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Master's Thesis

The role of trainees during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and the involvement of the staff of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in public administration after the Presidency

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European Agrarian Diplomacy

Thesis title

The role of trainees during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and the involvement of the staff of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in public administration after the Presidency.

Objectives of thesis

The main objective of the diploma thesis is to provide a comprehensive description of the role of trainees during the Czech Presidency of the EU Council and to analyse whether the staff of the Permanent Representation remained working in the public administration afterwards.

Methodology

The methodology of the diploma thesis will be based on the study and analysis of professional information sources dealing with the functioning of the Council of the EU primarily in relation to the Presidency of the Council of the EU, the main processes that the Presidency ensures and what positions trainees hold within each of the EU institutions. In the practical part of the thesis research methods of questionnaire survey and guided interviews will be used.

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my master's thesis titled "The role of trainees during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and the involvement of the staff of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in public administration after the Presidency" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master's thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 31.03.2024

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The role of trainees during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and the involvement of the staff of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in public administration after the Presidency

Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to comprehensively analyse the role of the interns at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, including their job description, workplace relations and many other aspects. Furthermore, the aim was to find out whether these interns were interested in working for the Czech public administration after the end of their internship and whether the public administration made efforts to recruit these interns as future employees. The theoretical part of the thesis is focused on the description of the functioning of the European Union and its institutions, the activities of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic in Brussels and the role of the Presidency. It also deals with the division, definition and description of different types of traineeships in the European institutions, including traineeships at the Permanent Representation during the Presidency. In the practical part, basic research methods of inquiry are applied, which are structured interviews with interns and diplomats from the Permanent Representation and questionnaire surveys where the respondents were interns. These methods are then evaluated and the results obtained show that interns played a very significant role at the Permanent Mission and essentially represented the work of full diplomats. At the same time, during their traineeship they have accumulated a great deal of knowledge and experience in all aspects, to the extent that a large number of them can be considered experts on the agenda. Furthermore, the results of the survey indicate that the public administration made no effort to recruit these experienced and capable trainees as future employees, despite the fact that the vast majority of trainees were interested in working in the public administration. The thesis also details the advantages, disadvantages, benefits and shortcomings of the internships studied. The thesis concludes with an assessment of the findings and the use of the potential of the internship by both the interns and the public administration.

Keywords: European Union, EU, Council of the EU, Presidency, role of trainees, Permanent Representation, trainees in EU, public administration, CZPRES, Czech presidency

Role stážistů během českého předsednictví v Radě EU a zapojení stážistů Stálého zastoupení ČR při EU do veřejné správy po skončení předsednictví

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce si kladla za cíl komplexně analyzovat jakou roli zastávali stážisté na Stálém zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii během českého předsednictví v Radě Evropské unie včetně náplně jejich práce, vztahů na pracovišti a mnoha dalších aspektů. Dále bylo cílem zjistit, zda tito stážisté následně po skončení stáže měli zájem pracovat ve státní správě ČR a zda státní správa projevila snahu o získání těchto stážistů jako budoucích zaměstnanců. Teoretická část práce je zaměřena na popis fungování Evropské unie a jejích orgánů, činnosti Stálého zastoupení ČR v Bruselu a role předsednictví. Dále se také zabývá rozdělením, definicí a popisem jednotlivých typů stáží v evropských institucích, a to včetně stáží na Stálém zastoupení během předsednictví. V praktické části jsou aplikovány základní výzkumné metody dotazování, jimiž jsou strukturované rozhovory se stážisty a diplomatem ze Stálého zastoupení a dotazníková šetření, kde byli respondenti stážisté. Následně jsou tyto metody vyhodnoceny a získané výsledky ukazují, že stážisté hráli velmi významnou roli na Stálém zastoupení a v podstatě zastupovali práci plnohodnotných diplomatů. Zároveň během stáže nasbírali velké množství znalostí a zkušeností ve všech ohledech a to do takové míry, že se velká část z nich dá považovat za experty na danou agendu. Dále výsledky šetření poukazují na to, že státní správa nevynaložila žádné úsilí pro to, aby tyto zkušené a schopné stážisty získala jako budoucí zaměstnance i přes to, že drtivá většina stážistů měla o práci ve státní správě zájem. Práce také podrobně popisuje výhody, nevýhody, přínosy a nedostatky zkoumané stáže. V závěru práce dochází ke zhodnocení zjištěných skutečností a využití potenciálu stáže jak ze strany stážistů, tak ze strany státní správy.

Klíčová slova: Evropská unie, EU, Rada Evropské unie, předsednictví, role stážistů, Stálé zastoupení, stážisté v EU, státní správa, CZPRES, české předsednictví

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1. Introduction

We are facing an era where young professionals not only bring a fresh perspective to every work sector imaginable, but also actively contribute to the dynamism and efficiency of diverse work environments. Closely related to this is the role of interns, which has become increasingly important in recent years, and it is not only the world's leading companies and organisations that are looking for young talent in this way. The state administration of the Czech Republic is certainly not lagging behind, having used interns as a driving force behind the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. There is no doubt about the importance of the Czech EU Presidency. It represents a key phase for the Czech Republic's representation in the European context, and the moment a Member State assumes the role of the Presidency, it becomes the focus of attention not only on the political scene of the European Union, but also words such as "European Union" or "diplomacy" acquire a completely new meaning for the wider public of the country. But what is the role of these trainees? What is their contribution and influence within this complex geopolitical environment? The aim of this thesis is to delve into this under-explored area and understand how interns have contributed to the success of the Czech EU Presidency, understanding the role of interns during the Presidency, but also examining their future career development in the public administration after this prestigious work experience. In particular, this thesis focuses on what experience the trainees gained while working at the Permanent Representation and whether the public administration sought to recruit these promising young professionals as future employees after the Presidency. A comprehensive analysis of this issue will offer an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the functioning of European political structures and provide key insights for future exploitation of the potential of engaging young talent in public administration and diplomatic efforts at international level. It should be noted that the author is one of the trainees who worked at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU during the Czech Presidency and also worked in Brussels in 2021, when he participated in the preparations for the Presidency. Some facts are therefore presented from his own personal experience.

2. Objectives and methodology

2.1 Objectives

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to comprehensively describe the role of the interns at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU during the Czech Presidency of the EU Council in terms of their workload, the approach of the Permanent Representation staff and their experience and expertise before and after the internship. Another objective is to determine and assess whether the internship was fully utilised in terms of the potential of the interns' future careers in the public administration, whether the public administration tried to retain or recruit capable interns as future employees after the Presidency and whether the interns themselves were interested in going to work in the public administration. Within these objectives, several research questions were identified:

- a) How and to what extent were trainees integrated into the work processes at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU during the Presidency?
- b) What work experience have the trainees been able to gain while working at the permanent representation? And did the trainees become, in their opinion and in the opinion of the trainees' supervisor, experts on the agenda?
- c) What proportion of trainees from the Permanent Representation started working in the public administration after the Presidency?
- d) What impact did the working environment and the team in which the trainees worked in the Permanent Representation have on the trainees' future involvement in the public administration after the Presidency?
- e) From the point of view of the trainees and the supervisor of the trainees, has the public administration shown any effort to retain these trainees as future employees?

2.2 Methodology

The methodology of the thesis is based on the study and analysis of professional information sources dealing with the description of the functioning of the European Union and its institutions, the activities of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic in Brussels, the role of the Presidency in the EU Council and the division and definition of

individual types of internships in the European institutions, including internships at the Permanent Representation during the Presidency.

The practical part is based on the identification of the role of trainees at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU and the analysis of the interest of trainees in working in public administration after the end of the Presidency and the efforts of public administration to use the potential of experienced trainees. The analysis includes the implementation and evaluation of two questionnaire surveys carried out at intervals. The first 23-question survey was conducted immediately after the end of the traineeship, i.e. in January 2023, and involved 40 respondents out of a total of 64 permanent trainees. The second survey was conducted in March 2024, more than a year after the first survey. This survey contained 19 questions and was attended by 30 respondents out of a total of 64 trainees on permanent assignment. In order to make the two questionnaires comparable, the response types (and questions) of this questionnaire 2 were based on the response type of questionnaire 1. These questionnaires were evaluated using a quantitative method with the possibility of statistical data processing. Another part of the analysis is the conduct and evaluation of semi-structured interviews with four trainees and a diplomat from the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, who was also one of the supervisors of the trainees. The interviewees represent a representative sample and were chosen so that each of them worked in a different department at the Permanent Representation and so that each of them had a different relationship with the public administration after the Presidency. Specifically, two are not currently working in the public service, one is working in the public administration and one is applying for a public administration job. All of these interviews were conducted between January and March 2024. The combination of these various appropriate methods of information gathering provided a comprehensive view of the issue. Based on the analysis conducted, the benefits and shortcomings of internships are presented and an assessment is made of the use of the potential of internships both for the public administration and for the interns themselves.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction to the European Union

The European Union (EU) stands as a remarkable example of regional integration and cooperation among its member states (MS). This section provides an introduction to the EU as a supranational entity, outlining its structure and the functions of its core institutions.

3.1.1 Overview of the European Union as a supranational entity

The European Union is a prime example of regional integration and cooperation between Member States. This section provides an introduction to the EU as a supranational entity, describing its structure and the functions of its basic institutions. The European Union, or the EU for short, is an economic and political union currently made up of 27 European countries.¹ When it was founded, its main goal was to promote stability, prosperity, and peace on the European continent, which was in a shattered state after the devastating Second World War.² Over the following decades, as more states joined and agreements were made, the EU became a unique supranational entity.³ Certainly one of the main characteristics of the EU is its supranational governance structure. This is characterised by EU institutions having decision-making powers and authority that go beyond those of national governments of individual member states, meaning that certain EU laws and regulations, once adopted, take precedence over national laws in certain areas.⁴ Other cornerstones of the EU undoubtedly include its single market, which allows the free movement of goods, services, capital and people between member states, facilitating economic growth and integration.⁵ All this is complemented by the common currency, the euro (€), which is the official currency of 19 of the 27 EU member states that make up the

¹ European Commission. *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations* [online]. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/6-27-members_en

² EU and ME. *WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION?* [online]. https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-and-me/en/WHAT_IS_THE_EUROPEAN_UNION.html.

³ Evropská unie. *Historie EU* [online]. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_cs

⁴ European Union. *How EU policy is decided* [online]. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en

⁵ European Union. *Single market* [online]. https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/single-market_en

eurozone. And the adoption of the euro in the countries concerned has greatly simplified trade and financial transactions within the euro area.⁶

3.1.2 Structure and functions of the EU institutions

The EU's governance structure is characterized by a complex interplay of institutions, each with specific roles and responsibilities. The core institutions include:

- **European Commission** - The European Commission (EC) is the executive arm of the EU, responsible for designing and implementing EU policies and laws. It is also responsible for representing the EU as a whole in international negotiations and enforcing competition rules.⁷ EC is made up of 27 Commissioners, one from each Member State, each with a different agenda.⁸
- **European Parliament** - The European Parliament (EP) is a legislative body that provides an important forum for political debate and decision-making at EU level. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are elected directly by voters in each member state to represent the interests of citizens in relation to EU lawmaking. EP has the power to amend, approve or reject proposed legislation and scrutinise the work of other EU institutions.⁹ The total number of MEPs is 705 and the number of MEPs from each country is based on the population of that country.¹⁰
- **European Council** - The European Council (EUCO) is made up of the heads of state (or prime minister) of each of the 27 Member States, the president of the European Commission and the president of the European Council. EUCO primarily addresses major policy issues and sets the overall direction and priorities of the EU. EUCO has no legislative powers and therefore does not conduct negotiations or adopt legislation, but it does provide strategic guidance to the other institutions.¹¹

⁶ European Central Bank. *What the European Central Bank does and what it means for you* [online]. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/educational/explainers/tell-me-more/html/anniversary.en.html>

⁷ European Commission. *What the European Commission does* [online]. https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/what-european-commission-does_en

⁸ European Commission. *The Commissioners* [online]. https://commissioners.ec.europa.eu/index_en

⁹ European Parliament. *Welcome to the European Parliament* [online]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en>

¹⁰ European Parliament. *The Members of the European Parliament* [online]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/members>

¹¹ Council of the European Union. *European Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/>

- **Council of the European Union** - This institution, unlike its predecessors, represents the national governments and is the EU's main decision-making body. It most often discusses and adopts legislative proposals in cooperation with the EP under the ordinary legislative procedure known as co-decision. Council of the European Union (EU Council) has different configurations and groupings, which differ in their agenda.¹²

These institutions, along with the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Court of Justice (CJEU), form the foundation of the EU's decision-making and governance structure.

3.2 Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union, often referred to simply as the "Council" or "EU Council" is a pivotal institution within the European Union's governance structure. This section provides a comprehensive introduction to the EU Council, outlining its basic functions, divisions, features, responsibilities, and other relevant information.

3.2.1 Basic functions of the Council

The EU Council is one of the three main institutions of the EU and is informally known as the Council of Ministers. It is the EU's main decision-making and coordinating body and as mentioned in the previous paragraph, plays a central legislative role in the EU's institutional set-up.¹³ Its main functions include legislative decision-making, whereby the EU Council, together with the EP, adopts EU legislation on the basis of proposals from the EC. However, before the process of adopting legislation is complete, it is often preceded by extensive reviews, amendments or, in the extreme, rejections of the EC's proposals.¹⁴ Another function is the coordination of Member States' policies, where all sorts of areas are addressed. These may include economic and fiscal policies, education, culture, youth and sport, or unemployment policy. The EU Council also has the task of developing the EU's common foreign and security policy, where it defines and implements these policies based

¹² Council of the European Union. *The Council of the European Union* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/>

¹³ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 56

¹⁴ Council of the European Union. *The Council of the European Union* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/>

on guidelines given by the EUCO. This also includes EU humanitarian and development aid or defence and trade. Furthermore, the EU Council, in cooperation with the EP, approves the EU budget and ensures that it is in line with the EU's strategic political priorities. Last but not least, its functions include the conclusion of international agreements, where the EU Council gives the EC a mandate to negotiate agreements between the EU and international organisations or third countries.¹⁵

3.2.2 Divisions and configurations

The Council operates in various configurations, each focusing on specific policy areas. Key divisions and configurations include:

- **General Affairs Council** - responsible for overarching EU policies and coordination, including preparing meetings of the EUCO.
- **Foreign Affairs Council** - addresses EU foreign policy and international relations matters.
- **Economic and Financial Affairs Council** - focuses on economic and financial policies, including the Eurozone.
- **Justice and Home Affairs Council** - deals with issues related to justice, security, and immigration.
- **Agriculture and Fisheries Council** - handles matters related to agriculture, fisheries, and rural development.
- **Environment Council** - addresses environmental policies and sustainability.
- **Transport, Telecommunications, and Energy Council** - focuses on policies related to transport, telecommunications, and energy.¹⁶

To give you a better idea, here is Figure 1¹⁷, which shows the Structures of the EU Council. The figure shows the EU Council's groupings from the smallest working groups, individual committees, and their respective bodies, which are attended by experts, officials

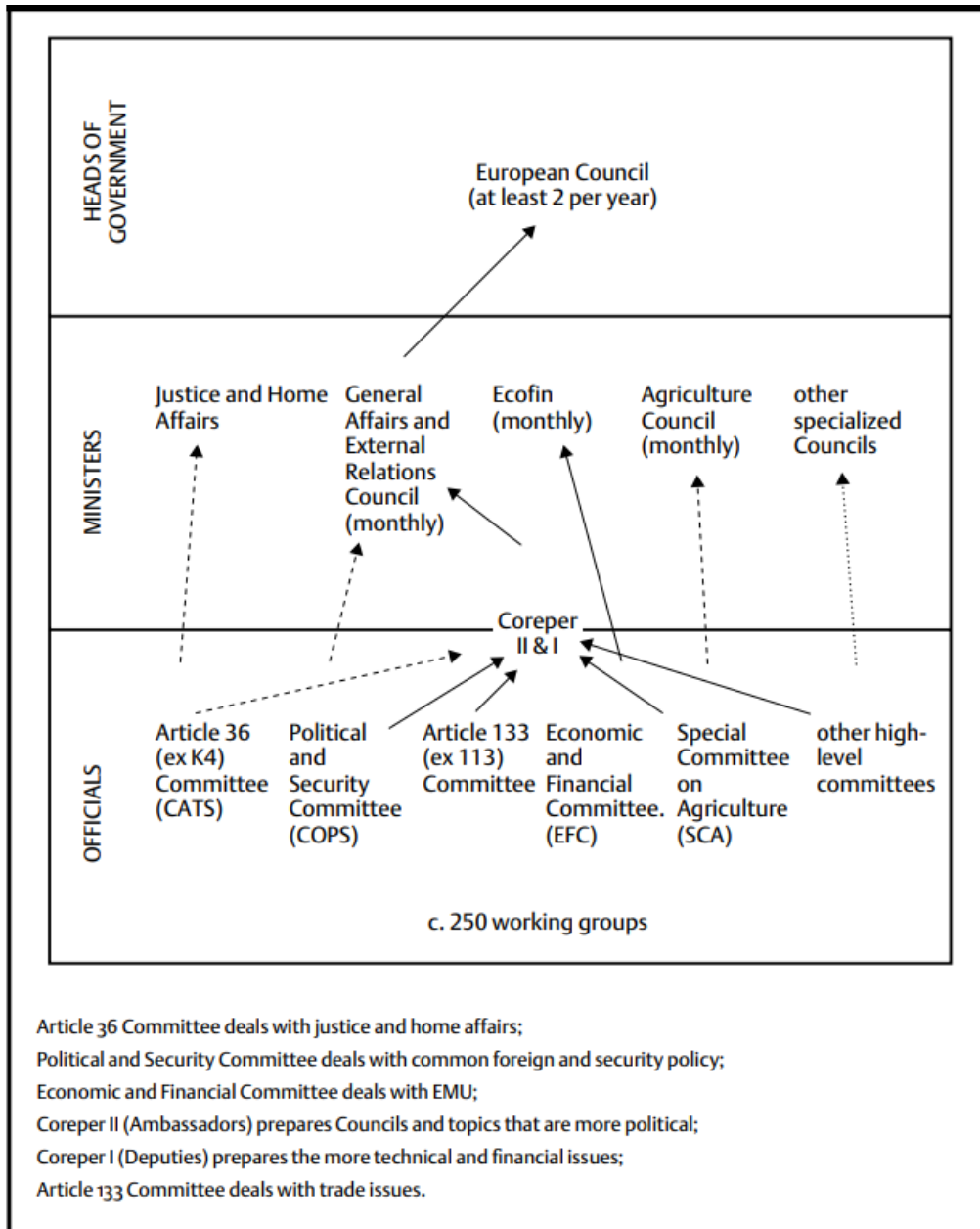
¹⁵ Council of the European Union. *The Council of the European Union* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/>

¹⁶ HODSON, D., PUETTER, U., PETERSON, J., SAURUGGER, S. *The Institutions of the European Union*. 2022, p. 89.

