Press Release

Public opinion on how urgently various areas of public life need to be addressed – February 2017

- Once again the most urgent problem is corruption: 64% of respondents consider it to be a very urgent problem. This is followed by immigration (61%), which last year was in first place. Economic crime ranks is the third most urgent problem (55%).

- The biggest decrease in perceived urgency was seen in unemployment, which fell by 17 percentage points. This pronounced decreasing trend is now in its third year: in 2015, 80% of respondents felt unemployment was a very urgent problem.

- Along with a decrease in the urgency of the need to address immigration by 11 percentage points there was also a similar decrease in the level of urgency assigned to the security situation in the Czech Republic and the Czech Republic's EU membership.

Prepared by:
Milan Tuček
Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění, Sociologický ústav AV ČR, v.v.i.)
Tel.: 210 310 589; e-mail: Milan.Tucek@soc.cas.cz

The Public Opinion Research Centre included a question in its regular February survey in which respondents were asked to rate what issues in public life they feel most urgently need to be addressed.[1] The question is asked with an annual periodicity. The results are presented in Figure 1.

According to respondents, the most urgent problem in the Czech Republic is corruption, which 64% of respondents consider 'very urgent' and another 29% consider 'somewhat urgent'. In second place is the problem of immigration, which 61% of respondents consider 'very urgent' and another 30% consider 'somewhat urgent' (there was a decrease from last year of 11 percentage points in the share of responses 'very urgent', the effect of which was to shift this issue out of first place). The third most urgent problem that needs to be addressed, cited as 'very urgent' by six percentage points fewer respondents, is economic crime (55% think it is 'very urgent' and 34% 'somewhat urgent'), followed by three issues that are felt to be 'very urgent' by one-half of respondents: social security, the state of security in the Czech Republic, public safety.

More than two-fifths of respondents indicated that health care is a very urgent problem (46%). The next most important issues are public finance (37%), the functioning of the national economy (36%), and unemployment (34 %). Next there are ten issues that around 30% of respondents consider 'very urgent' in the following order: the functioning of public administration, the standard of living, the political situation in the CR, interpersonal relations, agriculture, the legal environment, education, the observance of human rights, and the judiciary.
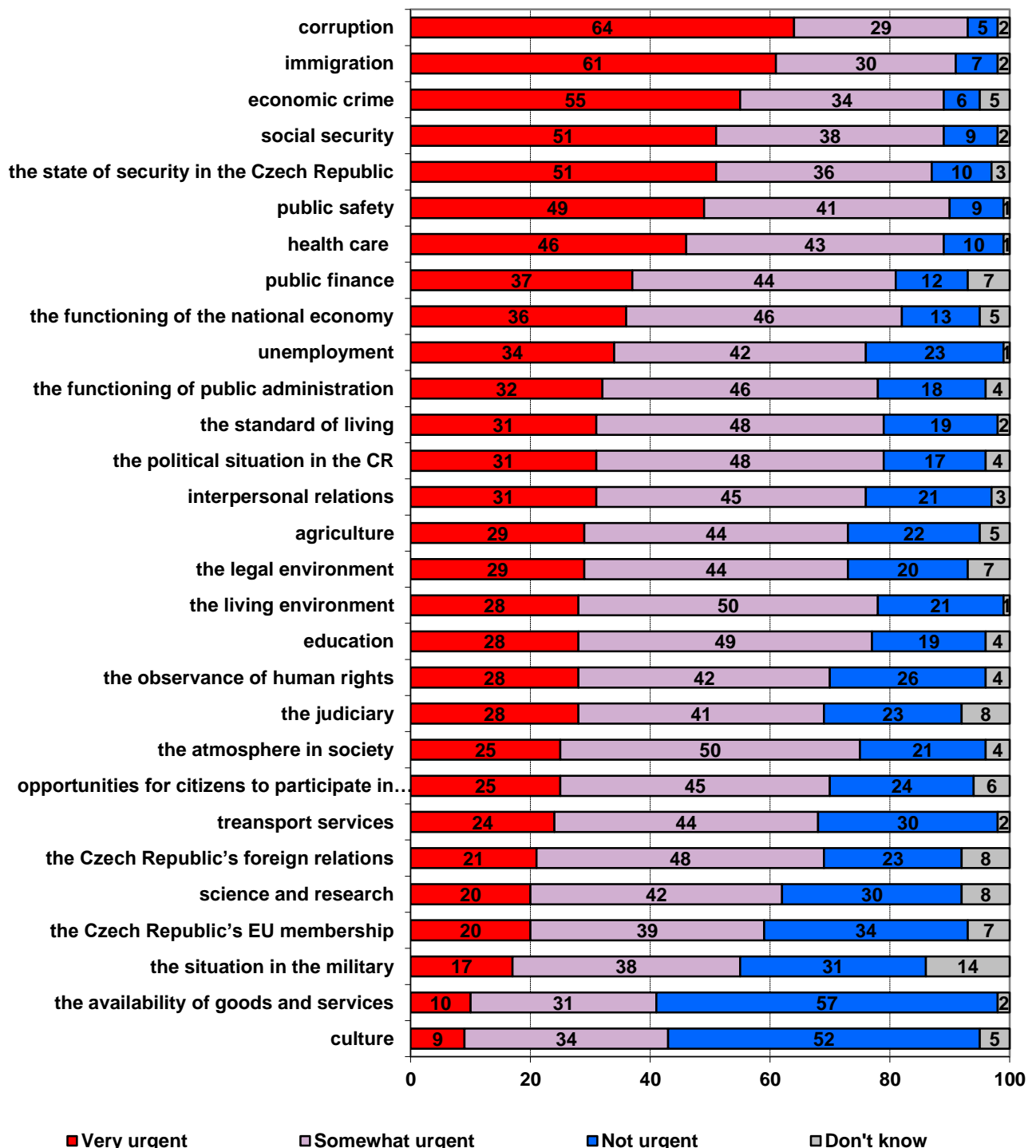
At the opposite end of the scale are culture and the availability of goods and services, which are considered to be 'very urgent' issues by 10% of respondents. More than one-half of respondents do not think that these are urgent issues, while 43% believe culture is an urgent issue (9% very urgent and 34% somewhat urgent), and 41% believe the availability of goods and services is an urgent issue (10% very and 31% somewhat).

For the remaining items their ranking as very important falls within the range of ten percentage points from 16% to 25%, in the following order from the lowest ranking: the situation of the military, the Czech Republic's membership in

---

[1] The question read: 'In your opinion, which of the following areas of public life need most urgently to be addressed this year in the Czech Republic: a) the living environment, b) health care, c) the Czech Republic's foreign relations, d) education, e) the functioning of the economy, f) public safety, i.e. general crime, g) culture, h) the situation in the military, i) the functioning of public administration, j) social security, k) unemployment, l) the judiciary, m) immigration, n) corruption, o) economic crime, p) agriculture, q) the political situation in the Czech Republic, r) opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making on public affairs, s) the standard of living, t) science and research, u) the Czech Republic's membership in the EU, v) transport services, w) the availability of goods and services, x) the observance of human rights, z) the legal environment, aa) the overall atmosphere in society, ab) interpersonal relations, ac) the state of public finance, ad) the security situation in the Czech Republic, e.g. the risk of war or a terrorist attack.' Response options: 'not urgent', 'somewhat urgent', 'very urgent', 'don't know'.

the EU, science and research, the Czech Republic's foreign relations, transport services, opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making, and the atmosphere in society.

Figure 1. Selected areas of public listed according to how urgent a problem they are considered by the public (%)

Area	Very urgent	Somewhat urgent	Not urgent	Don't know
corruption	64	29	5	2
immigration	61	30	7	2
economic crime	55	34	6	5
social security	51	38	9	2
the state of security in the Czech Republic	51	36	10	3
public safety	49	41	9	1
health care	46	43	10	1
public finance	37	44	12	7
the functioning of the national economy	36	46	13	5
unemployment	34	42	23	1
the functioning of public administration	32	46	18	4
the standard of living	31	48	19	2
the political situation in the CR	31	48	17	4
interpersonal relations	31	45	21	3
agriculture	29	44	22	5
the legal environment	29	44	20	7
the living environment	28	50	21	1
education	28	49	19	4
the observance of human rights	28	42	26	4
the judiciary	28	41	23	8
the atmosphere in society	25	50	21	4
opportunities for citizens to participate in…	25	45	24	6
treansport services	24	44	30	2
the Czech Republic's foreign relations	21	48	23	8
science and research	20	42	30	8
the Czech Republic's EU membership	20	39	34	7
the situation in the military	17	38	31	14
the availability of goods and services	10	31	57	2
culture	9	34	52	5

■ Very urgent □ Somewhat urgent ■ Not urgent □ Don't know

Note: Items are listed according to the percentage of 'very urgent' responses.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost), 6–19 February 2017, 1023 respondents over the age of 15, face-to-face interviews.

A factor analysis revealed six factors (mutually independent) that account for 57% of the variance of responses to the battery of items.

1. interpersonal relations, the atmosphere in society, the observance of human rights, the state of public finance, the political situation

2. the availability of goods and services, transport services

3. education, health care, the living environment, culture, science and research

4. social security, unemployment

5. corruption, economic crime

6. the security situation in the Czech Republic, immigration

The areas that are not listed among any of the factors scored in multiple factors and are therefore viewed in public opinion as multivalent. There are clear interpretations for the individual factors: the first factor represents the general state of society (at the heart of which is the overall atmosphere in society and the political situation); the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth factors each comprise logically interconnected areas and need to further explanation; the third factor logically comprises areas that belong to the quaternary sector of the national economy.

Given the number of different areas of public life included in the question, we carried out a factor analysis of the effect of sociodemographic characteristics. We found that the factor scores, which are a kind of sum of the responses to the items included in one factor, are in the case of the first factor (the atmosphere in society) and the fifth factor (corruption) influenced by age (an older age correlates with greater urgency). The fourth factor (social security) is influenced by the declared standard of living (the lower it is the greater the urgency) and education (the lower the level of education the greater the urgency) and happiness with the political situation (the less happiness with an area the greater the urgency it is assigned). Happiness with the political situation influences the first factor (the greater the happiness with this area the greater the urgency it is assigned).

In the time comparisons presented by Figures 2 and 4a to 4ad we can see that compared to March last year, when the same question was asked the last time, there was a statistically significant decrease in the share of responses 'very urgent' in the case of unemployment (by 17 percentage points – part of a decrease over several years from 80% in 2014 to the current 34%).

There was also a decrease in the urgency assigned to immigration – by 11 percentage points from last year. It is important to remember that the (European) refugee crisis expressed itself in 2016 in a significant increase in the share of people who considered it 'very urgent' (up by 22 percentage points from 2015), which put immigration in first place in terms how urgent it was seen. Similarly, there was a decrease in the level of urgency assigned to the Czech Republic's membership in the EU by 10 percentage points (to the same level observed in 2015), and a decrease in the level of urgency assigned to the security situation in the Czech Republic, which includes potential terrorist attacks (a decrease of 7 percentage points, i.e. to the same level observed two years ago). The research confirmed the trends of decreasing urgency assigned to public finance and the atmosphere in society.

