



The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan

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Introduction

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, started by the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which grew into a full invasion on February 24 2022, also affected the states of the V4+Japan format. Although the European part of the format is more affected compared to Japan, in general it can be said that Japan is not lagging in terms of political, financial, and material aid.

The conflict, with its effects on five states, created space for the development of deeper cooperation, but at the same time highlighted the obstacles that the format would face.

Central European states, as well as Japan, feel the threat of the disintegration of the liberal world order based on respect for state sovereignty and international law. The fact that three of the V4 states are neighbors with Ukraine makes the ongoing conflict more noticeable in Central Europe, but also in Japan, which is a cause for concern. If the aforementioned disintegration of the international order was to occur, it is possible that the situation would similarly escalate into an open conflict in East Asia.

It is evident from the states' positions that there was a split within the V4 regarding the procedure towards Russia or aid to Ukraine. Hungary, headed by Prime Minister Orbán, is the only V4 state that refuses to support Ukraine with the supply of military equipment on the grounds that it would contribute to the prolongation of the conflict. Japan also does not supply military equipment to Ukraine, but the reason in this case is the legislation that does not allow it. Poland and the Czech Republic are strong supporters of Ukraine and Western anti-Russian measures, and this policy enjoys relatively broad support from political actors and the public in both countries. With its pro-Russian foreign stances, Hungary thus lost an important ally in the fight against European accusations of corruption and the weakening of the rule of law. In the case of Slovakia, it is one of the most important donors of military equipment, but also of material and humanitarian aid. Slovakia was also hit by a strong wave of refugees after February 2022, and several tens of thousands of Ukrainians who fled the war remain on its territory to this day. However, the Slovak government of Prime Minister Eduard Heger supplies weapons to Ukraine despite significant opposition from public opinion and criticism from opposition parties. In a situation where the country is preparing for early elections in September, the attitude of the new

government towards supporting Ukraine is questionable. A possible turn in Slovakia's politics would further break the strategic consensus of the V4.

As it turns out, the conflict is an opportunity for all 5 states to reflect internally, whether in the field of the state's resistance to hybrid threats, energy security, or defense and modernization of the armed forces, or Self-defense Forces.

Poland, as the only one of the V4 states with access to the sea, has long been an opponent of increasing European dependence on Russian gas. At the same time, it intensively diversified suppliers of fuel and energy raw materials. However, in the issue of decarbonization of the energy sector, there are interesting possibilities for cooperation with the Czech Republic and Japan. In terms of energy security, the effects of the war in Ukraine were most pronounced in Slovakia and Hungary, while both countries remain largely dependent on Russia, not only for fossil fuels, but also for fuel for nuclear power plants. Japan, which is absolutely dependent on the import of fuel and energy raw materials, imported part of them from Russia, while it has two projects on the Sakhalin Peninsula in which Japanese companies are involved.

In matters of defense, increasing defense budgets and modernization of the armed forces, there is a relatively strong consensus within the V4+Japan format states about the need to modernize and strengthen defense capacities. Poland can be considered a leader in this, which created the conditions and at the same time a strong order for the modernization of the army. Poland's acquisition of tanks, howitzers and aircraft from South Korea was surprising in the context of Central Europe in relation to Poland. For the rest of the V4, the option of purchasing equipment from Seoul is still open. Japan's opportunities to succeed on the market in Central Europe are limited both by Japan's supply and experience with the sale of military equipment, but also by demand from Central European partners who focus primarily on ground technology. However, a clear manifestation of the conflict in Ukraine is the increase in defense spending, both in the V4 countries and in Japan. It even announced a record defense budget to reach 2 per cent of GDP by 2027, a 60 percent increase from today.

The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan: Slovakia

The COVID-19 pandemic left Slovak society torn and polarized. Though not completely unique, Slovakia's situation is a special case considering the European area. The country is vulnerable due to its populous' tendency to believe false information and is plagued by a significant distrust towards its political authorities. Already weakened by the pandemic, Slovakia is struggling to cope with another significant societal, economic, and security challenge due to Russian aggression against Ukraine. According to surveys, Slovakia is among the most pro-Russian countries in central and eastern Europe states and the western Balkans. In 2021, 42% of Slovak people considered Russia their most important strategic partner¹. With current events, Slovakia holds two memorable results: across all European countries included in the survey, its population had the third-fewest amount of people who believe that Russia is responsible for the contemporary situation in Ukraine at 38,42%, higher than only Bulgaria and Greece. ² At the same time, it holds the second highest percentage of people who believe that NATO is responsible for the situation in Ukraine with 31,26%, with only Bulgaria showing a higher percentage.³

Slovakia's political culture is characterized by the coalition and opposition parties' unwillingness to cooperate, choosing instead to categorically neglect and antagonize one another in the hope of gaining an advantage in the next general election. Such friction manifests in the views and reactions

¹ Katarína Drevená (2022) *Na Slovensku sa šíria tri základné dezinformačné naratívy v spojitosti s vojnou na Ukrajine*, Available at: <https://infosecurity.sk/dezinfo/na-slovensku-sa-siria-tri-zakladne-dezinformacne-narativy-v-spojivosti-s-vojnou-na-ukrajine/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

² Tereza Tisová (2022) *Slováci takmer najviac v Európe za vojnu obviňujú NATO*, Available at: <https://euractiv.sk/section/vychodna-politika/news/slovaci-obvinuju-nato-za-vojnou-takmer-najviac-v-europe/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

³ Ibid.

of political elites regarding the war in Ukraine. Therefore, while the coalition and its members generally agree to condemn Russia's behavior and support Ukraine with aid, the opposition remains strictly opposed. Unsurprisingly, far-right political actors such as Republika or Kotlebovci – Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko are consistently pro-Russian and anti-West. However, It is uncanny when such views⁴ are espoused by the Smer-SD and Hlas-SD parties, which led the Slovak government for nearly 12 years and laid the foundation for a significant part of its cooperation with the USA⁵. Though their position on the American defense treaty is not strictly related to Ukrainian war discourse, of note is the juxtaposition between their willingness to align with the USA and their resistance to help Ukraine with military aid. Robert Fico, chairman of Smer-SD, has said that if his party becomes a part of the coalition (based on the results of upcoming 2023 general elections), they will cease military aid to Ukraine. According to Fico, military assistance is not the solution⁶, and Slovakia should only provide humanitarian aid. Furthermore, in a pivot from his past hostility toward Hungarian politics, Fica has begun to emulate the politics of Viktor Orbán,

⁴ Teraz.sk (2022) *Smer-SD nepodporí dohodu s USA, chce, aby sa hlasovalo pred kamerami*, Available at: <https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/smer-sd-nepodpori-dohodu-s-usa-chce-a/610397-clanok.html> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁵ Richard Nemeč (2022) *Obranná zmluva s USA je na stole už roky. Aj napriek tomu sa stala terčom sporu*, Available at: <https://www.noviny.sk/slovensko/658566-obranna-zmluva-s-usa-je-na-stole-uz-roky-aj-napriek-tomu-sa-stala-tercom-sporu> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁶ Aktuality.sk (2023) *Smer nechce vojenskú pomoc Ukrajine, podľa premiéra ohrozuje vzťahy so spojencami*, Available at: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/UBudIAN/smer-nechce-vojensku-pomoc-ukrajine-podla-premiera-ohrozuje-vztahy-so-spojencami/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

praising his policies on Ukraine⁷ and openly commending Orbán's decision not to involve Hungary in the conflict.⁸

As for the rest of the opposition, far-right political subjects such as Republika or Kotlebovci have always been against the general pro-western orientation of Slovakia. Although Kotlebovci's relevancy recently subsided following its internal schism (which gave birth to Republika), Republika itself is a hopeful candidate for the parliamentary election. Having introduced several common candidates in the last municipal elections in 2022 and created an electoral coalition, Republika is now a promising potential partner for the new government.⁹ Though Republika may now seem more civilized than Kotlebovci, we cannot forget that these are the very same people that once marched through the streets with black uniforms and torches. Their political goals remain unambiguously defined; leave the West (European Union and NATO) and turn your face towards Russia. Thus, it is unsurprising that they oppose military aid to Ukraine¹⁰. Moreover, considering Hlas-SD, another product of Slovakia's political schism (this time in Smer-SD), they are very cautious, unsure of what their potential voters might prefer. Therefore they remain partially in support of military aid to Ukraine, but always remain

