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## Report ahead of the European Parliament Elections. Disinformation and Democracy (comparative report: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary)

The survey was conducted using the CAWI method in March (Poland) 2024 and March/April 2024 (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) on representative samples of the population aged 18-65 (quota selection by gender, age, region, size of residence, education and frequency of internet use) of Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

The respondents were asked questions about selected aspects of their use of news media; their opinions on the functioning of democracy in their countries,

**Q1: In the last month, during an ordinary week, how often have you watched or listened to the news on... (multiple choice)**

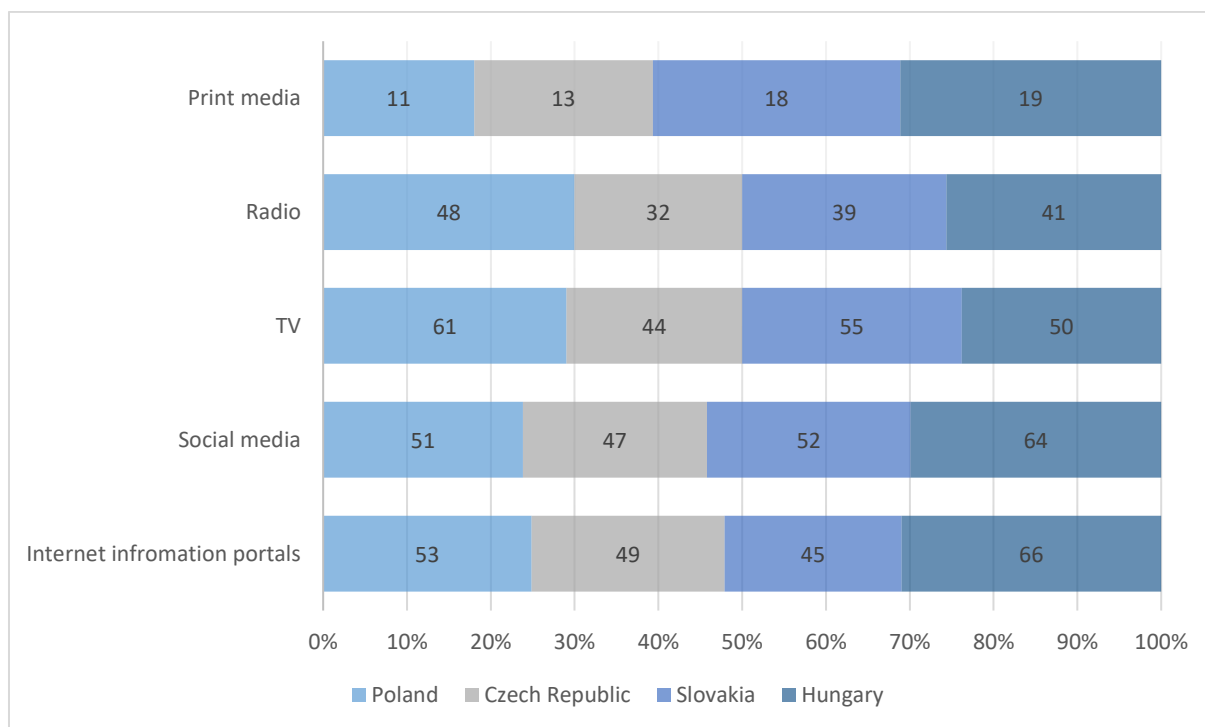


Chart 1

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

The presented results show the diversity of sources of obtaining information in the studied countries. Generally speaking, online sources dominate, with social media playing an important role, but also (to a comparable extent) web portals. There is a clear shift away from printed sources (most newspapers and magazines are also available on the Internet, so it cannot be ruled out that respondents treated them as internet portals). Television is still an important source of information, radio is also relatively popular (although its position is definitely weaker than the Internet and slightly weaker than television).

When it comes to comparing the answers of respondents from individual countries in Poland we observe a relatively stronger position of the “traditional media” i.e. radio and television (the position of the print media is slightly weaker than in other countries). In the case of the Czech Republic, the results of the survey indicate a low (compared to other countries) interest in the news media in general. This interest, on the other hand, is highest among Hungarians, where online sources also apparently dominate, but - interestingly - the position of print media is also the strongest.

**Q2: How often do you use social networks where you have your own profile and share posts - photos, videos... (e.g., Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok)?**

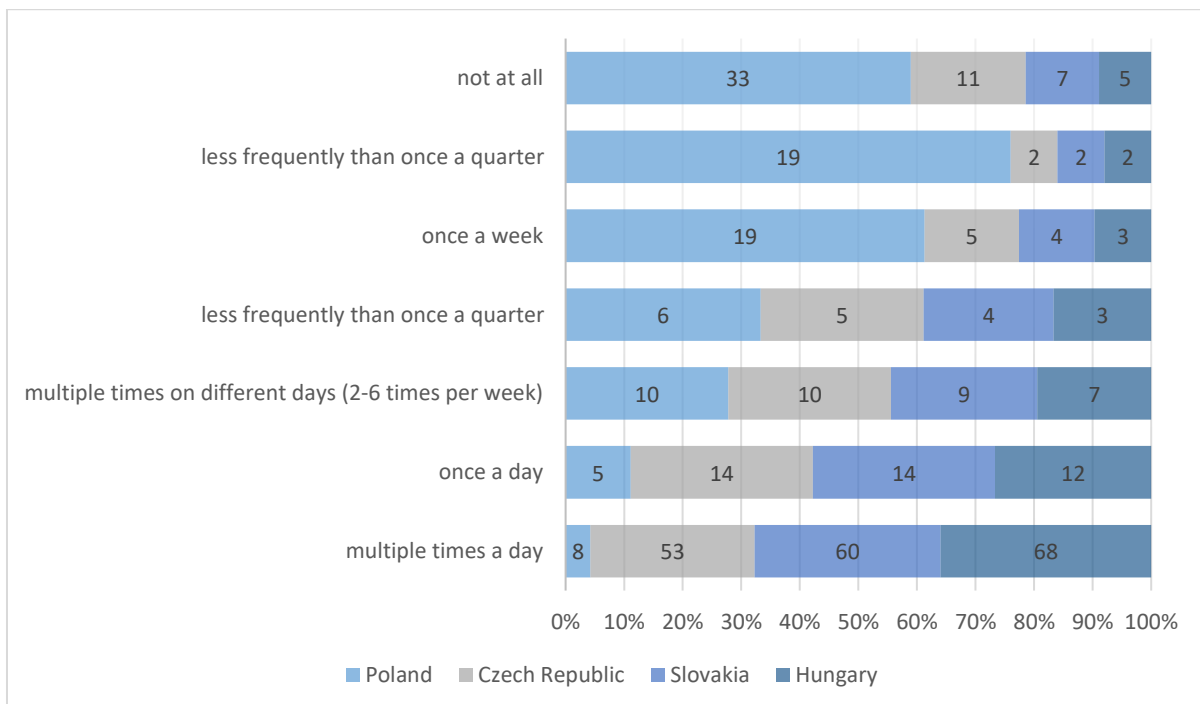


Chart 2  
Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

In the context of active social media use (having profiles and sharing content), Hungarians were exceptionally active, while Poles were exceptionally reserved.

Most Poles use social media rarely (less than once a quarter) or once a week) or not at all. 53% of Czechs say they use social media several times a day, similarly indicated by slightly more Slovak respondents (60%). It is worth noting that 11% of respondents in the Czech Republic declare that they do not use social media at all, the ratio is lower for Slovakia and Hungary. Generally (with the exception of Poland), the dominant method of using social media is frequent use - once a day or several times a day.

