



## WAR IN UKRAINE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLISH AND SLOVAK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

WOJNA W UKRAINIE Z PERSPEKTYWY POLSKICH  
I SŁOWACKICH STUDENTÓW UCZELNI WYŻSZYCH

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### — ABSTRACT —

In the aftermath of the Russia's annexation of Crimea and the outburst of conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine in 2014, thousands of Ukrainian migrants came to Poland. Many of them settled down and found jobs. On the onset of war in 2022, Ukrainian students were the most populous group among foreigners at Polish universities. The war in their home country had an impact on their families and friends. Young Poles, who made friends with Ukrainian students, take the war personally. Due to its unique nature, the perception of the conflict among young people has attracted the authors' research interest. Additionally, it seems to be an added value when we compare attitudes of Polish students with those of Slovakian ones, as the latter do not share the same experience. The main goal of this article is to analyse opinions about the war in Ukraine among students studying in Poland and Slovakia, and their attitudes and behaviours towards refugees expressed online and offline. Results presented in

### — ABSTRAKT —

Na skutek rosyjskiej aneksji Krymu i wybuchu konfliktu na wschodzie Ukrainy w 2014 roku do Polski przybyły tysiące migrantów ukraińskich, z których wielu podjęło tu pracę i rozpoczęło życie. W dniu wybuchu wojny w Ukrainie w 2022 roku studenci narodowości ukraińskiej stanowili najliczniejszą grupę cudzoziemców kształcących się na polskich uczelniach. Wojna w ich ojczystym kraju miała także realny wpływ na życie ich rodzin oraz znajomych. Polska młodzież, ze względu na łączące ich więzi z koleżankami i kolegami z Ukrainy, traktuje to jako bardzo osobiste przeżycie. Percepcję tych wydarzeń przez ludzi młodych cechuje odrębna charakterystyka, którą autorzy niniejszego artykułu postanowili zbadać. Ponadto wydaje się, że wartością dodaną badania jest porównanie postaw polskich studentów ze słowackimi, ponieważ obie grupy mają różne doświadczenie w badanym zakresie. Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza opinii na temat wojny w Ukrainie studentów studiujących w Polsce i w

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the article have been taken from a questionnaire survey involving a group of 459 students. The survey took place in Spring 2022. The quantitative analysis of data is designed to provide answers to the following research questions: What sources of information about the war do young people use? What do young people think about the war in Ukraine, its causes and consequences? What forms of refugee-oriented activity do young people resort to? Have students encountered any form of resentment towards particular nationality groups in connection with the outbreak of the war?

**Keywords:** attitudes; opinions; Polish students; Slovak students; war in Ukraine; youth

Słowacji oraz ich postaw i zachowań względem uchodźców wyrażanych zarówno w świecie wirtualnym, jak i realnym. Wyniki zaprezentowane w artykule pochodzą z badania kwestionariuszem ankiety przeprowadzonego wiosną 2022 roku w grupie 459 studentów. Analiza ilościowa zgromadzonych danych ma na celu uzyskanie odpowiedzi na następujące pytania badawcze: Z jakich źródeł informacji na temat wojny korzystają młodzi ludzie? Co myślą o wojnie w Ukrainie, jej przyczynach i skutkach? Jakie formy aktywności podejmują młodzi względem uchodźców? Czy studenci zetknęli się z jakąkolwiek formą niechęci wobec poszczególnych grup narodowościowych w związku z wybuchem wojny?

**Słowa kluczowe:** postawy; opinie; polscy studenci; słowaccy studenci; wojna w Ukrainie; młodzi

## INTRODUCTION

Apart from its regional dimension, the war in Ukraine has enormous global repercussions. The international community has witnessed an invasion by Vladimir Putin against sovereign Ukraine, and its citizens are forced to either fight for their freedom or flee from a life-threatening situation to other countries. Following Russia's attack on Ukraine, the Polish society faced an influx of refugees. Polish and Slovakian universities and colleges became involved in helping Ukrainians, assisted their Ukrainian students, war refugees, and prepared support for university applicants from war-torn Ukraine. Students from Ukraine were already studying at Polish and Slovakian universities after the events of 2014. They were one of the largest groups of foreigners, both as regular students and as part of the international student exchange. Therefore, it is not surprising that universities became involved in humanitarian aid for refugees.

