

## MACRO-LEVEL DETERMINANTS OF THE PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS IN THE FORMER COMMUNIST EU MEMBER STATES

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**ABSTRACT** - The paper analyzes the role of some societal level factors which determine citizens' participation in environmental non-governmental organizations in the case of ten former communist European countries, now members of the European Union, based on the data of the 62.2 Special Eurobarometer. The analysis practically re-verifies on the case of these countries previous considerations made on the level of very different states of the world regarding the macro-level determinants of participation, respectively adds to these previous findings the possible role of opportunity structures (number of ENGOs) and that of societal trust. Results confirm the role of the classical factors (national wealth, democratisation and environmental conditions) on participation. No matter participation have declined compared to the beginning of the transition period, democratisation still constitutes a helping force for participation in these countries as far as it creates the climate and opportunity structures for involvement. It is however interesting that ENGO participation is much more dependent on a country's democratic climate than on the number of opportunity structures, in spite of the fact that the latter is correlated with democratisation.

**Key words:** participation, environmental non-governmental organizations, post-communist states, democratisation, wealth

### INTRODUCTION

It is already a truism that participation in environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) constitutes a less popular behaviour in the post-communist Central and Eastern European (CEE) region or in the former Soviet Union (FSU) than in the Western European region. In fact, membership and volunteering in environmental organizations show a similar pattern to participation in other types of NGOs. The explanations regarding the lower civic participation rate in the former communist space accentuate the role of the communist legacy which undermined the existence of civil society and consequently civil participation and created an atomised society which in the best case turned towards informal participation forms, e.g. towards the family, neighbours, etc. (*Bădescu et al., 2004; Pichler & Wallace, 2007*). As a result, civil society organizations founded after the regime change had to face not only the lack of financial resources, but also the lack of a participatory culture, the lack of trust, and interest towards their issue agendas (*Howard, 2002*).

The role of the agenda setting is particularly important in the case of those organizations founded in the early '90s, which targeted the so-called postmaterialist problems, namely issues not directly linked to citizens' most pressing problems and interests centred on financial sustenance. Thus, NGOs founded around equality, environmental protection and other quality of life issues had little chance to mobilize the materialistic public of the region (*Botcheva, 1996*).

It is however equally true that the region has not been uniform in terms of environmental mobilization since the communist period. In some East-Central European countries and even in the

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former Soviet Union, contrary to the common wisdom that under authoritarian regimes there is no possibility for civic organizations to develop except those formed ‘from above’, there were representative environmental organizations formed ‘from below’ (*Fisher et al., 1992*) during the communist period. Usually they were founded at the end of the regime, and attracted a considerable number of formal and informal members and participants and initiated enviro-political movements and protests. The well-known case is that of the Hungarian Danube Movement, constituted in the mid-1980s by three organizations (Danube Circle, Foundation for Danube and Blues) as an opposition towards the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Danube dam project (*Gjigas, 1997*) that was involved in several illegal actions and demonstrations, but there were protest actions initiated by environmental organizations and centred around environmental and human rights issues in other countries as well. In Poland, during the 1980-1981 political change, the Polish Ecological Club was founded which soon became the most active non-political ENGO in Poland with appreciatively 4,000 members (*Hicks, 1996; Gjigas, 1997*). In the former Czechoslovakia, in the period of the velvet revolution, there were founded numerous environmental non-governmental organizations involved in several protest actions (*Fagin, 1999*). In Bulgaria, the Ecoglasnost ENGO created in 1989 initiated protest actions against the environmental pollution in Ruse (*Baumgartl, 1993*). In the former Soviet Union, in the Baltic states, respectively (which constitute part of our sample below), there were also environmental protests before the regime change, strongly associated with the Chernobyl disaster and with Gorbachev’s Glasnost; these protests show a direct link between ecological and cultural-ethnic concerns as far as in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania “the major environmental campaigns of this period involved opposition to new industrial development, which often included plans to import more Russian-speaking laborers” (*Ulfelder, 2004, pp. 34*). In almost every situation, these environmental actions represented an indirect form of protest against the communist regime (*Botcheva, 1996; Lee and Norris, 2000*) and thus served as arenas of participation for citizens as well, who were much more anti-communist than environmentalist.