**Figure 2. Trends in how urgent a problem selected areas of public life are seen to be by the public (%)**

Legend:
- unemployment
- the living environment
- public safety
- health care
- education
- social security
- corruption

X-axis: 2003 March, 2004 March, 2005 February, 2007 February, 2008 February, 2009 February, 2010 February, 2011 February, 2012 February, 2013 March, 2014 February, 2015 March, 2016 March, 2017 February
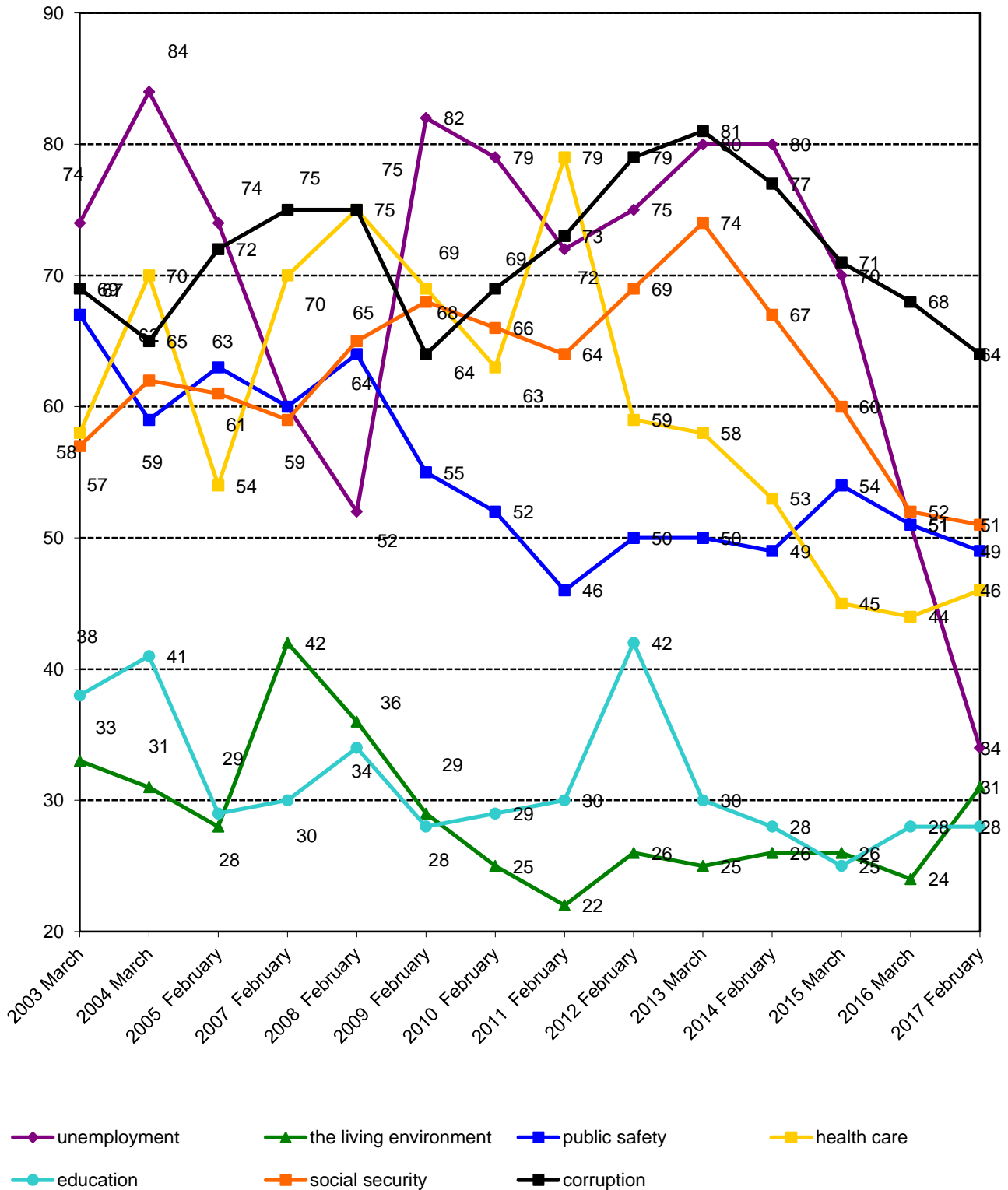
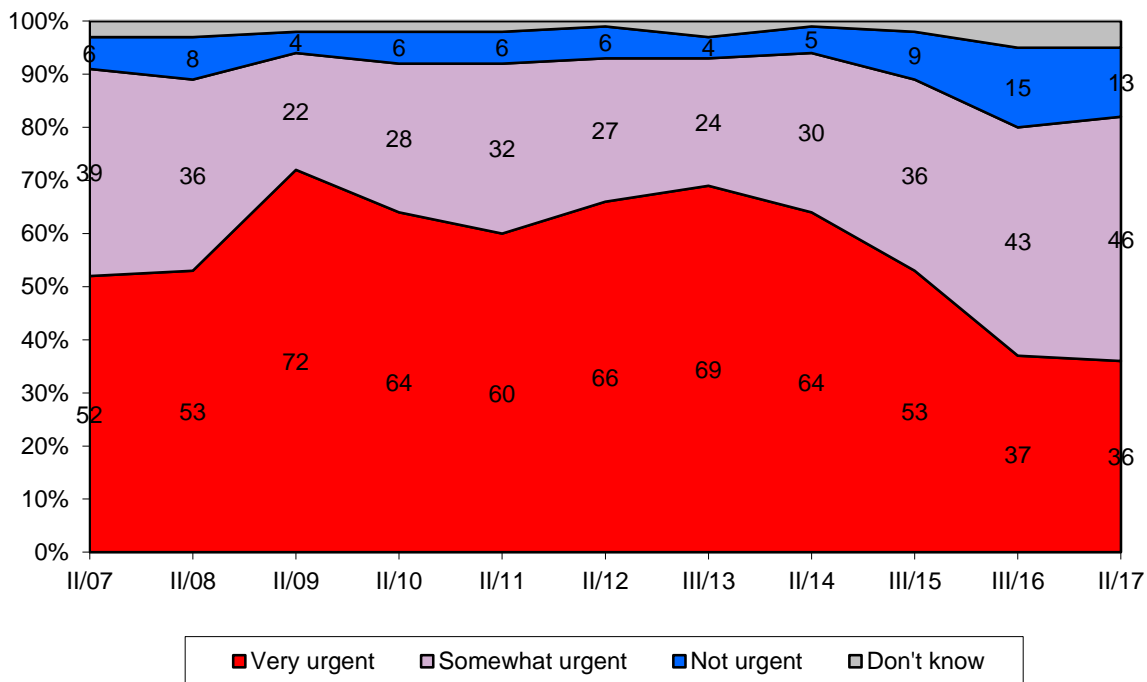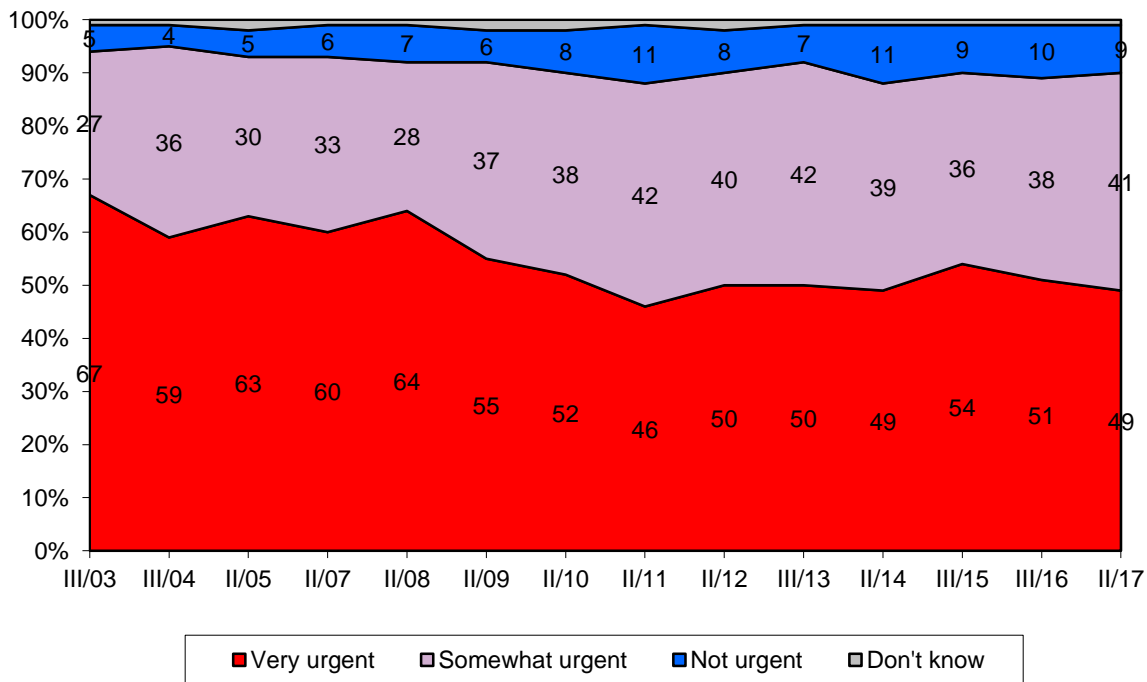Note: The figure presents the percentages of responses ‚very urgent'.
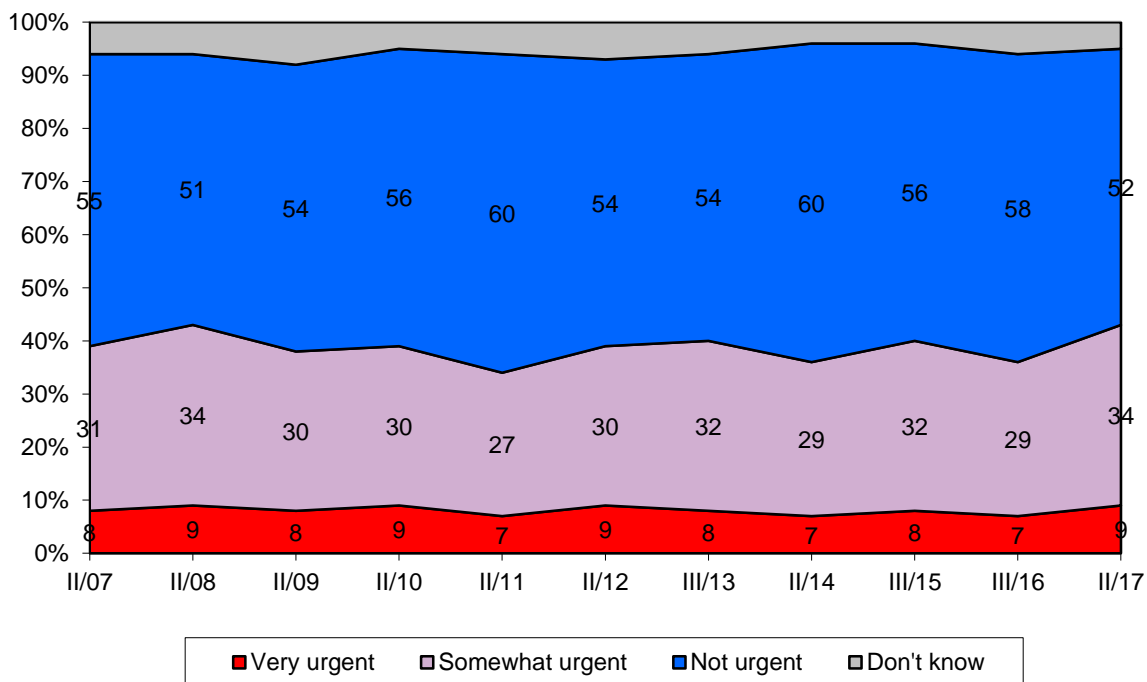
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Before presenting a series of graphs showing the time series for individual areas, we decided to include one comparison of the results of three successive surveys: in December 2016 we surveyed whether the same areas improved or worsened during the given year; in January 2017 we surveyed how satisfied people were with the given areas; in February we surveyed how urgently they need to be addressed. Here we chose the functioning of the national economy because of the significant changes in its ranking over the course of the ten-year period observed.

