

# V4 and Migration: A Rare Case of Unity

## Comparative Study on Migration Policies and Discourse in the V4



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**“Bruised but not broken: reviving the appeal of the EU in the minds of V4 citizens.”**

This project reacts to the upcoming 2024 European Parliament elections and focuses on researching and addressing the most contentious topics within the European Union, mainly focusing on its newer member states – V4 countries. These countries have been experiencing some forms of democratic backsliding, such as low participation in elections, tendencies towards Euroscepticism, high levels of distrust in authorities, or a resurgence of populism. Overall, these signals suggest a detachment from the European project.

Therefore, understanding the needs, concerns, and fears of V4 citizens is essential. It is also timely – Europe now stands on the verge of numerous transitions – chief among which is the green transformation intended to combat climate change.

The goal of the project is to gauge citizens’ attitudes and preferences towards four broad policy domains that played a pivotal role in the European Union’s quest to adapt to a new policy environment in the recent past: decarbonisation policies, migration, the COVID-19 pandemic, and debates over the rule of law.

During the project’s first phase, we have conducted qualitative and quantitative research into citizens’ attitudes to the four core topics of the project. Furthermore, we have looked into the V4 governments’ approaches to the topics via analyses of policy and discourse in the V4 countries. The project’s second phase will build on the realised research and engage with various stakeholders and policy-makers to share the findings and prepare communication- and engagement strategies before the 2024 European Parliament elections. Finally, we will disseminate the results and knowledge via public discussions, workshops, podcasts, and media outputs to the public.

The project is carried out by leading think-tank and research institutions in each of the V4 countries: EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy in Czechia; Bratislava Policy Institute in Slovakia; 21 Research Center in Hungary; The Projekt: Polska Foundation in Poland; and is supported by the European Union.



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## Summary

Introduction to migration policy in the v4.....	2
THE NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS .....	3
Summary of v4 policy and discourse positions.....	4
Comparative analysis.....	7
1. FRAMING MIGRATION AS A CULTURAL THREAT .....	8
2. REJECTION OF THE QUOTA .....	9
3. THE ANTI-BRUSSELS NARRATIVE.....	9
4. UKRAINIAN REFUGEES .....	10
5. SAFEGUARDING EXTERNAL BORDERS.....	11
Conclusion.....	11
2024 European Parliament elections .....	12
Bibliography.....	15

## Introduction to migration policy in the V4

After the rising number of immigrants in 2015, the implementation of the Common European Asylum System became a priority for EU member states. However, it has been documented by many studies that the V4 group countries drifted away from these intentions (Nagy 2017). A historical overview of the V4 countries' policies on refugees shows that the Visegrad Group has not yet experienced mass influxes of asylum seekers before. Not only the Orbán government and Slovak Prime Minister at that time, Robert Fico, but also the newly elected Polish PiS government and the Czech Republic have contributed to the shift in the national security approach. During 2016, the members of the Visegrad group worked together as a united bloc on migration issues in Brussels. However, while in Poland and Hungary, the illiberal sovereignist narrative prevailed, the Czech and Slovak governments took a more pragmatic approach to the EU generally (Kiner 2022).

How do the Visegrad countries perceive the question of migration? This analysis examines how the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary have positioned themselves in relation to the adoption and implementation of Frontex and looks at the similarities and differences in policies and discourse. It summarizes and compares national reports on policy and discourse in the V4 countries, also published as part of the RevivEU project.

The national reports on discourse analysis cover a period from June to December 2018. Mass immigration has caused the issue to feature in many media and political discourses in the member states. The time frame covers European Council conclusions from June 28-29, which confirmed that relocation and resettlement of refugees should take place only on a voluntary basis. (European Council 2018). The negotiation process about the UN's Migration Compact can also be dated to the same time interval. Various important events within member countries were included in the discourse analysis, such as the Hungarian parliamentary elections in the Spring of 2018 and the EP debate on the Sargentini report.

