, the lack of advertising and marketing of the trade unions themselves and their union representatives and the inability to reach the younger generation. What appears to be positive is the effort, but also some real steps in the integration of the unions into stronger, more robust, and more representative units with a better capacity to act, which could affect the future and the next position of trade unions in Slovakia. These steps taken by trade unions in Slovakia are beginning to correct somehow the errors committed in the early 90s, when there was atomisation and breakdown by sectors, the loss of forces and consequently a decline in membership⁵⁰. Fragmentation of forces in one sector (or profession) into several trade unions leads to their weakening and inconsistency in procedures that should be common (for example, when negotiating collective agreements for employees working in the public interest and government). Likewise, we could challenge certain reflections on acquiring members through the laws of competition, in which some authors (Ekiert - Kubík, 1998; Crowley, 2004) assume that trade unions will be more radical and actionable, if there were the rivaling units within a single sector, “competing” for a member. Considering the current situation of the KOZ SR membership we can claim the opposite: the fragmentation and rivalry within the trade unions lead to weakening of the trade union movement, mutual questioning of the legitimacy of

⁴⁹ Although the evaluation of the fulfillment of resolutions of The Sixth KOZ SR Congress in materials of The Seventh KOZ SR Congress in November 2012 concludes that the resolution on strengthening the overall social position of trade unions is met. The motivation for this conclusion is the finding that over the last four years the Confederation had succeeded in creating the conditions and tools for the trade unions for the campaign to recruit new members under the motto “20 years together - Join us!”, strengthening the professionalism of trade union officials through education system, recasting the website to be more attractive, presenting the opinions of experts of the Confederation to the public through the media and creating the so-called loyalty program for union members in order to make the trade union membership more attractive.

⁵⁰ At this point it should be noted that the economic crisis (especially the effort to rationalise public expenditures and the related “freezing” of wages of public sector employees) led to the fragmentation of trade unions active in education and health care. In June 2012, a breakaway New Education Union was created from the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science of Slovakia, and in March 2012, the Nurses and Midwives Trade Union was established. The reason being given is the dissatisfaction with the current actions of “old” trade unions, inactivity and lack of advocacy for all professions represented in the original Union.

individual trade unions, reduced ability to act, various internal conflicts, and certainly is not a guarantee of increasing the attractiveness of trade unions in the eyes of potential members.

Further serious problem faced by unions (not only in Slovakia), is the free-rider problem. Their main aim is to represent the economic and social interests and to defend the rights of workers, not just union members. Simply by this they claim to represent a broad segment of the population, and not only its members. For example, benefits brought about by a collective agreement negotiated with the employer through the union apply to all employees, not just to union members; of labor legislation agreed at the tripartite also benefit all employees, not just members of the organisation who participated in negotiations with the social partners, etc. According to Olson's terminology, it is a public non-excludable benefit with non-rivalrous consumption, which trade unions bring to all workers, not just their members. Both the collective benefits and the public benefit thus, paradoxically, weaken the interest group and threaten its continued survival, as they bind to basic resources, which the interest group has, namely the membership and economic resources.

Economic Resources of the KOZ SR

The assets and financial resources that enable continuous existence and operation of any organisation can be, to some extent, regarded as resources of influence of trade unions in politics (Malová, 2002). The KOZ SR statutes define three sources of funding of the Confederation, namely membership contributions, revenues and further incomes (donations). At the beginning of its existence, the KOZ possessed considerable assets inherited from the dissolved ROH, representing more than 16 billion Czechoslovak Koruna (CSK) (Barinych, 2002a). According to the newspaper SME, the proceeds from membership contributions within the Federal Republic in 1989 were only CSK 2, 091 million (SME, 22 March 2004). In March 1990, the Property, Administrative and Delimitation Union was established. It was founded with the aim to deal with these assets in accordance with the will of trade unions and to manage it in the meantime. In March 1990, the Congress passed a resolution that the assets, which the occupational committees of ROH were empowered to manage, were to be transferred to the ownership of grassroots, or local trade unions; the assets, that the corporate ROH committees were empowered to manage, were to be transferred to the ownership of that corporate trade union committees; the assets, with which the trade unions had the right to dispose of, their economic and special purpose facilities were to be transferred to the ownership of the successor trade union established on the ROH platform; all other assets were to be transferred to the Property, Administrative and Delimitation Union. All assets of this union were then divided by the number of members of the individual trade unions, as of 31 December 1989.

Slovak trade unions thus accounted for about a fifth of these assets, i.e. more than CSK three billion. On the basis of the Interim Statute, the KOZ had, as a legal entity and part of ČSKOZ SR, the power to establish special purpose facilities of the Confederacy. Thus, by the end of 1992, the KOZ was the institutional founder of eight special purpose facilities and economic facilities of trade unions, with the proprietary rights on their being possessed by the Property, Administrative and Delimitation Union. In January 1992, the Commercial Code came into force, which imposed an obligation on the economic founder of civic associations to transfer these

facilities to trading companies or cooperatives no later than one year from the entry into force or to cancel them. This regulation of the Commercial Code prompted the termination of the facilities mentioned above and the transfer of succession rights to the newly created legal entity, the United Property Fund of Trade Union Organisations in Slovak Republic (the current title is the United Property Fund of Fundamental Trade Union Organisations, hereinafter referred to as JMF). The latter was established by the Slovak Property, Administrative and Delimitation Union and the 38 trade unions operating in Slovakia on 19 June 1992. Their deposits gave the JMF assets worth CSK 2.174 billion. As of 31 December 1992, the Convention of the Confederation canceled all its economic facilities without liquidation, their legal successor becoming JMF. Simultaneously, the JMF founded its own trading companies under the Commercial Code on 1 January 1993, which took over the activities relating to these specific purpose facilities. JMF was established as an association of legal persons under Act 20f, et seq., of the Civil Code. On 26 August 1992, the JMF was entered in the register of interest associations of legal entities of District Office Bratislava as a trade union association of legal entities.

The JMF brings together member the trade unions operating in the territory of the Slovak Republic and Property Union of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic. The essential function of the JMF is the implementation of activities for its members - member trade unions, particularly in the financial, economic and internal management, accounting, payroll, material support, motor transport and other activities in the management of immovable and movable property of association for the purposes of maintenance, use, management, enhancement, and commercial exploitation for the benefit of the association members. Simultaneously, the JMF is active in the protection of property, economic and related rights of the association members. The JMF carries out its activities in accordance with its Memorandum, Statutes and legal regulations of the Slovak Republic, to the extent and under the conditions stipulated therein while respecting the objects of JMF. The JMF is a founder, shareholder and partner of several companies in which owns the decisive share of the capital. It provides the investment and refinancing activities for the trading companies, and other necessary activities serving the performance of their business.

Currently, among the JMF members there are 28 trade unions and the Property Union of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic. The largest share is possessed by the OZ KOVO⁵¹, namely 23.78 (after the JMF establishment it was 17.06%)⁵² (The Development of Economic and Financial Indicators of the JMP company, 2006). According to the economic performance of JMF, the last loss-making year was that of 1993; since 1994 the JMF has shown profit.⁵³

Despite the favourable economic results, the JMF did not have such a significant impact on the KOZ SR financing, where the supreme source of financing the activities remained the revenue from membership contributions from trade unions. According to the statutes, the membership fee of the Confederation member (or member trade union) represents 3.8% of the total amount of membership contributions at the level of basic organisations from the previous year. The set percentage is calculated by taking the 1% of the net wage of trade unionist as a basis. From this membership fee, 0.3% is earmarked for events organised by the Confederation (the so-called Action Fund), on the use of which decides the Convention of Confederacy.⁵⁴

⁵¹ These follow: Integrated Trade Union with 16.94%, Trade Union of Employees in Commerce and Tourism with 8.85%, Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science in Slovakia with 7.61%, and Trade Union of Agricultural Workers in Slovakia with 6.98%.

⁵² After the 2007 December merging Congress with the Slovak Trade Union of Services, this share increased to 21.95% and after the 2008 September merging Congress with the Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport NOZ to 23.78%. A consent of four unions with the largest percentage is sufficient to the decision of an absolute majority.

⁵³ For example, the average pre-tax profit of JMF in the period 1994 - 2005 amounted to SKK 69,524. The amount of JMF investment in the period 1994 - 2004 amounted to SKK 925,110. In 1994, the gross return on assets amounted to 2.61% and in 2005 it was 3.03%. In 1994, the return on sales amounted to 40.52% and in 2005 it was 33.5%.

⁵⁴ The KOZ SR Statutes adopted at the Fifth KOZ SR Congress in November 2004

Table 2: Development of membership and membership contributions of the KOZ SR in the period 1996 – 2014

| Year | Number of members | Membership contributions in SKK | Membership contributions in EUR | Membership contribution per member in SKK | Membership contribution per member in EUR |
|------|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1996 | 1,116,923 | 18,915,967,- | | 16.94 | |
| 1997 | 977,751 | 20,104,614,- | | 20.56 | |
| 1998 | 830,542 | 22,939,776,- | | 27.62 | |
| 1999 | 751,791 | 23,233,362,- | | 30.90 | |
| 2000 | 702,419 | 23,294,594,- | | 33.16 | |
| 2001 | 655,178 | 21,954,651,- | | 33.51 | |
| 2002 | 603,993 | 21,778,446,- | | 36.06 | |
| 2003 | 570,385 | 21,851,686,- | | 38.31 | |
| 2004 | 507,480 | 21,765,900,- | | 42.89 | |
| 2005 | 458,510 | 22,266,364,- | | 48.56 | |
| 2006 | 416,404 | 21,433,636,- | | 51.47 | |
| 2007 | 394,162 | 21,503,334,- | | 54.55 | |
| 2008 | 365,541 | 21,602,640.20 | | 59.10 | |
| 2009 | 337,621 | | 727,876.93 | | 2.16 |
| 2010 | 309,326 | | 663,189.54 | | 2.14 |
| 2011 | 295,916 | | 652,655.00 | | 2.21 |
| 2012 | 286,159 | | 578,342.05 | | 2.02 |
| 2013 | 272,911 | | 576,785.67 | | 2.11 |
| 2014 | 262,304 | | 570,590.41 | | 2.18 |

The above table 2 shows that, despite the decreasing trend in membership of trade unions, revenue of the KOZ SR from membership contributions remained almost unchanged (2008 – 2013), or did not decrease in proportion to the decline in membership respectively, but vice-versa, increased (1996 - 2008). This fact could be explained by the annual increase in wages of workers - union members, who conduct 1% of their net wages to the trade union. Another factor, which affected the total income from membership contributions, is an increase in contribution from the trade unions to Confederation to 3.8%,⁵⁵ 0.3% of which were

⁵⁵ The KOZ SR Statutes, Article 13, the Fifth KOZ SR Congress, November 2004

earmarked funds to the so-called Action Fund for the activities of the Confederation (the 1 May meetings, protests, industrial actions, etc.). With a decline in membership, the contribution per member is higher annually. The current funding model for trade union structures within the KOZ SR is built from the bottom up. This means that the basic trade union collects the membership contributions from its members in the amount of 1% of net wage. The trade union organisation pays 20-40% (each union has individually fixed percentage) of collected member contributions for the trade union and the trade union, as part of the KOZ SR, pays the Confederation 3.8% of membership contributions. It follows that most funds from membership contributions remain in the basic organisations, which might not always mean the effective management of these resources.

A revenue section of the KOZ budget is constituted, along with the addition to the membership contributions, also by donations from legal persons (especially JMF and MÚ OZ), interest and other income.⁵⁶ In 2004, a special budget revenue was the contribution from trade unions for a referendum on the basis of the KOZ SR Convention resolution no. 117/13 from 31 March 2004 amounting to SKK 3.50 per member, the total income under this heading amounted to SKK 2.042 million. The highest expenditure part of the budget is labor costs which account for nearly half of the budget.

⁵⁶ Paid donations from the JMF to the trade unions, the Confederation and IVO Sládkovičovo in the period 1995 - 2005 amounted to almost SKK 104 million; (of which SKK 6.2 million was destined for the very KOZ SR) and, in the years 1998-2005, paid donations from the Property Union of Trade Unions (MÚ OZ) for trade unions and the Confederation represented the amount of SKK 97.2 million. In his speech at the KOZ SR Convention in March 2006, the Chairman of the Board of JMF Emil Machyna stated that the total benefit of trade unions from the services and the JMF donations within 12 years amounted to SKK 227 million. (The development of the economic....., 2006).

Table 3: The KOZ SR Budgets in 2003 - 2014: Real Revenues and Expenses

| Year | Revenue of the budget in SKK | Revenue of the budget in EUR ⁵⁷ | The share of membership contributions in SKK | The share of membership contributions in EUR | Expenses of the budget in SKK | Expenses of the budget in EUR | The share of expenses for the industrial actions from the Action Fund in SKK | The share of expenses for the industrial actions from the Action Fund in EUR |
|------|------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 2003 | 26,429,530,- | 877,299.67 | 21,851,686,- | 725,343.09 | 26,429,530,- | 877,299.67 | 1,808,194,- | 60,021.04 |
| 2004 | 28,686,704,- | 952,224.13 | 21,765,900,- | 722,495.52 | 26,805,294,- | 889,772.75 | 2,154,400,- | 71,512.98 |
| 2005 | 25,608,212,- | 850,036.91 | 22,266,364,- | 739,107.88 | 24,781,680,- | 822,601.08 | 1,523,135,- | 50,558.82 |
| 2006 | 23,165,406,- | 768,950.61 | 21,433,636,- | 711,466.37 | 21,572,318,- | 716,069.77 | 986,818,- | 32,756.36 |
| 2007 | 24,416,631,- | 810,483.67 | 21,503,334,- | 713,779.92 | 21,571,958,- | 716,057.82 | 1,669,589,- | 55,420.20 |
| 2008 | | | 21,602,640.20 | 717,076.29 | | | 596,868,- | 19,812.39 |
| 2009 | - | 852,170.23 | - | 727,876.93 | - | 791,301.58 | - | 24,993.21 |
| 2010 | - | 789,332.53 | - | 663,189.54 | - | 826,797.18 | - | 93,482.06 |
| 2011 | - | 693,198.68 | - | 652,655.00 | - | 732,081.01 | - | 50,262.20 |
| 2012 | - | 822,357.46 | - | 578,342.05 | - | 640,540.39 | - | 17,311.65 |
| 2013 | - | 814,381.31 | - | 576,785.67 | - | 464,625.23 | - | 9,767.70 |
| 2014 | - | 724,029.34 | - | 570,590.41 | - | 504,667.92 | - | 11,801.22 |

⁵⁷ Conversion of currency: 1 EUR = 30,126 SKK

Table 4: The Ratio of Individual Trade Unions within the JMF

| Establishing Trade Union | The Ratio in the JMF in % | Note | Current Situation |
|--|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| OZ KOVO | 17.06 | | 23.78 |
| OZ STAVBA Construction Trade Union Association | 9.84 | Currently IOZ (Integrated Trade Union) | 16.94 |
| Trade Union of Employees in Commerce and Tourism | 8.85 | | |
| Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science in Slovakia | 7.61 | | |
| Trade Union of Agricultural Workers | 6.98 | | |
| The Slovak Trade Union of Employees in Health and Social Services | 6.74 | The Slovak Trade Union of Employees in Health and Social Services | |
| Trade Union Association of Wood, Forestry and Water Management | 5.43 | | |
| The Slovak Trade Union Association of the Textile, Clothing and Leather Industry | 5.4 | Currently IOZ | |
| The Slovak Trade Union of Social Services | 4.89 | Merged with OZ KOVO | |
| The Railway Workers Trade Union Association | 3.97 | | |
| OZ CHÉMIA SR Chemistry Trade Union Association | 3.15 | Currently ECHOZ | 4.21 |
| Trade union of Food Workers | 2.77 | | |
| OZ SLOVES Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration | 2.51 | Merged with the Slovak Trade Union of Culture... Trade Union Association of Mining, Geology and the Oil Industry | 3.75 |
| Trade Union Association of Mining, Geology | 2.42 | Merged with OZ KOVO | |
| Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport NOZ | 1.83 | Merged with OZ KOVO | |
| Public Transport Union | 1.7 | Currently IOZ | |
| Slovak Trade Union of Culture and Social Organisations | 1.24 | Merged with SLOVES | |
| TRADE UNION of COMMUNICATION WORKERS | 1.17 | Separated from the Trade Union Association of Post Offices and Logistic | |
| The Slovak Trade Union Association of Energy Workers | 1.06 | Currently ECHOZ | |
| Trade Union of Civilian Employees of the Army of the Slovak | 0.83 | | |

| | | | |
|---|------|------------------|--|
| Republic | | | |
| Slovak Trade Union Association of Glass Industry | 0.66 | | |
| Slovak Trade Union Association of Post Offices and Telecommunications | 0.63 | | |
| Trade Union Association of Financial Intermediation and Insurance Workers | 0.53 | | |
| Slovak Trade Union of Employees in Printing Industry | 0.49 | | |
| Trade Union of Employees in TV and Sports | 0.37 | | |
| Trade Union of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (OZ SAV) | 0.28 | | |
| Trade Union of the Mass Media | 0.26 | Slovak committee | |
| Association of Trade Unions in Nuclear Energy of Slovakia | 0.18 | | |
| Trade Union Association of Water Transport | 0.16 | | |
| Trade Union of Justice | 0.15 | | |
| Association of Theatre Trade Unions | 0.15 | | |
| Fire-fighters Union | 0.1 | | |
| Trade Union of Driving Schools | 0.04 | Ceased to exist | |
| Property Union of Trade Unions | | | |

Table 5: Comparison of the proportion of individual member trade unions associated in the KOZ SR as for membership in 2011 with the proportion of votes in the JMF

| Trade union - the KOZ SR member | Situation in membership in 2014 | Proportion of membership in % | Ratio in JMF in % |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Trade Union Association of Mining, Geology and the Oil Industry of the Slovak Republic | 4,011 | 1.53 | 2.42 |
| Energy and Chemical Workers' Union | 13,005 | 4.96 | 4.21 |
| OZ KOVO | 70,011 | 26.69 | 23.78 |
| Integrated Trade Union | 11,102 | 4.23 | 16.94 |
| Trade Union Association of Energy Workers | 3,896 | 1.49 | 0.18 |
| Slovak Trade Union Association of Glass Industry | 2,446 | 0.93 | 0.66 |
| Railway Workers Trade Union Association | 14,458 | 5.51 | 3.97 |
| Trade Union of Communication Workers (Trade Union Association of Post Offices and Logistic) | 2,971 | 1.13 | 1.17 |
| Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration (SLOVES) | 22,546 | 8.60 | 3.75 |
| Trade Union Association of Financial Intermediation and Insurance Workers | 4,470 | 1.70 | 0.53 |
| Trade Union of Civilian Employees of the Army of the Slovak Republic | 2,056 | 0.78 | 0.83 |
| Fire-fighters Union | 1,179 | 0.45 | 0.1 |
| Trade Union of Justice in SR | 2,582 | 0.98 | 0.15 |
| Trade Union Association of Water Transport | 56 | 0.02 | 0.16 |
| Trade Union of Agricultural Workers in Slovakia | 1,877 | 0.72 | 6.98 |
| Trade Union of Workers in The Wood Processing Industry, Forrests and Water Supplies | 11,724 | 4.47 | 5.43 |
| Trade union of Food Workers SR | 1,911 | 0.73 | 2.77 |
| Slovak Trade Union of Employees in Printing Industry | 128 | 0.05 | 0.49 |
| Trade Union of Employees in Commerce and Tourism | 9,393 | 3.58 | 8.85 |
| Trade Union of Corps of Prison and Court Guard | 1,306 | 0.50 | - |

| | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|------------|---------------|
| Slovak Trade Union of Employees in Health and Social Services | | 20,140 | 7.68 | 6.74 |
| Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science in Slovakia | | 48,792 | 18.60 | 7.61 |
| Police Trade Union in the SR | | 8,675 | 3.31 | - |
| Trade Union of Physical Education and Sport Employees in Slovakia | | 15 | 0.01 | 0.37 |
| Trade Union of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (OZ SAV) | | 934 | 0.36 | 0.28 |
| Slovak Trade Union of Free Professions | | 377 | 0.14 | - |
| Gas Industry Trade Union | | 1,924 | 0.73 | not specified |
| Slovak Trade Union Association of Post Offices and Telecommunications | | 319 | 0.12 | 0.63 |
| Association of Theatre Trade Unions in Slovakia | | 0 | 0 | 0.15 |
| Trade Union of Driving Schools | | 0 | 0 | 0.04 |
| TOGETHER | | 262,304 | 100 | |

The Table 5 compares the proportion of individual unions in decision-making within the JMF and the current proportion of the total amount of membership in unions associated in the KOZ SR. Based on these data we can see that the proportion of individual trade unions in decision-making in the JMF does not correspond to the current state of the membership. The situation of trade unions with the largest number of votes in the JMF does not reflect their real proportion of membership (excluding the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science, where the situation is reversed - the higher proportion of union membership than the amount of voting rights), though the OZ KOVO remains the largest trade union with the highest number of votes within the JMF. The overall result of the aforementioned facts is a situation where, on the one hand, there is the KOZ SR, which does not have enough power to use considerable trade union property, because, unlike the trade unions, it is not the JMF member; on the other hand, the JMF holds the property of trade unions and decides on it by means of authorities, in which the members of trade unions are represented in proportion of membership, as of 31 December 1989. The Confederation has essentially no ability to affect the management of the trade union property and the amount of revenue arising from the ownership of these assets. Despite all the KOZ efforts regarding becoming the JMF member, the JMF Board decided not to accept the Confederacy as a member in 2001. The then-President of JMF V. Šujan justified the decision by the fact that most trade unions associated in the JMF decided not to accept the KOZ - especially in political terms, since trade unions did not want to have the KOZ as a political body among themselves. Another reason for not accepting KOZ was also the applicable statutes of the JMF which say that the to-be member should bring a certain capital contribution to the fund. By its resolution, the Fourth KOZ Congress requested that the individual trade unions promote entry of KOZ into JMF, but without equity participation. Therefore, such entry would be contrary to the statutes of the JMF. The decision not to accept the KOZ was made mainly by the vote of large trade unions. The voting of the JMF Board is guided by the principle of equity participation in the fund, i.e. the larger the asset, the more votes principle. This means that the Confederation members, de facto, did not support its entry into the JMF. The Confederation may essentially have the right to manage only the means within its budget which is composed mainly of income from

membership contributions. If the power and influence of trade unions is measured by the amount of assets and financial resources, based on the foregoing, we can conclude that unions in Slovakia have considerable assets; but on the other hand the Confederacy, as yet still largest umbrella organisation of trade unions, has no possibility to manage this property, or decide on reallocation of income or spending of funds. The budget can cover the most basic activities of the KOZ office, while the salary costs suppose some of its half. Likewise, the method of voting and thus making decisions on the asset is, according to the percentage of the JMF members in the hands of a few unions, which blocks any possibility of other JMF members influencing the decision-making at all. It is important to note that the KOZ SR does not possess the social-support fund which would accumulate funds to cover the needs of industrial actions or strikes. The truth is that after the Fifth Congress, under the amended statutes, the Confederation began to form the action fund of 0.3% of membership contributions received from trade unions, but its current amount is not sufficient to organise a financial covering, e.g. the general strike or mass industrial actions at the national level lasting several days.⁵⁸ The actual means used for industrial actions or public gatherings in the years 2003 - 2012 ranged from 4% to 8% of total budget revenues of the Confederation. The Confederation expenditures on specialised press and promotion accounted for less than 1% of total revenues in the same period.⁵⁹ As of November 2012, the balance in the Action Fund was an estimated EUR 90,943.13.

⁵⁸ During the employee's participation in a strike, s/he will not be refunded with any wage. Likewise, during the strike period, the employee is not entitled to health insurance contributions, which is forced to pay himself/herself. This could prevent employees from participating actively in the strike and, thus, it will not be considered an effective coercive tool of advocacy. If trade unions possessed the financial resources accumulated for a long time during the strike (support, action) funds, they would become, with the intention (and implementation) to declare a strike, the real threat to the government or employers. These funds could refund the lost wages and the health insurance contributions of employees participating in the strike, which would increase the motivation of employees to support it. As for the opposite situation (which is a the trade union reality in Slovakia), the trade unions representatives rely more on their persuasive skills towards the employees and the membership, the belief in solidarity, and "fight for the right thing."

⁵⁹ As trade unions belong to the coercive interest groups of economic nature, we cite an example of the use of the KOZ SR financial resources to the protest rallies in the period 2003 - 2007. In 2003, the Confederation used the total amount of SKK 1.8 million for protest rallies

The method of the Confederation financing and decision-making on the trade union assets in Slovakia puts the Confederation into the position of a weak actor towards its social partners, whether it be at the national, sectoral or enterprise level. Despite the value of the property owned by the unions, the way of deciding on its management and usage, as well as the percentage distribution of voting rights, shows that the use of the assets is ultimately decided by just several trade unions without the participation of KOZ SR. The Confederation, as the umbrella trade union organisation, has no share of union assets itself, and the effect on its handling is only through its member unions which oppose its participation in the JMF. The percentage of the share of union assets, and therefore of the decision-making on their handling and management, is structured in a way that only several trade unions can actually decide on its use. As for trade unions, the assets at the headquarters level cannot be handled by headquarters. In the current percentage of the vote distribution, only four trade unions (with the largest proportion of votes) are able to outvote the remaining 24 trade unions by majority (after counting their proportion). It means that the Confederation does not have the right to handle one of the resources that could improve its position - which is precisely, economic power and property.

and the 1 May celebrations. In 2004, the Confederation used the total amount of SKK 2.15 million for protest rallies and the 1 May celebrations. In 2005, the expenditure was SKK 1.52 million. In 2006, this represented the amount of SKK 987,000 and in 2007, the Confederation spent an amount of SKK 1.67 million on protest rallies. When monitoring the expenditures of the Confederation budget, it is also interesting to follow those spent on specialised publications and promotion: in 2003, the KOZ SR spent SKK 146,000, in 2004, it was less than SKK 114,000, in 2005, expenditures on advertising and professional press amounted to SKK 89,000, in 2006 SKK 65,000 and in 2007, this amount was lower than SKK 91,000.

