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Media Observatory

CEDMO Special Brief

**Political Developments in
Slovakia**



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Slovakia: Main Disinformation Narratives Connected to Slovakia

Alleged foreign roots of protests

Since January 2025, anti-government protests have been organized regularly in Slovakia. They were triggered by PM Robert Fico's visit to Moscow and the coalition's statement against NATO and the EU. The government has labelled these protests as an attempted coup aimed at destabilizing the country, financed and organized from abroad. The Minister of the Interior has stated that a third of the protesters are Ukrainian, even drawing a connection between civil activists and hybrid attacks on the land registry and the health insurance company. He has not provided any evidence for these claims.

The government has accused the protest organizers of having links to Mamuka Mamulashvili, the commander of the Georgian Legion fighting in Ukraine. This has revived a long-standing narrative: that Georgian snipers linked to Mamulashvili were responsible for shooting into the crowd in Kyiv during the Maidan Uprising. Demagog.sk has pointed out that there is no evidence to support such links.

Disinformation about negotiations between Russia and Ukraine

Due to the U.S.-Russian negotiations about the war in Ukraine, a narrative has resurfaced, claiming that some Western states prevented a peace treaty between Russia and Ukraine in the spring of 2022. Slovak politicians have falsely claimed that Russia made no territorial claims and only demanded that Ukraine declare that it would not join NATO, which Ukraine allegedly refused. During the negotiations, both sides have taken opposing stands and no agreement was ready for signature.

Slovak politicians have also questioned the legitimacy of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's mandate, as his term was set to expire in May 2024. However, in Ukraine, it is illegal to hold elections during a state of war, which was declared after the Russian invasion.



Czech Republic: Main Disinformation Narratives Connected to Slovakia

Edited photo links protests to Soros

In January 2025, a photograph began circulating in Czech online spaces. It supposedly proved that Slovak opposition politicians Michal Šimečka and Ivan Korčok had met with the philanthropist George Soros to plan anti-government protests in Slovakia. This picture appeared after Slovak PM Robert Fico accused the opposition of colluding with foreign agents to organize a “Maidan.” Demagog.cz fact-checkers have pointed out that the image was edited. The face of George Soros was inserted into the original photograph of Korčok and Šimečka with an unknown man. The image has several inconsistencies, such as an incomplete cell phone in the man’s (Soros’s) hand and different lighting on each person.

Actor Boleslav Polívka accused of StB ties following protest appearance

After the Czech actor Boleslav Polívka spoke at the protests in Bratislava, a post on social media claimed he was an informant for the Communist-era State Security (StB). This post, also shared by some Slovak politicians (e.g. Štefan Harabin), includes a photo of an archived StB document listing Polívka as a “person under investigation” and “secret cooperation candidate.” However, Demagog.cz states these labels do not prove Polívka’s alleged status as an informant. On the contrary, the available files show that the StB investigated Polívka due to his contacts with people who were deemed “problematic” by the regime. They do not include him as an informant. Similar accusations of artists or public figures without supporting evidence have been made before, such as those targeting singer Marta Kubišová or actor and director Zdeněk Svěrák.

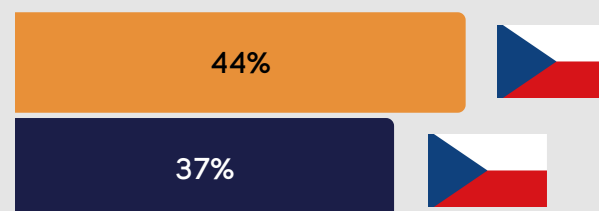
Awareness of Selected Narratives and Their Credibility in Czechia and Slovakia

Question: To what extent are you aware of the following news or information?

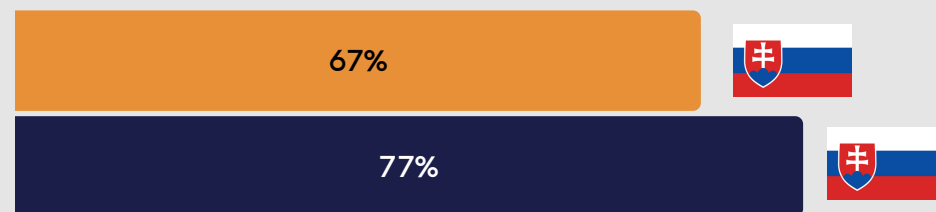
Question: To what extent do you consider the following information trustworthy?