Figure 3a: The functioning of the economy – better / worse since the previous year (%)
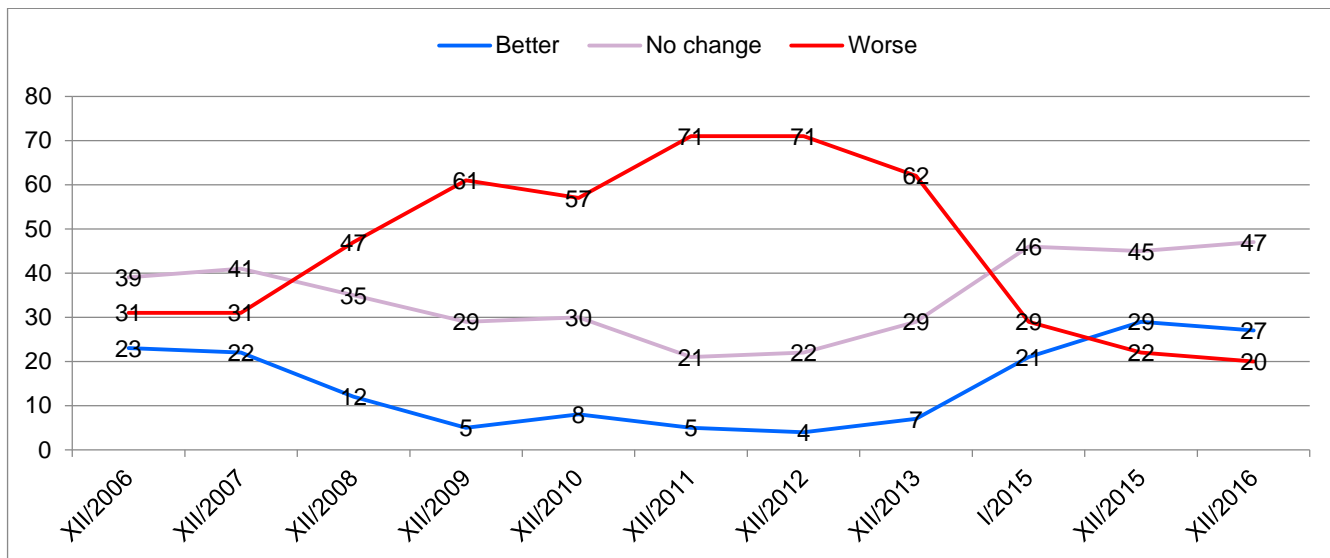
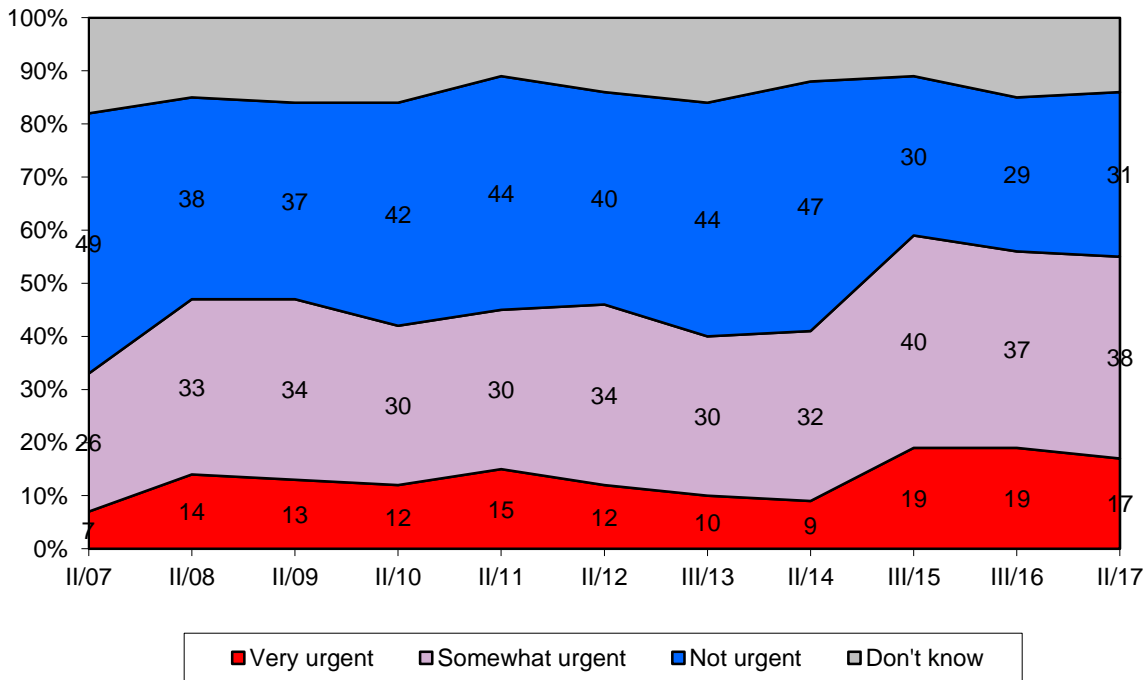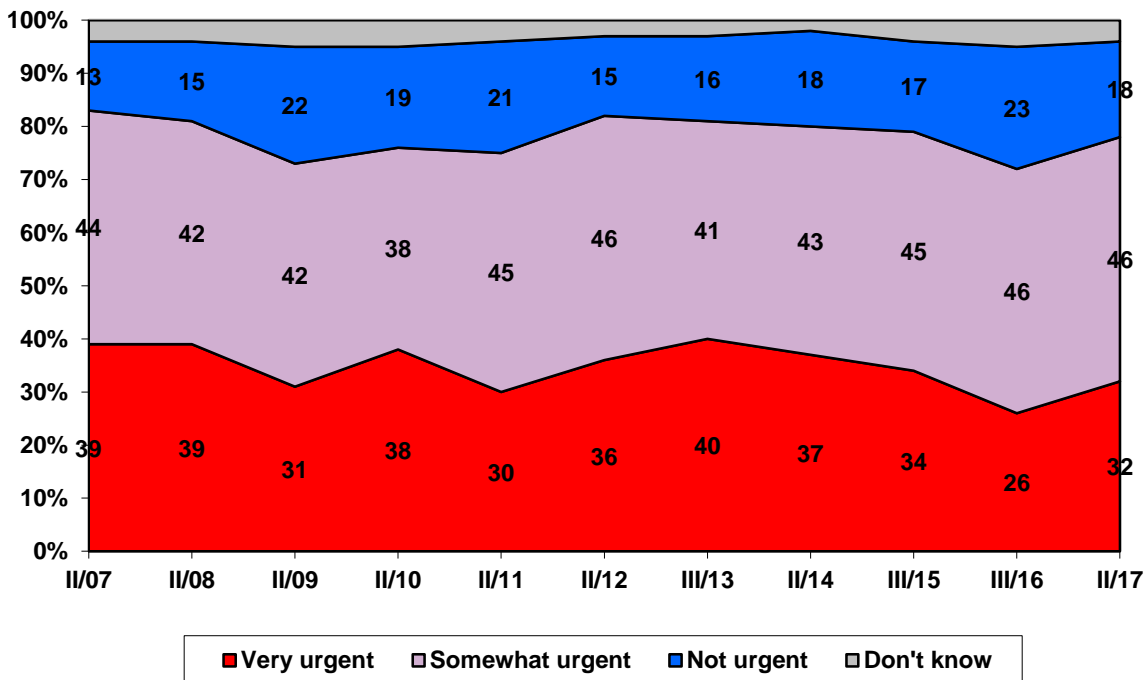Note: The difference to 100% is made up of ‚don't know‘ responses.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 3b: How happy people are with the current situation – the functioning of the economy (%)
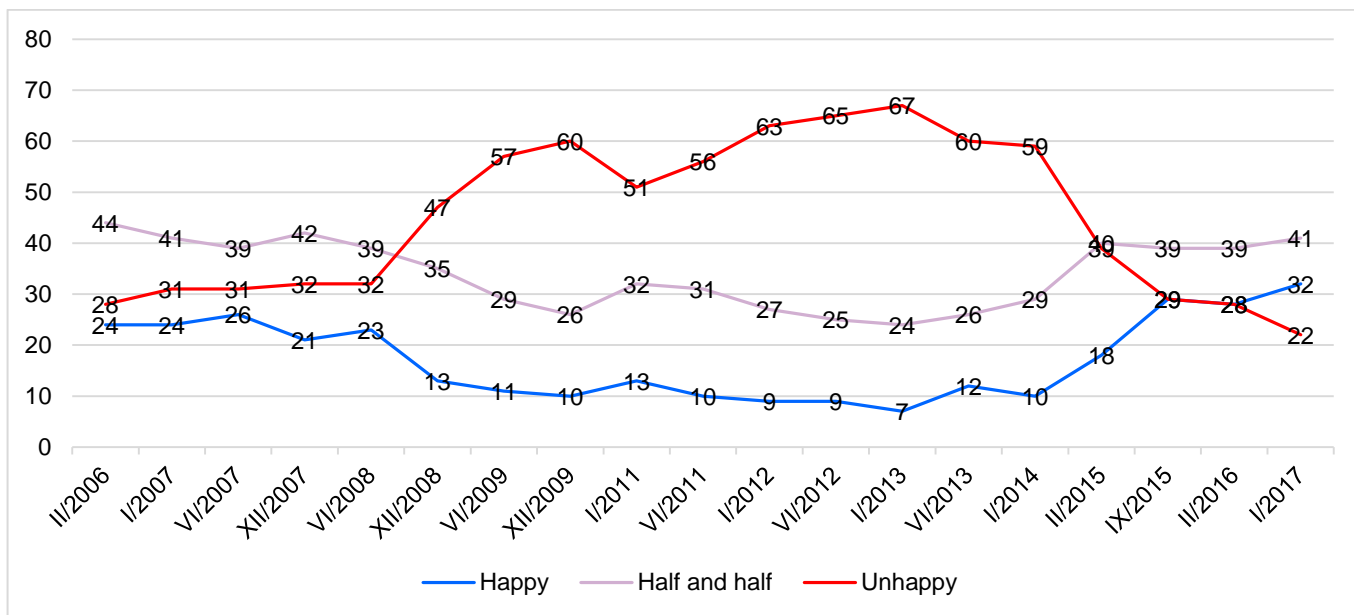
Note: The difference to 100% is made up of the response ‚don't know‘.
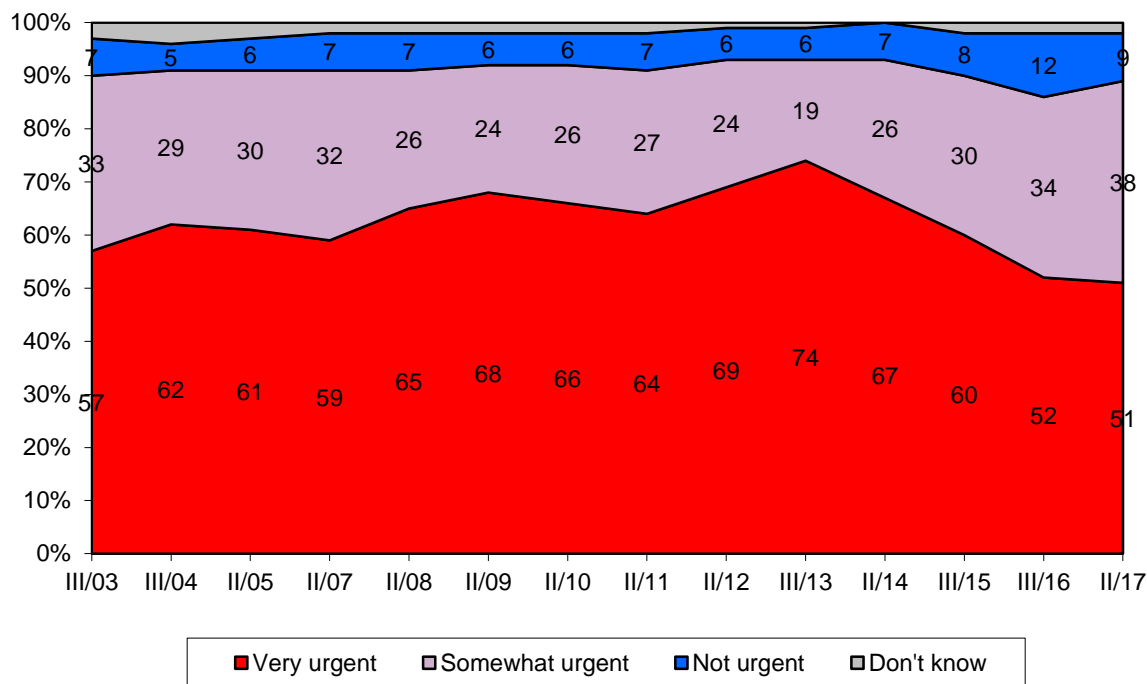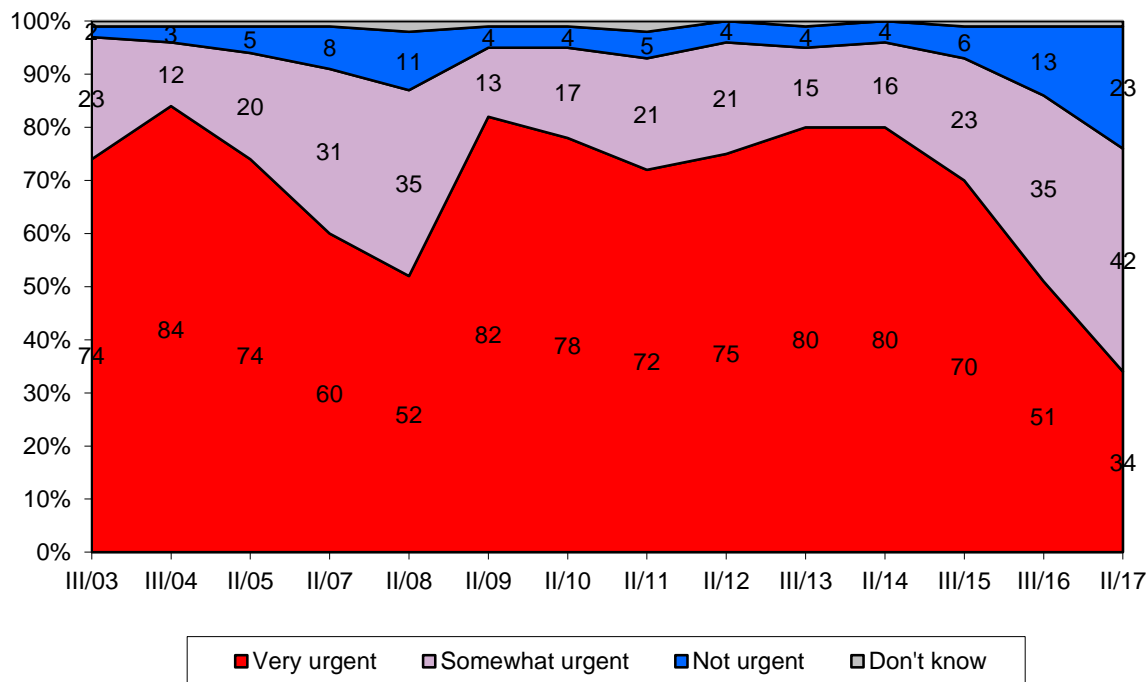
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 3c: How urgent a problem is the functioning of the economy – a time comparison (%)
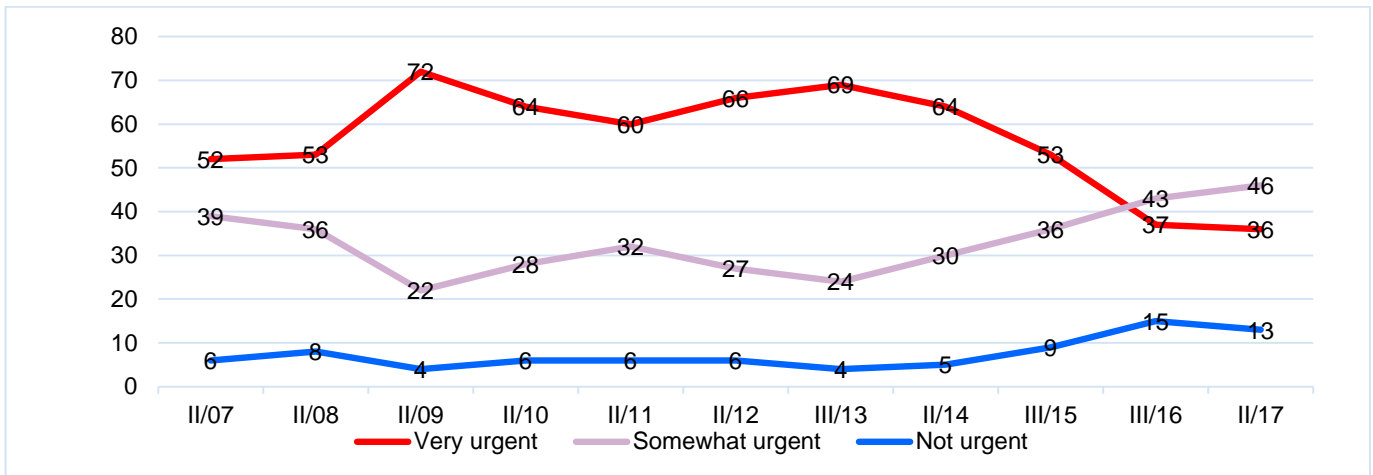
Note: The difference to 100% is made up of the response ‚don't know'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