Before the outbreak of the war, students from Ukraine were the dominant group among foreign students at Polish and Slovakian universities. In the 2020/2021 academic year, there were approximately 38,500 of them (Study in Poland, 2020). Based on either the Polish Charter or the general rules for non-EU foreign students, Ukrainian students can study in Poland free of charge. A large

group of Ukrainian students studied at universities close to the Ukrainian-Polish border. For instance, nearly two thousand of them studied in the Lublin Province. Another thousand chose Warsaw as their place to study. Additionally, a large number of young Ukrainians moved to the Wielkopolska Province and its main academic centre in Poznań (578 Ukrainians study at Adam Mickiewicz University in 2021/2022 academic year, with an additional 35 students under bilateral exchanges) (Szczęsny, 2022). Another example is Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz with 107 students from Ukraine studying at all levels.

In the academic year 2021/2022, more than 5,700 Ukrainian students studied in Slovakia (*Press Release...*, n.d.). According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, a total of 133,558 students were attending higher education institutions in Slovakia, of which 18,243 were from other countries, with the largest number from Ukraine (*Na Slovensku...*, 2021). Ukrainian students have dominated the number of foreign students in Slovakia since 2017, when there was a gradual increase in the number of applicants from this country, overtaking the largest group of foreign students from the Czech Republic so far. Interestingly, 99 per cent of those who were admitted also enrolled for study (Antalíková, 2020). Most students from Ukraine study in the east of Slovakia, especially in the Prešov and Košice regions, more specifically at the University of Prešov, the ISM Prešov University of International Business, and the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice, with the humanities and social sciences being the most prevalent fields of study these students from Ukraine apply for. It should also be stressed that studying in Slovak is free of charge in Slovakia, and the majority of Ukrainian students chose this alternative.

The main goal of this article is to analyse opinions about the war in Ukraine among students studying in Poland and Slovakia, and their attitudes and behaviours towards refugees expressed online and offline. Results presented in the article have been taken from a questionnaire survey involving a group of 459 students. The survey took place in Spring 2022. The research problem was to capture attitudes and behaviours of students studying in Poland and Slovakia towards the war in Ukraine. These include information about the war, attitudes towards its veracity and evaluation of information sources, attitudes towards refugees, opinions on their reception in particular countries, as well as discrimination of Ukrainians, Belarusians, or Russians, as those directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. The set of questions and statements contained in the questionnaire allowed us to prepare an analysis designed to provide answers to the following research questions: What sources of information about the war

do young people use? What do young people think about the war in Ukraine, its causes and consequences? What forms of refugee-oriented activity do young people resort to? Have students encountered any form of resentment towards particular nationality groups in connection with the outbreak of the war? In order to answer these questions, the quantitative and qualitative analyses of data were provided together with a comparative analysis of data in two groups of students, i.e., studying in Poland and in Slovakia.