However, the above picture does not fit Romania. Here, contrary to other countries from the region, the authoritarian regime was totally inclement regarding alternative associations (others than those formed ‘from above’) until its end and environmental associations founded before the communist period were dismissed (this is for instance the case of the Transylvanian Carpathia Society founded in 1891 and dismissed during the communist period). As a consequence, Romania entered the 1990s with a huge lack in terms of environmental mobilization legacy, and the regime change, albeit occurred through mass mobilization (revolution), can not be linked to some concrete civic organizations, in any case not to some ENGOS. In the first years of the 1990s, many environmental NGOs were registered, leading to the conclusion that by the mid of the decade the environmental movement represented the most dynamic and coherent part of the Romanian non-profit sector. However, the increase in the number of ENGOS was not linked to an increase in membership rate since more than a half of them had no more than 50 members (*Gjigas, 1997*).

Time has passed over the regime change and it makes sense to look at further evolutions in terms of environmental mobilization. *Dalton (2005)*, for instance, argues on the basis of the World Values Survey data that in many CEE countries ENGO membership rates dropped between 1990-1999 due to the “abnormally high levels of activism that surrounded the regime change in the early 1990s” (*Dalton, 2005, pp. 445*). This situation occurs however in a context where, in every former communist country, the post-communist period meant the exponential growth in the number of ENGOS (*Gjigas, 1997*). In other words, it seems that while democratisation hindered participation, it helped the formation of opportunity structures (*Pickvance, 1999*). Has the number of available arenas anything to do with the participation rate in ENGOS? What has happened in terms of mobilization beyond the ’90s? Are all former communist countries similar in terms of environmental mobilization and in its dropping tendency? These are only a few among those questions which will be investigated in the present paper.

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### DATA AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the followings, the data set of the Special Eurobarometer 62.2 on social capital (*European Commission, 2005*) will be used, which can be accessed and downloaded free of charge for scientific purpose from the website of the *Central Archive for Empirical Social Research*, (<http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/index.jsp>), based on which the actual situation of the former communist Europe will be assessed. The survey is representative for each of the 27 already EU member countries, and the present analysis will closely look at the singular as well as aggregated case of ten, former communist member states entered the EU in 2004 and 2007, namely Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, that is the countries from the CEE and FSU. ENGO participation, the dependent variable of the study is determined as the factor score of three variables – donation for ENGOS, membership in ENGOS and volunteering in ENGOS.

I start from the assumption that as there were inter-country differences during the communist period, both in terms of the number of ENGOS and environmental mobilization, there are also inter-country differences in the post-communist period's ENGO participation, due to some macro-level background characteristics which may influence participation. More exactly, I apply and re-verify in the case of the post-communist region some of *Dalton's (2005)* considerations regarding the role of national wealth, democratisation and environmental quality in spreading people towards participation in ENGOS. Dalton's study was undertaken on the level of the World Values Survey's 1999-2002 wave and, accordingly, covered a wide range of countries from different continents, with very different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. As a consequence, it makes sense to test the role of the above mentioned three factors in a more specific regional context, that is post-communist EU member states, and on a more recent data set. Moreover, I also consider important to include two more factors that I hypothesize to influence participation: the number of ENGOS and societal trust. All in all, I hypothesize the followings:

1. *People are more environmentally mobilized in wealthier countries (Frank et al., 2000; Dalton & Rohrschneider, 2002; Dalton, 2005; Gillham, 2008)*, where they are more connected to informational flux and have also more available individual resources for participation (money, free time, etc.);
2. *People are more participative in more democratised nations*, where institutions are transparent and favourable towards alternative mobilization, values and ideas and where civic culture is taken for granted (*McAdam et al., 1996; Dalton, 2005*);
3. Hypothesis 3 is a sub-hypothesis of the previous and presupposes that *in more democratic nations ENGOS are more numerous and thus there are more arenas which favour participation*;
4. Hypothesis 4 is also a sub-hypothesis associated with hypothesis 2 and assumes that *in more democratic societies citizens trust more each other and thus trust is a factor which spreads them towards participation*;
5. Hypothesis 5 assumes that *citizens are more participative in countries where they face the negative consequences of industrialization*, that is environmental pollution (*Dalton, 2005*).