### Q3: To what extent do you have public information on your social media profile?

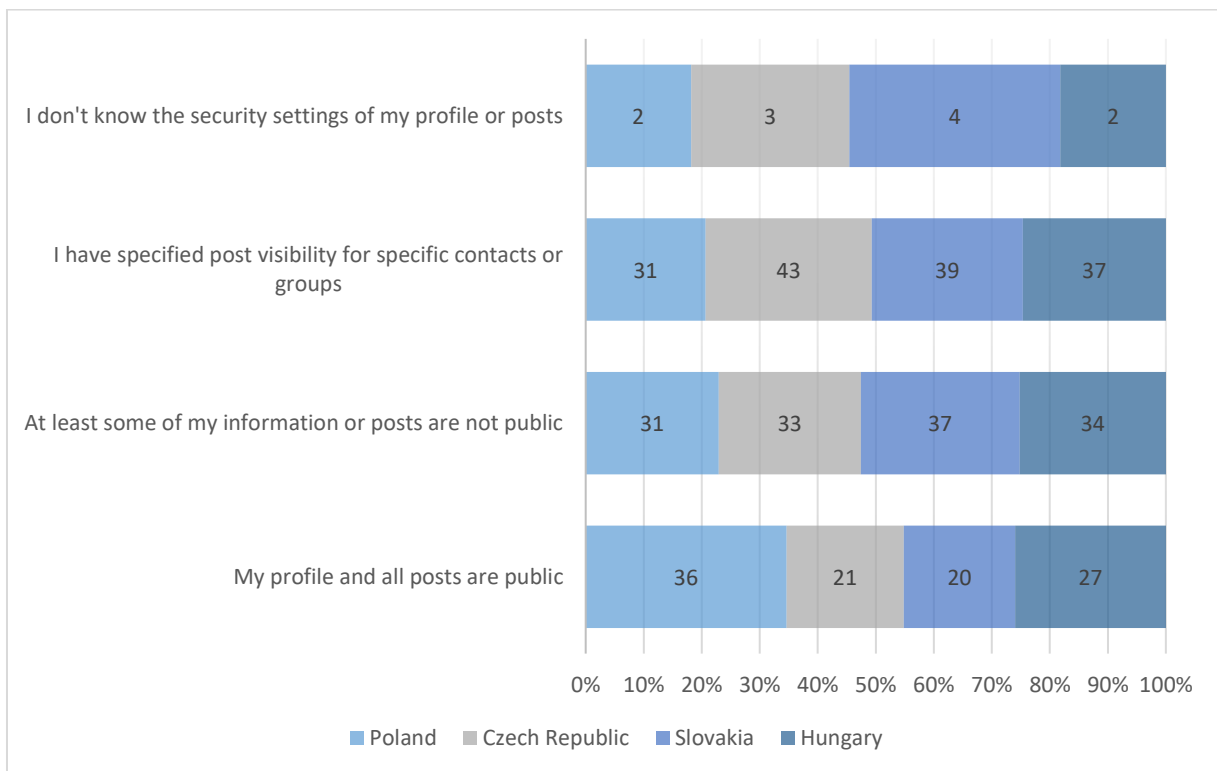


Chart 3  
 Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

The vast majority of respondents in all countries surveyed are familiar with the privacy settings of their social media accounts. Generally speaking, these settings mostly involve restricting the visibility of certain posts to certain audiences, or publishing at least some posts as not public. It is worth noting, however, that in each case more than 1/5 of respondents declare that their social media profiles are public. In this group, Poles stand out, in the case of whom such a

declaration is 36% of the answers given. In conjunction with the declared strong restriction on the use of social media, this is an interesting result, which requires further analysis.

**Q4: In the context of social networks such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, Instagram, etc., there is an ongoing discussion about the downsides and risks of their use (e.g. due to the spread of harmful content, manipulation of users by the network as a result of recommendation algorithms or non-transparent handling of users' personal data). Please indicate on a seven-point scale, where 1 means 'strongly agree' and 7 means 'strongly disagree', how much the statements correspond to your attitudes or opinions.**

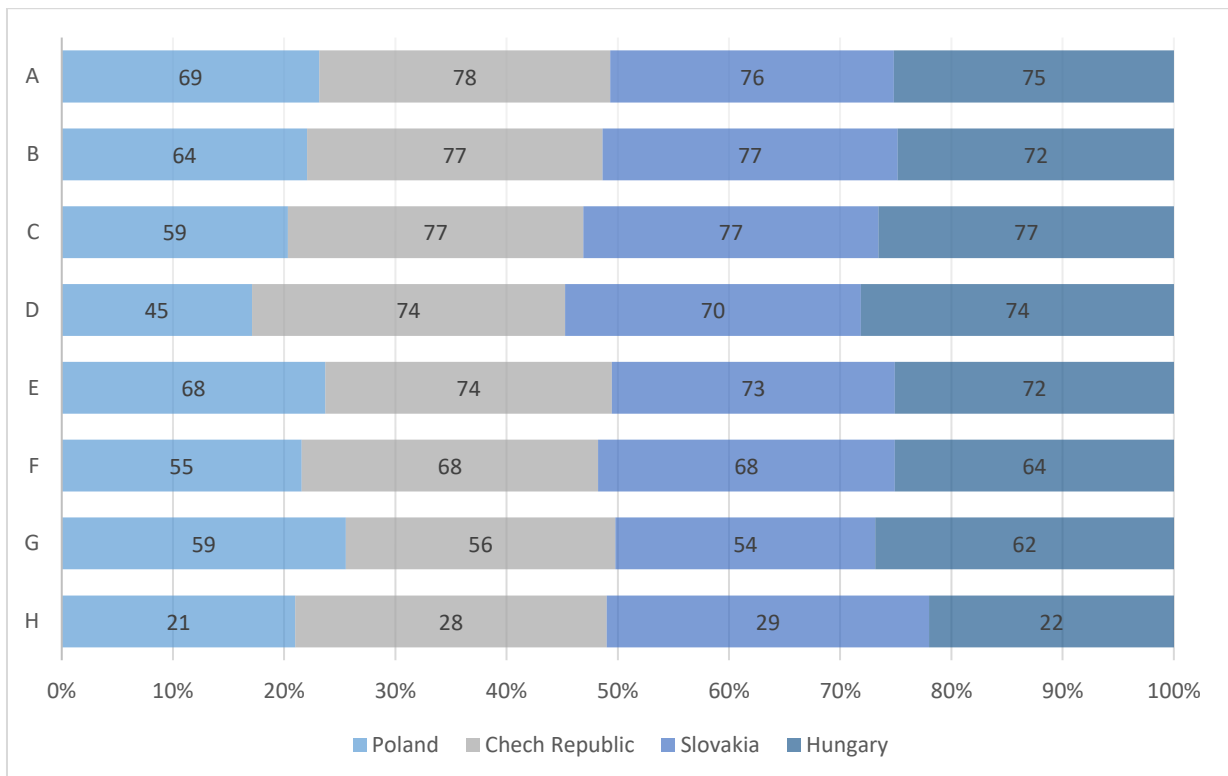


Chart 4

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

T3B = sum of "1 - Strongly agree", "2", and "3"

A/ Social network providers should be obliged to remove illegal content, goods or services that appear on a given social network.

B/ Targeted advertising aimed at children and minors should be banned on social media.

- C/ Users of social networks should be able to turn off the personalized recommendation function, i.e. the ordering of content they see on a given social network based on their previous use of the network.
- D/ Social network providers should make public the algorithms used for the ordering of content on their networks and make them available to independent research organisations (e.g. universities).
- E/ Users of social networks should be able to report content, goods or services they consider illegal to an independent regulator.
- F/ Targeted ads based on users' sensitive data (e.g. their religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political beliefs, etc.) should be banned on social networks.
- G/ Users of social networks who share content, goods or services that have been flagged as illegal and subsequently removed by the social network provider should be clearly informed of the reason for the removal. They should also have the possibility to subsequently contest the decision.
- H/ Social networks, by their very nature, should not be regulated at all.

For this question, responses are presented on a scale of 1 to 3, which were considered to be responses expressing respondents' acceptance for the given statements. Generally speaking, most respondents agree with most of the presented statements, and there are no significant differences between countries.

It should be noted, however, that this acceptance does not apply to the statement Social networks, by their very nature, should not be regulated at all. Clearly, respondents are convinced of the need to regulate social media (less than 30% of respondents in each country are against regulation, with the highest in Slovakia).

The least doubtful were statements A, B C, D, E, F (F to a slightly lesser extent, perhaps due to the wording of the question), which confirms the expectation of increased control of external bodies and/or users over social media portals. Less clear is the acceptance of assertion G, which is also in line with the logic of the respondents' answers.

When it comes to comparing the responses in the surveyed countries, there is a clear difference in respondents from Poland, who are less supportive of regulations and restrictions on social media, while the highest support is found in Hungary.

