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Involvement of the Czech environmental movements in the European game: which impact on their repertory of collective actions?*

Sandrine Devaux

Introduction

Europeanisation is one of the core notions developed by literature on European questions over the past ten years. Indeed studies not only focus on the European construction and the mechanisms of representation but also on the manner in which actors participate in the European decision-making process and in return on how they are influenced by their involvement at the European level. If all the member states are concerned, the questions are more relevant for the new members, especially those who formerly belonged to the communist bloc. While all the new member states are often considered as having the same features, background and facing the same challenges, we observe that each country is embedded in its own history. Communism for example, has been experienced differently in each nation and thus each central and eastern country has followed a singular “extrication path” from the soviet rules to those of the European Union.

* This article is one of the results of the collective research led in the framework of the EU-Consent program. Focused on the important topics covering “Democracy, Legitimacy and Identities: Citizens on the Construction of Europe”, this study tried to identify the role played by social actors from new and old member states in the European decision making process. In my own case, these issues have been analysed using Czech environmental actors.

Literature on European issues has already shown that, europeanisation is a twofold process covering a vertical and a horizontal dimension (Börzel Risse, 2000, Radaelli, 2004, Olsen, 2006). If analysing social actors is a good means to observe how europeanisation generally works, it is also appropriate to understand how this process runs in countries, which test simultaneously democratisation and European integration perspective (Dakowska, Neumayer, 2005, Neumayer, 2006). This was precisely the case with the last two enlargements. In fact during the 1990's post-communist states had to implement new policies to account for the democratic transformation and the administrative pressure of European integration.

To analyse these complex processes, I propose to deal with the case of the Czech environmental and ecological movements. As it is an important domain in European legislation, the field of environment presents fascinating case-studies for understanding the dynamics of the deepening and widening processes. It is (i) an issue in which the role played by the European Parliament is increasing, (ii) an area being investigated by EU Commission discourses to promote social dialogue and deliberative democracy and (iii) a domain in which a range of non profit organisations, more or less institutionalised, are involved. More specifically, it was a decisive chapter during the negotiations in all the post-communist countries and hence it is a relevant topic to analyse the links between widening and deepening processes – the core object of the EU-Consent program. Indeed, the ecological case allows on one hand to determine to which extent social actors may influence the decision making process in a field which is sufficiently Europeanised and on the other hand to examine whether social actors from new member states are empowered and gain more legitimacy by participating in EU decision making process.

The Czech case clearly illustrates this problematic in the sense that ecological issues constituted one of the protest sectors during the soviet-type regime and after the fall of communism it has been deeply transformed due to interactions with international movements and the adoption of European norms and values, as in other post-communist countries. But of course, each configuration of social actors and political institutions differs from one national framework to another. Despite the fact that the environmental sector is less important than the Polish or Hungarian ones regarding the size of the environmental movements, the numbers of members and the causes defended, it is nevertheless possible to draw the main patterns observed since the beginning of the 1990's alongside the European integration perspective.

With this context in mind, the aim of this chapter is to answer the following question: which opportunities has the integration of the Czech Republic into the European Union offered to Czech environmental actors and which type of actors have been more inclined to incorporate european issues in their collective actions?

The first part of the paper begins with an overview on the manner in which the “space of environmental mobilisations”¹ has been reframed during the post-communist transformation period and due to European pressure. In other words, the first point will deal with the vertical aspect of the Europeanisation. The second part of the paper addresses the question “how the Czech environmental sector has been impacted by the use of

¹ This notion is used to express the fact that associations and organisations involved in the same social field only can be understood if we take into account the interactions between them. This idea follows the argument developed by the French sociology, Lilian Mathieu, when he writes about “the space of social movements”. (Mathieu, 2007)

European resources (finances, norms and values)". We will also see to what extent the development of new collective actions in environmental sector derives from the Europeanisation.