⁷ Aktuality.sk (2022) *Stačí porovnať Ficove vyhlásenia o Orbánovi a ukáže sa, o koho blaho mu skutočne ide*, Available at: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/P6dOvJy/staci-porovnat-ficove-vyhlasenia-o-orbanovi-a-ukaze-sa-o-koho-blaho-mu-skutocne-ide/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁸ Sita.sk (2022) *Fico zablagoželal Maďarsku k volebným výsledkom, aj keď je hodnotovo na inom brehu ako Orbán*, Available at: <https://sita.sk/fico-zablahozelal-madarsku-k-volebnym-vysledkom-aj-ked-je-hodnotovo-na-inom-brehu-ako-orban/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁹ Tomáš Kyseľ (2022) *Smer to skúša s Republikou. Spolu vytvorili koalície a postavili desiatky kandidátov po celom Slovensku*, Available at: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/YTe2ROD/smer-to-skusa-s-republikou-spolu-vytvorili-koalicie-a-postavili-desiatky-kandidatov-po-celom-slovensku/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

¹⁰ Hnutie-Republika.sk (2023) *Chcú na Ukrajinu poslať naše stíhačky, ale nechcú sa o tom s nikým baviť!* Available at: <https://www.hnutie-republika.sk/chcu-na-ukrajinu-poslat-nase-stihacky-ale-nehcú-sa-o-tom-s-nikym-bavit/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

conditional, and whenever possible, they did not hesitate to antagonize the current prime minister for wanting to provide Ukraine with Slovak jets, accusing him of using it as a remedy for his own domestic political shortcomings¹¹.

The coalition, however, is not unanimous. On the 16th of February, the Slovakia's primary legislative body passed a resolution labelling the Russian regime as terrorists and accusing the Russian state of supporting terrorism¹². Although the resolution was passed with a clear majority of votes, some parliamentary coalition members voted in opposition or did not vote at all¹³. So even when Slovakia's foreign policy towards Ukraine is consistent, opinions within platforms still vary.

Fortunately, such internal divisions do not obstruct Slovakia's supply of arms, vehicles, machines, and weapon systems to Ukraine. For example, it provided four model Mi-17 and one model Mi-2 helicopter¹⁴, as their transfer did not hinder Slovakia's ability to defend itself due to their prior replacement by modern UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters. Slovakia has also provided much-needed Zuzana 2 howitzers, of which there are eight already in

¹¹ Trend.sk (2023) *Nad': Hlas-SD bud' tlačí NATO do vojny s Ruskom, alebo sú odborne a geopoliticky stratení*, Available at: <https://www.trend.sk/spravy/hlas-sd-bud-tlaci-nato-vojny-ruskom-alebo-su-odborne-geopoliticky-strateni> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

¹² Aktuality.sk (2023) *Parlament uznesením označil súčasný ruský režim za teroristický a Rusko ako štát podporujúci terorizmus*, Available at: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/BqCqK5x/parlament-uznesenim-oznaci-l-sucasny-rusky-rezim-za-teroristicky-a-rusko-ako-stat-podporujuci-terorizmus/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

¹³ Rebeka Kosečeková (2023) *Poslanci označili Rusko za teroristický štát. Pozrite, kto bol proti*, Available at: <https://tvnoviny.sk/domace/clanok/644055-poslanci-oznacili-rusko-za-teroristicky-stat-pozrite-si-kto-bol-proti> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

¹⁴ Aktuality (2022) *Vojna na Ukrajine: Slovensko darovalo Ukrajine päť vrtuľníkov*, Available at: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/xpY6xW5/vojna-na-ukrajine-slovensko-darovalo-ukrajine-pat-vrtulnikov/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

Ukraine¹⁵ and thirty military BVP-1 transporters¹⁶. As for air defense, one of the first weapon systems sent by Slovakia was the S-300 missile system. However, significant controversy remains over the government's decision to give its MiG-29 jets before acquiring replacements, even though at least half of the jets are grounded and were given to Ukraine for the materials while Slovakia kept the functioning ones to defend its air space.

Another important issue is the country's dependence on Russian gas, oil, and nuclear fuel, which remains one of the greatest fears among Slovak political elites and the general public. Russian gas constitutes 85% of Slovakia's consumption. However, should the need arise to alter supply lines, the country does have gas connections to western Europe via Czechia and Hungary. A northern connection with Poland is also under construction, marking a vital development in Slovakia's gas dependency problem by having connections to two terminals; one in Poland and one in Lithuania¹⁷. Such developments are not yet sufficient for a full substitution, but nowadays, Russian gas flows are 50% less, and Slovakia has closed a deal for gas from North Sea, which would cover roughly 65% of consumer consumption¹⁸

Nearly all of Slovakia's oil is imported from Russia, and the technology used to transform the oil into various products is designed specifically for the Russian supply. Should Russia choose to cut Slovakia's supply, it could potentially import oil through the Adria pipeline from Saudi Arabia. However,

¹⁵ MOSR (2022) *Ďalšie dve slovenské hufnice ZUZANA 2 sú už na Ukrajine*, Available at: <https://www.mosr.sk/52077-sk/dalsie-dve-slovenske-hufnice-zuzana-2-su-uz-na-ukrajine/> (Accessed 6 March).

¹⁶ RTVS: Správy (2022) *Ukrajina si prevzala od Slovenska 30 pásových transportérov*, Available at: <https://spravy.rtvs.sk/2022/11/ukrajina-si-prevzala-od-slovenska-30-pasovych-transporterov/> (Accessed 6 March).

¹⁷ Tomáš Grečko (2022) *Vysvetľujeme, ako veľmi sme závislí od ruských palív a či sa od nich vieme odstrihnúť*, Available at: <https://e.dennikn.sk/2740025/vysvetlujeme-ako-velmi-sme-zavisli-od-ruskych-paliv-a-ci-sa-od-nich-vieme-odstrihnut/> (Accessed 6 March).

¹⁸ Zuzana Kullová (2022) *Zastaviť plyn, zdvihnúť cenu, odstaviť Európu. Rusko rázne utiahlo kohútik, Slováci sú v strehu*, Available at: <https://www.trend.sk/ekonomika/zastavit-plyn-zdvihnut-cenu-odstavit-europu-rusko-utiahlo-kohutik-aj-slovaci-su-strehu> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

Arabian oil has different qualities for which Slovak technology is not equipped and using it to refine a different oil would eventually lead to a breakdown. If Slovakia wants to end its dependence on Russian oil, it must invest in rebuilding its refinery technologies.

Like its oil, Slovakia imports all its nuclear fuel from Russia. The Slovak nuclear operator has an agreement with a Russian company called TVEL lasting until 2026 with the option of extending it until 2030, creating a dangerous dependency. There is an alternative, however, in the form of an American company called Westinghouse, which was exporting nuclear fuel to Finland and has the ambition of rivaling TVEL in Eastern Europe with their ability to provide the same kind of nuclear fuel¹⁹.

There are long-term alternatives for Slovakia's energy dependency. However, should Russia shut down the valves, it will prove troublesome as all the steps necessary for diversification take time, which considering the current situation, is of the essence.

¹⁹ Tomáš Grečko (2022) *Vysvetľujeme, ako veľmi sme závislí od ruských palív a či sa od nich vieme odstrihnúť*, Available at: <https://e.dennikn.sk/2740025/vysvetlujeme-ako-velmi-sme-zavisli-od-ruskych-paliv-a-ci-sa-od-nich-vieme-odstrihnut/> (Accessed 6 March).

The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan: Czechia

The Ukraine war has escalated Czechia's economic, political and security dilemmas. Post-pandemic and war-related factors have both resulted in existential problems for Czech companies. Having not fully recovered from the structural effects of the post-pandemic period, the war in Ukraine only brought more challenges to Czech economy. By November 2022, annual Czech exports to Russia had dropped by 61,2% to ZCK 33,4 billion,²⁰ and it is highly unlikely that Czech-Russian trade will return to its original levels in any foreseeable scenarios. Therefore, the diversification of resources is necessary, as many companies have left the country and are unlikely to return.