¹⁷ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 57.

and diplomats, to the Council of Ministers and their parent EU Council. Details of the decision-making process and these groupings will be given in later chapters.

Figure 1: Structures of the EU Council



Source: WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 57

3.2.3 Introduction to Decision Making Procedures

As already mentioned, the Council is the EU's key decision-making body, representing the interests of the Member States, negotiating and adopting new EU laws and,

where necessary, further amending or coordinating policies. In the vast majority of cases, the EU Council decides jointly with the EP by co-decision. Co-decision is used primarily on agendas where the EU has exclusive or shared competence with its Member States. In these most common cases, the Council adopts legislation with the EP on the basis of proposals from the EC. Under certain conditions, which will not be addressed in this paper, it is possible for the EC to be given the power to adopt implementing or delegated acts. Furthermore, for the sake of completeness, it is also necessary to mention that in a number of specific areas the EU Council may adopt decisions by special legislative procedures such as the consent procedure or the consultation procedure. In these cases, Parliament's role is limited.¹⁸

Inside the council, the decision-making process most often follows what is known as a "three-stage procedure". The process starts with "The Working Party", where the Working Party begins with a general examination of the proposal and then examines it in detail line by line. There are more than 150 working groups and their committees, and these are purely expert meetings, most often not addressing policy issues. The next level to which a legislative proposal moves after the working groups is the "Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper)". There is Coreper I and Coreper II, the differences between which will be explained in the following chapters. The processing of a proposal through Coreper depends on the level of agreement reached at working party level, so that the proposal is adopted without discussion or further negotiations must be conducted.¹⁹ However, most proposals appear several times on the Coreper agenda because they seek to resolve differences that the working groups have not been able to resolve.²⁰ The last part of the decision-making process is the "Council configuration", where proposals that have passed Coreper are dealt with. These can either be adopted again without discussion, or they can continue to be negotiated and voted on here. The results are then set out in Council conclusions.²¹

¹⁸ Council of the European Union. *The decision-making process in the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 58.

²¹ Council of the European Union. *The decision-making process in the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/>

Depending on the issue in question, the EU Council takes its decisions on the basis of three types of vote. The first type is simple majority, where at least 14 member states must vote in favour. The second type is qualified majority voting (QMV), where at least 55% of member states representing at least 65% of the EU population must vote in favour. The third and final type is unanimous vote, where all Member States must vote in favour (often on taxation or foreign policy issues).²² In this part of the thesis, we have presented the decision-making process only briefly and in general terms, as this topic will be dealt with in detail in the following chapters describing the presidency.

3.3 Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU

3.3.1 Role of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU

The main task of the Brussels Permanent Representation (PRB) is to defend and represent the interests of the country concerned in the European Union. Other tasks include coordinating EU and national policies and ensuring communication between the state administration and the EU institutions. PRB also provides a full service to visiting state representatives. Diplomats from the PRB are then part of delegations of government members to meetings in Brussels.²³

PRB is the main link between the Czech government and the EU institutions.²⁴ Diplomats from the PRB prepare meetings for the Committees of Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the EU Member States, called Coreper II and Coreper I (abbreviated from the French Comité des représentants permanents).²⁵ The former deals with political, financial and foreign affairs issues, and the Czech Republic is represented by its ambassador to the EU, Edita Hrdá. The second one deals mainly with economic and social issues and is chaired by the Czech representative Lucie Šestáková. The third key committee is COPS

²² Council of the European Union. *Voting system* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/>

²³ KASSIM, H., MENON, A., PETERS, B.G., WRIGHT, V. *The National Co-ordination of EU Policy: The European Level*. 2001, p. 191

²⁴ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

²⁵ EUR-Lex. *Coreper* [online]. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:coreper>

(Comité politique et de sécurité), which deals with political and security issues. The Czech Republic is represented by Ambassador Jitka Láta Znamenáčková.²⁶

The three committees, which meet at least weekly (usually on Wednesday), bring together ambassadors from all member countries.²⁷ Each presents his or her country's position on the proposals under discussion.²⁸ They discuss the issues and also look for like-minded countries with which they can then push through amendments to the proposals.²⁹ The proposals prepared by the three committees are then voted on by the member state ministers for each area at the EU Council.³⁰

In the structure of the Czech administration, the PRB falls under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but its diplomats also work closely with other ministries, depending on the topic they are working on for each committee. In the EU hierarchy, it falls under the Council of the EU.³¹

3.3.2 Departments and agendas in the Permanent Representation

There are several departments at the PRB, depending on the topics diplomats work on. The focus of each department roughly corresponds to the focus of the Czech ministries and also to the focus of the expert groups, in which diplomats from these departments prepare proposals for Coreper I, Coreper II and COPS together with diplomats from other member states. These include, for example, the Agriculture and Environment Department or the Foreign and Security Policy Department.³²

In addition, the PRB also has people working directly on the preparation and coordination of committee meetings. In fact, the committees always deal with topics from several expert groups, from several departments. These people are called Antici (for Coreper

²⁶ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

²⁷ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 58.

²⁸ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ EUR-Lex. *Coreper* [online]. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:coreper>

³¹ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

³² Ibid

II), Mertens (for Coreper I) and Nicolaidis (for COPS). These names come from the surnames of the first diplomats who served in these positions.³³

- **Antici** - prepares and coordinates the agenda of Coreper II, where the Czech Republic is represented by Ambassador Edita Hrdá.³⁴ These meetings address general, foreign economic and financial and justice and home affairs topics.³⁵ Antici also prepares the European Council summits, i.e. the summits of the heads of state and government of the EU Member States, which are usually held every three months.³⁶
- **Mertens** - has a similar role to Antici, but for Coreper I.³⁷ It deals with employment, social policy, health and consumers affairs, competitiveness, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, fisheries, environment, education, youth, culture and sport issues.³⁸
- **Nicolaidis** - prepares meetings of COPS, the Political and Security Committee, in which the Czech Republic is represented by Ambassador Jitka Láta Znamenáčková. She performs a similar function to Antici and Mertens.
- **The Legal Department** - the activities of the Legal Department are focused on expert and diplomatic work in the EU institutions on institutional and horizontal legal issues. It focuses in particular on the rule of law, fundamental rights, transparency and comitology; it develops relations with the Court of Justice of the EU and performs a coordinating function in infringement proceedings. The Legal Service provides advice on EU law issues.
- **Financial and Cohesion Policy Unit** - deals with financial issues, the EU budget, the euro area, tax policy, statistics and financial services. It also deals with the use of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds.
- **Trade Policy Unit** - focuses on the EU's trade policy, which includes, inter alia, the EU's economic relations with third countries or the World Trade Organisation. It also

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

³⁵ EUR-Lex. *Coreper* [online]. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:coreper>

³⁶ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ EUR-Lex. *Coreper* [online]. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:coreper>

deals with customs policy and relations with European Free Trade Association countries and development cooperation with countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

- **Justice and Home Affairs Division** - the department deals with internal security, asylum, migration, external border protection or the Schengen area. It also deals with civil law, judicial cooperation in criminal matters, the European Criminal Justice Network, substantive criminal law or e-justice.
- **Agriculture and Environment Unit** - covers the agriculture, fisheries, environment and public health agenda. It deals in particular with rural development, forestry, food processing, fisheries, registration of geographical indications for agricultural products and the issue of genetically modified organisms.³⁹ Currently, the head of this department is Tomáš Vacenovský. During the Czech Presidency, this function was held by Stanislav Němec. The author of this thesis worked in this department.
- **Sectoral Agendas Unit A** - prepares the Competitiveness Councils and the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Councils. It focuses on enterprise and industrial policy, internal market issues, free movement of goods and services, technical harmonisation, competition, transport including Galileo, telecommunications and information society, postal services, data protection, energy and nuclear safety.
- **Sectoral Agendas Unit B** - prepares the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, Education, Youth and Culture and Competitiveness Councils. It also deals with employment and social affairs, science and research, public health, medical devices and medicines, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, company law, intellectual and industrial property, education, youth, sport, culture and audiovisual.
- **External Relations Division** - the department is responsible for preparing meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)⁴⁰ and, where appropriate, the General Affairs Council (GAC), which is responsible for EU enlargement, multiannual financial framework, cohesion policy and many more⁴¹, and of Czech representatives with

³⁹ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Council of the European Union. *General Affairs Council configuration (GAC)* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/gac/>

partners from third countries. Members of the department represent the Czech Republic in expert groups with a territorial focus (Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Western Balkans, Maghreb, Middle East, Middle East and Gulf region, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, USA and Canada, Asia and Oceania) or thematic focus (EU enlargement, neighbourhood policy, human rights, development cooperation and humanitarian aid).

- **Common Foreign and Security Policy Unit** - contributes to the preparation of Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meetings. It deals with foreign and security policy and prepares the Czech Republic's participation in the COPS and its subordinate working groups. The department's staff represents the Czech Republic, for example, in the Institute for Security Studies, the Satellite Centre, the European Security and Defence School and the Special Committees of individual EU operations.
- **Military Section** - consists of a group of members of the Army of the Czech Republic who are responsible for representing the Czech Republic in the EU Military Committee and its working groups.⁴²

3.4 Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The presidency of the Council of the European Union is a 6-month period during which a member country chairs all discussions within the body (except the Foreign Affairs Council) and represents the Council of the EU in negotiations with the EC and EP. The presidency also ensures that progress is made in negotiating EU legislation. The presidency is thus awarded to each member country in turn for six months.⁴³

The Council of the EU itself was established in 1967, and its functioning has changed over time as a result of the growing number of Member States.⁴⁴ A major milestone in the function and organisation of the Council of the EU and the presidency was brought about by the Lisbon Treaty, which introduced the so-called trio, a grouping of 3 successive presidencies planning a common agenda and objectives for better coordination and cooperation. Furthermore, the powers of the presidency have been significantly reduced,

⁴² Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *O Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

⁴³ Rada Evropské unie. *Předsednictví Rady EU* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/cs/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/>

⁴⁴ Rada Evropské unie. *Historie* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/cs/history/?filters=1734>

with the suppression of political responsibility for decisions on European integration, or the separation of the political role in mediating decisions at the highest levels, by the separation of the EUCO, which has become formally an independent EU body. Furthermore, qualified majority voting has been extended to more political topics.⁴⁵

3.4.1 Role of the Presidency in the negotiating process

In this chapter, we will build on the information already provided on the EU institutions and the decision-making process, expanding it with more detailed information and adding the role of the Presidency in these matters.

In the negotiation process, the Presidency also chair the preparatory bodies at two levels: the Working Parties (WP) and the Coreper.⁴⁶ Then comes the EU Council itself, which is already the decision-making body. The Presidency chairs and summarises the individual meetings, represents the EU Council, convenes the meetings, prepares the agenda and decides on the votes.⁴⁷ At all three levels of negotiations, the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) is at the disposal of the presiding state, and also attends all meetings (always sitting to the left of the presiding state), helping to organise meetings, adding its advice and offers experience from other presidencies. It also helps to maintain continuity.⁴⁸ He also helps with taking notes during the meetings and preparing the agenda. At the same time, it provides legal support through the legal service, which also attends all formations of the meetings and ensures that the content of the legislative proposal is in line with the law and correctly drafted in legal language.⁴⁹

WP refers to a type of meeting that is held regularly on a particular topic and each group has its own focus. At this level, the attachés of each country negotiate. Experts from member countries on the legislation in question may also be present. This is the first and very important level of negotiation, as individual articles of the legislative text can be actively

⁴⁵ Council of the European Union. *Shaping the EU as we know it* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/lisbon-treaty/>

⁴⁶ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 60.

⁴⁷ KUOSMANEN, A., *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union*. 1998, p. 74–75.

⁴⁸ Council of the European Union. *What does holding the presidency of the Council of the EU mean?* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/presidency-council-eu/>

⁴⁹ Council of the European Union. *The General Secretariat of the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/general-secretariat/>

amended. The debate here starts first in general terms and then focuses on individual sections or articles of the text. There is no set period of time during which the proposal must be discussed at this level and the WP is not obliged to present a specific agreement. It does, however, present its conclusions and amendments at the next level of the preparatory bodies, i.e. Coreper. The presiding state sits at the head and moderates the debate. The GSC, the Legal Service and representatives of the EC are also present, with whom the text of the legislative proposal is jointly drafted.⁵⁰

The Coreper level meetings are further divided into Coreper I and Coreper II. Topics related to foreign affairs, general affairs, justice, home affairs, economy and finance are dealt with by the ambassadors in Coreper II.⁵¹ Coreper I, where the deputy/representative ambassadors sit, is responsible for competitiveness, education, youth and culture, environment and agriculture, energy, transport and telecommunications, social policy, consumer protection and health policy.⁵² These topics are voted on at ministerial level by a qualified majority voting.⁵³ In addition to ambassadors and their representatives, Coreper meetings are attended by attachés who have negotiated the text at a lower level. The presiding country again acts as moderator of the debate. The GSC, the Legal Service and the EC representatives responsible for the legislative proposal also take part in the meeting.⁵⁴

The Council of the EU is the top ministerial meeting on the subject.⁵⁵ The meeting takes place at different frequencies and is attended by a minister from each Member State and negotiators from both preparatory bodies - ambassadors/deputy ambassadors and attachés. The final adjustments to the text and the final vote take place here. The aim of the EU Council is either to vote in favour of the proposal, which takes immediate effect, or to adopt the general approach (GA), which is the form of the legislative proposal voted on by a qualified majority, which the EU Council later takes into the negotiating process with the EP and the

⁵⁰ Council of the European Union. *The decision-making process in the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/>

⁵¹ Rada Evropské unie. *Coreper II* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/cs/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/Coreper-ii/>

⁵² Rada Evropské unie. *Coreper I* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/cs/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/Coreper-i/>

⁵³ I. BLAHUŠIAK. Euroskop. *Rada EU* [online]. <https://euroskop.cz/evropska-unie/institute-eu/rada-eu/>

⁵⁴ ŠEDINOVÁ, A. *Předsednictví velkého a malého státu: francouzské a české předsednictví v Radě Evropské unie v roce 2022 na příkladu směrnice o energetické náročnosti budov. 2022.*

⁵⁵ Council of the European Union. *Council configurations* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/>

EC.⁵⁶ The ministerial level is attended by diplomatic representatives of the countries of the two previous preparatory bodies, then the GA with the legal service and representatives of the EC, now at the level of Commissioners, under whom the legislation falls.⁵⁷

Each of the formations addresses a given theme and meets at different frequencies. Different frequencies and lengthy meetings of both the WP and Coreper. If the situation calls for it, the presiding country can also convene an extraordinary meeting of the EU Council. Such a situation occurred several times during 2022, in the field of energy, to deal with the emergency situation caused by the war in Ukraine, security of energy supply and high gas and electricity prices.⁵⁸

3.4.2 Relations between the Presidency and the Council preparatory bodies

One of the basic tasks of the Presidency is, in addition to those already mentioned, the preparation of agendas, as well as the conduct of meetings of the preparatory bodies.⁵⁹ All Member States are represented in all the preparatory bodies and the country holding the presidency acts as chair, so it does not comment on the legislation according to its national instructions, but moderates the debate and, after hearing all views, works together with the EC on the wording and content of the text of the legislation under discussion. As regards the technical and working aspects, the WP and Coreper are also key from the Presidency's point of view. Around 75% to 85% of all problems and comments on legislation are resolved at these two levels. Only an estimated 5% of all points of concern require discussion at ministerial level.⁶⁰

It is at the level of the WP that the Member States meet the legislative proposal for the first time and make any written comments on the individual articles. Often, the level of the WP is associated with technical and expert discussion, where the MS focus very concentrated on the articles in question. A large number of problematic parts are resolved at

⁵⁶ Council of the European Union. *The decision-making process in the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/>

⁵⁷ ŠEDINOVÁ, A. *Předsednictví velkého a malého státu: francouzské a české předsednictví v Radě Evropské unie v roce 2022 na příkladu směrnice o energetické náročnosti budov*. 2022.

⁵⁸ Council of the European Union. *Extraordinary Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Energy)* [online]. 24 November 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2022/11/24/>

⁵⁹ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 60.

