

DIVERGING NEIGHBORS: RESPONSES OF POLAND, ROMANIA AND
HUNGARY TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

PELİN NUR ÇAĞLAYAN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2025

Approval of the thesis:

**DIVERGING NEIGHBORS: RESPONSES OF POLAND, ROMANIA AND
HUNGARY TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE**

submitted by **PELİN NUR ÇAĞLAYAN** in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of **Master of Science in International Relations, the Graduate
School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Özgehan ŞENYUVA
Head of Department
Department of International Relations

Prof. Dr. Oktay Fırat TANRISEVER
Supervisor
Department of International Relations

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Giray SADIK (Head of the Examining Committee)
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University
Department of International Relations

Prof. Dr. Oktay Fırat TANRISEVER (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of International Relations

Assist. Prof. Dr. Başaran AYAR
Ankara University
Department of International Relations



I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Pelin Nur ÇAĞLAYAN

Signature:

ABSTRACT

DIVERGING NEIGHBORS: RESPONSES OF POLAND, ROMANIA AND HUNGARY TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

ÇAĞLAYAN, Pelin Nur

M.S., The Department of International Relations

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Oktay Fırat TANRISEVER

September 2025, 133 pages

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a global-scale conflict happening in the Eastern European region and impacting Ukraine's neighbors. This thesis examines the diverging responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary to the war. The responses are analyzed through three key factors that are geopolitics, national identity and energy dependence. Despite sharing similar historical experiences and being EU and NATO members, these states have adopted different stances. Hungary responded by being a non-compliant member state in the EU processes and maintained its relations with Russia. Poland responded by being a leading supporter of Ukraine and positioning itself as a regional security hub. Romania displayed a cautious but responsible stance visible in its concern for a potential spillover and its commitment to NATO responsibilities. The impact of the aforementioned factors on these states' responses are explained through the extent to which these states are vulnerable to Russian influence. Through a comparative analysis of these three cases, this thesis displays how geopolitical conditions, national identity tendencies and energy dependence levels have influenced these states' responses to Ukraine's invasion.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Hungary

ÖZ

FARKLILAŞAN KOMŞULAR: POLONYA, ROMANYA VE MACARİSTAN’IN RUSYA’NIN UKRAYNA’YI İŞGALİNE VERDİKLERİ TEPKİLER

ÇAĞLAYAN, Pelin Nur

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Oktay Fırat TANRISEVER

Eylül 2025, 133 sayfa

Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgali, Doğu Avrupa bölgesinde meydana gelen ve Ukrayna'nın komşularını etkileyen küresel ölçekli bir çatışmadır. Bu tez Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın bu savaşa verdiği farklı cevapları incelemektedir. Bu cevaplar, jeopolitik, ulusal kimlik ve enerji bağımlılığı olmak üzere üç temel faktör üzerinden analiz edilmektedir. Benzer tarihleri olmasına ve AB ve NATO üyesi olmalarına rağmen, bu ülkeler farklı tutumlar benimsemişlerdir. Macaristan, AB süreçlerinde uyumsuz bir üye devlet olarak kendini güvence altına almış ve Rusya ile ilişkilerini sürdürmüştür. Polonya, Ukrayna'nın önde gelen destekçilerinden biri olmuş ve kendisini bölgesel bir güvenlik merkezi olarak konumlandırmıştır. Romanya ise, çatışmanın olası yayılma olasılığından duyduğu endişe ve NATO yükümlülükleriyle belirginleşen temkinli ancak sorumlu bir duruş sergilemiştir. Bahsedilen faktörlerin etkisi bu üç ülkenin Rusya'nın etkisine olan zafiyet seviyeleri ile açıklanmaktadır. Bu tez, bu üç vakanın karşılaştırmalı analizi ile jeopolitik koşulların, ulusal kimlik eğilimlerinin ve enerji bağımlılığı düzeylerinin bu ülkelerin Ukrayna'nın işgaline verdiği tepkileri nasıl etkilediğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya, Ukrayna, Polonya, Romanya, Macaristan



To my beloved sister, Seda AĞLAYAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am truly grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Oktay Fırat Tanrısever, whose guidance, feedback and support has been invaluable throughout the development of this thesis and in all the other steps leading to this point. His insights have been essential in shaping my research.

I am also grateful to all the faculty members of the Department of International Relations for providing an intellectually stimulating and encouraging environment. My special thanks go to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevilay Kahraman, who encouraged me to pursue an academic career from the beginning, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şerif Onur Bahçecik, whose guidance and support deeply influenced my academic perspective.

I would like to thank the officials I had the privilege to meet from Poland, Romania and Hungary, whose encouragements strengthened my motivation.

I am deeply filled with gratitude for my family for their endless support, encouragement and faith in me. I would like to thank them for always believing in me and supporting me. I would like to thank my beloved sister, from whom I learned to be a hard-working person, and who laid the foundation from an early age for me to pursue an academic career.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Scope and Objectives	1
1.2. Literature Review	3
1.3. Research Questions	5
1.4. Argument.....	6
1.5. Conceptual Framework	6
1.6. Theoretical Framework.....	9
1.7. Methodology.....	10
1.8. Research Design	10
1.9. Sources of Data.....	11
1.10. Analytical Framework	12
1.11. Limitations.....	12

1.12.	The Russian Invasion of Ukraine.....	13
1.12.1	Events with Global Implications.....	14
1.12.2.	European Union’s Response	16
1.12.2.1.	Political Condemnation	16
1.12.2.2.	Sanctions Packages	17
1.12.2.3.	Military and Humanitarian Assistance.....	18
2.	POLAND’S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE	19
2.1.	Introduction.....	19
2.1.1.	Condemnation of the War	19
2.1.2.	Humanitarian Aid.....	20
2.1.3.	Diplomatic Efforts.....	22
2.1.4.	Military Aid.....	23
2.1.5.	Ukrainian Grain Dispute	25
2.2.	Geopolitics	26
2.3.	Energy Dependence	29
2.3.1.	Natural Gas	30
2.3.2.	Baltic Pipeline Project.....	31
2.3.3.	Swinoujście LNG Terminal	32
2.3.4.	Oil.....	33
2.3.5.	Coal	35
2.4.	National Identity	36
2.4.1.	Atlanticism	37
2.4.2.	Skepticism of Multilateral Organizations	38
2.4.3.	A Pro-EU Stance.....	38
2.4.4.	Regional Security and Territorial Defense.....	40