The reframing of "space of mobilisations" in the Czech Republic during the political transformation and under European pressure

In a previous research on the development of Czech non-profit organisations since the beginning of the 1990's (Devaux, 2005)², I have showed how this new sector derives from three trends: 1) adaptation of organisations inherited from the communist period; 2) transformation of organisations having run during the communist regime; 3) creation of new types of post-communist organisations. Through the case study of youth organisations and social associations set up for young people, I have shown that the more efficient organisations are not necessarily the new ones. The former organisations, despite the fact that they are sometimes considered as having dealt with the communist regime, continue to function within a democratic system by using skills and networks acquired before 1989. To a certain extent, the environmental field can be analysed through the same grid. It is not the dissident movements such as green associations that have been more efficient to support ecological causes since 1989. In addition, if you consider the European issue we can assert that these alternative actors are not any more willing to be involved at the European level. These paradoxes can be explained by the fact that dissident actors do not accept any more the new rules introduced by democratisation and

² This book has been reviewed by Markéta Sledačková (2006).

Europeanisation. Furthermore as it is today well-known that the renewal of social actors after the fall of the communist regimes did not only depend on dissidence but also on a large range of actors having acquired social *capitals* before 1989 (Mink, Szurek, 1998, Zalewski, 2006), it is crucial to take into consideration all types of organisations involved in the field of nature protection.

If I use the term of “space of mobilisations” to identify the interactions between several sorts of social actors engaged in the field of environment after 1989, it is not appropriate to discuss the reality under the communist regime. In fact, collective actions and mobilisations expressing contestation and various interests, as we understand them in a democratic context, could not take place in a soviet-type regime. Nevertheless this term is useful for examining their evolution since the 1980’s. In the Czech case, three figures have emerged that have been also identified in other communist societies such as Hungary, Poland or Slovakia. Just the impact of each figure differed from each country. During the 1990’s these three groups were reframed due to new domestic and external policies.

Persistence of nature protection organisations but far away from European issues

The first one, nature protection, linked to the international movement, was a massive movement. Due to the concern of the Czechs towards nature, it was quiet simple to set up official organisations in this respect. Nevertheless, these organisations could not condemn negative impacts that soviet-type industry had on nature. Thus they can rather be considered as recreational organisations providing activities of leisure and seeking to make people more aware of a natural lifestyle. As a Czech specificity, an official mass-organisation, ČSOP, (Český

Svaz Ochranců Přírody, Czech Union of Nature Protectors) was created in 1979. Socialist authorities sought to channel naturalist sentiment to prevent it from escalating into ecologist demands. The enduring survival of this organisation – which several minister of Environment have been members of – after 1989 is an indication of the deep-rootedness of these social practices.

Logically, the first type of actors has not changed too much since the end of the communist regime due to the fact that this naturalist and in a sense romantic conception of nature matches with Czech popular interest for the protection of nature. Indeed, it would be wrong to think that the end of the communist regime has changed all the sectors of the social life or broke down all the organisations which have been existed until 1989. These type of organisations present the specificity being much more embedded in national and local practices. But with a traditional and conservative approach towards nature, these organisations have not been dramatically affected by the return to a democratic system neither by europeanisation. In fact, they have sought to consolidate their membership to an international movement (International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN) rather than to be present at the European level. Nevertheless, the recent evolution lets us think that even this type of organisation is more aware of the European dimension of the issue than the international one. Indeed ČSOP remains the biggest nature protection organisation whose discourse begins to be more impacted by international and European norms and values. If during the 1990's, the organisation dealt solely with conservationism, ecology, protection of environment it is now openly dealing with sustainability. If it cannot be said that these issues are on its agenda, nevertheless they belong to its general framework. In addition alongside the Agenturu pro ochrany přírody a krajiny, ČSOP has been, since the end of the 1990's, involved with topics of Natura 2000. The reason for such participation maybe because in

the Czech Republic, this Directive has been presented as non political and as expert driven despite the fact that the manner in which Czech nature has been mapped and the national lists established proves that the process was more complex (Konopásek, 2008).