● Noticed ● Considered trustworthy

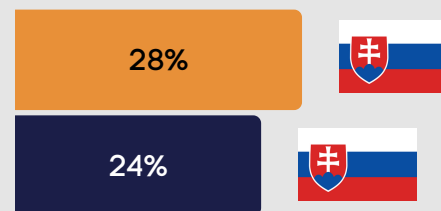
Western countries are trying to stage a coup in Slovakia to remove the cabinet of PM Robert Fico (SMER), which was formed after the 2023 elections.



A Slovak ruling party, Hlas-SD (Hlas – Social Democracy) has expelled two MPs, Samuel Migal' and Radomír Šalitroš.*



The student Simon Omaník, who refused to shake hands with President Peter Pellegrini after receiving an award from the Minister of Education, is Ukrainian. Furthermore, he was paid for his disrespectful gesture.



The graph displays the sum of values "I've heard and spread it" and "I've heard it and paid it no attention," and "Highly trustworthy" and "Somewhat trustworthy."

*A true narrative.



Awareness of Selected Narratives and Their Credibility in Czechia and Slovakia

Both Czech and Slovak respondents were presented with statements about the current political developments in Slovakia. Two of the statements were false, one (marked with an asterisk) was true. The first, about an alleged plan to remove Fico's cabinet from power, had been noticed by 44% of Czechs aged 16 and over. It was trusted by 37% of respondents. That percentage is very high compared to the other statements. It is more often believed by people aged 45 and over (41%), people with a secondary education without a final exam diploma (45%), and people who want Russia to win the war in Ukraine (67%).

The true statement about the expulsion of MPs Samuel Migal' and Radomír Šalitroš from the Hlas-SD party was noticed by over three-quarters (67%) of Slovak respondents, and 77% considered it credible. Older respondents were more likely to trust this information compared to their younger counterparts. For example, 89% of people aged 65 and over found it credible, while in the age group of 25–34, it dropped to 69%.

The false statement about the Ukrainian origins of the student Omaník and the alleged bribe he received was noticed by 28% of Slovak respondents. Less than a quarter (24%) found it credible. The most likely age group to find it credible was retirees (32%), while the least likely were people aged between 16 and 24 (10%). It is also more likely to be believed by people with a secondary education without a final exam diploma (34%).

Current Developments in Slovakia: Slovak View

Slovak PM Robert Fico’s statement about an “attempted coup” organised by the opposition is used as a cover for the problems his cabinet is facing (e.g. tax increases and the rebellion of some government MPs).

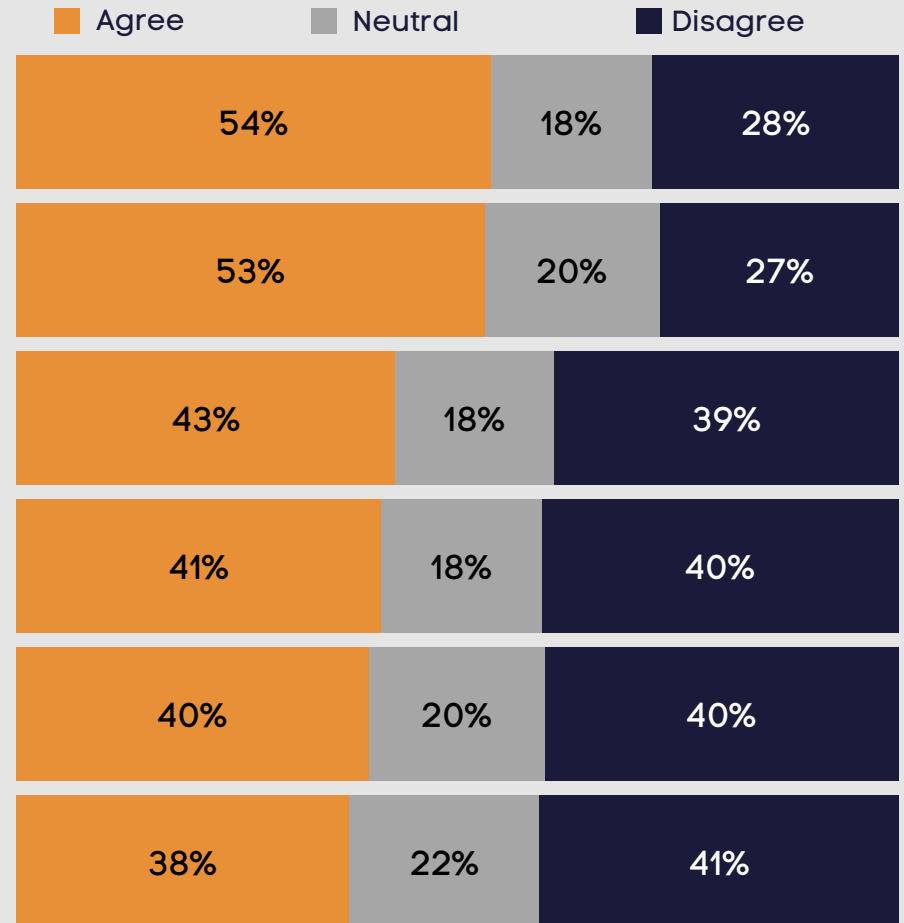
Robert Fico’s government is shifting away from pro-Western policies guided by the country’s membership in NATO and the EU.