2.5.	Conclusion.....	41
3.	ROMANIA’S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE.....	42
3.1.	Introduction	42
3.1.2.	Condemnation of the War	42
3.1.3.	Humanitarian Aid	44
3.1.4.	Diplomatic Efforts	45
3.1.4.1	Solidarity Lanes	48
3.1.5.	Military Aid.....	49
3.2.	Geopolitics.....	51
3.3.	Energy Dependency.....	53
3.3.1.	Intensity of Dependence	53
3.3.2.	Diversification Efforts	55
3.3.2.1.	National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan	55
3.3.2.2.	Neptun Deep Project.....	56
3.3.2.3.	The BRUA Pipeline	57
3.4.	National Identity.....	58
3.5.	Conclusion.....	62
4.	HUNGARY’S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE.....	64
4.1.	Introduction	63
4.1.1.	Condemnation of the War	64
4.1.2.	Humanitarian Aid	65
4.1.3.	Sanctions Regime	66
4.1.4.	Blocking of Arms Shipment.....	71
4.2.	Geopolitics.....	73
4.3.	Energy Dependency.....	76
4.3.1.	Dependence on Russia.....	76

4.3.2. Energy Security	77
4.3.3. Paks II Nuclear Power Plant Project	78
4.3.4. Balancing the East and the West.....	79
4.4. National Identity	81
4.4.1. Identity Politics	82
4.4.2. Global Opening	86
4.4.3. Eastern Opening	87
4.5. Conclusion	88
5. CONCLUSION	90
REFERENCES.....	95
APPENDICES	
A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET	121
B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU.....	133

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1.: Framing analysis of the identity problem in Hungary.



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1.: Graph showing the border traffic between Ukraine and Poland between February 14 and May 18, 2022.

Figure 2.2.: Geological landscape areas of Poland.

Figure 2.3.: Crude oil processed in Polish refineries by country of origin (2015–2021).

Figure 3.1.: Energy import dependency of the EU in 2020.

Figure 3.2.: Southern Gas Corridor.

Figure 4.1.: Hungary's general geographical conditions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
EPF	European Peace Facility
EU	European Union
EUMAM	European Union Military Assistance Mission in Support of Ukraine
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PiS	Law and Justice Party
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope and Objectives

This thesis aims to present a comparative analysis of the diverging responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary are examined under three interrelated categories, that are geopolitics, national identity and energy dependence, which together explain the impact of Russian influence on shaping these states' responses. These categories are chosen deliberately due to their theoretical relevance within the changes of regional security dynamics in Eastern Europe.

First, geopolitics is an inevitable aspect of state behavior analysis in a region where a major power, Russia, has been dominant with an everlasting objective of maintaining a strong sphere of influence. Therefore, these three states are the ones experiencing the immediate effects of the Russian aggression not only since February 2022 but even before that. In this regard, the importance of geopolitics in shaping state behavior is evident in Morgenthau's (1985) claim that geopolitics comes from geography, which is the main factor in shaping the "fate of nations". Therefore, it could be argued that these states' threat perceptions, foreign policy principles and strategic alignments may be influenced by several factors such as their proximity to Russia which becomes even more complex considering their common history, NATO commitments, and geographical features.

Second, national identity, sometimes referred to as identity, provides a perspective from which certain historical narratives, ingrained fears, and ideologies could be understood. It refers to a shared belief of these historical narratives and values, as well as a belief in the legitimacy of a country (Fukuyama, 2018a). The three states forming

the focus of this work present distinct national identities which are investigated from various perspectives. The dynamism in these different perspectives is due to the idea that certain characteristics unique to each state have been influential in shaping their varying responses. For example, Hungary's hedging response to the invasion has been driven mostly by its domestic political conditions consisting of the current government's ideological stance and strategic positioning with the EU and Russia. However, Poland's response is assertive and based on its foreign policy principles that emphasize territorial security, a West-ward position and its heightened wariness of the Russian threat in the region. Romania's approach, on the other hand, is influenced by a combination of various factors such as its historical experience with Russia and fear a potential spillover of the aggression to their territory, as well as its NATO commitments.

Third, energy dependence is a vital issue in explaining the differing stances of each state. The centrality of Russian energy resources, and its ability to use this centrality as a political tool for leverage which creates vulnerabilities in the Eastern European region has been clear. Russia uses European countries' energy dependence to achieve political gains through a strategy of manipulation of energy supply -, with an aim to establish itself as a global major power (Baran, 2007). The Russian invasion of Ukraine made this condition more exposed, leading all three states to seek energy diversification strategies. While Poland's efforts that have been continuing far before the breakout of the war allowed it to respond against Russia without hesitation, the same did not apply to Hungary, which is to this day more dependent on Russian energy than Poland, and does not desire to respond firmly to Russia anyway. Romania's less dependency on Russian energy due to it possessing comparatively larger domestic energy sources allowed it to respond by allocating less consideration for energy security concerns.

On top of these, it is visible that EU coherence did not result in similar domestic conditions for each state. In other words, as member states retain their national sovereignty to a large extent, they could resist possible joint decisions at the EU level due to their domestic political pressures (Gebhard, 2017, p.110). While these states' similar histories with Russia, their current post-Soviet statuses and their common

institutional memberships are considered, it would be natural to expect not the same but at least not this divergent responses. Instead, it is Russian influence that may leave states vulnerable. Russian influence in Eastern Europe relies on to paths that are dominating the target states' strategic economic sector to abuse capitalism and seeking to cause political divides and corroding political systems (Conley, 2016, p.10). Throughout the chapters, how states become vulnerable to Russian influence and how they ultimately shift their positions to either align with Russia for strategic purposes or resist it will be visible.

These three factors allow for a framework that examines the state responses with a multi-faceted perspective. Each factor represents a vital dimension influencing foreign policy through explaining material security concerns, self-conceptions and energy-based economic dependencies. In each aspect, it is possible to see the extent to which Russian manipulation has been influential. The combination of these factors enables a response to the question of why closely located countries in the same alliances have adopted diverging positions on a conflict occurring close to their borders. While the three factors are evaluated, the role of Russia needs to be considered as it is not only an aggressor but also a regional manipulator. That is why, its manipulation or lack of manipulation needs to be taken into consideration.

1.2. Literature Review

While the literature is limited due to the recency of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the existing sources are capable of displaying the three factors that are geopolitics, national identity and energy dependence, influencing the state responses. The literature has an agreement on the idea that Russian aggression against Ukraine is an unprovoked and unlawful act. Mearsheimer (2001; 2014) present a systemic explanation for the conflictual nature of the post-Soviet space and argues that the conflict caused by Russia could be due to the Western encroachment where Russia claims a strategic space.

The literature on Poland's response and the factors influencing its stance follow a consistent idea that Poland assumes a leadership role in supporting Ukraine and it

strategic culture is based on threat perception and regional activism. Komarnytskyy (2023) claims that Poland aims to be a regional security hub and a primary actor on NATO's eastern flank, and presents tangible actions such as defense investments and military and logistical support as evidences. Dyduch and Gora (2023) on the other hand, argue that Poland employed a strong stance on its response to the invasion and aligns itself with NATO and the EU against Russia. Similarly, Sus (2023) claims that Poland's foreign policy orientation is a result of the systemic threats in the region, and it supports the same idea with Komarnytskyy (2023), that Poland aspires to be a regional leader and factors such as national identity impact state responses particularly in environments where structural constraints are present, such as Russia. Poland's energy diversification efforts are described by Kamola-Cieřlik (2015), Maj (2023) and Kamyk (2020) through their assessments of energy security.