**Q5: Please select who should be LEGALLY responsible for the dissemination of harmful and potentially illegal content, services and goods on social media? (multiple choice)**

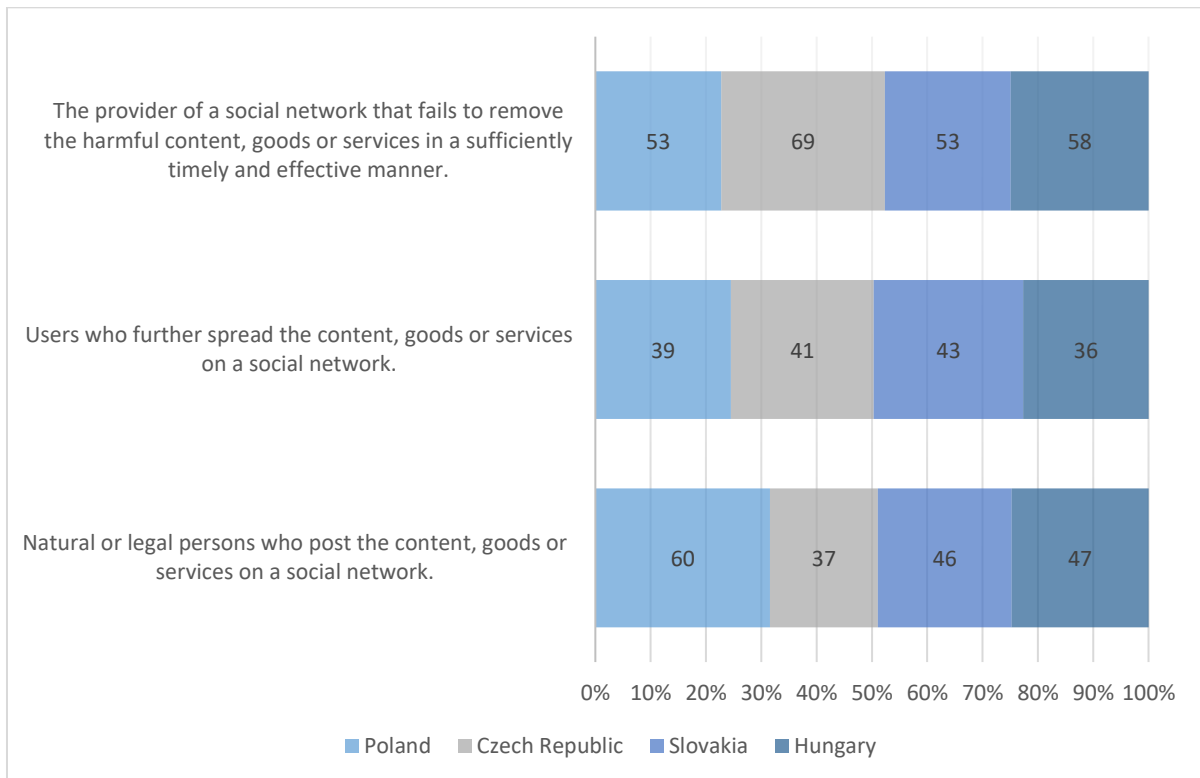


Chart 5  
 Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary N=1002).

In this case the responses were varied and at the same time rather balanced. In the case of respondents from Poland, there is a clear advantage of answers pointing to the responsibility of the creators of the content and the platforms that enable the sharing of this content. In the case of respondents from the Czech Republic, we can see a clear advantage in answers pointing to platforms, and a smaller advantage in answers pointing to people who post content on social media. The same is true for Slovakia, although here the responses are most evenly distributed. Hungarians indicate that platform is primarily responsible, followed by the actors who create media content. Interestingly, although in all four countries the ratio of indications to users who spread content is the lowest, it is still around 40%.

**Q6: In February this year, the Digital Services Act came into force in the European Union with the aim to maintain a safe online environment and protect the fundamental rights of**

**users. Have you noticed that this EU-wide legislation is intended to regulate social networks and other online platforms?**

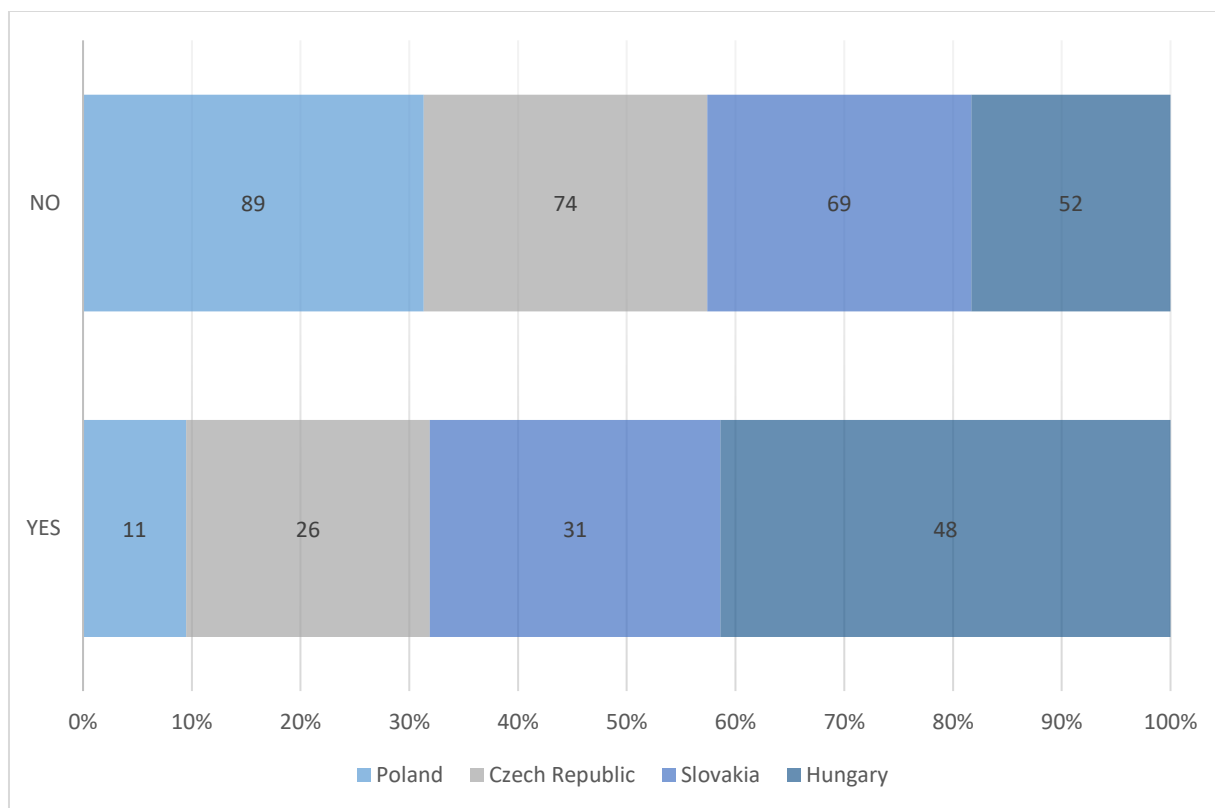


Chart 6  
 Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

The majority of respondents from the surveyed countries did not pay attention to the introduction of the Digital Service Act by the European Union. Interestingly, the percentage of respondents who did not register this fact is highest in Poland, while the lowest in Hungary. This result may indicate, on the one hand, a greater awareness of digital regulation, and on the other hand, a lesser trust of the Hungarian public in the European Union, and thus a greater interest (also critical) in the regulations that are being prepared and implemented by the European Union.