The solution to the current political crisis in Slovakia is early elections.

A coup attempt is taking place in Slovakia. It is organised by the opposition and foreign actors linked to it.

President Peter Pellegrini’s execution of his duties in the current political crisis remains impartial.

Fico’s cabinet is exercising an autonomous national policy to Slovakia’s benefit.



Respondents selected answers on a scale of 1 to 7. The graph includes the respondents who selected 1–3 under “agree,” those who selected 4 under “neutral,” and those who selected 5–7 under “disagree.”



Current Developments in Slovakia: Czech View

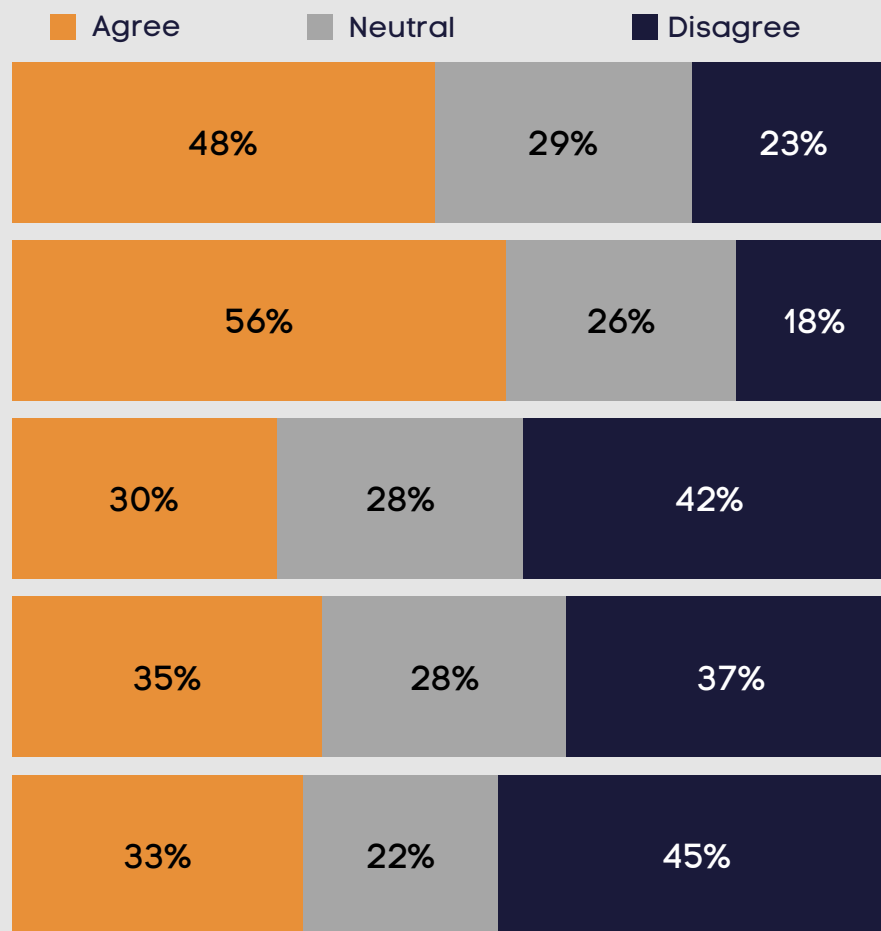
Slovak PM Robert Fico's statement about an "attempted coup" organised by the opposition is used as a cover for the problems his cabinet is facing (e.g. tax increases and the rebellion of some government MPs).