The Trade Unions Relations with Political Parties and Movements in Slovakia

There are several ways that interest groups create relations and cooperate with political parties (especially during elections), following the easier enforcement of their interests. These relations extend from informal practices through tacit or open declaration of support for formal agreements on mutual cooperation. In certain countries⁶⁰, it is quite common that the political party is affiliated with the interest group through its structures and leaders, and the interest group is like a part of the political party. This phenomenon occurs most often between political parties and trade unions; in this case we talk about the so-called political unionism. Political unionism involves multiple relations between political parties and trade unions, from the mutual sharing of ideologies, ideas and views on various policy to explicit cooperation and shared leadership, which in many cases leads to situations where unions are used by political parties for the achievement of political objectives irrelevant to the interests of employees and workers (Uhlerová, 2012b). The imaginary opposite of political unionism is the so-called “bread-and-butter” unionism, i.e. trade union activities exclusively aimed at improving social and economic conditions of workers (particularly through negotiations with employers and government).⁶¹

⁶⁰ This phenomenon is typical for relations of political parties and interest groups in, for example Southeast Asian countries (e.g. India), which is also the result of historical, political and economic development and transformation after gaining their independence in the mid-20th century.

⁶¹ The ILO considers the economic and social support of workers to be the essential and permanent role of the trade union movement. Trade unions also have an important role in the implementation of cooperation with other constituents in promoting social and economic development and supporting the community as a whole in each country. Considering the aforementioned facts, the basis for the trade union movement in each country is to maintain freedom and independence, so that they are in a position to bear their economic and social mission, with no regards to political changes. The condition is that the trade unions will be formed by membership regardless of race, nationality, creed and political will to enforce their targets on the basis of solidarity and social and economic interests of workers. If trade unions decide upon relations with a political party or, under the Constitution, to take political action to achieve their goals, such political relations and activities should be consistent with the fulfillment of their economic and social mission regardless of political

After 1989, the problem and one of the key tasks and challenges of the Slovak trade union movement was to find its place in the political system and to build relations with other elements of the political system, especially with political parties and movements. First of all, the KOZ SR tried to overcome the negative legacy of the past and gain legitimacy in the public eye. The non-partisan nature of trade unions has thus become their goal. An unstable political environment, especially fragmentation and splitting of political parties, was reflected in the low support for government bills in Parliament. Therefore, trade unions had to focus on pursuing their interests in Parliament through caucuses and MPs. The KOZ SR could not pursue their goals in isolation, in conditions of multiparty Parliamentary democracy. During the struggle for social justice, it had to find allies within a reasonable extent in political parties and movements that have programme objectives related to that of KOZ SR.

Before the 1994 election, the KOZ Convention had not approved the system of nomination of trade union officials and had recommended the representatives of trade unions to stand as the candidates individually. They found themselves on the lists of candidates with the following political parties: HZDS, SNS, KDH, the Democratic Union (DU) and Common Choice (SV). Most of them did not succeed and trade unions were not able to promote their interests in Parliament through those who made it to the National Council. Nevertheless, the situation changed after the 1994 election. A majority understanding of politics and the rise of autocratic tendencies were also reflected in the functioning of social dialogue which became considerably complicated and was interrupted by KOZ SR representatives in 1997. Given the prevailing party voting patterns in Parliament, the possibility of trade unions to achieve their objectives through caucuses and individual MPs was reduced. According

changes in the country. Governments pursuing cooperation with trade unions with the aim to implement economic and social policies should bear in mind that the value of such cooperation remains largely in the freedom and independence of the trade union movement as a key factor in promoting social development and should not change the trade union movement to the tool used to go further with their policy objectives, nor should they interfere with the normal functions of trade unions because of freely based relationship with a political party. The trade union movement loses its justification, as soon as it becomes a tool serving for the needs of some external force. Trade unions should not be commanded by political parties, nor should they conclude relationships if these do not help the specific social and economic functions of trade unions. (ILO, 1952)

to D. Malová, this method would be suitable only if the government had not clear majority support in Parliament. The disciplined vote of MPs in the ruling coalition, however, limited significantly the activities of trade unions in Parliament in the years 1994 - 1998 (Malová, 1999).

Before the 1998 Parliamentary election, neither the KOZ SR nor individual unions engaged directly in the election campaign, but some of the union representatives tried to establish themselves individually as independent candidates on candidate lists of political parties. Some later experience and an overview of each vote (Barinych, 1998) suggest that after the election to Parliament they became members or officials of political parties without feeling commitment and efforts to promote the interests of trade unions. Behaviours of union representatives in Parliament did not bring significant benefits and achievements in promoting the interests of trade unions. Placing trade unionists on candidate lists of political parties is fraught with more risks than benefits for trade unions, and thus promoting the interests of trade unions through its members operating in Parliament is not efficient and beneficial for them.

Since 1998, the trade unions (unions covered by KOZ SR) have begun to actively participate in election campaigns. The most important activity between the Third and Fourth KOZ SR Congress was the participation in the election campaign before the 1998 election. This was done on the basis of the document "The 1998 Parliamentary Election and the KOZ SR attitude" which was discussed by the KOZ SR Convention in December 1997. The latter reflected and analysed the experience of involvement in the election of many European trade union headquarters.⁶² It turned out that all of the trade union headquarters take a proactive approach to elections, trying to be non-partisan - not passive in the pre-election period, affecting its members by giving them information to enable an independent and responsible decision of who to vote for, use the election campaign to promote their programmes that confront the programmes of political parties and movements, and cooperate with those of them which share the most common programming points in social and economic areas. The pre-election

⁶²The German DGB, the Austrian OGB, the British TUC, the French CGT and CFTC, the Danish LO, the Hungarian MSZOSZ, the Czech ČMKOS

concept of trade unions in Slovakia in 1998 was aimed at mobilising their members and voters. Its purpose was to encourage people to participate in the election and to accomplish a composition of Parliament which would allow the trade unions to better promote the interests of their members and other employees. The Confederation representatives considered four options of participation in the election campaign, through which it would be possible to influence the election results and thus, to considerable extent, the opportunities to promote their interests in Parliament - to maintain complete neutrality and passivity; or actively promote pluralistic and socially sensitive enough outcome of the election; or publish their own electoral preferences; or create their own political party.

The first possibility is excluded due to the practical impossibility of maintaining neutrality in the conduct of major social changes, resulting in the trade unions' being heavily involved. Such a position was also accepted by the Confederation and it was nothing but a natural reaction to the battle with government concerning maintaining the position of the tripartite partners. The third variant comes with a number of risks to the members and general public, especially the possible dissatisfaction of those union members who sympathise with the non-preferred parties; increase of tensions within the trade unions due to polarisation of views which could lead to the fragmentation and weakening; denial of the principle of nonpartisanship and the consequent loss of credibility of trade unions as an independent force; escalation of attacks on unions as a hidden political power. All risks are greater than the possible profit on the preferences. The fourth solution can be regarded as a short term solution in emergency situations. It also contains the aforementioned number of risks, including the financial one. In that case, the existing political parties having intersections with the Confederation programme could even face a withdrawal of votes, but on the other hand, the new party would fail to meet the anticipated expectations. Possible failure could jeopardize the very existence of the Confederation.⁶³ Furthermore, it would alter the nature of trade unions, as these, as an interest group, seek not to obtain but to influence the power. Having considered all the risks, the

⁶³ For more details see the KOZ SR document entitled The 1998 Parliamentary Elections: the KOZ SR attitude as discussed by the KOZ SR Convention on 9 December 1997. Bratislava: KOZ SR

representatives of the Confederation adopted the second option, which was in terms of trade unions identified as optimal, and with regard to their programme, as the most natural. The union members were advised to reconsider a selected number of issues in the programmes of candidate parties. On the basis of objective information provided by different pathways by the trade union headquarters, each member was to decide to whom s/he would give his/her voice; hence the Confederation did not demonstrate what political entity to vote or not to vote for, and thus did not declare open support for a particular political party. By this 1998 decision, trade unions decided to involve actively in the election campaign and in the efforts to influence political development in Slovakia, on the other hand, by distancing themselves from the expression of support for a particular political party, they shrugged off responsibility to bear the risks of possible election failure of supported political entity.

In terms of trade unionists candidacy, the Confederation adopted a recommendation to stand as candidates for the political entities which guarantee by the programme that they would promote common objectives under the various programmes to ensure that when the candidates from trade unions on the candidate lists of political parties would be supported, the functional classification of union leaders would be preserved, and that union officials, who get into Parliament, provide regular reports about fulfilment of their tasks.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the Confederation has not set the possible mechanisms penalising the union representatives, who would, in case of operating in Parliament or in a political party, violate such defined criteria.

In accordance with an approved procedure, the Confederation leaders approached political parties which were likely to get to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (NR SR) after the election, to comment on the questions and issues that trade unions considered key

⁶⁴ The KOZ held an international conference related to these topics entitled "Trade unions - Elections - Policy" in April 1998. In the same month, the KOZ published "Evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of the Government of the Slovak Republic" approved by the government in January 1995 which showed that, contrary to this programme, during the reporting period unemployment increased, the situation in health, education, culture deteriorated, there was delay in entry into the EU and NATO, in other words, that the government was not fulfilling its programme at all, or only to a very limited, declarative rate.

issues in their mission and programme.⁶⁵ An analysis of the responses (in Práca, 1998) and comparison of electoral programmes showed that the Party of the Democratic Left (SDĽ), Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK), and the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) were closest to the KOZ requirements. The Confederation also developed the material which analysed previous voting of individual MPs on issues deemed important in terms of its programme objectives. The results of the votes showed that the then ruling coalition HZDS, SNS and the Union of the Workers of Slovakia (ZRS) did not vote in favour of the employees, but MPs of DU, KDH, SDĽ and the Hungarian Coalition (MK) supported employees.⁶⁶ Activities of trade unions and the regional KOZ structures in the regions aimed at meeting the information campaign and mobilising the union members to participate in elections. Along with the mobilisation, the primary effort of KOZ SR was to achieve such a composition in Parliament, which would allow the best promotion of the objectives of trade unions. We can say that, by its activities, KOZ SR significantly affected the final results of the 1998 Slovak Parliamentary election. The Confederation reached at least the first part of its objective, which was formulated as a pluralistic and socially sensitive outcome of the election. Thus, the Confederation actually became significantly involved in the political arena outside its usual activities for the first time during its existence (Malová, 1999).

In assessing the KOZ involvement in the election campaign, it is necessary to mention the specificity of the then political situation in Slovakia. The electoral period 1994 - 1998, in which the Parliamentary majority lay in the governing coalition of HZDS, SNS and ZRS, was considered a period of illiberal democracy (Sopóci, 2002). A typical feature of the government was the significant application of undemocratic elements in the political life of Slovak society, for example the enforcement of acts that allowed more efficient control of representation

⁶⁵ E.g. protection of trade union rights, social dialogue, labor law, social security, collective bargaining, housing, integration of the Slovak Republic into NATO and the EU, industrial policy, etc.

⁶⁶ The KOZ informed all Parliamentary parties, Gremium of the Third Sector, Roman Catholic and Evangelical Church and the media about this fact. The KOZ representatives also attended the negotiations of a "democratic round table" which helped to coordinate the actions of the then opposition, the Union of Towns and Communities, Youth Council of Slovakia and Gremium of the Third Sector. They also discussed with the representatives of churches.

of interests, creation of new interest groups, the number, identity and action (Malová - Čambáliková, 1998), the strengthening of the partisan and the state-partisan corporatism (Malová, 1997), which largely limited their autonomous status.

During this period, the KOZ SR engaged itself by its campaign in efforts for fundamental political change and democratisation of society in Slovakia. Despite the fact that one of the ruling subjects, HZDS, won the 1998 elections, there was a political regrouping and a change in the executive. A very broad and, as it turned out later, unprepared and incoherent coalition unwilling to agree on fundamental issues in the concept of economic policy and socio-economic development was established then. The new government “thanked” the trade unions for their position in the campaign by adopting the Tripartite Act and the Act on Guarantee Fund. The government began to take measures to stabilise the economy, which were not very popular among the citizens, and from the point of view of trade unions, affected adversely their social situation. Likewise, from the perspective of trade unions, the government did not fulfil its policy statement on key objectives, failed to meet the essential obligations of the 2000 General Agreement and the social dialogue from the government was regarded as formal and non-constructive by trade unions. The Confederation declared the government an untrustworthy social partner and the situation in the social dialogue began to be strained, which resulted in his suspension.

The fundamental principles of trade unions before the 2002 Parliamentary elections were characterised in the same way. The entities, that had already been in government in the period 1994-2002, were a disappointment, as they failed to meet their election promises, in particular in the social field, the growth of real wages and salaries, in addressing the issue of unemployment. The political scene missed the left-wing body, which could guarantee the enforcement of the needs of employees and trade union members. Trade unions participated in the election campaign again in 2002 in an effort to persuade as many voters as possible to participate in the elections, without any obligation towards the Confederation⁶⁷. Similar to the pre-election period in 1998, the

⁶⁷Under the central motto “Who votes, affects their own destiny!!!” The Confederation representatives again discussed the possibility of involvement of KOZ in the election campaign with the resulting material “The KOZ SR attitude to the Parliamentary elections in

representatives of the Confederation approached all relevant political parties to comment on the substantive issues of trade union rights and social policy.⁶⁸ By the involvement in the election campaign, trade unions sought to fully inform citizens - voters about the mode of governance and Parliamentary activity (based on their own analyses); to mobilise all eligible voters to participate in elections; to accomplish the composition of Parliament which would allow the trade unions to better promote the interests of their members and other employees; and to influence the election results so as to obtain a composition of government that would recognise the social dialogue, social partnership and would focus on solving the existential problems of citizens (the KOZ SR, 2002). The union members - voters were to decide on which political entity they would elect accordingly.

The result of pre-election activities of trade unions was a bit ambiguous. There was an impression among the trade unionists that the unions did not find any political partner among political parties. Based on the results of the Parliamentary elections, the right-wing centrist government was established. If over time initially non-existent tensions cropped up between the trade unions and the broad government coalition that emerged from the 1998 elections, it was more than likely that after the 2002 elections there would be a further widening. On the basis of the Confederation offer to negotiate with the political subjects addressed in the post-election developments in Slovakia, seven political parties declared a willingness to communicate and cooperate, four of which entered Parliament and only one entity was part of the ruling coalition (SMK).⁶⁹ The election results confirmed the concerns and expectations of a possible government of right-wing coalition. The expressed views and opinions as well as the pre-election programmes of parties of the ruling coalition were quite distinct from the programme objectives of trade unions. The Government policy statement itself enshrined the aim to

2002" (KOZ SR, 2002) which reworked the need to: 1. maintain complete neutrality, 2. promote actively pluralistic and socially sensitive enough outcome of the election, 3. declare own electoral preferences and 4. create own political party.

⁶⁸ The Confederation published an analysis regarding the responses of individual political parties and also the evaluation of the performance of selected parts of the Government policy statement, and the analysis of MPs voted to selected problems.

⁶⁹ HZDS-LS: 19.5 %, SMER: 13.46 %, SMK: 11.16 %, KSS: 6.32 %, HZD: 3.28 %, SDA: 1.79 %, SDL: 1.36 %, the following parties entered the National Council: HZDS-LS, SMER, SMK, KSS

remove the elements of corporatism in Slovakia, hence the trade unions could be worried about the loss of exclusive access to the Government on matters of negotiation of the measures in the economic and social field. The very results of Parliamentary elections suggested that the trade unions would have a difficult position. Nevertheless, the Confederation continued in its efforts to find, through mutual communication and cooperation, possible joint penetrations with relevant political parties and their Parliamentary caucuses, through which they would seek to promote their interests particularly in the social field; however, the coalition parties clearly showed no interest in this kind of cooperation, only the opposition political groups ĽS-HZDS⁷⁰, KSS and SMER responded positively and they also offered cooperation in the National Council.

As a result of growing tensions between the trade unions and the government coalition, the protests and rallies were organised by the trade union headquarters, or by individual trade unions, which also promoted a certain convergence with the opposition, namely the political party SMER⁷¹. It is understandable that if the negotiation mechanisms fail and the partners are unable to proceed with the willingness to look for (and receive) compromise solutions, interest groups extend their activities to coercive ones, through which they'd want to achieve fulfilment of their objectives. The protests, however, missed their effect as the government refused to accept the social demands of trade unions. The Confederation reached the conclusion that the change in social conditions can be brought about only by early elections. Therefore, they committed to an unusual step and, based on the resolution of the extraordinary meeting of the KOZ SR Convention (October 2003), decided to support the proposal to

⁷⁰ On the Republic Transformation Convention of HZDS in Trnava in March 2000, the Movement for Democratic Slovakia was transformed into a standard people's political party. Accordingly, the delegates of the Republic Convention voted for a change in June 2003, or addition to the name, respectively, to The People's Party - Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS).

⁷¹ There were also considerations that the unions were going to participate in the formation of a new political party, which essentially confirmed the then Vice President Peter Gajdoš in an interview with *Hospodárske noviny*, when denied that the new left-wing party could arise by transforming the trade unions, but said that unions could initiate its formation (*Hospodárske noviny*, 17 October, 2003). The reason for these issues was in the absence of non-communist left-wing political party in the National Council as a natural partner and ally of trade unions.

organise a petition calling for a referendum on snap elections. The political party SMER wanted to achieve the same objective; hence the very active cooperation between the two entities began. The parties KSS and SDL were also involved in this action. The governing coalition declared the KOZ SR an ally and party companion of SMER (Hospodárske noviny, 20 October, 2003). According to some political scientists (e.g. D. Malová), organising of petitions does not fall within the traditional instruments of trade union headquarters to defend their interests and, due to the share of political parties, the petition became not only a political but also a party action, which is a significant risk for trade unions (Hospodárske noviny, 11 November, 2003).⁷²

The referendum was attended by 35.86%⁷³ of eligible voters which, given the failure to meet the condition of absolute majority participation, meant its annulment⁷⁴. Despite the invalidity of the referendum, the trade unionists and opposition regarded the result as a success claiming that nearly 36% of eligible voters came to express their opinion in the referendum, among which almost 87% of votes were for the termination of the then governing coalition; also the governing coalition assessed the outcome of the referendum as successful. The trade union representatives think that the causes of failure (meaning the invalidity of referendum conditional to absolute majority of eligible voters) might be seen in a massive anti-campaign and challenging the legitimacy of the referendum, the call of the governing coalition to boycott it, in certain corrections of social restrictions that government made under a pressure of a referendum, and in apathy and lethargy of the public and citizens.

In the situation after the rejected 2004 referendum, trade unions were forced to take further steps to seek their political allies. The opinion of the KOZ SR raised two basic questions or tasks: either actively contribute to the integration of existing left-wing social democratic

⁷² The petition ran from mid-November 2003 to mid-January 2004, the organisers managed to gather 606,352 signatures. President Rudolf Schuster announced the referendum on 3 April 2004 to shorten the third election period of NR SR, the first round of presidential elections took place on the same day.

⁷³ As stated by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

⁷⁴ Of those, who voted in the referendum, the question "Do you want the MPs to adopt a constitutional law on the shortening of III. Slovak Parliament election period so that the elections to Parliament would be held in 2004?", 86.78% replied in the affirmative, 11.93% in the negative.

entities or to promote the emergence of one strong left-wing social democratic entity programmatically and clearly oriented towards common objectives of trade unions. The KOZ SR organised four discussion events with the participation of representatives of Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary entities "Trade unions and political parties"⁷⁵, which were designed for trade union officials to initiate a discussion within the union on a new form of relations of trade unions to political parties. The discussions resulted in the need to talk about the subject of the cooperation of trade unions with political parties and to seek opportunities for cooperation with political entities that have common programmatic goals with the unions. Following the KOZ SR initiative of the, further discussions on the so-called Social roundtable were held, which all center-left political parties were invited to in order for them to discuss the possibility of integration with the Left, or creation of a new strong left-wing party, respectively.

Trade unions were thus supposed to actively participate in the integration with the Left in Slovakia. Nonetheless, the aforementioned initiative and the steps taken give the new dimension to the cooperation of trade unions with political parties. They were slowly blurring the myth and fear regarding the trade union cooperation with political parties. This fear, or rather caution, was caused mainly by the experience and the historic legacy of the former regime, where trade unions were considered a "gear lever" of the ruling party policy. Trade unions in Slovakia became a part of the post-communist image: the left-wing spectrum (orientation towards the east and the past) versus the right-wing party (guarantor of democracy and the orientation towards the Euro-American society). The social issue presented as obscurantism and the hostility of the majority of the political spectrum to the trade unions prevailed. The phenomenon is a feature of post-communist societies, though, it appears even in democratic systems of the Western European countries, the example being the case of Italian left-wing forces, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet-backed regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. This caused their internal crisis, which resulted in fragmentation of the Left into the radical and the moderate section (Prando, 2010b). Trade unions were also burdened by the legacy of distrust, distrust of trade unions to political parties.

⁷⁵ Discuss events were organised in the period 2002 - 2004.

Therefore, the post-1989 trade union movement declared their “nonpartisanship and political neutrality” (regardless of clarifying the content of those terms) for many years.

Discussions on cooperation with political parties culminated at the turn of 2004 and 2005. The KOZ SR began to direct their efforts to seek and establish a strategic partnership with one political party of a social democratic type. More than ten years of experience allowed trade unions to reconsider their opposition to cooperation and promotion of a left-wing political entity as a strategic partner which they would support in the Parliamentary elections. The open interest in strategic partnership with KOZ SR was demonstrated by the political party SMER. This interest was also confirmed in the documents of the Convention on 13 December 2003.

The Fifth KOZ SR Congress clearly declared that the unions would be independent of any political party (Materials of the Fifth KOZ SR Congress of, 2004). Nevertheless, they did not exclude cooperation with any Parliamentary entity. The Congress Delegates adopted a resolution that commits the KOZ SR to the establishment of cooperation and partnership with political entities, bearing in mind the political diversity of union members. The Confederation expressed its preparedness to cooperate with all political parties whose programmes were consistent with its programme objectives and which showed an interest in such cooperation. Furthermore, the message states that it is necessary to seek such forms of cooperation that minimises the disparity of promises and actions. The requirements of trade unions will therefore seek to strengthen their position in employment relations, to strengthen social dialogue and tripartism and to accept a social nature in the reform process. In accordance with the approved message of the congress delegates, in a letter dated 15 December 2004, all Parliamentary political parties were addressed with a request to express whether their programme objectives are close or identical to the KOZ SR programme to the end of February 2005. Responses of the addressed political parties were to become the basis for determining the scope and form of possible future cooperation with the Confederation and the relevant political entities. Parliamentary political parties were to comment on the KOZ SR substantive agenda items in the area of tripartism, economic policy, social policy and social justice, employment, the Labour Code, collective bargaining, Occupational Health and Safety, environmental and working

environment, protection of wages, pension, health, sickness, supplementary pension insurance, child benefits and social protection and inclusion. The first of all Parliamentary parties which responded to the invitation of the KOZ SR was SMER-SD, which invited the KOZ SR representatives to negotiations on 26 January 2005. The main goals of the negotiations were the proximity of programmes of the KOZ SR and SMER-SD, the requirements of trade unions to strengthen their position in employment relations, strengthening of the social dialogue and tripartism, maintaining of the social nature in the reform process and standardisation of the relations between SMER-SD and the KOZ SR. Another political party, which responded to the call of the Confederation of Trade Unions, was the Communist Party (KSS) which declared the proximity of the KOZ SR programme with that of KSS and its main tasks in its written statement. Here it states that the trade unions can count on the support and active participation in fulfilment of the programme approved by the Fifth KOZ SR Congress if it is necessary. Given the proximity of programmes, the cooperation with SMER-SD became a priority. In addition, trade unions expressed their interest in contributing to the integration of left-wing entities into one strong left-wing party.

On 21 December 2005, a cooperation agreement between the Confederacy, represented by its President I. Saktor and SMER-SD, represented by its chairman Robert Fico was signed. The object of the agreement was mutual assistance and cooperation in the implementation of tasks arising from the scope of the tasks of the contracting parties. The aim of this agreement was to implement mutually beneficial cooperation between the contracting parties. In this agreement, KOZ SR and SMER-SD also pledged to choose such forms of cooperation that would be mutually beneficial and create optimal conditions for the fulfilment of programme objectives of KOZ SR, trade unions and SMER-SD (Agreement on cooperation between the KOZ SR and SMER-SD, 2005).

The agreement also contained the general content related to the cooperation between the contracting parties after the election. Some parts of the agreed points were also reflected in the Government policy statement as written by the coalition consisting of the parties SMER-SD, SNS and LS-HZDS after the 2006 elections. Moreover, signing of the cooperation agreement was nothing but a written declaration of the "sympathy" expressed between the trade union representatives and social

democracy, existing since 2004. The agreement sparked contradictions and heated debates even within the trade unions, because not all trade unions or their representatives and leaders, covered by KOZ SR identified with such an agreement and supported it. Many blamed the KOZ SR leaders and trade unions for having political ambitions and for ensuring the high positions in politics through such agreement. On the other hand, it is true that trade unions cannot guarantee their members' participation in elections and voting for the selected political party. An interest group cannot guarantee that its members will vote for the political party which it has concluded a cooperation agreement with since it can gather members with different electoral preferences, i.e. belonging to some interest group does not automatically mean the uniformity in electoral preferences. Thus, even within the trade unions there were different views on declaring active support for one political party in the election campaign. It evoked associations connected with the pre-1989 period, when trade unions supported one political party more or less on a "mandatory" basis. Moreover, they continued to declare their "nonpartisanship", which is only a buck-passing attitude of the trade union representatives towards their members, but also away from them.