The policy analysis looks at a larger period, from 2015 to the present, which allowed the researchers to trace policy developments over a longer period. Since both the policy and discourse analyses are looking back in time, changes in government in the Czech Republic and Slovakia had to be taken into account. By contrast, the same leading party has been in office in Poland since 2015 and in Hungary since 2010. In the Czech Republic, the ANO Andrej Babiš, Prime Minister since 2017, was replaced by the right-wing coalition led by Petr Fiala's ODS at

the end of 2021, while Babiš became the leader of the opposition. Yet the critical actors in the Czech political scene have largely remained the same. In Slovakia, the SMER government of Peter Pellegrini, in office between 2018 and 2020, was replaced in 2020 by the government of Igor Matovič (OĽaNO), and since then, there have been two more changes of prime minister. The period since the 2020 elections until today has been dominated by the disintegration of parliamentary parties. A fundamental transformation of the party-political scene is expected after the September 2023 elections.

### The number of asylum seekers

In the year of 2015, which marked the start of the migration crisis, over a million people fled to the EU, mostly from the Syrian civil war, but asylum-seekers also arrived from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran (Witold et al. 2018). It is important to clarify that the crisis has impacted member states unevenly. Among the V4, Hungary has clearly been the most affected in terms of numbers. The percentage share of the V4 in the total number of asylum applications in the EU in 2015 demonstrates this: Hungary received 13.4% of applications, Poland 1.3%, while the Czech Republic's and Slovakia's shares remained marginal, between 0.3-0.1% (Mohay 2021).

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Czech Republic	905	1235	1200	1140	1350	1570	790	1055	1335
Hungary	41215	174 435	28 215	3115	635	465	90	40	45
Poland	5610	10 255	9780	3005	2405	2765	1510	6240	7700
Slovakia	230	270	100	150	155	215	265	330	500

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN THE V4 MEMBER STATES FROM 2014-2022. DATA SOURCE: EUROSTAT- ASYLUM APPLICANTS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT, CITIZENSHIP, AGE, AND SEX - ANNUAL AGGREGATED DATA

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Czech Republic	375	460	435	145	155	135	105	260	325
Hungary	510	425	430	1290	365	60	130	40	30
Poland	720	640	295	510	375	265	370	2155	3870
Slovakia	170	80	210	60	45	35	40	45	70

TABLE 2. FIRST INSTANCE DECISIONS ON ASYLUM APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF DECISION - POSITIVE DECISIONS ANNUAL AGGREGATED DATA. SOURCE: EUROSTAT

### Summary of V4 Policy and Discourse positions

During the period under review, the increased number of asylum seekers was a highly politicized and significant issue in all V4 countries.

In the **Czech Republic**, it is an extremely culturally rooted topic, and the acceptance of refugees is strongly dependent on their country of origin. There is a strong leaning towards securitization of the admission of asylum seekers and a strong resistance against any form of solidarity clause within the common EU asylum policy that would lead to a redistribution of refugees. As in all V4 countries, the Frontex mandate reform encountered resistance in the Czech Republic. Although the new mandate addresses the main Czech concern - protection of the common border - there were concerns about a potential breach of sovereignty of the member states. The Czechs eventually consented but opposed the possibility of deploying an EU border guard without the approval of the hosting country. Regarding the discourse in the country, a vast majority of actors (ANO, ODS, President Zeman, SPD) depict the arrival of Middle Eastern/African refugees as a threat, call for stopping them at the Schengen borders, oppose refugee quota, claim the V4 in 2015 showed foresight and that its positions are now adopted across the EU. For the far-right SPD, migration is an existential threat and an inherent plan of the EU elites to denationalize the member states. SPD advocated for Czexit and claimed that

Western Europe is becoming dangerous due to 'criminal migrants'. Due to overwhelming opposition to migration shared by the Czech politicians and also the public, as well as disinformation, it was very difficult to formulate a liberal and/or more solidaristic approach to asylum seekers. Consequently, the liberal Pirates chose not to talk so much about the topic.

**Hungary** has become one of the most vocal critics of international migration, even though it is a transit country. The 'threats' posed by migration to the country's national values have become the government's main narratives since 2015. The communication on refugees became an instrument of prime minister Viktor Orbán's political strategy, echoed by the media and billboards across the country. In 2015 the Government ordered the creation of a temporary security border barrier to close the so-called "green border". They expected the EU to contribute to the costs. However, the EU declined to contribute as, from their point of view, this was not the appropriate method to control the migration pressure. In 2021, Frontex announced its withdrawal from Hungary. As Hungary failed to implement the European Court of Justice's ruling, it was declared that Hungary unlawfully restricts the access of foreign citizens to international protection and returns people without a valid visa to their country of origin without following the expulsion procedure.