⁶⁰ KUOSMANEN, A., *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union*. 1998, p. 74–75.

this level, and only some of the larger policy issues make it to the higher Coreper level. The task of the Presidency is to efficiently and proactively edit the text according to the reasoned requests of the MS and to prepare the topics to be discussed at Coreper level.⁶¹

The agenda and the role of the Presidency at Coreper level depends to some extent on the negotiations at WP level. If the WP cannot agree on something, the debate moves up a level. It is up to the Presidency to formulate the questions and the overall debate on the issue. At this level, it can either find a common solution, or get comments for debate back to the WP, or move the debate to ministerial level.⁶² Coreper can also speed up the discussion on a proposal considerably, which has been used by some Presidencies.⁶³

One of the great advantages of the meetings of the WP and Coreper is that they are permanently based in Brussels, so there is intensive communication between the Member States. The presiding country is responsible for the effectiveness of the negotiations, ensuring an overview and understanding of the situation in the legislative proposal so that the broadest possible compromise is reached. Thus, at the level of working groups, there is cooperation between the PRB of the MS with the diplomatic representation and the responsible ministry of the government of the country concerned. Coordination at this level takes place between the expert representation from the ministry and the attaché of the relevant PRB during the Presidency, with the difference that they coordinate the incorporation of amendments into the legislative proposal on behalf of all the MS, i.e. they do not comment on the text from their national position only. These experts may participate in negotiations with other MS as well as, for example, in the subsequent drafting with the EC. The intensity, coherence and coordination within the presiding MS and the PRB depends on according to their own settings and preferences so that the functioning is satisfactory for Presidency.⁶⁴

⁶¹ FOUILLEUX, E., MAILLARD, J., SMITH., A. *Technical or political? The working groups of the EU Council of Ministers*. 2005, p. 612-614

⁶² Council of the European Union. *The decision-making process in the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/decision-making/>

⁶³ FOUILLEUX, E., MAILLARD, J., SMITH., A. *Technical or political? The working groups of the EU Council of Ministers*. 2005, p. 613

⁶⁴ ŠEDINOVÁ, A. *Předsednictví velkého a malého státu: francouzské a české předsednictví v Radě Evropské unie v roce 2022 na příkladu směrnice o energetické náročnosti budov*. 2022.

3.4.3 The Presidency's role in the negotiations

The country holding the Presidency also represents the Council externally, mainly in representing the Council in negotiations with the EC and the EP.⁶⁵ In the case of legislative proposals, this is most often a so-called trilogue, which is a joint negotiation between the EC, the EP and the EU Council on a given legislative proposal.⁶⁶ This negotiation takes place once the EU Council has voted its GA and the EP has established its position. Here, both the EP and the EU Council present their views on the legislative proposal under discussion, as originally presented by the EC. The latter is present at the negotiations more as an observer and assists in the dialogue between the EP and the EU Council.⁶⁷ On the EP side, the rapporteur of the legislative proposal, the chair of the committee on the subject and the representatives of the various groups (shadow rapporteurs) are present.⁶⁸ The EU Council is represented by the country holding the presidency with its ambassador/deputy ambassador, attaché and other diplomats.

While the EP presents the common position of the EP's political groups, the Presidency, representing the Council of the EU, comes with a mandate from the 27 Member States. In addition to representation at the inter-institutional meeting itself, the presiding country manages the other MS of the EU Council on the progress of the negotiations and asks member states about their positions and red lines on the individual articles of the proposal. The trilogue is usually a rather long and exhausting meeting, lasting several weeks. Finding a common compromise is a matter of concessions and a balanced approach.⁶⁹ It is therefore another challenging role for the presiding state. The timetable for the trilogues is set according to the speed with which the positions of the two institutions are obtained. The number of trilogues held by each Presidency can therefore vary considerably. In some areas, the MS Presidency will thus avoid trilogues altogether.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ WALLACE, H., WALLACE, W., POLLACK, M.A. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 2005, p. 60.

⁶⁶ A. VAZNONYTÉ. Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies. *Entrepreneurs of Compromise? The Rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU after Lisbon* [online]. https://sieps.se/globalassets/publikationer/2022/2022_3epa.pdf

⁶⁷ EUR-Lex. *Trilogue* [online]. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/trilogue.html>

⁶⁸ V. DANĚK. iRozhlas.cz. *Málokdo o nich ví, jsou ale klíčové. , Trialogy českému předsednictví nezávidím, říká europoslankyně* [online]. 8 June 2022. https://www.irozhlas.cz/zpravy-svet/evropska-unie-ceske-predsednictvi-2022-trialog_2206081300_ak

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ ŠEDINOVÁ, A. *Předsednictví velkého a malého státu: francouzské a české předsednictví v Radě Evropské unie v roce 2022 na příkladu směrnice o energetické náročnosti budov*. 2022.

3.4.4 Member states and the Presidency

As already mentioned, the presidency is held by each EU Member State in turn. The first presidency of a given year starts on 1 January and ends on 30 June, while the second starts on 1 July and runs until the end of the chosen year. In order to maintain continuity in the legislation under consideration, the agenda and priorities are set not only within each Presidency, but also within the trio. They continue to build on each other during the negotiations as they take over the legislation and continue the negotiations at other levels. An interesting aspect is the composition of the Member States in the trio. In the original system, it was alphabetical order, but after the enlargement to include other, mainly small, Member States, this has been adjusted, so that there is at least one large Member State in each trio.⁷¹ The Czech Republic held the Presidency from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 and was part of a trio with France and Sweden.⁷²

3.5 Public administration in the context of the EU

Public administration within EU member states plays a crucial role in facilitating their participation in the European Union's decision-making processes and policy implementation. This section explores how public administration functions in relation to the EU Council.

3.5.1 Role of public administration in EU affairs

In relation to EU affairs, national public administrations have a central role as a facilitator in turning EU policies, directives and regulations into measures that are implementable in the Member State concerned.⁷³ Responsible national administrations translate these policies according to their jurisdiction, which can be understood as having the task of ensuring that national legislation is consistent and harmonious with EU standards and does not contradict each other.⁷⁴

⁷¹ KUOSMANEN, A., *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union*. 1998, p. 75.

⁷² Rada Evropské Unie. *Seznam předsednictví Rady Evropské unie* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/cs/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/timeline-presidencies-of-the-council-of-the-eu/>

⁷³ WESSELS, W., MAURER, A., MITTAG, J. *Fifteen into one? The European Union and its member states*. 2003, p. 76-77.

⁷⁴ European Commission. *Public administration and governance* [online]. https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/public-administration-and-governance_en

“The European Union has managed to set the principles for public administration and engages in strengthening the European Administrative Area by promoting the principles of administrative law and its development in order to ensure civic rights in relation to the state through the administration.”⁷⁵

As noted earlier, public administration representatives attend meetings at the EU Council, both at lower levels such as working groups, as well as at committees and other Council formations, which, in addition to the above, also serves to facilitate the flow of information between the EU institutions and national governments.⁷⁶ In addition, national parliaments work directly with the EC. This is primarily in the subsidiarity control mechanism, which allows parliaments to judge whether new legislative proposals comply with the subsidiarity principle. They also hold policy dialogues to exchange information and views on policy issues and legislative and non-legislative initiatives.⁷⁷

How a Member State behaves in the role of the Presidency has already been discussed in the previous chapter, but when a Member State is not in the role of the Presidency, its public administration behaves differently. Instead of chairing Council meetings, the administration supports the Presidency by offering expertise and ensuring the smooth implementation of decisions. Civil servants take an active part in Council meetings and working groups, but do not have as much influence on the agenda as during the Presidency itself. When not in the Presidency, the administration continues to defend its country's interests and positions within the EU, but the focus shifts to building alliances and influencing decisions in other ways.

The behaviour of public administrations is fundamentally influenced by the role of the Member State in the Council of the EU. Whether or not it holds the Presidency, public administrations serve as a bridge between national interests and the implementation of EU policy, adapting their actions and priorities to engage effectively with the wider European context.

⁷⁵ S HALIMI. *Role of Public Administration in the European Integration Process* [online]. Vol. 14, no. 3/2018. ISSN: 1844-8062. <https://journals.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/juridica/article/download/5284/4703>

⁷⁶ WESSELS, W., MAURER, A., MITTAG, J. *Fifteen into one? The European Union and its member states*. 2003, p. 76.

⁷⁷ European Commission. *Relations with national parliaments* [online]. https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/adopting-eu-law/relations-national-parliaments_en

3.6 The role of trainees in the EU institutions

Traineeships in the EU institutions are instrumental in fostering young talent, providing them with practical experience, and contributing to the functioning of EU bodies. This section delves into various aspects of traineeships in the EU.

3.6.1 Definition and classification of traineeships in the EU

Internships in the EU, like in any other organisation, are structured training programmes in which an intern is employed in a low-level position in a particular job to learn the skills needed for that job.⁷⁸ Primarily designed for students, recent graduates or young professionals who are primarily seeking to gain practical work experience in the EU institutions or similar institutions. These traineeships in the EU can generally last from a few months to a year, during which time trainees should become familiar not only with the functioning of the institutions themselves, but also with the specific work and issues at stake.⁷⁹ Despite the variety of types and variations of these programmes, traineeships in these institutions can be easily classified as paid and unpaid. Paid internships (which are the most common in EU institutions), such as Blue Book internships at the EC,⁸⁰ are most often in the form of a monthly salary/scholarship. In contrast, in the case of unpaid internships, such as internship at PRB, interns do not receive a salary, but often receive a financial contribution towards at least accommodation and travel.⁸¹ However, it should also be noted that most internships at these institutions are for graduates with a degree. Only very rarely are there internships that are specifically for students.⁸²

3.6.2 Types of traineeships in EU institutions

Traineeships in EU institutions offer diverse opportunities, including:

⁷⁸ Collins. *Definition of "traineeship"* [online]. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/traineeship>

⁷⁹ European Personnel Selection office. *Traineeships in the EU institutions, bodies and agencies* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships>

⁸⁰ European Commission. *"Blue Book" traineeship programme* [online]. https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/about_en

⁸¹ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *Stáže na Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/staze_na_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

⁸² European Personnel Selection office. *Schuman Traineeships* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5183>

- European Commission Traineeships: Blue book traineeships play the biggest role in the EC. This programme is open to university graduates from all over the world. The positions are in a wide range of disciplines and offer a great insight into the work of the EU. However, the specific job depends largely on the department in which the trainee is based.⁸³ For example, it may be in the areas of human resources, competition law, communications, environmental policy and many others. Trainees have similar types of tasks to new graduates who have been recruited to the EC. Specifically, this may include, for example, gathering information and documentation, organising working groups and meetings, preparing reports and answering questions, as well as attending unit meetings or many other activities.⁸⁴ To give an idea, the salary for such an internship is currently €1,220.78, plus travel allowances.⁸⁵ This sum is very similar for the other internships that will be listed here.
- European Parliament Traineeships: EP traineeships can be divided into two types. The first is the so-called "Schuman Traineeships", where the aim of the traineeship is not only to promote practical European education, but also to contribute to the training of EU citizens and give them an insight into the work of the European Parliament. As part of this traineeship, the trainee works in the General Secretariat of the Parliament, where he/she participates in the running of the institution as a whole.⁸⁶ The second type of traineeship is the Traineeships with MEPs, where the trainee is assigned directly to a Member of Parliament, who is in charge of the trainee and assigns him/her work.⁸⁷
- Council of the European Union Traineeships: The EU Council primarily offers a traineeship called Council of the European Union - Paid Traineeships, where the trainee is mostly employed by the General Secretariat of the Council and the workload is very similar to that of junior administrative officers at the beginning of their career, for example, attending Coreper and Council preparatory bodies,

⁸³ European Commission. *Blue Book traineeships* [online]. https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/index_en

⁸⁴ European Commission. "Blue Book" traineeship programme [online]. https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/about_en

⁸⁵ European Personnel Selection office. *Traineeships – EC* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5192>

⁸⁶ European Personnel Selection office. *Schuman Traineeships* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5183>

⁸⁷ Evropský parlament. *Stáže v Evropském parlamentu* [online]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/cs/work-with-us/traineeships>

preparing meetings and drafting minutes, translating documents, researching a project, writing reports or compiling documentation.⁸⁸ Trainees are also invited to participate in various study programmes, which may include visits and conferences in other EU institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.⁸⁹

- European Central Bank (ECB) Traineeships: The ECB trainee programme offers recent graduates the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge they have acquired during their studies and thus gain a better understanding of what it means to work for Europe, primarily in the fields of economics, finance, statistics or law.⁹⁰ Trainees on this programme have the opportunity to gain an insight into the work of the ECB and to contribute to its mission. The tasks encountered in the trainee's job description are supervised and vary according to the department you join. Examples include drafting reports, carrying out operational tasks, compiling statistical data or even researching and participating in possible studies.⁹¹
- European External Action Service (EEAS) Traineeships: As far as EEAS traineeships are concerned, they are very different from others in that the location of the traineeship is often not in Brussels, Luxembourg or Strasbourg. The EEAS, on the other hand, offers traineeships that take place in EU delegations all over the world and the trainee often has a plethora of countries to choose from, allowing them to pick exactly what they would be interested in.⁹² Traineeships are not only for graduates, but in this case often also for students.⁹³ And it is an educational project that does not involve any contractual or working relationship with the delegation, which makes it easier for the trainees.⁹⁴
- Permanent representation of MS Traineeships: Another option is to do a traineeship at the permanent representation of the relevant Member State in Brussels. These

⁸⁸ European Personnel Selection office. *Council of the European Union - Paid Traineeships* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5210>

⁸⁹ Council of the European Union. *Traineeships at the Council* [online]. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/general-secretariat/jobs/traineeships/>

⁹⁰ European Personnel Selection office. *ECB's traineeship programme* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5238>

⁹¹ European Central Bank. *Traineeship* [online]. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/careers/what-we-offer/traineeship/html/index.en.html>

⁹² European Union External Action. *Vacancies* [online]. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/vacancies_en?f%5B0%5D=contract_type%3ATrainee&f%5B1%5D=contract_type%3ATrainee

⁹³ European Personnel Selection office. *Traineeships – EEAS* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5206>

⁹⁴ European Union External Action. *Traineeship in Delegations of the European Union* [online]. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/traineeship-delegations-european-union_en

traineeships are not technically directly in an EU institution, but working in a permanent representation involves day-to-day contact and communication not only with other Member States, but also with and working in the EU institutions. Such as participating in Council working groups. This type of internship can often be applied for not only by recent graduates, as in many other cases, but also by students or even professionals from the Czech state and local government.⁹⁵

3.6.3 Differences between internships in EU institutions and contribution of trainees

As the previous chapters show, traineeships in the different EU institutions can vary. This is for a variety of reasons, such as duration, focus on a particular area, job description, location or financial rewards. Depending on the programme and the type of institution, traineeships can last from a few months to a year. For example, internships at the EC generally last five months.⁹⁶ In contrast, EP traineeships can last up to nine months and can be extended in various ways.⁹⁷ Differences in the focus of the traineeship are also evident, as the workload at the EC often involves support to EC projects and policy analysis,⁹⁸ whereas traineeships at the ECB relate to economic and financial matters.⁹⁹ This diversity in the type of traineeships is of great benefit to potential trainees, as everyone can choose exactly what they are interested in and what they want to do. This is why trainees often bring new perspectives and innovative ideas to enrich discussions and working processes in the EU institutions. High-performing trainees often have a job offer from the institution after their traineeship, as it is also in their interest to retain these capable people. This serves as an additional motivation for trainees who wish to work in similar positions in their future careers.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Stálé zastoupení České republiky při Evropské unii. *Stáže na Stálém zastoupení* [online]. https://mzv.gov.cz/representation_brussels/cz/o_stalem_zastoupeni/staze_na_stalem_zastoupeni/index.html

⁹⁶ European Personnel Selection office. *Traineeships – EC* [online]. <https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/job-opportunities/traineeships?institution=5192>

⁹⁷ Evropský parlament. *Stáže v Evropském parlamentu* [online]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/cs/work-with-us/traineeships>

⁹⁸ European Commission. *“Blue Book” traineeship programme* [online]. https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/about_en

⁹⁹ European Central Bank. *Traineeship* [online]. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/careers/what-we-offer/traineeship/html/index.en.html>

¹⁰⁰ Evropský parlament. *Stáže v Evropském parlamentu* [online]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/cs/work-with-us/traineeships>

3.6.4 Traineeship at the Permanent Representation

As already outlined in this paper, the permanent representations in Brussels serve as the main link between the EU Member States and the European Union, and act as key nodes of diplomacy and influence for national governments within the EU. PRB trainees have a unique opportunity as during their traineeship they will come into working contact with the EU Council, where they accompany diplomats to EU Council meetings, which offer a unique insight into the EU decision-making process and the complex web of intergovernmental negotiations, and attend meetings with other EU institutions, as well as being in constant contact with the headquarters and therefore the people of their country's government. All this is in addition to the other workload of diplomats at the PRB, where they have regular meetings with diplomats from the PRBs of other Member States. All of this together creates a unique mix where the trainee comes into contact with basically every EU institution, their own country and other countries as well. This offers him/her a wealth of experience, expertise and both professional and personal contacts. For these reasons, the PRB traineeship is slightly different from the other traineeships available.

3.6.5 Traineeship programmes in the context of the EU Council Presidency

During the EU Council Presidency, traineeships take on a special significance, as not only the role of the diplomats at the PRB changes, but also that of the trainees. They have a unique opportunity to participate in the extensive preparations for the entire Presidency. Their contribution may include supporting diplomats, logistical support for meetings, helping to plan the agenda, examining documents submitted and preparing new documents, researching policy issues or working with other EU institutions. Interns may have the opportunity to participate in diplomatic meetings from the perspective of the moderator and the Presidency as a representative of all Member States and the whole EU Council. The period of the Presidency will add to the attractiveness not only of the internship but also of the people who have completed the internship as potential employees with unique experiences. It also offers interns the opportunity to network with officials and diplomats from across the EU, which can influence their future careers.

4. Practical part

4.1 Basic information about the permanent representation and trainees

Currently, 113 people work at the permanent mission, including not only diplomats who take care of political and diplomatic issues, but also IT specialists, accountants and a cook. During the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2022, the Permanent Representation had up to 266 people, including at least 64 trainees. It is therefore clear that the civil service supplemented its human resources during the Presidency with trainees. The increase in staff during the Presidency also meant an increase in the demand for office and administrative space. As the existing permanent representation building at 15 Rue Caroly had limited capacity and could not accommodate this volume of people, another building had to be rented two streets away at 130 rue du Trône. The departments were subsequently split into these buildings, with Coreper II and COPS remaining in the existing building and Coreper I moving to the new building.