Before testing these hypotheses, I considered important to present some comparative and longitudinal data concerning the participation in ENGOS in the investigated countries.

### PARTICIPATION IN ENGOS IN POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

According to the Eurobarometer 62.2, in the researched ten former communist countries of the European Union, membership, volunteering and donation towards ENGOS were less popular behaviours compared to the other 17 EU member countries. In both groups of countries, donation is the most popular behaviour, followed by membership and volunteering, according to the presupposed easiness, respectively difficulty of the considered actions. Table 1 presents the comparative percents

for membership and volunteering based on the data of the Eurobarometer for 2005, respectively that of the European Values Survey's 1990 and 1999 rounds, as far as there are no available comparative Eurobarometer data for the decade of the '90s. Donating to an environmental organization was not an item included in the European Values Surveys, so there are no data for 1990 and 1999.

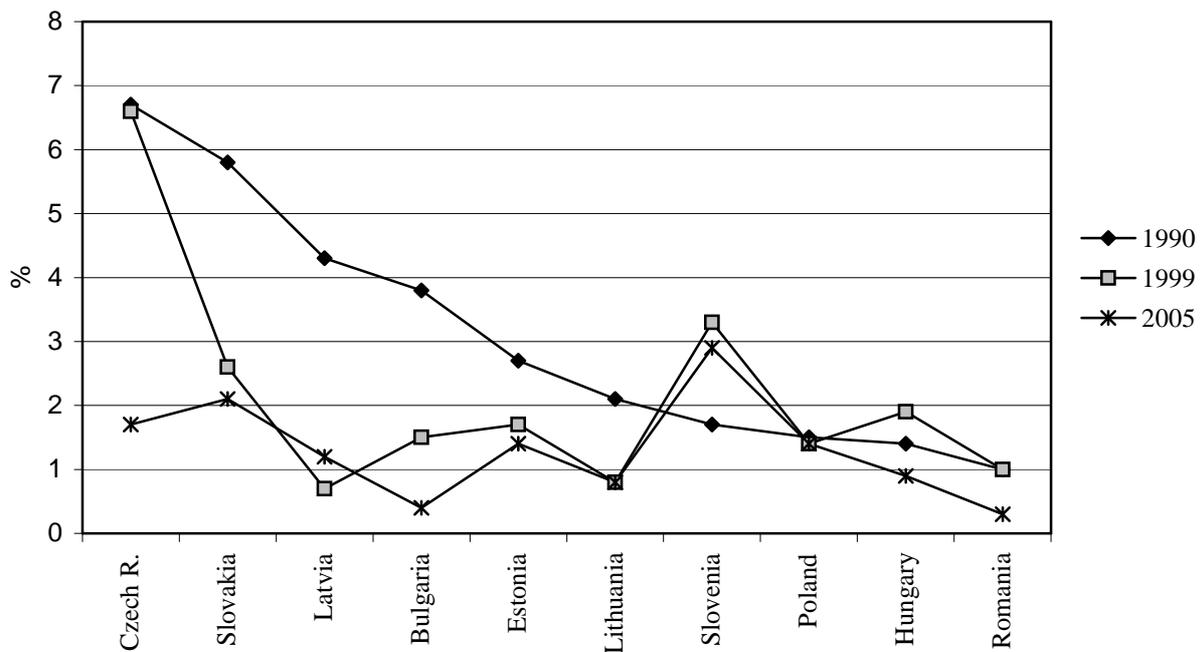
**Table 1.** *Evolution of participation in ENGOs in Europe between 1990 and 2005. Average percents of participant population*

	Membership %			Volunteering %			Donation %
	1990	1999	2005	1990	1999	2005	2005
CEE and FSU, now EU members states	3.5	2.5	1.3	2.3	1.6	1.1	1.8
Other EU member states	5.3	7.4	6.7	1.6	2.6	1.6	9.7

**Observation:** concerning other EU member states, data for 1990 are based on 13 EU member states (France, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Ireland), while the data for 1999 are based on 16 EU-members states (those as in 1990, plus Greece, Malta, Luxemburg).

These average longitudinal evolutions show that while on the level of the post-communist region both membership and volunteering followed a descending tendency, already signalled by Dalton (2005) for the '90s, in the case of the other EU-member countries both behaviours show a relatively steady state.