On the other hand, there were arguments supporting the effort of trade unions to demonstrate openly the "affection" to a chosen political party that is programmatically close to their mission. According to some KOZ representatives, it is common for trade unions in European countries to always cooperate with the party whose programme is close to them - whether it be Labour Party in Norway or the Labour Party in the UK. The then-Vice President of KOZ SR, E. Škultéty, claimed that if they wanted to enforce their requirements, they had to find such partner from among the political parties, through which they could do that (Národná obroda, 7 August 2004). In most cases, the trade union representatives in Slovakia share the view that it is necessary for trade unions to cooperate with political parties. Their opinions are divided on whether to cooperate with all relevant political parties equally, or to prefer one of them as a "strategic partner". The issue of cooperation of trade unions with political parties (whether all relevant or only a narrow range of selected political parties) has not been solved and has produced the differences of opinion between their representatives as well as between the members within trade unions. While some representatives of the trade union advocate for

a close cooperation with the selected political party (parties)⁷⁶, some representatives, however, see in such cooperation only the possibility to exploit the potential of trade unions before the election, or they are concerned about the possible “dependence” of trade unions regarding such cooperation (cf. Jarosiński, 2012).

The discussion with the divergent views on the cooperation of trade unions with political parties, or with one political party respectively, was steered inside the membership base but also in the media and the wider public. The announcement of the President of KOZ SR, I. Saktor, to run for mayor of Banská Bystrica in the upcoming 2006 municipal elections also contributed to the overall “pre-election” tensions within trade unions. That tension was reflected in the Board of KOZ SR meeting on 17 May 2006 after the speech of I. Saktor on the 1st May Day celebration in Banská Bystrica where he left the floor to the Chairman of SMER-SD and indirectly urged the participants to vote specifically for this political party despite the fact that the representatives of other opposition political parties were also invited and were present at the meeting. The right-wing political parties perceived the behaviour of KOZ as strongly negative and regarded the KOZ presence as that of a political organisation (SME, 2 May 2006). Several trade unions, especially non-productive ones,⁷⁷ (Hospodárske noviny, 11 May, 2006) expressed dissatisfaction

⁷⁶ E. Machyna, President of the OZ KOVO, one of the unions which signed an agreement with SMER, said in an interview from 30 October 2007 in Banská Bystrica that he considered the relationship with politicians and political parties essential in promoting the interests of trade unions. According to him, it is necessary to have partners who share the same values as trade unions and who understand them. In his opinion, the trade unions should cooperate with political parties, which is quite common throughout Europe.

J. Blahák, former chairman of the OZ Chemistry (now ECHOZ), in an interview from 12 March 2005 in Bratislava noted that he is not in favor of cooperation with only one political party, but promotes the same closeness - distance to the relevant political parties, while the mutual cooperation should be very informal.

M. Gaticiová, former President of the SLOVES, in an interview from 25 October 2005 in Bratislava confirmed the opinion that trade unions should cooperate with political parties, but not to cooperate exclusively with one in order not to get into the “bondage”. Cooperation should be based on a serious partnership and the effort of its establishment should not be shown only shortly before the elections with the aim to obtain some potential voters.

⁷⁷ For example, the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science in Slovakia, OZ SLOVES - trade union of public administration; later joined gas industry trade union, energy workers, firefighters, culture, public road unions, who declared support and cooperation with other political parties as well, see the article “Volit' jedine SMER? Tretina odborárov je proti” (To

with the course of the meeting, considering the trade unions as being drawn into the political ambitions of their leader. This dissatisfaction was labelled by some as the split in the trade unions or the opinion inconsistency (SME, 12 May 2006). As trade unions represent their members with different political views and preferences of political parties, only a small percentage of them will be governed by the recommendations of the trade union headquarters, and those who disagree with the exclusive cooperation with one party, better recognise the distribution of political risks. Cooperation with only one political party, in the opinion of the then-president of SLOVES, M. Gaticiová, was unacceptable, threatening the existence of employees working in government administration (Hospodárske noviny, 11 May 2006). The Bureau of the Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science in Slovakia declared on behalf of its membership a distance from the arbitrary practices of the President of the Confederation of Trade Unions, which have a negative impact on the attitudes of their members, and stressed that it sought to cooperate with each political entity whose programme corresponded to the programme of trade union and KOZ SR (TASR, 9 May 2006). Management Board of the KOZ SR finally demonstrated the unity of trade unions and the President of KOZ SR announced his intention to resign as president in November - even before the municipal elections.

Trade unions were actively involved in the election campaign and they urged members to participate in elections but also recommended voting for political party SMER-SD. Five trade unions which signed the cooperation agreement with SMER-SD together with KOZ held the meetings with their members where they urged them to vote for SMER-SD. Extensive material produced by KOZ which examined the votes of MPs about the acts on social nature, the evaluation of fulfilment of the 2002 Government policy statement and the KOZ SR attitude to the snap 2006 Parliamentary elections in June was also a part of the election campaign.

The active participation of trade unions in the election campaign and declaration of support for SMER-SD was apparently worth the effort. The June snap election proved SMER-SD to be the outright winner and its

vote for SMER only? One third of trade unionists opposes), Hospodárske noviny 11 May 2006

leader Robert Fico was commissioned to form a new government by the President of the Slovak Republic. Trade unions claimed satisfaction with the results of the elections as, citing the President of KOZ SR, I. Saktor, they bet on the winner (*Hospodárske noviny*, 22 June 2006). The government was formed on the basis of three political parties: SMER-SD, SNS, ĽS-HZDS. In July 2006, after the appointment of the government, the trade union representatives were invited to the negotiations concerning the Government policy statement, where they summarised their demands in six priority points: raising the minimum wage to 60% of the average wage in the national economy, progressive taxation of individuals, a reduction in VAT on selected goods, restoration of tripartite, the form of the Labour Code from the “before Kaník” period, the membership contribution of the trade union members as a deduction. Most of these requirements were actually reflected in the Government policy statement; the Government committed itself to reestablish the tripartite and its functioning as a body of consultations on the principle of equal social partnership of governments, trade unions and employers’ organisations.

Despite the seemingly affiliate and positive relation between KOZ and SMER-SD⁷⁸ after the 2006 Parliamentary election, which was enhanced by creating a center-right coalition government after the June 2010 Parliamentary election and the transition of up to then ruling party SMER-SD into opposition, the debate and difference of opinion over the signed agreement between trade unionists persisted. Before the March 2012 Parliamentary election, KOZ SR and SMER-SD signed another cooperation agreement, while KOZ SR declared open support for SMER-SD during the election campaign. Despite the mentioned fact, the President of KOZ SR stressed that cooperation and recommendation by the Confederacy was not contradictory to its nonpartisanism. (SME, 20 March 2010). Trade unions were also actively involved in the election campaign for the 2012 snap Parliamentary election when the Cooperation

⁷⁸ From 1 September 2007, the amendment of the Labour Code came into force, which appeared to be favorable to trade union demands, as it strengthened their legislative and institutional position in the workplace. Nevertheless, union members were not completely satisfied with some provisions of the Labour Code applied in practice (e.g. restrictions on overtime in healthcare), the government resumed negotiations at tripartite level in the Council of Economic Partnership, trade unions have been consulted on the proposal of the Act on the Minimum Wage.

agreement with SMER-SD was re-signed. While the union representatives argued that the information campaign was designed for the voter's deciding who to vote for⁷⁹, their attitude could be seen as a buck-passing concealing of the fact that unions have their political ally with no possibility to talk about their "nonpartisanship". This is also contradictory to both the union members and public because on the one hand, the relation between trade unions and the political party is formalised for several years in the form of cooperation agreements with declaring mutual support, on the other hand, the unions present their involvement in election campaign only by providing information (e.g. in 1998 or 2002). Such behavior can be explained in particular by aiming to satisfy both "warring" opinion groups and trying to maintain the image of the "nonpartisanship" without the label of a particular political party.

Trade union cooperation with left-wing political entities operates in several Western European countries, and promotion of a certain political party during the pre-election battle by an interest group belongs to the activities of pressure and interest groups, through which they achieve their objectives. But the operation, the influence and the work of trade unions in post-communist countries is very specific, as is not the case of the so-called stable democratic countries in Western Europe. The influence of trade unions is based mainly on economic and political principles and depends on specific conditions, expectations of a particular government policy, context and ad hoc agreements. It is not possible to talk about a precisely profiled model yet, as the political context and environment are not so stable as to define such a long-term model (Uhlerová, 2010). Nevertheless at this point it is important to note that the nonpartisanship of any organisation ends when it chooses a political party for cooperation and, in addition, gives advice on how to behave at the election. (D. Malová, SME, 20 March 2010). The use of and emphasis on the concept of "nonpartisanship" by the trade unions after the selection of

⁷⁹ Representatives of trade union headquarters stressed that trade unions were not commanding who to vote for, just provided information to the members and the public about things promoted in Parliament and in the government by individual representatives, who was, by his/her views and acts, closer to employees and citizens (KOZ SR press conference, 27 February 2012). However, from the pre-election activities (e.g. publishing the information leaflets, magazines, etc.) it was obvious that the SMER-SD got an ample scope to present their programme.

a particular political party for their partner can be regarded as the declaration of a desirable condition and an avoidance of associations notoriously linked to the pre-1989 period. According to some “defendants” of the sealed partnership among the trade union representatives, the signing of the cooperation agreement was an ill-considered step of unions without the strategic/forecastable analysis, which may have adverse effects on the KOZ relations with political parties and the government in the future, when the political party SMER-SD is not in the government. At the same time, such a relation between trade unions and a political party may have a negative impact on the relations with employers built up over a long period of time and also with other political partners of KOZ.⁸⁰

Summary

We can summarise the brief digression presented into the genesis of the relations of trade unions in Slovakia with political parties as follows: during the first years of its democratic existence, trade unions in Slovakia took a neutral stance towards political parties and movements in order to overcome the negative legacy of the former regime and to eliminate the public perception of trade unions as the extended arm of the Communist Party. They tried to promote their interests in Parliament through the individual MPs or caucuses. In the period 1990-2005, trade unions did not find a natural ally and “reliable” partner in the political arena. There was not such a political entity in the spectrum of the political scene that would trade unions clearly like to support. Those political parties that were closer to trade unions or would cooperate with trade unions and assist in enforcing their demands often carried out steps that can be regarded as the right-wing ones. Another problem may be that, in the past years, there was no clear differentiation of political parties on the left and right. Even the left-oriented ones were in tow in coalition with right-wing parties and basically could not clearly and principally enforce their policy. There was no right-wing or left-wing government until 2002. The fact that the left-wing parties failed in the 2002 Parliamentary

⁸⁰ Such an opinion was presented, for instance, by the President of OZ Chemistry (currently ECHOZ) J. Blahák on the Convention of KOZ SR on 10 October 2007.

election was the result of their wrong policies as they were drawn into cooperation within the coalition with right-wing parties (SDL).

Trade unions began actively participating in election campaigns only in 1998. Before the 1998 Parliamentary election, the active participation of trade unions in an election campaign was aroused by the effort to change the mode of governance and the expected change in the attitude of the new government towards the tripartite and the trade unions themselves. After this period, and after the deterioration of relations first with M. Dzurinda's cabinet, trade unions launched efforts to seek and find a political ally among the political parties. That effort persisted and became one of the most debated topics within the trade unions until 2005, when they found a strategic partner in the political party SMER-SD. The discussion about the form and scope of cooperation with the political parties is still ongoing and the opinions of individual trade union representatives differ. Support for cooperation (despite the signed agreement) with SMER-SD is not clear as there is a risk of worsening the long-term relation built with employers and the concerns of some trade union representatives. As for the political party, when cooperation changes to loyalty and obedience by the trade unions to the government, there may be nothing but exploitation.

Having a political ally comes with certain advantages and risks to trade unions. A requested (and expected) advantage may be an easier promotion of interests in the tripartite, if the partner political party is in government, and strengthening corporatist tendencies in the development and implementation of government policies, especially in social and economic areas. This was the strongest motivation for KOZ SR to find a strategic partner among political parties. However, if the partner party is in opposition, trade unions may face deterioration in relations with the government, in which the supported or supporting political entity is not represented. If a political party partner can, based on the results of the elections, form a government for several election periods in a row, it will allow the partners to create a sort of model of communication and cooperation, and to stabilise and standardise the negotiation environment.⁸¹

⁸¹ An example of this may be the Scandinavian countries, but it is very difficult to compare it and to seek the parallels with those countries whose historical, social and political development determining the content and level of political culture is so different.

Seeking a natural ally of trade unions in Slovakia among the political parties distracted trade unions from the need of internal reform and transformation of the structures, resulting in a weakening of their own position within the political system and social partners - government and employers. On the one hand, trade unions seek to strengthen their position towards the exterior, on the other hand, it is weakened inwards (structure, internal communication, membership, financial resources, fragmentation, etc.), which is reflected by a relation to the external environment. The opinion concerning cooperation with a political party inside the membership and the trade union representatives is not entirely uniform and clear either, which may result, for example, in the outflow of membership or other fragmentation (dissenting departure) of trade unions, and thus not only worsen the bargaining power of trade unions in enterprises and industries, but also weaken their ability to act in organising various protest actions, if negotiations fail.

Government, as one of the social partners at the tripartite level, affects the social dialogue at the national level, which is only partially transferred into the results of collective bargaining at the sectoral level and, at the same time, may affect relations between trade unions and employers. Relations between the trade unions and the government do not determine directly the degree, efficiency and results of collective bargaining at sectoral level and the industrial relations, as the relations between trade unions and employers are important for the degree of material benefits from collective agreements and the collective bargaining culture, but these relations could be negatively affected merely by the positive relation of government to only one of the social partners. The legal relations between employers and trade unions are important for collective bargaining to work properly. Moreover there is a risk of worsening of relations with employers due to close relations with the government (political party in government, respectively), which is reflected in the bipartite social dialogue.

If the power of trade unions and their position in the workplace and the society-wide level is measured by the effectiveness of collective bargaining, the relation with the government does not affect and determine strengthening or weakening of their position directly. The existing institutional structure of social dialogue brings the trade unions affiliated in KOZ SR an exclusive access to the government with the

possibility to comment on the important economic and social problems but for the purposes of collective bargaining this is not strictly necessary. At the tripartite level, legislative and political intentions of the government in economic and social sphere are discussed; in the sphere of wages, the subject of negotiations usually concerns determining the minimum wage or remuneration of public sector employees in relation to the state budget. Tripartite, however, does not affect the setting of wages in each sector. One might also assume that if the left-wing party is in the government, wages will grow faster than in a situation when there is the right-wing government in power. But the aforementioned Western European model does not apply to Slovakia, as the minimum wage rates during Robert Fico's cabinet, influenced by collective bargaining, grew at a slower pace than during Mikuláš Dzurinda's cabinet (Uhlerová, 2012c)⁸². Focusing on strengthening their own position in society by strengthening the position towards the government, the trade union representatives overlooked the need to reorganise and streamline the decision-making mechanisms, which would, also help to streamline the collective bargaining itself.

⁸² See the following chapter.

The Relations between the KOZ SR and Social Partners within the Tripartism: Government and Employers

The events of November 1989 initiated a political system transformation which led to a pluralist and representative democracy as well as to the change from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Various conflicts, especially the social ones, were expected to attend the process. To avoid them, or minimise their impact, the then-federal government decided to found “an institution dealing with benefits and enabling a feedback which has proved to be effective in different types of european neo-corporatist models” (Mansfeldová, 1996, p.13). In Western Europe, such institutions were established either after World War II, during the postwar economic reform from 1947 to 1952 or, more often, they were the results of macroeconomical or redistribution problems from 1953 to 1970 accompanied by a series of strikes. The institutions in post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe were, however, founded only for prophylactic reasons. Nevertheless, tripartite mechanisms were gradually launched in other post-communist countries including the Russian Federation, but their role in the democratic transformation cannot be overestimated. Their functions and their actual significance change according to persons involved and conditions in particular countries. The tripartism is usually entrenched as a social mechanism enabling discussions between interest groups and politicians on the selected legislative and political issues with no binding influence on wages nor results of collective bargaining and industrial relations (Myant - Slocock - Smith, 2000).

In Western Europe, the nationwide institutions enabling the social dialogue carry out several basic functions. First of all, they act as a functionary representative of interests, in other words, the tripartism in its various forms assure the agreement between the government economic and social policy and the interests of employees and employers. It also assures the regulation or rather the arrangement of economic and social interests. The tripartite helps establish and preserve social peace, too. After all, the tripartite mechanism makes the implementation of

political decisions easier and faster as the government policy is based on a previous agreement with social partners.

In autumn 1990, a successful transformation of the ROH into KOZ SR in former Czechoslovakia initiated the foundation of the RHSD. Consequently, state level tripartite institutions giving scope for expressing possible national interests were finally established. The RHSD was created when the state owned the majority of enterprises and the structure of negotiations resembled a bipartite (Malová, 1996) or even one-sided activity rather than the agreement with three autonomous units substituting a triangle of economic and political powers typical for developed democratic states (Čambáliková - Mansfeldová, 1996). A sudden creation of the tripartism in Slovakia in 1990 was quite a surprise because of the lack of exerted pressure as widespread economic and social reforms were only in the process of preparation. No strong conflicts accompanied the events and thus the overall social situation was quite calm, nonetheless, the tripartism was created more or less as a means of prevention of expected social unrests as mentioned earlier. M. Čambáliková believes that the creation of social partnership institutions initiated "from above", thus by the government there "was de facto an attempt to establish democratic institutions according to the model of democratic societies where such institutions were spontaneously entrenched and proved functional" (Čambáliková - Mansfeldová, 1996, p. 561). On the other hand, Z. Mansfeldová denies the establishment of institutions. She considers the adoption of new methods a tool to prevent and solve conflicts. She justifies it by the fact that tripartism proved itself to be inefficient in the matters of social and technological progress as early as the 1980s (Mansfeldová, 1996). It is important to know that the RHSD was not a result of a law but a legally non-binding agreement with the social partners, meaning that the members were bound to respect reached decisions only morally.

The formation of a social partnership at macrolevel was influenced by a relatively homogenous social structure and a high political legitimacy as well as by a government social prestige after 1989. The fact that the state still owned the great majority of enterprises when the establishment proceeded strengthened its position too, because the government stood for the employers. State became the most powerful member of the tripartism, the mechanism which was a great asset to all three

stakeholders in an uncertain political and social situation in Slovakia. It definitely helped reduce uncertainty during the process of economic and social reforms. Due to the tripartism, the trade unions can directly take part in political processes without complicated negotiations with political parties in the parliament or outside it. The tripartism provided employers with the opportunity to avoid a direct political risk during a difficult period of privatisation. It also enabled entrepreneurs, managers and proprietors to negotiate for their claims directly with the government. The government, the tripartite third member, also benefited as no serious protests, which could have disrupted the process of the implementation of economic and social reforms, took place in spite of a gradually decreasing standard of living.

The attribution of a political status to interest groups has always had a double effect. On the one hand, the interest groups acquire certain advantages and privileges, but on the other hand, they also have to accept some restrictions and restrictive obligations. The interest groups recognised by the government and incorporated in a political process have to more or less conform to formal commitments. They cannot use unacceptable tactics, they have to behave in a responsible way and inform about possible actions in advance and they should forbear claims the government cannot deal with if it is to carry out its programme (Malová, 1997).

D. Malová claims (*ibid*) that the tripartite mechanism functioning is usually analysed according to the extent of its agenda, thus, according to the number of issues and competences specified in the founding document. Attention should be also paid to the status of tripartite negotiations, thus, also to their institutional definition as well as to the degree of an agreement's being binding. A third important viewpoint of assessing the role of the tripartism is as an organisational force and the power status of its social partners. The governments of post-communist countries had usually more favourable position than their partners as neither trade unions nor employers had an effective control over their members, consequently, their positions during the negotiations were more vulnerable.

The creation of tripartism is closely related to the trade union transformation according to the KOZ management immediate demand. It is necessary to mention that trade unions as well as their representatives

were more or less concerned especially with their personal, organisational and property matters in the first months after the fall of the communist regime (Barinych, 2002). In those days, the federal government passed several important acts which were to reduce the trade union influence on politics and thus pushed it to the margins of political events. First of all, it was the act on the trade union plurality which the parliament passed without any prior consultations in April 1990. The act could have led to rather negative consequences for the already existing trade unions as it not only made the conditions for the creation of a trade union more liberal but it also could have resulted in a stronger competition among members or even an argument over the property of the former ROH because in 1990, several former "social organisations" underwent similar organisational changes and many of them lost control over their property.

Secondly, it was a gradual loss of some decision-making competences as well as the control over the enterprises the former ROH had, although only officially. Subsequently, the trade unions lodged claims from before 1989 which included the right to participate in government sessions and to directly initiate legislation within the Parliament. The claim for the creation of a tripartite mechanism, conceding that employers' associations would be formed as an independent power, appeared later (Malová, 1997).

In Slovakia, the tripartite body was represented by the aforementioned RHSD. However, its creation was not a result of the act. It was established on the basis of a legally non-binding agreement with the Slovak government, the Council of Business Unions and Associations of Slovakia and the KOZ SR. The agreement was signed on 30th October 1990. The RHSD complied with its statute of an organisation created as an independent bargaining and initiatory body whose aims were to reach a mutual agreement and to take a stand on principal economic, social, employment and wage matters, thus, on all bills and measures related to employment, social policy and the living standards of citizens. The tripartite became a "consulting space aggregating articulated and manifested interests where recommendations can be produced and the social partners have the last chance to comment on bills" (Mansfeldová, 1996, p. 18). The RHSD had a wide field of action from the very beginning as it should have had the following four functions. It should have been a

body dealing with economic and social policies related to the citizens' work and living standards; prepared and discussed the conceptual basis for legal regulation principles; served as a groundwork for both collective negotiations and concluding collective contracts and finally commented on presented bills calling for changes in economic and social domains as well as in the work and social affairs domains. Moreover, conclusions should have been binding for all of its members. The RHSD field of action was quite wide compared to the majority of Western European tripartite institutions.

The KOZ SR acquired an important advantage, the exclusive position in representing the interests of employees, as the RHSD appointed it alongside with the Confederation of Arts and Culture (KUK) as their sole representatives. It happened during the era when new trade unions asking for representation in the RHSD, and also some other organisations which played an important role in the democracy transition, were being established. However, the government did not diversify the RHSD structure

as the tripartism was (and still is) equal at all levels and all three parties are represented by exactly seven members. The employers had been represented by a supreme employers' association in Slovakia - the AZZZ SR from 1991 but from 2004 the National Union of Employers (hereinafter referred to as RÚZ SR) has been representing them.⁸³ At the beginning, six KOZ SR members and one KUK member represented the trade unions whereas from 1995 all representatives are nominated by the KOZ. The state basically recognized the Confederation as the exclusive representative of employees, though, it had to voluntarily accept certain restrictions during the negotiations "in exchange" for this privileged status. Despite the economic reforms which resulted in deteriorated living standards for a considerable part of the population, citizens did not organise any serious protests in the first years after the creation of the tripartism and the trade unions continued to participate in tripartite negotiations, though they had not fulfilled the requirements. As a result, the state strengthened its ability to implement the economic and social

⁸³ The RÚZ SR was founded on 30th March 2004. Nowadays, it consists of 25 unions and 18 individual members who give employment to more than 230,000 employees.

policies without threatening a social conciliation (Malová; Čambalíková, 1998).

The basic document and the actual means of fulfilling the social dialogue content at the same time should have been a General Agreement (GA). The social partners usually signed it for a one-year period. It is a frame document defining relevant economic and social problems. The collective bargaining at both sector and enterprise levels should have been based on it. The content of a GA should have been reflected in collective agreements, but there is no legal connection between them. Nevertheless, it became clear that a GA stands as a consulting mechanism rather than for real negotiations about an organised work and capital interests as soon as the first negotiations with the RHSD and the signing of early general agreements took place (Malová, 1997; Myant – Slocock - Smith, 2000).

The RHSD enactment from the period 1990-1999 allowed tripartism to comment on governmental legislative motions. The usual tripartite representatives to parliamentary sessions were its members from the governmental party, thus, the ministers. Deputies were informed about the tripartite standpoint on a previously discussed bill by its proposer as it was part of a bill, or more exactly a part of an explanatory statement. However, the trade union representatives were concerned with the RHSD political status as early as in 1991. They had been trying to legislate it for several years when they eventually succeeded after the arrival of M. Dzurinda's cabinet in 1998. It was an "expression of gratitude" for their support in an attempt to achieve a change in the government before the September 1998 election.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ The Confederation achieved a new position after the outcome of elections when the coalition government was composed of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (Slovenská demokratická koalícia, SDK), the Party of the Democratic Left (Strana demokratickej ľavice, SDL), the Party of Civic Understanding (Strana občianskeho porozumenia, SOP) and the Party of the Hungarian Community (Strana maďarskej komunity, SMK). Despite the trade union rejection of the government offer to conclude a two-year Economic and Social Stability Pact, the Economic and Social Council and the wage regulation were abolished and the preparations for a law on the tripartism started even before the resumption of the tripartite negotiations. The AZZZ and the KOZ managed to arrive at compromise over the representation and financing of the tripartism and the RHSD finally passed a tripartite bill on 22 December 1998. Howbeit the National Council passed the law on the economic and social partnership only as early as May next year.

The act with an effective date of the 15th of June, 1999 and valid till the end of 2004 did not define a General Agreement as legally binding, despite the Confederation's demand. It would have been against the principles of modern representative democracy but also the usual social dialogue adjustment in EU countries (Malová, 1997). The act was a reaction to the previous negative experience with social dialogues. New rules were set to avoid arguments among the associations of employers and employees about the legitimate right to be represented at the national level. The strictly given representativeness affirmed the exclusive position of the Confederation as a sole representative of employees and simultaneously prevented a repetition of previous events.⁸⁵ The act implied the enactment of an economic and social partnership "among the state, employers and employees... who, through their representatives, discuss fundamental matters of an economic and social development in order to reach an agreement at national level" (Act No. 106/1999 Coll.). The representativeness is conditioned by some requirements; the organisation has to associate employers and employees from "the majority of economic sectors" and operate in at least five regions. Representative associations of employers have to employ at least "ten per cent of the total number of employees in the economy sector" and representative trade unions have to associate "at least ten per cent of the total number of employees in the Slovak Republic." The Act obliged the government to negotiate with social partners but neither the results of negotiations nor the General Agreement became legally binding despite the Confederation requirement.