The comparison shows how interconnected the three evaluations are.

The following graphs capture how urgent each of the items in the questionnaire is rated according to their order in the questionnaire.

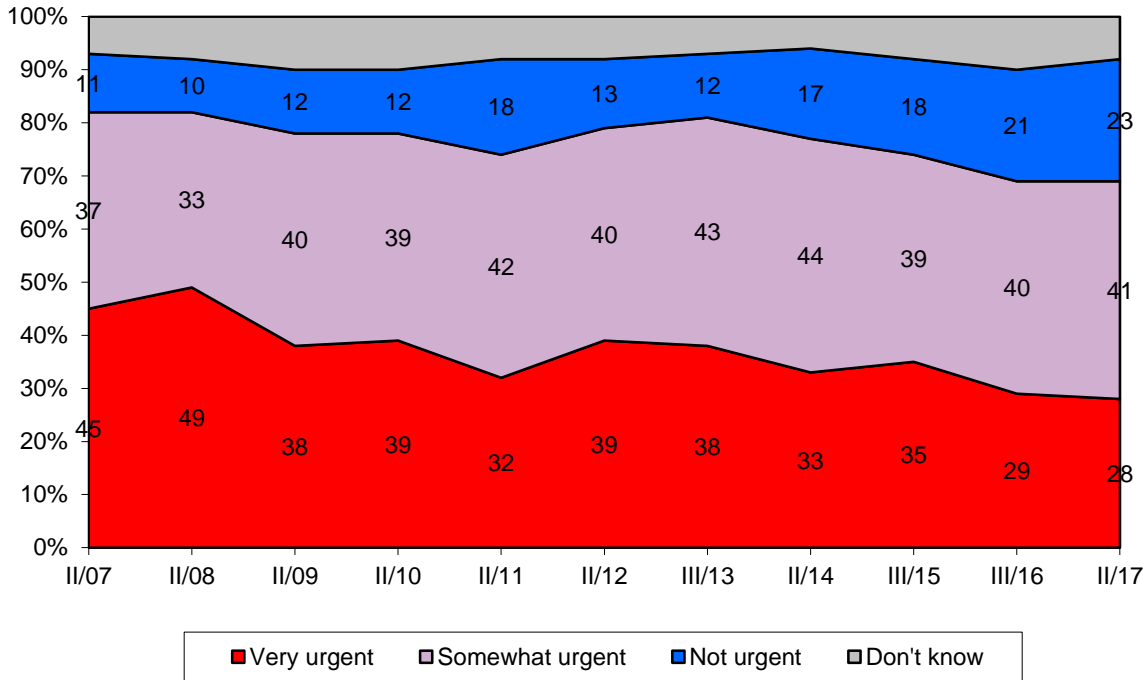**Figure 4a: How urgent a problem is the living environment – a time comparison (%)**
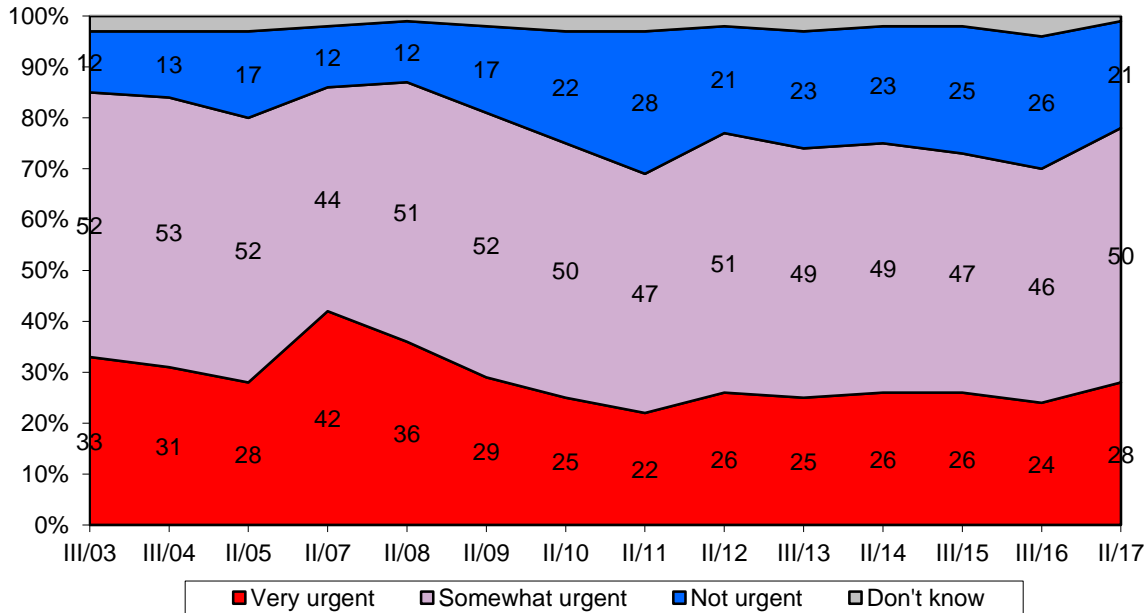
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