Hungary's position, on the other hand, is described as diverging from EU unity for strategic purposes. Tarrósy and Vörös (2014a) and Tarrósy et al. (2024) state that Hungary's foreign policy is defined by its policy of "Global Opening" which emphasizes increased engagement with non-Western powers such as Russia and China, which challenges the EU foreign policy coherence. The tendency to be more engaged with the non-Western actors is explained through the idea that Hungarian elites view European identity as culturally incompatible with Hungary's national identity that has a more diverse nature. Durakçay (2023) argues that Hungary's diverging response including its refusal to allow arms transit through its territory and opposing the energy sanctions against Russia caused issues in the Visegrád Group. Suleiman (2021) outlines the antidemocratic practices and campaigns employed by Hungary. In addition, Fukuyama's (2018b) idea that identity politics is on the rise and it erodes democratic systems is a valuable work in the literature. Hungary's energy dependence is discussed in the literature as being due to Soviet influence (Szabo et al., 2020), and due to this, the current energy relationship between Hungary and Russia has a patron-client relationship nature (Madlovics & Magyar, 2023).

Romania's response is often defined as not as strong as Poland but not as divergent as Hungary either. Ghincea (2023) claims that Romania is a vital actor that could shape

Black Sea security due to its active participation in regional formats, and this active position is due to the long-lasting Russian revisionism in the region. Marcu (2009) presents two important challenges that Romania, as well as Moldova and Ukraine, are facing, that is integration with the EU and the navigation of the conflictual environment in the Eastern European region. This challenge seems to have influenced Romania's stance on the invasion. Murafa (2023) indicates that Romania has shifted from Russian energy and supported its domestic production capabilities, as well as seeking different external sources and Ciot and Butișcă (2023) highlight Romania's objective to align itself with EU objectives regarding energy policy. Beluhova-Uzunova et al. (2024) state that Romania supported Ukraine through allowing Ukrainian grain to be exported through its ports and it caused domestic issues impacting the agricultural sector.

Due to the recency of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing status of it, the literature on the three states' responses remain limited. In order to fulfil the objective of this thesis, a wide range of reliable but non-academic sources that inform on the ongoing developments and analyze the recent events have been utilized. Throughout this thesis, the literature and the non-academic sources have been combined to analyze the responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary and Romania to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

1.3. Research Questions

This thesis focuses on the responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As the main question is about the source of the divergence, the primary research question is as follows:

1. Why do Poland, Romania and Hungary responded differently to the Russian invasion of Ukraine despite their similar histories and institutional memberships?

While examining their divergence in responses, each country's geopolitics, national identity and energy dependence are investigated. Thus, the sub-questions are as follows:

1. How have the geopolitical conditions of Poland, Romania and Hungary influenced their responses to the invasion?
2. In what ways has national identity affected Poland, Romania and Hungary's responses to the invasion?
3. To what extent energy dependence has been significant in shaping Poland, Romania and Hungary's responses to the invasion.

1.4. Argument

This thesis argues that the responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary to the Russian invasion of Ukraine are shaped by geopolitics, energy dependence and national identity, which are closely connected to each of these states' levels of vulnerability to Russian influence. The thesis maintains that these three factors operate in interdependence and carry explanatory power regarding the divergences in the policies of each state. It is underlined that one factor on its own could not be explanatory. Instead, a synthesis of the three factors presents how alignment or non-alignment with Russia influenced these three states's responses.

In Hungary's case, how energy dependency and identity politics plays a role in shaping its response and how EU unity is disrupted is visible. In Poland's case, an increased awareness of a Russian threat is visible, which shapes its foreign policy orientations, leading it to be a pioneering supporter of Ukraine. In Romania's case, both cautiousness for not provoking Russia and membership (EU and NATO) responsibilities are present. Therefore, it could be argued that Russian influence is present on each of these states, but in different ways. In other words, Russia's systemic influence on these states varied in extent but it is significant in shaping their current responses to the invasion. This approach explains the divergence in the state responses to the invasion and explains the limits of regional solidarity.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

In order to establish a foundation on which the analyses in this thesis is based, it is important to clarify the key concepts. This section outlines the core concepts that will

guide the upcoming discussions in this thesis. By defining these terms, a more systematic explanation of the responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary is aimed at.

In simple terms, geopolitics refers to the influence of geographic structures on power relations and state behavior. It could be understood as the interaction between geopolitical agents such as states and regional organizations and the practices of territorial strategies as states constantly measure their security with regard to their vulnerabilities and locations (Flint, 2006, p.10). Specific to the topic of this thesis, geopolitics presents that the Eastern European region has significant geographic vulnerabilities and serves as a center for great power competition (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.99). This study benefits from Csurgai 's (2019) geopolitical analysis framework. The nature of geopolitics is more than interdisciplinary and it presents a multifaceted approach to the various dimension and causes of conflicts (Csurgai, 2019, p.11, as cited in Pitney, 2023, p.9).

Several geopolitical factors are listed by Csurgai (2019) such as physical geography, boundaries, historical factors, geography of populations, geopolitical representations and natural resources. This thesis bases its claims about geopolitics on physical geography, boundaries and natural resources. Briefly, the geopolitics sections in this thesis mainly refer to the idea that states formulate their foreign policy and defense orientations partially according to their geographical features, borders with other states and their presence or absence of natural resources.

In this thesis, national identity is approached from different dimensions of it such as domestic politics, foreign policy orientations mostly informed by the historical experiences of states.

Identity politics could be defined as “political beliefs and systems that place a lot of importance on the group to which people see themselves as belonging to, especially according to their race...” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2024). Members of a certain group aim to reclaim their distinctiveness that might be challenging the existing or dominant expectations, with the objective of

achieving better self-determination (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2024). This concept is widely referred to while analyzing the Hungarian responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition, Fukuyama (2018b, p.91) defines the right-leaning approach to identity politics as an attempt to protect the traditional national identity that is in connection to race, ethnicity, and religion. As both sources present, it could be said that identity politics refers to the belief of groups that their national, religious and ethnic identities do not receive sufficient recognition (Fukuyama, 2018; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2024). However, this stimulated the rise of right-wing identity politics at a noticeable level (Fukuyama, 2018b, p.101).