## BACKGROUND

Ukraine has a very unfavourable geopolitical position (Masters, 2022). Russia, bordering the Ukraine, has destabilised the country for centuries. The Maidan in Kiev, the annexation of Crimea, and the war in Donbass are important developments in the history of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (Walker, 2022). Moscow sees Ukraine as a natural sphere of its influence and a single Russian political and cultural space. Vladimir Putin's strategic foreign policy aims to maintain the state of affairs (Mpoke Bigg, 2022). In April 2019, presidential elections were held in Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelensky, a lawyer by education and comedian and actor by passion, received an overwhelming majority of votes in the second round (Ben, 2019; Rogacin, 2022). The goal of Zelensky's term was to bring peace to Eastern Ukraine through dialogue with Vladimir Putin (Bazhenova, 2019; Hetmanchuk, 2020). However, the Russian president did not abandon military goals in southern Ukraine (Sullivan, 2022; Fisher, 2014). The tension between Ukraine and Russia was growing, especially as Zelensky's aspiration was to bring his country into NATO. Russia regarded actions taken by the new Ukrainian president as a threat to the integrity of the state, as they considered Ukraine to be part of the Russian Federation (Nowiński, 2022). On the night of February 24, 2022, Vladimir Putin ordered to attack Ukraine. He substantiated his decision to invade a sovereign state by the need to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine (*Transcript: Vladimir Putin's...*, 2022). In reality, the Russian aggression against Ukraine realised Vladimir Putin's imperialist ambitions and provoked a defensive response from Ukrainian soldiers and ordinary citizens, as well as from Europe and international organisations. On March 2, 2022, the UN General Assembly condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Subsequently, 38 countries (including Poland) reported Russian war crimes to the International Criminal Court in The Hague (Kuczyńska, 2022). The first days of the war showed that military

action did not focus solely on military targets; civilians were also among the victims.

Poland is Ukraine's closest neighbour to the west. Therefore, the reaction of Poland and Poles to the situation in Ukraine was crucial for millions of Ukrainians who sought refuge in Poland. In his speech on February 24, Polish President Andrzej Duda stressed that we are dealing with an unprecedented act of aggression, another violation of international law by Russia, and a violation of a sovereign and independent state. He also expressed confidence in the international community's unequivocal response (*Prezydent po naradzie...*, 2022). The Polish Parliament also called for international institutions to take decisive steps against Russia. It requested the Russian Federation and the cooperating Republic of Belarus to cease hostilities and to withdraw all their troops from the territory of Ukraine and from the vicinity of its border (Długosz, 2022; Sykuliski, 2022). The Polish media also took a stance on the invasion of Ukraine. Television and radio stations changed their programmes, and Internet portals prepared special thematic services and series of podcasts (Erling, Kozielski, & Niedbalski, 2022). While considering Russia's actions in Ukraine unlawful, ordinary Poles have also rushed to help Ukrainians. They organised various forms of protest, collected donations, and welcomed refugees to their homes.

A public opinion poll in Poland from February 28 to March 10, 2022, by the Public Opinion Research Centre showed that the vast majority of Poles (88%) closely followed the events in Ukraine, and more than two-thirds of the respondents (68%) declared that they had helped Ukrainians either in kind or in cash (CBOS, 2022). The vast majority of Poles supported diplomatic pressure on Russia (91%), complete political and economic isolation of Russia from the West (91%), as well as financial aid to Ukraine (93%), and the supply of military equipment and armaments (90%). In contrast, the idea of sending military troops to Ukraine to fight was generally opposed (54%).

From the beginning of the invasion, the Slovakian authorities have taken an unequivocal stance on the conflict in Ukraine. They defined Russia as the aggressor who launched a military attack on its neighbour. After an extraordinary meeting of the Slovak Security Council (February 24), a statement was issued condemning the Russian aggression and declaring support for the Ukrainians. President Zuzana Čaputová, Prime Minister Eduard Heger (OĽaNO) and Speaker of the National Council Boris Kollár stated that together with NATO and EU allies, the Slovak Republic is ready to assist Ukraine in ending the conflict and protecting human lives. The authorities also asked for solidarity and assis-

tance for refugees from Ukraine. They assured that the Slovak armed forces and police would provide adequate control of Slovak-Ukrainian border crossings in this exceptional situation, and that those who flee from the war would receive necessary support. The largest opposition party, Smer-SD, presented a different position. On the one hand, its chairman, former Prime Minister Robert Fico, condemned the use of Russian military forces in Ukraine and called for humanitarian aid for refugees. On the other hand, he appealed to President Čaputová, Prime Minister Heger and Parliament Speaker Kollár to pay more attention to Slovakia's national interest (Lewkowicz, 2022b).

