

Trade union recognition in MNCs in central and eastern Europe

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The research project

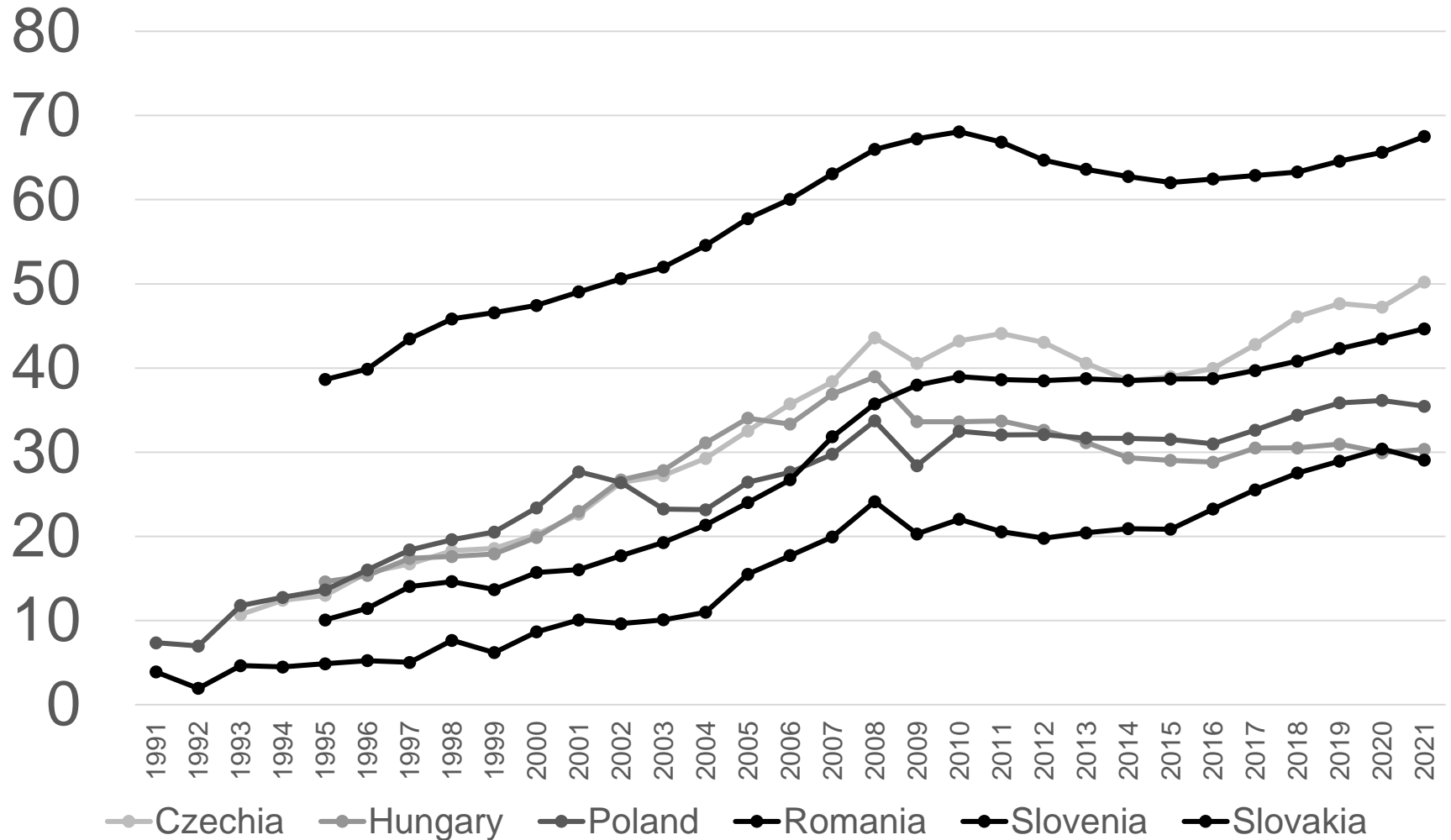
Research project stimulated from US experience with European MNCs

European analogy, western European companies in new member states

6 countries; cz, hu, pl, ro, si, sk; 2 different sectors – automotive, retail; 2+ companies in each

Interviewed trade union representatives, a few from management (not going to give us these stories – anonymity, managers differ, no clear company cultures?)

Nominal wage, % of Germany



Trade union methods

Sometimes inherit organisations (VW), recognised, but still conflicts, esp over wages,

Otherwise, often, slow & hard start, win trust on both sides, very cautious, use laws,

Accepted, recognised, begin bargaining, get results, happy with small gains,

Varies between companies (no guarantee if they recognise unions at home),

Varies between countries (Slovenia has best conditions, Romania and Poland much worse)

What helps unions

Context of willingness to join, of outside support (other social actors, sometimes political leaders),

Use of friendly media, sometimes seen as provocation, sometimes very effective,

Strikes with publicity (like car accident?), unions cautious (won't get support?), but sets relationship,

International, mixed views (EWCs), often don't feel supported, can be decisive (esp retail),

Especially if a global agreement exists...

MNCs CAN be good for trade unions, IF...