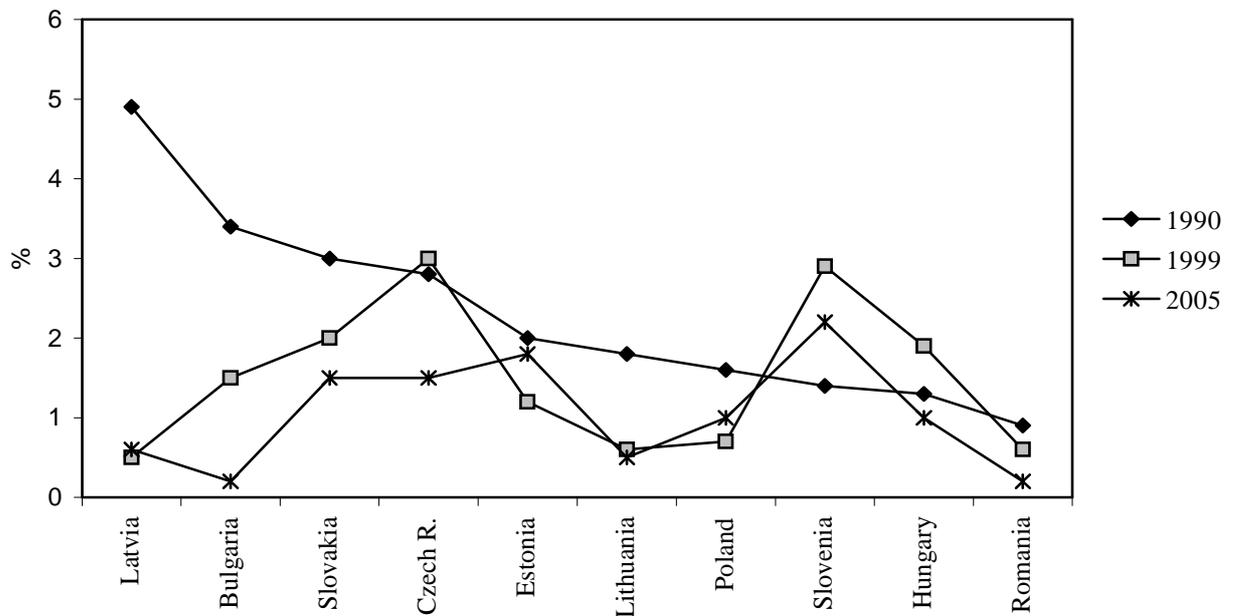
Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show both the actual situation and the longitudinal evolution of ENGO membership, environmental volunteering for each of the ten post-communist countries, respectively (data for 1990 and 1999 based again on the corresponding rounds of the European Values Survey). Data indicate that according to the presupposition, there are indeed inter-country variances of both membership and volunteering.



**Figure 1.** *Evolution of ENGO membership for the ten post-communist EU states. Percents of population member in ENGOs*