Foreign policy refers to the “general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). It broadly includes the strategies and principles that a state employs while conducting its relations with other states and organizations (international and non-governmental). Foreign policy is also defined as the policy implementations happening in the international arena by an independent and sovereign authority (Morin & Paquin, 2018, as cited in Genç Yılmaz, 2019, p. 156). While it is understood as a pragmatic decision-making as a response to external developments, it is also influenced by various other factors such as historical experiences that became embedded in a particular state’s strategic and political culture and public memory.

Energy dependence refers to the condition in which a state relies on external sources to supply itself with oil, natural gas and coal. The rate of a state’s energy dependency displays the “proportion of energy that an economy must import” (Eurostat, n.d.). A state could be defined as energy dependent if it lacks domestic resources sufficient to secure its energy supply independently. This reliance could make states vulnerable to fluctuations in price, deliberate or technical supply disruptions and political leverage objectives of supplier states. This vulnerability could be heightened if the importer state does not have available alternatives for supply (Casier, 2011, p.541). In the scope of this thesis, energy dependence refers to these three states’ varying levels of dependence on Russia.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

While many scholars consider international organizations such as the EU and NATO as vital for the maintenance of peace and stability, in reality, regional conflicts cause diverging responses from states. This could be explained better through a realist perspective instead of a liberal perspective that emphasize the role of international organizations.

Scholars often underline that international organizations foster cooperation and connect states to a socialized network of states, which eventually contribute to shaping their identities (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999, p.726). Liberal institutionalists, for instance, view that states are rational egoists in an anarchic world with the exception that they could cooperate in instances where common interests exists (Keohane & Martin, 1995, p.39; Mearsheimer, 1994, p.16). More specifically, Andrew Moravcsik (2010, p.91), who is a proponent of Liberal Intergovernmentalism, believes that the EU is a “second superpower”. Similarly, Meunier and Vachudova (2018, p.1632) claim that the EU is a “potential superpower” with regard to its multifaceted opportunities from which member states benefit. On the other hand, NATO is considered more than a military alliance and a liberal democratic community, and is labeled as a “pacific federation” (Sjursen, 2004, p.693).

While these scholars claim that international organizations are vital for states and are drivers for cooperation, the reality presents a contrasting case. Despite these institutional expectations, responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary diverge despite their common memberships in the EU and NATO. This might signal that national interests, which are separate from regional or organizational interests, are at play. Realist International Relations theory presents a more explanatory approach to the divergences in state behavior. Realism is defined by the role of the states and the nature of the international system. States are considered the primary actors in an anarchic international system, and they act as rational and unitary entities with a strong objective of surviving (Morgenthau, 1985). In addition, Mearsheimer argues that cooperation is constrained by concerns regarding relative gains and the possibility that some states might cheat (1994, p.12). It is emphasized that international organizations

function as “arenas for acting out power relationships” that great powers benefit from in order to realize their selfish objectives (Evans & Wilson, 1992, p.330, as cited in Mearsheimer, 1994, p.13).

These realist perspectives explain why states prioritize their own interests even if it means standing against the expected institutional norms and collective commitments when encountered with core issues such as security. That is why, a Realist approach would be more explanatory than a Liberal Institutional approach since the divergences of these three states are better explained through Realism, with its argument that international organizations do not play a central role when states encounter issues threatening their survival.

1.7. Methodology

This work adopts a qualitative and descriptive research approach while examining the responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It does not aim to arrive at generalizable and statistically driven conclusions. Rather, a nuanced exploration of why these states have responded to the invasion in the way responded is attempted to understand regarding their geopolitical conditions, national identity principles and energy dependence levels.

1.8. Research Design

These three states are chosen deliberately due to their presence on a large portion of the Eastern European Region and geopolitical and strategic positions in the context of their Russian invasion of Ukraine. While there are many other states who are highly expressive in their support for Ukraine, the chosen ones are immediate neighbors of Ukraine who could be directly affected by the war at certain times. Their being immediate neighbors of Ukraine makes them frontline states regarding refugee flows, energy security implications and geopolitics (Kaczmarek et al., 2025, p.199; Sliwa, 2019, p.217). Another reason for choosing these three states is that while they are similar in their history in terms of their post-Soviet statuses and their memberships in

international organizations such as the EU and NATO, they have nevertheless diverged in their responses. This divergence allows for a most similar case analysis as examining the differences across the three factors that are geopolitics, energy dependence and national identity displays how states with similar historical conditions and institutional memberships could pursue different policies for their responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Briefly, the research is structured as a comparative study of these three states that serve as the primary units of analysis through a most similar case analysis. These primary units are selected based on their similar histories, common institutional memberships, their geographic proximity to Ukraine, and because of the fact that they are immediate neighbors of Ukraine which position them as the principle states that experience the immediate effects of the war. The variation between the states' responses to the invasion allows for a comparative investigation of how the aforementioned factors have impacted their responses.

1.9. Sources of Data

This work relies mainly on a diverse set of primary and secondary sources which could be described under four groups; news media reports and scholarly articles as secondary sources and official communications and reports of international organizations as primary sources. First, the news media reports are selected from both international and regional sources. Relying on regional news media has been crucial in order to understand and convey the domestic realities of each state, which may not be published by international news sources. Second, scholarly articles, including think tanks and academic publications were used to provide theoretical grounding and enhance the process of analysis.

Third, reports from international organizations and their offices such as the European Commission, Eurostat and United Nations were used to present the official data and policy responses that were used to analyze each state's position. Lastly, official communications such as press releases, speeches and policy documents published by

governments' and foreign ministries' official websites are utilized to reflect the official stances of each state.

1.10. Analytical Framework

This work employs a comparative framework that aims to identify patterns, similarities and differences between the three states' responses. The comparison is conducted under three key dimensions, that are geopolitics, national identity, and energy dependence. In the geopolitics dimension, each state's geographic positioning and features are analyzed to reflect the geopolitical implications for them. In other words, it is attempted to understand how their locations and geographic features influenced their response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Each state's national identities have been analyzed under different themes that were influential in their response. In light of their national identity inclinations, recurring narratives, historical impact, foreign policy principles, domestic political dynamics and strategic priorities were discussed. In each aspect, Russian manipulation or at least an attempt to manipulation is present. During this process, the focus has been on the official discourse displayed by each state's leaders and foreign ministers. This way, it would be possible to examine why the adopted policies were adopted and how they were framed, instead of only understanding what policies were adopted.

1.11. Limitations

Several methodological challenges have been experienced due to the invasion being an ongoing and highly politicized event, whose upcoming phases could not be guessed accurately. The first challenge was to access the primary documents which are not fully published especially in the period of the ongoing war. Moreover, since the war has been going on for three and a half years now, the amount of scholarly articles is still limited. While the available materials are limited when compared to materials available for less recent cases, the study has not been majorly constrained by this issue. Second, despite major care was given to selecting reliable news media sources,

it was still necessary to ensure the minimization of interference of editorial bias and selective reporting. In order to mitigate this concern, triangulation strategy has been adopted and claims were cross-checked across multiple sources.