Attempts of ecological movements to adapt themselves to new political rules

On the contrary, the aim of small alternative groups founded in 1988 in Prague and in Brno, the capital of the Moravia, and the second largest Czech town was presenting nature protection in political terms. It was clearly a huge challenge because until 1989 all social issues were imposed by the State (Ost, 1993, Padgett, 2000). During the 1980's, we notice a radicalisation in relation to the environment. This process resulted from the involvement of a new generation born after 1968. Mainly it was students in a scientific field who came from poor regions, especially in the North of Bohemia. In addition, some of them were engaged in local organisations of the Czechoslovakian Union of Nature Protectors. We can say that this new generation was aware of environmental issues as it was already the case in western countries and in addition young people had been concerned by the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. For them, defending the environment was a way to be politically involved in society and to take responsibility for general interests. So, they tried to publicise ecological problems and especially so-called "invisible pollutions" like air pollution, use of toxic substances, nuclear energy. I argue that at their modest level these informal groups have contributed to create a sort of "public space" around an environmental issue especially through publications like

Ekologický bulletin (Dejmal, interview, 2004)³ and debates (Vaněk, 2002, p. 258).

Just after the political change, former ecological movements created at the end of the 1980's have been transformed into legal associations defined by the terms of the new law on citizens' associations. These main national associations are Hnutí Duha (Rainbow Movement) and Děti Země (The Children of Earth). Obviously other local or focused associations have been created in the country, as for instance the anti-nuclear energy associations Jihočeské Matky (The Mothers of South Bohemia) or CALLA, based near to the Temelín nuclear plant. These main organisations which were led by the same group at least until the end of the 1990's, kept the same environmental conception and in general proposed another style of life than that proposed by the new economic and political elites. To achieve their goal, aimed against a consumer society, the excessive use of automobiles and stopping the production of nuclear energy – they elaborated collective action which could have an impact, both on public opinion and politicians. But such a strategic choice in the specific context of the post-communist transition was not successful. Indeed the small size of these groups and their refusal to be involved in politics (considered as immoral activities) did not allow them to convince people to adopt a green way of life. Consequently the conclusion of the political scientist Chad Briggs, inspired by the Hungarian case, can be applied to the Czech one: "Although the environment became a rallying point for politics in Hungary in the late 1980's, support for environmental groups and issues fell dramatically after 1990. Symbolically the environment was

³ Dejmal I. is an ecologist, former dissident, founder of the Ecological Bulletin, of the Ecological Society in 1989 and co-founder of the Society for the sustainable development in 1992. He was the second minister of Environment in the Czech Republic.

very powerful, but could not compete with general faith in the free market reforms that followed the collapse of communism. The Hungarian public largely believed that conditions would automatically improve with privatisation, including environmental conditions” (Briggs, Devaux, 2006).

However the overview would not be complete if limited to these two categories. Actually, another type of actors has played an important role in expressing opposing points of view before the end of the communist regime: the scientists. This point is not specific to the Czech Republic but I can say that in light of the small size of ecological movements in this country due to the hard-line kept by the communist party up until the end of the 1980's, their role has been quite significant. More interesting is the fact that several of them have contributed to the elaboration of environmental public policies in a democratic context.

Value of scientists' skills to elaborate new public policies and to Europeanise environmental issues

Between 1990 and 1992, many laws were adopted to renew the Czech legal system. During this period several think tanks have been founded in response to the urgent need of the State to have juridical and technical knowledge in the environmental field. As the new environmental policies have been elaborated due to the convergence with the western model, the closeness with the European Union and since 1992 due to the adoption of principles of the United Nations, well informed and connected experts were crucial for the new regime. It was the case of the founder-members of the main think tanks, Bedřich Moldan and Václav Mezřický, both of whom have belonged to the Ecological Section.