The Hungarian government's approach to the issue is best understood through Orbán's master narrative: migration is the primary weapon of the enemies of Hungary: it can be used to "reshape" Hungary through "population exchange". Every criticism and condemnation that Orbán and his government receive is just a political attack aimed at forcing migration on Hungary. The central position of migration as a weapon in Orbán's master frame can be explained by the extraordinary success of his anti-immigration campaign launched in early 2015. By applying the toolkit of anti-immigration campaigns from all around the world, Orbán framed refugees and migration as a threat to the national security in Hungary (DW 2018). Only the liberal Democratic Coalition party (DK) had a counternarrative, every other opposition party relied on the government's framing of events and merely reacted to them. Democratic Coalition meanwhile constructed a counternarrative, adopting a staunchly humanitarian, pro-European position where the focus shifts from national security to the security of refugees who suffer from the "inhumane" policies of the Orbán government.

In **Slovakia**, almost the entire political scene fought against any possibility of asylum seekers coming to the country during the 2014-2016 migration crisis. Robert Fico's government filed a lawsuit against the European Commission for its attempts to enforce the so-called quotas, the

prime minister wanted (unsuccessfully) to close the border with Austria and Hungary, and he advocated the protection of the external Schengen borders or the creation of various detention centers, e.g. in the Middle East. The Slovak position towards migration rapidly changed by the time of Russian invasion to Ukraine (the tendency was also observed in the other V4 countries). The border regime was relaxed, the government granted asylum to practically every Ukrainian refugee, integration efforts began in education, and the parliamentary parties jointly supported almost all of the proposed legislative aid to refugees. In terms of public discourse in Slovakia, parliamentarians tended to evade the issue of migration altogether and shied away from making strong statements. However, they collectively rejected the acceptance of refugees based on the quota system while portraying the issue as a responsibility of the countries directly affected by migration. They tried to put Slovakia in a position of a country helping other European countries most affected by the migration flow. Still, the European Union should not see this as welcoming refugee seekers into European territory but instead as a voluntary humanitarian act to help their European neighbors. Some representatives, especially members of the Slovak National Party, portrayed the Global Migration Pact as a threat to national sovereignty regarding Slovakia's right to decide who can or cannot enter the country. They also defended their position through the frame of "cultural otherness" of Central Europe, meaning that Central Europeans are different from people coming to Europe from other continents, and they are also different from Western European people. Similar to Hungary, the anti-Brussels narrative was also present here. This rhetoric has dominated the (far) right of the political-ideological spectrum - the SNS, but also Smer-SD.

In **Poland**, the issue of Middle Eastern migration was an external problem: in practice, the country did not feel any significant migration pressure from that direction. In view of the fact that refugees did not seek to go to Poland, they were in a position of voluntary assistance - to border countries on the one hand and to destination countries receiving asylum seekers on the other. The dilemmas that resulted from this position were addressed differently by different political groupings. Civic Platform, in power until 2015, betted on cooperation with big EU countries, albeit with reservations, and yielded to the expectations of stronger European partners. Law and Justice, which took over from it, on the other hand, weaponized this issue as a tool in domestic politics. The political debate over attitudes towards refugees from the Middle East resurfaced in 2021, as illegal crossings of the Polish-Belarusian border by migrants



from the Middle East increased significantly from the spring of 2021 onwards. First, left-liberal organizations and opposition groups began to criticize Polish border services for their brutal treatment of people trying to secretly cross the Polish border and accused them of failing to follow the routine procedures when dealing with refugees. The problems escalated, however, and events on the Polish-Belarusian border became subject, to an even greater extent than in 2015, to an aggressive media exchange of blows between leading political forces in the country. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the consensus in Poland among all major political forces around the need to support Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees have largely muted earlier disputes over migrants from the Middle East.

The Polish discussion on migration began in 2015 when the issue became the subject of the election campaign. On the one hand, the logic of the campaign pushed parties into opposing corners, and their migration-related messaging became sharply delineated, and their mutual antagonisms were highlighted as a result. In the following years, on the other hand, the topic lost its salience. The influx of Middle Eastern refugees into Poland was a settled thing of the past, and the ruling camp, led by PiS, could present itself as the victor who defended the country against the threat posed by asylum-seekers. By this time, the government and the opposition expressed similar views on the influx of Middle Eastern migrants into Poland. As in the other V4 countries, public opinion was clearly against immigration, and no serious political force was interested in putting up a fight. The governing party, as in Hungary, emphasized conservative and cultural values, which the majority of the public could identify with. The opposition camp was less coherent, as its political pragmatism (imposing restrictions on the influx of refugees) was not fully compatible with the liberal philosophy it advocated. This led to occasional accusations against the main opposition party in various media outlets and also from its own core supporters.