**Q7: In your opinion, should the size of a particular social network be taken into account when regulating social network providers?**

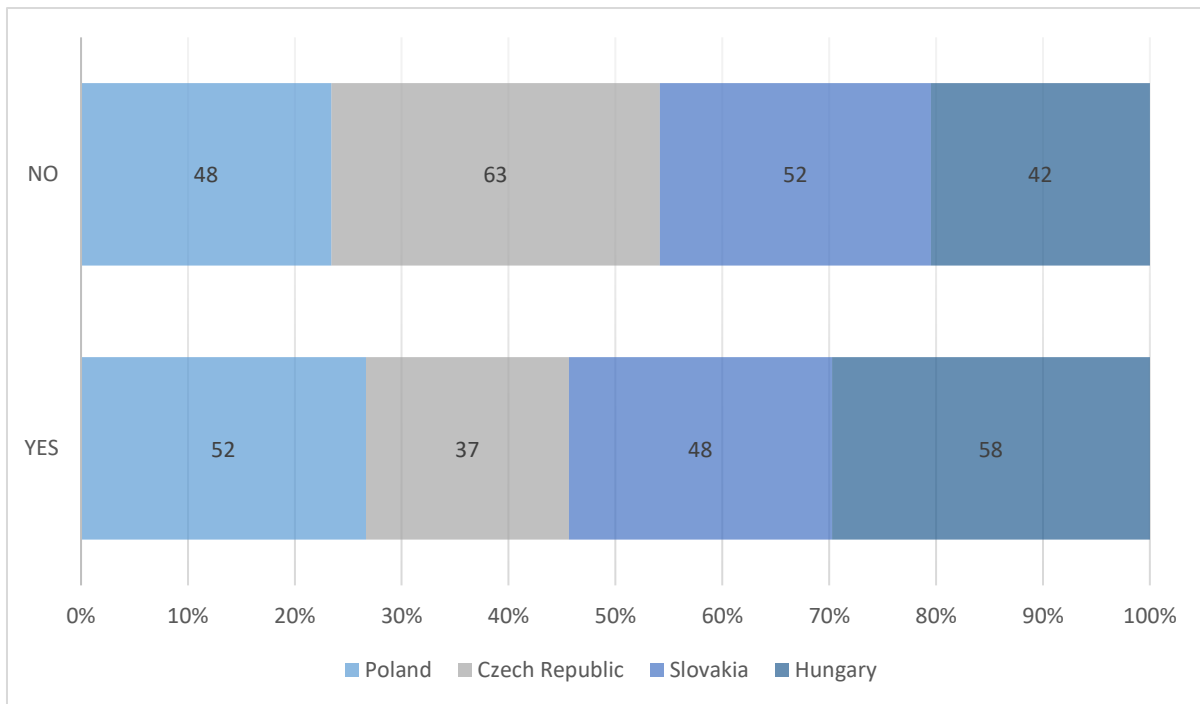


Chart 7

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

1. YES, stricter rules should apply to very large internet platforms, such that reach more than 10 % of users in a given market. In the context of the European Union, this would include networks like Facebook, X, Instagram.
2. NO, the size of an internet platform should not play a role in regulation.

Respondents in all four countries were divided on this question. Noteworthy is the position of respondents from the Czech Republic, who in the majority (63%) considered that the size of the platform should not matter (a similar trend is seen in Slovakia), on the other hand - the opinion of respondents from Hungary, who, on the contrary, declared the opinion that the size should be important for the nature of the restrictions and rules that apply to the platform (a similar trend is seen in Poland).

**Q8: How often do you currently use generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Bing, Google Bard, Canva, Midjourney, etc.?**



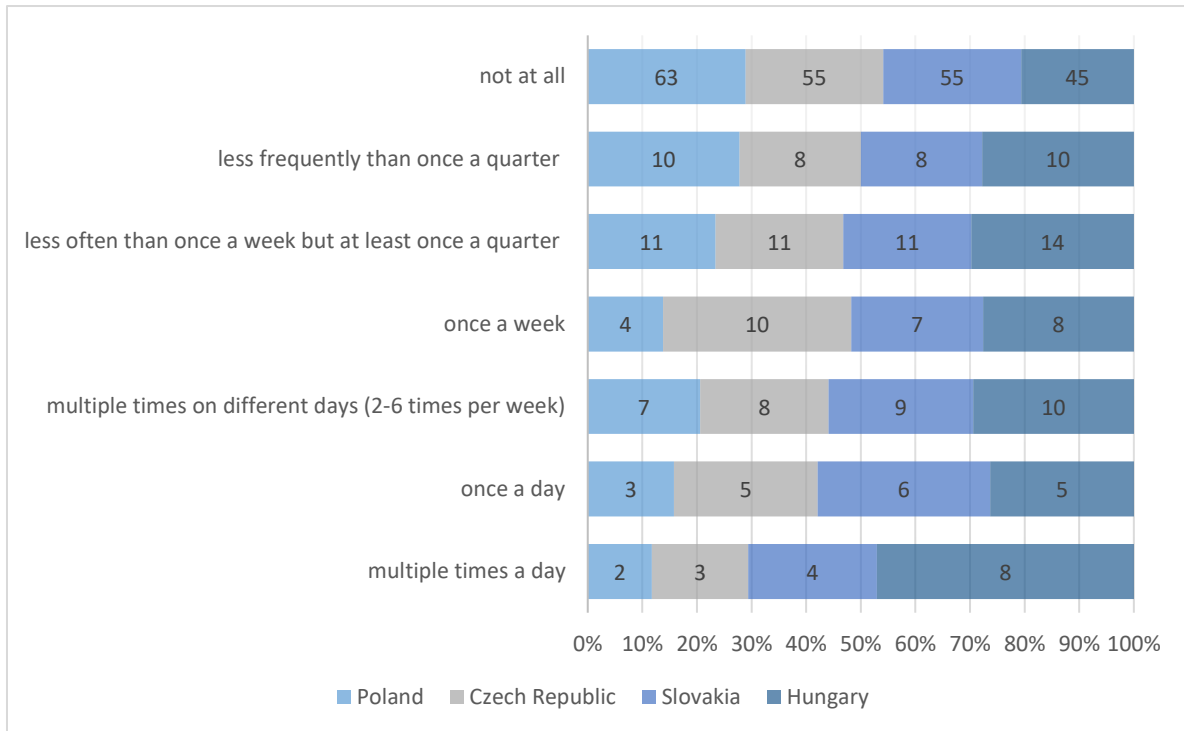


Chart 8  
Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

The respondents' answers to the question about AI indicate that it is still not a popular tool in the surveyed countries. In each case, less than 10% of respondents use the tool daily. The majority of respondents do not use AI at all or use it rarely. Among the surveyed countries, AI tools are least popular in Poland (63% of respondents do not use, 2% - use many times a day), and most popular in Hungary (45% do not use at all, 8% use several times a day).

**Q9: How satisfied are you with the functioning of democracy in [country]?**

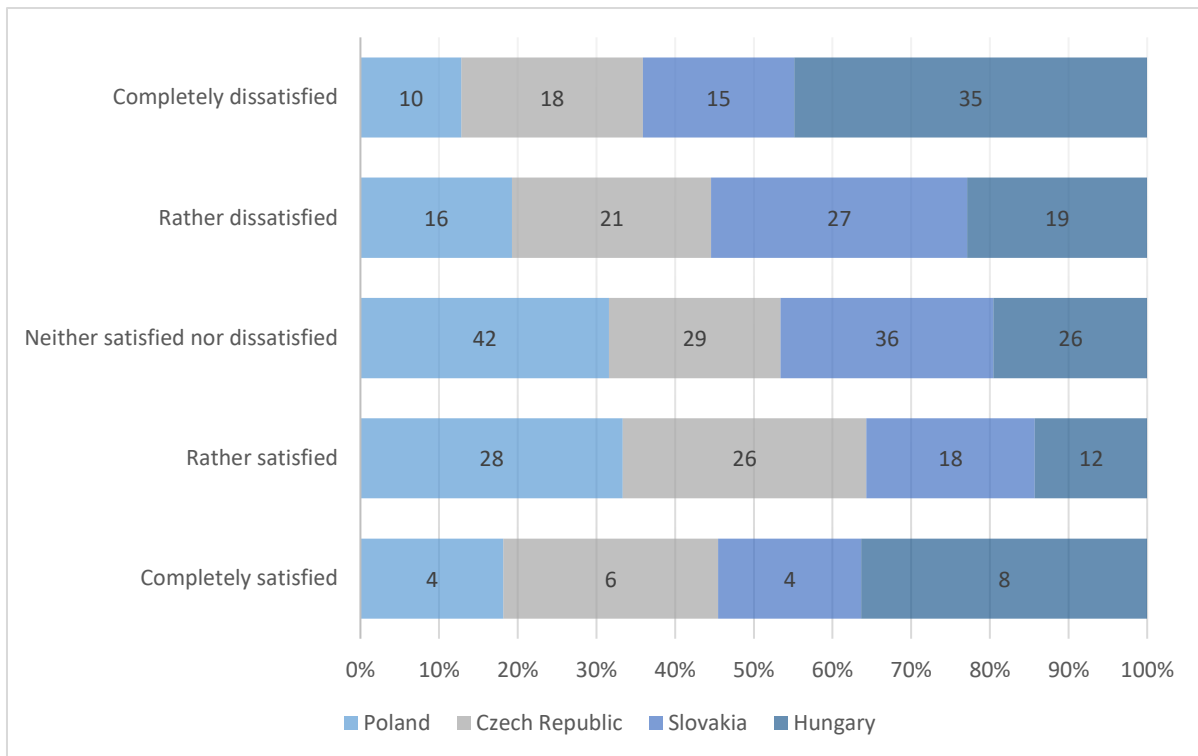


Chart 9  
Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

A small percentage of respondents (less than 10% in each country) declare full satisfaction with the functioning of democracy. However, if we also take into account the opinion of “rather satisfied”, the opinion on democracy of citizens of the surveyed countries is not so negative. In Poland, the percentage of satisfied and rather satisfied is higher than that of dissatisfied and rather dissatisfied (32% versus 26%). In the Czech Republic, the dissatisfied and rather dissatisfied are slightly more than the satisfied and rather satisfied (39% versus 32%), in Slovakia the satisfied and rather satisfied are significantly less than the dissatisfied and rather dissatisfied (22% versus 42%), as is the case in Hungary (20% versus 54%). As we see, the lowest level of satisfaction with democracy is observed in Hungary and Slovakia, while the highest in Poland and the Czech Republic.