1.12. The Russian Invasion Of Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine officially started on February 24, 2022, under the label of “special military operation” term used by the Russian Defence Ministry. The invasion could be evaluated as a representation of a final outcome of the conflictual relations between Russia and Ukraine, and described as an unprovoked act of aggression. It also represents the war that has the most fatal consequences on continental Europe since the end of the World War II. The invasion negatively impacted global security dynamics, economy of mainly food and military infrastructure, demographics, geopolitics and many more aspects. Due to its global implications, the war could not be defined by having a regional status.

Ukraine’s path of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 could be considered the starting point of the conflictual relations between Russia and Ukraine. In the aftermath of the Ukrainian independence, Russia, the primary successor state of the Soviet Union, has not hidden its view that Ukraine is a part of its sphere of influence. Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, made it clear that he believes that Ukrainian and Russian people are “one people, a single whole” (“President of Russia”, 2021). This phrase and its variations with similar meanings have been used by Putin on many other occasions for a long period. He has even taken further steps by arguing that Ukraine is an “artificial state” that was formed during the Soviet period and Ukrainian territory did not historically belonged to today’s Ukraine (Vock, 2024).

In the three and a half year course of the war, the invasion has seen fluctuations in territorial gain and attack-defense dynamics. Before the invasion, Russia was only controlling Crimea and certain parts of Donbas, and extended to regions such as Kharkiv, Mariupol and Kyiv during the initial phases of the invasion in 2022. However, these early gains were not sustainable as Ukrainian counteroffensives were

successful in pushing Russian forces from the northern and northeastern parts of Ukraine, including Kyiv and Kharkiv. As of 2025, Russia is controlling parts of Donetsk and Luhansk cities in the Donbas region, most parts of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, and is advancing in Pokrovsk.

1.12.1. Events with Global Implications

The nature of Russia's invasion of Ukraine could be defined with its global-scale impact, despite seemingly being regional from a distance at first. However, there have been many instances where the war has displayed itself in the foreign policy orientations of states, EU-level policy-making, concerns for global food security, nuclear risks and distinct military strategies.

First, four months after the war broke out, the EU took an important step by granting EU candidate status to Ukraine. Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, announced this by stating that “There can be no better sign of hope for the citizens of Ukraine (Moldova and Georgia) in these troubled times (European Commission, 2022a). While this seems to be a major decision that showed a sense of strategic solidarity, it remained symbolic. Ukraine had been lobbying for a more accelerated process with the EU, and becoming a candidate state meant the support for Ukraine's independence and their belief in Ukraine's resilience in defending itself. In addition, it was a message to Russia that its aggression did not yield the expected outcome of Ukraine being under total control, but instead it became even closer with the European states as it was pushed to the Western sphere. Despite being a rather symbolic act due to full accession requiring more reforms regarding the rule of law and anti-corruption measures, this status allowed Ukraine to have access to technical support and deeper cooperation.

Second, the Black Sea Grain Initiative could be described as an output of diplomacy in a period of a potential global food crisis. The initiative was brokered by Türkiye and the UN and was aimed to relieve the food market which was blocked by Russia's aggression by allowing Ukrainian wheat, maize and sunflower oil. A Joint Coordination Centre was established in Istanbul to monitor the vessels carrying agricultural

products. This process contributed to the stabilization of global food prices by allowing Ukrainian products to be exported, which benefited its own economy as well as the global market. Despite being successful while it lasted, Russia withdrew from the security guarantees for the vessels carrying grain. António Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN commented on the withdrawal by indicating that participating in such agreements is “a choice” (“UN chief regrets”, 2023). Nevertheless, the initiative set an example of how multilateral diplomacy could yield positive results at a time of war, especially under a regional actor’s leadership and the involvement of a multinational organization.

Another point of crisis during the course of the war was a global alarm for nuclear disaster. Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, located in southeastern part of Ukraine, was repeatedly shelled by Russian forces, which created widespread concern for the safety of the power plant. It was indicated by the UN that this attack marked the first time that a military conflict spread to a nuclear power facility (Siemaszko, 2022). While the concern was major, it was stated by a nuclear safety expert, Attila Aszódi (2022), that the risk was not at the scale of what happened in Chernobyl but ensuring the safety of the plant was still crucial. The attack on the power plant disrupted the regular functioning of the reactors and damaged power lines which led to several emergency shutdowns. International Atomic Energy Agency called for the demilitarization of the plant and established a permanent monitoring mission, whose success was limited due to Russian forces’ interference. In addition, the Director General of IAEA visited the plant many times, observing the damage.

Nine months after the start of the invasion, a missile struck the village of Przewodów in eastern Poland. This incident where two Polish civilians were killed was the first time that an attack, even though indirect, happened on NATO territory. Initially, it was speculated that the missile had been launched by Russia as Russian forces were targeting Ukrainian infrastructure. However, after an investigation conducted with the cooperation of Poland, NATO and the US, it was determined that the incident was caused by Ukraine as Ukrainian defense was aiming to avert the Russian missiles. This incident displayed that such accidents could impact the neighboring countries by imposing risks for the civilians living close to the Ukrainian border.

1.12.2. European Union's Response

The European Union's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine consisted of several areas such as political condemnation, targeted sanctions, military and humanitarian aid. EU unity in the initial phase of the invasion is often defined as unprecedented. The invasion was framed as an unprovoked aggression and a violation of international law, as well as European security norms. However, the period since the outbreak of the war displays that the EU failed to be a completely united union due to the diverging response of Hungary.

1.12.2.1. Political Condemnation

In the initial response to the invasion, the EU expressed its condemnation for the Russian aggression and described the war as a violation of international law. They underlined the violations of the United Nations Charter and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Statements under the coordination of The European Council, the European Commission, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy often expressed solidarity with Ukraine and demands for Russia to withdraw from Ukraine immediately. This initial response became the basis of a long-acting stance against Russia and the unity in the union.

The first objective was to isolate Russia in the international scene. The EU mechanisms supported the UN General Assembly resolutions, and the suspension of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council ("UN General Assembly votes", 2022). The Union's stance was made clear once more with Ambassador Olaf Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, stating that "The rare decision this Assembly has taken today sends a strong signal of accountability and hopefully will help preventing and discouraging more violations of human rights" "UN General Assembly", 2022).

One of the most important steps taken by the EU in support of Ukraine was the formal granting of candidate status to Ukraine, as early as June 2022. This way, the EU seemed to have recognized the European leaning of Ukraine and indicated that the

necessary steps are being taken in certain areas, which provides the ground for granting candidacy (European Commission, 2022b).

1.12.2.2. Sanctions Packages

During the course of the war, the EU has adopted a series of sanctions that specifically target weakening Russia's ability to finance the war, as it was indicated that "Our sanctions have a clear objective - to weaken Russia's economy and its ability to pursue its illegal aggression against Ukraine" by Maria Luís Albuquerque, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union (European Commission, 2024).