### **Comparative Analysis**

Throughout the country-specific policies and discourses, a number of common themes emerged that we shall elaborate on below. Specifically, we shall highlight five relevant issues that form the basis for comparison:

## 1. Framing migration as a cultural threat

The member states' concern about possible cultural threats is the first finding that stands out when analyzing the discourse of incumbent governments. In the Czech Republic, the African origin and Muslim faith of refugees, as culturally incompatible and unable to adapt to a Czech social environment based on Christian values and customs, have become the main public narrative in the debate on migration management (Witold et al. 2018). Comparatively speaking, migration has not been addressed as a topic of major significance in Slovakia. While the V4 countries all emphasized that national sovereignty must be protected against multiculturalism, Slovakia took a more moderate stance in publicly expressing its view on the issue, especially compared to Poland and Hungary (Glied and Zameczki 2021). In practice, Poland did not feel any significant migration pressure around 2015. Middle Eastern migration was an external problem for the country, nevertheless, there are more similarities between Hungary and Poland regarding the issue of migration than between any other V4 member states. According to the literature, within the V4, Hungary and Poland were the two opinion leaders (Glied and Zameczki 2021). Right-wing political ideology mobilizes negative attitudes towards refugees, leading to the rejection and discrimination of these groups through the perception of symbolic threat, which may center on culture or religion (Davidov et al. 2020). Since the first large waves of the migration flows in 2015, the Law and Justice party has emphasized cultural and political autonomy in Poland. Based on this narrative, refugees from the Middle East were presented as groups not only foreign and unwilling to integrate but also hostile to the Christian tradition. Several examples were presented by the party from Western countries of why immigration has been a problem in these regions in order to highlight the potential dangers that Poland could face. Jakub Skiba, vice-minister of internal affairs and administration of the Law and Justice government, stated: *"As for the Middle East, and Arab cultures, I am much more reserved. The experience of Western countries is not positive in this regard. Just look at France or the UK. The process of acculturation and integration is unbelievably difficult and generates huge problems."* (dzieje.pl 2016).

Political leaders claimed that it was their moral duty not to give in to Western pressure and thus to prevent asylum-seekers with different cultural backgrounds from entering. A similar tendency occurred in Hungary. Orbán framed migration as a threat to Christian and cultural values from the beginning. He states that *"(...) in reality migration means population exchange,*

*(...). This will change our culture, and in a few years we won't recognize our own village, our own town, our own country, and our own continent."* (Orban 2018).

## **2. Rejection of the Quota**

The idea of the redistribution of refugees within the EU on the basis of binding quotas has been met with strong opposition from the V4 countries (Kiner 2022). A proposal from the European Commission included redistributing 120,000 refugees from the most affected areas: Greece, and Italy (European Council 2018). It was adopted by a qualified majority with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia voting against it. Poland voted in favor of the decision. From the beginning, Hungary and Slovakia have had a negative attitude toward the relocation of refugees from Greece and Italy. They voted against Council Decision 2015/1523/EU and Council Decision 2015/1601/EU (Zdanowicz 2021). The controversial referendum in Hungary against a mandatory EU refugee quota was a further act of the "cultural counter-revolution" (Nič 2016).

For the V4 countries, the common political success would have been to offer an alternative and reference point for other countries within the EU, and to be able to influence Community policy and force policy change (Glied and Zameczki 2021). In fact, arguments that Central Europe had understood early that migration had to be handled through hard-line policies, and now the Western European states were following this lead, were widespread in the V4. A common policy of the V4 countries on migration instead of an 'open-door' policy is to address effectively the root causes of migration flows, i.e., to address the drivers of migration, to support countries of origin and thereby reduce migration towards the EU (Szalai et al 2017).