Robert Fico's government is shifting away from pro-Western policies guided by the country's membership in NATO and the EU.

A coup attempt is taking place in Slovakia. It is organised by the opposition and foreign actors linked to it.

Fico's cabinet is exercising an autonomous national policy to Slovakia's benefit.

I closely follow the events in Slovakia.



Respondents selected answers on a scale of 1 to 7. The graph includes the respondents who selected 1-3 under "agree," those who selected 4 under "neutral," and those who selected 5-7 under "disagree."



Views on the Events in Slovakia: A Summary

Over half of Slovak respondents (54%) agree that PM Robert Fico's statement about an "attempted coup" organised by the opposition is used as a cover for the problems his cabinet is facing. A similar proportion of respondents (53%) state that Fico's government is shifting away from pro-Western policies. 43% of Slovak respondents believe early elections are a way out of the current situation in Slovakia. On the other hand, 42% of Slovaks agree that there is an ongoing coup taking place in Slovakia and that it is led by foreign actors linked to the Slovak opposition. Two out of five (40%) respondents consider Pellegrini's role in this crisis impartial. The same proportion has taken the opposite stance. 37% of respondents agree that Fico's government is exercising an autonomous national policy beneficial to Slovakia. 41% disagree.

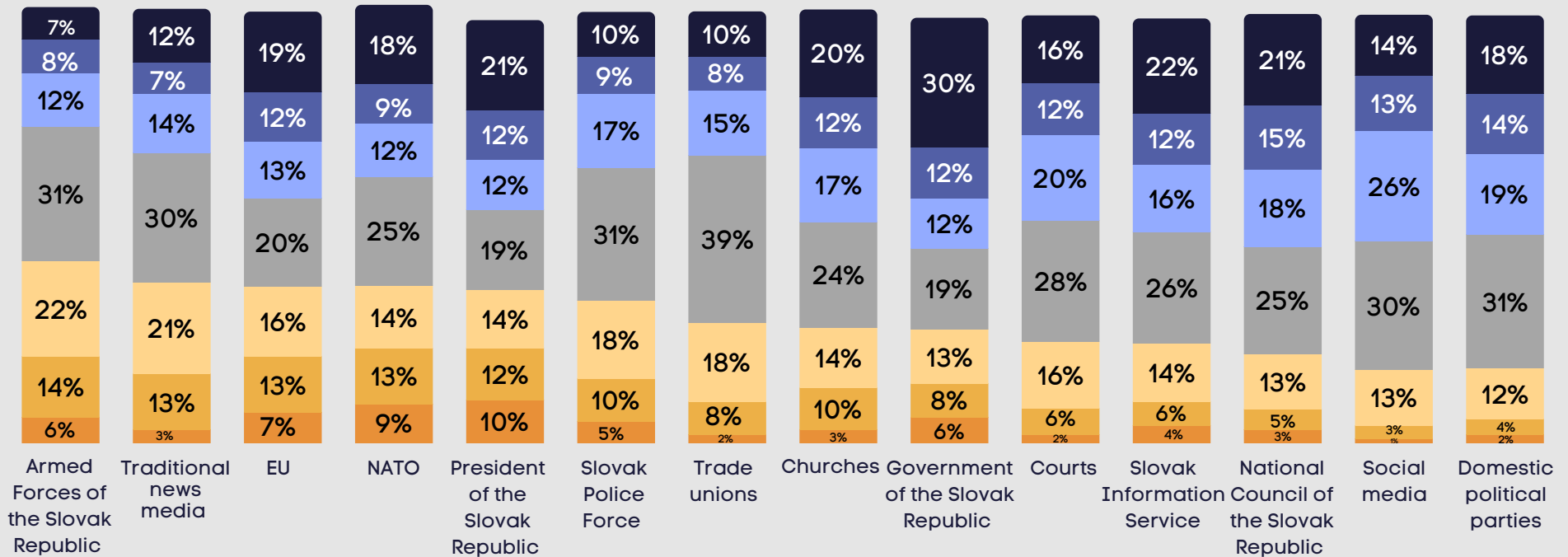
The highest level of agreement among Czech respondents is about the Slovak government shifting away from pro-Western policies (56%). Less than half (48%) also agree that Fico's statement about an "attempted coup" is used as a cover for the problems his cabinet is facing. On the other hand, 30% of Czechs believe the coup claim is credible. Over a third (35%) agree that Fico's cabinet is exercising an autonomous national policy to Slovakia's benefit. 37% disagree. Exactly one third (33%) of Czech respondents state they closely follow the current events in Slovakia. However, a larger group (45%) does not. In general, a neutral stance (the middle value – 4) is more frequent among Czechs than it is among Slovaks. We believe this to be caused by a generally lower awareness of the Slovak political situation among Czechs.