The roots of Ecological Section began informally at the Presidium of the Academy of Science in May 1969 but never took shape due to the interruption of the Prague Spring in August 1969 and following political “normalisation” process which paralysed most sectors of society until 1989. During the 1970’s, scientists and engineers, among them Bedřich Moldan and Václav Mezříčský, again tried to create a space to discuss environmental issues, but it was totally impossible to do so even in the framework of the Academy of Science. Finally, this “club” was founded in the Biology faculty at the Charles University in Prague and on December 7th 1978, the Ecological section of the Biology Society from the Czech Academy of Science was born. Some 20 to 30 employees of scientific and technical institutes belonged to it. Josef Vavroušek, an engineer, joined this initiative in 1986, at a time when he was the chief of the Council for the development of sciences and techniques. Regularly, the Section organised seminars and conferences on topics which were not at the beginning far from a conservationist approach (in 1979, “soil as a part of the geosystem”, “physics and ecology”, in 1980 “biochemical cycles”). However, increasingly, attention had gradually turned to ecological problems as the title of the seminar of 1985, “acid depots of the atmosphere and their consequences”, suggests. In March 1989, a plenary session took place at the Faculty of technology and at the end of the year the Section had about 400 members.

Initially, the Section was just a cross-disciplinary space where different people met to debate environmental problems. It later became more institutionalised and was asked to advice the Academy of Science, and, after 1986, the Central Committee of the Communist Party itself. The Soviet “glasnost” policy made the government pay more attention to environmental problems. Section’s members asked for the authorisation to publish its reports but these documents remained secret. The first report on the state of the environment in the Czech Republic was published

in March 1990 with the cooperation of the Section and the recently created ministry of Environment, directed by Bedřich Moldan. If in 1980, the Section collaborated with the Communist party, it maintained at the same time relationships with some dissidents involved in environmental issues; amongst others was Ivan Dejmál, a signatory of Charter 77. This is an important aspect of the development of the Section. It could be perceived as a legitimate actor both by the State and by the dissidents.

Not only is this perspective consistent with the theory of the specific role played by scientists in Soviet-type regimes (Lubrano, Solomon, 1980) but also with the hypothesis that scientists have benefited from the opportunities opened by European Union integration.

The following examples illustrate how a new type of environmental actors has emerged in a context characterised by the importation of a democratic model and by convergence with European rules.

The Institute for Ecological Policy was founded in 1992 as a foundation and since 1998 it has been functioning as a public benefit society, which is the legal form generally used by think tanks (Schneider, 2003). Its “mission is to promote sustainable development in the Czech Republic, based on an awareness of the links between human needs and natural resources. Since 1992, the IEP has been actively focused on putting together policies that support sustainable development and a healthy environment with a view to influencing documents of national importance”⁴. The overall aim here is to change unfavourable trends.

If we look at the biography of the leaders, it can be observed that former scientists and experts have been core

⁴ Sources: Report on activities, 1997.

elements in the foundation of such a think tank. In fact a team of legal advisers, which included Václav Mezřický and Eva Kružiková, created the IEP. Only Michaela Valentová, a project manager, was active before 1989 in an ecological movement. She was a founding member of the association “The Mothers of Prague” which organised a demonstration in August 1989 against industrial pollution in the Czech capital and which favoured the creation of more pedestrian zones. In the IEP, she is today responsible for environmental problems after the European integration of the country. Significantly, she is the only member who is not a legal specialist. It is important to note that both of the founders were members of the Ecological Section. Eva Kuřiková joined this initiative in 1980. Václav Mezřický was employed in the State Institute for Law and was already specialised in environmental aspects. After 1989, the current director of IEP, Kuřiková, was a member of the first Czech Ministry of Environment and Václav Mezřický was engaged in an academic career at the Faculty of Law, where he is today Head of the Environmental Law Department.

The Centre for environmental questions is an academic organisation founded by Bedřich Moldan that officially produces scientific studies on environmental issues. Indeed, the Centre is specialised in the promotion of general principles and values which can be explained by the fact that the Centre for environmental questions is composed of scientists while the IEP’s members are lawyers. This CEQ is registered at the Faculty of Humanities at the Charles University in Prague. Nevertheless, the roots of this initiative stem from a team at the Faculty of Natural Sciences. There, the director of the Institute for environment thought that creating an organisation to increase environmental knowledge and awareness through society was relevant. The purpose consisted in the coordination of all the efforts in this direction, in the educational field as well as in the research field.