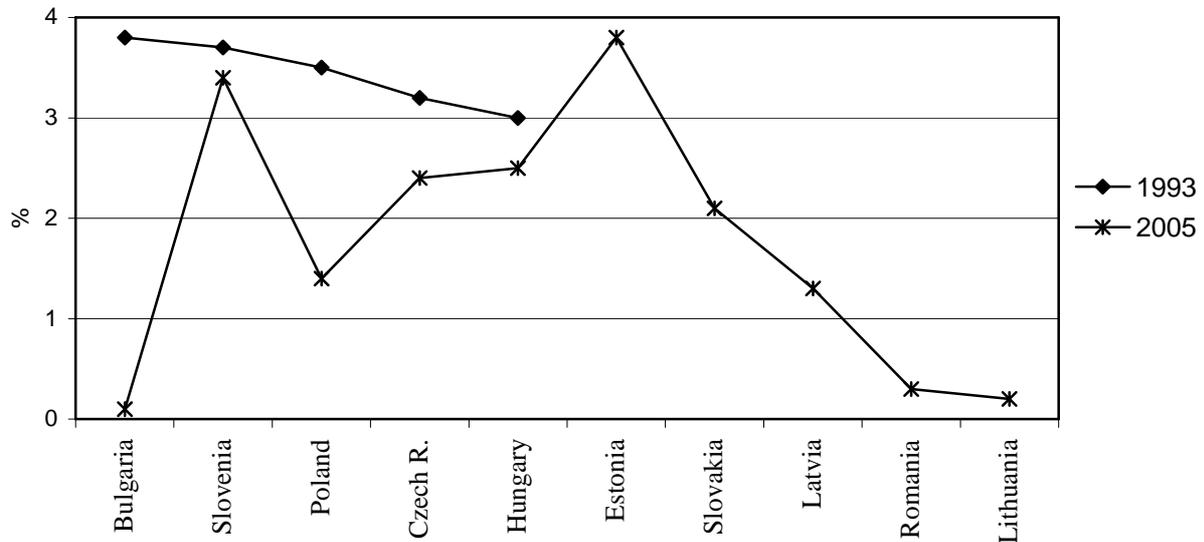
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On the one hand, and concerning only the case of the 2005 year, membership varies between 3% (Slovenia) and 0.3% (Romania), with five countries having above the average membership rates. Volunteering runs between 2.2% of population involved (Slovenia) and 0.2% (Bulgaria and Romania), with six countries above the average. On the other hand, there are inter-country variations on longitudinal. In this regard, it is true that in the majority of the countries both membership and volunteering declined between 1990 and 2005. The most striking in this regard is the case of those countries which, in 1990, had above the average rates of membership and volunteering (and comparable with some Scandinavian and Western European countries), i.e. the Czech Republic, where from nearly 7% in 1990 and 1999, membership rate fell to 2% in 2005 (while the rate of volunteering halved); Slovakia, where from 6% in 1990, membership decreased to 2% in 2005. In Estonia and Lithuania, Hungary and Romania, albeit participation decreased, changes are not so striking as far as these countries did not have above the average membership rates in 1990. Poland shows a steady state in the case of membership, but a dropping tendency in volunteering, while Slovenia is the sole country with a rising tendency with both membership and volunteering, from 1.7% in 1990 to 3% in 2005.



**Figure 2.** Evolution of volunteering in ENGOs in the ten post-communist EU states. Percents of population volunteering in NGOS

As already mentioned, I did not find comparable longitudinal data for the case of donation towards environmental NGOs, and the sole available statistics from the beginning of the '90s is that based on the International Social Survey's (ISSP) 1993 round, undertaken only in five out of the ten analysed post-communist countries (Figure 3). As far as available, comparative findings indicate a dramatically decrease for Bulgaria, followed by Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, while Slovenia is in a steady state. The 2005 inter-country variations are between 0.1% in Bulgaria and 3.8% in Slovenia, with five countries above the average.



**Figure 3.** Partial evolution of donation towards NGOs in post-communist EU member states. Percents of population making donations

Based on the 2005 data, in five of the researched countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia) donation is the most popular behaviour, in three countries (Poland, Romania, Slovakia) it is equally popular (or unpopular) as membership, while in two countries (Bulgaria and Lithuania), membership is somewhat more endorsed than the other two participation forms (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Participation by forms of engagement. Percents of population

Country	Donation (%)	Membership (%)	Volunteering (%)
Bulgaria	0.1	0.4	0.2
Czech Republic	2.4	1.7	1.5
Estonia	3.8	1.4	1.8
Hungary	2.5	0.9	1.0
Latvia	1.3	1.2	0.6
Lithuania	0.2	0.8	0.5
Poland	1.4	1.4	1.0
Romania	0.3	0.3	0.2
Slovakia	2.1	2.1	1.5
Slovenia	3.4	2.9	2.2

**Table 3.** Percentage of participation by the number of engagements. Percents of population

Country	Number of activities (%)		
	1	2	3
Bulgaria	0.3	0.2	-
Czech Republic	2.1	0.7	0.7
Estonia	3.1	1.2	0.5
Hungary	2.5	0.5	0.3
Latvia	1.5	0.5	0.2
Lithuania	0.6	0.3	0.1
Poland	1.3	0.5	0.5
Romania	1.3	0.1	0.1
Slovakia	1.8	0.7	0.8
Slovenia	3.9	1.4	0.6

In any case, on the level of each of the ten countries there are positive, quite strong and significant correlations between the three forms of participation, which means that there are always people who engage in the same time in more than one participation form and the real core of activists is even less numerous as might seem (Table 3).