Importance of Issues in Slovakia



To what extent do you trust or distrust the following organisations/ institutions?

● 1 – Highly trust ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● 6 ● 7 – Highly distrust



Issues and Trust in Institutions in Slovakia

The Slovak population has differing views on the most serious issue facing their country. The state budget deficit is the most frequent choice, but it was still only chosen by 15% of respondents. The second most frequent choice is inflation (12%), with the energy crisis ranking third (10%). Less than 1% of the Slovak population believes racism to be the most pressing issue in their country.

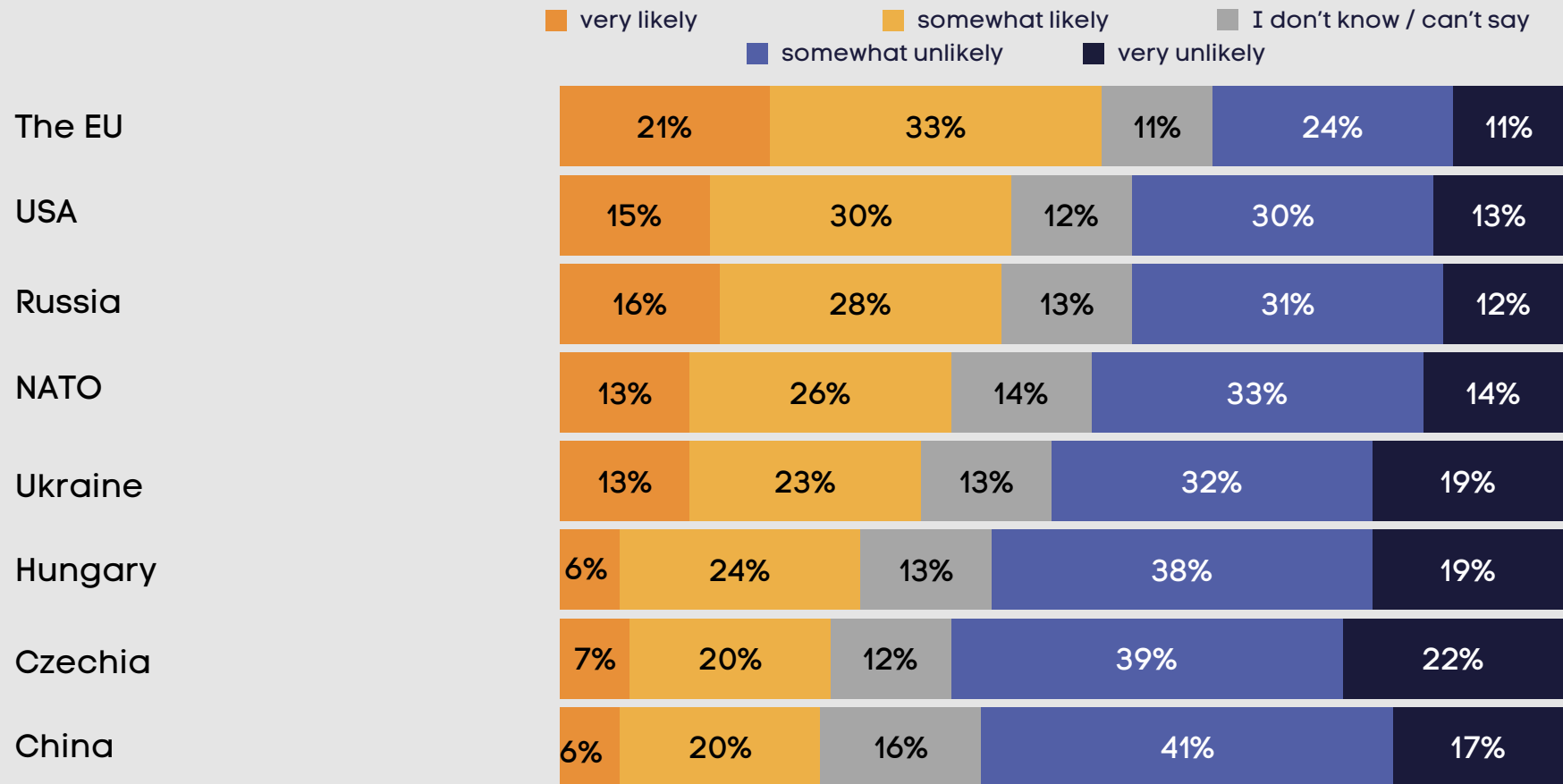
Of all the institutions listed, the Slovak army has the highest degree of trust among Slovak citizens. 42% of people aged 16 and over have expressed varying degrees of trust in it. Traditional news media (37%) and the EU (36%) also enjoy a high level of trust among the population. A relatively high level of trust is also placed in NATO (36%), the president of Slovakia (36%), the national police force (33%), and trade unions (28%).