These examples allow us to demonstrate that the creation of such new type of actors in the environmental field is an answer to domestic needs in terms of new public policies and in terms of European harmonisation. If we can say that modern governments tend to decide by “delegating judgement” (Urfalino and Vilkas, 1995) because they lack legal and technical advice, this phenomenon has been reinforced in the post-communist countries by the necessity of converging towards European standards. This is the reason why think tanks and non-profit organisations perceived as independent were mainly consulted by the government in 1991 and in 1998 for the preparation of environmental laws. The Institute for ecological policy and the Centre for environmental questions occupy a central place between the different processes (the elaboration of new policies⁵, the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* and the growing public awareness of environmental problems) due to several factors. As far as they worked on tolerated topics or on non-political aspects, there were authorised to lead scientific activities. Hence, they have managed to develop their skills and up-date their knowledge. In addition, from time-to-time, several have been also connected to the dissident movements. Furthermore, several of them have been involved in international academic networks (SCOPE program, scientific committee for environmental problems in the framework of the International Council for science). This variable has been very crucial at the breakdown of communism because it has allowed people to be considered as legitimate. It prevents them from being

⁵ During 1990-1992 a large number of laws were adopted in the Czech system and especially in the environmental field, the most important of which were the Clean Air Act, the Forest Protection Act, the State Administration in Waste Management and the Environmental Fund Act in 1991, the Agricultural Land Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act and the Environmental Inspection Act in 1992.

considered as elements of the past and they managed to reconvert their skills in a new democratic period which has been characterised by the renewal of decision-making process. Due to the fact that they have been perceived as competent but also as neutral during the communist period, they did not constitute an enemy for the new regime. Unlike the ecological associations, which have been considered as extremist ones, and the organisations fighting against the new economic model (the capitalist economy), the scientists could be seen as experts. Hence, they have been able to use European resources to promote their conception of environmental protection.

Not only have these new types of organisations managed to be recognised as a partner of the government but furthermore they help to vehicle within the public domain the European and international “ideology” on environmental issues. IEP projects are often based upon the co-operation with the public administration and upon the presentation of new topics in the sphere of sustainable development. They prepare analyses and studies connected to the harmonisation processes of the Czech environmental regulations with those of EU legislation. Moreover, these think tanks are engaged in the implementation of such measures and for example, the IEP put forward suggestions for the creation of an Environmental Inspectorate. One of its aims is to create a general framework for all legal texts on the protection of the environment. It edited a handbook of European environmental law and intends to make a code about this topic that could reach all levels of the public. This project consists in “drawing up a draft concept for a comprehensive environmental code with a view to removing the internal fragmentation of legislation in this field, securing its transparency and bringing together the instruments, principles and institutes used”. The IEP works as a translator of norms by incorporating European norms in the Czech environmental laws and the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local level in the

Czech Republic. In comparison with the Centre for environmental questions, the IEP is more involved in strengthening institutional regulatory capacity in the environmental sector. In this respect, it is closer to European institutions due to the fact that the IEP was involved in the Phare twinning process.

To conclude on this point we can say that these think-tanks have been the most efficient organisations to europeanise the environmental field in the Czech Republic during the pre-accession period, essentially by contributing to the legal harmonisation and by disseminating new values, such as sustainable development. This top-down dimension of Europeanisation has also affected certain environmental associations, which have been involved in the European Union before EU integration. In this case, it can be argued that they have tried to become familiar with European rules before managing to be influential at the European level.

Hence, a crucial question remains: how have the effects of europeanisation impacted significantly the collective actions led by environmental social actors?

The impact of europeanisation on Czech environmental actors' repertory of collective actions

I consider that social actors may influence, or attempt to influence, European policy making processes from the bottom up, as well as adapting their behaviour to the constraints and benefits arising from top down Europeanisation dynamics. In this sense, they may have a role not only as 'takers' but also as 'shapers' of Europeanisation (Börzel, 1999). Since social actors are seen as being at the root of Europeanisation, we take into

account that these actors may also become weaker or stronger as a result of their interaction with the EU.

The Czech case seems to prove that Europeanisation does not occur as a linear process concerning all the actors at the same time. On the contrary, it may entail tensions and side effects and lead to an increased differentiation between and within social actors.