Rising inflation rates amount to over 20 year over year and are reflected in the rising price of goods and services. Zlámal provided concrete numbers in May 2022, wherein electricity prices rose by over 240%, gas by over 370%, and crude oil by over 60%.²¹ Even if the invasion ends, prices are unlikely to return to pre-war levels. Because the EU and thus Czechia diverted from Russian energy imports in favor of other regions such as the USA, Czechia was able to fill its deposits to over 80% by the winter seasons. However, it will likely be difficult to maintain such levels of energy security if the war continues towards into the winter of 2023-2024. Energy prices doubled and then quadrupled for prominent industrial leaders, which led to rising unemployment and bankruptcies. Nevertheless, the companies showed resilience in their ability to adopt changing structural conditions.

Similarly, Czech politicians recommended a planar reduction of heating in households, companies and industries to maintain essential industrial operations. There has been a significant drop in general consumer demand

²⁰ Jakub Svoboda (2023) Český výzov do Ruska citelně zeslábla, zřejmě však proudí oklikou, Seznam.cz, Available: <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/ekonomika-cesky-vyvoz-do-ruska-citelne-zeslabl-zrejme-vsak-proudi-oklikou-40421901> (Accessed 28 February 2023).

²¹ David Zlámal (2022) *Nová realita: dopady války na Ukrajině na českou ekonomiku a podniky*, Available: https://www.ev.com/cs_cz/strategy/dopady-valky-na-ukrajine-na-ceskou-ekonomiku-a-podniky (Accessed 5 March 2023).

due to the war's impact on economically endangered households, forcing people to cut energy use to save money on bills. There was also a visible decrease in consumption in the gastronomy sector, as rising prices in foodstuffs have been among the average in the EU year over year. According to latest data from 5 March 2023, the increase of prices in January 2023 was over 19% in Czechia, while the EU average was over 15.5%.²² The Czech Central Bank elevated interest rates by over 5%, impacting lending and borrowing within the private sector and causing a drop in mortgage demand.

With regards to energies, the Czech government approved a ceiling for electricity prices, which on the one hand, gave crucial assistance to people struggling to afford the rising cost of living, but also further indebted the Czech government, which was already struggling with historically high debt. According to the Czech Ministry of Finance, at the end of 2022, the absolute value of national debt reached CZK 2,894.8 billion (42,9% of GDP), which was an increase by over CZK 421,9 billion, due primarily to covering the budget deficit. The international rating agencies preserved the highest V4 ranking for Czechia, although the Fitch Group lowered the Czech ranking to AA- in March 2023.²³

Czechia started to promote diversification, mainly regarding green energy solutions such as electro-voltaic panels and support for clean nuclear energy by importing resources from countries beyond Russia. This transition has been problematic due to general hesitation concerning the usage of nuclear plants for security reasons. The Czech National Economic Council (NERV) has been preparing a rise in taxes, and the Czech government under PM Petr Fiala opened the sensitive topic of reforming the pension system, including an increase in the retirement age and lower valorisation of pensions. The opposition (ANO), led by former Czech PM Andrej Babiš, populistically criticised these impacts but has not taken responsibility for

²² Eurostat (2023) Food price monitoring tool, Available: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/prc_fsc_idx/default/table?lang=en (Accessed 6 March 2023).

²³ Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic (2023) *The Czech Republic Government Debt Management Annual Report 2022*, Available: https://www.mfcr.cz/assets/en/media/2022-12-31_The-Czech-Republic-Government-Debt-Management-Annual-Report-2022.pdf (Accessed 5 March 2023).

short-sighted decisions in tax system prior to the start of pandemic. As a result, the political landscape has been more divided, with the exception of condemning Russia's aggressive war in Ukraine.

In 2022 the Czech Republic oversaw the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Czechia introduced a tough stance on Russia, "mobilising support for Ukraine and calling for tougher sanctions against Moscow".²⁴ Prague, in coordination with Brussels, has backed Ukraine since the start of the war by providing aid of many forms, including shelter for Ukrainian citizens (mostly women and children), as well as military and humanitarian aid.

Based on data from the Ministry of Interior from early January 2023, Czechia has provided temporary protection to over 472,216 Ukrainian citizens in 2022, yet the real number is likely higher. Since the fighting began, 662,358 refugees from Ukraine have registered at the Foreign Police, and about 115,000 nationals have found employment in Czechia. With these 2022 figures, Czechia likely hosted the largest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita of all EU Member States and issued 8,746 visas to Ukrainian nationals.²⁵

Czechia followed EU Member States in regulating imports and exports concerning the war in Ukraine. Supported by the Parliament and President, Czechia joined other Western Democratic countries sanctioning Russia in accordance with EU mechanisms during the second half of 2022. Although former president Miloš Zeman (2013-2023) was a keen supporter of Russia (and China) for years, he took a critical position against the war, allowing him to face at home and in the West. In October 2022, Czech lawmakers approved an instrument against foreign entities that harm the Czech state, following the model of the American Magnitsky Act of 2016. This includes dealing with organisations supporting terrorism, such as cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and groups violating human rights. The legislation approved in December 2022 gave Czechia options to freeze property or

²⁴ Michal Kolmaš (2023) "Diverging perceptions of the „Visegrad Four+“ format and the limits of the V4 + Japan cooperation", *Asia Europe Journal*, 21, pp. 101-116

²⁵ České noviny (2023) *Dočasnou ochranu loni získalo 473 216 uprchlíků před válkou*, Available: <https://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/docasnou-ochranu-v-cr-loni-ziskalo-473-216-ukrajinskych-uprchliku-pred-vaikou/2305214> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

deny entry to Russian citizens and sanction companies that harm Czech national interests and the economy. As in other EU countries, in January 2023, there were few records of attempts to avoid sanctions against Russia at the individual level, and some companies who were allegedly trying to seek profit.

With the ongoing war in Ukraine, in April 2022 the Russian seat on the Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was assigned to Czechia. It was elected by the UN General Assembly to hold it by end of the year 2022.

Regarding military aid, in February 2023, Czech PM Petr Fiala revealed the country's contributions, which included 89 tanks (among the highest of donor countries), 226 fighting vehicles, 33 multiple rocket launchers, 38 howitzers, six air defence systems, four helicopters, and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition.²⁶ By the end of February, the Czech government had approved further military aid to Ukraine, including 13 self-propelled howitzers, 55 armoured vehicles, and 38 tanks, with a total value of some CZK 40 billion.²⁷ Of this amount, CZK 10 billion will come from Czech Government and CZK 30 billion from the Czech defence industry. Czechia also provided training and treatment to Ukrainian soldiers²⁸ and donated its unused military stock material worth CZK 4,8-4,9 billion.

The comprehensive list of declassified Czech military aid to Ukraine based on the Czech Ministry of Defence & Armed Forces includes the following: aviation technology - four pcs, tanks - 38 pcs, infantry fighting vehicles - 55 pcs, exploratory chemical vehicles - five pcs, cars - 47 pcs, self-propelled howitzers - 13 pcs, cartridges for artillery - 27,518 pcs, rocket launchers - 12 pcs, missiles for rocket launchers - 4,900 pcs, armoured cars - 8,022 pcs, mortars - 128 pcs, mines for mortars - 17,400 pcs, anti-aircraft means - 291 pcs, short hand firearms - 30,025 pcs, long hand firearms - 11,233

²⁶ Reuters (2023) *Czechs have sent 89 tanks, hundreds of pieces of heavy machinery to Ukraine-PM*, Available: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/czechs-have-sent-89-tanks-hundreds-pieces-heavy-machinery-ukraine-pm-2023-02-22/> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

²⁷ Jerusalem Post (2023) *Czech Republic agrees further military aid to Ukrain – defense ministry*, Available: <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-732488> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

²⁸ Expat CZ (2023) *Czechia sends over CZK 40 billion in military aid to Ukraine, with more to come*, Available: <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czechia-sends-over-czk-40-billion-in-military-aid-to-ukraine-with-more-expected-soon> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

pcs, cartridges for hand firearms - 4,263,000 pcs, military medical equipment, radiation, chemical and biological protection material, military equipment, fuel, spare parts, transport, and other material.²⁹

Since the conflict's beginning, Czechia has provided aid worth of up to CZK 420 million, consisting of CZK 70 million for tents, modular housing units and escape vehicles; medical equipment worth of over CZK 101,1 million, energy and related equipment (e.g., repairs to infrastructure, heaters) worth CZK 68 million, and aid through international organisations worth of CZK 113,1 million. The Czech government plans to provide next CZK 500 million.³⁰ In more general numbers, according to the Czech Ministry of Finance, the expenditure of the state budget on the Ukrainian refugee crisis consisted of CZK 8,7 billion in social humanitarian allowance, CZK 4,5 billion in health care and CZK 4,3 billion in expenses related to accommodation of Ukrainian refugees.³¹

In addition to government initiatives, the Czech people and individuals donated over CZK 4 billion (over EUR 165 million) to provide material aid (shelters, food, clothes), military aid, and other assistance.³² Key organization included Charita ČR, Post Bellum, SOS Ukraine platform, Czech Red Cross, the People in Need, and the Czech Christian Church. Another help come from volunteering and providing private shelters, which demonstrates the deep solidarity for Ukraine in Czechia, despite Czech

²⁹ Ministry of Defence & Armed Forces (2023) *Ministryně obrany informovala o detailech odtajněné vojenské pomoci Ukrajině*, Available: <https://mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/ministryne-obrany-informovala-o-detailech-odtajnene-vojenske-pomoci-ukrajine-242316/> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

³⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (2023) *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Helped Ukrainian Refugees With Shelter and Medical Care*, Available: https://www.mzv.cz/vienna/de/nachrichten_und_ereignisse/humanitarian_aid_from_the_ministry_of.html (Accessed 5 March 2023).