The highest levels of distrust were expressed towards the government and the National Council. Both are distrusted by 54% of respondents. A high level of distrust was also expressed towards social media (53%), political parties (51%), the Slovak Information Service (50%), and churches (49%).

The army is mostly trusted by men and people aged 65 and over. Traditional news media enjoy high levels of trust among the youngest age group, but also among the oldest one. The EU is mainly trusted by respondents aged 16–24 and by those with a university degree. Distrust in the Slovak government was mainly expressed by the youngest respondents, those with a university degree, and inhabitants of the Prešov region.

Potential Influence of Foreign Governments and International Institutions on Political Developments

Question: How likely, if at all, do you think it is for the following foreign governments or international organisations will try to influence future political developments in Slovakia?



Likelihood of Foreign Influence in Slovakia

Slovak respondents find that the European Union is the most likely (54%) to try and influence political developments in their country. The second most frequent choice is the USA (45%). Russia is the third most frequent answer (44%). Respondents find the following to be the least likely culprits: China (26%), Czechia (27%), Hungary (30%), and Ukraine (36%).

The older the respondent, the more likely they are to expect the EU to try and influence local politics. While only 40% of those aged 16 to 24 believe the EU might meddle, two out of three respondents (67%) aged 65 and over hold this opinion. A similar distribution by age group is seen with the USA. However, the opposite trend applies to Russia. Young voters under 24 are especially likely (58%) to believe Russia would meddle in local politics, while only 36% of respondents aged 45 to 54 agree. Potential Russian intervention in Slovakia is also considered likely by respondents with a university degree (49%).

Research Method: Slovakia

Sample size	1,612 respondents aged 16 and over
Survey date	7–21 February 2025
Survey method	online panel survey (CAWI)
Representativity	quota sampling the survey is representative of the general population of Slovakia aged 16 and over based on basic sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education, region and size of town)
Contracted and carried out by	survey conducted by Ipsos (SAVA and SIMAR member) exclusively for the Charles University – CEDMO

Data collection in Slovakia was carried out by IPSOS and funded under the project MPO 60273/24/21300/21000 CEDMO 2.0 NPO.

Research Method: Czechia

Sample size	3,187 respondents aged 16 and over
Survey date	7–23 February 2025
Survey method	online panel survey (CAWI)
Representativity	quota sampling the survey is representative of the general population of Czechia aged 16 and over based on basic sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education, region and size of town), employment status, and past voting behaviour (2021 Chamber of Deputies election, 2nd round of the 2023 presidential election)
Contracted and carried out by	survey conducted by MEDIAN, s.r.o. (SIMAR member) exclusively for Charles University

Data collection in Czechia was carried out by Median and funded by the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility under the project 1.4 CEDMO 1 - Z220312000000, support for increasing the impact, innovation and sustainability of CEDMO in the Czech Republic.



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Responsibility for the research content lies with Charles University. CEDMO contact person: Lukáš Kutil, e-mail: lukas.kutil@matfyz.cuni.cz.

Responsibility for the fact-checking content of this publication lies with Demagog.cz. Contact person: Petr Gongala, e-mail: petr.gongala@demagog.cz.

The URLs of all fact-checks referenced in this publication can be found [HERE](#).