



Central European
Digital Media
Observatory



Political Engagement and Action The Visegrad Group (V4) countries

Coffee Beans

Veronika Cigáneková, CEDMO - SVA

In this coffee bean, we will analyze citizens' interest in politics, political action, and their voting patterns in the V4 countries.

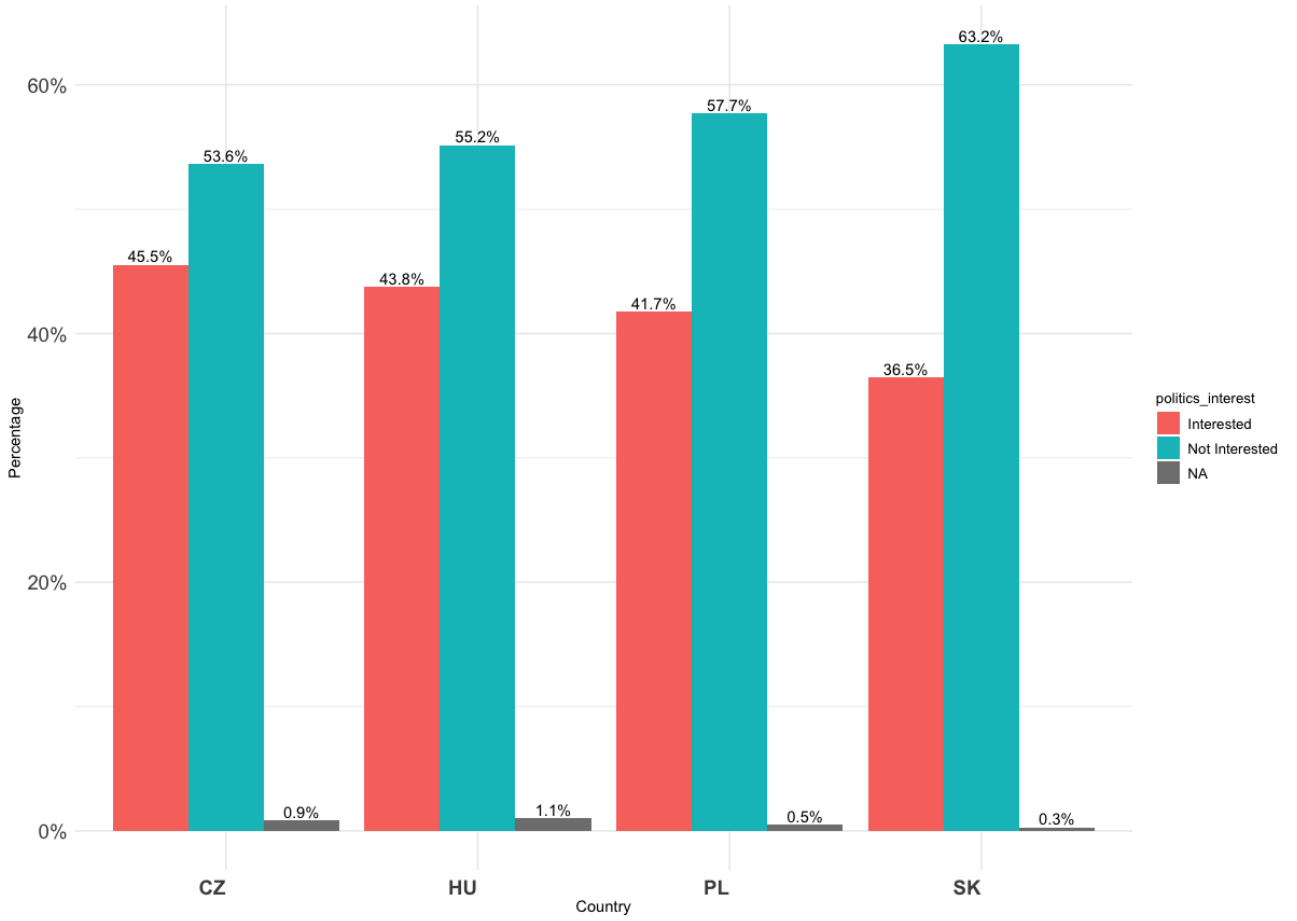
Interest in politics

In the graph below, respondents were asked “How interested would you say you are in politics?” and had a four-tier interest scale. We re-coded four initial categories into two binary categories of interest in politics. From the graph below, it's evident that the highest interest is in the Czech Republic with 45.5%. On the other hand, the highest disinterest is in Slovakia with as many as 63.2% claiming they have no interest in politics.

Updated data from the World Values Survey in 2022, which mirrors the previous survey's questions, indicates that this sentiment persisted, with 64% of the respondents still disengaged from politics in 2022. Moreover, the Czech Republic saw a decline in the 2022 data and political interest dropped to 37%. For Poland and Hungary, our reference point remains the 2017-2018 data, revealing a marginally higher political interest in Hungary by around 2 percentage points. Data about interest in politics might hint towards a changing political climate that impacts populations. Let us look further at diverse forms of political action to get more insights.