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As far as participation forms correlate, it is reliable to use principal component analysis as a dimension reduction technique on the level of the three behaviour items and thus to create a single dependent variable of participation (Table 4), related to which, in the followings, I turn to investigate what are those macro-level background characteristics that may account for the certainly quite low, albeit different levels of ENGO participation in the region.

**Table 4.** *Factor analysis of the three participation items*

Variables	Component
Membership	0.845
Donation	0.666
Volunteering	0.869
Percent of variance explained	64%
KMO=0.613; Bartlett test of sphericity: $\chi^2=7231.041$ ; $p<0.001$	

Method of extraction: *Principal Component Analysis*

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The dependent variables (the variable emerged as the result of the factor analysis, respectively) illustrate specific civic engagements that, in the meantime, are environmentally significant behaviours (*Stern, 2000*). According to *Verba et al. (1995)*, people engage in civic participation because they are able and motivated, or because they were asked. To be able to participate means that citizens possess resources such as free time, money, or loyalty (*Jenkins, 1981*). Motivation in the present case presupposes that there are some negative environmental conditions that motivate people to participate, while the trust factor becomes important when citizens are asked by ENGOs to participate in one form or another.

No doubt, some of the resources are part of participants' human or social capital and thus represent individual level factors, e.g. education, age, income, personal networks. On the other hand, it is also obvious that their individual level resources are in many cases dependent on the resources of a certain society or societal context: for instance people usually earn more in wealthier countries, so in these contexts they might have more available resources for participation (*Inglehart, 2003*) as much as the researched behaviour is associated with the quality of life, or so called post-materialist agenda. Authors such as *Frank et al. (2000)*, *Dalton and Rohrschneider (2002)*, *Dalton (2005)*, *Gillham (2008)*, etc. brought evidence regarding the role of national wealth or socio-economic development on environmental participation and there are regional evidence in this regard on the level of the generally taken volunteering (*Voicu and Voicu, 2003*) or civic engagement (*Bădescu et al., 2004*), based on which my first hypothesis assumes that environmental participation is more frequent in wealthier countries.

Participation in the public space is very much dependent on a society's openness, or participatory culture. In this regard, a lack in democracy, institutional openness and societal trust may hinder participation. In fact, these are those important reasons that are evoked when the low civic participation of the former communist countries is discussed (*Howard, 2002*). Differently put, it makes sense to assume that more democratic systems produce more vigorous civic behaviours (*Muller and Seligson, 1994 – quoted by Letki, 2004*), which means that participation will be higher in countries where citizens trust more each other or those who ask them to participate. As a consequence and in accordance with *Dalton (2005)*, I hypothesize that ENGO participation is higher in more democratic countries, respectively in countries with greater social trust and in societies where there are more opportunity structures for participation. Talking about the motivation side, I hypothesize that people are more willing to participate in these environmentally significant behaviours in nations where there

are more environmental problems, namely in more developed countries where greater energy use results in greater environmental strain (Dalton, 2005).

For the hypothesized determining factors of ENGO participation were used the following variables, many of them in accordance with Dalton's approach.

*National wealth* is measured as the GDP/capita for each of ten countries based on its value for the year 2004 as far as this was the year when the fieldwork of the Eurobarometer 62.2 was undertaken. The indicators were delivered from the Freedom House ([www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)).

*Societies' democratic climate* is measured through the Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index based on political rights and civil liberties for the year 2004. It should be mentioned that the Freedom House measures freedom based on two categories: political rights and civil liberties. Political rights refer, among others, to electoral process, political pluralism and participation, functioning of the government, etc. Civil liberties comprise freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights (e.g. freedom of assembly, demonstration, freedom of NGOs, etc.), rule of law, personal autonomy, etc. Each country is assigned a numerical rating on a scale of 1-7, concerning both political pluralism and civil liberties. Score 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the least degree of freedom. In the present analysis scores were recoded, meaning that higher the score more democratic the country, and in the analysis both the separate scores (for political rights and civil liberties) and both the average score of them are used. The rationale is that I presupposed that given the specific nature of the researched behaviours, civil liberties would exercise greater impact on the dependent variable as political rights.