According to D. Malová, the Act on economic and social partnership meant a certain compromise between the KOZ requirements and the government opinions on the social partners representativeness and the financing of the tripartism (Malová, 1997). It became a part of the Slovak legal order without violating parliamentary democracy rules, where only Parliament is entitled to adopt laws and Acts and where social partners are responsible for the preparation of conventions and their further implementation.

⁸⁵ The RHSD was substituted by the Economic and Social Council and the Association of Trade Unions was established.

The Act on tripartism was repealed in 2004. It was one of the goals of the contemporary government programme whose aim was to minimise corporatist elements in the representation of economic interests. The repeal was also a result of a long-lasting tension between the government and the trade unions. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Partnership Council (RHSP) was established. It was supposed to act only as an advisory body of the government contrary to the former RHSD defined as a national-level institute for achieving agreements. Tripartism became a bargaining and consultative institution as required only after the arrival of the government of Robert Fico in 2007 when the Act on Tripartite Consultations at the national level (the Act on tripartism) was passed. The government thus fulfilled one of the promises given to the trade unions. Its enactment was also a part of the Cooperation Agreement between the KOZ and the party Smer-SD reached in 2005.

1990 - 1994

The fundamental document and the actual means of fulfillment of the social dialogue content became the aforementioned General Agreement (GA), a frame document defining relevant economic and social problems which usually consists of five chapters.⁸⁶ The ratification of every single GA was preceded by very long and often clashing negotiations. In the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (ČSFR), they were signed separately at federal and republic levels.⁸⁷ The differences between the agreements resulted from the division of competences between the federation and the republics. Although the federal agreement dealt with social and wage matters, it had rather a general character and covered the two republican agreements. The first Slovak agreement, the 1991 GA, was signed in a new social situation, though it was based on GA provisions valid for former ČSFR. As well as the other ones, it was based on regulations, conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation and the European Social Charter. Despite the social

⁸⁶ Common Provisions, Employment and its Active Policy, Wages, Social Policy, Social Reform, and Final Provisions..

⁸⁷ Agreements at the republican level were signed on 28th January 1991 and 2nd March 1992 by the Slovak party whereas the Czech party signed it only on 20th February 1992; they did not managed to reach a GA in 1991. Agreements at federal level were signed on 28th February 1991 and 30th March 1992.

partners' inexperience and their unstable relations, the GA laid the foundation for a gradual production of a quite well-defined document full of commitments. The society successively started to acknowledge its position. Moreover, the formerly unbinding character of a legally enforceable contract was becoming more and more socially common.

None of the three parties was content with the 1991 federal GA which had a quite declarative and programme character. However, they remained willing to cooperate. They managed to keep up a mutual understanding and a necessary willingness even when it was obvious that the society would have to fight against unemployment, inflation and extensive structural changes after more than forty years. The first chapter contained the commitment of governments to giving a part of their authorities to the supreme tripartite bodies as well as on negotiating draft legislation on working and social conditions of employees by the government only after the prior negotiations by the respective RHSD, thus, after mutual consultations which restricted the government's right to decide on its own. The agreements with the social partners should have been included in a bill in order for deputies to be informed about the social partners' standpoint, despite their non-binding character as it is typical of so called modern liberal democracies. In the second chapter, the government committed itself to both develop and finance programmes for employment and retraining programmes.

The negotiations in the third chapter regarding the domain of wages were the most complicated. It dealt with issues concerning the indicative wage growth and its adjustment to the development of the cost of living. The wage increase should have depended on the living cost increase; in the public sector it should have ranged from 5% to 6%. The indicative wage growth also included increase limits; a wage control and possible sanctions. The social partners, thus, conformed to the requirement for a wage control demanded by the government. Then, the mechanism for establishing a minimum wage on the basis of a cost of living index was also adopted. Another sensitive issue was the amount of the unemployment benefit, its length and the possibility to negotiate additional allowances at the enterprise level. Trade unions also focused on the possibility to establish a fund of cultural and social needs within collective agreements. The inexperience of trade union leaders was

revealed particularly because of those requirements - as they are a kind of a leftover from the former regime. Finally, in the last chapter, contracting parties pledged to maintain the social settlement according to the agreed conditions.

Thereafter, the RHSD negotiations pointed out the growing complications with the tripartite functioning. They highlighted especially the difficult reaching of decisions and their circumvention in specific legal regulations. The RHSD members should have had the right to comment on contradictory issues by means of voting. If deputies had not been able to reach an agreement, the government would have been obliged to take into account different opinions and to present them to the Parliament as a part of a bill. However, the government often took no notice of RHSD conclusions, social partners' attitudes or GA provisions. The government failed to meet its obligations when real wages fell rapidly and unemployment in Slovakia reached an alarming rate. In 1991, the amount of the minimum wage became a source of problems between the government and the trade unions. The trade unions asked the government to fulfil its commitment and increase the minimum wage according to the agreed terms and conditions, but the federal government refused because of the difficult economic situation. Consequently, the federal government tried to lower the RHSD status and to redefine it as "a government advisory body" enabling the government to ascertain social partners' opinions (Myant – Slocock-Smith, 2000). Afterwards, the status was basically lowered to the level of a wide range of advisory bodies of the Office of the Government which were a heritage from the past (Malová, 1997). On the 11th of November, 1991, the KOZ SR organised a protest rally to remonstrate against the non-compliance of the federal GA. It was initiated by the federal trade unions the OZ KOVO and the OZ Chemistry, although the rally took place only in Slovakia where an hour-long protest strike was called on the 25th of November; however, as little as one per cent of basic organisations got involved. It probably resulted from a different impact of the economic reform on both parts of the federation as well as from Prague's centralisation, as all decisions about economic policy occurred in Prague with no respect to Slovak needs.

However, those events weakened the position of trade unions especially in their relation towards their members and other social partners. Wage control is generally considered a political means of a

planned economy, in other words, the measure contradicted declarations on the transition to a liberal and democratic market economy. During the establishment phase of the social dialogue at the highest federal and republic levels, the trade unions focused on maintaining the achieved status and strengthening the position of the RHSD to make its conclusions legally binding. The GA should have become a part of the law and order so its conclusions would have been automatically introduced into the governmental policy and the parliamentary legislation. However, it failed to be enforced because of several reasons. First of all, generally speaking, citizens considerably supported government reforms and were willing to endure the policy of “belt-tightening”. Secondly, neither the trade union leaders nor the individual trade unions were unified. It became obvious that the principal KOZ SR influence came from the tripartite mechanism itself and not from the general public support. Eventually, the government refused the claim and kept on insisting that it answers only to Parliament as it was agreed previously and the RHSD is a body the establishment of which is not based on the free elections’ results (Malová, 1997). The GA character remained legally non-binding. In other words, the conclusions were not legally enforceable nor it was possible to be penalised for their violation.

The 1992 GA was very general without any specific obligations, although, the wage regulation remained unchanged. Contrary to the government, the trade unions did not consider it fulfilled. However, in that year, the arguments on a common state character caught more attention than a social and economic policy as the contemporary political development was focused rather on the organisation of the federation. After the 1992 election, the government repealed the act on the wage regulation despite the federal government decision and became immediately popular with employees and unionists. According to the evaluation of the RHSD and GA results in 1992, the trade unions were still much less popular than the government. It was then expected that the government would provide the KOZ representatives more space in the preparation of a new GA in a sovereign state.

The 1993 General Agreement signed on 29th April responded to the new conditions arising from the freshly acquired independence of the Slovak Republic. It contained provisions on maintaining the continuity of the law and order in the Slovak Republic after the split of the ČSFR. For

the first time, it consisted of a chapter on the economic policy; it invited the government to improve the functioning of the economy, stop the decline and start the recovery. The most fundamental obligations of the government were related to the wage issues. It pledged to cancel the wage control, to increase the minimum wage and to decrease the wage differences between private and public sectors to an acceptable level. Real wages should have been assessed every quarter and if the inflation had risen, RHSD would have had to take measures within 30 days. On the other hand, KOZ and AZZZ promised to take into account the economic results of particular sectors and enterprises when preparing collective agreements and determining the wage increase⁸⁸.

The 1994 General Agreement was affected by arguments over the creation of a social fund. The Confederation requested its establishment as it found necessary to replace the abolished Fund for Social and Cultural Requirements. The KOZ conditioned its agreement with the GA by the creation of the social fund from the employer's costs. Even though its final version in the form of Act. 152/1994 Coll. did not meet the trade union conception, its establishment was undeniably positive and the GA was finally signed on 18 February, 1994. However, the trade union requirements for the amendment of the Law on collective bargaining, the preparation of a new Labour Code and the revision of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic to legislate a law on the tripartism were not satisfied. The government programme introduced in 1994 promised to meet those requirements but they were not fulfilled, although the RHSD discussed them gradually, too.

The period of social dialogue functioning during 1990 - 1994 can be divided into two phases. The first phase, from 1990 to 1992, was characterised by the dominant role of the federal government. The RHSD was a significant body with the exclusive access to the government. In other words, the trade unions could influence discussed bills and other measures, however, they did not manage to take advantage of it, especially because of the strong position of the government, their own inexperience and internal problems. The following phase, from the regular 1992

⁸⁸ During the following years, the General Agreement structure, the tripartite negotiations and the evaluation of the tripartism were related especially to the economic and social policy as well as to the mechanisms increasing both the real wage in a public sector and the minimum wage.

election to the 1994 snap election was characterized by an unstable political situation. Parliament did not support governmental proposals sufficiently so the advantages of the KOZ exclusive access to the government through the RHSD were significantly limited. The Confederation had to focus its attention on parliamentary clubs and individual politicians in order to achieve its goals as the influencing of draft legislation was one of the means of fulfilling them. Consequently, the parliamentary activity of its leaders increased. The new role was more difficult in comparison with the former one in the RHSD but the advancement of own interests should have been much easier.

1994 - 1998

The trade union requirements were met in the programme of a new government coalition, formed by the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko, HZDS), the Slovak National Party (Slovenská národná strana, SNS) and the Union of the Workers of Slovakia (Združenie robotníkov Slovenska, ZRS) after the 1994 election. The adopted legislation included the amendment of the law on collective bargaining, the preparation of a new Labour Code and the amendment of the Constitution which would finally legislate the tripartism. Nothing indicated that the government would not be willing to keep the promises; on the contrary, the RHSD even initiated the accession to all five basic ILO conventions. Due to the trade union requirements, the 1995 General Agreement included the abolition of a wage regulation and the provision on costs - all costs arising from the employment relations agreed in collective agreements were regarded as employer's costs for tax purposes. However, the unionists started to be unsatisfied as general agreements were not being fulfilled and their requirements were approached more or less cautiously. On the one hand, the government did not raise regulated prices for housing and heating, on the other hand, it did not always respect agreements with the RHSD while preparing the legislation. The relation between the KOZ and V. Mečiar's cabinet was getting worse contrary to the relation with the employer representatives who actively took part in a privatisation process and received support for the export of Slovak enterprises. The Confederation left the tripartism on the 31st of August, 1995 because the date of the RHSD negotiation changed.

Moreover, it got involved in a dispute with the government about matters concerning compensation for cancelling travel discounts. In less than one month, on 23 September, the Confederation organised the first demonstration since 1989, where approximately 50,000 people participated⁸⁹. The trade unions, however, did not protest against the government but the decisions on the social domain they considered to be unacceptable. The government regarded the departure as a social dialogue violation. The Confederation declared a crisis situation on 30 October after the failure of negotiations between two tripartite partners. It conditioned its involvement in discussions on the 1996 GA by fulfilling the commitments included in the legislative plan as the government did not pass any of the proposals since then. The government included two of them into the agenda of the National Council of the Slovak Republic plenary session in January 1996. In the first quarter of 1996, the government approved the bill on a minimum wage rise and subsequently raised minimum rates of pay by 10% by means of a government regulation, thereby belatedly meeting some of the commitments from the 1995 GA.

The Confederation enforced the requirements for a total tax wedge reduction in the 1996 General Agreement. The part concerning the social domain dealt especially with the establishment of a pension insurance scheme, accident insurance and requirements for the preparation of an Act on a public service. After the Third Council, the new management of the Confederation adopted a less tolerant attitude towards the government in comparison with the previous one. The newly elected President Ivan Saktor announced that the KOZ would not sign the 1997 GA unless the fulfillment of commitments is agreed in the 1995 and 1996 General Agreements. Not only did the government fail to fulfill its commitments but it also ignored the agreements with the RHSD when making decisions despite repeated threats of the Confederation's leaving the tripartite negotiations. In 1997, the RHSD negotiation was even suspended as the government unilaterally passed an act on the wage regulation without any consultation with the social partners and the parliament approved it, despite the KOZ disagreement and protests. As a

⁸⁹ The rally was supported, among others, by KUK, SDL, KDH, the New Education Trade Union (NSO) and the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (Sociálnodemokratická strana Slovenska, SDSS).

result, the Confederation left the tripartism. It would return only under the condition that the government either repealed the wage regulation or passed a law on the tripartism legislating the General Agreement since it still was not legally binding and the partners could break it anytime. The government did not accept any of those conditions in 1997. It even initiated the establishment of the Economic and Social Council (Ekonomicko-sociálna rada, ESR) which should have become a new social partner. The recently established Association of Trade Unions (Združenie odborových zväzov, ZOZ) took up the role of the KOZ. It associated five pro-government trade unions; The Trade Union for Metallurgy, Christian Trade Unions of Slovakia, The General Free Trade Union, The Federation of Railway Station Workers and The Railway Workers Trade Union.⁹⁰

As a result, General Agreements for 1997 and 1998 were not signed, though the social dialogue at province and enterprise levels continued even in the 1997-98 pre-election period. The trade unions also conducted a bilateral negotiation on upcoming bills with the AZZZ. Negotiations on a new Labour Code went on, despite the fact that the AZZZ disagreed in two domains with the KOZ. The Federation disagreed neither with the extension of the statutory leave entitlement nor with the trade union requirement that an employee can get a notice on the basis of a mutual agreement between the trade union and the employer. The KOZ and the AZZZ thus entered into a high-level negotiation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

On the one hand, the KOZ tried to reintroduce a social dialogue at the national level, on the other hand, it could not give up its requirements since it would mean a definite decrease in its bargaining position.⁹¹ The

⁹⁰ The Confederation was indirectly involved in the establishment of the ZOZ as it refused to engage in problems of the Trade Union OZ KOVO. In December 1996, the general council of the OZ KOVO VSŽ Košice decided to secede from the OZ KOVO and consequently establish the Trade Union OZ Metalurg. However, the KOZ did not admit it because of its status. According to the article 10 of the KOZ statutes, it accepted only democratic and independent trade unions. The fact that former trade union leaders such J. Kalman, A. Engliš and V. Tkáč got involved in the establishment of the ZOZ is also worth noticing.

⁹¹ The KOZ was fiercely trying to get back to the tripartite negotiations and not to give up its requirement at the same time. It required the first session to be devoted only to the bill on the tripartism. In the summer, it seemed that the KOZ succeeded as the management of the RHSD announced on 30 June 1998 that the tripartism was going to meet on 6 August to discuss the bill. However, the hope to restore the social dialogue before the election was soon destroyed as J. Kalman, the Deputy Prime Minister and the President of the RHSD, did

gap between the government and the trade unions was increasing more and more as the social partners blamed each other for breaking rules and agreements and each of them saw the reason why the tripartite negotiation did not take place somewhere else. V. Mečiar's cabinet probably tried to complicate the position of a new Cabinet when it unexpectedly met the KOZ requirements and proposed to raise a minimum wage to 4,000 Slovak Korunas (SKK). The AZZZ criticised it. According to its President F. Slávik, such a considerable rise is not systematic as it exceeds the inflation rate and leads to an increase in the levies tied to the minimum wage. In addition, the Federation criticised the attitude of the government which obviously did not think about the growth of their contributions to insurance companies. Anyway, such a minimum wage probably would not increase the motivation of the unemployed so it would only provoke the increase of tariff wages.

The position of the Confederation dramatically changed during the period 1994-1998. At the beginning, it was a dignified partner of the Government of the Slovak Republic that succeeded in implementing its objectives and intentions into the General Agreements. At the end of the period, it went to the opposition and was trying to arrange the change of current incumbents. The whole situation was probably a result of promises the government gave to the trade unions since the latter did not have effective tools to force the government to fulfill them. Moreover, personnel changes in the Confederation leadership also stood for the change of the trade union attitude towards the government. The departure of the Confederation from the tripartism caused heated discussions even within its own ranks. KOZ management laid its head on the block as the ZOZ could have taken over its influence and thus threatened the KOZ existence as a unit. Its involvement in the democratisation of Slovak conditions as well as a very active engagement in the 1998 election campaign were thus more comprehensible.⁹² KOZ

not call a session of the Council of Social Partners. He justified it by the AZZZ requirements adopted on 16th July. The Federation would have reintroduced cooperation with the RHSD only if the programme had consisted of other points besides the law on tripartism. On the other hand, the KOZ had not been discussing the bill on a social insurance with the Ministry of Labour for more than a year and since it should have been one of the proposed points, it refused the programme change.

⁹² See the following chapter.

could not implement its interests through RHSD anymore. Therefore, it had to apply the means of coercion it had used very rarely, if ever. It was a case of protest rallies, the organisation of demonstrations, petitions or the co-operation with other interest groups. The KOZ also lobbied deputies, political parties as well as ministries. However, not even those means helped to change the trade union position in Slovakia. D. Malová affirms it by claiming that the trade union decision to leave the RHSD did not change their status but only gave the government full play and enabled it to reach decisions in a faster manner. For this reason, it is very important for the trade unions to take part in the negotiations. If they do not participate in the negotiations or bargaining, they have to make use of several complementary tactics and means to fulfill their goals such as already mentioned lobbying but also protests and rallies which are more demanding financially, organisationally and personally. In addition, they consume more time (Malová, 1997).

1998 - 2002

The new government coalition consisting of the SDK, SDL, SOP and SMK was created after the September 1998 election. These results gave the trade union management a new hope because it apparently meant a new position for the trade unions, especially toward the government. In order to continue the social dialogue after the 1998 election when the government changed, the KOZ persevered with its requirements; it wanted the government either to repeal the wage regulation or to pass the law on tripartism. The development of the social dialogue at the national level thus still partially depended on conflicts among the social partners caused during the period of the former government - even after the 1998 election. The KOZ leaders kept on insisting on the same conditions for M. Dzurinda's cabinet, in spite of the fact that it encroached upon the campaign "for the change of the politics style" during the pre-electoral period. It should have resulted in the change of the government as according to the analyses of the KOZ, the former one did not fulfill its commitments set in its policy statement.

The trade unions rejected the two-year stability pact proposed by P. Magvaši, the new Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. On the other hand, the tripartite negotiations were restored, the Economic-Social

Council (hereinafter referred to as ESR) and the wage regulation were repealed and the preparations for the act on tripartism finally started. The stability pact should have steadied the relations among the social partners for two years at least and specified the framework of the economic policy to strengthen a social settlement in those days when the government would have to adopt several unpopular economic measures. The trade unions were afraid that a part of unionists could understand such a document as a party attitude which could result in a further loss of members. Some EU Member States adopted similar contracts in economically difficult times⁹³, but because of the trade union structure and the party system disunity such an arrangement is not probable in Slovakia (Malová, 1997).

The Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs I. Mikloš nominated by the right-wing Democratic Party (a part of the SDK) was elected president of the RHSD. The RHSD passed the bill on the tripartism as early as during its first session on 22 December 1998 but the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed the act on the economic and social partnership as late as May 1999.

Conflicts between the KOZ and the government started to escalate as early as January 1999 in spite of promising compromises over the act on tripartite. The KOZ required that the government should compensate the price increase for the wage increase at inflation level at least, reduce the tax burden on income and increase the child benefit for socially deprived families. However, the worsening economic situation in Slovakia forced the government to adopt the so-called first package of economic measures. The trade union leaders emphasised that they expected the new government to be more accessible to the trade unions as it reintroduced the social dialogue right after the elections. Nonetheless, in 1999, the dissatisfaction with the tripartite functioning increased since the trade unions allegedly could not work properly nor enforce their requirements. Misunderstandings between the KOZ representatives and the government continued as the trade unions demanded the raise of minimum wage to 4,000 Slovak Korunas and the reduction of the tax burden imposed on employees as well as state subsidies to finance the

⁹³ For example, the UK trade unions entered into a "Social Pact" with the Labour government in the period 1974-1979.

public transport, to stimulate the investments, especially in housing and to finish partially built motorways.⁹⁴

In February 1999, the AZZZ SR decided to interrupt participation in the tripartism to express disagreement with the Parliamentary Committee on Health decisions about the appointed management board of self-governing bodies of the public health insurance, Všeobecná zdravotná poisťovňa, as none of its candidates were accepted. The Federation did not agree with the discussed amendment to the law on social insurance, however, it returned to the tripartite negotiations.

Nonetheless, the passed Act on Economic and Social Partnership did not put an end to problems concerning the social dialogue as the social partners had had different opinions on the RHSD functioning since the very beginning.⁹⁵ In addition, the first package of economic measures implemented to solve macroeconomic imbalances and the capacity increase of economy caused more problems with the reintroduction of the RHSD negotiations as the price of transport, energy, water, postage and finally the food increased. Moreover, the government adopted those restrictive measures without having discussed them with the RHDS social partners, and since the trade unions did not agree with all of them, they demanded compensations. The relation between the government and the trade unions worsened due to the permanently different opinions. It got even more complicated when the government adopted the so-called second package of economic measures as the value added tax and the excise tax increased, and the import levy was re-imposed. The KOZ did not consider the social “compensation” measures, such as a housing benefit, proposed by the government to be sufficient, thus it decided to resort to coercive means to advance its interests.

An extraordinary KOZ convention taking place in June 1999 approved twenty requirements as a reaction to the government economic policy. On 24 June 1999, the unionists declared a crisis situation. After

⁹⁴ Trade unions also suggested that the government should impose the tax on legal entities as they accumulated arrears of approximately 40 billion crowns, which could be used as a resource to finance development programmes.

⁹⁵ As early as the beginning of 1999, Peter Gajdoš, the later vice-president of the KOZ SR, pointed out that the Government policy statement had not contained the fundamental trade union requirements such as the unemployment reduction, the change of tax burden imposed on employees at least to the 1993 level in, and the creation of a business environment enabling a higher growth of a real wage and social incomes.

that, they threatened the government with strikes in the autumn in case it failed to meet their requirements.⁹⁶ The President of the RHSD, I. Mikloš, pointed out that some of the trade union requirements which are mutually exclusive, especially those of the highest priority, i.e. the tax decrease and the increase of wages and employment, cannot be fulfilled at the same time. The KOZ submitted a 59 point demand but according to the government, they could manage to meet only 41 of them because of both objective reasons arising from legal restrictions and the current financial constraints. Thirteen requirements called for either the more elaborate explanation from the KOZ SR and a comment from the AZZZ SR or a more detailed analysis, as is the case of working hours shortening. According to the Prime Minister M. Dzurinda, the following negotiation should have resulted in the Confederation standpoint on a potential signing of a common declaration, in which all three social partners would have expressed their political will to strive for a social conciliation for the next 12 months. The KOZ SR refused it and emphasized that it would have only taken it into account if the government had changed the standpoint on one of the former requirements demanded by a part of the KOZ management in the previous period. The Confederation tried to enforce the act on a legally binding General Agreement implying that the GA would become a law instead of a political document.

An extraordinary KOZ convention held on 2 September 1999 should have charged the trade unions with duties in response to the negative development of economic policy and the worsened social dialogue functioning. The session especially discussed the negotiations between the government and the KOZ management. Nonetheless, Parliament declared a state alert and the trade unions turned to the organisation of protests to support their requirements. Firstly, the unionists called meetings to order in regional towns that were, however, limited only to distributing leaflets with the KOZ requirements. The protest rally held in Bratislava on the 25th of September, 1999 was attended by approximately 40,000 participants. The events resulted in the

⁹⁶ The most important requirements were the adoption of comprehensive politic programmes and acts containing the economic policy strategy, national employment programme, acts on labour inspection, decrease of tax burden imposed on entrepreneurs and natural persons and the end of employee discrimination, corruption, clientelism and economic criminality.

polarisation of public opinions on trade union activity because the opposition parties such as HZDS and ZRS took part in the rallies to promote their own political aims exclusively. Moreover, the Confederation was criticised by both the government representatives and numerous journalists and analysts as it was provoking social unrests in spite of the fact that the tripartite negotiations were in force, and the government had promised to fulfill the majority of the trade union requirements.⁹⁷

The Confederation tactics did not focus exclusively on the protest organisation at the end of 1999. It also initiated the establishment of a committee to prepare a bill on the 2000 General Agreement, despite the declared strike alert. It seems that the trade unions were concerned especially with the KOZ improvement of a bargaining position with the aim being to influence the proposals of both a state budget and the GA as much as possible. According to the policy, the KOZ organised a protest march towards the parliament building on 8 December 1999. The trade unions protested against the state budget proposed by the government as it allegedly did not contain their requirements⁹⁸.

The KOZ representatives also criticised the slow process of passing laws on employment relations. Right after the elections, they had demanded that M. Dzurinda's cabinet present a proposal of the Labour Code and the bills on collective bargaining and public sector. However, it did not happen till September 1999 as required and the legal code preparation was delayed. Moreover, the parliament did not treat the amendments together as a single package according to the trade union demands so the following RHSD negotiations should have dealt with a whole complex of issues and prepare the 2000 GA.