A public opinion survey in Slovakia, implemented between February 25 and March 1, 2022, by the MNFORCE and Seesame research centres in collaboration with the Slovak Academy of Sciences, shows that the vast majority of respondents (78.2%) approved of Slovakia's official response and condemned the Russian military attack on Ukraine. Forty-two percent of the respondents fully agreed with it, 22.4% had minor reservations, 13.8% had major reservations, and 21.8% criticised the Slovak authorities. The majority of the public also supported the idea to send humanitarian aid to Ukraine (77.8%) and accepting refugees from war zones (74.6%). In contrast, they were less keen to prohibit the Russian propaganda in Slovakia regarding the war in Ukraine, and introduce severe sanctions against Russia, especially those concerning visas for Russian citizens and their presence in Slovakia (Lewkowicz, 2022a).

## METHODOLOGY

The survey was implemented in spring 2022 and involved students studying in Poland and Slovakia at three universities: Kazimierz Wielki University (Bydgoszcz, Poland), Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań, Poland), and Matej Bel University (Banská Bystrica, Slovakia). The respondents were requested to fill out an online questionnaire.

A total of 459 students, 301 women, 157 men, and 1 non-binary person, took part in the survey. The respondents included 266 (58%) students studying in Poland and 193 (42%) in Slovakia. In terms of nationality, Poles accounted for 205 respondents (44.7%), Slovaks – 163 (35.4%), Ukrainians – 50 (11%), Belarusians – 35 (7.6%), Russians – 3 (0.65%), and other – 3 (0.65%). The characteristics of respondents by gender, nationality, and country of study are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the Research Sample

	Number of people surveyed		Percentage of the respondents in total sample
	Poland	Slovakia	
Gender			
Woman	163	138	65.7
Male	102	55	34.1
Non-binary	1	0	0.2
Nationality			
	Poland	Slovakia	
Poland	205	0	44.7
Slovak	0	163	35.4
Ukrainian	24	26	11
Belarusian	35	0	7.6
Russian	1	2	0.65
Other	1	2	0.65

The survey included questions about the respondents' level of interest in the war expressed on a five-point Likert scale – from '0' (I am not interested in it at all) to '5' (I am very interested in it – I watch the news about it several times a day). Each level of interest in the war was described in detail to clarify and standardise the correct understanding of the topic (results with relevant statements are included in Table 2). This part of the survey also tested respondents' attitudes towards information about the war, as well as towards its veracity and their evaluation of the sources of information. For this purpose, in addition to the question about trustworthy information, we formulated several true and false statements (that we found on the Web) to determine which of them are approved by students.

We also decided to determine attitudes towards refugees and opinions about hosting them. Thus, we produced a list of the most popular activities, e.g., using an overlay with the flag of Ukraine on a Facebook profile picture, signing a petition against the war, and participating in donation collections or other aid actions. The respondents could also list other types of activities.

In the last part of the questionnaire, we examined discrimination of Ukrainian, Belarusian, or Russian people as those directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. Since the media provided extensive coverage of such situations, we listed three types of behaviour towards specific groups, namely, resentment expressed

in comments on social media, resentment expressed verbally in direct contact, and the use of violence.

Due to the specific nature of the survey, answers were analysed using basic descriptive statistics. In the comparative analysis of both surveyed groups, we juxtaposed the number of responses (N) and the percentage in a given sample (Polish and Slovak).

## Results

To determine the degree of interest in the war in Ukraine, the survey included five options ranging from zero interest to very high interest. Each variant was described with specific activities and their frequency. Those who chose very high interest highlight that they check news on the topic several times a day, while those with moderate interest show the same concern about the war in Ukraine as about other topics. The analysis shows that students studying in Poland were significantly more interested in the war in Ukraine. None of them indicated that they were not interested in it at all, and 38% in this group highlighted that they were up to date with information on the war and refugees. As regards students studying in Slovakia, the results were different. Most of them were moderately interested in the war (33.5%). Interestingly, almost 6% of Slovak students were not interested in the war at all, while none of Polish students marked this particular answer. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Level of Interest in the War in Ukraine