All trainees can be divided into two groups. The first group of trainees was already selected towards the end of 2020. This group was subsequently enrolled in classes at the Diplomatic Academy and participated in a variety of lectures and exercises throughout 2021, designed for future diplomats. Thus, in addition to their school education, which was mostly related to international relations, political science or diplomatic studies, these trainees received training directly from experts and diplomats, who gave them an insight not only into how things work at the permanent mission, what kind of work awaits them, but also how diplomats should behave, what the protocol is, and gave them valuable advice and experience that they have gathered during their careers. A second group of trainees was subsequently selected during 2021 and the first half of 2022, when it became clear that staffing would not be sufficient and the teams at the Permanent Mission needed to be expanded. The number of trainees who went through the diplomatic academy was 29, compared to the rest of the trainees who were 35. All trainees were generally university students. It should also be noted that the author of this paper is one of the trainees who passed the diplomatic academy. During his presidency, he worked at the PRB in the Department of Agriculture and Environment. In addition, he worked as an intern at the PRB in the second half of 2021, when he helped with the preparations for the Presidency. He therefore has a

considerable amount of information from his own experience and was himself actively involved in the matters described in this thesis.

4.2 Research survey

In order to achieve the set objectives, it was necessary to obtain information on the role of trainees in the permanent representation. This included the work they did, how they were treated by their supervisors and colleagues, how integrated they were in all processes and many other aspects. Based on this, the trainees could assess whether they found the work fulfilling, enjoyable and motivating enough to go on to work in the civil service. Here, it is also important to find out whether, after the internship ended, it was the civil service that offered the interns jobs or whether the interns had to search and apply for them themselves. In order to obtain information about the role that the interns held, a qualitative method of semi-structured interviews with several interns and the head of department at the PRB was chosen. This method was used to obtain all relevant information about what the trainees were doing during the Presidency and what qualifications they had acquired. A quantitative questionnaire survey method was chosen to obtain information about the trainees' views and expectations before the internship, how they evaluate their work at the PRB in retrospect and whether they subsequently went on to work in the civil service. Two questionnaire surveys were carried out, with the first one conducted immediately after the end of the internship, i.e. in January 2023, by Ing. Daniel Bendl, a student of the Faculty of International Relations at the University of Economics. This questionnaire survey had the interns as respondents and asked about their attitude towards the internship and the public administration before and after the presidency experience. For the purposes of this thesis, Daniel Bendl provided all raw data from this survey to the author of this thesis. This data perfectly complements the interviews and the second questionnaire in this thesis. The second questionnaire survey was conducted almost a year after the end of the internship. With the second questionnaire, it was possible to obtain the interns' views on the internship with the time gap and other data such as the interns' subsequent involvement in the public administration. Together, these interviews and questionnaires thus provide a comprehensive view of the issue.

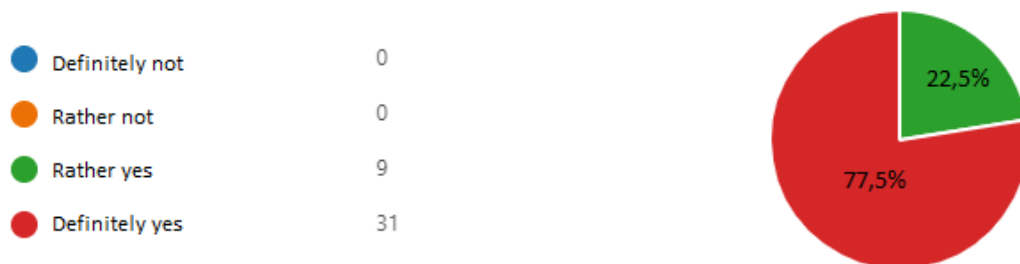
4.2.1 Questionnaire survey No. 1

The survey was conducted in January 2023, immediately after the end of the presidency and the internship. 40 respondents out of a total of 64 PRB trainees, 20 women and 20 men, took part in the survey. The respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years old and all were university students, most often at Master's/Engineering level. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 2 semi-closed enumerative questions, 19 closed-ended multiple choice questions, and 2 questions to which respondents selected an answer using a Likert scale. In terms of differentiating the questions according to the number of choices offered, the questionnaire contained 23 polytomous questions. The questionnaire survey was evaluated using a quantitative method with the possibility of statistical data processing. First, the frequencies of individual responses were determined and then tabulated and charted. This solution was sufficient to achieve the objective of data processing and all necessary information was obtained. For the first 16 questions, a statement was always presented to the respondents. They were then asked to use their answers to determine how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement. The aim of these questions was to find out how the interns' opinion and perspective differed on various topics related to becoming an administrator and working at the PRB before and after the internship.

Question 1: Before the internship, I perceived the internship as beneficial for my career development.

Figure 2:

1. Before the internship, I perceived the internship as beneficial for my career development



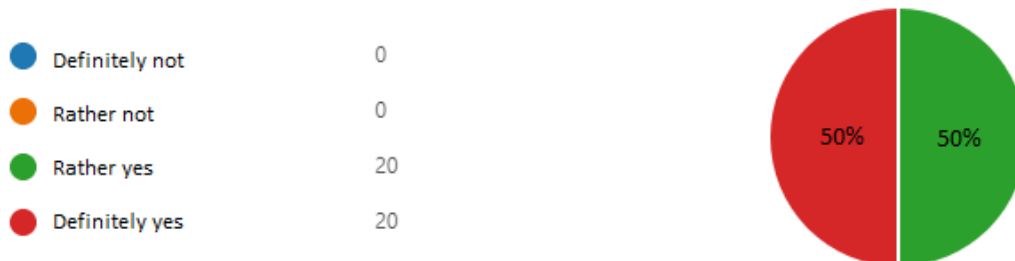
Source: Own work

Figure 2 shows that prior to starting the internship, all interns considered the opportunity to be beneficial for further career development, with 77.5% of respondents answering “definitely yes” and 22.5% answering “rather yes“.

Question 2: After the internship, I perceive the internship as beneficial for my career development.

Figure 3:

2. After the internship, I perceive the internship as beneficial for my career development



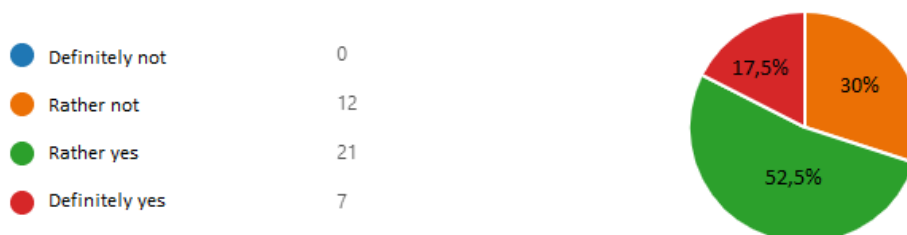
Source: Own work

In this question, 100% of respondents again identified the internship as beneficial for their further career development. However, now 50% of trainees chose the answer "definitely yes" and 50% for "rather yes". Comparing this with the previous question, it is clear that despite a slight decrease in the certainty of responses, it can be concluded that this work experience was beneficial to the further career development of the interns.

Question 3: Before the internship, I perceived employment in Czech state public institutions as attractive.

Figure 4:

3. Before the internship, I perceived employment in Czech state public institutions as attractive

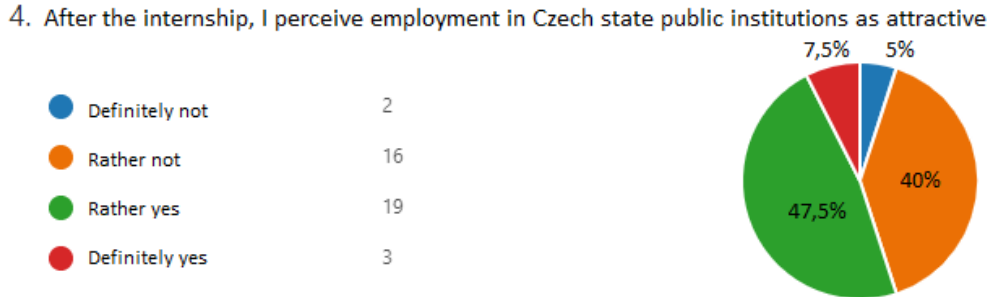


Source: Own work

As shown in Figure 4, only 30% said that they did not perceive government employment as attractive before starting their internship. In contrast, 52.5% of respondents perceived it as very attractive and 17.5% indicated a "rather yes" response.

Question 4: After the internship, I perceive employment in Czech public institutions as attractive.

Figure 5:



Source: Own work

From Figure 5 we can see that 55% of the trainees after the internship evaluate working in the public administration as attractive, while 45% have the opposite opinion. Compared to the results of question 3, it is clear that after the internship a significant part of the interns changed their opinion about the attractiveness of employment in Czech public institutions, so that the answer "definitely yes" decreased from 17.5% to 7.5% and the answer "rather yes" decreased from 52.5% to 47.5%. In contrast, the answer "rather not" increased from 30% to 40% and the answer "definitely not" from 0% to 5%.

Question 5: Before the internship, I perceived employment EU institutions attractive.

Figure 6:



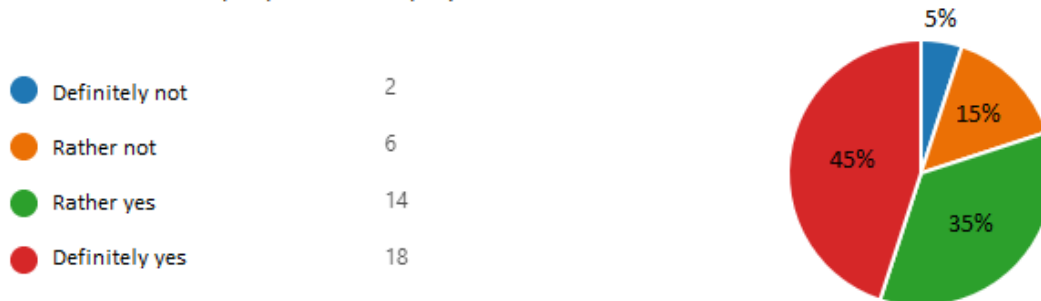
Source: Own work

It is clear from the answers to this question that before completing the traineeship, 30% of respondents rated employment in EU institutions as very attractive, 47.5% as attractive and 22.5% marked the answer "rather not", which means that they perceived the job as rather unattractive.

Question 6: After the internship, I perceive employment in the EU institutions as attractive.

Figure 7:

6. After the internship, I perceive employment in EU institutions as attractive



Source: Own work

In contrast, this question asked how respondents felt about working in the EU institutions after their traineeship. A full 45% of trainees indicated the answer "definitely yes", 35% of trainees indicated "rather yes", 15% indicated "rather not" and 5% of answers were "definitely not". If we compare these results with the answers in the previous question, where the same opinion was assessed but before the internship, we can conclude that the internship in the majority helped to confirm the interns' opinion on this topic, as the number of decisive answers increased. Furthermore, it can be concluded that this work experience helped to slightly improve the trainees' opinion on employment in EU institutions.

Question 7: Before the internship, I perceived the public sector as more attractive than the private sector (in terms of employment).

Figure 8:

7. Before the internship, I perceived the public sector as more attractive than the private sector (in terms of employment)



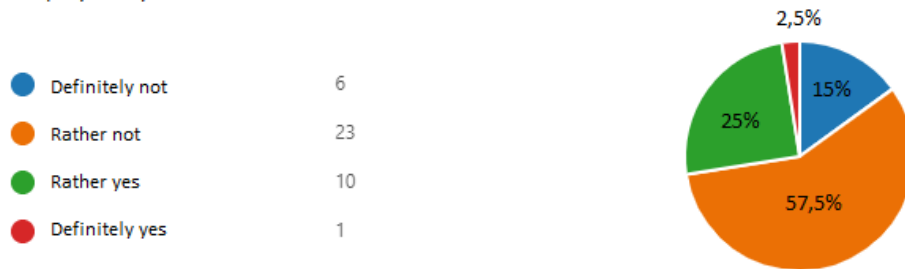
Source: Own work

As can be seen in Figure 8, 62.5% of respondents rated the private sector as more attractive than the public sector. Conversely, 37.5% had the opposite opinion and perceived the public sector as more attractive. However, it cannot be said that the responses were unambiguous, as 82.5% of the responses were spread between “rather not” and “rather yes”.

Question 8: After the internship, I perceive the public sector as more attractive than the private sector (in terms of employment).

Figure 9:

8. After the internship, I perceive the public sector as more attractive than the private sector (in terms of employment)



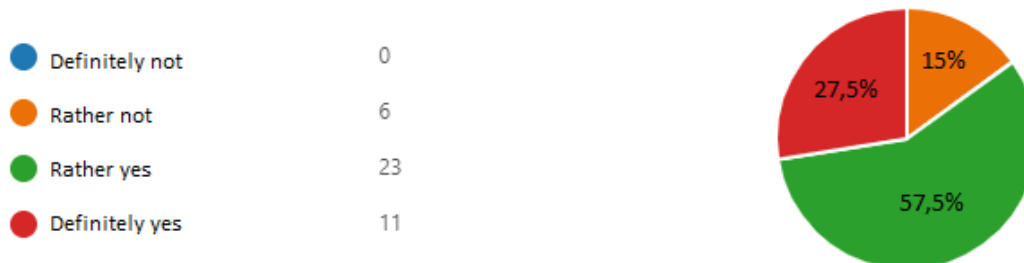
Source: Own work

This question aimed to find out which sector the trainees perceived as more attractive after their time at PRB. The "definitely not" option increased from 7.5% to 15% compared to the previous question. The option "rather not" increased from 55% to 57.5%. The option "rather yes" decreased from 27.5% to 25% and the option "definitely yes" decreased from 10% to 2.5%. It is clear from these results that the uncertainty in this view has remained more or less unchanged, as there are still 82.5% of responses spread across the “rather no” and “rather yes” options. However, it is also clear that the overall opinion on which sector is attractive has shifted slightly in favour of the private sector, as the number of respondents finding the private sector more attractive has increased from 62.5% to 72.5% after completing the internship.

Question 9: Before the internship, I perceived the work of a diplomat as demanding.

Figure 10:

9. Before the internship, I perceived the work of a diplomat as demanding



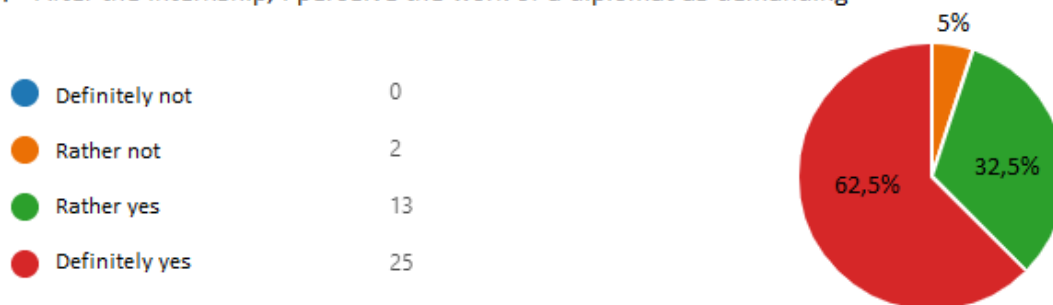
Source: Own work

In Figure 10, it can be seen that the majority of respondents found the job of a diplomat challenging prior to the internship, with 27.5% indicating "definitely yes", 57.5% indicating "rather yes" and 15% indicating "rather not".

Question 10: After the internship, I perceive the work of a diplomat as demanding.

Figure 11:

10. After the internship, I perceive the work of a diplomat as demanding



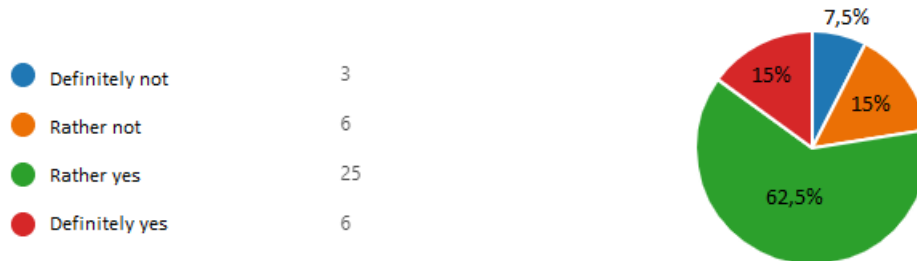
Source: Own work

This question then asked how challenging respondents perceived the work of a diplomat after their internship. In this case, 62.5% of respondents answered "definitely yes", 32.5% "rather yes" and 5% "rather not". From these responses, it can be concluded that after the work experience that the trainees had at the PRB, they were even more convinced that the job of a diplomat is very demanding.

Question 11: Before the internship, I perceived the Czech Republic's negotiating position within the European Union as relatively limited.

Figure 12:

11. Before the internship, I perceived the Czech Republic's negotiating position within the European Union as relative limited



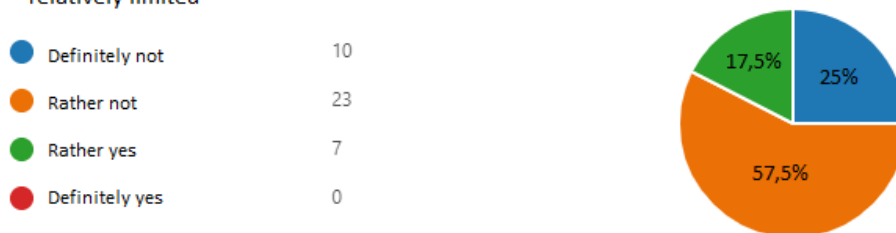
Source: Own work

Figure 12 shows that before the internship, 77.5% of the interns assessed the negotiating position of the Czech Republic within the EU as relatively limited, with 15% indicating the answer "definitely yes" and 62.5% indicating the answer "rather yes". In contrast, 15% chose the answer "rather not" and 7.5% chose "definitely not".