## **3. The Anti-Brussels Narrative**

V4 countries have expressed concerns and criticisms regarding the European Union's handling of the migration crisis in 2015. One of those was based on the need to protect values such as Christianity and the sovereignty of states. The literature observes that Poland and Hungary's expressions are more militant against Brussels and that the two countries' condescending language is more likely to hinder real debate than to advance it. Moreover, one cannot ignore the Rule of Law process concerning these two countries as they are closely linked to the issue of migration. By contrast, Slovakia has been more open to compromise and has used less harsh

language (Glied - Zameczki 2021). However, even these countries were reluctant to accept a significant number of refugees and have criticized what it perceives as an imposition of decisions by Brussels on matters of national sovereignty. Slovakia has argued that member states should have greater control over decisions related to accepting refugees.

#### 4. Ukrainian refugees

The ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has dramatically increased migration flows to Europe. The UNHCR estimates that by August 2022, more than 6.6 million Ukrainians had been seeking asylum across Europe, most of them temporarily settled in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland and the Czech Republic are currently hosting the largest group of refugees, with significant numbers also in Hungary and Slovakia. In October 2022, nearly 2 million Ukrainian refugees were registered in the Visegrad countries under temporary protection: 30,000 in Hungary, 96,000 in Slovakia, 442,000 in the Czech Republic, and 1,422,482 in Poland. (Pędziwiatr 2023). This sub-section outlines how the V4 countries are positioned in the context of the current refugee crisis compared to the migration situation before the outbreak of the war.

The Visegrad Group (V4) countries have generally displayed different attitudes towards refugees from different regions, including Ukraine. Poland has historically had a more positive stance towards Ukrainian refugees, particularly due to the historical and cultural ties between the two countries. Poland provided aid to most of the Ukrainian refugees in absolute numbers, while the Czech Republic had the highest number in the EU considering the size of population. Hungary has been more receptive to Ukrainian refugees compared to refugees from other regions. Due to geographical proximity and historical connections, Hungary has implemented specific policies to provide temporary protection to Ukrainian asylum seekers during the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Slovakia and the Czech Republic also have been more accepting of Ukrainian refugees than of asylum-seekers from the Middle East (Pędziwiatr 2023). Contrary to Hungary, Slovakia also extended temporary protection to non-Ukrainians with Ukrainian residence permits. Already a few days after the beginning of the conflict, the Czech government ordered on 2 March to issue Ukrainian citizens coming to Czechia special visas for the purpose of an “enduring stay” over 90 days, thus fully opening its borders to Ukrainian refugees (OECD 2022).

## 5. Safeguarding external borders

The V4 countries emphasized the need for enhanced EU measures to protect the external borders of the Schengen Area. They advocated for increased resources, technology, and personnel to support border control operations and prevent unauthorized entry. Among the members of the V4, Hungary has been the most openly critical of the EU's response to the crisis in the context of border security. This has led Hungary to take unilateral measures, often presented as a reinforcement of Hungary's historical role as a 'bastion of Europe', which have culminated in the construction of a fence on its southern border (Glien - Pap 2016). External border control is inseparable from the maintenance of the Schengen area. In Slovakia's discourse the best strategy to secure the Schengen border and minimize the migration flow to the European countries lies in the capacity of the EU to build refugee camps outside of Europe. Both sides - opposition and coalition - supported this statement. In February 2023, at the border management conference, Slovakia reaffirmed its position supporting the protection of external borders and the use of European resources to provide funding to countries on the external borders of the EU. V4 countries stressed the importance of cooperation with the EU border agency, Frontex (now the European Border and Coast Guard Agency), to strengthen border control and enhance the security of the Schengen Area's external borders.

## Conclusion

The objective of the analysis was to overview the similarities and differences between the policies and discourses of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The main findings are the following:

1. Overall, the V4 countries are almost identical in their approach to migration. Their common ground has been the rejection of quotas linked to the mandatory redistribution of refugees and prioritizing the safeguarding of the internal security of their countries.
2. During the 2015-2016 migration crisis, the Visegrad countries coordinated their political communication through quasi-identical communication strategies. The approach of the V4 was to reject the open-door policy advocated by the European Union. Our main findings are that the migration crisis has strengthened cohesion among the V4 countries. The V4 countries' more negative attitudes towards migration

were based on shared historical experiences rooted in their geographical location. However, their reactions differed during the migration crisis. While in Poland and Hungary, the illiberal sovereignist narrative prevailed, the Czech and Slovak governments took a more pragmatic approach to the EU. These differences were the most visible in the realm of political discourse. Another significant difference is that Hungary undertook the most tangible anti-immigration measures, partly due to its geographical position in the Schengen zone and its transit country status.