Institutionalised actors have been co-opted by European institutions

During the first part of the 1990's a process of actors' selection took place due to two main factors. It is a fact that European umbrella organisations (like European Trade Unions Confederation, European Environment Bureau) have tried to establish contact with post-communist countries sooner than we may imagine. When these institutions were seeking future partners in the prospective member states, they acted by networking. As a result, relations with the well-known organisations, especially those who had already subscribed to international networks, were privileged. Secondly, this type of European platform, like the European Environmental Bureau⁶, does not necessarily seek the most dissident actors but rather the more representative and probably those who are able to run as a transmission belt towards national public opinion. In fact, in the environmental field the EEB "aims to promote knowledge and understanding of the current and potential EU environmental and sustainable development policies

⁶ The hypothesis is based on a empirical research led in Brussels in 2006 related to the functioning of the European Environmental Bureau. I conducted interviews with those in charge of the REACH directive and of the enlargement.

amongst the general public in the EU, so that this will lead them generally to mobilise for continuous improvement”⁷. This is the reason why the main green associations from the post-communist candidate countries, represented in this framework, are not the ecological but the conservationist ones who do not differ drastically from those that can be found in older EU countries. This way of acting is largely understandable considering the Commission attempts to encapsulate as many interests as possible and that the main task of the EEB is to communicate as broadly as possible information related to environmental issues towards potential partners at the national level. Two types of Czech organisations are EEB’s members: Think tanks like IEP, Environmental Law Service and STUZ (The Society for sustainable living)⁸ and a organisation, Arnika⁹, founded in 2001 by Jindřich Pertlík, a former member of Děti Země (Children of the Earth)¹⁰. The type of work done in the EEB groups, which mainly deals with legal aspects, can also explain the choice of stakeholders.

⁷ For further information see: www.eeb.org.

⁸ Josef Vavroušek, the Federal Environment Minister a former clerk who, from 1970 to 1990, became head of the Science and Technology Development Advisory Institute and, from 1982, was a member of the Ecology Section of the Czech Academy of Sciences’ Biology Society, and who founded it in 1992. Despite his official functions, he was regarded as a leading light of Czech ecology and, in the final days of the Socialist regime, he began engaging in activities of a more political nature. In September 1989, he launched the Independent Intelligentsia Circle, whose aim was to restore the values of European culture and encourage dialogue among the different segments of society. On 19 November 1989, he co-founded the Civic Forum, along with other ecologists, such as Ivan Dejmál, the editor of the samizdat, *Ekologický Bulletin*.

⁹ For further information see: www.arnika.org

¹⁰ This organisation is dedicated to the biodiversity protection and to the elimination of toxic substances and waste but this topic has become bigger due to the debate around the REACH directive. Arnika is also member of the POP’s program (persistent organic pollutants).

Thus, by looking at how members of the European Environment Bureau have perceived the enlargement of central and eastern countries as well as social actors from these countries, we can understand under what circumstances relations have been established between European institutions and prospective member states during the 1990's.

If the working group Enlargement had been created in 1999 inside the EEB (i.e. a year after the start of European negotiations with the Czechs), certain relations had already been elaborated since 1995, when the EEB began to find partners in the candidate states. At this moment it was important for such an organisation to have a larger panel of speakers among intermediate organisations and beyond national ministers or leaders on the negotiation of environmental chapter's negotiation. In respect of this aim, the European Commission asked the EEB to select actors which could be stakeholders participating in environmental platforms according to the new spirit of civic dialogue. Thus the EEB has defined a specific role concerning the candidate states that it presents in the following terms: "The EEB has also become the main partner with a focus on the EU for environmental organisations in Accession Countries. The experience, relationships and the position which the EEB has, are of great value to them in determining their own role in the accession process. More and more are becoming members of the EEB. Since the beginning of the enlargement process, the number of memberships from accession regions has nearly trebled"¹¹.