The General Agreement for 2000 reached among the government, the employers and the trade unions was, after difficult negotiations, finally signed on 17th March 2000. The government committed itself to decrease the unemployment rate by 3% by the end of the year, to propose an

⁹⁷ In addition, the participants who did not live in Bratislava received a financial compensation for travel costs and food from their union organization. The rally reminded of an organized trip rather than of a social protest and thus became the subject of jeering remarks.

⁹⁸ In January, the vice-president of the KOZ Emil Machyna said in an interview with the journal Pravda (4 January 2000) that the government had met some of the trade union requirements as they asked for the adjustment of a burden tax, although, the demanded amount of deductible items was not implemented.

amendment to the income tax (including the decrease of tax for natural persons to the level in 1993) by the end of June and to involve the social partners in the EU accession process. It also pledged not to propose a tax increase nor the regulation of prices without a prior discussion by the tripartism. The KOZ and the AZZZ committed themselves to superintend higher level collective agreements so that the wage increase would take into account the inflation raise. The KOZ also pledged to cancel the strike alert. However, individual trade unions were not bound in practise, as they are independent legal entities. The government had the smallest profit of such a GA composition. According to D. Malová, the government significantly reduced its influence without any pressure on economic and social domains because of the overall political situation; the HZDS activated and launched the petition calling for holding a referendum on early elections (Malová, 2000).

Relations among the social partners improved after the GA approval and, thus, the RHSD acceded to numerous proposals of the government. KOZ appreciated especially the act on employment, the amendment to the acts on social and health insurance, the minimum wage increase as well as the adjustment of pensions. However, the government and KOZ did not manage to agree either on the act on civil and public service or the Labour Code. The trade unions were against the Labour Code changes proposed by the government as employees were allegedly preferred to trade union organisations. As a result, the Labour Code was not passed. As far as the acts on civil and public services are concerned, the trade unions criticized the government because it conditioned its approval by a public administration reform, although, the trade unions discussed the situation of public service employees with the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia (Združenie miest a obcí Slovenska, ZMOS) and had come to agreement.

The process of passing the state budget for 2001 caused more serious disagreements. The KOZ regarded the proposal as the breach of obligations arising from the 2000 GA as the government had committed itself to decrease the tax burden to the level of 1993. In general, they considered the proposal to be restrictive with a negative impact on employees and their families as the tax wedge would increase. Once again the RHSD did not agree with the proposal. However, the AZZZ agreed after all and the government passed it. It is necessary to emphasize that the

RHSD had discussed the state budget proposal twice so the council of ministers acted according to the Act on Tripartism. In December 2000, the Council of chairmen of KOZ decided to authorize the KOZ representatives to sign the 2001 GA only if the commitments from the 2000 GA had been met.

The tendency for participatory democracy to deepen affirmed the social dialogue functioning at the national level in 1999-2000. Not only the social partner negotiations were restored but their status was also legislated, thus, the government became obliged to include them in the decision-making process. Moreover, the actual tripartite functioning as well as the session frequency, the scale of discussed subject matters, the GA approval and the informed public confirmed the status of the negotiations, despite certain reservations. It was not a formal affair anymore but rather a democratic discussion to the point (Malová, 2002).

The year 2001 began with an extraordinary "round-table" meeting of the social partners which took place relatively peacefully. E. Machyna, chairman of OZ KOVO, initiated it to find more conceptual solutions than during regular tripartite meetings. The negotiations dealt with the subject matters of a business environment, a social policy and the definition of responsibilities for the restructuring of the industry. All of the participants agreed that the priority of the Slovak Republic was accession to the EU under the best conditions. The unionists drew attention to the considerable structural problem of unemployment caused by the bankruptcy of several large enterprises in a single region such as in Kysuce, Martin or Komárno. They criticised especially the course of tenders leading to the sale of property as consequently a large number of jobs were destroyed. In their opinion, the purpose of the tenders should be the change of management or finding investors. The trade unions demanded the government to prepare a space for investors who would be able to take up at least a part of the production. They also emphasised that certain disagreements among them and the employers and partly the government carried over so there was a possibility they would organise protests to support their requirements for a system action (SITA Slovak News Agency, 19 January 2001). Contrary to the unionists, a representative of the employers and chairman of the Association of Industrial Unions, Jozef Uhrík, focused on positive results of the government and appreciated the effort to improve the overall economic

situation, to receive a higher rating and to lower interest rates which should have boosted the development of the whole economy.

Shortly after that, on the 31st of January 2001, I. Saktor, the chairman of KOZ, declared that the government had not met the crucial GA commitments such as the unemployment decrease by 3%, the decrease of the tax burden imposed on natural persons nor the raise of real wages in the budget and a contributory domain. The Deputy Prime Minister for Economy, I. Mikloš, admitted it, although he emphasised that the majority of the commitments would be met.

The tripartite negotiations were matter-of-fact till 12 April 2001. As the social partners commented on the 2000 GA in order for them to justify their standpoint on a new General Agreement, it became obvious that each of them understood its fulfillment differently⁹⁹. The reservations of the unionists were related especially to the government commitments on the unemployment decrease, the tax burden and a favourable development of wages. According to M. Lach, the president of AZZZ, the employers considered the acceleration of both the public administration reform and the infrastructure development to be the most urgent priorities but also the decrease of the tax burden and a stronger support of small and middle businesses¹⁰⁰. Finally, different interpretations of economic and social developments resulted in the KOZ decision not to sign the 2001 General Agreement.

⁹⁹ The government with "a particular interest in the social dialogue and the social peace preservation" considered 49 commitments as fulfilled. Seven others were regarded as being fulfilled currently or fulfilled partially and four of them were not fulfilled at all. According to the trade unions, only 26 commitments were fulfilled whereas 13 were fulfilled only partially and the resting 13 were not fulfilled at all. The Federation of Employer Associations of the Slovak Republic considered 30 commitments as fulfilled, 13 partially fulfilled and seven were unfulfilled (SITA, 12th April 2001).

¹⁰⁰ The Prime Minister tried to prove that a net income reached only 0.3% decline due to a gradual decrease of taxes, although, real wages fell over the last year. In his opinion, the statistics was distorted because of the low-wage public works as the net income would have increased by 0.5% if these wages had not been considered. The commitment to decrease unemployment in a public sector by three per cent was fulfilled only by 1.3%. The Prime Minister appreciated the increase of real wages by 4.8% in the industry and 1.1% in the building industry. He also claimed that real wages in education and health care would be also soon increased. According to him, the fact that the KOZ did not sign the GA was not as serious as it could have seemed. He emphasized that all three sides were interested in the social dialogue and the social peace preservation.

KOZ substantiated its decision by the fact that the previous commitments had remained unfulfilled. It also probably tried to confirm its autonomy before the public as there were more and more opinions that the current government dominated it. It is necessary to mention that before the 1998 election, KOZ organised a campaign to inform how particular political parties had voted on important social and economic acts. It turned out that former coalition parties (HZDS, SNS and ZRS) had voted against the interests of the unionists and numerous employees. However, KOZ went on participating in the round-table negotiations of the contemporary government. It is also worth noticing that KOZ evidently learnt from the past as it did not leave tripartism after the loss of influence on the government as it had done in 1997 during the government of V. Mečiar.

Nonetheless, further development showed that the social dialogue would not have fundamentally changed if the GA had not been signed. Though RHSD functioning changed to a certain extent; the trade unions and later the employers tried to maximise their requirements and they started to be more critical towards government proposals than they used to be. They returned to the proposals more often, though they came to agreement very rarely. According to the Act on Tripartism, the social partners are obliged to discuss problematic subject matters twice. However, the government can propose a bill to Parliament without the social partners' comments if they fail to reach an agreement. Since their statements became a part of a bill, more complicated negotiations on certain proposals had been expected.

The RHSD meetings continued according to the programme; the main subject matter was an overall amendment to the labour law including a new Labour Code, the Act on Collective Bargaining and acts on civil and public services. The trade unions as well as the employers had several important comments on those acts and the government approved of many of them. Consequently, the altered bills were proposed to Parliament. As far as the Act on Collective Bargaining is concerned, certain disagreements between KOZ and AZZZ were solved only as soon as the Parliament discussed them. The employers demanded to legislate the obligation to submit a list of strikers before a strike starts to ensure occupational safety, however, the trade unions regarded it to be discriminatory. They also proposed a condition that an absolute majority

of employees have to agree with a strike. The trade unions considered it to be discriminatory as well. Finally, the deputies voted for the trade union requirements. The new Labour Code strengthened the social dialogue and the involvement of employees as it included the obligation to establish work councils at a workplace. It partially fulfilled one of the trade unions' requirements; in the past, they asked to legislate the obligation of a contribution from each employee to the cover costs of a collective bargaining.

RHSD approved of the bill on civil service as early as in February, however, the whole bill-passing process slowed down because of disagreements between the Deputy Prime Minister for Economy I. Mikloš and the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family P. Magvaši. Several trade unions' comments on strengthening the protection of employees were incorporated into the bill, although, it was not faultless according to I. Lenský, the KOZ deputy chairman. Finally, Parliament passed the acts on civil and public services which resulted in several changed articles. During the August session, the KOZ Council of Chairmen expressed its dissatisfaction with the content of the acts and consequently announced its intention of organising a protest.

In May, RHSD did not come to agreement on the wage increase in education and health. The trade unions did not consider the government proposal to be sufficient, they neither agreed with the wording of the bill on the transformation of contributory and budgetary organisations nor with the concept of the air transport development. KOZ demanded a more elaborate document. Moreover, it objected that the Ministry of Economy had not incorporated its comments from the last negotiation. However, the Ministry claimed that all comments in compliance with the concept aim had been incorporated. The social partners did not reach an agreement on the budget for science and technology for the following year because the employers were against it. AZZZ pointed out that the structure as well as the institutional scheme of a scientific research needed to be adjusted to the economic practise.

The RHSD discussions over the bill on the state budget and the tax reform led to similar discrepant situations. The employers were particularly critical; they recommended to the government to improve the way of collecting money and drew attention to a low tax collection and an undeclared work both introducing an unfair competition. However, Karol

Pavlů, the president of the Entrepreneurs' Association of Slovakia (Združenie podnikateľov Slovenska, ZPS), admitted that the employers also participated in the spread of undeclared work what resulted in a social benefit increase. The government's tax reform proposal was not acceptable for the employers who asked more significant tax reduction. B. Schmögnerová, the Minister of Finance, opposed their request. She drew attention to the recommendation of the International Monetary Fund (Medzinárodný menový fond, MMF) for postponing a further tax cut till the collecting improves. The unionists also criticized the small amount of finances designated for the wage increase in the budgetary and contributory domain. They further proposed to set a tax deduction for a taxpayer and a dependent child at least at the level of subsistence, and demanded an adjustment of tax brackets according to the inflation growth.

In May, at the general assembly, AZZZ claimed that tripartism did not deal with essential subject matters. Deputy Prime Minister I. Mikloš responded with the fact that the programme of RHSD is determined by the social partner's requirements. Nonetheless, the government did not refuse to negotiate about law enforcement, a public service reform, a tax reform and the concept of the energy as AZZZ required, although RHSD already discussed those subject matters several times. In the following period, the RHSD situation did not improve. In June and July, the social partners did not come to agreement in almost all discussed issues related especially to the tax legislation changes, privatisation, the state budget and social affairs¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ The KOZ representatives did not agree with the proposal of the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family to raise the minimum wage from 4,400 to 4,920 SKK. The trade unions proposed to raise it at least to 5,260 SKK because the minimum wage should be higher than a subsistence to be motivational. According to the government, the minimum wage over 5,000 SKK was more than 70% of the contemporary average wage in the sectors with the lowest wages. Its raise could have resulted in difficulties in competitiveness and the overall unemployment increase. Likewise KOZ, AZZZ and the government had different opinions on the adjustment of pensions as well as on the change of the retirement age. KOZ proposed to raise pensions by 10% whereas the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic by 5 to 7%. In the latter case, the AZZZ representatives wanted to level the retirement age of women and men as soon as possible and suggested the year 2011 whereas KOZ supported a slower pace and suggested the year 2019. As far as that issue is concerned, the government decided to wait till the other two social partners came to agreement.

In 2001, the social dialogue at the national level was not very swift; the situation worsened especially because the GA had not been signed but partially also because of the politicisation which took place apparently after the April meeting of KOZ and AZZZ representatives with president Rudolf Schuster, and attended also by the highest representatives of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Slovenská obchodná a priemyselná komora, SOPK), the ZMOS and the president of the National Council of the Slovak Republic J. Migaš. The establishment of alternative mechanisms at the time when the representative democracy as well as the social dialogue institutions function properly only exacerbates the situation, destroys legitimacy and evades responsibility (Malová, 2002).

2002 - 2006

The tension between the government and the trade unions grew even more after the 2002 Parliamentary Election. The Minister of Justice D. Lipšic proposed to repeal the Act on Tripartism as soon as December 2003. He believed the mechanism supported a corporatist model where the unionists and the employers had a privileged “lobbying” status at the expense of other interest groups. He also claimed that the tripartism needed to be dissolved because the trade unions had asserted anti-government politics (TASR, 23 January 2004). In 2004, the RHSD functioning and the attitude of the government towards the social dialogue was influenced by a trade unions’ petition, the referendum on early elections but especially by the decision that an opposition political party SMER-SD would become a political partner of KOZ SR. At an extraordinary session of the RHSD Presidency on 4th May 2004, P. Rusko declared that it was impossible to negotiate with the trade unions having links with a political party (report of KOZ SR, 2004). The social partners were meeting and negotiating, however, the tripartism did not adopt any resolutions because of the frequent absence of the government representatives. At another time, the social partners’ attitudes were so different that they were not able to arrive at a compromise. In compliance with the Act, the government made the decisions.

In the summer of 2004, a “traditional model of negotiations” on the minimum wage repeated; it reflected the whole RHSD functioning. The government proposed to increase the minimum wage from 6,080 to 6,500

SKK. AZZZ SR and RÚZ SR (without representation in RHSD for the present moment) supported the proposal. KOZ SR wanted to increase the minimum wage at least to SKK 7,190 according to the EU principles as the minimum wage should have represented 60% of the average wage. In this context, RÚZ stated that it would insist on revoking the minimum wage as it stood for a disserviceable element in the labour market contradicting regional differences in Slovakia. RHSD did not come to agreement on the amount of the minimum wage because of KOZ SR disapproval. Finally, the government passed its former proposal. The European Committee of Social Rights criticized it as the minimum wage in Slovakia represented only 45% of the average wage.

KOZ SR initiated and actively supported the referendum on early elections, however, it was invalid. After it, the government returned to the intention of repealing the Act on Tripartism. The intention became even firmer when KOZ SR declared that SMER-SD would become its ally. The government realised that the trade unions were not powerful so they would not be able to mobilise their members and organise mass protests against its plan. Moreover, the trade unions could not refer to other member states as none but Belgium had a legislated tripartism¹⁰².

On 22 September 2004, the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed an amendment to the Act on the organisation of Government Activities and organisation of Central State Administration. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Partnership Council (RHSP) was established as an advisory body of the government contrary to the former RHSD defined as a national-level institute for achieving agreements. The new arrangement should have been valid from 1st November. However, AZZZ and KOZ emphasized that the government had failed to fulfill a legal obligation to negotiate its proposal during the RHSD meeting which should have taken place as early as on 24th September. They also reminded them that the government had evoked the RHSD unilaterally. As a result, the tripartism met one more time in October, although it was not quorate because of the absence of the government members. The social partners expressed their disagreement with the amendment; KOZ SR especially refused the new status. According to the international

¹⁰² On the other hand, all economically developed states have a certain kind of tripartism; the International Labour Organization Convention No. 144 on Tripartite Consultations was not signed only by Switzerland and Japan.

standards, it considered tripartism to be a conciliatory and not an advisory body. AZZZ also criticized the amendment as the employers and the employees would stop being partners of the government. The Federation, thus, insisted on maintaining a partnership relation in accordance with International Labour organisation principles. RÚZ believed the amendment would improve communication among the social partners, although it also urged the status change; RHSP should have been at least a consulting and not an advisory body.

The criteria of representativeness were also laid down; the trade unions had to have at least 20,000 members and employers' associations had to have at least 20,000 employees. Another reason why KOZ SR refused the amendment was probably the fact that the independent trade unions with the required number of members which were part of the Confederation could have also become members of the new body. At that time, there were six trade unions satisfying the conditions. The Independent Christian Trade Unions of Slovakia unilaterally supported the amendment as it represented an official means of access to the government. AZZZ was against the proposed quorum as it did not consider the trade unions standing only for 20,000 members to be representative enough. The quorum should have increased to 100,000 employees and the number of seats should have depended on it. If RHSP would have become an advisory body of the government, AZZZ had demanded the government to cover the costs of the social partners associated with the preparation for negotiations, as was the case with other councils. The last RHSD meeting according to the former Act on Tripartism took place on 23rd November 2004 during which all three sides expressed their interest in the continuation of the social dialogue in its new form. The government accepted the social partner's requirements; it had no objections especially to those ones proposed by KOZ SR as they came out from the international legal acts. Finally, the government decided that the RHSP status would not be based on the so-called Competency Law but rather on a voluntary decision of the partners. According to Article 2, RHSP was established as a national consulting body of an economic and social partnership providing the space for consultations in order to reach an agreement on specific domains or at least to explain standpoints of particular social partners.

On the 28th of January, 2005, after the repeal of the Act on Tripartism, the first session of the Council for Economic and Social

Partnership of the Slovak Republic took place to approve the RHSP rules of procedure as well as its programme for the first half of 2005. P. Rusko, the contemporary Minister of Economy, became the chairman of RHSP. According to the RHSP status, the trade union representatives as well as the representatives of the employers and the government should have each had 6 seats in the Council. At the first RHSP session, the members basically agreed on fundamental documents, their attitudes and the subject matters to be discussed. Despite that agreement, the chairman of RHSP emphasized that he “would have interrupted the social dialogue if the unionists had started to cooperate with a certain unnamed political party” (report of KOZ SR, February 2005). Nonetheless, by the end of the first half of 2005, the trade union representatives considered the RHSP sessions to be “formal and unrestrained”. In addition, two bills became a source of problems during the fourth RHSP session in June 2005. The unionists did not agree with a bill on lobbying as it was “a serious interference not only in the trade union legal status and their field of activity but also in the fundamental human rights and freedoms. Such a verbalisation of the bill would implement a foreign institute into the Slovak legal order, moreover, the subject matter of the bill is not a priority of the law approximation” (report of the KOZ SR, June 2005). The second problematic bill was an amendment to Act No. 553/2003 Coll. on the Remuneration of Certain Employees for Work in the Public Interest. Neither ZMOS nor KOZ SR agreed with the amendment as the cancellation of tariff tables would directly affect the finances of ZMOS because two types of remuneration would create two different categories of the employees within one legal entity (municipality). KOZ SR refused it because it considered it to be discriminatory.

In summer 2005, negotiations on the minimum wage amount followed a standard pattern. KOZ SR was strictly against the proposals of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. It agreed neither with a coefficient to adjust the amount of the gross minimum wage nor with the increase of the minimum wage to 6,800 SKK. KOZ SR proposed to increase it at least to 7,280 SKK from 1st October 2005 which was 46% of the average wage in 2004. In August, at the following RHSP session, KOZ SR demanded the members to agree on a minimum wage coefficient of 0.46 one more time, although the level of 60% of the average wage according to the European Social Charter would

not be met. The proposal of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family was 0.43. According to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, it would mean a decrease in the minimum wage proportional to the expected average wage for 2006 to the level of 39.53%. RHSP arrived at the conclusion, that the government would have accepted the proposal of 7000 SKK if the social partners had come to such a compromise. In the second half of 2005, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family were replaced. However, neither the RHSP functioning nor communication were significantly influenced.

RHSP negotiations during the first half of 2006 were similar to the previous year. KOZ SR representatives complained about the government representatives' attitudes. It resulted in the situations when RHSP either did not discuss materials or more often it discussed them after a regular session. It also frequently happened that materials were incomplete or the social partners got them one day before a session. The proposal of the act on tripartite negotiations at the national level, thus the Act on Tripartism, was discussed at a regular RHSP session taking place in November where the government representatives were already from a new coalition formed after the June elections. The bill was prepared in accordance with the programme declaration of the Slovak government but it also met the requirements of the social partners who had demanded a new model of the tripartism. (August, 2006). In 2004, the government abolished the tripartism as it wanted to eliminate corporatist elements in the representation of interests. The act influenced the institutional position of the trade unions, however, only its status and membership conditions actually changed. The conditions became more liberal so there were more possible members.

2006 - 2010

After the arrival of R. Fico's cabinet, a package of measures aimed at changing an employment relation according to the trade union requirements was expected to be adopted as KOZ SR had signed an agreement on the cooperation with SMER-SD. Consequently, it was also expected that its content would somehow reflect on government priorities in the field of the social policy. In 2007, two important events influenced

the social partner negotiations at the national level; an amendment to the Labour Code and the tripartite negotiations according to a “modified” pattern - the establishment of the Economic and Social Council (Hospodárska a sociálna rada, HSR). In March and April 2007, several RHSP negotiations took place. The most important subject matter to discuss was the amendment to the Labour Code (alongside with other acts on employment relation such as the Act on Work Safety and Health Protection regulations (BOZP), the Act on Social Fund and the Act on Collective Bargaining). On 1st April 2007, Act No. 103/2007 Collection of Laws on Tripartite Consultations at the National Level was passed. As a result, several changes were introduced. The legislated social dialogue was reintroduced and the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic was created instead of RHSP, acting as a space for a voluntary social dialogue which was not enacted. The Economic and Social Council was a consulting and conciliation body at the national level serving the government and the social partners.

The Council had 21 members. It consisted of seven representatives appointed by the government, seven representatives appointed by representative employers’ associations and seven representatives appointed by representative associations of the trade unions. The number of Council members representing the representative employers’ associations shall be determined proportionally to the number of employed employees. The number of Council members representing the representative associations of the trade unions shall be determined proportionally to the number of associated employees who are trade union members. The representative of the state in the HSR is the government of the Slovak Republic, the employers’ representatives are representatives appointed by representative associations of employers. The representative association of employers is the association of employers which associates employers within several sectors of the economy or has competence in at least five regions, jointly employing at least 100,000 employees in an employment relation or in a similar labour relation. The employees’ representatives are representative associations of the trade unions. The representative association of the trade unions is the association of the trade unions which associates employees in an employment relation or in a similar labour relation within several economy sectors with at least 100,000 employees who are the trade union

members (the Act. 103/2007 Coll.). The tripartism institution in the form of the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic returned back to the times of the Council of Economic and Social Agreement when it was a consulting and a conciliation body, not an advisory body as it was a case of the Council for Economic and Social Partnership.

On 28th June 2007, the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed a law changing and amending Act. 311/2007 Coll. on Labour Code. The following day, a law changing and amending Act. 2/1991 Coll. on Collective Bargaining was passed, as well. One of the contracting parties of the collective agreement of a higher degree proposed that the collective agreement could also be binding for the employer with a dominant activity in the sector who was not a member of an employers' organisation involved in the conclusion of the agreement, thus, he did not need to agree with the agreement. The government passed an amendment to the Act on Collective Bargaining with effect from 1 September 2009 on the basis of the proposal. As a result, the situation before the so-called Kaník's amendment from 2004 was restored. In the end of 2009, another amendment to the Act on Collective Bargaining was adopted. The bindingness of a collective agreement of a higher level expanded to the whole sector, thus, on all employers of the sector.

KOZ SR had participated in the amendment to the Labour Code from the beginning when it influenced the content of the programme declaration of the government dealing with an employment relation. The Labour Code needed to be amended because of several factors. First of all, it was necessary to correlate the labour law with the EU labour law. Then, the law and order had to be harmonised and provisions which were not compatible with other laws had to be either altered or removed. It was also necessary to ensure the equal legal status of particular partners of an employment relation. Moreover, the social dialogue between the employers and the employees had to be reinforced as well as the status of employees' representatives had to be specified. KOZ SR bodies were continuously informed on the bills. Consequently, they adopted standpoints to the requirements of the employers as well as to the changes of the proposer. The adopted law consisted of 157 amendments. 83 deputies voted for the amendment whereas 61 deputies were against it. On 19 June 2007, KOZ SR organised a gathering in front of the building of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to support the adoption of

the amendment. It supported it actively in public; on many occasions the essential changes it should have brought especially to employees were mentioned. The whole preparation process took a long time and the social partners had to make certain concessions. For the trade unions, the new Labour Code brought a tightening of conditions to conclude a fixed-term employment contract. Moreover, a probationary period could not be abused any longer nor could an employer terminate a fixed-term employment contract without a legal reason. It also established a legal claim for severance pay when the contract is terminated because of certain causes. The trade union status at the workplace was strengthened, as well. The new Legal Code came into effect on 1 September 2007.

Another important subject matter to discuss during the year was the amount of the minimum wage. Finally, the social partners agreed on the increase from 7,600 SKK to 8,100 SKK by October. In 2007, the amount of the minimum wage was set according to the “old” regulations; the government could have decided on its own without any restrictions if the social partners had not come to agreement. Since 2008, according to the new rules, the amount had been determined by the 1st of January of the following year (it used to have to be determined by October of the same year). First and foremost, the employers should come to agreement with the trade unions; negotiations should start not later than on 1 April. If the social partners did not reach an agreement, the minimum wage would be increased by the growth rate of an average monthly nominal wage in Slovakia. According to the law, the development of consumer prices, unemployment, average wages as well as a subsistence level increase should be considered during the negotiations. The new Act governing Minimum Wage strengthened the position of the trade unions within the tripartism as the government could no longer decide about the amount of the minimum wage without any restrictions but had to take into account the indicators of economic development.