³¹ Seznam (2023) *Dopady války na Česko. I po roce stojí Češi jasně za Ukrajinou*, Available: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/fakta-jak-valka-na-ukrajine-zmenila-cesko-cesi-jsou-nejsolidarnejsi-v-historii-226309> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

³² Kafka Desk (2023) *Czechs donated over 4 billion Kč to Ukraine since the start of invasion*, Available: <https://kafkadesk.org/2022/08/24/czechs-donated-over-4-billion-kc-to-ukraine-since-start-of-invasion/>

society's generally unwelcoming stance toward immigrants due to the 2015 European immigration crisis.

As the conflict continues, some experts view the war in Ukraine as a long-term conflict of will and resources. According to Major General Karel Řehka, Chief of the General Staff is, it is necessary to support Ukraine and conduct calculations in order to avoid potential escalations that could involve the EU and NATO explicitly since Russia owns an arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons. According to his expert opinion, Czech military support to Ukraine will not decrease Czechia's combat readiness . Yet he is convinced it is necessary to increase defence expenditures and modernize Czech army.³³

According to a survey by the STEM Agency, since February 2022, most Czech citizens have been convinced that it is appropriate to welcome and take care of Ukrainian refugees. However, resolute consent has been slowly decreasing, along with opinions on anti-Russian sanctions and the possibility of a diplomatic resolution of the conflict.³⁴

Czechia is among the top donors of military aid to Ukraine per capita globally. As a form of compensation for Czech military aid to Ukraine, the USA announced in Autumn 2022 that it would compensate Czechia's technical military aid to Ukraine worth of USD 106 million (CZK 2.3 billion), and in in mid-February 2023 compensations to Czech Army worth of USD 200 million (CZK 4.4 billion) dedicated to military modernization. Furthermore, the EU compensated Czechia with EUR 6.5 million (CZK 155 millions).³⁵ According to declassified information from February 2023, Czechia plans to donate additional military material worth of CZK 2 billion.

³³ Czech Television (2023) *Pomoc na Ukraine proudí neustále, bojeschopnost naší armády však neohrozíme, sdělil Řehka*, Available: <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/domaci/3568264-pomoc-na-ukrajinu-proudi-neustale-bojeschopnost-nasi-armady-vsak-neohrozime-sdelil> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

³⁴ Seznam (2023) *Dopady války na Česko. I po roce stojí Češi jasně za Ukrajinou*, Available: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/fakta-jak-valka-na-ukrajine-zmenila-cesko-cesi-jsou-nejsolidarnejsi-v-historii-226309> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

³⁵ Idnes (2023a) *Česko darovalo Ukraji zbraně za 48 miliard. Získalo i první kompenzaci*, Available: https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/cesko-pomoc-ukrajina-rusko-invaze-zbrane-dovoz-ministerstvo-obrany.A230219_071545_domaci_idvs (Accessed 5 March 2023).

The Czech Army also plans to train 4,000 Ukrainian soldiers at the cost of CZK 1 billion.³⁶

Energy and resource security has become a significant concern in Central Europe. In early 2023 the Czech government released plans to strengthen energy security and update energy security legislation to adapt to international circumstances and security energy imports. Prague supports community energy projects and the development of renewable energy sources and means. One specific challenge associated with the war in Ukraine and the need for an energy transition in Europe is the EU Green Deal, a fearsome prospect for car-exporting country like Czechia. Rising energy prices exasperate the spiral of inflation, and if Prague fails to reduce the effects of energy crisis, its citizens might start losing trust in the government, public spheres, and its pro-Western orientation.³⁷

While EU imported 40% of its gas supplies from Russia, the Czech Republic, along with Latvia, was the most dependent importer of Russian gas in the EU, with almost 100% of imports in the first half of 2022.³⁸ Russian oil supplies were stable over the last decade ranging between 7727.9 kt and 5324.8 kt from 2010 to 2021. The transport share by oil pipelines in Czechia in 2021 was 48,8% from Druzhba (Russia), and 51,2% from the Ingolstadt-Kralupy-Litvínov (IKL) pipeline. Between 2017 and 2021, oil imports from Russia far exceeded oil imports from other countries, e.g., in 2021, Russia

³⁶ Ministry of Defence & Armed Forces (2023) Ministryně obrany informovala o detailech odtajněné vojenské pomoci Ukrajině, Available: <https://mocr.army.cz/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/ministryne-obrany-informovala-o-detailech-odtajnene-vojske-pomoci-ukrajine-242316/> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

³⁷ KRIT - Krízový informační tým Ministerstva vnitra České republiky (2022) *Válka & energetická krize*, Available: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=i&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwie3_vgkMX9AhVr8bslHY95Bc04FBAWegQIExAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mvcr.cz%2Fsoubor%2Fkrit-memo-valka-a-energeticka-krize-20221214-pdf.aspx&usq=AOvVaw1dAZJkmi7-6fyt_FLLHqFX Accessed 5 March 2023).

³⁸ E15 (2022) Česko je spolu s Lotyšskem nejvíce závislé na ruském plynu, Available: <https://www.e15.cz/byznys/prumysl-a-energetika/cesko-je-spolu-s-lotysskem-nejvice-zavisle-na-ruskem-plynu-1388924> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

supplied 3,417.4 kt of oil, while Kazakhstan supplied 1239.3 kt, Azerbaijan 1095.9 kt, and the USA only 804.3 kt of oil.³⁹

According to KRIT, the Czech government secured enough gas and fuel for the winter heating season. In September 2022, energy deposits were secured by 84%, which was by 800 million m³ more than in 2021.⁴⁰ The Czech government also secured shares in an LNG terminal with 3 billion m³ capacity in the Netherlands, which would cover nearly a third of the national yearly consumption and decrease the price of gas. Czechia also diversified imports of American crude oil.

By January 2023, Czechia had significantly reduced imports of Russian gas to only 4% of their former levels,⁴¹ helped by diversifying imports towards Norway and LNG. While Czechia cut off gas imports from Russia, there are indications that crude oil dependency and imports strengthened in 2022. In 2022 the Czech import of crude oil from Russia increased to 4162 kt, a yearly increase by 8,5%.⁴²

The EU, and thus Czechia, has deployed restrictive measures against Russia, which include arms exports and imports, dual-use goods exports, financial measures of many kinds, limits on flights, airports and aircraft, road

³⁹ Ministry of Industry and Trade (2022) Statistics of crude oil imports to the Czech Republic, Available: <https://www.mpo.cz/en/energy/statistics/oil-and-oil-products/statistics-of-crude-oil-imports-to-the-czech-republic--260434/> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

⁴⁰ KRIT - Krizový informační tým Ministerstva vnitra České republiky (2022) *Válka & energetická krize*, Available: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=i&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwie3_ygkMX9AhVr8bsIHY95Bc04FBAWegQIExAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mvcr.cz%2Fsoubor%2Fkrit-memo-valka-a-energeticka-krize-20221214-pdf.aspx&usq=AOvVaw1dAZJkmj7-6fyt_FLLHqFX Accessed 5 March 2023).

⁴¹ Idnes (2023b) Česko snížilo závislost na ruském plynu na čtyři procenta, pomáhá LNG a Norsko, Available: https://www.idnes.cz/ekonomika/domaci/rusko-plyn-lng-norsko.A230131_144923_ekonomika_akp (Accessed 5 March 2023).