The interviews revealed on the one hand how contacts have been established and which type of organisations are members of the EEB and on the other hand how

¹¹ EEB website consulted on 09.05.09

Europeanisation of social actors have been conducted during the pre-accession period. Hence, we can analyse how the widening and deepening processes have taken place. On the one hand, it seems that personal relationships prevail¹², which has been confirmed by the representative of the Czech associations. In certain cases, speakers have lacked. The working group on REACH for example had problems in finding a Polish speaker.

Those in charge of enlargement have clearly explained the usefulness of the workshops organised for the candidates states: delivering position papers, helping them to access to the Commission and to be integrated into the EU and to learn European rules. For the EEB the aim was, before 2004, to ensure the process (explaining how the EU works, making the accession process clearer and developing the capacity building of each candidate country). It explained also that the Hungarian case was a “success story” in the sense that meetings between EEB and Hungarian members (National Society of Conservationist and Center for Environmental Studies) have allowed the Hungarian partners to learn and discuss different points of view and to formulate common positions.

Since 2004, endeavours are still made to reinforce this capacity building. The EEB was aware that high standards existed in communist countries in relation to the environment but that they were not implemented. Thus the role of the European Union is presented as a means to oblige the government to implement policies. In this sense, Europeanisation of social actors from post-communist countries has contributed first of all, prior to the accession period, to strengthen domestic

¹² It was specifically the case of the recruitment of STUŽ because Josef Vavroušek was already known in Brussels as a Czech environmental expert.

institutionalised organisations. And subsequently, especially since the accession, European resources have been used by a larger set of organisations, whose aims have been reshaped in relation to the European agenda.

New actors on the European game and changes in repertory of collective actions

We can say that the ecological movements, which have been founded at the end of the 1980's, have essentially concentrated their efforts at national level during the 1990's. Indeed they have had not only to continue to denounce the damages of the former communist economy but also to fight again the risks of a capitalist economy. In fact the extrication away from soviet-type regimes has not immediately solved the ecological damages caused by the soviet-type industry. These ecological movements and civic contention still address the question of how to deal with the impacts of pollution and to stop new projects led in a capitalist economy but with similar dangerous effects on the environment. So, the association Hnutí Duha (The Rainbow Movement) that has rapidly adhered to the Friends of the Earth Europe, has elaborated priorities regarding the Czech situation: energy, forests, mining, waste and agriculture. But despite belonging to this movement, Hnutí Duha has not so much formulated its preoccupations regarding European issues. As I already wrote, the more radical associations like Hnutí Duha and Deti Zeme refused during the first decade after the fall of the communist regime to cooperate with public authorities both at national and international levels. If they seek nowadays to have influence on the policymaking process, they still remain far away from the EU and from its financial resources.

While Arnika's budget is composed of almost 35% by European funds¹³, only 15% of Hnutí Duha's budget is based on public funds (national and European ones)¹⁴.

If the first relationships let EEB management think that all the post-communist ONG's have the same view on "chemicals" for example, as said by those in charge of the working group on chemicals, it exists a variety of points of view among environmental organisations from new member states. Hungary was a new driver force in the fight over the REACH directive while old member states like Germany slowed down their involvement or a more recent member like Greece just begun to engage on this topic. It was a similar case towards the Waste directive with Poland as a key actor. Thus we can say that social actors from new member states neither have common visions nor elaborate collective strategies. Miroslav Šuta, a former member of Greenpeace Czech Republic and an expert recognised both at national and European level regretted that the Visegrad countries were not able to influence the European Commission. In fact he was disappointed by the Polish attitude, which consisted in supporting the British one¹⁵. This statement reinforces the necessity to examine precisely the Europeanisation process in each national context and its effects on the repertory of collective actions.

In the Czech context, the campaign toward REACH directive led by the EEB, Greenpeace, the WWF and the Friends of the Earth has influenced the statement of national ecological associations, which are more radical than usual. Concerning the REACH directive, it can be explained by the fact that the Czech Republic is

¹³ Activities report of *Arnika*, 2007.

¹⁴ Activities report of *Hnutí Duha*, 2007.

¹⁵ Interview with Miroslav Šuta, Prague, July 2006.

particularly concerned by the use of chemicals in the past and presently.