Question 12: After the internship, I perceive the Czech Republic's negotiating position within the European Union as relatively limited.

Figure 13:

12. After the internship, I perceive the Czech Republic's negotiating position within the European Union as relatively limited



Source: Own work

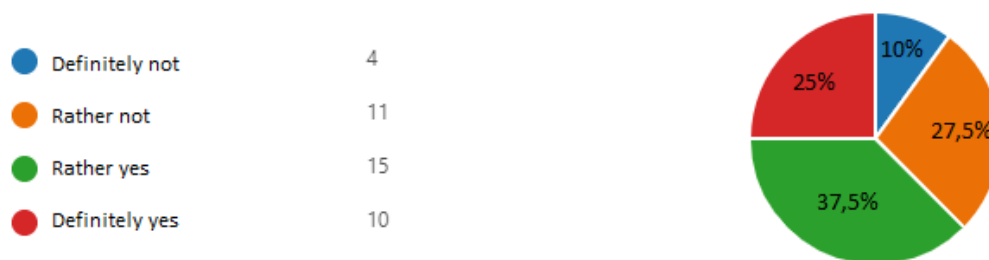
This question dealt with the same topic as the previous one, but with the difference that the trainees were asked to evaluate how they perceived the negotiating position of the Czech Republic within the EU after the end of their traineeship. Surprisingly, no respondent chose the option "definitely yes", 17.5% chose the answer "rather yes", 57.5% chose the answer "rather not" and 25% marked the answer "definitely not". It is clear from these results

that the overwhelming majority of trainees after completing this work experience at the PRB have reconsidered how they perceive the negotiating position of the Czech Republic within the EU. Specifically, the ratio of 77.5% who perceived the position of the Czech Republic as limited and 22.5% who did not perceive it as limited has become, after completing the traineeship, a ratio of 17.5% who still perceive the position of the Czech Republic as limited in some way and 82.5% who do not perceive the position of the Czech Republic as limited. This can be assessed as a very significant change in opinion, which is primarily influenced by the awareness of the individuals concerned. Similar features can also be perceived in the public, where uninformed citizens often have similar opinions as the respondents before the internship.

Question 13: Before the internship, I intended to pursue a career as a professional diplomat.

Figure 14:

13. Before the internship, I intended to pursue a career as a professional diplomat

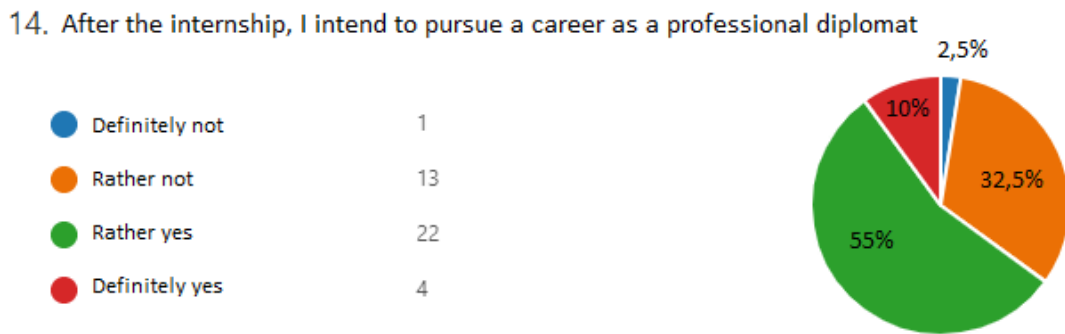


Source: Own work

The aim of question 13 was to find out whether the respondents intended to pursue a career as a professional diplomat before the internship. The interns answered as follows: 25% chose the answer "definitely yes", 37.5% chose the answer "rather yes", 27.5% chose the answer "rather not" and 10% chose the answer "definitely not". It is clear that a large majority considered working as a diplomat in the future.

Question 14: After the internship I intend to pursue a career as a professional diplomat.

Figure 15:



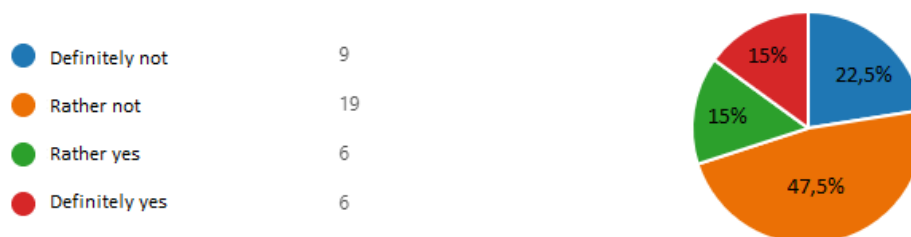
Source: Own work

Figure 15 shows that after the respondents completed their internship at the PRB, some of them considerably reconsidered their opinion about the career of a professional diplomat, so that only 10% marked the answer "definitely yes", 55% marked the answer "rather yes", 32.5% marked the answer "rather not" and 1 respondent, i.e. 2.5% marked the answer "definitely not". From these results, it can be concluded that completing the internship has made some respondents unsure as only 12.5% of the 35% who selected "definitely yes" and "definitely not" responses in the previous question have now done so. In contrast, the number of respondents who are considering a career as a diplomat in the future but are not fully sure has increased significantly from 37.5% to 55%. These changes are likely due not only to trainees finding out exactly what the job description of a diplomat entails, but also how challenging the job is, as revealed in question 10.

Question 15: Before the internship, I intended a career in a field corresponding to the agenda assigned to me during the internship.

Figure 16:

15. Before the internship, I intended a career in the field corresponding to the agenda assigned to me during the internship

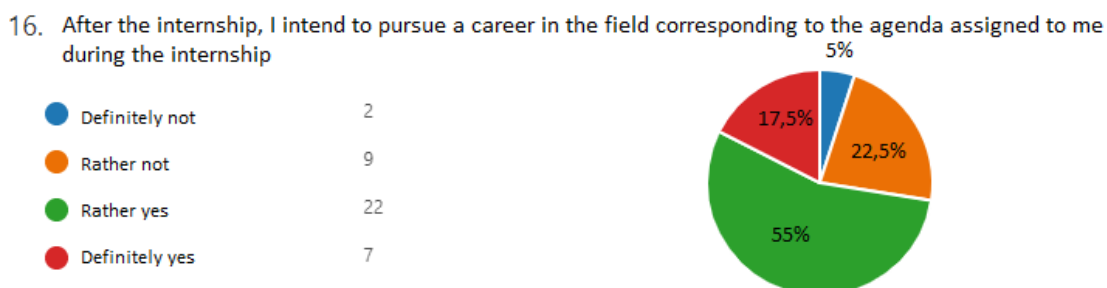


Source: Own work

In this question, respondents were asked to assess whether they had thought about a career in the field and the agenda they were assigned to work at PRB prior to their internship. In their responses, 15% of respondents indicated "definitely yes," 15% of respondents indicated "rather yes," 47.5% of respondents indicated "rather not" and 22.5% of respondents indicated "definitely not" It is clear from these results that 70% of respondents were assigned to an agenda that they had not previously worked in or could not imagine working in. Only 15% of the respondents went for an internship saying that they were sure that they wanted to work in this field in the future.

Question 16: After the internship, I intend to pursue a career in the field corresponding to the agenda assigned to me during the internship.

Figure 17:



Source: Own work

As can be seen in Figure 17, 72.5% of respondents are considering a career in the field they worked in at the PRB after completing their internship. In contrast, 5% are definitely not considering this career and 22.5% indicated a "rather not" response. When comparing this data with the data in the previous question, a significant difference can be seen. Compared to the original 70% of respondents who did not consider a career in the area in question prior to the internship, 72.5% are now considering a career after the internship. This is probably due to the fact that the respondents have gained considerable insight into the issues in the field during the internship, the agenda is now close to their hearts and many have found a passion for it.

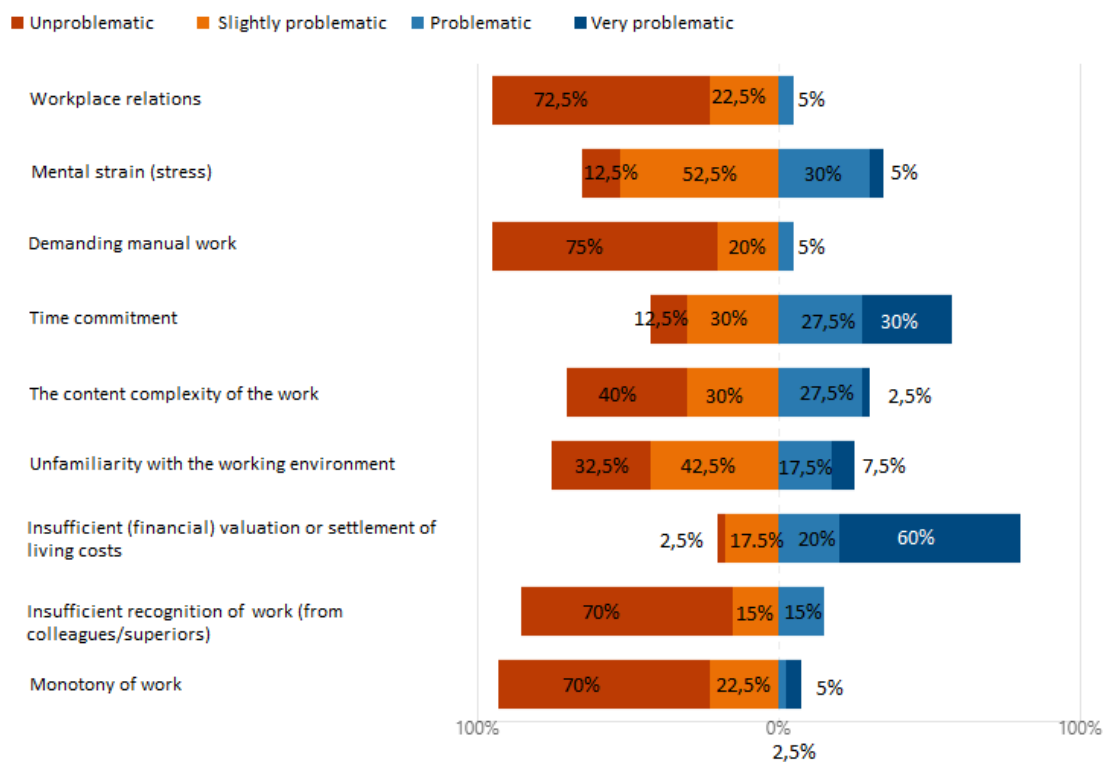
The next two questions were designed to ask respondents to rate the difficulty of the internship on a per-aspect basis. One area was introduced each time and respondents then

rated how challenging this area was during their time at the PRB on a scale from 'not problematic' to 'very problematic'.

Question 17: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects.

Figure 18:

17. Perception of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects



Source: Own work

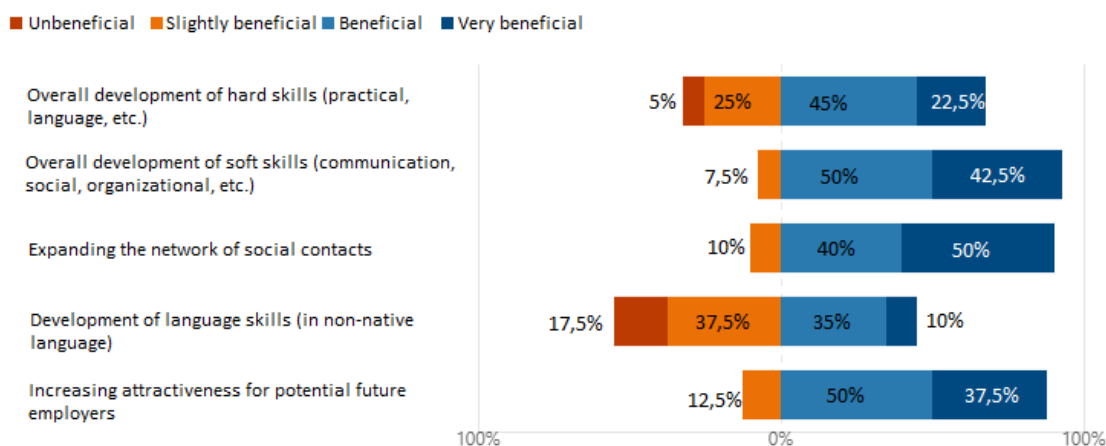
From the responses shown in Figure 18, it can be inferred that trainees considered that workplace relationships with their colleagues were not challenging or problematic, manual strain during work, monotony of work and recognition of work from colleagues or supervisors was mostly sufficient. Subsequently, the demands of the mental strain, stress, content of the work and unfamiliarity with the work environment were already problematic for some trainees, as a significant number of them were entering an unfamiliar environment and often an unfamiliar agenda that was not easy to navigate. Despite this, however, the overwhelming majority of trainees rated these aspects as only moderately problematic. In

contrast, the aspects of time pressure and lack of financial remuneration or settlement of living costs were rated as problematic or even very problematic by the majority of trainees.

Question 18: Perception of the benefits of the internship according to individual aspects.

Figure 19:

18. Perception of the benefit of the internship according to individual aspects

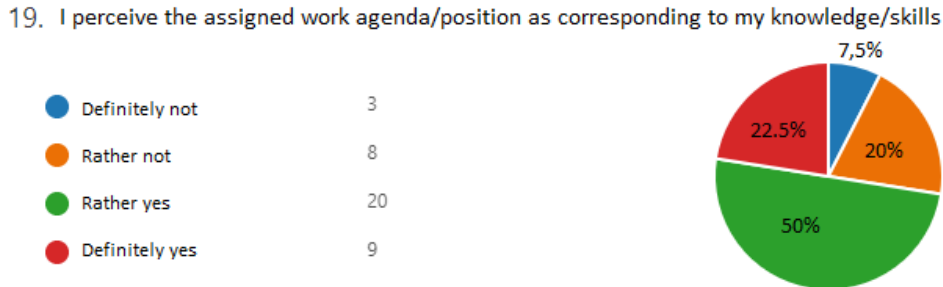


Source: Own work

This question, on the other hand, addressed the benefits of completing the internship on an aspect-by-aspect basis. The results of the answers to these questions suggest that the development of soft skills, expanding the network of social contacts and increasing attractiveness for future potential employers are rated as beneficial or very beneficial by the respondents. Consequently, they categorized the development of hard skills as moderately beneficial to beneficial. The least beneficial aspect of the internship was rated by respondents as the development of language skills in a non-native language, with only 10% of respondents marking the answer "very beneficial", 35% marking the answer "beneficial", 37.5% marking the answer "moderately beneficial" and 17.5% marking the answer "not beneficial". This may be due to the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had excellent language skills as one of the conditions for the selection of trainees. Therefore, the trainees already had these language skills at a high level at the time of the traineeship and many of them had no room to move on.

Question 19: I perceive the assigned work agenda/position as corresponding to my knowledge/skills.

Figure 20:



Source: Own work

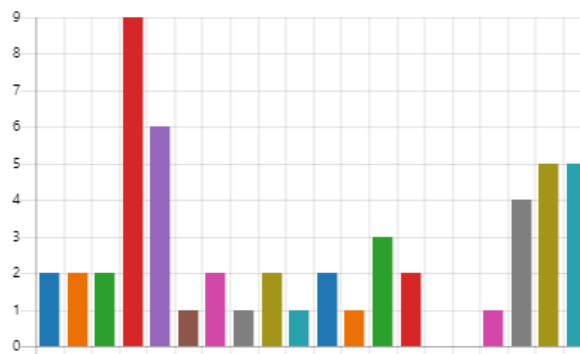
Question 19 was aimed at asking respondents to rate whether the position and agenda they had been assigned at the PRB was relevant to their knowledge and skills. The results show that 22.5% of the respondents indicated the answer "definitely yes", 50% of the respondents indicated the answer "rather yes", 20% of the respondents indicated the answer "rather not" and 7.5% of the respondents indicated the answer "definitely not". This is consistent with the fact that some trainees may have indicated a preference as to which department they would like to be assigned to during their preparation for the Presidency. And even those who were assigned to an area in which they were not familiar often had the chance to choose which part of the agenda they would work on.

Question 22: Assigned agenda during the internship (multiple choice).

Figure 21:

22. Assigned agenda during internship (multiple answers possible)

● Energetics	2
● Industry/internal market	2
● Safety	2
● External relations	9
● Finance and economics	6
● Agriculture	1
● Healthcare	2
● Environment	1
● Education/Youth/Sport	2
● Work and social issues	1
● Transport	2
● Telecommunication	1
● Media/PR/Press	3
● Protocol	2
● Space	0
● Research	0
● Military	1
● Law	4
● Horizontal coordination	5
● Other	5



Source: Own work

In question 22, respondents indicated what agenda they were assigned during their internship. As can be seen from Figure 21, the interns were distributed to all the departments that exist at the PRB. The number of interns in each department depended on the workload of the diplomats and the staffing gaps at the PRB.