⁴² Ekonomický deník (2023) Česku se nedaří omezovat závislost na ruské ropě. Naopak, podíl dovozu z Ruska loni vzrostl na 65 procent, Available: <https://ekonomickydenik.cz/cesku-se-nedari-omezovat-zavislost-na-ruske-rope-naopak-podil-dovozu-z-ruska-loni-vzrostl-na-56-procent/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

transport, ports and vessels, restrictions on goods, aviation and space industries, coal and other products, crude oil, firearms, their parts and essential components and ammunition, gold, iron and steel, luxury goods, maritime navigation, oil refining, restrictions on services, and others.⁴³ The deployed sanction regime on Russia (and Belarus) had been broadened.⁴⁴

⁴³Sanctionmap.eu (2023) Russia, Available: <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main/details/26/?search=%7B%22value%22:%22%22.%22searchType%22:%7B%7D%7D> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁴⁴Finanční analytický úřad (2022) Sankce proti Rusku a Bělorusku, Available: <https://www.financnianalytickvurad.cz/sankce-proti-rusku-a-belorusku#sankce%20proti%20rusku> (Accessed 5 March 2023).

The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan: Poland

Russia's aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, made Poland a frontline country, and the issues of aid for Kiev dominated Poland's public debate. Unequivocal support for Ukraine and condemnation of Russian actions were announced by the most important representatives of the Polish authorities; the President, Prime Minister, Marshal of the Sejm. From the beginning of the war, there was also a political consensus among parliamentary parties that Ukraine would be supported by representatives of the ruling Law and Justice party and opposition parties (Civic Platform, Polish People's Party, New Left, Poland 2050). The only party ambivalent toward supporting Ukraine was the far-right Confederation, which had only 11 MPs.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Poland has been hit by the greatest humanitarian crisis since World War II. According to data from the Statista Research Department, nearly 10 million Ukrainians have crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border so far, and over 1.5 million of them have stayed in Poland. At first, the burden of help was taken primarily by ordinary citizens. It is estimated that 77% of Poles were involved in helping refugees from Ukraine to some extent, with as much as 7% welcomed them into their homes. The number of inhabitants of many cities and towns increased by a dozen or even several dozen percent.⁴⁵

The Polish Economic Institute's research shows that Poles' involvement in supporting refugees from Ukraine was intense at the war's onset. The estimated value of annual expenses of public authorities for helping refugees, together with the private expenses of Poles incurred for this

⁴⁵ Statista Research Department (2023) *Number of border crossings between Ukraine and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries after Russia's invasion of Ukraine from February 24 to February 28, 2023, by selected country*, Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293403/cee-ukrainian-refugees-by-country/> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

purpose during the first 3 months of the war, is PLN 25.4 billion in total (0.97% of Poland's GDP in 2021).⁴⁶

The Polish government has prepared a special act that legalizes the stay of Ukrainians in Poland, enables them to work, obtain free medical assistance, care and education for children, and financial support, with additional provisions for people who have welcomed refugees in their homes and apartments.

The Ukraine Support Tracker portal of the Institute of World Economy in Kiel estimates the support provided by Poland for the armament of the Ukrainian army at EUR 1.82 billion, ranking the country fourth on the list of supporters (data from December 2022). The largest financial support was declared by the USA (EUR 22.86 billion), followed by the United Kingdom (EUR 4.13 billion) and Germany (EUR 2.34 billion). For comparison, the European Union authorities declared military support for EUR 3.1 billion.⁴⁷

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia, with then sanction packages adopted so far. Poland has supported these activities from the beginning, even persuading EU institutions and member states to apply a broader range of sanctions. Poland favored the express path for Ukraine's membership in the EU and supported the fastest possible granting of candidate status, which was finally obtained in June 2022. Also in June 2022, Poland supported granting Ukraine the status of a 3SI participating partner at the Three Seas Initiative summit in Riga.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Polski Instytut Ekonomiczny (2022) *Polacy mogli wydać nawet 10 mld PLN na pomoc udzielaną uchodźcom z Ukrainy w pierwszych miesiącach wojny*, Available at: <https://pie.net.pl/polacy-mogli-wydac-nawet-10-mld-pln-na-pomoc-udzielana-uchodzcom-z-ukrainy-w-pierwszych-miesiacach-wojny/> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

⁴⁷ Rzeczpospolita (2022) M. Kozubal, *Nasz kraj w światowej czołówce pomocy wojskowej dla Kijowa*, Available at: <https://www.rp.pl/biznes/art37630121-nasz-kraj-w-swiatowej-czolowce-pomocy-wojskowej-dla-kijowa> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

⁴⁸ Instytut Europy Środkowej (2022) Ł. Lewkowicz, M. Gołębiowska, *Po szczycie Inicjatywy Trójmorza w Rydze: nowy status współpracy z Ukrainą i wsparcie Stanów Zjednoczonych*, „Komentarze IEŚ”, Available at: <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/po->

As for military assistance, Poland is at the forefront of countries assisting Ukraine. Detailed data on Polish weapons sent to Ukraine is provided by the industry portal Oryxspioenkop, which monitors the situation in Ukraine (data from December 2022). According to this data, Poland has sent over 300 armored combat vehicles to this country, including over 230 tanks, e.g., T-72M and T-72M1, 110 self-propelled guns, and many rocket launchers. 18 155 mm AHS Krab modern gun-howitzers were delivered to Ukraine, and Ukraine has purchased another 54. Ammunition was donated for tanks, guns, surface-to-air missiles, at least 100 air-to-air missiles for MiG-29 aircraft, at least 160 Piorun rocket launchers, various types of mortars (e.g. revolver mortars), rifles (Tantal, AKMS, UKM-2000P), including the most modern Grot, and grenade launchers. In February 2022, Poland was already transferring a significant amount of protective equipment for soldiers to Ukraine, e.g., 42 thousand helmets.⁴⁹

There is a visible political consensus on the supply of arms to Ukraine among the major political parties. According to Polish politicians, military support for Ukraine delays the possibility of Russia attacking Poland. Top politicians maintain that they will continue to transfer arms to the east until the Russians are defeated. Most Poles (82% of respondents in the Ipsos survey) are in favor of military support for Ukraine, with the Confederation being the only party that opposes the supply of arms to Ukraine. Some of its politicians merely favor Poland's neutrality in the current conflict, while others oppose transferring Polish weapons to Ukraine, not wanting to disarm their own country. However, in many statements, they suggest support for Russia.⁵⁰

szczytie-inicjatywy-trojmorza-w-rydze-nowy-status-wspolpracy-z-ukraina-i-wsparcie-stanow-zjednoczonych/ (Accessed 9 March 2023).

⁴⁹ Rzeczpospolita (2022) M. Kozubal, *Nasz kraj w światowej czołówce pomocy wojskowej dla Kijowa*, Available at: <https://www.rp.pl/biznes/art37630121-nasz-kraj-w-swiatowej-czolowce-pomocy-wojskowej-dla-kijowa> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

⁵⁰ OKO.press (2023) W. Głowacki, *Wspierać Ukrainę przez lata, czy szukać sposobu na układ z Rosją? [Sondaż w Polsce i w Niemczech]*, Available at: <https://oko.press/wspierac-ukraine-przez-lata-czy-szukac-sposobu-na-uklad-z-rosja-sondaz-w-polsce-i-w-niemczech> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

Regarding the impact on energy security, Russia's attack on Ukraine has significantly changed the situation of Poland, forcing the government began to take short-term and long-term measures to avoid destabilization. In the current situation, the Ministry of Climate and Environment has set strategic goals regarding, among others, counteracting the crisis related to energy prices. They have proposed redirecting gas and coal to non-Russian sources while calling for a similar maneuver on EU markets and accelerating investments related to nuclear energy and offshore wind energy, which will be a key pillar of Poland's future energy mix.⁵¹

The estimated volume of gas imports to Poland in January-October 2022 amounted to 13.1 billion m³. As in previous years, from January to April 2022, Russia was the largest natural gas supplier to Poland. In May 2022, however, Moscow stopped “blue fuel” shipments to Poland, and the Polish side has not sought to resume deliveries due to factors such as the Yamal contract expiring this year. Thus, Russia ceased to be a direct supplier of gas to Poland.