In 2007, the following HSR negotiations adopted a matter-of-fact approach. The social partners discussed several amendments to social laws such as the Act on Social Fund, the Act on Health Care, the Act on Health Insurance, the Act on Social Insurance, the Act on Benefit in the Event of Childbirth, the Act on Minimum Wage etc. The overall tripartite functioning was quite smooth despite occasional situations when the

social partners did not manage to reach an agreement.¹⁰³ The year 2008 was very similar; a lot of issues were discussed, although, their content often differed from the programme of the trade unions and the employers. For example, MPs discussed a bill on a Work Safety and Health Protection concept for 2007-2012 but also health care, accident insurance, a new Act on Education as well as the modification of the monthly minimum wage. After all, according to the amendment to the Act on Minimum Wage adopted by the Parliament at mid-September 2008, the government can set the amount of the minimum wage on its own. The amendment sets only the minimum limit which is given by the growth rate of the average wage in Slovakia. The maximum limit is not set, however, the government can adjust it by means of a regulation. It should, of course, take into account the social partners' standpoints, the development of criteria for the minimum wage adjustment, the development of the proportion of the net minimum wage from the net average wage for at least two previous calendar years and the development of the labour productivity¹⁰⁴.

Since 2009, the tripartite negotiations had been marked considerably by the economic crisis which impacted all social partners. During the period, they focused on finding common solutions to decrease its effect on Slovak economy and employment. As a result, they adjusted their requirements and proposals. KOZ SR concentrated especially on the protection of employees and Slovak citizens from the economic crisis impact as well as on the creation of a network consisting of social benefits and other social measures helping the citizens to overcome problems

¹⁰³KOZ SR vice-president E. Škultéty declared that the relations with the employers had begun to complicate not only at tripartite but also at bipartite level at the turn of the years 2007 and 2008. They allegedly started to foil the negotiations of collective agreements at a higher level as a revenge for the new Labour Code which was more advantageous for the trade unions. The employers were not willing to arrive at a compromise, they always demanded the same requirements such as a unilateral termination of a collective agreement. The course of negotiating of a collective agreement of a higher level, for example the Agreement Strojárska with the OZ KOVO or the Agreement with the OZ Chémia SR, confirmed a complicated situation.

¹⁰⁴ The problems with an inadequate representation appeared for the first time. The social partners did not appreciate that RÚZ was represented by secretaries as the government was represented by ministers and the KOZ SR by the president, the vice-president or by chairmen of particular trade unions.

caused by the crisis.¹⁰⁵ During the period from 2006 to the arrival of a right-wing government in July 2010, the neo-corporatist model of the economic interest intermediation was restored. According to the theory of Gerhard Lehmbruch, it could be classified as a weak or a medium corporatism. The trade unions managed to enforce some of their requirements such as the amendment of the tripartism and the Labour Code as well as the Act on Collective Bargaining which were also incorporated into the programme declaration of the new government. The pre-election cooperation between the trade unions and the government party SMER-SD seemed to be advantageous for the trade unions. It partly resulted in the restoration of corporatist elements in the representation of the employees' interests.

2010 - 2014

The KOZ SR was a social partner of three different governments during the period from 2010 to 2014. SMER-SD won the parliamentary elections which took place in June 2010, however, the party did not manage to create a coalition with any relevant political party. Finally, four right-wing political parties¹⁰⁶ headed by I. Radičová formed a coalition which announced extensive changes in a social, a pension and employment legislation. The first disagreements (especially between the trade unions and the government) started to emerge as soon as they discussed the state budget, the minimum wage and a pension reform. In December 2010, the deputies of the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed an amendment to the Act on Collective Bargaining which resulted in the liberalisation of the extension of a collective agreement at a higher level similar to the so-called Kaník's amendment from 2004. Since then, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic would have a right to extend the bindingness of the collective agreement of a higher degree if both contractual parties proposed it in a

¹⁰⁵ According to KOZ SR, it was crucial to create conditions to stimulate a demand (by improving the infrastructure), to adopt measures to moderate the enforcement action of mortgage loans, to prolong the period during which unemployment benefit is paid according to the number of years of unemployment insurance, to accept the possibility of an early retirement without a pension reduction, to establish two VAT rates etc.

¹⁰⁶ The SDKÚ-DS, the Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a Solidarita, SaS), the KDH, the Most-Híd

common written demand. The Ministry can stipulate that the collective agreement of a higher degree shall be binding also for the employer who is not bound by another collective agreement of a higher degree, only if that employer agreed to the extension.¹⁰⁷

In 2011, the government of I. Radičová managed to pass the amendment to the Labour Code strengthening the competencies of employees and trade unions in negotiations dealing with working conditions, wages and the conditions of an employment. Moreover, it defined more cases of deflecting from the statutory minimal wage standards (from the viewpoint of the trade unions) even to the disadvantage of an employee (the so-called deflection from the principle of profitability). In 2011, the so-called flexible working hours (flexikonto), temporarily introduced by R. Fico's cabinet in 2010 as a tool to eliminate the impacts of the economic crisis, became a permanent tool to increase employment flexibility. The trade unions strongly criticised the right-wing government in many areas of its activities but especially because of the upcoming packages of austerity measures, the amendment to the Labour Code, the tax-wedge reform, the Act on Employment Services and others. They also organised various protests and the disagreements over the amendment to the Labour Code resulted in the interruption of the social dialogue as the trade union representatives left the tripartite negotiations in September 2011. It had happened for the first time since 1997 when the government was led by V. Mečiar. The trade unions left the social dialogue because they had been against the introduction of the wage regulation. The social dialogue was not restored until M. Dzurinda's cabinet.

SMER-SD won the parliamentary elections which took place in March 2012, this time it had enough deputies so it did not need any other partner to form a coalition. The incoming Prime Minister R. Fico met with the social partners as soon as by the end of March to invite them to the preparation of the programme Declaration of the Government. He also invited the representatives of the self-governments (the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia), the church (both catholic and

¹⁰⁷Such a wording is based on the OECD recommendations from 2002 suggesting that the collective agreement of a higher degree can be binding for the employer who is not a member of any employer's association only if that employer agreed to it and his field of action is similar as well as economic and social conditions.

evangelical) and the academic community (the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Rectors' Conference). It seems that he was interested in social peace. The pursuit of such wide-ranging social dialogue can also be considered as a political gesture through which the incoming government manifested the interest in a social consensus as well as their determination to make laws convenient for the general public. On the other hand, it will be revealed only later if it was not a cover-up over the unpopular consolidation measures or the alibi for the measures to consolidate the public finances as their approval would apply the agreement of all social partners. In May 2012, the government initiated the establishment of the Council of Solidarity and Development (Rada solidarity a rozvoja) consisting of the representatives of the trade unions, the employers, the pensioners, the entrepreneurs, the sole traders, the self-governments, the church, the academic community and the non-governmental organisations. It should have ensured the stability as well as a peaceful society and reached common solutions and agreements among the representatives of various societal groups. The Economic and Social Council was reestablished as a consulting and conciliation body where the government, the trade unions, the employers and the self-governments are represented. They exhaustively discussed the repeated amendment to the Labour Code, the amount of the minimum wage and the state budget. The amendment to the Labour Code with effect from the 1st of January, 2013 strengthened the statuses of an employee and a trade union organisation at the workplace.

From 2008 to 2012, the trade unions applied themselves to eliminate the formality at tripartite negotiations, to strengthen the bipartism and to increase the efficiency of the collective bargaining process. The government policy significantly differed from the trade union mission statement because of the 2010 election results. The incapability of the social partners to communicate resulted in the organisation of several protest rallies and declarations against government measures in the social and economic domains. After the "revival" of R. Fico's cabinet in 2012, the trade union status within the tripartism apparently improved and the pursuit of a social peace through the active and continuous social dialogue reappeared.

During I. Radičová's cabinet from mid-2010 till mid-2012, the neo-corporatist elements were eliminated. However, such a model of the

implementation of economic interests was restored after the March 2012 elections when R. Fico's cabinet arrived and the trade unions managed to implement some of their requirements (the adjustment of the tripartite status and the amendment to the Labour Code). The cooperation between SMER-SD and the trade unions had a certain influence on the reestablishment of corporatist elements in the employees' interests representation as the government wanted to manifest its respect for the whole society as much as possible.

Many employers' representatives as well as the representatives of centre-right political parties criticised the Act on Tripartism as it is not commonplace, compared to the majority of member states.

Summary

The social dialogue from 1990 to 1994 can be divided into two phases according to the role of the tripartite body, RHSD. During the first phase, the federal government played a dominant role. RHSD was a useful place which offered the trade unions an exclusive access to the government, thus, influence on discussed bills and measures. However, the trade unions were not able to take advantage of the position especially because of the powerful government, their own inexperience and internal problems. After that, from the 1992 regular election till the 1994 snap election, the political situation in the Slovak Republic was unstable. The National Council did not support the government's proposals sufficiently which considerably limited the exclusive access of KOZ to the government. The Confederation had to focus on parliamentary clubs and individual deputies to meet its targets through influence on legislation. It resulted in increased activity in Parliament. The Confederation found itself in two opposing positions during 1994 - 1998. At the beginning, it was a dignified partner of the government that succeeded in implementing its objectives there and into General Agreements. At the end of the period, it went to the opposition and was trying to arrange the change of the then-current coalition. The whole situation was probably a result of promises the government gave to the trade unions as they did not have effective tools to force the government to fulfill them. Moreover, personnel changes in the leadership of the Confederation also stood for the trade union's change in

attitude towards the coalition, which resulted in a departure from the social dialogue. As KOZ could not promote its interests through the RHSD anymore, it started to apply the means of coercion it had used very rarely or not at all, such as protest rallies, the organisation of demonstrations, petitions or co-operation with other interest groups. KOZ also lobbied the deputies, the political parties as well as the ministries. However, the position of the Confederation did not change significantly despite all of those means (which were financially very demanding).

In 1998, the prestige of the trade unions enhanced as they had involved themselves in the pre-election campaign which resulted in the “fall” of the previous government and a consequent democratisation of the Slovak political situation. Moreover, left-wing political parties, such as SDL, also formed the first government after the era of V. Mečiar. Such a composition significantly helped the trade unions as the government often took KOZ requirements into consideration. In addition, its representatives negotiated several times with KOZ representatives over the means how to make the social dialogue more effective. However, the tension among the social partners was growing because of the internal problems of SDL, which weakened its position within the coalition. The tension escalated in 2003 and 2004 when KOZ tried to change the current incumbents, although, it is not a usual function of the trade unions.

KOZ had applied a wide range of tools to fulfil its objectives since 1997. They can be divided into two major categories: the exertion of influence over the legislative process and the use of coercive actions. The first category relates especially to the RHSD negotiations as KOZ was the only trade union organisation with exclusive access to the government through RHSD. Such a tool to enforce the requirements could be replaced only with difficulties, although the Confederation often complained of the formal nature of the tripartite negotiations. The second category relates to all coercion means used in cases when the trade unions were not able to implement their requirements through the negotiations. However, they were less efficient, although, more expensive. In addition, it required a strong solidarity among the trade unions as well as the readiness for action and the massiveness of the membership base which was continuously decreasing.

In 2002, a right-wing government was formed after the September elections. The social dialogue was growing more and more tense, which

forced the trade unions to use means of coercion, protest rallies and protest marches. They also used a petition and a referendum which should have led to a change of government which is considered rather as a rather unusual procedure. After the repeal of the Act on Tripartism, the trade unions could not significantly influence the legislation process through the tripartite negotiations anymore as RHSP became an advisory body of the government. As a result, the government tried to introduce a pluralism of interests and eliminate the corporatist elements from the economic interest negotiations. After the 2006 elections, it seemed that the status of the trade unions would have strengthened. The victory of SMER-SD was understood as a significant advantage because it took the requirements of the trade unions into consideration during the preparation of the programme Declaration of the Government. It was a kind of a “reward” for pre-election support. Consequently, the tripartite functioning was restored after the reestablishment of the Economic and Social Council as a consulting and a conciliation body. Moreover, the trade unions succeeded in amending the Labour Code; the status of an employee and a trade union organisation at a workplace was strengthened.

It can be summarised that the trade unions had used not only the membership in the tripartism and a consequent exclusive access to the government but also means of coercion such as rallies and strikes to implement their requirements since 1990. Moreover, they also used lobbying, especially in the 90s, when they were satisfied neither with the development nor with the results of the tripartite negotiations. Besides the mentioned tactics, KOZ SR, alongside with the non-member trade unions, were looking for “natural” political allies. KOZ sought them particularly among the political parties which were, or at least seemed to be, left-wing, social democratic or socialistic. It was also in favour of parties whose programmes were corresponding to its own. The trade unions associated in KOZ were trying to use other options of implementing their interests, for example, they nominated their candidates on party lists of candidates in the parliamentary elections. It is more effective and less expensive to achieve the requirements by means of tripartite negotiations, however, the success is largely influenced by both the composition and the status of the government, which is one of the social partners at the highest level. Despite institutionalised relations, the trade unions are still not able to make maximum use of the legislative

framework defining them as interest groups. Experts often discuss the effectivity of tripartite institutions in post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and their opinions differ.

On the one hand, the current institutional organisation of the tripartism in Slovakia offers the trade unions represented by KOZ SR exclusive access to the government so they can comment on the legislation of social and economic domains. On the other hand, they discuss a wide-ranging agenda that diverts attention from the main objectives. Consequently, the trade unions are involved in discussions on various (not only) economic and social problems the government is dealing with, although, they do not fall within the priority areas of the trade unions nor the employers (who are another social partner in the tripartism). It can be, thus, assumed that the effect of the tripartism depends on the economic and political situation but also on particular political participants and the relations among them. It seems that the establishment of tripartite institutions in Central and Eastern Europe is relatively most advantageous for the trade unions as it became an acceptable form of implementing interests after the fall of communism when the trade union representatives had an aversion to co-operation with any political party. The trade unions, thus, accepted the model functioning in Western Europe which enabled them to stay outside the political competition but gave them influence on the decision-making process at the same time. However, the recently established or transformed organisations or associations and interest groups did not have a clear idea how to function in new democratic conditions at the time. It seems that the government was most advantageous; it had organised interests under control and was able to “stamp on” possible protests expected during the process of the implementation of economic and social reforms. The government accepted former communist trade unions which were reformed as an exclusive partner despite the Pluralism of Trade Unions Act passed by the Parliament at that time. As a result, the independent trade unions which were established recently did not have access to the government. In return, the trade unions had to accept certain restrictions in possible strike or protest activities. The tripartism was useful in introducing a modern participatory democracy as well as in implementing extensive economic and social reforms affecting the standard of living, thereby moderate above mentioned negative impacts.

Nowadays, tripartism is a place for trade unions where they can discuss social and economic subject matters affecting the whole society. However, it is a double-edged weapon; on the one hand, the trade unions have the access not only to the government but also to the legislative proposals; on the other hand, their attention is diverted from the main objectives such as collective bargaining at the bipartite sector and the enterprise levels, as it does not have a major influence. The trade unions focus especially on the relation with the government; they try to improve relations with political parties which could possibly form a new government. However, it could have a negative impact on the relation between the employers and the trade unions from a strategic and long-term viewpoint. It would surely reflect on the form and the effectiveness of collective bargaining.

The economic crisis placed (not only) the trade unions in a specific situation; they have to cope with new problems and challenges. At the turn of the years 2008 and 2009, the trade unions announced that they were not going to press the minimum wage increase anymore. They wanted to maintain the employment and reduce the rate of dismissal as much as possible instead. It seems to be logical as the request for a minimum wage increase would not be effective because of the impact of the economic crisis felt in the enterprises. It can be assumed that the crisis will make the social partners cooperate in order to find common solutions and measures. In the future, it can have positive impacts on further relations among the social partners (both on and off the economic crisis). The cooperation could also have a positive impact on the future development of the social dialogue. The tripartism could have an important role as in the beginning of the 90s once again. It can be a place where the social partners would cooperate and look for and implement common solutions to the economic crisis in order to eliminate the impacts on citizens as the tripartite mechanisms were effective especially after the war when Western European countries were building their national economies or during the recession period related to the so-called oil-crises associated with the growth of unemployment and inflation during the 1970s and 1980s.

The Relations between the Trade Unions and the Employers at the Bipartite Level: The Case Study on Collective Material Benefits

This chapter consists of the analysis of chosen collective agreements of a higher degree (hereinafter referred to as the KZVS) reached from 1994 to 2014. The aim is to point out actual relationships between the selected trade unions and the employers at the sector level. The analysis deals with two trade unions from an industrial sector (The Metal Trade Union, hereinafter referred to as the OZ KOVO and the Power-Chemical Trade Union, hereinafter referred to as the ECHOZ) and two trade unions from a public sector (The Slovak Trade Union for Public Administration and Culture, hereinafter referred to as the SLOVES and The Trade Union Association of Workers in School and Science Sector in Slovakia, hereinafter referred to as the OZ PŠVS).

The KZVS analysis showed that a collective bargaining and reached collective agreements of a higher degree, tools of a social dialogue, guarantee a certain increase in minimum wage rates in the studied sectors, although, it varies among individual sectors. The increase usually slightly exceeds the amount of the inflation rate for the given year (especially in an industrial sector), or it is at the same level. However, the agreed increase in minimum wage rates sometimes does not even reach the amount of the inflation rate. Nevertheless, during the observed period, the average increase in a public sector did not reach the average inflation rate. In an industrial sector, the average increase was at the level of inflation (or just above it). The average wage in the national economy grows at a faster rate than in the studied sectors.

Table 6: The development and the comparison of selected macroeconomic indicators and the minimum wage rates in the KZVS in selected industrial as well as public sectors in the years 1994-2014

| Year | Inflation % | Labour productivity % | The average wage in the NE (increase) % | The OZ Chémia (ECHOZ) group A % | The OZ Chémia (ECHOZ) group B % | The OZ KOVO engineering % | The SLOVES state admin. % | The SLOVES public admin. % | The PŠVS education % | The PŠVS university teachers and the research % |
|---------|-------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1994 | 13.5 | 6.7 | 17.0 | 7.8 | 6.2 | 4.0 | - | - | - | - |
| 1995 | 9.9 | 4.4 | 14.3 | 7.8 | 6.2 | 6.2 | - | - | - | - |
| 1996 | 5.8 | 12.0 | 13.3 | 7.8 | 6.2 | 15.0 | - | - | - | - |
| 1997 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 13.1 | 8.6 | 9.3 | 0.6 | - | - | - | - |
| 1998 | 6.7 | 9.1 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 9.3 | 8.6 | - | - | - | - |
| Average | 8.5 | 7.7 | 13.2 | 8.1 | 7.4 | 6.9 | - | - | - | - |
| 1999 | 10.6 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 8.6 | 9.3 | 8.7 | - | - | - | - |
| 2000 | 12.0 | 15.3 | 6.5 | 22.0 | 14.8 | 8.7 | - | - | - | - |
| 2001 | 7.3 | 4.2 | 8.2 | 22.0 | 14.8 | 10.4 | - | - | - | - |
| 2002 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 9.3 | 22.0 | 14.8 | 10.4 | - | - | - | - |
| Average | 8.3 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 18.7 | 13.4 | 9.6 | - | - | - | - |
| 2003 | 8.5 | 10.0 | 6.3 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 6.5 | - | - | - | - |
| 2004 | 7.5 | 6.4 | 10.2 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 6.5 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| 2005 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 9.2 | 2.7 | 1.9 | 6.6 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| 2006 | 4.5 | 13.6 | 8.6 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 6.8 | 5.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| Average | 5.8 | 8.2 | 8.6 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 6.6 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| 2007 | 2.8 | 10.4 | 7.4 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 6.8 | 4.0 | 7.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------|------|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|------|
| 2008 | 4.6 | 3.2 | 8.1 | -1.3 | 0.9 | 13.7 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| 2009 | 1.6 | -3.4 | 3.0 | 4.4 | 8.6 | 3.2 | 4.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 7.0 | 5.0 |
| 2010 | 1.0 | 23.9 | 3.3 | 2.1 | 1.6 | 3.2 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Average | 2.5 | 8.5 | 5.5 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 6.7 | 3.0 | 3.3 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 3.8 |
| 2011 | 3.9 | 6.2 | 2.2 | 5.0 | 1.0 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Average | 3.9 | 6.2 | 2.2 | 5.0 | 1.0 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2012 | 3.6 | 8.3 | 2.4 | 4.0 | 1.3 | 3.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2013 | 1.4 | 3.5 | 2.4 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 3.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2014 | -0.1 | 2.7 | 4.0 | 3.4 | 2.5 | 2.9 | 16 € | 16 € | 5.0 | 16 € | 16 € |
| Average | 1.6 | 4.8 | 2.9 | 3.6 | 1.8 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total av. 1994 - 2014 | 5.6 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 7.4 | 6.0 | 6.6 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.3 |

The average amount of the agreed minimum wage rate for each of the studied years, however, even after the collective bargaining, did not reach the level of an average minimum wage in the national economy (in absolute terms). If the studied period is divided into several phases, according to the individual governments (as shown in table no. XY), it can be assumed that the highest average wage increase agreed to in the KZVS for the OZ Chémia (later the ECHOZ) was in 1999 - 2002, when it reached the average of the 18.7% in group A and 13.4% in group B. The average inflation during that period stood at a level of 8.3%, thus, the agreed wage increase significantly exceeded the average inflation rate. It also applies to the wage increase agreed to in the KZVS Strojárska for the OZ KOVO which was 9.6% in average. The increase is not as significant as in the case of the OZ Chémia enterprises. The stagnation of machinery and electrical engineering industries after 1989 could have been a cause. During the studied period, the minimum wage rate in the selected industry sectors was increasing even faster than the average wage in the national economy or the labour productivity in industry. The social dialogue at the national level was restored and institutionalized, thus fully functional, despite several disagreements between the government¹⁰⁸ and the trade unions on the state budget, the tax burden as well as on certain social and economic issues. The functional social dialogue at the national level as well as a mutual respect of the social partners (despite the disagreements or different opinions on the discussed subject matters) provide the opportunities for material advantages of trade union members through the collective bargaining and the collective agreements.

The average inflation rate from 2003 to 2006 was 5.8%. The average increase of the minimum wage rates agreed to in KZVS for the group A enterprises in the OZ Chémia reached the level of 3.5% whereas it was only 2.9% for the group B enterprises, thus, the inflation rate was lower than the average inflation during the given period. In the case of the KZVS Strojárska, the average increase of the minimum wage rates was 6.6%, thus, higher than the average inflation rate during the given period. It means that the wages in the chemical industry were increasing slower

¹⁰⁸ During that period, the government coalition led by M. Dzurinda consisted of SDK (42 seats in the National Council of the SR), SDĽ (23 seats in the National Council of the SR), SMK (15 seats in the National Council of the SR) and SOP (13 seats in the National Council of the SR).

compared to the previous period as well as to the engineering industry. It could have been a result of the situation in the chemical and engineering industries; if the sector is productive, the (starting) position of the trade unions during the bargaining process and subsequently the results are more favourable. During the given period, M. Dzurinda's second government was in power, thus the government coalition consisted of right-wing parties.¹⁰⁹ The situation of the social dialogue at the national level and the worsening relationships between the government and the trade unions influenced the social dialogue at the sector level, as well. Consequently, the amount of agreed minimum wage rates in the industrial trade unions studied was significantly lower compared to the previous period. During that period, the wage increase in a non-manufacturing sector, in both the state and the public administration, were moving from 5 to 7%, which was the level of the average annual inflation.

From 2007 to 2010, the average inflation rate reached the level of 2.5%. The average increase in the minimum wage rates agreed to in the KZVS for the OZ Chémia enterprises was just above the inflation rate. In the case of the OZ KOVO and the wage increase agreed to in the KZVS Strojárska, the increase was significantly higher, at the level of 6.7% in average. The average wage increase in the state administration exceeded the inflation rate by 0.5%, in the public administration by 0.8%, in education by 1.8% and in science, research and higher education by 1.3%. In 2007, the Slovak economy grew and the unemployment rate of 10.4% had been the lowest since 1994, the tempo of the annual growth of the gross domestic product amounted to 14.3% throughout the whole year, the GDP grew by 10.4% versus the 8.5% growth in 2006 and ¹¹⁰the Slovak Koruna strengthened. In 2009, the euro became the national currency. It is questionable whether the trade unions were able to take advantage of the favourable economic development since the economic growth and positive economic indicators are crucial factors of the trade union influence. The increase in the minimum wage rates agreed to in the KZVS for 2007 and 2008 in both the industrial and non-manufacturing sectors is very modest (especially in the chemical industry). It refers to the trade union inability to negotiate higher wages for their members during the

¹⁰⁹ the SDKÚ, the SMK, the KDH, the ANO

¹¹⁰Source: The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

period of record-breaking economic growth. After 2008, the effect of the economic crisis starts to show, particularly in the public sector. The social partners had not managed to negotiate the wage increase for the state and public administration workers since 2011. The agreed wage growth in the public sector for 2010 was at the level of inflation, thus 1%. During the economic crisis, the trade unions focused on employment maintenance at the expense of the requirements for the wage increasing. In the years 2011-2013, the collective agreements of a higher degree for the state and public administrations did not deal with the wage rate valorisation. As a result, the real wages in the public sector fell by 8.9%.

In the years 2006-2010, the government led by R. Fico supporting the trade unions (at the declaration level at least) was in power. According to the findings described above, it can be claimed that a positive relationship between the government and the trade unions does not influence the effectiveness nor the results of collective bargaining at the sector level. On the other hand, the relationship between trade unions and employers is the key one, especially in the industrial and private sectors. Paradoxically, a positive relationship between the government and the trade unions can even have a negative impact on relationship with the third social partner, the employers, which is ultimately transferred to the negotiation of collective agreements of a higher degree as well as of enterprise collective agreements. If a trade union political partner is in the government, the wages in the public sector are expected to grow at a faster pace as the government is also an employer and the wages are negotiated at the national level¹¹¹. It is therefore interesting that, on average, the wages grew more slowly in the years 2007 - 2010 (when the government of R. Fico was in power) than in the years 2003 - 2006 (when M. Dzurinda's second cabinet was in power), although, the average labour productivity in the industry was slightly higher. From the year 2011, the fall of the real wages in the public sector can serve as an item of discourse. During the second government of R. Fico (from 2012), the average wage in the national economy had been growing much more slowly than in the previous periods. The average wage growth of group B in ECHOZ as well as of educational workers reached the average inflation rate. The other

¹¹¹usually simultaneously with the discussion about the state budget for the next year as the wages of state and public administration workers are a part of the state budget expenditure.

state and public administration workers reached growth by 16 euros in 2014.