3. The V4 issued several common positions in 2015 and 2016 outlining their policy on migration. The three central points are:
  - Safeguarding external borders
  - Rejecting the quota and Germany's 'open-door' policy
  - Managing effectively the root causes of migration flows, i.e., addressing the drivers of migration, supporting countries of origin, and reducing migration to the EU.
4. The general view of the V4 countries is that while refugees of African origin and/or Muslim religion are seen as a threat to national security and cultural unity, their Ukrainian "brothers" deserve immediate assistance and asylum.

## 2024 European Parliament elections

### Slovakia

- The topic of migration is expected to be among the electoral issues of the campaign for the European Parliament in 2024. The topic has re-entered the political discourse after the negotiations on the new asylum and migration system in the EU, which were discussed by the interior ministers of the member states this summer. The topic of migration is mainly brought up by populist politicians.
- Politicians rejecting immigrants in Slovakia do not have such a negative attitude towards Ukrainian refugees as towards refugees from the Middle East or North Africa. Thus, it is expected that scaring the voters against mass migration will mainly refer to refugees from the Middle East and Africa, while refugees from Ukraine will not be a topic of the campaign.
- The position of the Slovak Republic towards the new Migration Pact will largely depend on the results of the elections that will be held in September 2023. In the event of a

victory by the Smer-SD party and the formation of a government with parties close to it, a complete rejection of the pact is expected, as party chairman Fico and others already communicate this way today. If a government is formed from the center-right and pro-Western parties, we can expect constructive negotiations on this pact.

#### Czech Republic

- As one of the most politicized EU policies, migration from outside the EU will likely be misused by Czech politicians to stir anti-EU sentiments and score cheap votes in the 2024 European Parliament elections.
- Particularly Andrej Babiš, now leader of the opposition, is likely to stir debates around the currently negotiated EU Pact on Asylum and Migration and paint the current right wing government as being pro-migration. He has already used this tactic in the 2021 parliamentary elections, where he accused his opponents of inviting migrants, while painting himself as the one who effectively “stopped the migration quota in 2018”.
- The current right wing government assumes a more pragmatic position vis-a-vis migration. The Czech interior minister was the only one in the V4 to vote in favor of the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration in June 2023. Still, the possibility of mandatory migrant relocation and resettlement is strongly opposed by the current government, as this is firmly opposed across society.
- The massive influx of Ukrainian refugees into Czechia can be used by the government to “absolve” the Czech Republic from any responsibility vis-a-vis other groups of refugees. The topic of Ukrainian migration itself is not perceived as an EU issue and thus will probably not figure in the EP election discussions.

#### Hungary

- Almost certainly, the Hungarian government will attempt to put the topic of migration in the center stage of the European Parliament elections campaign, regardless of the receding problem pressure.
- The main line of attack will probably center around the recently proposed Migration Pact by the European Commission. This will allow the government to attempt to replay the 2015-2016 asylum debate, presenting the Hungarian position as a matter of sovereignty and security.

- The government will try to avoid intertwining the issue of migration with Ukrainian refugees as the latter continue to enjoy a considerable level of sympathy among the Hungarian public. The rhetorical distinction between “good” and “deserving” migrants (e.g., Ukrainian refugees) and “bad” and “illegal” migrants will likely resurface in the campaign.
- Another prominent thread of the government’s narrative will be the EU’s alleged incompetence in dealing with the migration flow via the Mediterranean Sea, as evidenced by a number of boat accidents.

Poland:

- The issue of migration is not particularly important in Poland at the moment (July 2023). Opinion polls show that voters are currently focused on rising prices, the effects of inflation, state security, and health, and not on the issue of migration.
- The contrast between the main political forces, the government (Law and Justice) and the opposition (Civic Platform), is not very visibly outlined and, therefore, may have less mobilization significance among voters.
- The relevance of the issue of migration to the public debate may change due to the dynamic socio-political situation (including low fertility rates, current and future problems with the lack of “hands to work”) and the parliamentary elections in Poland in the autumn of 2023, which may change the existing balance of political forces and influence the public debate.



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