From January to October 2022, coal imports to Poland amounted to 14 million tons, and until April last year, Russia was its leading raw materials supplier. From January to April 2022, Poland imported 2.5 million tons of Russian coal and 2.2 million tons from other suppliers. At the beginning of May 2022, Russian coal imports were completely suspended due to the embargo imposed by the Polish government.

From January to October 2022, crude oil imports amounted to 20.7 million tons. Throughout the 10-month period, Russia was the leading supplier of crude oil to Poland. However, it should be noted that its share systematically decreased in the following months due to a greater number of alternative suppliers and lower imports of Russian oil. At the end of 2022, Poland was still buying 51% of its oil from Russia⁵².

⁵¹ Portal Ochrony Środowiska (2022) T. Kaler, *Bezpieczeństwo energetyczne Polski a wojna na Ukrainie*, Available at: <https://portalochronysrodowiska.pl/energetyka/bezpieczenstwo-energetyczne-polski-a-wojna-na-ukrainie-1875.html#> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

⁵² Gramwzielone.pl (2022) *Ile kosztuje Polskę uzależnienie od importu paliw kopalnych?*, Available at: <https://www.gramwzielone.pl/trendy/109666/tyle-polska-placi-za-uzaleznienie-od-importu-paliw-kopalnych> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

The Ministry of Infrastructure announced an acceleration of the construction of the gas terminal in the Gulf of Gdańsk (commissioning is planned for 2027-2028). The program assumes the location of a floating FSRU unit in the Gdańsk area, capable of unloading LNG, processing storage, regasifying LNG, and providing additional services. As part of the program, there are also plans to expand the national transmission system, enabling effective gas distribution from Gdańsk to customers in Poland and the region. The most significant energy investments in the country, such as offshore wind farms and a nuclear power plant, will be implemented in the Pomeranian Voivodeship. As part of developing low-emission energy, the Polish Hydrogen Strategy until 2030 with a perspective for extra ten years, until 2040 was adopted. Hydrogen can be used both in the energy and heating sectors and as an alternative fuel in transport⁵³.

Poland's energy security is currently ensured by the appropriate energy balance structure, which includes a large share of domestic coal extraction and the existing infrastructure with favorable conditions for importing energy resources, including natural gas, crude oil, and fuels. Poland has a developed natural gas import system, including the LNG terminal in Świnoujście, and numerous interconnectors that play a crucial role in ensuring the energy security of the entire region of Central Europe⁵⁴.

⁵³ Portal Ochrony Środowiska (2022) T. Kaler, *Bezpieczeństwo energetyczne Polski a wojna na Ukrainie*, Available at: <https://portalochronysrodowiska.pl/energetyka/bezpieczenstwo-energetyczne-polski-a-wojna-na-ukrainie-1875.html#> (Accessed 9 March 2023).

⁵⁴ Based on data obtained from Michał Paszkowski, a senior analyst at the Institute of Central Europe and an employee of the Lotos fuel company.

The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan: Hungary

Like Poland and Slovakia, Hungary is directly adjacent to Ukraine and significantly affected by the war. However, despite the similarity of external factors, Hungary's position differs significantly from the rest of the V4 and the rest of the EU and NATO. This difference is due to Viktor Orbán's mixture of populism and nationalism as his government attempts to balance popularity in the domestic scene and compliance with the demands of the EU, NATO, and other partners supporting Ukraine. The war in Ukraine was a campaign topic before the April 2022 parliamentary elections in Hungary. The EU has long criticized Orbán for democratic backsliding, corruption, and shortcomings in rule of law, which it is trying to prevent by stopping European funds flowing to Hungary. The war and the need for Hungary's consent for Ukraine's ascension into the EU provide Orbán with negotiating leverage which he skillfully uses to balance his position. Budapest's policy comes at the price of losing Poland as a vital partner in the fight against criticism from the EU. However, according to some, the effort to divert attention from the state's economic problems is only one of the factors influencing Hungary's foreign policy and attitude towards Russian aggression. Another factor may be Orbán's effort to cultivate long-term positive relations with Russia. The Fidesz government led by Orbán purposefully built good relations with Russia, an exchange for which they expected a patronizing approach to ensure sufficient energy raw materials at favorable prices. They also developed a nuclear power plant project with the Russian company Rosatom. In seeking support for these, there is a mutual relationship between Orbán's Fidesz party, which dominates the political arena with 50% support,⁵⁵ and a society whose views are above average in pro-Russian sentiment.⁵⁶ It is also possible to explain antipathy

⁵⁵ Politico (2023) *Poll of Polls Hungary — National parliament voting intention*. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/hungary/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁵⁶ Hungary Today (2022) *Ipsos Survey: 90% of Hungarians Say Hungary Should Avoid Military Involvement in War*. Available at: <https://hungarytoday.hu/ipsos-poll-survey-opinion-hungarians-war-ukraine-russia-sanction/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

of a part of Hungarian society towards Ukraine due to the dispute over the territory of western Ukraine, inhabited by the Hungarian-speaking population.

The Central European country was also affected economically when post-covid recovery was disrupted by the war, which, due to Hungary's energy dependence, worsened the state's ability to deal with the consequences of the conflict. Since the outbreak of the war, more than 2.3 million people have entered Hungary across the border with Ukraine. However, only 34,248 Ukrainian refugees with Temporary Protection status or a similar national scheme remained in the country. Compared to Slovakia with a population of 5 million, where over 111,000 refugees are registered, this is a third of the number.⁵⁷

Even though Hungary's foreign policy actions concerning the conflict in Ukraine are mostly the subject of criticism, it should be noted that after the outbreak of the war, Hungary condemned the aggression and called it "contrary to international law". Furthermore, Hungary's approach is a cynical and improvement of its negotiating position. For example, an aid package to Ukraine of EUR 18 billion, or EUR 500 million for the European Peace Facility (EPF) mechanism, can be cited. Hungary vetoed the package until Orbán achieved a reduction in the volume of suspended funds. An amount exceeding EUR 7.5 billion was blocked due to suspicion of corruption linked to European finances. Viktor Orbán's government managed to negotiate a reduction of the blocked amount by EUR 1.2 billion.⁵⁸

Due to the war in Ukraine, Sweden and Finland are now seeking NATO membership. Together with Turkey, Hungary is the last member state of the alliance that has not approved the entry of the Nordic states. Although, according to the statements of Hungarian politicians, there is no need to

⁵⁷ UNHCR Hungary (2022) *UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION OPERATIONAL UPDATE*. Available at https://reliefweb.int/attachments/c5455f03-03bb-468f-b2a8-8e4507bef8c6/UNHCR%20Hungary%20-%20Operational%20Update%20%28September%202022%29_%20final.pdf (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁵⁸ DW (2022) *EU strikes deal to lift Hungary's block on Ukraine aid*. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-strikes-deal-to-lift-hungarys-block-on-ukraine-aid/a-64077864> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

worry about Budapest not supporting their accession, it is evident that Hungary is also improving its position in the EU,⁵⁹ as Sweden and Finland were among the critics of Hungary's democratic backsliding and Orbán's judicial reforms.⁶⁰

As a former Eastern Bloc state, Hungary possesses military equipment similar to the rest of the Visegrad Four grouping, yet it has long refused to send military equipment to Ukraine.⁶¹ In support of its position, the government argues that the supply of arms prolongs the conflict and that an end to the war must be achieved diplomatically, not militarily. The Hungarian armed forces are halfway through the ten-year implementation period of the so-called Zrínyi 2026 Defense and Force Development Programme,⁶² which determines, among other things, the progress and areas of modernization of the armed forces. Much of Hungary's military equipment, especially tanks and armored infantry vehicles, will be replaced by more modern equipment in the near future. In the case of tanks, the purchase of German Leopards 2A4 and 2A7+ will replace the Soviet T-72s. In the case of armored vehicles, there was long speculation about a replacement for various versions of the BTR-80, an 8×8 wheeled amphibious armored personnel carrier. In the end,

⁵⁹ Pekka Vantinnen (2023) *Hungary backs Finnish, Swedish NATO membership, unclear on ratification date*. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/hungary-backs-finnish-swedish-nato-membership-unclear-on-ratification-date/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶⁰ EuroNews (2023) *'Budapest is teaching Finland and Sweden a lesson': Hungary becomes increasingly isolated in NATO*. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2023/03/13/budapest-is-teaching-finland-and-sweden-a-lesson-hungary-becomes-increasingly-isolated-in-> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶¹ Reuters (2022) *Hungary to stay out of Ukraine-Russia conflict, Orban says*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungary-stay-out-ukraine-russia-conflict-orban-says-2022-02-27/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶² Dávid Nagy (2021) *Zrínyi 2026: Hungary's Large-scale Military Force Development Programme*. Available at: <https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/current/zrinyi-2026-hungarys-large-scale-military-force-development-programme/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

Budapest decided on the German Lynx.⁶³ As with the remaining V4 states, Hungary could provide Soviet-era technology to Ukraine for financial compensation or in exchange for more modern Western technology. However, the government refuses such a step, and since the outbreak of the conflict, has refused to allow the direct transport of weapons to Ukraine through its territory.⁶⁴ However, despite the statements of government officials, equipment was allowed to pass through Hungarian territory and airspace, for example to Poland, which was later transferred to Ukraine.⁶⁵ Hungary also provides training and medical care to Ukrainian soldiers, but this has not been publicly communicated by the government.⁶⁶ The Minister of Defense had to clarify the information in response to a statement by his Slovak colleague, who said in a public debate that "neutral" Hungary also trains Ukrainian soldiers.⁶⁷ This dichotomy is also the result of Orbán's balancing act in the game for voters and saving face on the international stage.