It is assumed that the trade unions did not manage to take advantage of the economic growth potential nor the political potential to increase the wages through the collective bargaining in the industrial or the public sector. It can be also concluded that a relationship between the trade unions and a political partner in the government did not develop any potential for the wage valorisation in the industrial, private or public sectors.

The membership base of the trade unions was constantly declining despite a certain increase in wages due to collective bargaining. However, it was not only the case of the studied trade unions but all of them. Collective bargaining is a tool to reach an agreement between the employers and the employees. The trade union organisations representing the employees' interests have a unique position not only in the process of collective bargaining but also in the negotiations governing employment, social security and remuneration. Despite the position, the trade unions were not able to maintain a stable membership base nor prevent a falling trend. It could have resulted from the fact that it was not "attractive" to become a member and thus have certain advantages as well as an ensured yearly wage growth due to the trade union efforts as the collective agreement bindingness applied to all employees. Moreover, the increase was only at the inflation rate level. The so-called "client services" (or "selective benefits" according to the terminology of M. Olson) which the trade unions could offer exclusively to their members were not tempting enough or present at all.

If collective bargaining does not increase the membership or even maintain it, the trade union influence is not guaranteed either. As a result, their position towards the social partners at the tripartite or bipartite levels as well as towards other elements of a political system (especially in terms of a mobilizing or a negotiating potential) is weakened. The membership decline does not only imply the weakening of one of the ways to influence the public politics but also the weakening of representativeness which can lead to problems in the collective bargaining itself. If there was an imaginary equation, it could be claimed that a strong membership base (and the acquiring of new members) equals a strong support for collective bargaining (a high degree of

representativeness) which equals the possibility to bargain higher wages and better conditions for the employees. The "equation" is not working vice versa; it can be claimed that collective bargaining does not imply membership stabilization or activation. Therefore, it entails the maintaining of its position towards the social partners at the national, sector or enterprise levels but also in society.

According to Stephen Crowley, the power of the trade unions is in their "capacity to shape public policy or to win material benefits on behalf of their members" (Crowley, 2004, p. 400). On the basis of this claim, the power of the trade unions could be measured according to their ability to ensure the material benefits (such as social benefits, a higher wage, bonuses) for their members, which are achieved due to collective bargaining. Therefore, its effectiveness is one of the indicators of the power and the authority of the trade unions at a workplace, in a sector or at a national level. However, these benefits are not selective; they apply to all employees, so collective bargaining could also pose the free-riding problem which weakens trade union power. According to Crowley, the power and the authority of trade unions at a workplace as well as at the national level are influenced by several factors: the membership base, the structure and the effectiveness of collective bargaining and the strike intensity.

Particular factors could seem to be interconnected, especially the membership base and collective bargaining effectiveness. On the one hand, the membership could have an impact on the collective bargaining effectiveness; on the other hand, the collective bargaining results could influence the number of members. According to the content analysis of collective agreements of a higher degree of selected trade unions, it can be claimed that a certain wage growth agreed to through collective bargaining has no (positive) impact on the membership situation which is generally declining. In the years 2000 - 2014, the industrial trade unions showed a bigger decline than the non-manufacturing trade unions. The industrial trade unions paradoxically negotiated a higher wage increase than the non-manufacturing trade unions.

The trade unions thus did not manage to activate or not even stabilize the membership base through negotiated economic, social and material benefits. On the other hand, the number of members is not the only nor the decision-making factor of collective bargaining effectiveness.

The membership base of the selected non-manufacturing trade unions declined less than the membership base of the industrial trade unions; however, the benefits agreed to in the collective agreements were lower on average. It can be a result of above mentioned factors. It is not possible to verify or falsify a claim that, if the membership grew, a bargaining position of the trade unions would improve, particularly at the sector level, which would result in a multiplier effect, thus the membership base would further increase.

The process, when the trade unions were looking for a natural ally among political parties, diverted their attention away from the need for an internal reform and the structure changes resulted in the weakening of their position within the political system, as well as towards the social partners - the government and the employers. The government influences the social dialogue at the national level which also is reflected in the results of collective bargaining at the sector level to a certain extent. It can also have an impact on the relationship between the trade unions and the employers. In the period when the relationship between the trade unions and the government was not favourable, the agreed increase in the wage rates did not reach even an inflation rate or was just above it. The relationship situation therefore transferred to the relationship with another social partner, the employers, which is determinative, especially in the collective bargaining at the enterprise level. In the period after the 2006 election, when the government became a political ally of the trade unions, collective bargaining did not bring a significant increase in wage rates. A significant increase in the wages was not reached even in the public and the state administration where the government played the role of an employer during the negotiations. A negative relationship between the employers and the government (as well as a positive relationship between the trade unions and the government) can decrease the effectiveness of the collective bargaining at the sector level and lead to conflicts rather than a cooperation. The relationship between the trade unions and the government does not have to have a direct impact on collective bargaining, however, it can influence the relationship between the employers and the trade unions which subsequently has an impact on collective bargaining effectiveness. Therefore, if the government significantly supports only one of the social partners, the overall situation

is not favourable. In addition, it has a negative impact on negotiations and industrial relationships.

If the power and the position of the trade unions at a workplace and at the national level is measured by collective bargaining effectiveness, the relationship with the government does not influence the strengthening or weakening of their position directly. The trade unions associated in KOZ SR have an exclusive access to the government due to the current social dialogue structure. They can thus comment on important economic and social subject matters. However, such an access is not necessary for collective bargaining. At the level of the tripartite, they discuss legislative and political intentions of the government in the economic and social domains. They also negotiate on the minimum wage amount as well as the state budget which is related to the wage of state administration and public interest workers. However, tripartism has no impact on the minimum wage amount in particular sectors except the state and public ones. It affirms the fact that the function and the meaning of tripartism depends on actual actors and conditions in particular countries. In the majority of post-communist countries, tripartism is entrenched as a social mechanism enabling discussions between interest groups and politicians about the selected legislative and political issues with no binding influence on wages nor results of a collective bargaining and industrial relations (Myant - Slocock - Smith, 2000).

The process when the trade unions were looking for an ally among political parties diverted their attention away from the need for internal reform and the structure changes that could have resulted in the improvement of collective bargaining. They focused on position strengthening through a better relationship with the government, however, they forgot the need for an internal reform and the improvement of decision-making mechanisms. The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic structure is based on a "confederation" and not a "federation". It means that the Confederation decisions are not binding and the trade unions treat them only as nonbinding recommendations. The current Confederation structure has resulted in the ineffectiveness and a low flexibility of decision-making processes as well as a low adaptability of contracting parties. Moreover, the results were often not contemporary and ineffective. The transformation of the trade union organisation is also related to the

changes in the property and its administration. The property is one of the key factors determining their influence and power. The current setting of the property management resulted in the fact that the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic has no influence on the management; the right to decide about its use is in the hands of few trade unions so only the trade unions with the biggest profit can decide about the change of the setting.

By summing up the above mentioned findings, we can conclude the following:

First of all, a social dialogue at the national level, which is a tripartism in Slovakia, is an institutionalized partnership among the government, the employers and the trade unions creating a space for the latter ones to be informed but also enabling them to negotiate and comment on important political, legislative and socio-economic issues, however, it has no influence on the results of a collective bargaining at the sector level. The most probable reason is the fact that the wage growth is not discussed. Tripartism negotiates only on the minimum wage amount, or sometimes on a possible valorisation of the wages of the public sector employees (although there is also a collective bargaining within the public sector), and does not discuss the wage increase across the board.

Neither the quality, effectiveness nor the results of the collective bargaining at the sector level nor industrialized relations are thus determined by the relationship between the trade unions and the government because the material benefits as well as the collective bargaining itself depend on the relationship between the trade unions and the employers. However, if the government shows an affinity for only one of the social partners, it can have a negative influence on the bargaining. The relationship between the employers and the trade unions (especially in the industrial and the private sector) is very important. From this point of view, the strengthening of the corporatist tendencies in formal economic interests as well as the relationship improvement between the interest group (the trade unions) and the state (the government) during the negotiation process has no direct (positive) impact nor does it stimulate an increase in material benefits (especially the wages) through collective bargaining. Not even in those sectors where the wage valorisation is determined by the state budget, thus in the cases where the government is also an employer.

Secondly, the current situation shows the trend in decreasing the number of the trade union members. Moreover, the economic and social benefits agreed to in the collective agreements are not a tool for the membership base activation especially because of the fact that the wage increase is at the level of inflation (or just above it or even under it). Another reason is an institutional barrier. It relates to the fact that the benefits apply to all employees and not only to the trade union members. In addition, selective benefits (if they still exist), or eventually the solidary benefits, are not motivating enough to eliminate the free-riding problem impact.

Generally, the membership base suffers from a declining trend. The trade union representativeness is thus diminishing which weakens effectiveness, although the number of members is not the only key factor having an impact on the collective bargaining results.

Thirdly, neither the economic nor the social benefits derived from the collective bargaining are attractive enough to broaden the membership base. Besides the benefits agreed to in the collective agreements, the trade unions do not offer any selective benefits to their members which would significantly differentiate them from the non-members and therefore do not retain the current members or acquire the new ones. All the employees enjoy the collective agreement benefits regardless if they are the trade union members or not. The collective bargaining effectiveness and the existing legislative framework use are both also influenced by the internal organisation structure as well as by the setting of the internal decision-making processes and the trade union mechanisms which had not been significantly reformed or transformed since 1990 because of a stagnation factor. It is one of the reasons why their position and influence weaken. After 1990, neither powers nor the organisation alongside with the structure and the programme priorities and roles changed much. The trade union leaders do not change either, which is also related to the stagnation factor. The property of the trade unions is not used to strengthen their influence nor position due to its transformation after 1989 and the current administration. Only the most influential trade unions can decide about its use. However, they did not allow using it to strengthen the position of the trade unions in Slovakia.

The Summary and Conclusions

The aim of the study was to analyse the trade union position in the Slovak Republic political system from its “post-revolutionary” transformation up to the present day, to explore their power and influence, or rather weakness, the relationships with political parties and movements, the government and the social partners as well as to find and analyse possible reasons having an impact on their position and functioning after 1989. The publication deals especially with trade union transformation (organisational, economic, personnel and programme) after 1989 as well as with the research on the relationships of KOZ SR, a new political actor in the democratic regime, towards the government, the political parties and the social partners. The study investigates the impact of those relationships on the trade union position, as well. It also focuses on defining the possibilities and limits surrounding how the trade unions can influence public politics as well as the analysis of the mechanism of the social dialogue at the national and the sector levels. The study also defines its impacts on the trade union position in the political system and the society as well as on the relationship with the social partners.

In Slovakia, the situation of the trade unions was difficult after 1989 as they became a part of the national and economic transformation process whereas the process implied their internal reform as well as the transformation into an individual organisation based on democratic principles. During the first years of its existence, the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic, the biggest organisation representing Slovak trade unions, focused on looking for its position in the political system and the international environment, its own transformation process and the creation of new structures as well as the transfer of the property from the former ROH. Later, the Confederation concentrated on three basic problem types; the definition and the search for its position within the tripartism as well as the relationship towards the government and the social partners, the definition of its attitudes towards the political parties and movements that led to looking for a political ally, and the activation of the membership base which had been showing a decreasing trend. The trade unions focused on the above mentioned problems as they wanted to strengthen their position in

society as well as towards the social partners. Moreover, they also wanted to promote their interests, especially through an alliance with the relevant left-wing political party. From the point of view of the organisation, the Slovak trade unions had not undergone any significant reform since 1990. The KOZ SR structure and bodies have had the current form and the defined competence system since 1996 (with minor modifications). The reasons can be found in the fact that the Confederation focused rather on the programme specification of its activities and priorities, the definition of its attitudes towards other political system subjects as well as on solving various external factors affecting its activities. In addition, a strong stagnation factor and significant personnel continuity dominate the internal structure which resulted in the unwillingness and lack of interest to even start an internal reform or to name and subsequently solve internal organisational problems. Such a situation weakens the trade union position as it has a negative impact not only on the internal mechanism of the adoption and implementation of strategic decisions but also on the collective bargaining effectiveness as well as on the internal communication and the trade union functioning. The trade union property is used to strengthen neither their influence nor the position due to its transformation and administration as those few trade unions, which are entitled to decide about it, did not allow using it for those purposes.

Another trade union source of financing and power is the membership base. In Slovakia, it has been showing a declining trend. It resulted in a wide range of external as well as internal factors such as the economy transformation and the transition to a “new economy”, the effects of the new wave of globalization which led to changes in employment and welfare, a real wage decrease, the market liberalization, the privatisation, structural changes in the labour market, the shift in the strategy of the capital investment which could also lead to changes in the employees’ mentality or the solidarity destruction (compare to Keller, 2011). Another reason of the membership base decline can consist of psychological aspects such as individualization or discrepancy. In Central and Eastern Europe, the negative attitude of the public towards trade unions, based on the previous regime, can be another possible reason. The existing mechanism of the social dialogue and the collective bargaining at the enterprise and the sector level bringing the benefits to all the employees and not only to the trade union members is also an important

factor having an impact on the involvement with the trade unions. The members were disappointed with the trade union representatives because of the collective bargaining malfunction as well as by the fact that the trade union elites focused on the relationship with the government and the search for strategic partners among the political parties. As a result, a gap between the membership base and the leadership was created. It can be assumed that the benefits brought by collective bargaining at the sector or the enterprise level are not attractive enough to increase the number of members and consequently to strengthen one of the trade union sources of influence and thus their position in society. At the same time, an unstable membership base can weaken the trade unions' position in the collective bargaining process, and effectiveness. The trade unions did not manage to find an effective tool to increase the number of their members despite the fact that they have been intensively dealing with that problem since 2000. The trade union representatives named the internal factors influencing the decline such as the need for an internal organisation and personnel reform, a continuous negative attitude of the public towards the trade unions and their representatives, insufficient marketing, however, they did not make necessary efforts to remove the stated factors. One more time, the reason can be found in the stagnation factor, the personnel continuity as well as in a certain "satisfaction" with the current situation. The membership decline implies the loss of representativeness as well. It thus weakens the collective bargaining effectiveness and the obtained benefits are also less considerable. However, several trade unions have been trying to integrate and create relatively stronger and more representative units in the recent period. It is considered as one of the solutions for the membership base situation.

The Slovak institutionalized social partnership at the national level, the tripartism, creates not only an avenue for the trade unions to be informed but also to negotiate and comment on important political, legislative and socio-economic intentions of the government. However, the blanket wage amount does not depend on the tripartism as the social partners do not discuss the wage amount (they discuss solely the minimum wage amount and the state budget which, in turn, influences the remuneration of the state and public administration workers). The wage increase (mainly in the industrial and private sectors) is dealt with during

collective bargaining between the trade unions and the employers. For that reason, the relationship between those two social partners is more important for collective bargaining effectiveness than a relationship with the government. The trade union affinity towards the government can have a negative impact on the relationship between the trade unions and the employers, thus, on the effectiveness and the benefits of the collective bargaining.

According to the case study dealing with the content analysis of chosen collective agreements of a higher degree of selected trade unions, collective bargaining guarantees a certain wage increase, however, it is usually only at the level of the inflation rate for the given period. Even after collective bargaining, the average amount of the agreed minimum wage rates does not reach the level nor the rate of the average wage growth in the national economy nor reflects the growth in the labour productivity in the industry. At the same time, it is necessary to mention that trade unions did not manage to turn the favourable economic development to their advantage. However, the trade union representatives respected the situation and did not press for a wage increase during unfavourable economic development, when they focused especially on employment maintenance. The collective bargaining situation, as well as its results, are not currently attractive enough to stimulate the trade unions to improve their structures, especially because of the low wage increase guaranteed by the collective agreements. Moreover, there is also the free-riding problem. It seems that the trade unions do not bring any other selective benefits besides the collective bargaining results to their members which would significantly differ them from the non-members and would be motivating enough to keep the former members or acquire the new ones.

The trade union position also depends on the economic base and their property, or rather its use to strengthen their position. It can be claimed that the property of the Slovak trade unions is not an important influence source; not because of its value but because of the way of its transformation and the consequent administration as only few trade unions can decide about its use.

Tripartism, as one of the social dialogue levels, offers the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR) an exclusive access to the government. At the same time, it creates an arena

where the trade unions can comment on the discussed legislative intentions in the field of the social and economic policies. KOZ SR de facto as well as de jure gained privileged access to the government and an advantageous institutional position, as the other trade unions which are not a part of the KOZ SR are fewer in number so they do not meet the conditions of representativeness given in the tripartite statute. Moreover, neither citizens nor the employees recognize them sufficiently so they cannot play the role of their representatives in the social partnership system.

The agreed commitments and their consequent implementation as well as a compliance of the conditions agreed to in the collective agreements are also a means of measuring trade union power. The trade union position and power at the national but also sector levels are determined by the collective bargaining effectiveness and material benefits for their members obtained through collective agreements (Crowley, 2004). In Slovakia, collective bargaining at the sector level implies a certain wage increase as well as other social, or even material, benefits. However, they are not attractive enough to have a positive impact on the situation of the trade union membership base, and strengthen their influence and position at the national and the sector level at the same time. There are several possible reasons. First of all, the agreed wage increase is not attractive enough for prospective members nor reaches an overall increase in the average wages in the sector or the national economy. Then, the employees do not fully realize the agreed increase as it usually only covers the inflation rate for the given period. Moreover, the collective bargaining results are influenced to a certain extent by the membership base size which has a declining trend in Slovakia. Finally, the trade unions represent all the employees and not only their members while negotiating, therefore, the collective agreement commitments apply to all the employees and not only the members.

The case studies of four chosen trade unions demonstrated that collective bargaining does not have a strong influence on the wage amount as it more or less relates to the inflation rate. In the public sector, there was even a decline in real wages. The trade union exclusiveness and their main target consist in the collective bargaining and the guarantee of the wage increase. However, the link between collective bargaining and the wage amount is very weak. Collective bargaining will have no impact on

the improvement of the trade union situation within society unless it is clear that they are really able to negotiate higher wages. Furthermore, it can be also assumed that wages would grow at a higher rate when the government is left-wing and not right-wing. However, according to the findings published in the study, such a model is not valid in Slovakia as the minimum wage rates were growing slower during R. Fico's cabinet than during that of M. Dzurinda. Consequently, it can be claimed that the corporatist element strengthening in the formal economic interest intermediation does not strengthen the position of the actors of the social partnership at the sector and the enterprise level.

In Slovakia, the trade unions have been trying to find a certain compromise among their own requirements, the expectations of citizens and their members, the current political and social situations as well as the measures of a particular government for a long time. The trade union functioning, influence and work in post-communist countries is very specific. Their influence is based especially on economic and politic principles but it also depends on actual conditions, the particular government's expectations, current political actors, a political context and ad hoc agreements. It is not yet possible to talk about a steady model because the political context and the political situation are not as stable and unambiguous as is necessary for the definition of a model.

Bibliography and List of References

- Almond, A. - Powell, G. B. 1966. Comparative Politics: a developmental approach. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Ainsworth, S. H. 2002. Analyzing Interest Groups. Group Influence on People and Policies. New York: W. W. Norton&Company.
- Barinych, P. 1997. Parlamentné voľby v roku 1998, postoj KOZ SR k nim. Bratislava: KOZ SR.
- Barinych, P. 1998a. Najväčší záujem o dianie v odboroch potvrdili hlavne vyššie vekové kategórie, najmenší mladí ľudia. In Práca, 4. marca 1998, p. 9.
- Barinych, P. 1998b. Odbory - voľby - politika. In Nové slovo, roč. 3, č. 98, pp. 6-7.
- Barinych, P. 1998c. Prehľad o hlasovaní jednotlivých poslaneckých klubov (strán) k vybraným problémom (november 1994 - február 1998). Bratislava: KOZ SR.
- Barinych, P. - Habšuda, B. 1997. Pri obhajobe záujmov ľudí odbory vstupujú do politiky každý deň. In Práca, 25. novembra 1997, p. 7.
- Barinych, P. - Habšuda, B. - Chovančík, P. 2000. Národný program organizovania členov odborov. Bratislava: KOZ SR.
- Barinych, P. 2002a. November 1989 a odbory. In Odbory na Slovensku (november 1989 – 2000). Kolektív autorov. 2007. p. 17 Manuscript.
- Barinych, P. 2002b. Hľadanie novej tváre odborov. In Odbory na Slovensku (november 1989 – 2000). Kolektív autorov. 2007. s. 74. Manuscript.
- Barinych, P. 2002c. Členská základňa. In Odbory na Slovensku (november 1989 – 2000). Kolektív autorov. 2007. s. 38. Rukopis.
- Bentley, A. F. 1967. The Process of Government. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Bierstedt, R. 1970. An Analysis of Social Power. In Coser, L. A., Rosenberg, B. (eds.): Sociological Theory. A Book of Readings. New York: Macmillan, s. 154 – 167.
- Biskup, 1986. Partnerschaft in der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft. Kooperation statt Konfrontation. Bern u. Stuttgart: Verlag P. Haupt.

- Bochin, M. 2007. Politický systém. Štruktúra a dynamika jeho fungovania. Teoretická analýza. Prešov: Krupaprint.
- Brokl, L. 1997. Reprezentace zájmů v politickém systému České republiky. Praha: SLON.
- Bútora, M. – Mesežnikov, G. – Bútorová, Z. 1999. Kto? Prečo? Ako? Slovenské voľby '98. Bratislava: IVO.
- Dôstojná životná úroveň - naše právo. Dokumenty III. zjazdu KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR, 1996.
- Casale, G. 1999. Social Dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe. Budapest: International Labour Organization.
- Cawson, A. 1985. Introduction. Varieties of corporatism: the importance of the meso- level of interest intermediation. In: Cawson, A. (ed.): Organized Interests and the State. Studies in Meso – Corporatism. Londýn: SAGE.
- Cawson, A. 1986. Corporatism and Political Theory. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Cigler, A. J. – Loomis, B. A. 2002. Interest Group Politics. Washington, D. C.: CQ Press.
- Collective Bargaining Convention No. 154 Promoting Collective Bargaining. 1981. Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2005.
- Crowley, S. 2004. Explaining Labor Weakness in Post – Communist Europe: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspective. In: East European Politics and Societies, roč. 18, č. 3, s. 394 - 429.
- Čambáliková, M. 1992. Zamestnanecké hnutie a kolektívne vyjednávanie. In: Sociológia, roč. 24, č. 4, s. 275 - 280.
- Čambáliková, M. 1996. Institutions of Social Partnership – Legality and Legitimacy. In: Human Affairs, č. 6, s. 9 – 18.
- Čambáliková, M. 1997. Sociálne partnerstvo v Českej a Slovenskej republike. In: Sociológia, roč. 29, č. 3, s. 301 - 314.
- Čambáliková, M. 1998. Slovak Social Partners in the Transformation and Integration Processes. In: Sociológia, roč. 30, č. 6, s. 623 – 632.
- Čambáliková, M. 2001. From Dual Deviation to Dual Identity? The Case of Electronic Industry Workers in Slovak Republic 1995 – 2000. In: Sociológia, roč. 33, č. 3, s. 235 – 250.
- Čambáliková, M. 2002. Globalizačné výzvy sociálnemu dialógu a sociálnemu občianstvu. In: Sociológia, roč. 34, č. 5, s. 445 - 460.

- Čambáliková, M. 2003. Začlenenie a vylúčenie v období transformácie a integrácie. In: Sociológia, roč. 35, č. 4, s. 285 – 306.
- Čambáliková, M. 2008. Sociálne partnerstvo: Inštitúcia, stratégia, vízia. Sládkovičovo: Vysoká škola v Sládkovičove.
- Čambáliková, M. - Mansfeldová, Z. 1996. Sociálne partnerstvo a jeho aktéri v Čechách a na Slovensku. In: Sociológia, roč. 28, č. 6, s. 557 – 574.
- Čaraba, F. – Pechanová, E. 1994. Transformácia odborového majetku. Bratislava: Práca.
- Čerpanie rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2003 a stanovisko revízorov účtov k výsledkom hospodárenia KOZ SR za rok 2003. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 2. 6. 2004 prerokovaný v Predstavenstve KOZ SR dňa 14. 4. 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, 2004.
- Čerpanie rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2004 a stanovisko revízorov účtov. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 30. 3. 2005 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 9. 3. 2005. Bratislava : KOZ SR, marec 2005.
- Čerpanie rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2005 a stanovisko revízorov účtov k výsledkom hospodárenia KOZ SR za rok 2005. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 30. 3. 2006 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 15. 3. 2006. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Čerpanie rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2006 a stanovisko revízorov účtov k čerpaniu rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2006 a správa o činnosti revízorov účtov pri KOZ SR za rok 2006. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 27. 3. 2007 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 14. 3. 2007. Bratislava : KOZ SR, marec 2007.
- Čerpanie rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2007, stanovisko revízorov účtov k čerpaniu rozpočtu KOZ SR za rok 2007, správa o činnosti revízorov účtov pri KOZ SR za rok 2007. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 26. 3. 2008, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 20. 2. 2008. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2008.
- Cohen, J. L. - Arato, A. 1992. Civil Society and Political Theory. Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1994.
- Charlwood, A. 2004. The New Generation of Trade Union Leaders and Prospects for Union Revitalization. In: British Journal of Industrial Relations, London, roč. 42, č. 2, s. 379 – 397.