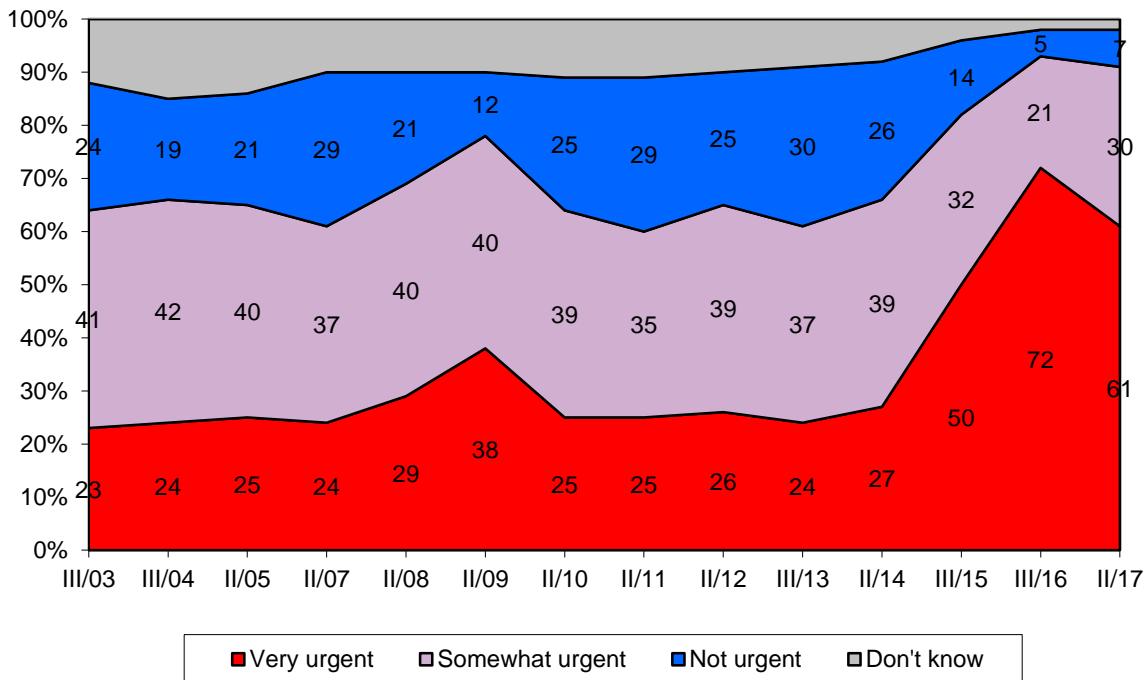**Figure 4b: How urgent a problem is health care – a time comparison (%)**
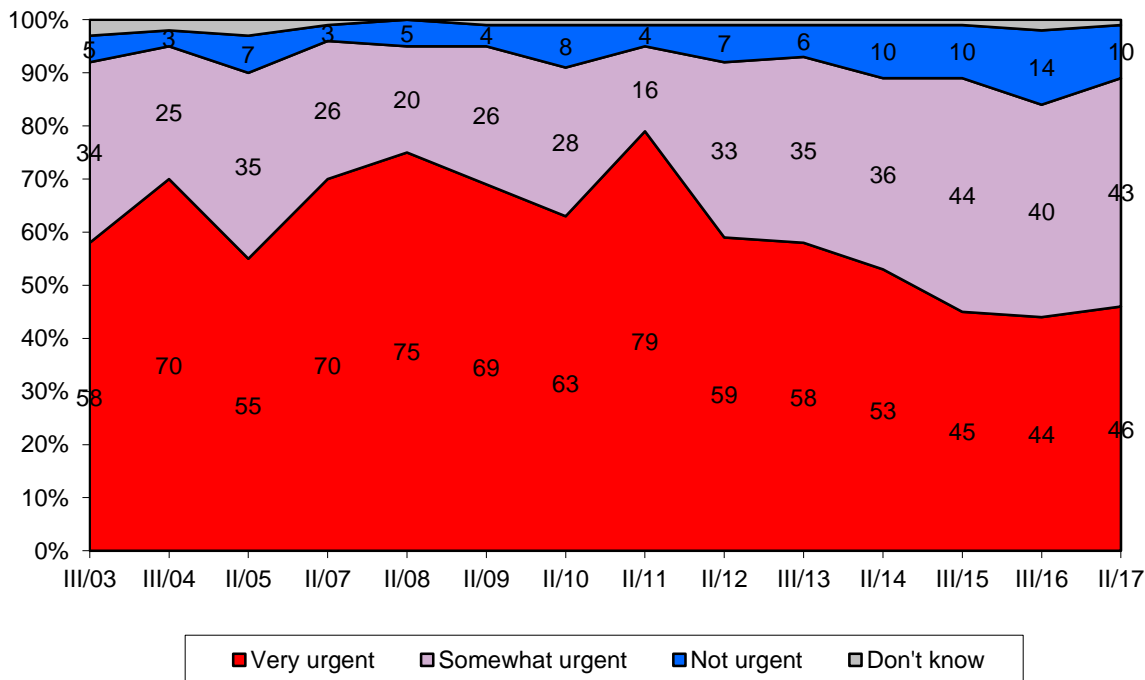
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4c: How urgent a problem are the Czech Republic's foreign relations – a time comparison (%)
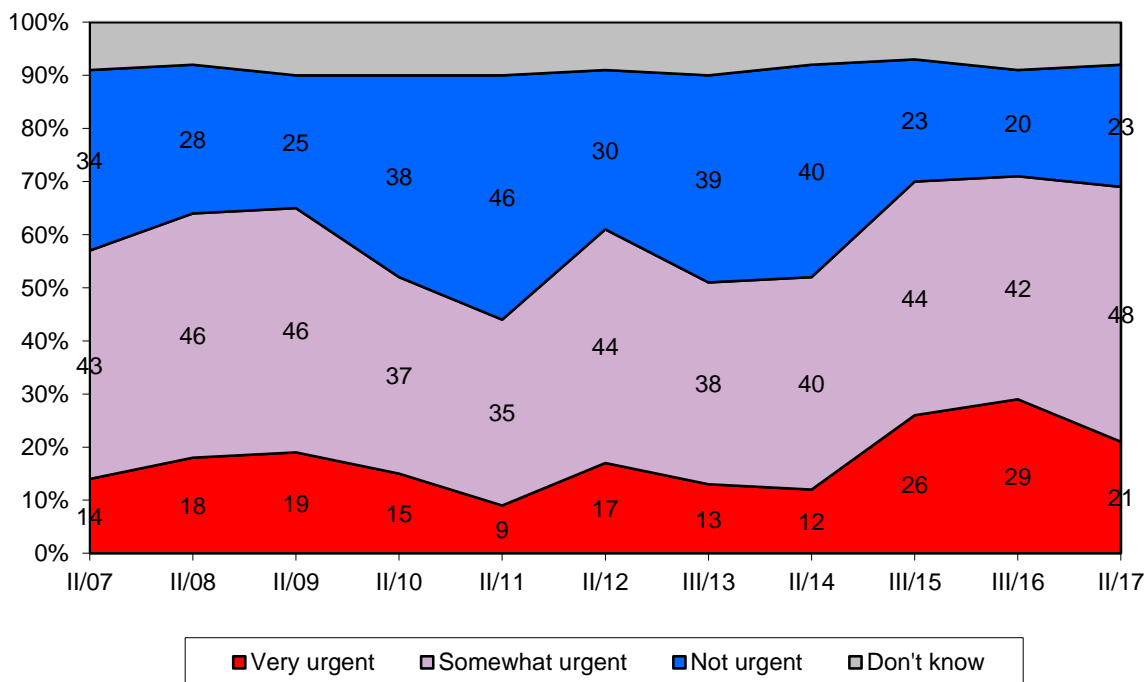
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4d: How urgent a problem is education – a time comparison (%)
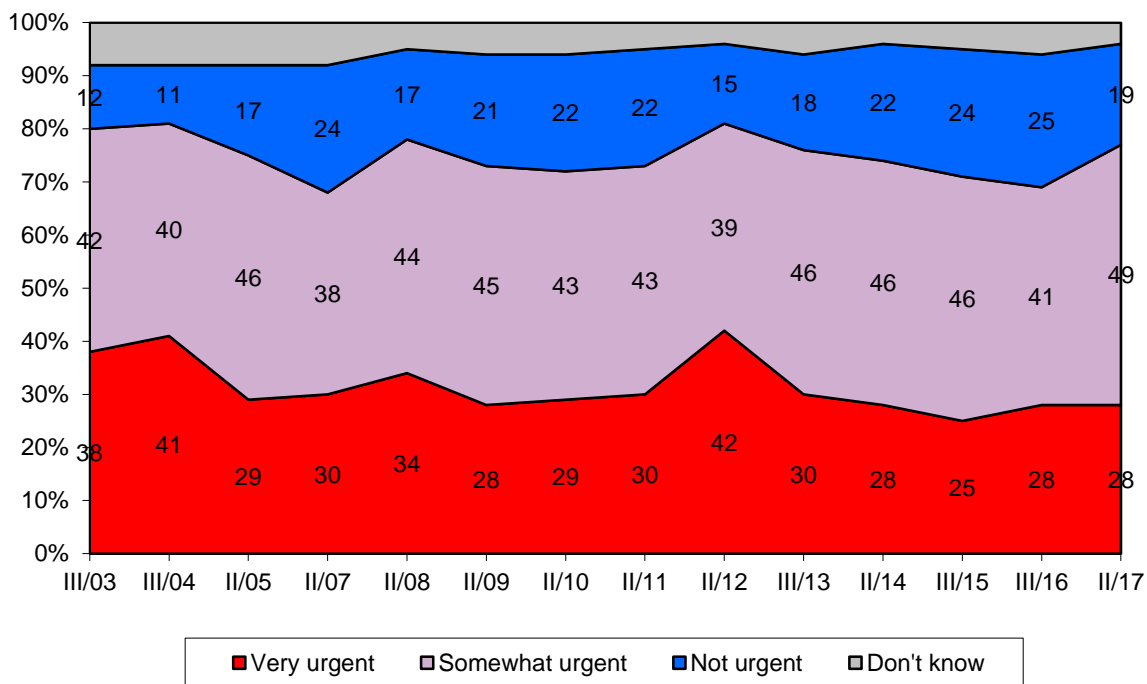
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).
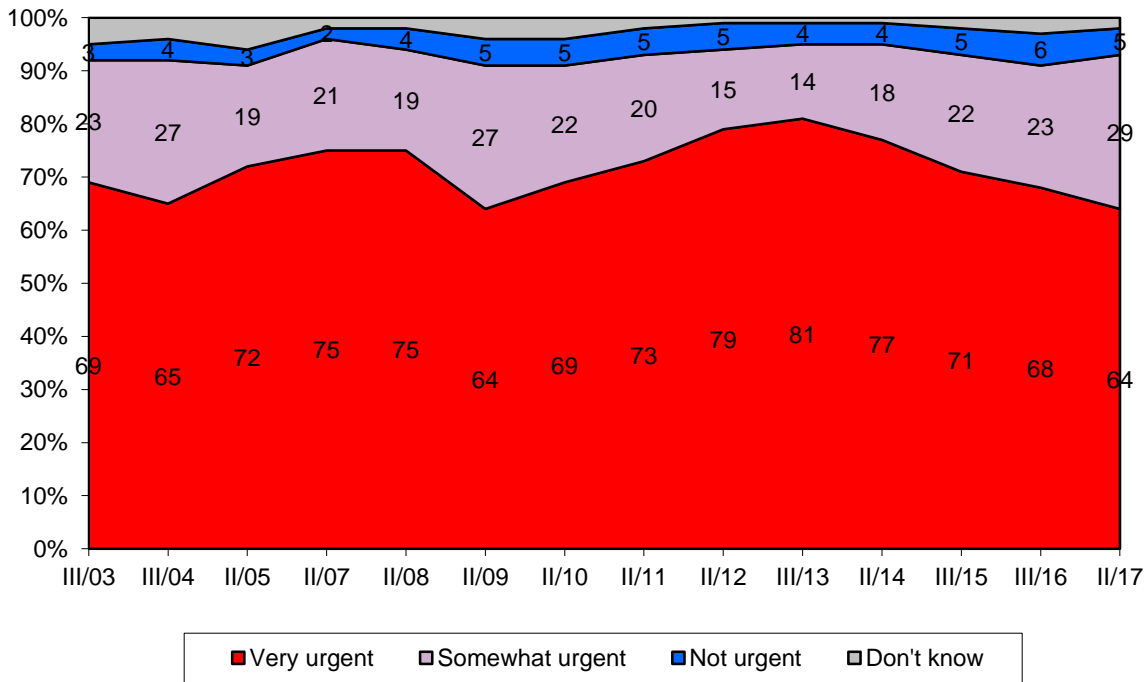
Figure 4e: How urgent a problem is the functioning of the economy – a time comparison (%)
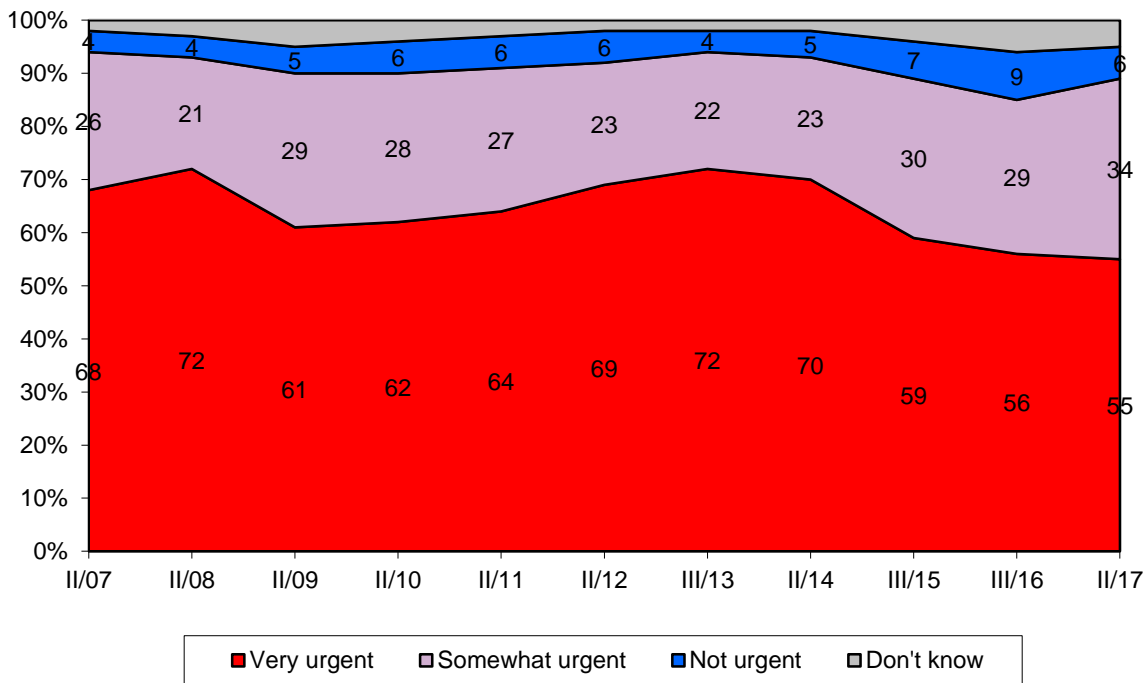