**Q10: To what extent do you think the following statements describe the situation in [country]?**

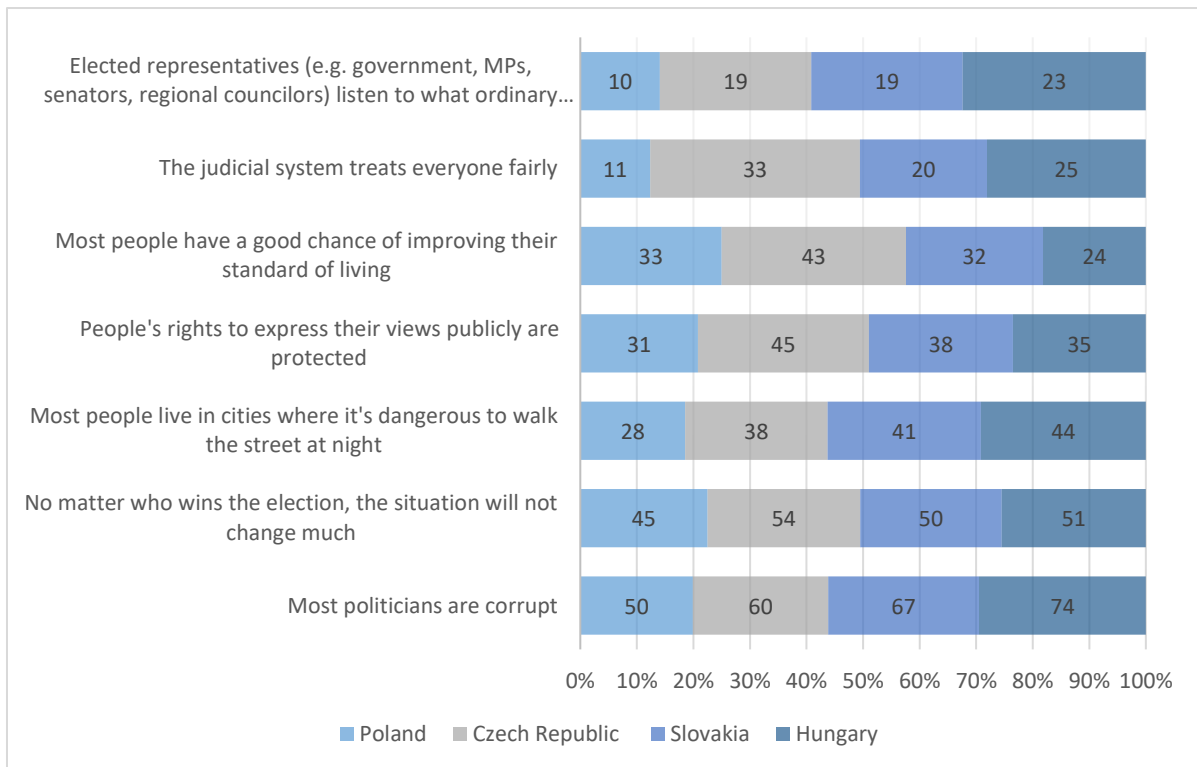


Chart 10

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

T2B = sum of "Very good" and "Rather good" responses

- a) Elected representatives (e.g. government, MPs, senators, regional councilors) listen to what ordinary people think
- b) The judicial system treats everyone fairly
- c) Most people have a good chance of improving their standard of living
- d) People's rights to express their views publicly are protected
- e) Most people live in cities where it's dangerous to walk the street at night
- f) No matter who wins the election, the situation will not change much
- g) Most politicians are corrupt

The chart presents “very good” and “rather good” answers. As can be seen, the most unanimous opinion expressed by respondents in the surveyed countries is that politicians are corrupt - affirmative answers range from 74% in Hungary to 50% in Poland. About 50% of respondents in each of the surveyed countries) also agree with the thesis that: No matter who wins the election, the situation will not change much (in the case of Poland the ratio is the lowest at 45%). The answers given by respondents indicate a relatively high feeling of security in Poland and the Czech Republic, and a lower one in Slovakia and Hungary. Czechs, on the other hand,

declare the highest degree of conviction regarding protection of freedom of speech in their country, while Poles express the most negative opinion in this regard. Czechs are also the most optimistic when it comes to believing that most people have a good chance of improving their standard of living and expressing confidence in their country's justice system. Also, the largest number of Czech respondents believe that elected representatives (e.g. government, MPs, senators, regional councilors) listen to what ordinary people think. The percentage of Poles expressing such a belief is also the lowest for this statement.

On the one hand, Poles express the greatest sense of security and the least generalized negative attitudes toward politicians and the electoral process and guarantees of freedom of speech (statements g, f, e, d), but on the other hand - they are least convinced that politicians listen to ordinary people and that the justice system works properly (statements b, a). This variation can be explained, among other things, by the current political situation in Poland (the period after the elections and a fierce election campaign, as well as the settlement of previous governments and numerous reports of irregularities in the functioning of the judiciary).

It is also worth noting the very strong (or strong) conviction of respondents in all the countries surveyed regarding corruption among politicians.

**Q11: How safe do you feel at the moment? On the scale below, please indicate the numerical value that best corresponds to your opinion, where 1 means very safe and 7 means not safe at all.**

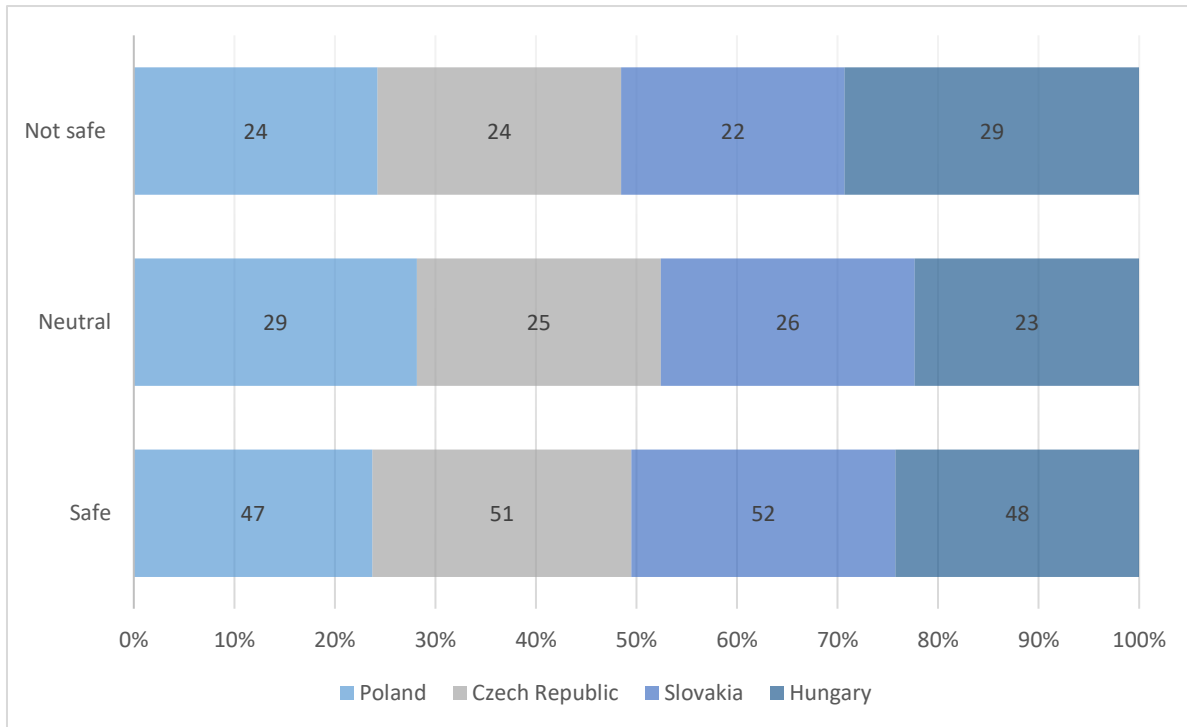


Chart 11

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

Safe (T3B) = sum of responses "1 - Very safe", "2" and "3"; Neutral = "4"; Not safe at all (B3B) = sum of responses "5", "6" and "7 - Not safe at all"

As for the generalized question on the feeling of security, about 50% of respondents in each of the countries feel safe at the moment. Interestingly, the percentages are lowest in Poland and Hungary. However, in each country there are more people who feel safe than those who do not. However, it is also worth noting that in each case the percentage of respondents who do not give a clear answer to the generalized question on feeling safe is more than one-fifth of the respondents.