Like other countries of the Central European region, Hungary is largely dependent on the import of energy raw materials from Russia. Up to 85% of

⁶³ Dániel Deme (2022) *Another Big Cat Arrives in the Armory of the Hungarian Land Forces*. Available at: <https://hungarytoday.hu/another-big-cat-arrives-in-the-armory-of-the-hungarian-land-forces/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶⁴ Lily Bayer (2022) *Hungary refuses to allow weapons transit to Ukraine*. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-foreign-minister-peter-szijjarto-weapon-transit-ukraine/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶⁵ Zalán Zubor (2022) *Weapons shipments for Ukraine did pass through Hungary, despite the government's contradicting claims*. Available at: <https://english.atlatszo.hu/2022/05/13/weapons-shipments-for-ukraine-did-pass-through-hungary-despite-the-governments-contradicting-claims/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶⁶ Max Griera (2023) *Slovak minister says 'neutral' Hungary also trains Ukrainian soldiers*. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/slovak-minister-says-neutral-hungary-also-trains-ukrainian-soldiers/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶⁷ Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovak Republic (2023) *Hlboká Online #23*. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=978024276938781 (Accessed 1 March 2023).

natural gas and 65% of oil are imported from Russia.⁶⁸ The complex situation is underscored by a lack of sufficient infrastructure from the neighboring Romania and Croatia, which could contribute to reducing dependence on Russian supplies.⁶⁹ Gradually, by 2050, dependence on Russia should be completely eliminated.⁷⁰ After the outbreak of the conflict, Hungary intensified its efforts in the area of resource diversification, but also in reducing the share of fossil fuels in the energy mix. At the same time, however, the Hungarian government vetoed a complete embargo on Russian oil and, together with the countries connected to the Druzhba pipeline, asserted an exemption for oil imports. Viktor Orbán also stated that he is ready to immediately veto any proposal for sanctions on the import of nuclear fuel from Russia.⁷¹ Similar to Slovakia's case, Hungarian nuclear power plants also import fuel from the Russian Federation, and the aforementioned power plant construction project with the Russian Rosatom undoubtedly plays an important role here.⁷²

It can be assumed that Hungary will continue to try to block European sanctions on importing energy raw materials from Russia. In this case, however, in contrast to the supply of weapons, it is largely a pragmatic action, given the ongoing projects and the infrastructure needed for diversification or reducing dependence on supplies from Russia.

⁶⁸Sam Meredith (2022) *Hungary says it's impossible for Europe to ban Russian gas anytime soon. Putin agrees.* Available at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/10/russian-gas-ban-hungary-says-eu-cant-impose-a-gas-ban-on-russia.html> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁶⁹ Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister (2018) *Hungary's excessive reliance on Russian gas will end by 2022.* Available at: <https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/hungarys-excessive-reliance-on-russian-gas-will-end-by-2022/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁷⁰Reuters (2022) *Hungary aims to eliminate reliance on Russian gas by 2050.* Available at <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/hungary-aims-eliminate-reliance-russian-gas-by-2050-minister-2022-10-04/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁷¹ Euractiv (2023) *Hungary will veto EU sanctions on Russian nuclear energy, Orban warns.* Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/hungary-will-veto-eu-sanctions-on-russian-nuclear-energy-orban-warns/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁷²Alis Davies (2022) *Russia to build two nuclear reactors in Hungary.* Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62695938> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan: Japan

Japan's response to the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine was in line with its long-term articulated priorities and national interests, especially a rule-based order. The Japanese government considers the killing of civilians by Russian troops in Ukraine to be "...a serious violation of international humanitarian law and war crimes. It is absolutely unacceptable and Japan vehemently condemns it." At the same time, this conflict represents a strong impetus for Japan to take a more proactive approach to security in its own region. Tokyo has linked the war in Ukraine with the decline of the rule-based order and, therefore, it's a threat to its own region. Japanese public support for aid to Ukraine is nearly 86%, and up to 75.2% of residents fear that a similar scenario could occur with China and Taiwan or the Senkaku Islands.⁷³ On one hand, this data supports the KISHIDA Fumio government's actions, but it also limits the possibilities of the Japanese government to send weapons to Ukraine, or change the legislation to make this possible. The coalition partner of the LDP, the Komeito party, is also against the delivery of weapons to Ukraine for fear that it could involve Japan not only in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. They fear that a precedent would be created that could involve Japan in conflicts in the Indo-Pacific in the future.

The Japanese government's position is clear regarding providing humanitarian and financial aid or introduction sanctions against Russia. Japan supplied Ukrainian with non-lethal military equipment, such as drones, bulletproof vests, helmets, winter battle dress uniform, tents, cameras, hygiene products, emergency rations, binoculars, lighting devices, medical supplies, and more. The Japanese government provided humanitarian aid not only to Ukraine but also to neighboring countries totaling USD 200 million and promised additional funding of up to USD 500 million. Additionally, it provided direct financial support of USD 600 million, generators, equipment needed to ensure broadcasting, and other non-

⁷³ Kyodo News (2022) *86% back Japan's sanctions on Russia over invasion in Ukraine: poll* Available at: <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/03/65dff5d6bb6c-breaking-news-support-rate-for-japan-cabinet-rises-to-601-kyodo-poll.html> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

military essentials.⁷⁴ In the course of action against Russia, Japan was one of the prominent supporters of sanctions, using its position in the world economy and its fundamental influence in international financial institutions such as the IMF or the World Bank. At the same time, the assets of natural and legal persons, including President Putin, as well as twelve Russian banks were frozen.⁷⁵ The decision to introduce a price ceiling on Russian oil was also significant from the point of view of limiting the Russian Federation's ability to finance the war.

Regarding Japan's voting and activity at the UN, it is necessary to mention the fact that Japan is a non-permanent member of the UNSC for 2023-2024 and chaired this body in January 2023. It is a record 12th time that an Asian power has become a non-permanent member of the Security Council.⁷⁶ Russian aggression and fears of growing Chinese assertiveness gave Japan the space to re-articulate its efforts to reform the UN so as to "restore the functions of the United Nations."⁷⁷ Above all, it concerns Japan's permanent membership in the UNSC and the system's reform so that the Security Council cannot be blocked by the veto power of one or two permanent members, as is the case today with Russia and China.

The issue of arms supplies to Ukraine is the subject of criticism among some Japanese, especially when unprecedented steps are taken by countries

⁷⁴ Government of Japan (2023) *Japan stands with Ukraine*, Available at: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/pdf/jp_stands_with_ukraine_eng.pdf (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Japan Times (2023) *Japan to be tested as nonpermanent U.N. Security Council member* Available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/01/02/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-un-security-council-tested/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁷⁷ Prime Minister's Office of Japan (2023) *Address by Prime Minister Kishida at the Seventy-Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, Available at: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/statement/202209/_00004.html (Accessed 1 March 2023).

such as Germany,⁷⁸ and traditionally neutral countries like Switzerland.⁷⁹ Japan has self-restricted its weapons exports for decades. It was guided by three principles: not to export weapons to states that are 1) communist, 2) embargoed by the UN, and 3) in an ongoing conflict or at risk of conflict. These principles, adopted in 1967, became entrenched in the approach to arms exports to the point where Japan refused to export arms "on principle". By 2014, 21 exceptions were granted, but many of them related to the provision of non-lethal equipment such as bulldozers or bulletproof vests to soldiers of other states in multinational missions abroad.⁸⁰ It was in 2014 that the Japanese government under Abe Shinzo decided to relax arms export rules. These changes came from domestic industry pressure, fears of losing competitiveness, and the belief that defense industry cooperation and arms exports can strengthen existing alliances and create new ones.