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4f: How urgent a problem are public safety and crime in general – a time comparison (%)
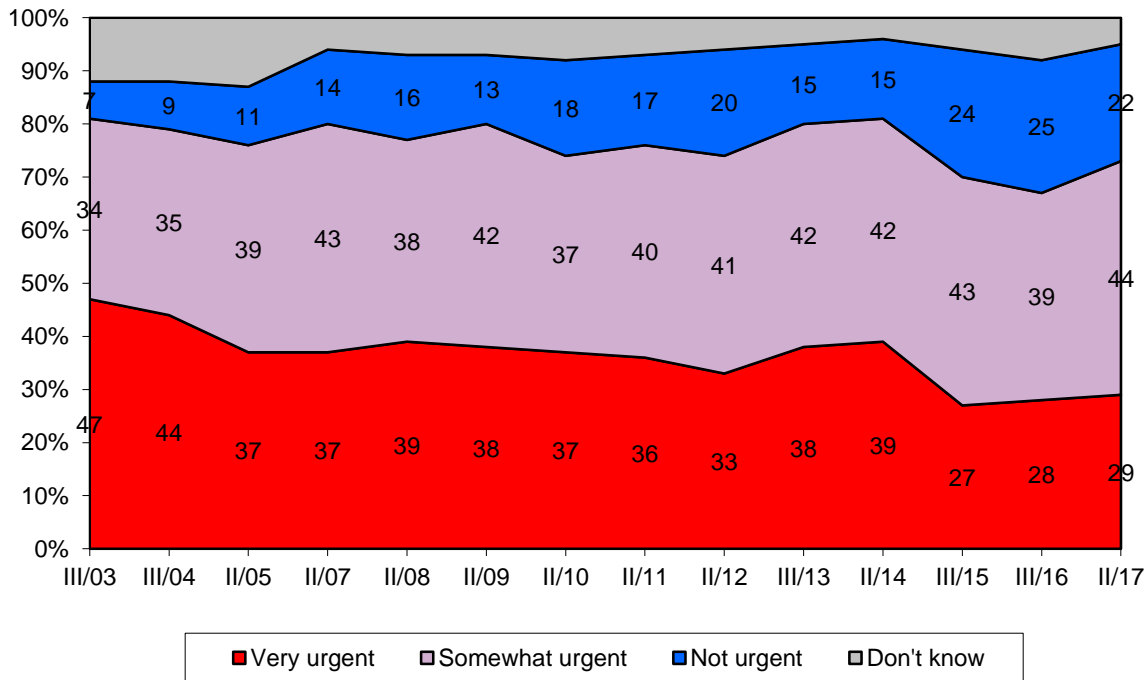

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4g: How urgent a problem is culture – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

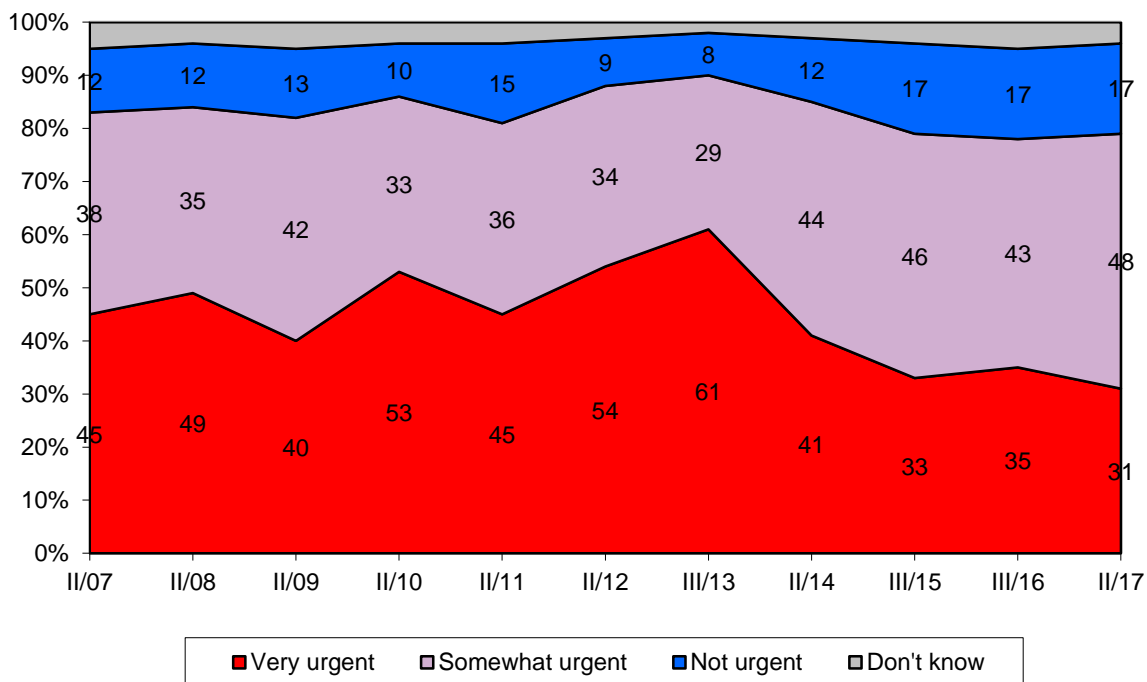**Figure 4h: How urgent a problem is the situation in the military – a time comparison (%)**

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4i: How urgent a problem is the functioning of public administration – a time comparison (%)
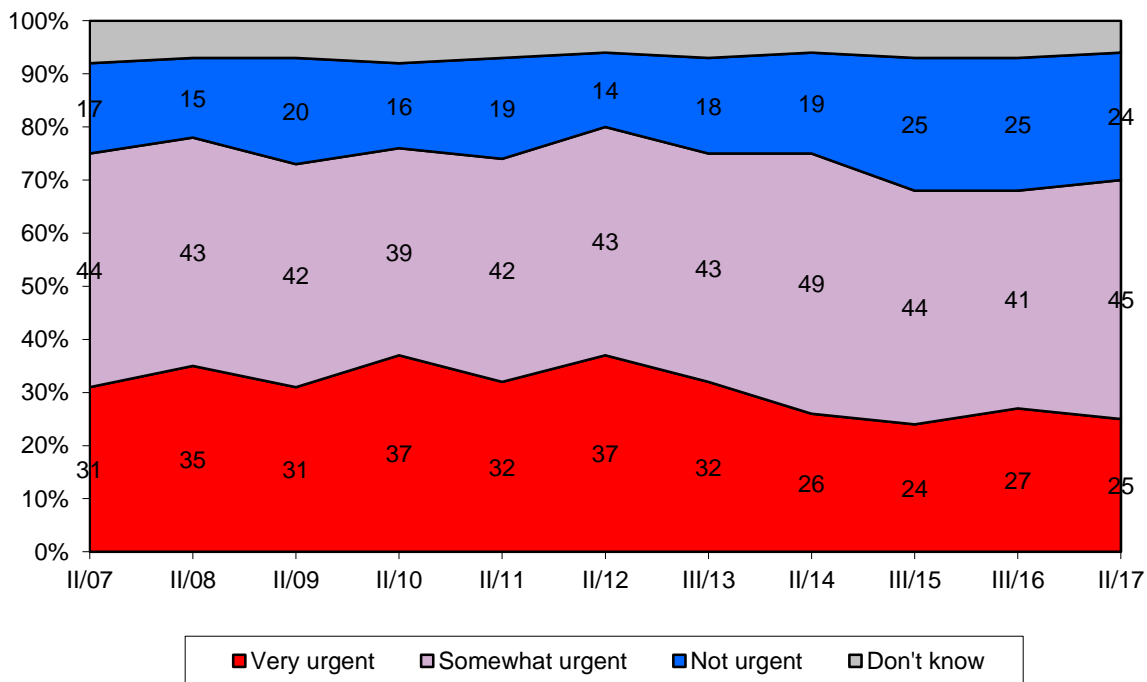

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4j: How urgent a problem is social security – a time comparison (%)
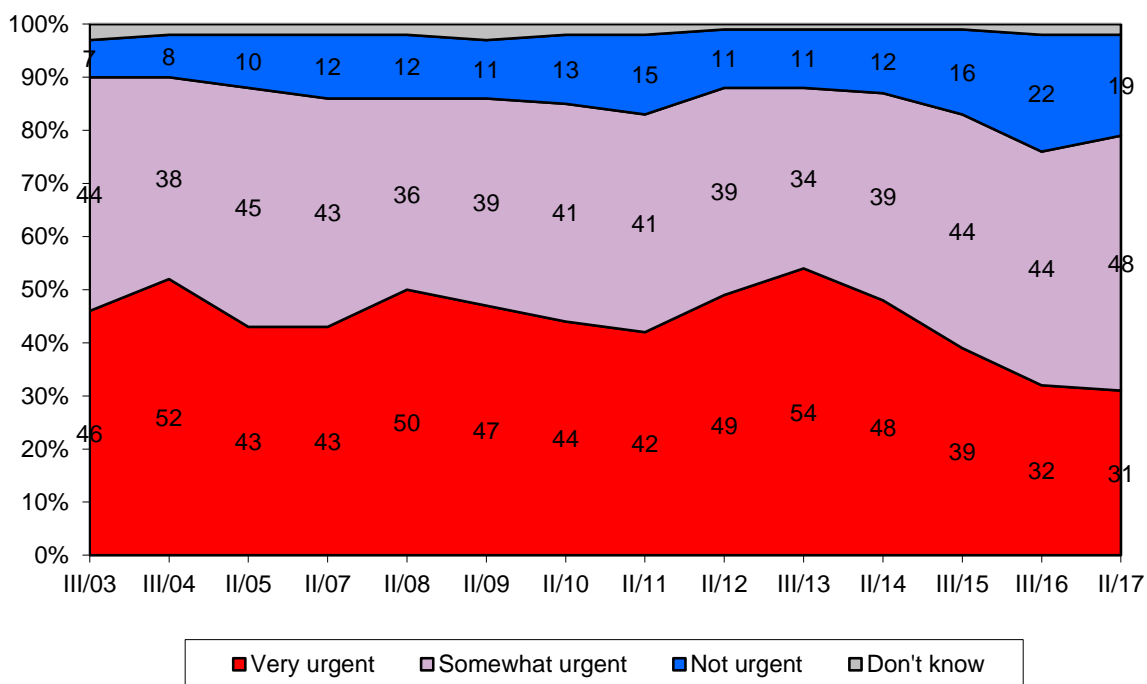

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4k: How urgent a problem is unemployment – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4l: How urgent a problem is the judiciary – a time comparison (%)
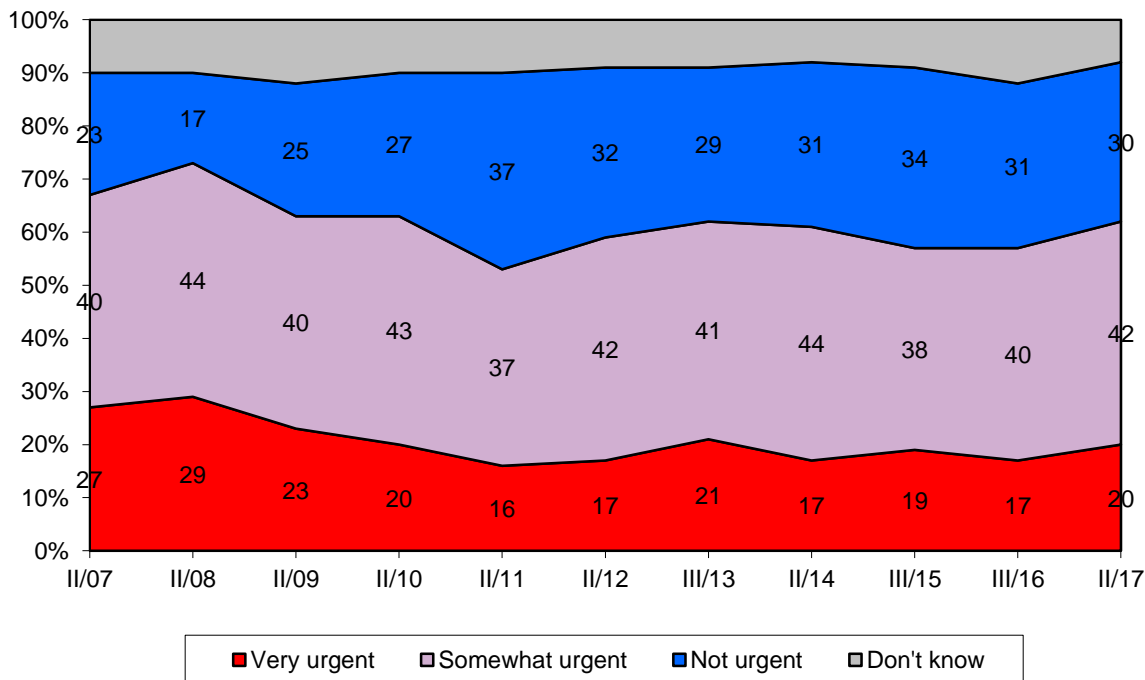

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4m: How urgent a problem is immigration – a time comparison (%)