**Q 12: After five years, the European Parliament elections will take place at the beginning of June (9 June 2024). Will you participate in the elections?**

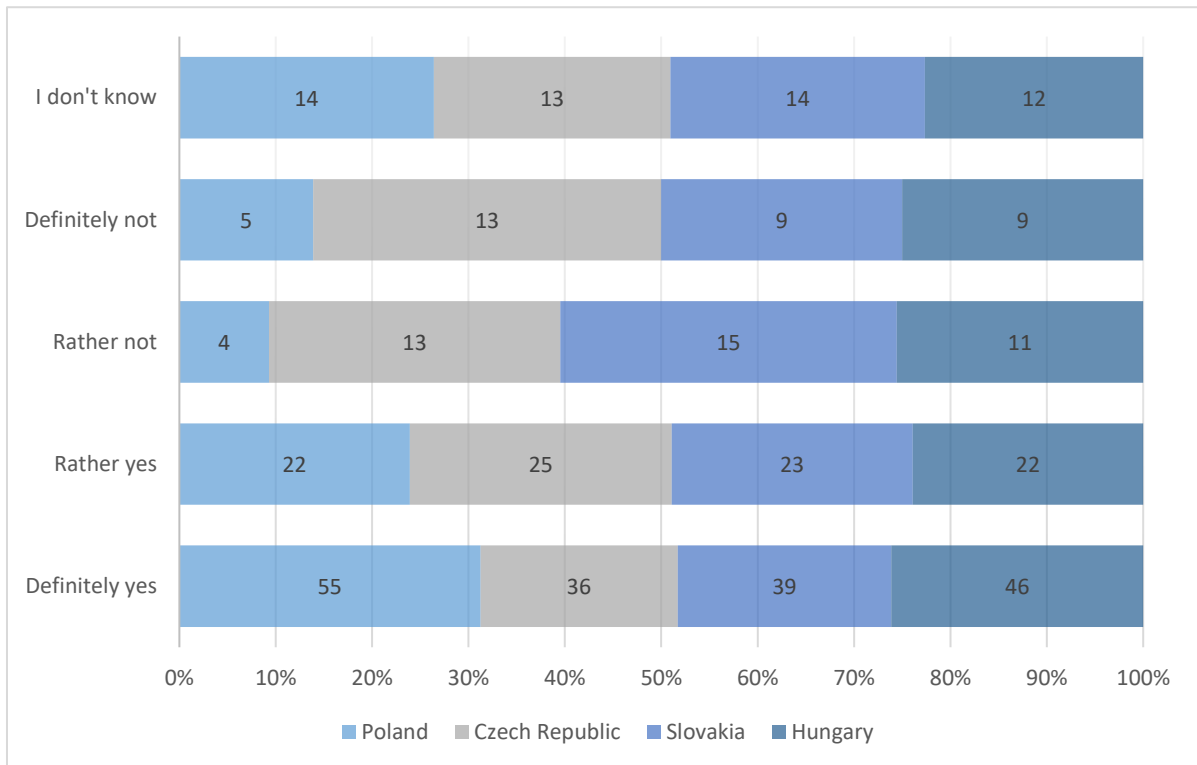


Chart 12  
 Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (M=1002).

The majority of respondents in each of the countries surveyed declare their intention to participate in the elections to the European Parliament (answers definitely yes and rather yes). The highest percentage of such declarations is observed in Poland (77%), slightly lower in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. It is worth noting that also the percentage of those who do not plan to participate in the elections to the European Parliament (no and rather no) is significantly lower in Poland than in the other surveyed countries. About 15% of respondents have not yet decided whether they will participate in the elections.

**Q 13: Overall, do you think that attempts by foreign states (e.g. Russia, China) to influence the June European Parliament elections in Poland are....**

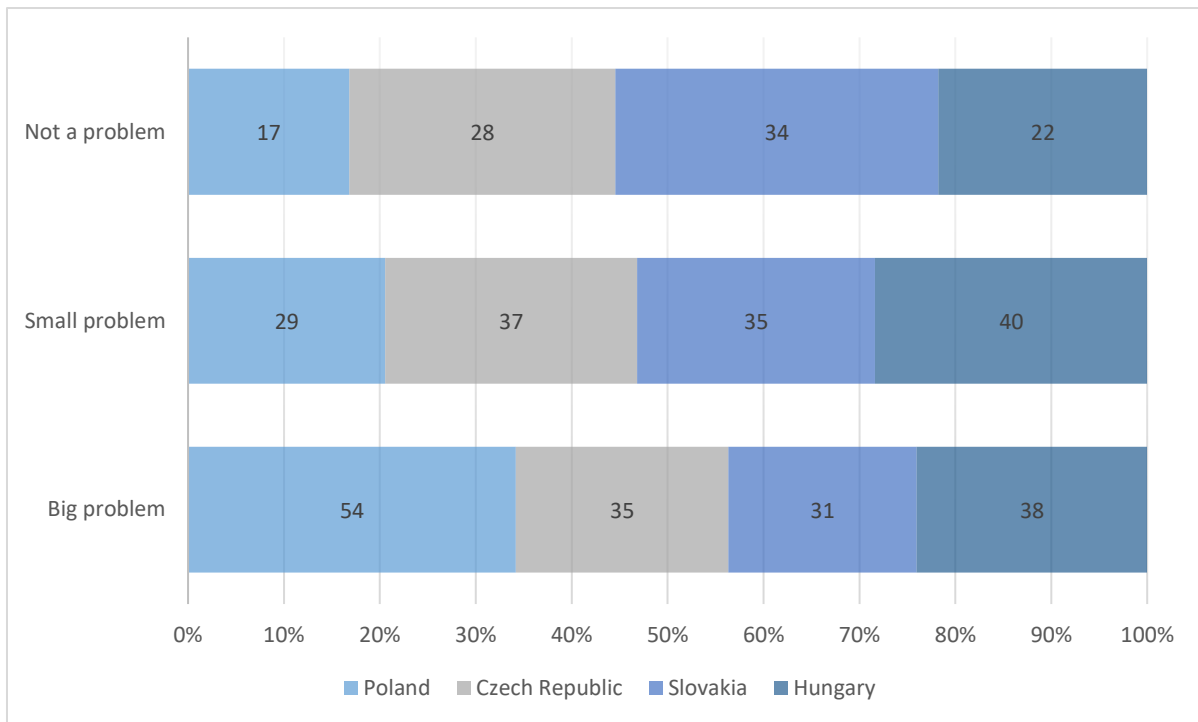


Chart 13

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

The percentage recognizing the interference of foreign countries in elections to the European Parliament as a big problem is by far the highest in Poland, while in the other surveyed countries it is at similar levels (lower than in Poland). It is worth noting, however, that the perception of such interference as a problem in general (responses big problem and small problem) is at a similar level in the countries surveyed, although the highest percentage of respondents who do not consider such interference a problem is in Slovakia.