To what extent are you interested in the war in Ukraine?	Poland		Slovakia	
	N	%	N	%
very large – I check news on the subject several times a day	61	23	36	18.8
large – I keep up to date with information on war and refugees	101	38	52	27.2
moderate – I am interested in the subject as in other current affairs	73	27	64	33.5
small – I don't keep track of it, just the highlights	31	12	28	14.7
I'm not interested at all	0	0	11	5.8

The second part of the survey included questions about sources of information used by the respondents and their assessment of the accuracy of information published about the war. While indicating that the war is also waged in the area



of information, we asked to what extent respondents trust information provided. Results in both groups of students indicate that they are quite cautious in accepting information on the subject with no differences regarding the country of their studies. Students studying in Poland and those studying in Slovakia most often indicated that they moderately trust information on the war in Ukraine. They claim they check other sources when information appears untrue (more than 50% of the respondents). Students who check most of the information accounted for 20%, and those who use previously checked sources – 25% (slightly less in Slovakia than in Poland). The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Level of Confidence in Information about the War in Ukraine

Knowing that the war is also being waged in terms of information, to what extent do you trust information regarding the war in Ukraine?	Poland		Slovakia	
	N	%	N	%
very high – all information is reliable	4	1.5	2	1
large – I use such sources that I have trusted so far and continue to trust them	72	27.1	45	23.3
moderate – I check other sources for information that appears to me to be incorrect	134	50.4	98	50.8
small – I try to check most of the information	52	19.5	38	19.7
I do not trust any information	4	1.5	6	3.1

Interestingly, such a concordance of responses was not observed regarding the media, which are the primary source of information about the war for students in both countries. Although in both groups the dominant sources of information are Internet portals (85% of students studying in Poland and 78.6% of those studying in Slovakia) and social media (79.4% and 66.1%, respectively). A clear difference was found regarding printed press. Only 5% of Polish students used printed press, while in Slovakia it was 33.9%. The survey also included 'other' as an option. Remaining answers referred to apps publicising political information, podcasts dedicated to the topic or direct contact with Ukrainian refugees, and family members. It should be pointed out that multiple answers could be marked for this question, so the percentages do not add up to 100. The figures are included in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Sources of Information the Respondents Used for News on the War in Ukraine

Sources of information	Poland		Slovakia	
	N	%	N	%
Television	114	42.7	88	45.8
Radio	71	26.6	44	22.9
Printed press	13	4.9	65	33.9
Social media	212	79.4	127	66.1
Web portals	228	85.4	151	78.6
Friends	116	43.4	64	33.3
Other	18	7.2	11	5.5

This section also included a number of statements about the war in Ukraine with true and false answers to determine which ones are approved by students. The respondents were allowed to mark more than one answer and add their own opinion. According to Table 5, respondents from both countries most often indicated that the war is part of Russia's superpower policy and an action to restore the influence it once had during the era of the USSR (about 75% in both groups). In their opinion, the war is the result of Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine (10% fewer Slovak respondents to choose this answer). The third most frequently indicated answer was: The International Court in The Hague ruled that Russia's actions in Ukraine violate international law and the UN Charter (International Court of Justice, 2022). Inversely to the previous answer, 10% of Polish respondents selected the answer. Fake news disseminated online (e.g., 'the war in Ukraine serves to distract the public from the WHO's creation of a world government', *Czy celowo skupia się uwagę...*, 2022), as well as the official Russian communication on the subject ('this is a military special operation to defend the people of Donbass from genocide and to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine', *Transcript: Vladimir Putin's...*, 2022) were the least frequently selected answers (single responses to both statements). Additional answers marked by the respondents mentioned Putin's imperial actions, but also the effect of breaking the agreement between Russia and Western countries expressed by the support for the illegitimate authorities that emerged after the Euromaidan or actions planned to make people panic (after the pandemic). The respondents also responded that it was difficult to establish the real reasons for this conflict.