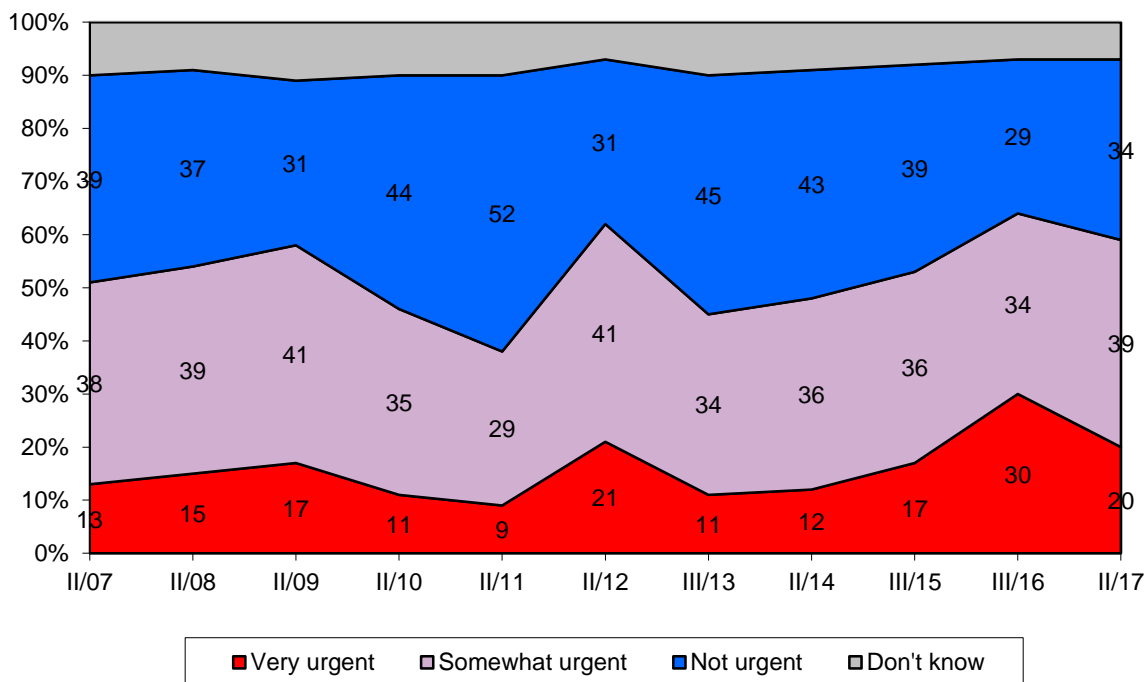Note: Until 2005 'problems with refugees'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4n: How urgent a problem is corruption – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4o: How urgent a problem is economic crime – a time comparison (%)
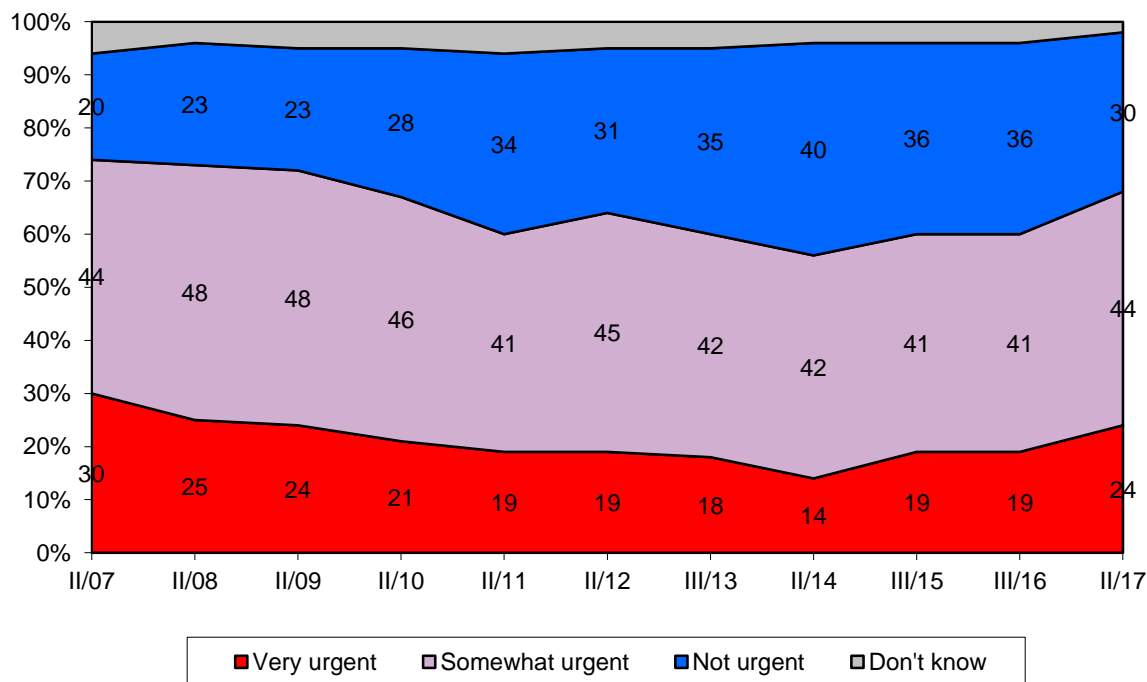

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4p: How urgent a problem is agriculture – a time comparison (%)
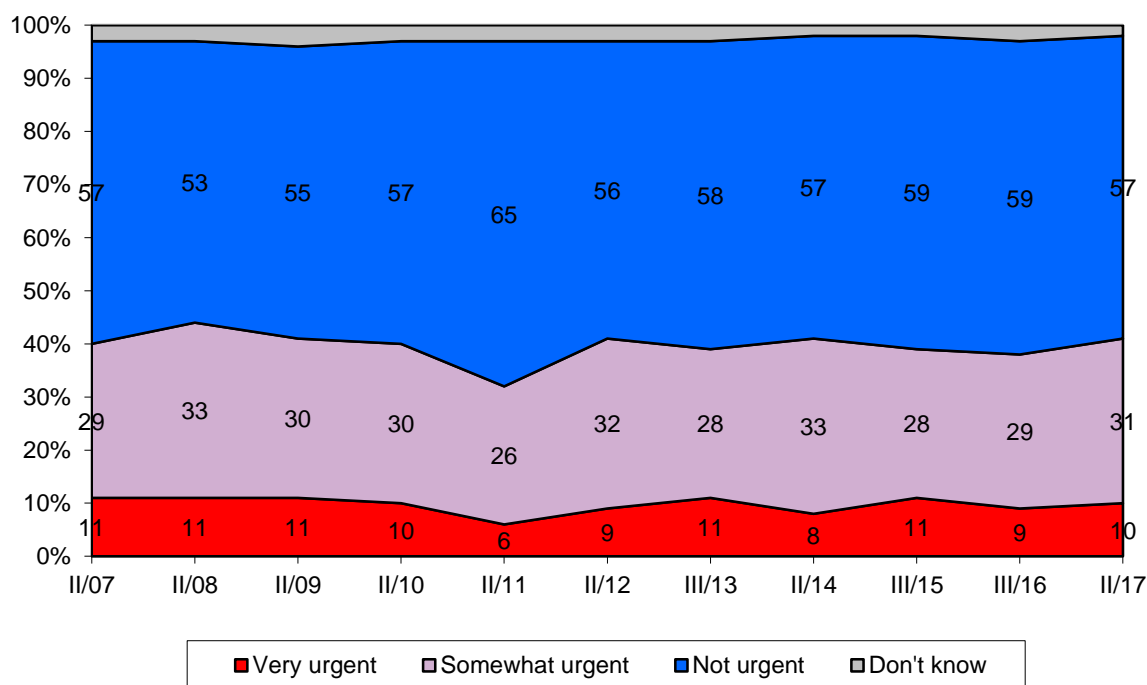

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4q: How urgent a problem is the political situation in the Czech Republic – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4r: How urgent a problem is the issue of opportunities for the public to participate in decision-making – a time comparison (%)
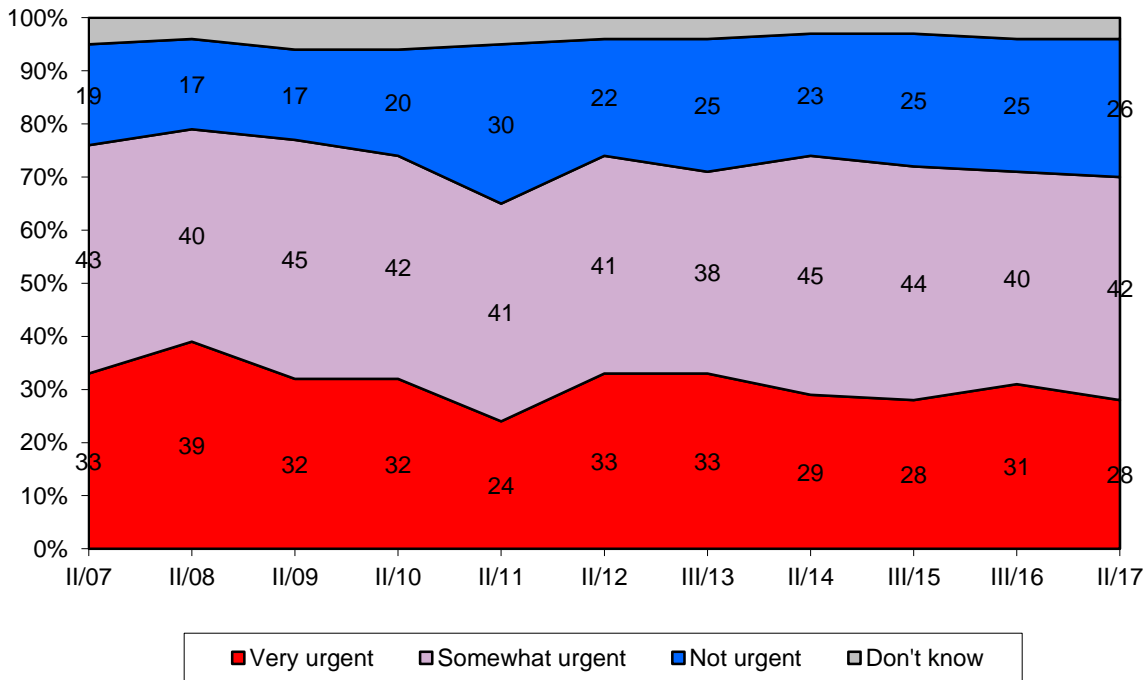

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4s: How urgent a problem is the standard of living – a time comparison (%)
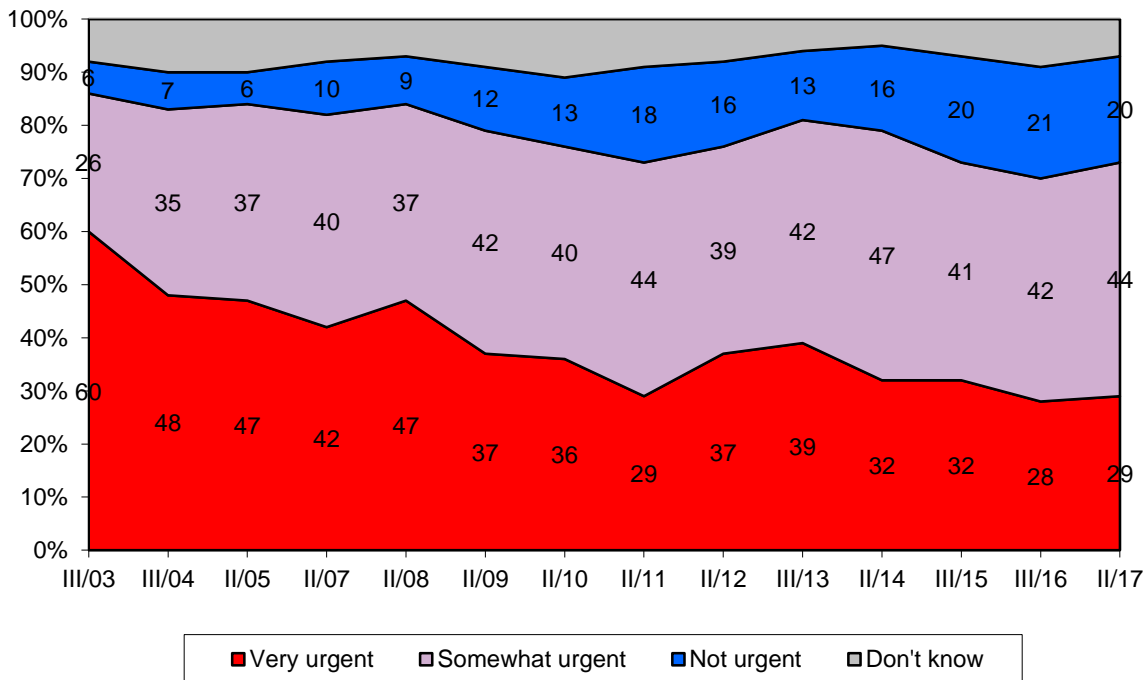