*Societal trust* is measured as the national level score of generalized trust based on the Eurobarometer 62.2.

For the measurement of *the number of ENGOs*, I opted for the survey results of the NGO Support Programme of the Regional Environmental Center for East Central Europe (REC) and the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Released in 2007, the survey brings an outlook to the actual state of the ENGO sphere of the researched region (Carmin et al., 2008). Here I mention that there are several problems with this variable, while in the case of every problem, there are mitigative conditions. One of the problems is that the regional response rate was 60% for the survey, so in reality there are much more ENGOs, but it is a mitigative condition that survey preparation and requests were very meticulous and pertinent, so it makes sense to assume that those organizations that completed the survey do really exist and are active on local, regional, or national levels and constitute the viable core of the ENGOs in the researched countries. A second problem is that we do not have data for Bulgaria and Romania. The lack was submitted by the use for Romania of the results of a survey (Cosmeanu, 2008) which is very similar in its methodology with that of the REC and MIT's, while Bulgaria was considered a missing case in the case of this measurement. Finally, there is the time problem as far as data for participation was registered in 2004, while data for ENGOs between 2006 and 2007, respectively 2008 in the case of Romania. This shortage could not be improved. Overall, this variable and its impact, respectively, should be carefully analysed.

Countries' *environmental pollution* was measured through two alternative indicators: greenhouse gas emissions per capita in the year 2004, retrieved from the European Environment Agency, and alternatively through the Ecological Footprint of nations which measures each nation's pressure on nature for the year 2004, retrieved from Global Footprint Network. On country-level, this indicator measures a country's total resource consumption. It is expressed in hectares of biologically productive land and then divided by population number. More resource dependent a nation, higher its ecological footprint.

The first table below presents the result of bivariate correlation between ENGO participation and the independent variables. Results indicate that wealth produces the strongest positive, statistically significant correlation with ENGO participation, followed by democratisation (especially measured in terms of civil liberties). Environmental quality measured mostly in terms of ecological footprint results also in a positive, significant correlation with participation. Surprisingly, neither trust, nor the number of NGOs produces significant correlation, albeit the *r* values are quite strong and in the expected

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direction. However, it should be mentioned that the correlation between trust and donation is statistically significant ( $r=0.666$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), which means that although for the other two behaviours trust seems unimportant, for money donation it constitutes an important factor. On the other hand, as expected, the number of NGOs correlates strongly ( $r=0.663$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) with the civil liberties, meaning that democratisation is indeed reflected in the number of ENGOs, however, participation is associated much more with democratic climate than with the number of NGOs, at least when ENGOs are concerned. Results lead to the confirmation of the hypothesis 1, 2 and 5, while hypothesis 3 is only partially confirmed (trust correlates with donation) in a bivariate context.

Accordingly, the somewhat higher participation, for instance in Slovenia, can be explained on the basis of the country's high GDP/capita and democratisation, while the lowest participation in Bulgaria and Romania is explainable on the basis of these countries' lowest GDP in the region. Meanwhile the lowest participation rate in Bulgaria and Romania can be explained also by the lower democratisation of these two countries, and the lower environmental pressure in terms of resource use/capita and energy intensity.

**Table 5.** *Bivariate correlations between ENGO participation and background variables*

Background variables	ENGO participation (r values)
Wealth (GDP/capita)	0.914***
Democratisation - average score of political rights and civil liberties - political rights - civil liberties	0.769** 0.569+ 0.833**
Trust (generalized trust)	0.444
Opportunity structures (number of NGOs)	0.308
Environmental quality - greenhouse gas emissions/capita; - ecological footprint	0.587+ 0.713*

\*\*\*correlation significant at  $p<0.001$ ; \*\* $p<0.01$ ; \*  $p<0.05$ ; +  $p<0.1$

In the second step, the influence of background variables was investigated in a multivariate linear regression. The construction of the model caused some problems as far as some of the background variables are highly intercorrelated. This is the case of the GDP/capita and democratisation (both as average score and as civil liberties), NGOs number and civil liberties, understandably greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint. As a consequence, I decided not to include the number of NGOs in the model, given the fact that civil liberties predict the number of available opportunity structures in a society, while for wealth and democratisation (measured as the average of civil liberties and political rights), I calculated an average score measuring socio-economic well being, and so did on the level of the two environmental quality indicators.