- Dahl, R. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Devánová, A. Odborári Ficovi: Prišiel čas zaplatiť za našu podporu. *Hospodárske noviny*, 22. júna 2006.
- Diamond, L. 1994. Toward Democratic Consolidation. In: *Journal of Democracy*, roč. 5, č. 3, s. 4 - 17.
- Dimitrova, D. – Vilroxx, J. 2005. *Trade Union Strategies in Central and Eastern Europe. Towards decent work*. Geneva: ILO, International Labour Office.
- Dohoda o spolupráci medzi medzi KOZ SR a SMER-SD. Bratislava, 2005.
- Donaghey, J. – Teague, P. 2005. The Persistence of Social Pacts in Europe. In: *Industrial Relations Journal*, roč. 36, č. 6, s. 478 – 493.
- Dvořáková, V. - Kunc, J. 1994. *O přechodech k demokracii*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství.
- Easton, D. 1965. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: John Wiley.
- Ekiert, G. – Kubik, J. 1998. Contentious Politics in New Democracies: East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia. In: *World Politics*, roč. 50, č. 4, s. 547 – 581.
- Ekiert, G. – Kubik, J. 2001. *Rebellious Civil Society: Popular Protest and Democratic Consolidation in Poland, 1989-1993*. University of Michigan Press.
- Fakty o činnosti KOZ SR v období medzi IV. a V. Zjazdom KOZ SR. Bratislava: Kancelária KOZ SR, 2004.
- Fakty o činnosti KOZ SR v období medzi V. a VI. Zjazdom KOZ SR. Bratislava: Kancelária KOZ SR, 2008.
- Fakty o činnosti KOZ SR v období medzi VI. a VII. Zjazdom KOZ SR. Bratislava: Kancelária KOZ SR, 2012.
- Fakty o vládnutí na Slovensku. Komu dať svoj hlas. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006. CD.
- Fiala, P. 1999. Definice zájmových skupin. K některým teoretickým problémům politologického výzkumu organizovaných zájmů. In: *Politologický časopis*, roč. 6, č. 1, s. 52 - 60.
- Financovanie odborov na Slovensku. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR. Košice: KOZ SR, marec 2006.

- Financovanie KOZ SR v roku 2008 a po VI. Zjazde KOZ SR v r. 2009 – 2012. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR 10. 10. 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, september 2007.
- Fernie, S. – Metcalf, D. 2005. Trade unions: resurgence or demise? New York: Routledge.
- Grant, W. 1999. Insider and outsider pressure groups. In: Politics Review, roč. 9, č. sept., s. 92 – 94.
- Habrmanová, S. – Domeová, A. Voliť jedine Smer? Tretina odborárov je proti. Hospodárske noviny, 11. mája 2006.
- Hassel, A. 2001. The Problem of Political Exchange in Complex Governance Systems: The Case of Germany's Alliance for Jobs. In: European Journal of Industrial Relations. roč. 7, č. 3. s. 307 - 326.
- Héthy, L. 2001. Social dialogue and the expanding world: the decade of tripartism in Hungary and in Central and Eastern Europe 1988-99. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.
- Heyes, J. 2004. The Changing Role of Labour Ministries: Influencing Labour, Employment and Social Policy. Paper No. 6. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Heywood, A. 1994. Politické ideológie. Praha: Victoria Publishing, 1994.
- Hlavné úlohy KOZ SR na rok 2004. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 2. júna 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, máj 2004.
- Hospodárenie Konfederácie odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky. V. zjazd KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR, november 2004.
- Hospodárenie Konfederácie odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky. VI. zjazd KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR, november 2008.
- Hospodárenie Konfederácie odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky. VII. zjazd KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR, november 2012.
- Iankova, E. 1998. The Transformative Corporatism of Eastern Europe. In: East European Politics and Societies, roč. 12, č. 2, s. 222 – 264.
- Informácia o čerpaní rozpočtu KOZ SR za obdobie 1-8/2007. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 10. 10. 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, september 2007.
- Informácia o diskusných podujatiach I. – IV. „Vzťah odborov k politickým stranám“. Bratislava: KOZ SR, máj 2006.

- Informácia o realizácii Národného programu organizovania nových členov odborov. Materiál na rokovanie Predstavenstva KOZ SR dňa 27. 6. 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, jún 2007.
- Informácia o rokovaní predstaviteľov KOZ SR s relevantnými politickými stranami, ktoré majú ambíciu pôsobiť po voľbách v NR SR. 2002. Bratislava: KOZ SR, september 2002.
- Jarosiński, J. 2012. Związki zawodowe w teorii i praktyce partii rządzących w Polsce 1944 – 1958. Kielce: Uniwersytet Jana Kochanowskiego.
- Jessop, B. 1979. Corporatism, parliamentarism, and social democracy. In P.C. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds.) *Trends towards Corporatist Intermediation*. London: SAGE, s.185 - 212
- Kaldor, M. - Vejvoda, I. 1997. Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe. In: *International Affairs*, roč. 73, č. 1, s. 59-82.
- Kelly, J. E. 2002. *Industrial Relations: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management*. London: Routledge.
- Keller, B. – Sörries. 1999. Sectoral Social Dialogues: New Opportunities or More Impasses? In: *Industrial Relations Journal*, roč. 30, č. 4, s. 330 – 344.
- Keller, B. – Bansbach, M. 2000. Social Dialogue: an Interim Report on Recent Results and Prospects. In: *Industrial Relations Journal*, roč. 31, č. 4, s. 291 – 307.
- Keller, B. – Sörries, B. 1999. The New European Social Dialogue: Old Wine in New Bottles? In: *Journal of European Social Policy*, roč. 9, č. 2, s. 111 - 125.
- Keller, B. – Sörries, B. 1998. The Sectoral Social Dialogue and European Social Policy – Fewer Facts, More Fantasy. In: *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, roč. 4, č. 3, s. 331 – 347.
- Keller, J. 2011a. *Nová sociální rizika*. Praha: SLON.
- Keller, J. 2011b. *Soumrak sociálního státu*. Praha: SLON.
- Keller, J. 2012. *Tři sociální světy. Sociální struktura postindustriální společnosti*, 2. vydanie. Praha: SLON.
- Kenworthy, L. 2000. *Quantitative Indicators of Corporatism: A Survey and Assessment*. Cologne: Max-Planck-Institut.
- Koper, J. 2011. Mechanisms of democratic transition. In: *Identities, citizenship and democracy: 20 years after*. Brusel: Bruylant, s. 23 – 32.

- Králik, J. 2011. Teoretická a empirická analýza k manažmentu územnej samosprávy. Manažment podnikania a vecí verejných. 6. roč., č.15, s.57-69.
- Kulašik, P. 2007. Politológia. Hlohovec: Efekt – Copy, s. r. o.
- Kunc, S. 2008. Zájmové skupiny jako politický aktér. In: Mansfeldová, Z. – Kroupa, A. (eds.) Proměny reprezentace zájmů po vstupu do Evropské unie. Praha: Slon, s. 79 – 95.
- Kyman, Pavel. Odborový zväz Spoje, ČSA 25, Banská Bystrica. 31. októbra 2007. Osobná komunikácia.
- Lacko, Marián. Odborový zväz zamestnancov obrany, Rázusa 7, Trenčín. 14. novembra 2007. Osobná komunikácia.
- Láštic, E. Koniec tripartity na Slovensku? In Inzine [online].[cit. 11. 05. 2002] dostupné na <http://www.inzine.sk/article.asp?art=8155>
- Lawrence, S. – Ishikawa, J. 2005. Social Dialogue Indicators: Trade Union Membership and Collective Bargaining Coverage, Statistical Concepts, Methods and Findings. International Labor Office Working Paper No. 59. Geneva: ILO, International Labor Office.
- Lehmbruch, G. 1977. Liberal Corporatism and Party Government. In: Comparative Political Studies, roč.10, č. 1, s. 91-126.
- Lichtenstein, N. 2002. State of the Union, a Century of American Labor. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Lijphart, A – Crepaz, M. M. L. 1991. Corporatism and Consensus Democracy in Eighteen Countries: Conceptual and Empirical Linkages. In: British Journal of Political Science, roč. 21, s. 235-246.
- Madison, J. 1981. Federalist 10. In The Federalist Papers, 2. vydanie. Baltimore: John Hopkins University.
- Mailand, M. – Due, J. 2004. Social Dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe: Present State and Future Development. In: European Journal of Industrial Relations, roč. 10, č. 2, s. 179 – 197.
- Malová, D. 1994. The Relationship Between Political Parties and Civil Society in Postcommunist Czecho-Slovakia. In: Soňa Szomolányi a Grigorij Mesežnikov (eds.) The Slovak Path of Transition - To Democracy? Bratislava: Slovak Political Science Association and Interlingua, s. 111-158.
- Malová, D. 1996. Reprezentácia záujmov na Slovensku: smerom ku korporatizmu? In: Sociológia, roč. 28, č. 5, s. 403-414.

- Malová, D. - Sivaková, D. 1996. The National Council of the Slovak Republic: The Developments of a National Parliament. In: Attila Ágh a Gabriella Ilonszki (eds.) *Parliaments and Organised Interests: The Second Steps*. Budapest: Hungarian Centre for Democracy Studies, s. 35 - 48.
- Malová, D. 2000. Organizované záujmy. In: Grigorij Mesežnikov a Miroslav Kollár (eds.) *Slovensko 2000. Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti*. Bratislava: IVO, s. 212 - 230.
- Malová, D. 1997a. The Development of Interest Representation in Slovakia After 1989: from Transmission Belts' to 'Party-State Corporatism'? In: *Slovakia's Political Regime Seven Years After*. Bratislava: Fridrich Ebert Stiftung, SPSA.
- Malová, D. 1997b. Vývoj politického systému na Slovensku po roku 1989: Vzťahy medzi štátom, politickou a občianskou spoločnosťou. Habilitačná práca. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského.
- Malová, D. 1999a. Organizované záujmy. In: Grigorij Mesežnikov a Michal Ivantyšin (eds.) *Slovensko 1998-1999. Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti*. Bratislava: IVO, s. 215-232.
- Malová, D. 1999b. From Hesitations to a Well-thought Strategy: The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak republic in the 1998 Elections. In: Martin Bútora, Grigorij Mesežnikov and Zora Bútorová (eds.) *Who? Why? How? Slovak Elections in 1998*. Bratislava: IVO.
- Malová, D. 2002. Politika a odbory. Poslanie a úloha odborov v moderných spoločnostiach. In: *Odbory na Slovensku (november 1989 – 2000)*. Kolektív autorov. 2007. 23 s. Rukopis.
- Malová, D. - Čambáliková, M. 1998. Čo vieme a nevieme o reprezentácii záujmov na Slovensku? Bratislava: Fridrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Malová, D. – Rybář, M. 2002. *Organizované záujmy*. In: *Slovensko 2002, prvá časť*. Bratislava: IVO, s. 271-290.
- Malová, D. – Rybář, M.. 2004. Organizované záujmy. In: Grigorij Mesežnikov a Miroslav Kollár (eds.) *Slovensko 2004. Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti*. Bratislava: IVO
- Mannová, E. 1990. Spolky a ich miesto v živote spoločnosti v 19. storočí. In: *Historický časopis*, roč.38, č. 1, s.16 - 27.
- Mannová, E. 1991. Prehľad vývoja spolokového hnutia na Slovensku z aspektu formovania občianskej spoločnosti. In: Ján Stena (ed.)

- Občianska spoločnosť: Problémy a perspektívy v ČSFR. Bratislava: SÚ SAV, s.71-79.
- Mannová, E. 1992. Spolky v období sociálno-politických zmien na Slovensku 1938-1951. In: Občianska spoločnosť na prahu znovuzrodenia. Bratislava: Sociologický ústav SAV, s. 21-30.
- Mansfeldová, Z. 1994. Tripartita jako model prostředkování zájmů v politickém systému České republiky. Praha: Sociologický ústav, AV ČR.
- Mansfeldová, Z. – Kroupa, A. 2005. Participace a zájmové organizace v České republice. Praha: SLON.
- Marsh, A. I. – Ryan, V. – Smethurst, J. B. 2006. Historical Directory of Trade Unions. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.
- Meardi, G. 2002. The Trojan Horse for the Americanization of Europe? Polish Industrial Relations Towards the EU. In: European Journal of Industrial Relations, roč. 8, č.1, s. 77 – 99.
- Meardi, G. 2007. More Voice After More Exit? Unstable Industrial Relations in Central Eastern Europe. In: Industrial Relations Journal, roč. 38, č. 6, s. 503 – 523.
- Mesárošová, M. 2001. Kolektívne vyjednávanie. Rigorózna práca. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského.
- Myant, M. – Smith, S. 1999. Czech Trade Unions in Comparative Perspective. In: European Journal of Industrial Relations, roč. 5, č. 3, s. 265 – 285.
- Myant, M. - Slocock, B. - Smith, S. 2000. Tripartism in the Czech and Slovak Republic In: Europe-Asia Studies, roč. 52, č. 4, s. 723-739.
- Myant, M. – Waller, M. 1994. Parties, trade unions, and society in East-Central Europe. London: Routledge.
- Nagle, J. D. – Mahr, A. 1999. Democracy and Democratization: Post-communist Europe in Comparative Perspective. London: SAGE.
- Návrh na novelizáciu Stanov Konfederácie odborových zväzov. Stanovy Konfederácie odborových zväzov. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 29. 9. 2004 prerokovaný v Predstavenstve KOZ SR dňa 22. 9. 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, september 2004.
- Návrh stratégie odborovej politiky z pohľadu KOZ SR v súvislosti s hľadaním spojencov z radov politických subjektov. 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, február 2004.

- Návrh strategických opatrení KOZ SR pre ďalšie obdobie. Bratislava: KOZ SR, jún 2002.
- Návrh zásad hospodárenia KOZ SR. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 30. 3. 2006, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 15. 3. 2006. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Nižníková, J. Školskí odborári odmietajú postup prezidenta Konfederácie odborových zväzov Ivana Saktora na prvomájovom mítingu v Banskej Bystrici. Rádio Regina, Košice, Regiónžurnál, 9. mája 2006, 16:30 h.
- Novák, M. 1997. Systémy politických strán. Praha: SLON.
- Odborári sa už hlásia o slovo. In SME, 13. júla 2006, s. 2.
- Odbory hľadajú strategického partnera. In Hospodárske noviny, 17. októbra 2003, s. 6.
- Offe, C. 1981. The Attribution of Public Status to Interest Groups. Observation on the West German Case. In: Susanne D. Berger (ed.) Organizing Interests in Western Europe: Pluralism, Corporatism, and the Transformation of Politics. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Olson, M. 1995. The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups. Sixteen Printing. Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Ost, D. 2000. Ilusory Corporatism in Eastern Europe: Neoliberal Tripartism and Postcommunist Class Identities. In: Politics and Society, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 503-530.
- O'Sullivan, N. 1995. Fašismus. Brno: CDK.
- Oswald, A. J. 1985. The Economic Theory of Trade Unions: An Introductory Survey. In: The Scandinavian Journal of Economics, roč. 87, č. 2, s. 160 – 193.
- Prando, P. 2010a. Teórie európskeho federalizmu.
- Prando, P. 2010b. Ľavicový a pravicový radikalizmus v súčasnom talianskom straníckom systéme. In: Politické vedy, roč. 13, č. 1, s. 99 – 112.
- Parlamentné voľby roku 1998. Vyhodnotenie aktivít KOZ SR v predvolebnej kampani. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR. Október 1998.
- Parlamentné voľby 2002. Bratislava: KOZ SR, 2002.

- Petičná akcia KOZ o predčasných voľbách je netradičná. Hospodárske noviny, 11. novembra 2003.
- Pollert, A. 1999. Trade Unionism in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe. In: European Journal of Industrial Relations, roč. 5, č. 2, s. 209 – 234.
- Postoj KOZ SR k predčasným parlamentným voľbám v roku 2006 v zmysle posolstva delegátov V. zjazdu KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Program Konfederácie odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky na roky 2004 – 2008. Materiál na rokovanie V. zjazdu KOZ SR. 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, november 2004.
- Realizácia posolstva delegátov V. zjazdu KOZ SR odborárom, zamestnancom – občanom SR. Materiál na rokovanie Prezídia KOZ SR dňa 7. septembra 2005. Bratislava: KOZ SR, september 2005.
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining ILO Convention. No. C98. Geneva: ILO 32nd Session, 1949.
- Rozpracovanie záverov V. zjazdu KOZ SR do hlavných úloh na rok 2005. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 28. marca 2007 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 9. 3. 2005. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2005.
- Rozpracovanie úloh vyplývajúcich z V. zjazdu do hlavných úloh KOZ SR na rok 2006. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR v dňoch 29. – 30. marca 2006 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 15. 3. 2006. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Rozpracovanie záverov V. zjazdu KOZ SR do hlavných úloh na rok 2007. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 30. 3. 2005, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 24. januára 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2007.
- Rozpracovanie záverov V. zjazdu KOZ SR do hlavných úloh na rok 2008. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR 26. 3. 2008, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR 12. 12. 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2008.
- Říchová, B. 2000. Přehled moderních politologických teorií. Praha: Portál, 2006.
- Říchová, B. 2002. Úvod do současné politikologie. Praha: Portál, 2007.

- Saktor vzal na seba Ficovo vystúpenie na mítingu. In Košický korzár [online].[cit. 18. 05. 2006] dostupné na <http://www.cassovia.sk/korzar/archiv/clanok.php3?sub=18.5.2006/675070>
- Salisbury, R. H. 1969. An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups. In: *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, roč. 13, č. 1, s. 1 - 32.
- Sarfati, H. 2003. Welfare and Labour Market Reforms: A New Framework for Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining? In: *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, roč. 9, č. 3, s. 265-282.
- Schattschneider, E. E. 1960. *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Schmitter, P. C. 1974. Still the Century of Corporatism? In: *Review of Politics*, roč.36, č.1.
- Schmitter, P.C. 1981. Interest Intermediation and Regime Governability in Contemporary Western Europe and North America. In: Susanne Berger (ed.) *Organizing Interests in Western Europe*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, s. 287-330.
- Schmitter, P. C. 1992a. Interest Systems and the Consolidation of Democracies. In: Marks, Gary and Diamond, Larry (ed.) *Reexamining Democracy. Essays in Honor of Seymour Martin Lipset*. Newbury Park: Sage, s. 156-181.
- Schmitter, P. C. 1992b. The Consolidation of Democracy and Representation of Social Groups, *American Behavioral Scientist*, roč. 35, č 3-4, s. 422-449.
- Schmitter, P. C. – Grote, J. 1999. The Renaissance of National Corporatism: Unintended Side-Effect of European Economic and Monetary Union or Calculated Response to the Absence of European Social Policy? In: *ETUC Journal Transfer*, č. 1-2.
- Servanský, J. Tripartite odzvoní, sociálny dialóg ostane? In *Národná obroda* [online].[cit. 07. 08. 2004] dostupné na [http://www.obroda.sk/clanok/13121/Tripartite-odzvoni,-socialny-dialog-ostane%3F-\(Jozef-Servansky\)/](http://www.obroda.sk/clanok/13121/Tripartite-odzvoni,-socialny-dialog-ostane%3F-(Jozef-Servansky)/)
- Shively, W. P. 2000. *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2000.
- Siaroff, A. 1999. Corporatism in 24 Industrial Democracies: Meaning and Measurement, In: *European Journal of Political Research*, č. 36, s. 175 – 205.

- Sopóci, J. 2000. Záujmové skupiny v politickom živote spoločnosti. In: Politické vedy, roč. 2, č. 1, s. 5 – 44.
- Sopóci, J. 2002. Záujmové skupiny v slovenskej politike v deväťdesiatych rokoch. Bratislava: VEDA vydavateľstvo SAV.
- Sopóci, J. 2004. Politika v spoločnosti: úvod do sociológie politiky. Bratislava: VEDA vydavateľstvo SAV.
- Stav členskej základne odborových zväzov združených v KOZ SR k 30. 9. 2004. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR 30. 3. 2005, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 9. 3. 2005. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2005.
- Stav členskej základne odborových zväzov združených v KOZ SR k 30. 9. 2005. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR 30. 3. 2006, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 15. 3. 2006. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Stav členskej základne odborových zväzov združených v KOZ SR k 30. 9. 2006. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR 27. 3. 2007, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 14. 3. 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2007.
- Stav členskej základne odborových zväzov združených v KOZ SR k 30. 9. 2007 a počet mandátov odborových zväzov v Sneme KOZ SR k 1. 1. 2008. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR 26. 3. 2008, prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR 12. 12. 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2008.
- Szomolányi, S. 1999. Kl'ukatá cesta Slovenska k demokracii. Bratislava: Stimul.
- Škaloud, J. 1969. Úvod do politológie. Bratislava: EPOCHA. 1969, s. 161.
- Štefániková, L. 2010. Demokratický spôsob vlády a erózia politických strán. In: Koper, J. – Kulašik, P. – Kováčik, B. (eds.) Výskum vzájomnej kompatibility politických postojov súčasných straníckych elít na Slovensku. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela, s. 17 – 21.
- Štruktúra KOZ je podľa Kaníka prepojená so stranou SMER. In Hospodárske noviny, 20. októbra 2003, s. 3.
- Tkáč, V. 2004. Odbory, zamestnávateľia, zamestnanecké rady (Európa, právo a prax). Košice: PressPrint.
- Tomeš, I. - Tkáč, V. 1993. Kolektivní vyjednávání a kolektivní smlouvy. Praha: Prospektrum.

- Tóth, R. 1998. Koncepcia politického systému. Bratislava: Úrad stratégie rozvoja spoločnosti, vedy a techniky SR.
- Tóth, R. 1994. Základy politológie. Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo.
- Truman, B. D. 1953. The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion. New York: Knopf, 1971.
- Uhlerová, M. 2009. Vývojové trendy odborového hnutia v rozšírenej Európskej únii: od masových hnutí k profesionálnym službám? In: Interpolis '09, VI. vedecká konferencia doktorandov a mladých vedeckých pracovníkov. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela, s. 315 – 318.
- Uhlerová, M. 2010. Odbory a politické strany na Slovensku: od averzie cez hľadanie spojencov k strategickému partnerstvu? In: Koper, J. – Kulašik, P. – Kováčik, B. (eds.) Výskum vzájomnej kompatibility politických postojov súčasných straníckych elít na Slovensku. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela, s. 127 - 144.
- Uhlerová, M. 2012a. Specific Features of Interests Representation in the Political System of India. In: Politické vedy, roč. 14, č. 4, s. 8 - 31
- Uhlerová, M. 2012b. Inštitucionalizovaný sociálny dialóg a jeho dosahy na postavenie odborov v post-komunistických krajinách strednej Európy. Prípadová štúdia Slovenska. In: Politické vedy, roč. 15, č. 1, s. 8 - 51.
- Uhlerová, M. 2012c. Politické, historické a ekonomické východiská formovania a súčasného postavenia odborového hnutia v politickom systéme Indie. In: Interpolis '11, 8. vedecká konferencia doktorandov a mladých vedeckých pracovníkov. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela, s. 235 – 242.
- Uhlerová, M. 2013. Záujmové skupiny v teórii politiky. Banská Bystrica: Belianum.
- V centrále Konfederácie odborových zväzov vládne napätie. Spôsobilá ho spolupráca KOZ so stranou SMER-SD. Rádio Slovensko, 15. mája 2006, 12:00 h.
- V odboroch rastú spory pre spoluprácu so Smerom. SME, 12. mája 2006.
- Vladárová, M. 1994. Kolektívna zmluva a kolektívne vyjednávanie: v otázkach a odpovediach. Bratislava: Práca, 1994. s. 132.
- Vyhodnotenie plnenia hlavných úloh KOZ SR za rok 2005. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR v dňoch 29. – 30. marca 2006 prerokovaný

- Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 15. 3. 2006. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Vyhodnotenie plnenia hlavných úloh KOZ SR na rok 2006. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 28. marca 2007 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 24. januára 2007. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2007.
- Vyhodnotenie plnenia hlavných úloh KOZ SR rok 2007. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 26. marca 2008 prerokovaný Predstavenstvom KOZ SR dňa 20. februára 2008 prerokovaný Prezidiom KOZ SR dňa 6. februára 2008. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2008.
- Vyhodnotenie plnenia programu KOZ SR za obdobie 2004 - 2008. Bratislava: Kancelária KOZ SR, 2008.
- Vyhodnotenie plnenia programu KOZ SR za obdobie 2008 - 2012. Bratislava: Kancelária KOZ SR, 2012.
- Vyhodnotenie Programu KOZ SR schváleného IV. Zjazdom KOZ SR do hlavných úloh KOZ SR na rok 2003. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 2. júna 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, máj 2004.
- Vyúčtovanie 0,3% podielu členského príspevku členov KOZ SR za rok 2005. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 30. 3. 2006, prerokované Predstavenstvom KOZ SR 15. 3. 2006. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Vývoj ekonomických a finančných ukazovateľov obchodnej spoločnosti JMF. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR. Košice: KOZ SR, marec 2006.
- Vývoj nezamestnanosti, miezd a sociálneho dialógu v regiónoch Slovenska. Štúdia PHARE/Partnership/KOZ SR. Bratislava: KOZ SR, 2000.
- Vzťah odborov a politických strán. Materiál na rokovanie Snemu KOZ SR dňa 31. 3. 2004. Bratislava: KOZ SR, marec 2004.
- Weber, M. 2009. Metodologie, sociologie a politika, Praha: Oikoymenh.
- Woolley, P. J. – Papa A. R. 1998. American Politics: Core Argument and Current Controversy. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Ziegler, H. 1988. Pluralism, Corporatism and Confucianism. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Žaloudek, K. 1999. Encyklopedie politiky. 2. vyd. Praha: Libri.

Title: **Trade Unions Politics in Slovakia after 1989**

Author: **Monika Uhlerová, PhD.**

Publisher: Publishing house of the Matej Bel University
in Banská Bystrica - Belianum

Number of pages: 164 pages (10,64 authorial sheets)

Number of copies: 100 copies

Edition: first

Format: A5

Published in: 2015

Print: EQUILIBRIA, s.r.o.

© Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, 2015

ISBN 978-80-557-0963-5

EAN 9788055709635