Initial categories were: 1.- Very interested, 2.- Somewhat interested, 3.- Not very interested and 4.- Not at all interested.
They were then grouped: 1,2 = Interested and 3,4 = Not interested

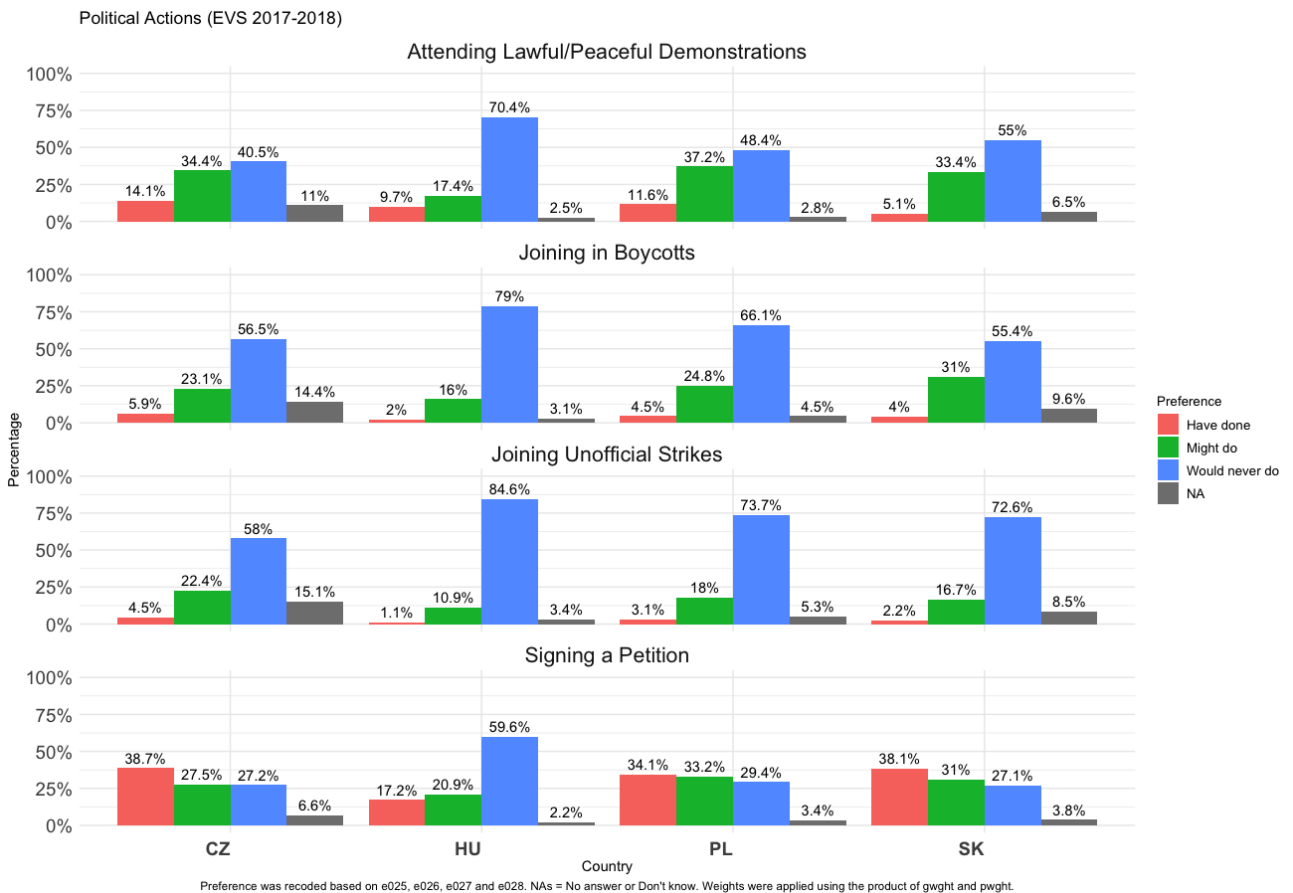
Interest in Politics by Country (EVS 2017-2018)



Interest in politics was recoded based on e023 (1,2 = Interested; 3,4 = Not Interested). NAs = No answer or Don't know. Weights were applied using the product of gwght and pwght.