Results of the multivariate analysis (Table 6) clearly confirm the role of the national wealth and democratisation, and that of environmental conditions. Alternative models, not displayed here, in which I introduced in turn only the GDP/capita, respectively only the democratisation score, yield to similar results, with GDP/capita ( $B=0.800$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and democratisation ( $B=0.614$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) having the strongest impact on participation in environmental organization.

**Table 6.** *Multivariate linear regression of ENGO participation*

Background variables	Model 1
Socio-economic development (average score of GDP/capita and democratisation)	0.800***
Trust (generalized trust)	-0.099
Environmental quality (average score of greenhouse gas emissions/capita and ecological footprint)	0.463*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.825

Beta coefficients significant at: \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$

No matter participation has declined compared to the beginning of the transition period, democratisation still constitutes a helping force in participation as far as it creates the climate and opportunity structures for participation. It is however interesting that ENGO participation is much more dependent on a country's democratic climate than on the number of opportunity structures, in spite of the fact that the latter is correlated with democratisation. This probably means that ENGOs visibility, accessibility and their requests for participation are not dependent on the number of ENGOs, but there are some more active and visible ENGOs that attract the majority of participants, while the other organizations remain empty in terms of citizens' involvement.

Data show also the fact that democratisation still is not enough for ENGO participation because it is coupled with wealth and environmental pressure. In other words, both democratisation and wealth create the opportunity for participation in terms of openness, civil liberties, financial and time resources, while environmental conditions generate the motivation for participation. The effect of environmental conditions should be however judged carefully as far as there is the possibility that the use of other environmental indicators may lead to different results (cf. *Dalton, 2005*).

## CONCLUSIONS

Compared to other regions of Europe, mostly Scandinavia and Western Europe, CEE countries and the Baltic States are much more similar than different, showing lower levels of participation rate as the older EU 15. Post-communist, now EU member European countries show much lower percents of ENGO participation than in the first years of the nineties. However, their participation euphoria has volatilised (*Dalton, 2005*), data suggest that this phenomenon occurred with different dynamics throughout the region resulting in visible inter-country differences. The previous analysis focused on macro-level differentiating factors of discrepant actual participation rates. Results indicated that those well-known factors such as national wealth, democratisation, and environmental pressure are those important conditions that, on societal level, differentiate the analysed ten countries of the CEE and Former Soviet Union. Nearly twenty years after the regime change, democratisation is still an important force, as far as it creates the opportunities for participation, both in terms of civil liberties (freedom of participation, assemblage, etc.) and of opportunity structures (available arenas for participation), which means that countries that rank better on Freedom of the World Index have more ENGO participants. Besides democracy, participation requires economic resources, so participation is also significantly more frequent in wealthier countries that are more democratic at the same time. All in all, socio-economic development is the most important factor of the inter-country variation of ENGO participation.

Moreover, on the basis of the used environmental quality indicators (greenhouse gas emission per capita and Ecological Footprint), environmental pressure of a country is also a significant macro-level predictor of participation, occurring the interesting fact already signalled by *Gillham (2008)* that nations who exercise higher environmental pressure are more likely to engage in ENGO participation.

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Surprisingly, ENGO participation is not clearly dependent, neither on societal trust, nor on the number of available ENGOs. In the case of trust, it is important however to notice that several forms of participation (e.g. donation) are clearly dependent on trust, while in the case of the number of ENGOs, the insignificant relations possibly signal the decisive role of the ENGOs' visibility and possibility for mobilization, rather than the role of the number of ENGOs.

Our data re-confirmed the role of societal resources on participation in the case of a more recent dataset and in a specific region. Certainly, participation occurs with different frequencies depending on the societal resources of a country and thus makes sense to link further evolution in participation not only to citizens' individual resources and motivations, but also to macro-level evolutions as much as individual resources, possibilities and motivations clearly depend on those macro-social conditions such as wealth, economy's environmental pressure and civil liberties for associations.

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