**Table 5.** Assessment of the Accuracy of Statements about the War in Ukraine

Which information about the war in Ukraine do you think is true?	Poland		Slovakia	
	N	%	N	%
<i>this war is the result of Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine</i>	198	74.7	121	64.4
<i>is a military special operation to defend the people of Donbass from genocide and to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine</i>	2	0.8	6	3.2
<i>NATO is not part of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and is not sending its troops to Ukraine</i>	112	42.3	80	42.6
<i>The International Tribunal in The Hague has ruled that Russia's actions in Ukraine violate international law and the UN Charter</i>	134	50.6	113	60.1
<i>the war in Ukraine serves to distract the public from WHO's creation of a world government</i>	11	4.2	10	5.3
<i>is part of Russia's superpower policy and an effort to restore its influence from the USSR era</i>	200	75.5	138	73.4
<i>other</i>	8	3.2	20	10

The next part of the survey solicited answers about the respondents' participation in actions supporting Ukrainians, as well as their opinions about receiving refugees. In both groups, the most frequent support was 'donating gifts', the scale among Polish and Slovak students differed, 60% and 40.9%, respectively. As regards other actions, Slovak students were more likely to take action online, e.g., social media events expressing opposition to the war and the signing of a petition against the war (with one exception, as the overlay of the Ukrainian flag on their Facebook profile picture was used more often by Polish students). In the case of offline actions, the opposite was true (except volunteering) since Polish students were more eager to participate in street demonstrations in the first days after the outbreak of the war and collect donations in kind and in cash. Identical results were recorded with regard to sharing content about aid to Ukraine on social media (37.2% of responses in both groups). The answer 'other' also included donating blood or welcoming a family to one's home. The results are presented in Table 6.

The question: 'Do you think Poland/Slovakia should accept refugees from Ukraine?', yielded 74.7% of positive and 2.6% negative responses among students studying in Poland. The remaining 15.1% had no opinion or indicated that they were in favour of helping but not on such a scale, or the aid should be provided

**Table 6.** Forms of Support for Ukrainians

Forms of support for Ukrainians	Poland		Slovakia	
	N	%	N	%
overlay with Ukrainian flag on Facebook profile picture	32	12.8	15	9.1
participating in an event expressing opposition to the war on social media	40	16	34	20.7
sharing content on various forms of assistance to Ukraine on social media	93	37.2	61	37.2
signing a petition against the war	41	16.4	40	24.4
participation in a demonstration in my town in the first days after the outbreak of the war	57	22.8	27	16.5
organising a collection of donations or other aid action	59	23.6	27	16.5
transfer of donations for collection	150	60	67	40.9
participation in the fundraising	122	48.8	55	33.5
volunteering	59	23.6	49	29.9
other	10	4	13	7.8

in solidarity with other countries, or in a different way than at present. The survey showed similar results in Slovakia, as 75.8% of the respondents studying in that country provided affirmative answers, while 3.7% negative ones. The remainder either chose 'I don't know' or mentioned that additional measures should apply, i.e., additional controls, assistance that is not excessive or targeted to those in need.

The last part of the survey examined hostility towards people of particular nationalities. Since the media provided extensive coverage of such situations, we listed three types of behaviour towards specific groups (Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians), namely, resentment expressed in comments on social media, resentment expressed verbally in direct contact, and the use of violence. We also included Belarusians in the survey, as their country was indirectly involved in the hostilities by making its territory available for Russian troops or to launch missiles at Ukrainian positions. Additionally, Belarus provides military support – mainly by air – for Russian groups located on its territory, as well as housing and food for soldiers (Dyner, 2022). However, in relation to this national group, responses of Polish and Slovak students differed significantly. While Polish students declared they had experienced some dislike towards Belarusians (30.7% resentment in social media and 18.5% in face-to-face contact), Slovak students did not encoun-

ter any such behaviour (a few in the entire sample). Interestingly, the two sample groups developed different attitudes towards Russians and Ukrainians. Polish students recorded significantly more aversion in relation to Russians (76.1% in social media and 46.6% in face-to-face contact) than Slovak students (50.9% in social media and 27.2% in face-to-face contact). Opposite results were found towards Ukrainians: only 33.3% of Polish students witnessed resentment towards Ukrainians in social media and 26.1% in direct contact, while as many as 60.1% of Slovak students encountered hostile behaviour towards Ukrainians in social media and 38.7% in direct contact. Polish respondents also highlighted other behaviours: dislike towards Russians who openly supported the war or objected to the removal of Russia's cultural heritage from public space in Poland. The results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Resentment towards People of Different Nationalities