REACH has been an important timeline for reshaping the structure of the Czech environmental “space of mobilisations”. The fact that an issue is registered in the European political agenda, has an impact on the manner in which national organisations perceive this issue. It was the case in the Czech Republic of the association Arnika, who was one of the more involved associations in the debate alongside Greenpeace Czech Republic, seeking to provoke new mobilisations in the national space, to provide expertise and to attract attention of the authorities and of the public. The association organised medical tests to prove that even Czech politicians are “contaminated”, including the minister of the Environment. The main argument is that these noxious substances are present in everyday life and concern everyone. But of course, as wrote Ulrich Beck in the “Risk society” (1992), poor social classes are more affected, in that case because they have no solution but to buy cheap and noxious products (like washing powder with phosphate).

The case of the reactions against the REACH directive is quite different and the mobilisation is more technical and more general despite the fact it has a particular signification in such a post-communist country where the chemical industry is developed. The title of an article of the Czech Greenpeace movement was: the EU is finishing with “chemical socialism”? Miroslav Šuta, the main expert in chemical substances, is a doctor who claims that there exist alternatives to these substances and that we need to classify more than 10 000 chemical products.

Conclusion

European pressure to make national organisations and policies more convergent with European standards has in the pre-accession period strengthened a segment of the space of environmental mobilisations, the think tanks.

To sum up the processes witnessed during the pre-accession period, we can notice that the misfit process induced a selection of social actors. We can see that in the Czech Republic the think tanks founded by scientists have been the first europeanised environmental organisations. They have caught the new political opportunities by coping with the need of legislative misfit regarding European and international environmental norms. So far, we can say that in the 1990's the informal europeanisation process offered possibilities for the emergence of new actors at the national level (it has been the case of the Centre for the Environmental questions). Not only have these actors rapidly integrated the national political decision-making process but they have also managed to access the European level and to be co-opted (it has been the case of the Institute for a Eco-policy).

Meanwhile we have observed the phenomena of mushrooming ecological associations at the national level, but these actors were weakly connected to European causes or networks (or just in an institutional way, like the creation in 1990 of a Czech branch of Greenpeace). The europeanisation of collective action seems to take more time, probably because of the difficulties faced by the ecological associations whose political actors did not consider them as legitimate.

The pre-accession period seems to fit more with the above scenario, the *statu quo* one, because the selection of social actors from candidate states selected by European institutions can only reinforce the current european rules while it contributes to strengthening a institutionalisation

process at national level. On the contrary since the integration widening process seems to correspond to a “reinvented Union” scenario. This scenario can be argued by two sets of findings. The first one shows that enlargement has strengthened the relations between social actors from old and new member states. A large range of know-how has been transferred to the East and it is especially the case in the field of environmental organisations. Czech ecologists have benefited from the experience of Austrian and Dutch associations, especially in the fight against nuclear plants. The second one confirms that social actors from new member states do not just learn from old member states but can also participate effectively in the EU decision-making process. Indeed, in the cases of REACH and waste directives, I observed that respectively Poland and Hungary have been a driving force on these topics while older countries seemed to have given up due to the strength of industrial lobbies. These findings show that social actors from new member states are able to support and to reload the EU.

But, Europeanisation is not a linear process. The Arnika case illustrates the fact that an association can choose at a specific moment to use European resources (here the chemicals’ debate) to reinforce its position at national level. Indeed by encouraging a public debate around this issue, it has gained in publicity and in legitimacy. This evolution can be also explained by the evolution of the political spectrum. Nowadays the environmental question is less illegitimate in the Czech Republic than during the 1990’s. The Green Party was a member of the governmental coalition until the fall of the Topolánek government on March 24th 2009.

A European issue constitutes a good political opportunity only if it is translated in national and clear terms as Arnika did in the framework of the REACH campaign. In this sense national level still remains crucial in the definition of social causes despite these being determined by the

European agenda. On the other hand we can also say that European platforms such as the European Environment Bureau have learnt to understand the social actors from CEEC since the beginning of the 1990's. If those social actors became more familiar with European rules, European institutions have progressively discovered the large range of organised civil society from these candidate states.

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