4.2.2 Questionnaire survey No. 2

The survey was conducted in March 2024, more than a year after the end of the presidency and the internship, which provided sufficient time for a retrospective evaluation of the internship as well as time for the interns to engage with the administration if necessary. A total of 30 respondents out of a total of 64 PRB trainees, 16 women and 14 men, took part

in the survey. The respondents were aged between 21 and 32 years old and all were students or recent graduates of higher education, most often Master's/engineering students. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 2 semi-closed enumerative questions, 14 closed-ended multiple choice questions and 2 open-ended questions. In terms of differentiating the questions according to the number of options offered, the questionnaire contained 12 polytomous questions and 4 dichotomous questions. The questionnaire survey was evaluated using a quantitative method with the possibility of statistical data processing. First, the frequencies of individual responses were determined, which were subsequently processed into tables and graphs. This solution was sufficient to achieve the objective of data processing and all the necessary information was obtained.

This questionnaire aimed to find out the trainees' opinion of the internship more than a year after its completion, and primarily to find out whether the trainees had since started working in the public administration or had at least applied for a position, and whether the public administration itself had actively sought to employ these former trainees.

Question 3: Were you satisfied with how involved you were in the work at the PRB?

Figure 22:

3. Were you satisfied with how involved you were in the work at the PRB?



Source: Own work

Question 3 was designed to find out how trainees rated their satisfaction with how they were involved in the PRB. In asking this question, it was assumed to have a link to whether interns subsequently went on to work in government. However, the results show that the overwhelming majority of respondents were happy with their involvement in the work

processes, with 47% of respondents indicating a “Definitely yes” response, 43% a “Rather yes” response and only 7% a “Rather not” response and 3% a “Definitely not” response.

Question 4: How did you feel while working in your team at PRB? How did your colleagues and superiors treat you?

Figure 23:

4. How did you feel while working in your team at PRB? How did your colleagues and superiors treat you?



Source: Own work

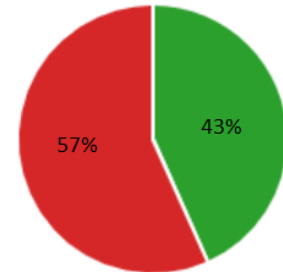
Figure 23 shows how the trainees felt while working at PRB. Whether they were included in the team and the work to the extent that they could feel like full employees, or whether their colleagues or the type of work assigned to them made them feel that they were there in the position of trainees. This feeling of the interns may also have played an important role in their decision as to whether or not working in the civil service was for them. It is clear from the results that more than half of the interns felt like an employee with 40% of the respondents indicating the answer "I felt more like an employee" and 17% even indicating "I felt like a full-fledged employee". In contrast, 40% marked the answer "I felt more like an intern" and only 3% marked "I felt purely like an intern". These responses, with 80% of respondents marking the "middle" options, show that the attitude of the PRB supervisors and staff was generally welcoming to interns, as the vast majority felt "better" than just plain interns.

Question 5: Did you find the work at the PRB interesting?

Figure 24:

5. Did you find the work at the PRB interesting?

Definitely not	0
Rather not	0
Rather yes	13
Definitely yes	17



Source: Own work

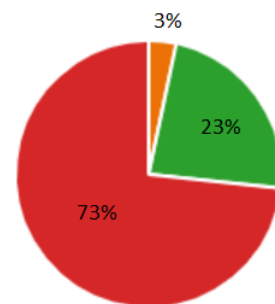
In the results of question 5, i.e. whether the trainees found the work at PRB interesting, they all answered yes. Specifically, 57% indicated "Definitely yes" and 43% "Rather yes". This rules out the possibility that trainees were not interested in working at PRB in the future due to the unattractiveness of the job.

Question 6: Do you think the internship was beneficial for your career development?

Figure 25:

6. Do you think the internship was beneficial for your career development?

Definitely not	0
Rather not	1
Rather yes	7
Definitely yes	22



Source: Own work

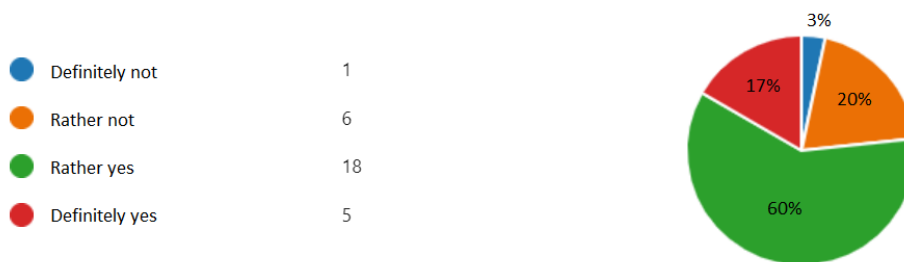
Question 6 asked whether trainees found their time at PRB to be beneficial to their future careers. This question is deliberately asked in the same way as the first questionnaire to see the trainees' opinion more than one year apart. In this case, 73% answered "Definitely yes", 23% "Rather yes" and only one intern indicated "Rather not". Comparing this to the

results of the first questionnaire, this is almost identical to the opinion the interns had BEFORE their internship. Their responses just AFTER the internship were more sceptical and interns marked 50%/50% answers Definitely yes/Rather yes. It is therefore clear that with hindsight the minor scepticism about the benefits of the internship has subsided and they again stand by the view that the internship was of considerable benefit to their future careers.

Question 7: Would you say that during your internship you became an expert on the agenda you were assigned?

Figure 26:

7. Would you say that during your internship you became an expert on the agenda you were assigned?



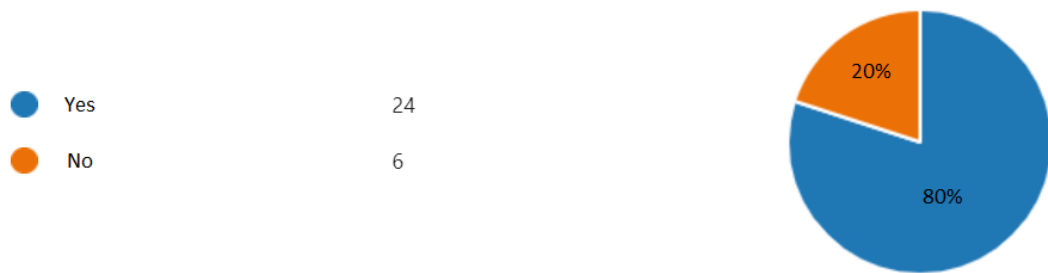
Source: Own work

This question explored the interns' subjective opinion of whether they had become experts in the particular agenda they were working on during their internship. Despite the relatively limited length of the internship, which for most interns was 7 months, a surprising 77% of respondents indicated that they felt they were experts on the issue. Specifically, 17% marked "Definitely yes" and 60% marked "Rather yes". This may be due to the intensity of the work during the internship and its time commitment (which is also addressed in this thesis), with interns working almost continuously for the entire 7 months on the subject matter, thus gaining the necessary experience. A further 20% marked "Rather not" and again only one intern answered "Definitely not".

Question 8: Were you interested in working in public administration after your internship?

Figure 27:

8. Were you interested in working in public administration after your internship?



Source: Own work

Figure 27 shows that 80% of the trainees were interested in working in the public administration after their internship. These data show that the civil service had a large number of potential employees who had considerable experience not only of working in Brussels and the functioning of the public administration, but also considerable knowledge of the agendas and interest in the job.

Question 9: Where in the public administration were you interested in working after your internship?

Figure 28:

9. Where in the public administration were you interested in working after your internship?



Source: Own work

Of the 24 interns who answered in the previous question that they were interested in working in the state administration after their internship, 15 respondents (62%) wanted to work in one of the ministries in the Czech Republic, 5 respondents (21%) wanted to work at the PRB and 4 respondents (17%) wanted to work at another embassy. From these values, it can be seen that most of the trainees were not too ambitious to want to go straight to work abroad. On the contrary, they wanted to work in the headquarters of one of the ministries and start building their career in this way.

Question 10: Have you worked (or are you still working) in public administration after your traineeship?

Figure 29:

10. Have you worked (or are you still working) in public administration after your traineeship?



Source: Own work

In contrast to the previous questions, the next question addressed not aspirations but reality and aimed to find out whether or not the trainees actually got a job in the public administration after their traineeship. The results in Figure 29 show that 30% of the interns did get a job in the public administration. In contrast, 70% of the interns are not currently working there or have not worked there in the past, of which 47% of the interns did not even receive any job offer from the state administration, 10% of the interns received a job offer but declined it, and 13% of the interns had to apply for a position in the state administration themselves but were unsuccessful in the selection process.

Question 11: What government agency do you work for?

If in the previous question respondents indicated that they work in the public administration, in this question number 11 they filled in which part of the public

administration they work in. 6 respondents indicated that they work directly in one of the ministries, 2 respondents work in the government office and one respondent in the house of foreign cooperation. These data are more or less consistent with the results of question 9, where interns indicated that they would most often like to work somewhere in a ministry in the Czech Republic after their internship.

Question 12: How did you get this job?

Figure 30:

12. How did you get this job?



Source: Own work

In question 12, these same trainees were then asked how they got this job in the public administration. Surprisingly, only 3 trainees were offered an offer directly from representatives of a ministry or government office. Another 3 interns were recommended by one of their PRB contacts and the remaining 3 interns had to find the job on their own.

Question 13: Does this work relate to the same agenda that you have been working on at the PRB?

Figure 31:

13. Does this work relate to the same agenda that you have been working on at the PRB?



Source: Own work

Subsequently, these same trainees were asked whether their work in the civil service corresponded to the agenda they had worked on at the PRB. The results show that, surprisingly, only 33% of these interns work on the same agenda and a full 67% work in a different area. These results could initially be interpreted as a considerable under-utilisation of the potential and experience of the trainees concerned, as they are not working on agendas close to those they worked on during their Presidency. However, it is not possible to generalise here, as the experience of legislative procedures and the functioning of the public administration is the same or at least similar across agendas and technical things can always be learned. However, these results are also consistent with the data obtained in question 16 of the first questionnaire, where 72.5% of respondents indicated that they would like to work in the same area in their future job as during the Presidency.

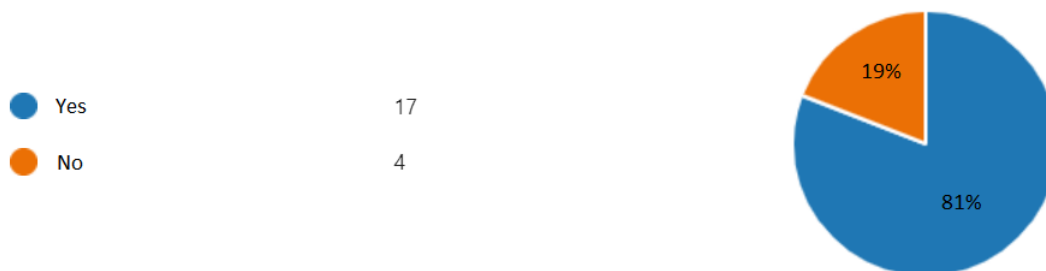
Question 15: Why did you turn down the job offer?

In this question, on the other hand, respondents who answered in question 10 that they do not work in the state administration, but were offered a job, are asked why they refused this offer. All 3 respondents answered more or less the same way, namely that they rejected the offer because of the lack of financial remuneration, the unmotivating environment and the time inflexibility. These factors of working in certain positions in the public administration are well known in the public domain and therefore these are not significant results in terms of the phenomena studied in this work, the trainees were just making a rational decision.

Question 16: Are you considering working in the public administration in the future?

Figure 32:

16. Are you considering working in the public administration in the future?



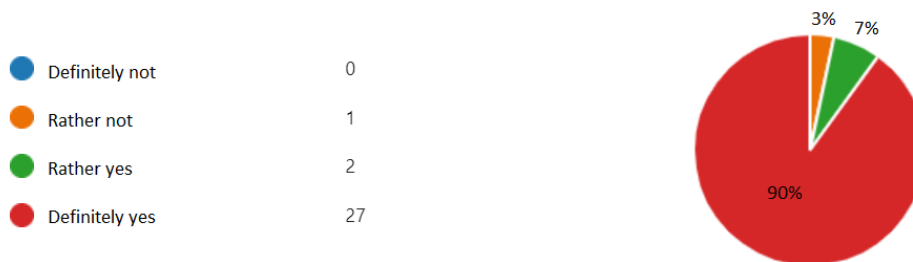
Source: Own work

Respondents who answered in question 10 that they do not work in the public administration answered in this question whether they are considering working in the public administration in the future. In Figure 32 it can be seen that the majority of trainees, specifically 81%, are still considering working in the public administration in the future. This data shows that most interns, despite not having received any job offers so far after their internship or having failed when they applied themselves, would like to work in the public administration. This still offers an opportunity for the public administration to recruit these potential employees with considerable experience.

Question 17: Do you think the civil service should have tried to retain capable and experienced trainees as future employees after the presidency?

Figure 33:

17. Do you think the civil service should have tried to retain capable and experienced trainees as future employees after the presidency?



Source: Own work

Question 17 sought the trainees' views on whether the public administration should have made any efforts to retain capable and experienced trainees as future employees after the end of the Presidency. The results clearly show that 97% of respondents agree that the public administration should have used the potential of these interns, with an overwhelming 90% of interns indicating "Definitely yes" and 7% "Rather yes". Only one intern marked the answer "Rather not". Of course, the results of this question may be influenced by the interns' subjective perception of their desire to be employed in the public administration, however, the interns themselves are very aware of the experience and knowledge they have gained during their internship and the data is so clear that it is safe to assume that these interns had considerable potential to be capable and efficient employees who can also work under great stress and time pressure, as they demonstrated during Presidency.

Question 18: If so, was that the case? In your opinion, has the public administration made sufficient efforts to attract these potential employees?

Figure 34:

18. If so, was that the case? In your opinion, has the public administration made sufficient efforts to attract these potential employees?



Source: Own work

This question 18 built on the previous question 17 by asking respondents who answered in the previous question that the public administration should have made an effort to do so to now indicate whether this was indeed the case and whether the public administration made efforts to recruit these potential experienced employees. The results show that only 7% of the respondents indicated the answer "Rather yes" and therefore that the public administration more or less made efforts to attract these trainees. In contrast, an overwhelming majority of 93% responded that the public administration made no effort to recruit these interns as employees. Specifically, 48% of interns indicated the response "Rather not" and 45% indicated the response "Definitely not." This data may indicate a missed unique opportunity that the public administration had and did not take advantage of.

In question 19, respondents were given the opportunity to add whatever information they felt appropriate. A couple of trainees took this opportunity, and their comment was almost identical, namely that they were disappointed that, despite initial promises before the traineeship that they would subsequently be allowed to work in the public administration, they did not receive any offer in the end. Here is one of the responses for reference: *"I was quite disappointed that I was not approached with any job offer as we were promised. I had to actively look for a civil service job on my own."*

4.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

In order to obtain more detailed information about the internship, the interns and their relationship with the public administration after the Presidency, a structured interview method was used with four interns and one diplomat who was also one of the supervisors of the interns at the PRB. The interns were selected to ensure that the sample was representative, with each intern working in a different PRB department, i.e. with different people and on a different agenda. Furthermore, they were selected so that two interns were not currently (i.e. after the internship) working in the public administration, one was working in the public administration and one was applying for a job in the public administration. This selection ensured that all relevant groups of interns were represented in the interviews. Participants were provided with a record of the interview, the use of the information obtained and the option not to answer the question. The interviews took place from January to March 2024 and met the planned length, which was set at 30 minutes per interview.

4.2.4 Interview with trainee No. 1

Respondent 1 worked at the PRB in the Competitiveness and TTE Division where she was assigned the Energy agenda, specifically energy performance of buildings, energy efficiency, gas and renewable energy. She participated in the internship as a student of Western European Studies at Charles University, which provided a good background for her work at the PRB. Her workload was varied, but most often she prepared minutes of working group meetings. She also compiled countries' written comments on legislative proposals into clear files, which then facilitated the diplomats' work during the negotiations. Her workload also included translating texts from English into Czech and vice versa or preparing meetings of diplomats or experts. She was very satisfied with the attitude of her colleagues and superiors and the way she was involved in the team and work processes made her feel more like a junior diplomat than a trainee. On the other hand, her role as a trainee limited her, for example, in some meetings in which she could not participate as actively as she would have liked. As far as the time commitment is concerned, it was very demanding for the respondent, as she herself states that the energy issue was the number one priority for the whole EU during the Czech Presidency. She also mentions a considerable degree of mental demand and, on the contrary, knowledge in the field was not an obstacle, as she learned everything she needed from her colleagues. When asked whether she felt like an expert on the subject

after the Presidency, the respondent replied that if it was about the processes of negotiating and adopting legislation, she definitely did, despite how complicated they are. In her words, "practical experience is the most valuable thing to ensure that you understand the processes." However, if it were specifically about energy and related issues, she does not feel like a true expert. She herself recognizes that she has significant gaps, particularly in technical matters, but these would not be difficult to fill over time. She considers the experience gained in the international environment and diplomacy to be positive, and primarily counts the time-consuming nature and lack of remuneration of the internship among the negatives. After the traineeship, she did not receive any concrete job offer from the public administration, only an advertisement from her former colleagues asking her to apply for a position at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. However, due to the inflexibility of the civil service and the low salary, she did not even apply for the job.