The new three principles limit the export of arms if they "violate obligations under international treaties or agreements, violate UNSC resolutions, or when the transfer would be to a country party to a conflict and against which the UNSC is taking measures to maintain or restore peace in the event of an armed attack." At the same time, however, they allow exports if they contribute to the "active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation, or to Japan's security."⁸¹ If these conditions are met, it is necessary to ensure control of the delivered weapons, the end user, and in

⁷⁸ David Herzsenhorn, Lili Bayer and Hans von der Burchard (2023) *Germany to send Ukraine weapons in historic shift on military aid*, Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-war-russia-germany-still-blocking-arms-supplies/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁷⁹ Wilhelmine Preussen, Leonie Kijewski and Nicolas Camut (2023) *Germany to send Ukraine weapons in historic shift on military aid*, Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/switzerland-rethinks-neutrality-considers-weapon-export-amid-ukraine-russia-war-crisis/> (Accessed 6 March 2023).

⁸⁰ Alexandra Sakaki and Sebastian Maslow (2020) "Japan's new arms export policies: strategic aspirations and domestic constraints", *AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS* 2020, VOL. 74, NO. 6, 649–669 Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2020.1781789>

⁸¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014) *Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology*, Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000034953.pdf> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

the case of re-export, consent must be requested. In that case, compliance with the three principles will be assessed again.

Abe Shinzo's government enabled the supply of non-lethal military material to Ukraine. However, the above-mentioned concerns about the export of weapons persist, and therefore it is impossible to expect that Japan would supply weapons to Ukraine. For the Japanese left-wing political spectrum, the delivery of drones, which were only equipped for research, was already controversial. According to an editorial in the *Asahi Shimbun*, their use in combat, even if only for reconnaissance, is borderline as they serve to "detect and identify Russian military targets for attacks" and therefore cannot be considered "purely defensive equipment."⁸² It is therefore evident that the proposal to change the current three principles, which would allow "to transfer a wide range of defense equipment to a country subject to aggression that violates international law," will face significant criticism and negative attitudes among a large portion of the public. In any case, the war in Ukraine represents an important milestone in exporting and supplying Japanese weapons and military equipment. If the government of KISHIDA Fumio could use the momentum of support for Ukraine and communicate the changes in the context of trying to maintain the rule-based international order, it could push through the proposed change. In today's dynamically evolving security environment, any set-up is unlikely to last for decades, as it did during the Cold War. However, it would be a step towards normalizing the state's foreign and security policy as envisioned by the LDP's hawkish wing.

As a net importer of energy raw materials, Japan was significantly affected by the energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it supported sanctions against Russia aimed at the energy sector. Before the outbreak of the conflict, Russia supplied Japan with approximately 4% of its oil and 9% of its natural gas.⁸³ Even though the degree of dependence is nowhere near comparable to the countries of Central Europe, fossil fuels

⁸² *Asahi Shimbun (2022) EDITORIAL: Japan's aid to Ukraine cannot lead to broader arms exports Available at: <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14611183> (Accessed 1 March 2023).*

⁸³ *Clara Tan (2023) War Imperils Japan's Energy Security Available at: <https://www.energyintel.com/00000186-0640-d2f7-a387-afda49e60000> (Accessed 1 March 2023).*

make up 88% of Japan's total primary energy supply.⁸⁴ From this point of view, stable supplies of energy raw materials are crucial for Japan, leading it to reduce its dependence on oil and natural gas imports from the Middle East and engage in projects with Russia, namely Sakhalin-1 and Sakhalin-2, during the Abe Shizno administration. Despite the fact that Japan also supported the price cap initiated by the G7 group, the government rejected a full embargo on Russian oil. The reason is, among other things, the shares of Japanese companies in the Sakhalin 1 (30%) and 2 (22.5%) projects.⁸⁵ Japanese companies, unlike their Western partners Shell and Exxon Mobil, did not withdraw from the projects.

Despite the articulated interest in not abandoning projects in Russia, Japan was building up its oil and natural gas reserves because there is a fear that Russian could condition cooperation with unacceptable conditions. LNG stocks in 2023 are the highest since 2008, but even then, they would only cover consumption for a few weeks due to the difficulty of storing gas. As for oil, Japan has reserves for more than 200 days.⁸⁶

There is another important reason why Japan will not completely stop cooperating with Russia in energy sector despite its relatively low dependence on Russian oil and natural gas. It is concerned about the People's Republic of China and fears that Chinese companies would replace Japanese ones, thus permanently losing access to a cheap and readily available source of LNG if it withdraws now.

⁸⁴ IEA (2021) *Japan 2021 Energy Policy Review* Available at: <https://www.iea.org/reports/japan-2021> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁸⁵ Rurika Imahashi (2022) *Walking a tightrope: Ukraine war puts Japan's energy security on thin ice* Available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/Walking-a-tightrope-Ukraine-war-puts-Japan-s-energy-security-on-thin-ice> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

⁸⁶ Japan Times (2023) *Japan's LNG stockpile surges amid energy crisis induced by Ukraine war* Available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/02/25/national/lng-stockpiles-record/> (Accessed 1 March 2023).

Conclusions of the on-line seminar

- The impact of the conflict in Ukraine is different for each state in the V4+Japan format, but it is a significant driver of security and foreign policy.
- Japan is less heavily involved due to its geographical distance from the conflict. However, the violation of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity is reflected in East Asia, especially in connection with the tension in Sino-Taiwanese relations and the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute. For these reasons, Japan strongly supports Ukraine and the sanctions aimed at Russia.
- The V4 states and Japan should strengthen cooperation, but it is not necessary to focus exclusively on Ukraine. They should remember the successful cooperation in the Western Balkans region, where V4+Japan implemented several successful joint projects. This region is of interest to both Japan and the V4 states, and therefore it would be mutually beneficial if the cooperation continued despite the apparent tendency to focus efforts on aid and post-conflict reconstruction in Ukraine.
- Given recent news about Polish purchases of South Korean military equipment and speculations about similar purchases by other V4 states, there are questions about the possibility of purchasing Japanese military equipment and cooperation between the defense industries of the V4 countries and Japan. However, Japan is in the early phases of building its position in the military equipment market and lacks experience in exporting this production. At the same time, it should be noted that Japanese products are price disadvantageously, and the Japanese defense industry specializes primarily in aviation and marine technology, which is not as useful for the V4 countries. In the medium term, the Japanese-British-Italian fighter project, which should be ready by 2035, could be suitable for the European market, and similar projects could represent a good basis for building cooperation between the defense industries of the V4 states.
- In the area of energy security, Japan's dependence on energy raw materials was significantly lower than in the case of the V4 states. Despite this, Japan has not yet withdrawn from projects on the Sakhalin Peninsula in Russia.

- The effects of the war in Ukraine on the energy security of the V4 states showed weaknesses, and it is in this sector that the possibility of cooperation with Japan, a pioneer in this area, is emerging.; especially when it comes to building strategic stocks or crisis management. Regarding the goal of decarbonizing the energy sector, the Japanese experience is interesting for countries such as Poland or the Czechia. Nuclear power plants, which make up a significant part of electricity production in the Central European region, represent a potentially interesting area of cooperation in terms of involving Japanese companies in the construction of planned reactors or in improving the physical safety of existing power plants, as it became clear during the conflict in Ukraine that even nuclear power plants can be the site of battles and the target of shelling.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ The on-line seminar “*Japan and Visegrad Four: assessment of the effects of the war on Ukraine and post-conflict cooperation*” took place on January 17th 2023.

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The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan

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Cite as: Vancel et al. The Impact of War in Ukraine on V4 + Japan. CEIAS, March 2023.

Published by:

Central European Institute of Asian Studies
Murgašova 2, 811 04 Bratislava, Slovakia
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This study was created with the financial support of the Government of Japan, as part of the project “Japan and Visegrad Four: assessment of the effects of the war on Ukraine and post-conflict cooperation”.



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