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4t: How urgent a problem are science and research – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4u: How urgent a problem is the Czech Republic's membership in the EU – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).
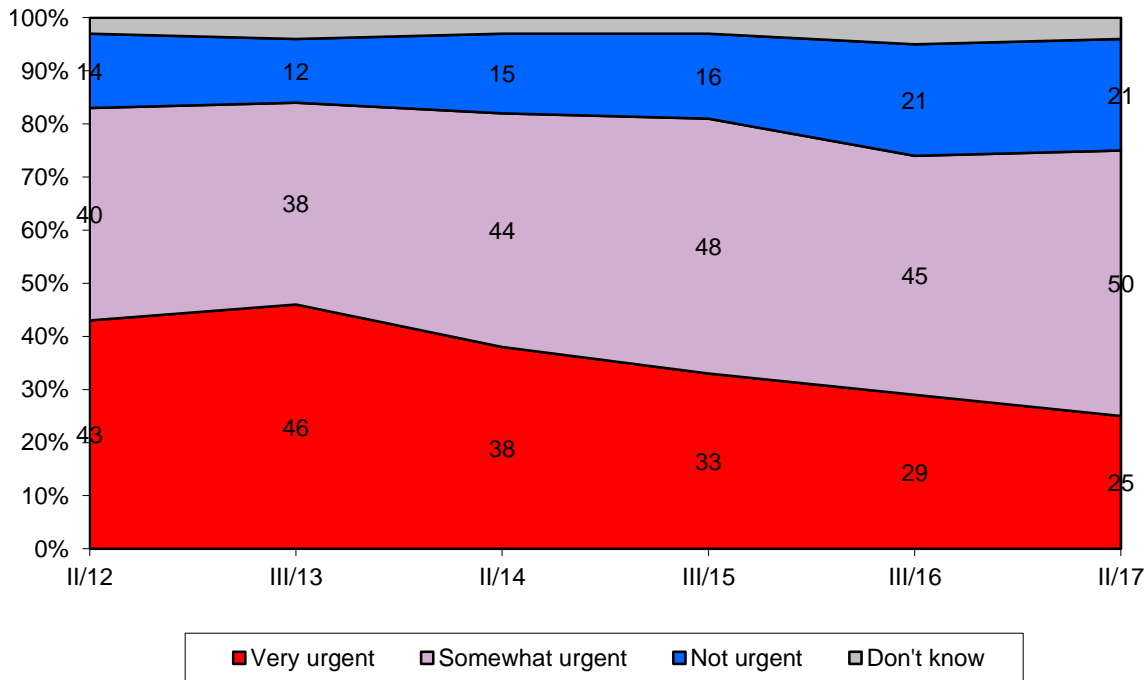
Figure 4v: How urgent a problem are transport services – a time comparison (%)
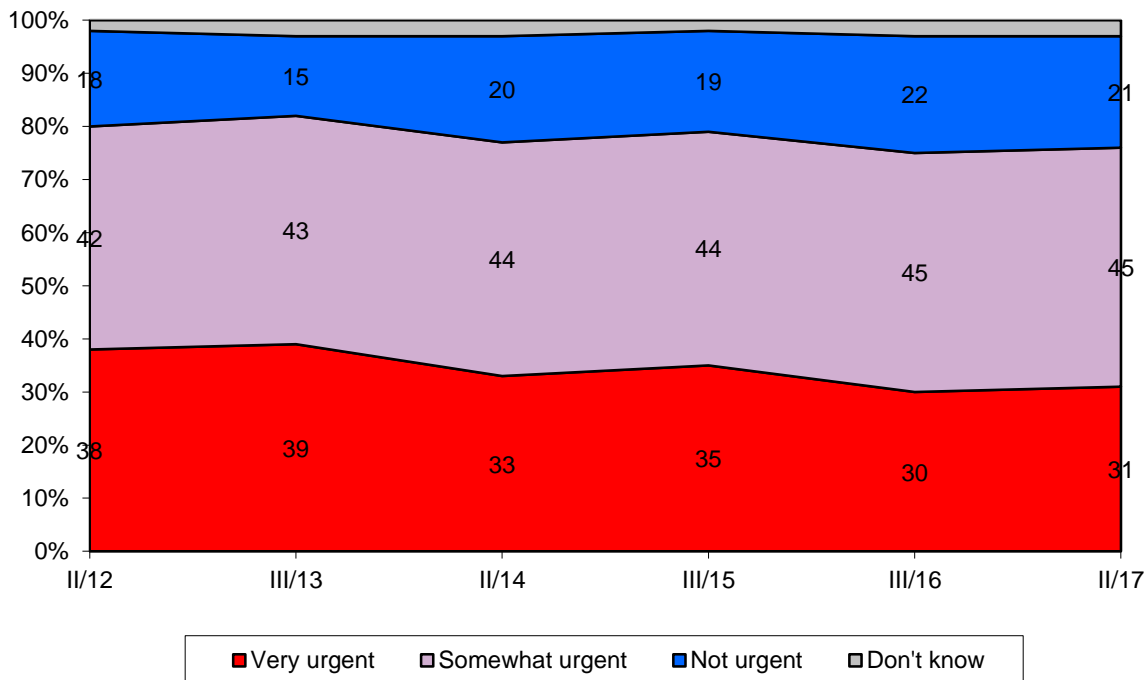

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

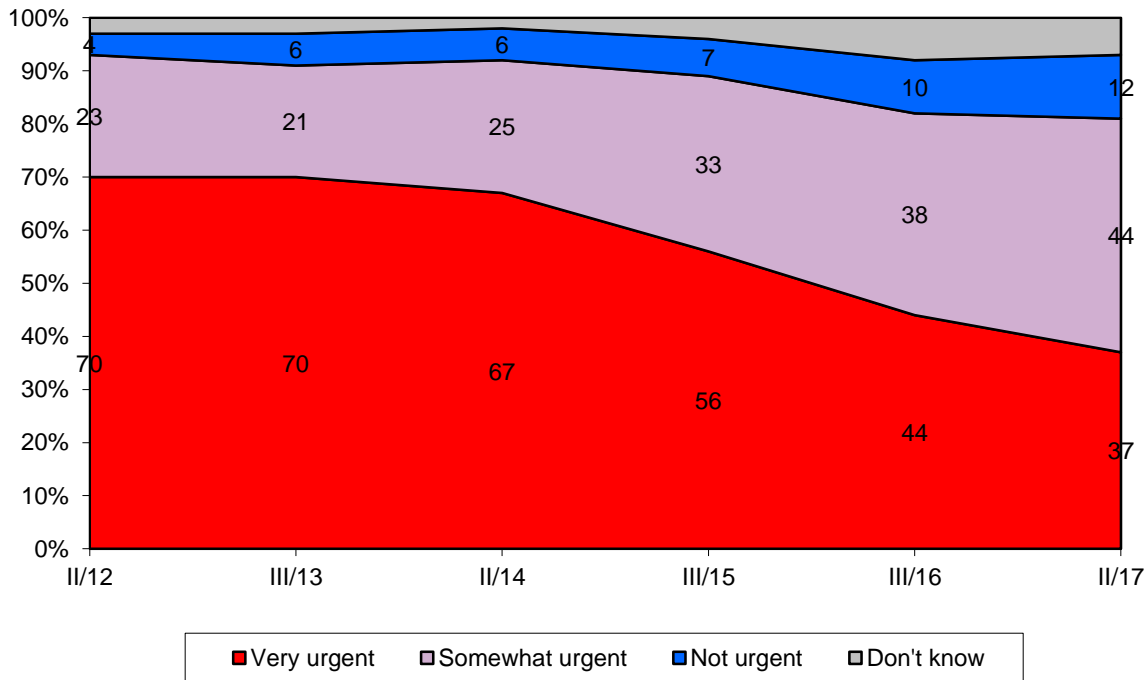**Figure 4w: How urgent a problem is the availability of goods and services – a time comparison (%)**

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4x: How urgent a problem is the observance of human rights – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4z: How urgent a problem is the legal environment – a time comparison (%)

Note: To 2005 'the legal system'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4aa: How urgent a problem is the overall atmosphere in society – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

**Figure 4ab: How urgent a problem is the issue of interpersonal relations – a time comparison (%)**

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4ac: How urgent a problem is the state of public finance – a time comparison (%)

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Figure 4ad: How urgent a problem is the security situation in the Czech Republic – a time comparison (%)
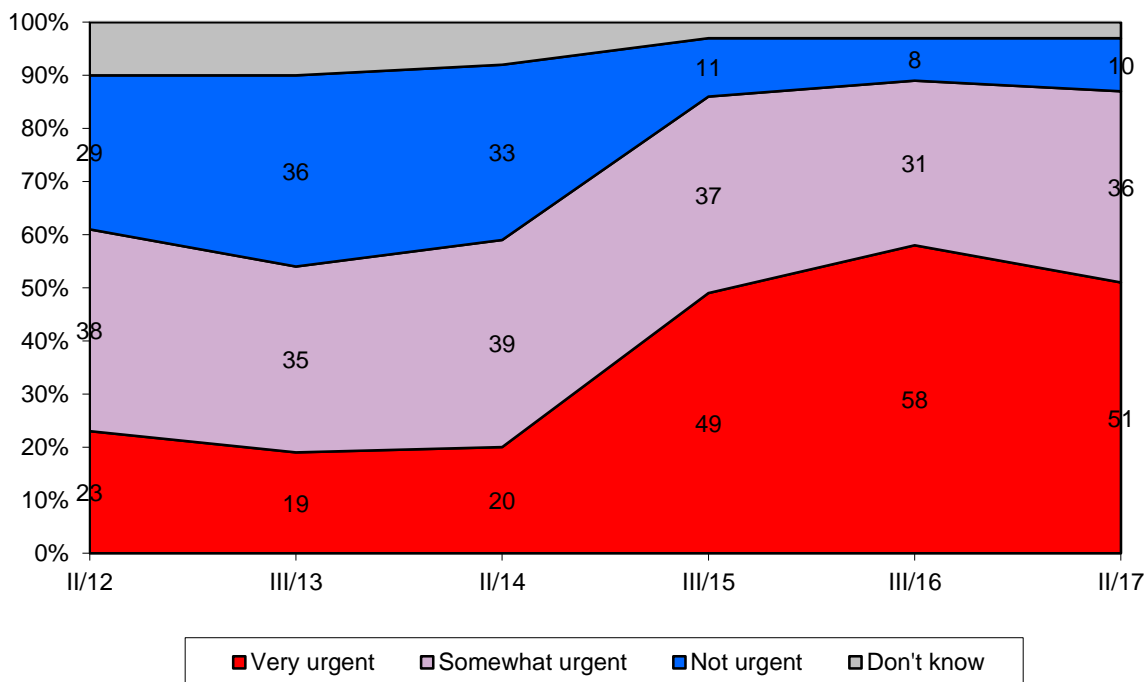
Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Technical parameters of the survey

Survey:	*Czech Society, v17-02*
Survey fielded by:	*Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences*
Project:	*Czech Society – Continuous Public Opinion Research Project of the Public Opinion Research*

Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences

Field survey dates:	*6–19 February 2017*
Sampling method:	*Quota sampling*
Quotas:	*Region (NUTS 3 Regions), size of place of residence, sex, age, education*
Data source for quota sampling:	*Czech Statistical Office*
Representativeness:	*Population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15*
Number of respondents:	*1023*
Number of interviewees:	*255*
Data collection method:	*Face-to-face interviews conducted by interviewers with respondents - combined CAPI and PAPI questioning*
Research instrument:	*Standardised questionnaire*
Questions:	*PO.5*
Press release no.:	*po170322*
Published on:	*22 March 2017*
Prepared by:	*Milan Tuček*

Glossary of terms:

A quota sample replicates the structure of the basic population of the study (in this case the population of the Czech Republic aged 15 and over) by setting quotas for different parameters. In other words, a quota sample is based on the same proportion of persons with the selected characteristics. We used data from the Czech Statistical Office to create the quotas. In our surveys quotas are set for sex, age, education, region, and community size. The sample is thus selected so that the percentage of men and women in the sample corresponds to the share of men and women in each region of the CR. Similarly the sample reflects the corresponding shares of the population in individual regions in the CR, citizens in different age groups, people with different levels of education, and people in different sizes of communities.

A representative sample is a sample from the total population whose characteristics can be validly inferred to apply as the characteristics of the population overall. In our case this means that respondents were selected with a view to generalising the collected data as applicable to the population of the Czech Republic aged 15 and over.