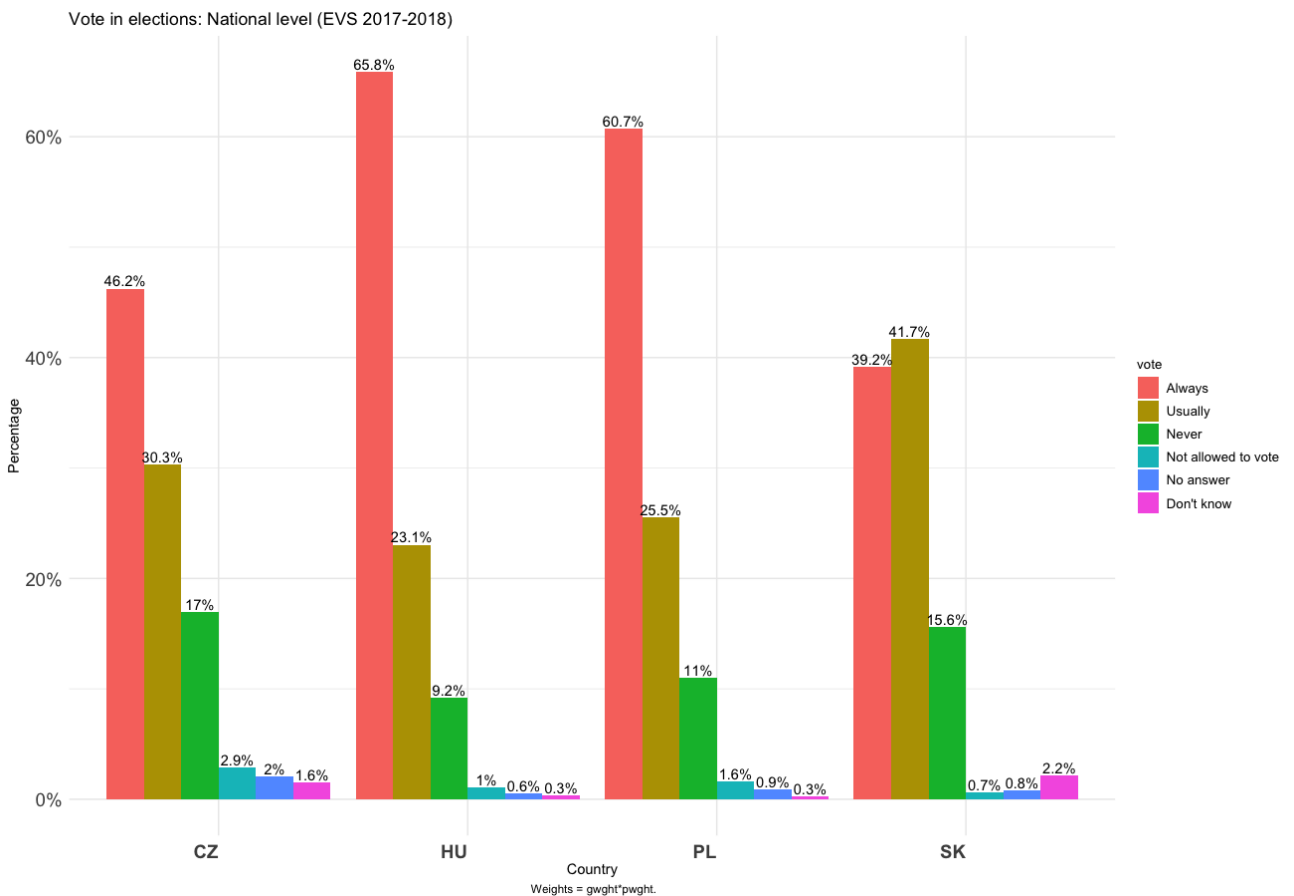
Political actions

When examining political actions or forms of participation, we notice that Hungary has the highest proportion of the population across all political actions that responded they “would never do” so. Interestingly, as many as 70.4% of Hungarians would never attend lawful or peaceful demonstrations. This observation provides insight into the political tendencies of the country. On the other hand, a significant proportion (20.9%) considers signing a petition, and more than a quarter (17.2%) of the population have already done so in the past. From the graph below, we see that “signing a petition” is generally the most popular form of political action across the V4 countries, indicating shared political attitudes. Generally, respondents' views on these forms of political action might be influenced by cultural norms, such as a preference for less confrontational forms of political expression or diverse historical contexts in the regions.



Voting patterns

The data show that Hungary has the highest portion of the population (65.8%) who always vote in national elections. The second highest percentage is in Poland with 60.7%. On the other hand, we see that over a quarter of Czechs say they never vote in national elections. Low voter turnout is a worrying phenomenon as it questions the political legitimacy of elected leaders. Still, we see that the majority across the V4 countries self-report to either vote always or usually. The diversity of voting patterns might be connected to political trust or satisfaction with the available political options.



Conclusion

The data on political engagement and actions across the Visegrad Group countries show both differences and some similarities. In most of the questions, we see Hungarians and Poles responding quite similarly. On the other hand, as a block V4 countries do seem to show a wide spectrum of attitudes, leading one to reconsider the value of this cluster for political analysis. Across all countries, we see growing disinterest in politics which is an important reflection towards media and political communication of the countries. Similarly, the preference for non-confrontational forms of political expression, like signing petitions, emerges as a common trend. Finally, it is positive to see that a higher percentage of respondents in all V4 countries tend to vote in national elections.



Dataset

EVS/WVS (2022). European Values Study and World Values Survey: Joint EVS/WVS 2017-2022 Dataset (Joint EVS/WVS). JD Systems Institute & WWSA. Dataset Version 4.0.0, [doi:10.14281/18241.21](https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.21)

Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen (eds.). 2022. World Values Survey: Round Seven - Country-Pooled Datafile Version 5.0. Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute & WWSA Secretariat. [doi:10.14281/18241.20](https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.20)