Eighteen packages of sanctions have been implemented between February 2022 and July 2025, and these sanctions targeted asset freezes, travel bans, political elites, Russia's allies and trade restrictions. The financial and economic restrictions aimed to be imposed on individuals and entities starting with Vladimir Putin himself and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, as well as certain oligarchs and propagandists. As of April 2025, approximately 2,400 individuals and entities have been sanctioned by the EU (European Commission, 2025). In addition, major Russian banks have been removed from SWIFT and other bans have been introduced to investment opportunities and crypto asset transfers. Currently, sanctions cover 70% of banking sector assets of Russia (European Commission, 2025a).

Import bans have been introduced for coal, crude oil and petroleum products, which have been extended over time as member states found new alternatives for energy. Export restrictions consisted of imposing strict control over civilian goods that could serve military purposes, electronics parts, aircraft parts, machine tools and drone-related technologies. Moreover, certain entities from China, North Korea and Belarus were added to the sanctions packages due to them supplying Russia with drones and ammunition to Russia. Finally, visa measures have been adopted by the EU through the suspension of the Visa Facilitation Agreement with Russia, which led to Russian citizens facing longer, costlier and harder visa processes.

1.12.2.3. Military and Humanitarian Assistance

The EU and EU member states have provided 59.6 billion euros worth of military support for Ukraine, with 6.1 billion euros under the European Peace Facility (EPF) to deliver the military equipment, and trained more than 78,000 Ukrainian soldiers (European Commission, 2025b). It is the primary mechanism used by the EU to finance the military assistance operations for Ukraine. Through the EPF, both lethal and non-lethal equipment have been provided. The aid provided to Ukraine was the first time the EU participated in the financing of arms deliveries to a non-member country under attack.

Defense capabilities were improved through EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), which was launched in November 2022 as a mission whose goal is to train Ukrainian Armed Forces. Its training processes are still underway in 2025, with 75,000 troops aimed to have been trained by the end of winter of 2025 as announced in January 2025 (European External Action Service, 2025).

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism launched its largest humanitarian aid operation to provide aid to Ukraine, and emergency logistics hubs have been established in Poland, Romania and Slovakia (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2025). Between 2022 and 2025, 1.090 billion euros have been allocated for humanitarian aid by the European Commission with 485 million in 2022, 300 million in 2023, 165 million in 2024, and 140 million in 2025, and 3.6 billion euros have been allocated by the EU and its member states (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2025).

CHAPTER 2

POLAND'S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

2.1. Introduction

Since the outbreak of the war, Poland had been in favor of collective and stronger sanctions against Russia and a staunch ally of Ukraine, advocating for its membership to the Western institutions. Poland took on the role of a pioneer of the EU sanctions both in the union-level and region-level (CEE). On top of standing against Russia and supporting Ukraine, Poland motivated other actors to provide support with a leading position. It condemned the war since the beginning, provided humanitarian and military assistance and supported Ukraine in the diplomatic scene and through its discourse. As a post-Soviet state located close to Ukraine and Russia, it had started its energy diversification process long before the invasion of 2022 to not rely on Russian energy. Its Soviet history, and the resulting Western-oriented identity made Poland adopt certain foreign policy principles which ultimately led it to value its NATO and EU memberships and cooperation with the US. These principles proved important especially in the presence of Russian aggression in the region as Poland has supported Ukraine's integration into the Western institutions. In Poland's case, a limited Russian influence is visible especially in comparison to Hungary's case. It could be argued that less manipulation allowed Poland to act in an environment where it could choose how to respond to the invasion in the way it deemed appropriate.

2.1.1. Condemnation of the War

Poland's abrupt reaction to the start of the invasion stems from its historical memory with Russia and long-lasting desire for Ukraine to join Western institutions. Parallel with this, the message published to condemn Russia by Poland's President (former),

Andrzej Duda, signaled themes such as historical memory, call for unity, solidarity with Ukraine, importance of Western values, security readiness, NATO commitment and humanitarian support. Duda emphasized Ukraine's role in standing against Russia to protect all that is Western and Poland's supporting role:

“Our neighbours: Ukrainians are taking today the most trying test where their lives are hanging in the balance. The test whose stake in their state's independence. They not only defend their freedom but the freedom of us all. In this respect, they can count on full support from Poland.” (The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland, 2022a).

From the earliest days of the invasion, the Polish side underlined that the war is a violation of international law. Duda, in a visit to Kyiv less than two months after the outbreak of the war, stated that “This is not war, this is terrorism” to condemn Russia's aggression (“Visiting Kyiv”, 2022). Recently, Poland's foreign minister Radosław Sikorski criticized Russia by asking “Don't you have enough land?” in the European Parliament (“Polish foreign minister denounces Russian aggression”, 2025). Since 2022, it has been common for Polish diplomats to utilize international platforms like the EU and UN to condemn Russia.

2.1.2. Humanitarian aid

Since February 24, 2022, Poland has shown great commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees coming from Ukraine. Polish people viewed the Russian war against Ukraine as “also their war” (Kononczuk, 2023, as cited in Sus, 2023). Its comprehensive and immediate humanitarian response demonstrated Poland's solidarity with Ukraine. First, Poland became the primary destination for Ukrainian civilians fleeing the war. Feliksiak and Rogulska (2022) indicates several reasons behind the support, such as Poland's proximity to Ukraine and the presence of a perceived threat (as cited in Szeptycki, 2024, p.57). In the context of the war, the

Polish people are defined as feeling close to Ukrainian people, and also by perceiving the invasion as a threat to Poland. It could be inferred that standing with the Ukrainian people and protecting them would be a civil way to counter Russian aggression. After a relatively short time, millions of refugees had already passed through the border to

Poland, majority of which were women and children. At the end of April, 2022, less than two and a half months since the outbreak of the war, approximately 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees were already staying in Poland (Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, 2022, p.36). Arrivals into Poland saw their highest with approximately 130 thousand people in the early days of March, which could be seen in Figure 2.1. below:

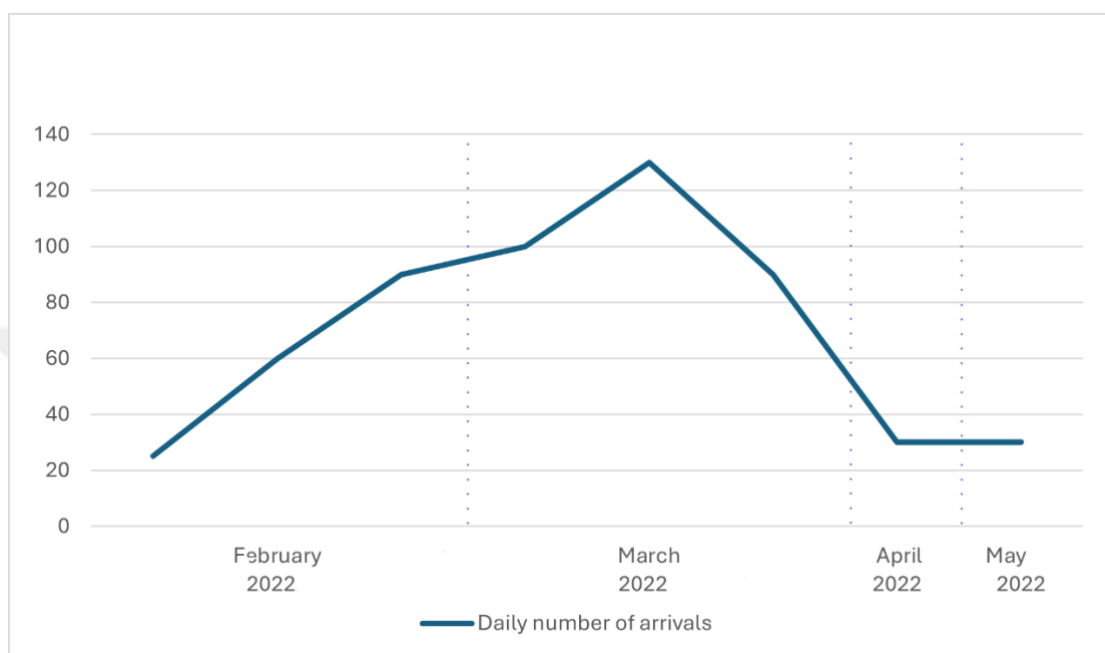


Figure 2.1. Graph showing the border traffic between Ukraine and Poland between February 14 and May 18, 2022. Adapted from from Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, (2022, p.36).

The Polish government offered residence permits on top of immediate shelters, access to services such as employment, healthcare and education. On May 22, 2022, Andrzej Duda emphasized that Ukrainians were courageous, they were their guests and not refugees (“You are Ukrainians”, 2022). In fact, some of the Ukrainian refugees had found shelter in Polish people’s homes temporarily. Ordinary people opening their homes displayed civil society’s role in Poland’s humanitarian efforts. Municipalities, churches and volunteer groups were mobilized to provide assistance in providing food, clothing and advising services for employment.

The Polish government granted special status for Ukrainian citizens in order to simplify their access to public services and employment procedures. The status,

brought by the “Law on assistance to Ukrainian citizens in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of that country” was adopted as early as March 12, 2022.

Poland’s humanitarian response could be defined as significant and effective in providing relief to the Ukrainian refugees. It was not only the Polish government but also the people participating in hosting the refugees with social solidarity. This cooperation positioned Poland as a strong ally of Ukraine and entrenched its status as a refugee-hosting country.

2.1.3. Diplomatic Efforts

From the beginning of the invasion in 2022, Poland strengthened its position as an advocate of Ukraine’s integration into Western institutions, mainly the EU and NATO. It is clearly stated in The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland (2022b) that Poland has been supporting Ukraine’s democratic and pro-European aspirations such as EU membership for a long time and before the attack on Ukraine. It needs to be noted that Andrzej Duda emphasized Ukraine to be given EU candidate status due to the “current security challenges”, only one day before the start of the invasion (“Poland and Lithuania”, 2022).

Poland also took on the responsibility of pushing other Western actors to join tougher sanctions against Russia and provide more aid for Ukraine. For example, about the case of ban on Russian energy, Poland blamed the reluctant Germany for obstructing the implementation of stronger sanctions against Russia, Mateusz Morawiecki, the president of Poland (former), indicating that Germany is “the biggest impediment” blocking stronger sanctions (Connolly & Wintour, 2022). On another instance, Poland criticized Germany for being openly reluctant to permit the transfer of Leopard tanks to Ukraine, and called this “unacceptable”, blaming Germany for sabotaging the actions of countries that are working to help (Tilles, 2023). Poland, positioned as a pioneer in the CEE region, called mainly Germany, France and the Netherlands to implement the sanctions in a stronger and prolonged way, and emphasized the importance of unity by underlining the Russian threat to freedom and independence, on various instances. In addition to calling the Western actors to join the sanctions with

more strength, Duda addressed to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2022 by warning about the wider implications of the war and highlighting the global nature of it, saying that it is not only a regional issue and it will eventually affect other countries too (“Speech by H.E. Mr. Andrzej Duda”, 2022).

Poland’s commitment to integrate Ukraine into Western institutions is visible in statements such as the one calling for an “express path” for Ukraine’s candidate status to be given and Ukraine to be a member of the EU as soon as possible, two days after the start of the invasion (The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland, 2022c). This was realized in June 2022 with Ukraine being granted an official EU candidate status.

The diplomatic commitment and expressions display Poland’s active role in shaping the regional security environment in the CEE region. Poland locates itself as the leading supporter of Ukraine’s inclusion in the Western institutions that are mainly the EU and NATO. Its position as an active actor that calls other states to implement tougher sanctions displays the idea that if Ukraine is not strongly supported, Russian aggression would improve to a level that could tangibly threaten the security of the wider region, that is the CEE region. Therefore, it could be claimed that understanding the context of Poland’s support for Ukraine and its position against Russia require considering its geopolitical position that could be defined through its location as a frontline state on the eastern flank of NATO.

2.1.4. Military Aid

On top of providing humanitarian aid, hosting refugees and advocating for Ukraine in the diplomatic scene, Poland has been a significant actor in strengthening Ukraine’s defense capabilities, thus shaping European security. Poland has consistently ranked the most significant provider of military aid to Ukraine, and it was the first to start supplying Ukraine. In total, military assistance provided to Ukraine by Poland amounts to PLN 15 billion, which equals to more than 4 billion US dollars¹ (The

¹ This amount has been converted to US dollars according to the exchange rate of 3.672 PLN on 24.06.2025.

Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland, 2025). In addition, Poland increased its defense budget from 2.4% to 4%, of its GDP, with the goal of increasing to 5% in 2025 (Kvasha, 2025).

A dominant amount of the military assistance from Poland to Ukraine was heavy ground equipment, such as T-72 tanks, PT-91 Twardy tanks and Leopard 2A4 main battle tanks used in land warfare. These have been vital in protecting defense lines and practicing counteroffensives. Poland also supplied infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers, which improved Ukraine's mobility capabilities. The artillery systems provided were critical for Ukraine to achieve long-range firepower during offensive operations. The amount of Poland's armored aid deliveries is one of the largest in NATO.

Poland shipped significant amounts of light weapons and small arms such as grenades, machine guns, and ammunition such as small arms, tank shells, artillery and mortar rounds, strengthening both defensive and offensive capabilities of Ukraine. On top of these, it supplied several types of drones to improve Ukraine's precision strike capabilities and visual intelligence.