4.2.5 Interview with trainee No. 2

Respondent 2 did not work in a specific department at PRB like most of the other trainees. In fact, he worked on the horizontal coordination of agendas under the EU Councils prepared at Coreper I. Specifically, he worked in the Mertens group. He applied for the internship as a student of international relations at the University of Economics, which, like respondent 1, gave him the necessary background for this type of work. The main part of his working week was preparing documentation for the regular meetings of the Mertens Group and Coreper I, where he drafted agendas (so-called "flash"), prepared documents for the Mertens and the Deputy Permanent Representative, and also produced minutes of the Mertens meetings. Among other things, his work also included, as with all interns, routine administrative tasks related to the running of the office and the logistics of PRB and CZPRES events. As regards the attitude of colleagues and supervisors, the respondent stated that he was more or less satisfied. Despite the small space for training, his colleagues did their best to give him their attention, which of course diminished over time as he had to be able to work independently. Similar to respondent 1, he also states that the lack of knowledge when he started the internship was not a problem at all and he was able to acquire all the knowledge on the job. He further described that the time commitment in his job was very demanding except for the first two months and this demandingness escalated towards the end of his presidency to the point where there was hardly any time for his personal life. When asked whether he had become an expert on a particular agenda, the respondent did not know how

to answer as he had no specific agenda assigned to him. However, he had gained a superficial overview of all Coreper I agendas and knew the Council processes very well. He considers the main benefits of the internship to be the contacts he made, which he still uses professionally. Furthermore, the experience at the EU Centre and the career potential in the civil service. The downside for him was the long time away from school and inadequate remuneration, both financial and in the form of study credits. Finally, the respondent noted that he had applied for a job in the public administration several times and had been unsuccessful. He is currently reapplying for a position in the Ministry. As far as job offers in the public administration after the internship are concerned, he did not receive any offer either from Brussels or from the public administration authorities in the Czech Republic.

4.2.6 Interview with trainee No. 3

Respondent 3 worked at the PRB in the Agriculture and Environment Department, specifically assisting with the deforestation agenda. During her internship, she was a student of European Agrarian Diplomacy at CZU and also worked in the media as a social media manager. Her workload during the internship consisted of taking minutes of Council working groups and trialogues, producing lists and tables of Member States' positions that were key to the negotiations at the trialogues, and assisting with the preparation of background material for working groups and trialogues. The respondent was satisfied with her colleagues' attitude and involvement in the working processes, as everyone treated her politely and the sponsor gave her enough space to participate in all the activities she was interested in. Like previous respondents, this intern also rated the work during the Presidency as very time-consuming. In her words, *"Negotiations during trialogues and working groups usually lasted for long hours, often going into the night or even into the morning hours. At the same time, it was very common to work over the weekend."* The respondent also had to work remotely from her current job during the internship, otherwise she would not have been able to afford to stay in Brussels. Therefore, not only because of the time pressure, but also because of the stress factors, she considers the traineeship to be very demanding. She further stated that she would not describe herself as an expert on the agenda. For this, a deeper technical knowledge of the subject would be needed. However, the respondent is well versed in the negotiation and working processes in Brussels and the related communication with headquarters. Among the positives of the traineeship, the respondent ranked the experience of working abroad, gaining more political insight, gaining experience of EU legislative

processes and gaining valuable contacts. The intern again identified the time commitment as a negative and added the lack of remuneration. She pointed out that the cost of living in Brussels is higher than in Prague and that she, as a trainee who did not go through the diplomatic academy, was not even entitled to accommodation. This, combined with the zero financial remuneration from the public administration, was a big problem for her, as she had to make up for all the extra costs by working remotely in the Czech Republic. The traineeship reinforced the respondent's conviction that she wanted to be evaluated financially at work on the basis of work efficiency and performance, not on the basis of tables as in the public administration. For these reasons, the respondent did not even apply for a public administration job. However, she noted that after her internship, she was not contacted by anyone from the public administration regarding future cooperation or job offers.

4.2.7 Interview with trainee No. 4

Respondent 4 worked in one of the departments within Coreper I and at the time of his internship he was a master's student focusing on the European Union and political analysis, which, in his opinion, gave him the perfect foundation for working at the PRB. From the edge of the internship, his workload was primarily administrative support to diplomats, handling email and organising side events. After a few weeks, however, he was assigned a specific agenda and more or less fully shadowed his supervisor. He therefore participated in working groups, Coreper meetings and various bilateral meetings with the Commission or Member States. In the context of these meetings and negotiations, he was not only responsible for taking minutes, but also for preparing the background papers for meetings, analysing relative documents, or preparing research. He also attended many side events as a Czech representative in the role of observer. Apart from the above, he also actively participated in dialogues and drafting sessions, where, together with the GSC and the Commission, compromise texts of legislative proposals are prepared. He also dealt with logistical and coordination matters related to the planning of working groups, meetings with the Commission and communication with the central office in Prague and the preparation of Council meetings. Regarding relations at the workplace, the respondent was extremely satisfied and replied: "My colleagues or guarantors were absolutely great, they did not treat me as a trainee at all, but really more as an equal colleague. The same attitude was then reflected in the approach of colleagues from Prague who provided us with professional support and came to Brussels frequently." In terms of the subsequent involvement in the

working processes, the respondent himself was very pleasantly surprised, as the amount of things he could get involved in during the internship far exceeded his expectations before the internship. When asked about the demands of the work, the respondent replied that the work was definitely challenging in all aspects, whether it was related to time, stress or knowledge. However, he noted that to some extent it was also up to him how much responsibility he took on and with that the difficulty of the work was at least slightly adjustable. Furthermore, the respondent stated that his knowledge of the agenda was certainly not sufficiently expert at the beginning, but this was not a barrier, and he was able to add to his knowledge over time. On this basis, he would venture to say that his knowledge of the area is very extensive and comprehensive, but he would not like to describe himself as a true expert on the subject. Among the positives of the internship, he would include the unique experience of being involved in the Presidency, seeing and experiencing processes that are not entirely common even within the European bubble, and getting an insight into how the Czech public administration works. On the other hand, he would include the approach of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs towards the trainees among the negatives, but in his case the positives definitely prevailed. After the respondent had completed his education after the traineeship, he was offered a position in one of the departments with which he had been in close contact during his Presidency. This particular department had responsibility for one of his most important files. He subsequently accepted this offer, but he feels it necessary to point out that it was not some centralised effort by the administration to get him because of his experience at CZ PRES, but rather that these people knew him specifically from the Presidency and, as part of their good relations and the fact that they knew he was talented, they offered him the job.

4.2.8 Interview with a PRB diplomat

The interviewee for this interview was a professional diplomat who served as chair of the working group during the Presidency and worked with the trainees on a daily basis. She stated that there were a total of four interns in her department, one of whom worked directly on the same agenda as her. She noted that because of the breadth of agendas, there were more interns in this department than in others (this is confirmed by the questionnaire surveys, which show that most often two interns worked in one department). In particular, there were two trainees in the agriculture section and two trainees in the environment section. The most frequent work assigned to interns was, according to her, writing minutes, helping to organise

events, preparing background documents and research. It also included logistical and organisational support. When asked what role the PRB interns had played during the Presidency, she replied that the role of the interns had been very beneficial, important and had greatly contributed to the smooth running of the Presidency. This was also mainly because the PRB was not sufficiently reinforced with core staff for the Presidency and that was why the interns played the role of these missing staff. She then added that she was extremely satisfied with the work of the trainees and could not fault them. When asked whether the trainees' lack of knowledge of specific agendas was a barrier to their entry, she replied that, in general, it was undoubtedly easier for both parties if one came with some experience or knowledge. However, this was not a barrier in this case and since most of the trainees adapted very quickly and absorbed a lot of new information, they were able to do the necessary work and function fully. It is also often more useful to know the procedural part of the EU agenda rather than the technical part and this is where the trainees quickly found their feet. When asked whether trainees could become experts on a given agenda during the Presidency, she replied that if it was a trainee who was interested in being actively involved in the work, he or she could definitely become an expert on the subject, and most of them were. Because the topics here are discussed at all levels, from the technical to the political level, the trainees had the opportunity to gain very extensive experience and knowledge that the experts at headquarters have. In addition, trainees have the advantage of knowing how the EU works and its legislative processes, which is often not the case for experts in ministries. Furthermore, the respondent considers that this work experience was definitely beneficial for the future career of the trainees. When asked whether the respondent thought that the public administration should have tried to recruit proven trainees as employees after the Presidency and whether this was done, she responded unequivocally that the public administration should have definitely tried to recruit trainees as potential employees as there was a lot of potential in them. However, in her opinion, this was not done at all and she was not even aware that at least a basic strategy had been developed in this regard and she considered this to be a missed opportunity that the public administration had. She added that she was not surprised by this situation, since the public administration had not made any exceptional efforts to retain even the diplomats themselves, i.e. public servants. Let alone trainees. The last question of the interview was focused on whether she considered working in the public administration to be attractive for CZPRES trainees, even in comparison with, for example, working in EU institutions. She responded to this question

by saying that in her opinion, working in the public administration is not remotely sufficiently valued. It could be attractive or interesting, but the starting salary in the Czech public administration does not stand comparison with offers in the private sphere or EU institutions.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Summary and discussion of questionnaire No. 1

A summary of all the relevant information obtained from this questionnaire provided an insight into the trainees' views on the traineeship, the EU, and the public administration before and after their time at the PRB. It was found that, despite a decrease in the certainty of this decision, all trainees rated the traineeship as beneficial for their future career. However, their opinion of working in the public administration was not so clear. Before the traineeship, less than a third of the respondents thought that working in the public administration was not attractive, and after the traineeship, less than half held this opinion, suggesting that the type of work and probably its difficulty negatively influenced the trainees' opinion of working in the public administration immediately after the Presidency. This also supports their view that more respondents would prefer to work in the private sector after the Presidency than before the internship. On the other hand, work in the EU institutions was perceived as equally attractive by trainees both before and after the traineeship, which may suggest that, given the opportunity, future respondents would prefer to work in the EU institutions rather than in public administration. Another finding was that trainees were reinforced during their traineeship that the work of a diplomat is very demanding and extensive. Another big change in the trainees' opinion could be seen on the topic of the degree of influence of the Czech Republic in the EU negotiation process, where the trainees before the traineeship believed that the Czech Republic had a very weak negotiating position and after the traineeship this opinion was completely different. The change in this view may be significant in the sense that it may have also helped to change the trainees' view of working in the public administration, as they now believe that their work has a greater impact on the final results than they thought before the traineeship. The trainees also indicated in the questionnaire that most of them could not imagine before the traineeship that they would work in the field they were assigned to the Presidency. In contrast, after the internship, almost three quarters answered that they would like to work in this field, which is also helpful for their intention to work in the public administration in the future, as they will have already found considerable experience in these fields after the Presidency, and this gives the public administration room to use the potential of these interns and their experience and knowledge. Last but not least, respondents ranked time-consuming and lack of evaluation as the most

problematic aspects of their time at the PRB and ranked among the benefits not only the acquisition of hard skills in the field, but also a large number of soft skills and work contacts, which can help their attractiveness on the labour market. Finally, the respondents indicated which agenda or department they had worked on in Brussels and the answers clearly show that the trainees were involved in almost all the agendas that exist at the PRB, demonstrating the diversity of experience that individual trainees were able to gain and each of them could therefore contribute to a different part of the public administration.

5.2 Summary and discussion of questionnaire No. 2

Before proceeding to the summary of this questionnaire, it is necessary to address the significant relationships between the questions in Questionnaire 2 that are in some way relevant to this paper and not apparent at first glance from the graphs, as a more detailed examination of the data was necessary. This is due to the assumption that some groups of trainees who answered the same to one question may have similar answers to other questions and other groups may have different answers.

The first such group of trainees to have significant relationships between questions is the respondents who answered "Definitely yes" to question 3, whether they were satisfied with how they were involved at the PRB. There were 14 of these respondents and in the following question 11 of them indicated that they felt like an employee at the PRB. 4 of them even indicated that they felt like a full employee, which is significant as there was a total of 5 such responses. Further, this group responded almost identically to question 7, where 12 of these 14 respondents answered that they had become experts on the agenda during their internship. Specifically, 8 of them marked the answer "Rather yes" and 4 even "Definitely yes" which is a large number considering that there were 5 of these answers in total. The last significant phenomenon for this group of trainees is that 4 of them are working in the public administration after the traineeship, 9 are considering this job in the future and only one does not want to work in the public administration. Summarising all the findings about this group of trainees, we can generally conclude that how the trainees felt involved in the work processes at the PRB not only influenced how they perceived the work itself and how satisfied they were during the traineeship, but also, in their opinion, they gained much more experience and knowledge and it also significantly influenced their opinion on whether they wanted to work in public administration after the traineeship.

Another group that points to a significant phenomenon is the group of trainees who responded in question 4 that they felt like employees while working at the PRB. This group is very similar to the previous one, but for the purpose of this paper it is mentioned separately. There are a total of 17 respondents in this group and they are not only distinguished by the fact that they answered the same to question 4, but also the vast majority of them, namely 15 of the 17, consider that they have become experts on the agenda during their internship (question 7) and 16 of them are working or interested in working in the civil service (questions 10 and 14). These data complement very well the statements in the previous paragraph, where even interns who were not 100% satisfied with their involvement in the work processes at the PRB, but felt more like full-fledged employees in their team, subsequently conclude that they have gained much more experience and are interested in working further in the public administration.

Another group of respondents can be defined as trainees who received a job offer from the public administration after the Presidency. Based on the data from questions 10 and 12, we can see that 9 respondents out of a total of 30 received a job offer. It should be noted that all of these interns felt more like employees while working at the PRB and rated themselves as having become experts on the agendas during their work. It should also be taken into account that 4 of these 9 job offers came as recommendations from the PRB staff, which is debatable whether this is an effort by the public administration to recruit these staff or whether it is a good personal relationship between the trainees and their colleagues. Despite the fact that this is a relatively small group of 9 (potentially only 5) interns, it is significant for the account of this thesis because it indicates the level of interest of the public administration in employing former interns. This is complemented by the remaining data from the questions mentioned above, where 4 trainees applied for a position themselves but were unsuccessful. In this case, we cannot talk about the lack of interest of the public administration in employing these trainees, as it is not clear what positions they applied for and therefore it is possible that they may have been rejected due to their lack of qualifications for the position. It should be noted, however, that one third of the trainees (potentially more than two thirds if we also take into account job recommendations from the PRB colleagues) who work in the public administration after the presidency must have sought out the position and applied for it themselves.

For the sake of completeness of information, it is necessary to point out a small group of respondents who do not work in the public administration and do not want to work there. Specifically, out of the whole sample, there are 4 respondents who already after the end of their internship indicated that they do not want to have a career in public administration. In addition, most of them felt more in the role of an intern during their internship, which may have been a factor in this decision. The results of these data are predictable, as it is to be expected that working in the public administration is not for everyone, and despite the very good experience of more or less all interns during the presidency, some will prefer to take their career in a different direction.

As alluded to earlier, the link between questions 17 and 18 is also very important, with respondents almost unanimously agreeing that the public administration should have made an effort to retain capable trainees, who have extensive experience of EU and public administration processes and considerable knowledge of the agenda, as future employees, and that the public administration had not done so.

Summarizing all the significant information obtained from this questionnaire, it provided a view of the interns' internship more than a year apart and information about their involvement in public administration during this period. It was found that the vast majority of the interns were satisfied with their work at the PRB and despite the fact that about half of the respondents felt more in the position of an intern than a junior diplomat, all found their work at the PRB very interesting and even with the benefit of hindsight concluded that it was a great asset to their working career. In terms of gaining work experience and knowledge, not only in EU legislative procedures but also in specific and challenging agendas, the trainees broadly represent the view that they have become experts in these areas. This work experience motivated them to such an extent that more than three quarters of the respondents wanted to work in the public administration after their traineeship, especially in one of the ministries in the Czech Republic. However, the reality did not meet the aspirations and only less than a third of these candidates actually got a job in the public administration. What was unexpected was that the majority of these trainees are now working on an agenda that does not coincide with their agenda during the Presidency. Even more surprising was the fact that the public administration only offered a job to less than one fifth of the trainees after the Presidency. The remainder were not offered jobs or otherwise contacted or had to

apply for positions themselves. Despite these facts, most of the former trainees who are not currently working in the public administration are still considering this career. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents clearly expressed their opinion that the public administration did not show sufficient activity after the Presidency to attract capable trainees as employees, despite the fact that, in the trainees' opinion, they should have and promised to do so. Last but not least, it was proven that the trainees' involvement in the work processes and the approach of their colleagues in Brussels not only positively influenced their perception of their work and the team, but also gave them more work experience and knowledge of the agenda, which motivated them to want to work in the public administration in the future.

5.3 Summary and discussion of interviews

Summarizing all the information gathered from the interviews, it was found that the workload of all interns was very complex and definitely went beyond the standard responsibilities that interns generally have. Their workload ranged from taking minutes and drafting comments from individual Member States, to organising side events and meetings or preparing background documents and research, to fully representing their diplomatic colleagues at various events. In fact, it can be stated that the trainees fully fulfilled the role of full-fledged staff, which was in short supply at the PRB, as confirmed by one of the diplomats. Furthermore, it is clear that the attitude not only of the supervisors but also of all PRB staff in general was not only very friendly and professional towards the interns, but they even treated them not as their interns but as colleagues and fully involved them in their work. The only areas where respondents were slightly constrained by their position as interns were situations where, due to clearly defined rules and regulations, only diplomats were required to carry out a given activity and interns were often only allowed to participate in these activities as observers, but these exceptions were obvious and understandable to all interns. The data also show that the lack of knowledge of the agenda and experience of working in Brussels on arrival was not an obstacle for trainees. All trainees adapted very quickly to the working pace of their fellow diplomats and gained all the necessary experience on the job. This included not only experience with legislative processes but also technical knowledge of the different agendas. The trainees confirmed this in their statements, stating that their knowledge of the topics had definitely broadened and deepened and that they knew the issues very well, but they were careful not to use the word expert, which they did not want to be called. In contrast, the diplomat who worked with a number of them was not

afraid to refer to capable trainees as experts on the agenda after the Presidency. During the internship, however, the time and stress load was very demanding for the respondents. Many had to work from morning to evening and working weekends were common. This, added to school or work commitments in the Czech Republic, made for very demanding working conditions that interns had to cope with, demonstrating their resilience primarily to stress and time pressure. Among the positives that the internship brought to the respondents is definitely the experience of an international environment and working abroad. This is complemented by the personal and professional contacts gained and the experience gained of the EU agendas and processes. The negatives were basically only the time commitment during the traineeship. One of the last observations was that not only in the opinion of the trainees, but even of the diplomat (a public administration employee), the public administration should have made an effort to recruit capable trainees after the Presidency and all agreed that this was far from being the case.