Types of resentment towards people of different nationalities	Poland		Slovakia	
	N	%	N	%
dislike of Russians in my neighbourhood expressed in comments on social media	181	76.1	88	50.9
aversion to Russians in my neighbourhood expressed verbally in face-to-face contact	111	46.6	47	27.2
use of force, fights involving persons of Russian origin	10	4.2	4	2.3
dislike of Belarusians in my neighbourhood expressed in comments on social media	73	30.7	9	5.2
aversion to Belarusians in my surroundings expressed verbally in direct contact	44	18.5	7	4
use of force, fights involving persons of Belarusian origin	2	0.8	0	0
dislike of Ukrainians in my neighbourhood expressed in comments on social media	79	33.2	104	60.1
aversion to Ukrainians in my neighbourhood expressed verbally in face-to-face contact	62	26.1	67	38.7
use of violence involving people of Ukrainian origin	6	2.5	4	2.3
other	7	2.8	10	6

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the article is to present results of a survey on attitudes and behaviour related to the war in Ukraine among students studying in Poland and Slovakia. On the basis of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of responses, the authors arrived at conclusions expressed below. As regards sources of information used by students in both groups, the survey showed that Internet portals and social media proved to be the most popular. It should be considered that for this age group these are typical electronic media and their use does not raise further questions (it is confirmed by many surveys, e.g., Izrael, 2017; CSM, 2019; Kapsa & Trempała, 2020; Boni, 2021; Pazderska, 2021). On the other hand, the survey revealed an interesting difference with regard to the printed press. While few Polish students use it, it is still popular among more than one third of Slovak students. At the same time, students studying in Poland were clearly more interested in the topic of the war in Ukraine than those in Slovakia. However, irrespective of the preferred sources of information, it was noted that all young people are rather reserved in accepting information about the war in Ukraine. They use proven sources and sources they have trusted so far. Thus, they provided a correct assessment to true or false statements about the war included in the survey.

In terms of help to Ukrainian refugees, the survey noted some differences between the surveyed groups. Although it was most common in both groups to donate, Polish students did it more often than their Slovakian counterparts. Some differences can also be seen in other activities. For instance, Slovak students were more likely to become active online than Polish students, while the opposite was true for offline activities. It can be generally explained by the attitudes of both nations towards Ukrainians. Although in both countries the societies offered their help to the refugees from Ukraine, the scale of the Poles' involvement was exceptional (CBOS, 2022). According to a study by the Polish Economic Institute (Baszczak et al., 2022), around 77% of Poles were involved in helping refugees from Ukraine in the first months of the war, for which purpose they spent an estimated 9–10 billion zloty (€1.93–2.14 billion) out of their own pockets. Poland has been the primary destination for many refugees from Ukraine, among whom around two thirds were crossing its border. While many subsequently moved on to other countries and some have returned to Ukraine, it is estimated that over one million remain in Poland.

The results concerning resentment towards particular nationalities are very interesting. The two groups of students surveyed provided different responses.

Polish students showed significantly more aversion towards Russians than Slovak students, and the opposite was true in the case of Ukrainians, as few Polish students and most Slovak students witnessed hostile behaviour towards this nationality group. Moreover, Polish students showed aversion towards Belarusians, whereas such behaviour could hardly be found among Slovak students. Poles' aversion to Russians in the current situation could be explained by the fact of Russian aggression against Ukraine. However, the reluctance of Slovaks towards Ukrainians is a new phenomenon and could be explored in the future research – whether it is appropriate at the moment or will it be permanent.

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