**Q 14: In your opinion, how likely is it, if at all, that some foreign governments or international institutions will try to influence the June European Parliament elections?**

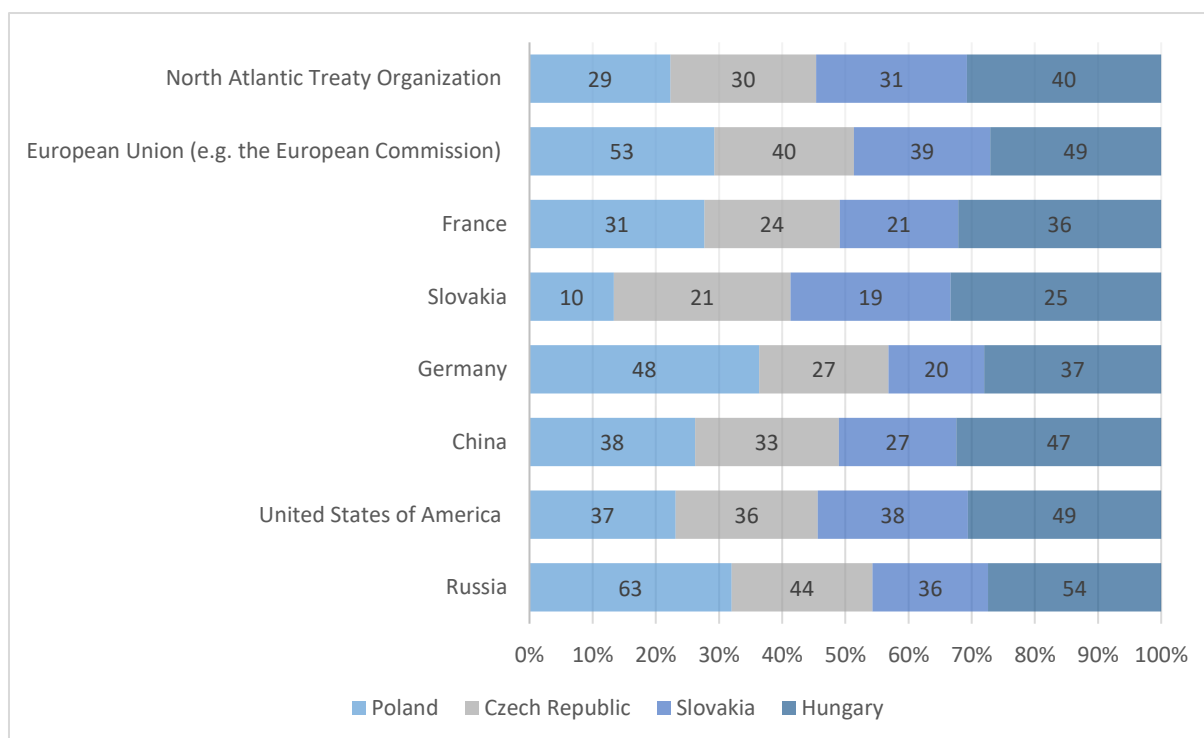


Chart 14

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002)

T2B = sum of "Very likely" and "Somewhat likely" responses

In this case, we received varied results depending on the country. In general, we observe the strongest conviction regarding the influence of Russia, the European Union and the United States, while the weakest is associated with Slovakia and France.

In Poland, the percentage of respondents who are convinced of possible Russian interference is the highest (63%), while the lowest is in Slovakia. In contrast, preconceptions about NATO interference are expressed primarily by Hungary, to a lesser extent by respondents from the other countries surveyed. The same is true for Chinese influence, and here, again, the lowest percentage of respondents is observed in Slovakia. Germany's influence is feared primarily by Poles, and to a lesser extent by respondents from other countries. Slovakia and France's influence is feared primarily by residents of Hungary, while the European Union's influence is feared most by Poles. As for NATO, residents of Hungary are most concerned. Generally speaking, Hungarians and Poles are most concerned about external interference, and to a lesser extent Slovaks and Czechs.

**Q 15: For the first time in history, from 2019 to 2024 the European Commission was led by a woman, German politician Ursula von der Leyen. Do you agree/disagree that she should continue in her position for the next five years? On the scale below, please indicate**



the numerical value that best corresponds to your opinion, where 1 means "strongly agree" and 7 means "strongly disagree".

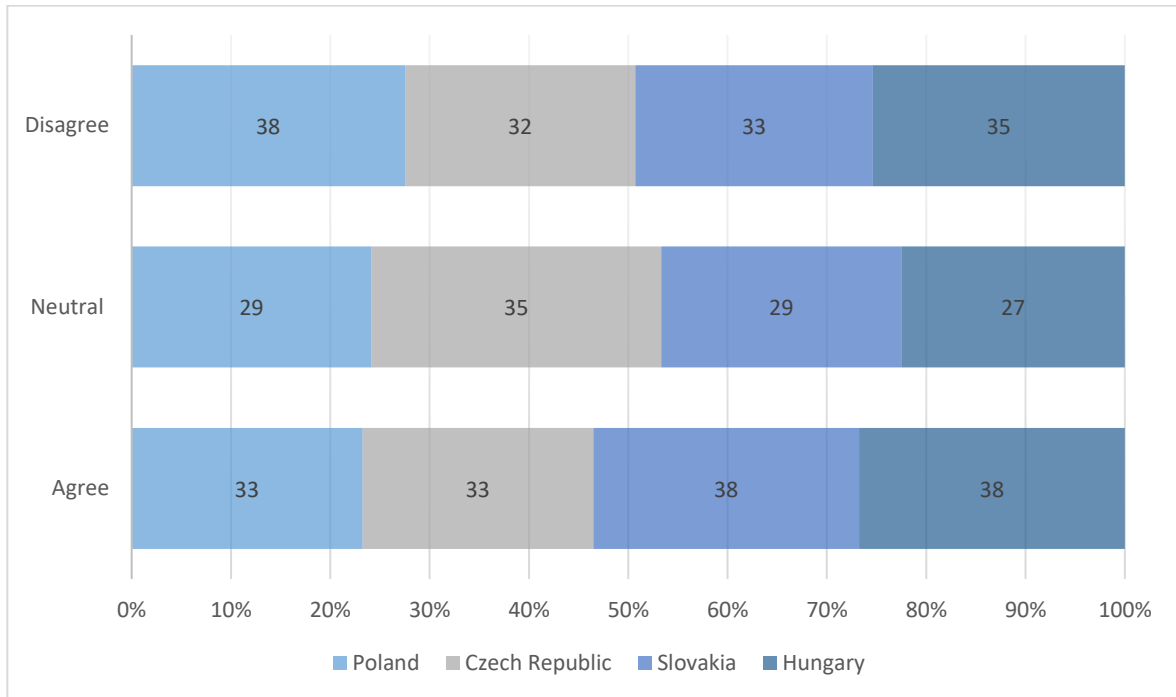


Chart 15

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

Agree (T3B) = sum of responses "1 - Strongly Agree", "2" and "3"; Neutral = "4"; Disagree (B3B) = sum of responses "5", "6" and "7 - Strongly Disagree"

As for opinions on whether German politician Ursula von der Leyen should remain in office, more than 30% of respondents in each country express a positive opinion. A slightly higher number of respondents (especially in Poland) disagree with this opinion, about 30% of respondents have no opinion. Support for Ursula von der Leyen is highest in Hungary and Slovakia, and lower in Poland and the Czech Republic.

**Q 16: When you receive reports about the following topics, how difficult is it for you to determine how true they are?**