5.4 Comparison with similar research

Scientific publications on similar topics are almost non-existent and therefore it is very difficult to find relevant data for comparison. Most similar research either examines internships in general across a specific country, or the impact of specific projects in a particular sector or across all age groups. It is not only for these reasons that it is difficult to compare these other studies with the data collected in this paper, which deals with a very specific internship that is covered by the public administration of the Czech Republic, but which behaves more like an internship in the EU institutions. However, if we compare the data obtained with the most similar research, such as the European Commission's Study to support the evaluation of the Quality Framework for Traineeships¹⁰¹, which evaluates traineeships not only in Brussels but also in all Member States, or Ondřej Hora's Empirical Evaluation of Traineeships for Young People under 30¹⁰², we can see that the results are somewhat similar. For example, the results of the European Commission study show that 85% of respondents to the trainee survey agreed that they had learned things during their traineeship that were useful from a professional point of view and 83% agreed that they had

¹⁰¹ European Commission. *Study supporting the evaluation of the Quality Framework for Traineeships* [online]. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=26544&langId=en>

¹⁰² HORA, ONŘEJ, Sciendo, *Empirical evaluation of professional traineeships for young people up to 30 years of age* [online]. https://www.rilsa.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18024866-CentralEuropeanJournalofPublicPolicy_EF692216.pdf

gained real work experience during their traineeship¹⁰³. This is consistent with the findings of this thesis, where the amount of agreement for similar questions was around the 90% level. Another finding of the European Commission study was that traineeships clearly promote labour market integration by increasing employability and related skills. However, a related finding was that these internships do not provide guaranteed access to the labour market. The majority (58%) of respondents to their survey of interns reported that they had not been offered a job after their internship¹⁰⁴ (the remaining 42% include job offers from contacts made during the internship - therefore, for comparison, it is assumed that job referrals from PRB colleagues count as public administration job offers within the data of this thesis). This value of 58% is considerably lower than the value in this thesis, where a full 70% of respondents did not receive a job offer after their internship. On the basis of these data, it can be concluded that the employment of CZPRES interns after their internship is significantly lower than the average employment of interns in the EU, due to the fact that the majority of them did not receive any job offer after their internship. On the rest of the similar questions, the studies were in agreement with this thesis. A further comparison can be made with the results of Ondřej Hora's study on "Empirical evaluation of professional traineeships for young people up to 30 years of age", where he concluded that trainees generally have a better chance of finding a place on the labour market, that they have gained considerable work experience and that they have avoided long-term unemployment at the beginning of their career¹⁰⁵. The results of the data in this thesis are consistent with O. Hora's findings, particularly in that interns gained significant work experience. Further research would be needed to compare the remaining results. As is clear from the comparisons mentioned, the results of this thesis are similar to the results of the other studies with one small difference, namely that the potential of the internship and the interns in future employment was not exploited to the extent that it offered.

¹⁰³ European Commission. *Study supporting the evaluation of the Quality Framework for Traineeships* [online]. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=26544&langId=en>, p. 50.

¹⁰⁴ European Commission. *Study supporting the evaluation of the Quality Framework for Traineeships* [online]. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=26544&langId=en>, p. 51.

¹⁰⁵ HORA, ONŘEJ, Sciendo, *Empirical evaluation of professional traineeships for young people up to 30 years of age* [online]. https://www.rilsa.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18024866-CentralEuropeanJournalofPublicPolicy_EF692216.pdf, p.29.

5.5 Research limitations

This thesis had a number of research limitations. Among the most significant was the fact that it could not provide a full view of the issue from the side of the public administration due to the fact that the agendas of individual interns were divided among all ministries in the Czech Republic and each of these ministries is specific in its view. Thus, from this perspective, the public administration side could not be generalised to a single representative figure that would be able to provide a view of the public administration's approach to the CZPRES interns. To obtain this data would require an extensive study that would be significantly beyond the scope of this thesis. Another significant research limitation was the fact that due to the anonymity of the first questionnaire in particular, it was not possible to track the evolution of individual respondents' answers over time, i.e. between the first and second questionnaires. This may serve as a recommendation for future papers on a similar topic, where a comparison of these responses over time could provide further detailed information and insight. The type of responses chosen in the first questionnaire proved to be another limitation, with the original interviewer selecting a 4-value scale. In order to make the two questionnaires comparable, this scale had to be subsequently selected in the second questionnaire, despite the fact that in this case at least a 5-value scale would have been preferable, where respondents would have had the opportunity to express a neutral opinion. Another, less significant research limitation was the return rate of the second questionnaire. Compared to the first questionnaire, where 40 trainees out of 64 (i.e. 62.5%) completed the survey, the second questionnaire was completed by 30 trainees out of 64 (i.e. less than 47%) and the return rate therefore fell below half. However, this was to be expected because of the time lag, where contact between all interns fades as time passes. Finally, it should also be mentioned that most relevant potential positions for interns in the public administration require the completion of a university degree, and some interns did not have this after their internship. However, for the purposes of this thesis, this fact was intentionally omitted as it should not be a barrier to receiving a job offer from the public administration in the future or at least to communicating with each other about further cooperation after the internship.

6. Conclusion

The role of the Presidency of the Council of the EU is a major challenge for most Member States, not only because of its importance but also because of its enormous demands. With this role, Member States take on some of the great responsibility for where not only legislation but the EU as a whole will be heading over the next six months. This role places great demands not only on the skills and knowledge of Brussels diplomats and their colleagues at headquarters, but also on their commitment and will, as they are essentially required to give up their personal lives for more than six months and are expected to devote all their time and effort to their work to ensure that their country's Presidency runs smoothly and delivers a successful outcome. Directly linked to this are the large staffing requirements at the Permanent Representation, where a large number of highly capable people are needed. The Czech Republic decided to address this staffing challenge ahead of its 2022 Presidency with a low-cost option, which was to use a large number of trainees from among university students instead of recruiting additional core staff for the Permanent Representation.

This thesis aimed to find out what role these interns played at the PRB during the presidency. Specifically, it was to show how integrated the interns were in the working processes, what trust was placed in them and what experience and knowledge they were able to gain during this work. Other objectives were to find out how many trainees went on to work in the public administration after the Presidency, how their working environment and colleagues influenced their decisions about future work in the public administration, and whether the public administration made any effort to recruit these experienced trainees as future employees after the Presidency.

The results of the research, which consisted of questionnaire surveys and interviews, showed that the role of trainees at the PRB was very significant during the Presidency and that most trainees essentially played the role of full diplomats. In fact, their work did not differ significantly from that of their supervisors and other diplomats, who integrated the trainees into all working processes and treated them as colleagues, not as mere trainees. Not only from the trainees' point of view, but also from the diplomats' point of view, this internship was very beneficial for the trainees' future careers, as they gained unique

knowledge and experience that they would hardly have gained elsewhere. It was shown that even the lack of knowledge of the topics to which the interns were assigned was not a complication for their work at the PRB, as the interns were able to adapt very quickly and acquired all the necessary knowledge within the first weeks of work. This knowledge of not only the legislative processes but also of the technical parts of the agendas was subsequently deepened and broadened during their work to the point where, according to most of the trainees and the PRB diplomat, they became experts in the agenda. The data showed that despite the fact that the vast majority of interns were interested in working in the public administration after the internship, less than one third of all interns are currently working in the public administration. It was shown that those interns who felt very comfortable in their work team at PRB and were involved in all available activities were able to gain more knowledge and work experience during their internship. At the same time, these trainees were more inclined to work in the public administration after the Presidency and most of those currently working in the public administration belong to this group. A significant finding was that only a very small fraction of trainees were offered a job by the public administration after their traineeship. This is confirmed by the testimonies of the trainees and the PRB diplomat, who stated that in their opinion, the public administration did not make any efforts to recruit trainees as future employees after the Presidency, despite the fact that they were largely experts in the respective agendas with experience of the international environment, knowledge of the functioning of the EU and its legislation, and experience of public administration processes. In addition, the public administration has already invested a considerable amount of resources and time in these trainees, especially in the case of trainees who have undergone a year of training at the Diplomatic Academy, where they have acquired a great deal of relevant and useful knowledge. When this information is taken into account, together with the fact that the vast majority were fresh graduates looking for work, it is all the more surprising that the public administration did not take any steps to recruit these potential employees and thus missed this great opportunity to recruit capable and experienced staff with whom it had close contact.

This thesis provides an insight into the important and crucial role played by PRB trainees during the Czech EU Presidency and their subsequent involvement in the public administration. It also provides a view of the internship from both the interns' and the PRB diplomat's perspective and shows the advantages, disadvantages, benefits and shortcomings

of the internship. The conclusion primarily highlights the untapped potential of this internship primarily from a public administration perspective, but with implications for the interns, who as a result have to seek employment on their own and often outside the public administration.

It is therefore clear that nowadays internships are an excellent tool where, on the one hand, young talents can gain the necessary work experience and practice with important companies or institutions and, on the other hand, these very entities can gain new insights and innovative ideas from interns in their field of activity and, at the same time, the chance to attract these young professionals as their future employees with great potential. After all, it has been shown that, if selected and guided appropriately, trainees can take on even the most challenging roles, such as helping to ensure the smooth and successful running of The Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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8.2 List of abbreviations

EU – European Union

CZPRES – Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU

MS – Members state

EC – European Commission

EP – European Parliament

MEPs – Members of the European Parliament

EUCO – European Council

ECB – European Central Bank

CJEU – Court of Justice of the European Union

Coreper – Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union

QMV – Qualified Majority Voting

PRB – Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels

COPS – Political and Security Committee

FAC – Foreign Affairs Council configuration

GAC – General Affairs Council configuration

WP – Working Party

GSC – The General Secretariat of the Council

GA – General approach

EEAS – European External Action Service

Appendix

Appendix A: Questionnaire N.1

Question 1: Before the internship, I perceived the internship as beneficial for my career development.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 2: After the internship, I perceive the internship as beneficial for my career development.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 3: Before the internship, I perceived employment in Czech state public institutions as attractive.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 4: After the internship, I perceive employment in Czech public institutions as attractive.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 5: Before the internship, I perceived employment EU institutions attractive.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 6: After the internship, I perceive employment in the EU institutions as attractive.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 7: Before the internship, I perceived the public sector as more attractive than the private sector (in terms of employment).

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 8: After the internship, I perceive the public sector as more attractive than the private sector (in terms of employment).

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 9: Before the internship, I perceived the work of a diplomat as demanding.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 10: After the internship, I perceive the work of a diplomat as demanding.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 11: Before the internship, I perceived the Czech Republic's negotiating position within the European Union as relatively limited.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 12: After the internship, I perceive the Czech Republic's negotiating position within the European Union as relatively limited.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 13: Before the internship, I intended to pursue a career as a professional diplomat.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 14: After the internship I intend to pursue a career as a professional diplomat.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 15: Before the internship, I intended a career in a field corresponding to the agenda assigned to me during the internship.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 16: After the internship, I intend to pursue a career in the field corresponding to the agenda assigned to me during the internship.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 17a: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Workplace relations.

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17b: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Mental strain (stress).

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17c: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Demanding manual work.

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17d: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Time commitment.

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17e: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – The content complexity of the work.

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17f: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Unfamiliarity with the working environment.

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17g: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Insufficient (financial) valuation or settlement of living costs).

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17h: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Insufficient recognition of work (from colleagues/superiors).

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic

- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 17i: Perceptions of the difficulty of the internship according to individual aspects – Monotony of work.

- a) Unproblematic
- b) Slightly problematic
- c) Problematic
- d) Very problematic

Question 18a: Perception of the benefits of the internship according to individual aspects – Overall development of hard skills (practical, language, etc.).

- a) Unbeneficial
- b) Slightly beneficial
- c) Beneficial
- d) Very beneficial

Question 18b: Perception of the benefits of the internship according to individual aspects – Overall development of soft skills (communication, social, organizational, etc.).

- a) Unbeneficial
- b) Slightly beneficial
- c) Beneficial
- d) Very beneficial

Question 18c: Perception of the benefits of the internship according to individual aspects – Expanding the network of social contacts.

- a) Unbeneficial
- b) Slightly beneficial
- c) Beneficial
- d) Very beneficial

Question 18d: Perception of the benefits of the internship according to individual aspects – Development of language skills (in non-native language).

- a) Unbeneficial
- b) Slightly beneficial
- c) Beneficial
- d) Very beneficial

Question 18e: Perception of the benefits of the internship according to individual aspects – Increasing attractiveness for potential future employers.

- a) Unbeneficial
- b) Slightly beneficial
- c) Beneficial
- d) Very beneficial

Question 19: I perceive the assigned work agenda/position as corresponding to my knowledge/skills.

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 20: Would you consider doing the same internship again?

- a) Definitely not
- b) Rather not
- c) Rather yes
- d) Definitely yes

Question 21: Degree of study during the traineeship.

- a) Bachelor
- b) Masters
- c) Doctoral

Question 22: Assigned agenda during the internship (multiple choice).

- a) Energetics
- b) Industry/internal market
- c) Safety
- d) External relations
- e) Finance and economics
- f) Agriculture
- g) Healthcare
- h) Environment
- i) Education/Youth/Sport
- j) Work and social issues
- k) Transport
- l) Telecommunication
- m) Media/PR/Press
- n) Protocol
- o) Space
- p) Research
- q) Military

- r) Law
- s) Horizontal coordination
- t) Other

Question 23: Field of study at university (multiple choice).

- a) Energetics
- b) Industry/internal market
- c) Safety
- d) External relations
- e) Finance and economics
- f) Agriculture
- g) Healthcare
- h) Environment
- i) Education/Youth/Sport
- j) Transport
- k) Telecommunication
- l) Media/PR/Press
- m) Space
- n) Research
- o) Military
- p) Political science
- q) Law
- r) Other

Appendix B: Questionnaire N.2

Thesis Questionnaire - Trainees

Thank you very much in advance for filling it in. The questionnaire is ANONYMOUS.

Name of DP: The role of trainees during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and the involvement of the staff of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in public administration after the Presidency

1. Gender *

- Female
- Male

2. Age *

- 20 and less
- 21-23
- 24-26
- 27-30
- 31 and more

3. Were you satisfied with how involved you were in the work at the PRB? *

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

4. How did you feel while working in your team at PRB? How did your colleagues and superiors treat you? *

- I felt purely like an intern
- I felt more like an intern
- I felt more like an employee
- I felt like a full fledged employee

5. Did you find the work at the PRB interesting? *

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

6. Do you think the internship was beneficial for your career development? *

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

7. Would you say that during your internship you became an expert on the agenda you were assigned? *

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

8. Were you interested in working in public administration after your internship? *

- Yes
- No

9. Where in the public administration were you interested in working after your internship? *

- At the Ministry in the Czech Republic
- At the PRB in Brussels
- At another embassy
- Jiné

10. Have you worked (or are you still working) in public administration after your traineeship? *

- Yes
- No, but I got a job offer
- No, but I applied for a job and was unsuccessful
- No, I didn't even get a job offer

11. What government agency do you work for? *

Zadejte svoji odpověď.

12. How did you get this job? *

- I had to find a job myself
- The job was recommended/offered to me by someone from the PRB
- The job was recommended/offered to me by someone from the ministry
- Jiné

13. Does this work relate to the same agenda that you have been working on at the PRB? *

- Yes
- No

14. Did this job meet the expectations you had before you started? *

- Definitely not
- Rather not
- Rather yes
- Definitely yes

15. Why did you turn down the job offer? *

Zadejte svoji odpověď.

16. Are you considering working in the public administration in the future? *

Yes

No

17. Do you think the civil service should have tried to retain capable and experienced trainees as future employees after the presidency? *

Definitely not

Rather not

Rather yes

Definitely yes

18. If so, was that the case? In your opinion, has the public administration made sufficient efforts to attract these potential employees? *

Definitely not

Rather not

Rather yes

Definitely yes

19. Space for comment

Zadejte svoji odpověď.

Semi-structured interview – trainee

Question 1 - Where did you work (and/or study) before you did your traineeship?

Question 2 - What department and agenda did you work in at the PRB?

Question 3 - Describe in detail your job description and what you were responsible for.

Question 4 - Were you satisfied with the way your colleagues or guarantors involved you in the working processes? How did colleagues approach you?

Question 5 - Were there areas that you wanted to get more involved in but were not allowed to for some reason?

Question 6 - How time-consuming, stressful, or knowledgeable was your work?

Question 7 - Would you say you became an expert in the particular agenda you worked in?

Question 8 - What were the positives of the traineeship and what did it bring you? What were the negatives?

Question 9 - Did you stay in contact with anyone from Brussels or HQ after your traineeship?

Question 10 - Did you work or apply for a job in the civil service after your traineeship? Also describe the reason why yes or no. And if you are already working, describe your position and how you got it (whether you were offered it by someone from Brussels/HQ or whether you had to find the job yourself).

Semi-structured interview – diplomat from PRB

Question 1 - What position did you work in during your presidency?

Question 2 - How many interns have worked in your department?

Question 3 - What type of work were interns most often assigned?

Question 4 - In your opinion, what role did the trainees play during the Presidency?

Question 5 - Were you satisfied with the performance of the trainees?

Question 6 - Was it a barrier that trainees often had no experience of the agenda when they started?

Question 7 - Would you say that during the Presidency the trainees have become experts on the subject?

Question 8 - Would you say that this work experience has been beneficial to the career development of the trainees?

Question 9 - Do you think the public administration should have tried to recruit proven trainees as employees after the presidency? Why yes/no? Was this done?

Question 10 - In your opinion, is working in the public administration attractive/interesting/sufficiently rewarding for CZPRES trainees? For example, compared to working in EU institutions.