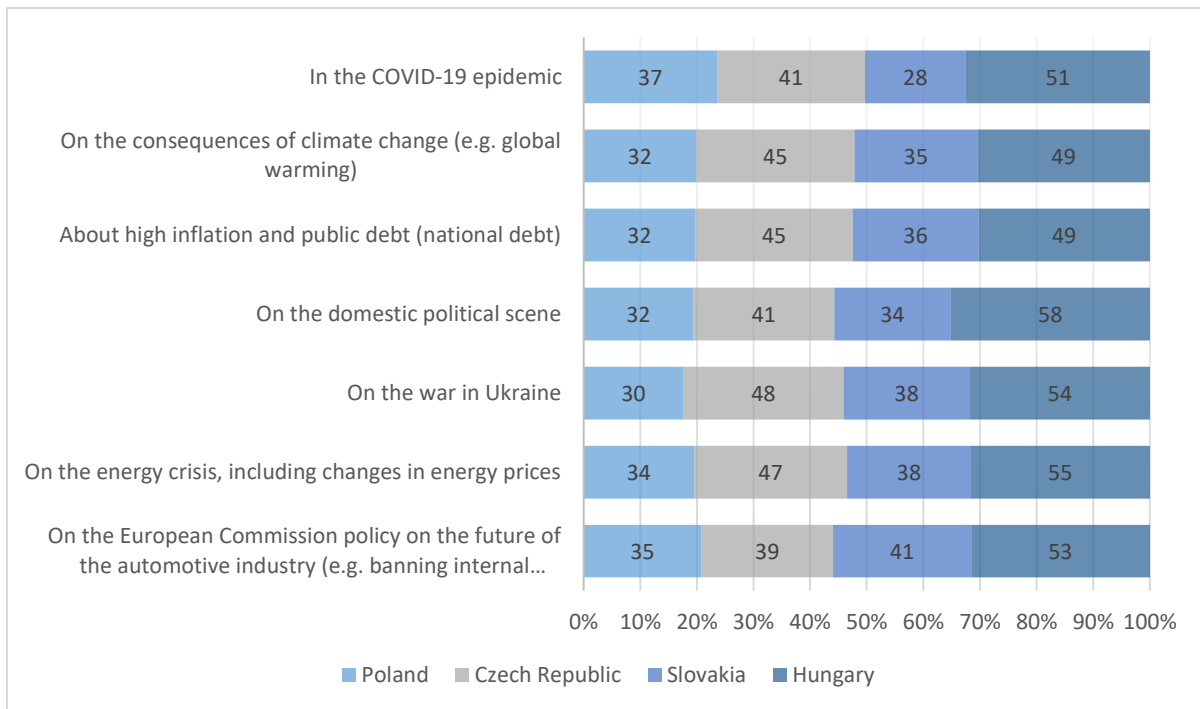


Chart 16

Poland (N=1000), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

T2B = sum of the answers "Very difficult" and "Rather difficult"

The greatest difficulty in assessing the truthfulness of information is declared by respondents from Hungary and the Czech Republic, the least by respondents from Poland and Slovakia. Generally speaking, the declared difficulties in assessing the truthfulness of information are evened out in the context of the topics to which the information relates. Poles declare the highest level of difficulty in assessing information related to Covid-19 and the European Union, Czechs - the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis; Slovaks - in connection with the European Commission's policy on electric cars, the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis; Hungarians - the internal political scene and the war in Ukraine. However, the differences in terms of teamtics are not significant.

**Q 17: Which of the following statements best describes your opinion on the war in Ukraine and its impact on [country]?**

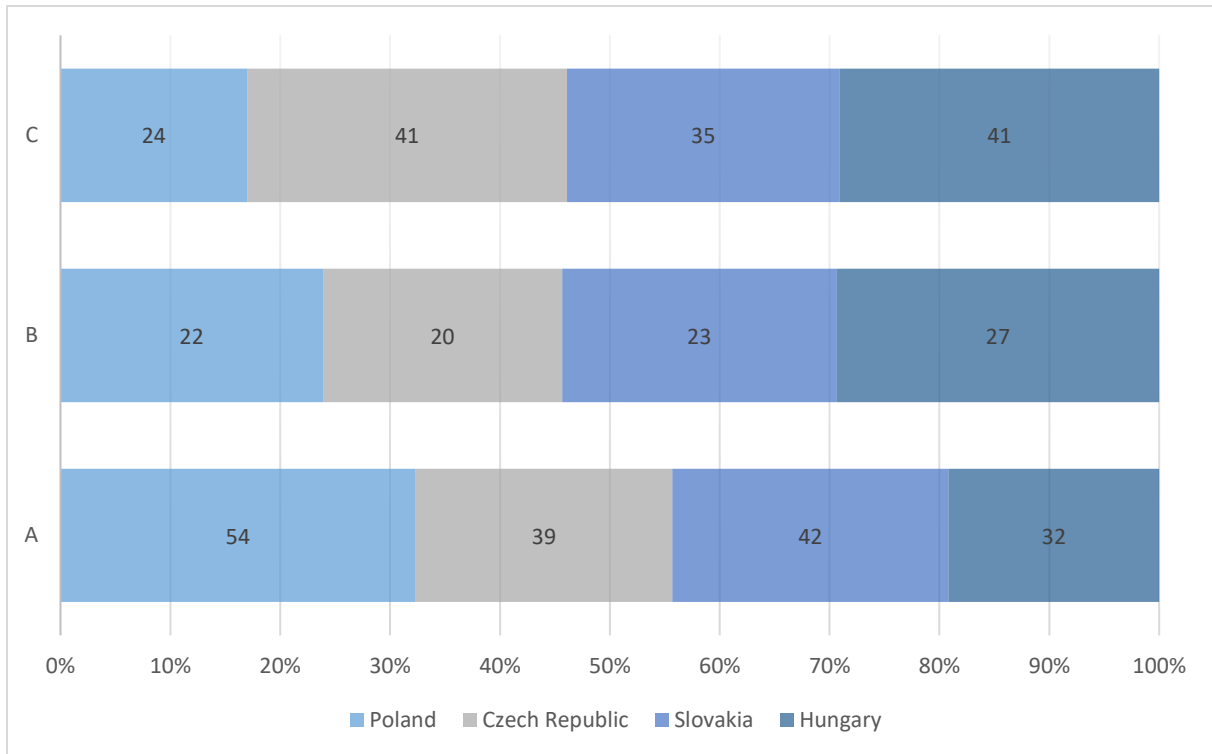


Chart 17  
Poland (N=100), the Czech Republic (N=1006), Slovakia (N=1006) and Hungary (N=1002).

C. The information war is just a pretext for Western governments, including the [country] one, to restrict freedom of speech and inconvenient media outlets

B. The information war does not affect [country] because the current conflict, including disinformation campaigns, is limited to Ukraine and Russia

A. [Country] is the arena of the information war waged by the Russian Federation against Western countries

In general, the most popular opinion among residents of the surveyed countries is opinion A ([Country] is the arena of the information war waged by the Russian Federation against Western countries), while the least popular opinion is B (The information war does not affect [country] because the current conflict, including disinformation campaigns, is limited to Ukraine and Russia).

More than half of respondents from Poland express the belief that Poland is the arena of the information war waged by the Russian Federation against Western countries. 32% of

Hungarians hold a similar opinion (with respect to their country). As for Czechs, 39% of respondents declare such an opinion (about Czech Republic).

In contrast, the largest number of Hungarians express the belief that the information war does not affect [country] because the current conflict, including disinformation campaigns, is limited to Ukraine and Russia. In the rest of the country, this belief is expressed by just over 20% of respondents.

Similarly, more than 40% of Hungarians recognize that The information war is just a pretext for western governments, including the [country] one, to restrict freedom of speech and inconvenience media outlets. The same number of Czechs believe this, an opinion that is least popular among Poles.

### **Main findings:**

- In terms of information sources, we see a shift away from traditional media (especially print) toward online media, with news portals playing an important role.
- In terms of social media use, Hungarians are exceptionally active, while Poles are exceptionally inactive.
- The vast majority of respondents are aware of their social media settings, also most of them do not share all content publically.
- Respondents are in favor of controlling content published on social media (among the countries surveyed, respondents from Poland are least in favor of controlling social media).
- Respondents believe that social media content should be the responsibility of platforms and authors to a greater extent, and to a much lesser extent of those who share content.
- Poles have the least knowledge about the introduction of Digital Media Act, while Hungarians have the most knowledge.
- Artificial intelligence tools are not popular in the surveyed countries, although - in comparison with other surveyed countries - they are most popular in Hungary.
- Respondents are satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their country at the level of 20%-32%, with Poles being the most satisfied and Hungarians and Slovaks the least satisfied.
- Respondents have a strongly held belief in corruption among politicians (most in

Hungary, least in Poland)

- An average of 6 out of 10 respondents said they would like to participate in the elections to the European Parliament (most in Poland).
- Respondents, primarily from Poland, see interference of foreign actors in the electoral process as a problem.
- Respondents consider interference of Russia, the European Union and the United States most likely.
- The greatest difficulty in assessing the truthfulness of information is declared by respondents from Hungary and the Czech Republic, the least by respondents from Poland and Slovakia. Generally speaking, the declared difficulties in assessing the truthfulness of information are evened out in the context of the topics to which the information relates
- A significant proportion of respondents, especially in Poland, agree with the thesis that [Country] is the arena of the information war waged by the Russian Federation against Western countries (32% Hungary, 54% Poland), while about 1/5 of respondents believe that The information war does not affect [country] because the current conflict, including disinformation campaigns, is limited to Ukraine and Russia. Generally speaking, respondents from Poland are more strongly convinced that the war in Ukraine is not just a matter of the two countries, but is a broader problem, important for their country as well, with Hungarians expressing this kind of belief to the least extent.

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