Poland's air defense contribution would represent an essential part of its military aid. It supplied fighter jets, attack helicopters, anti-aircraft systems, known as MANPADS, and self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, which were vital in Ukraine's airspace defense as they reinforced Ukraine's layered air defense system.

On top of weaponry, Poland aimed to improve Ukraine's logistical and communication infrastructure and thus provided satellite terminals, whose maintenance was funded by Poland. These terminals are critical in securing battlefield communications especially under Russian cyber threats. The logistical support has been a key aspect of Poland's military aid as Poland is in close proximity to Ukraine and it is in a strategic position as a suitable transit hub for deliveries of Western military equipment.

Poland hosted more than 25,000 Ukrainian soldiers to train them, 14,500 of which were trained under the EU's EUMAM training mission. These training programs' objective was to build basic soldier capacities and teach how to operate the Western supplied systems. As recent as February 2025, the Joint Analysis Training and

Education Centre (JATEC) was established in Poland after the Washington Summit in 2024, and marked an important step in NATO-Ukraine cooperation under Poland's oversight (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, 2025). The centre will allow Ukraine and NATO to jointly study military and civilian strategies, and Russian tactics.

2.1.5. Ukrainian Grain Dispute

After the breakout of the war, Ukraine's access to its Black Sea ports was limited, and it had to export its grain through alternative routes such as Poland. At first, the goal was to help Ukrainian trade and contribute to the overall global food security. However, it ultimately harmed local farmers in Poland since Ukrainian grain was cheaper and remained in Poland when it was expected to transit through it to reach other markets (Beluhova-Uzunova et al., 2024, p.14). This caused a surplus in the local market leading to lesser income for Polish farmers specifically because of the Ukrainian grain. After farmers' protests, Poland unilaterally banned Ukrainian grain imports along with other agricultural products. Ukrainian leader Zelenskyy commented that this grain dispute was a "political theater", to which Poland's Prime Minister at the time, Morawiecki, responded by underlining his duty to protect Polish people and that they cannot be insulted like this (Ehlinger & Knight, 2023). On another instance, Morawiecki stated that "Everything that is bad for Polish agriculture must either be blocked, replaced or compensated" (The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 2023).

This dispute had several implications regarding the economy, politics and geopolitics. The Polish agricultural sector being negatively affected disrupted the intra-EU solidarity. The Law and Justice Party (PiS) ruling at the time framed the issue as a threat to national interest since it relied on rural votes (Brzeziński, 2023). This dispute is considered a small disruption in the regional unity towards supporting Ukraine and shows the limits of Poland's everlasting support for Ukraine. As of 2025, Poland still implements restrictions on Ukrainian agricultural imports.

Briefly, Poland responded to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on various fronts. It condemned the war right from its beginning and provided Ukraine with humanitarian

and military support. It also advocated for Poland's integration into the EU and NATO on various instances. Poland's diplomatic support for Ukraine along with its pioneering position in the CEE region displays its vital role in the regional response to the Russian aggression. This response with a wide range of areas was due to Poland being largely free from Russian manipulation thanks to its increased awareness of a potential Russian threat.

2.2. Geopolitics

The natural structures and the geographic position of any state requires analysis to interpret its behaviors. Especially the natural structures and conditions may have an impact on a state's not only military but also its economy, agricultural sector and density of population. Poland is a country located in Central Europe. Its neighbors are Germany to the west, Ukraine and Belarus to the east, Czechia and Slovakia to the south and Lithuania to the north. There is also the Kaliningrad Oblast that is a Russian exclave to the north along with the Baltic Sea.

Poland's geographical position and topographical structures require attention while investigating its everlasting security concerns. Its location, primarily in Eastern Europe, but also its proximity to Central Europe as well as Russia positions it as geopolitically vital (Pitney, 2023). This proximity to both sides demands attention by the European countries for security issues. This bridging position between the East and the West has proven crucial right after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. For instance, Poland has exercised the duty of being a logistical hub so that both humanitarian and military aid would be sent to Ukraine through its territory. However, this strategic location has left Poland without a buffer zone, which used to be Ukraine, separating Poland and Russia.

The country's natural structures could be examined under two topographic aspects that are the Carpathian mountains, and its location on the North European Plain, as could be seen in Figure 2.2. below. The Carpathian mountains are separated into parts that are Sudeten at the border with Czechia and Beskid at the border of Slovakia. These mountains play an important role in shaping the military strategy of Poland (Poland's

Geographic Challenge, 2015, as cited in Pitney, 2023). The Sudeten Mountains are around 800 meters high and have functioned as “a highly impassable state border” especially after the World War II until the fall of the Soviet Union (Furmankiewicz et al., 2019). The Sudeten provides at least a moderate natural barrier to the threats from the southwest of the country. However, it does not prevent military movement completely, reducing small-scale regional vulnerability instead.



Figure 2.2. Geological landscape areas of Poland. Retrieved from Zieliński et al. (2021).

The Carpathians, on the other hand, on the southeastern part of Poland, was an ethnic borderland of Polish-Ukrainian people until the World War II (Affek et al., 2021). These mountains stretch as an arc across Central and Eastern Europe. The northern part presents an edge that forms the southeastern border with Ukraine and Slovakia, including the Tatra Mountains that are the highest in Poland. Forming a strong natural

barrier, the Carpathians are the most formidable barrier among the three mountain ranges. The steep valleys and high peaks resulting in difficulty of transportation carry the potential of creating deterrence. Historically, these have functioned as natural shields, complicating the invasion with its rugged terrain and limited capacity for movement.

Lastly, the Beskid mountains stretch from eastern Czechia to the north of Slovakia and Poland's south. This series of mountains are characterized by hills and forests, but they are lower when compared to the other mountains in the Carpathian system. It does not offer the ability to move easily but there are certain parts like the Dukla Pass that allow passage, as happened in the World War II's Eastern Front.

Apart from these mountains that offer only moderate protection, Poland does not have the necessary protection from invasions through natural boundaries and its location on the North European Plain makes it vulnerable to military invasions in general (Dumont & Verluise, 2016; Poland's Geographic Challenge, 2015, as cited in Pitney, 2023, p.10). The Plain stretches from Germany through Poland to Belarus and Russia, and does not offer many natural barriers like mountains or rivers which could hinder military movements. This vulnerability could be considered a contributing factor to Poland's reliance on alliances with NATO and the US, and its maintenance of a well-developed military.

Poland's geographic conditions and its location are one of the factors that drive Poland to play such a central and assertive role in responding to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Not only it is located on the eastern flank of NATO, but also shares borders with the Russian exclave Kaliningrad directly, and Belarus, who has presented itself as a close ally of Russia since the beginning of the invasion, and Ukraine. Due to this encirclement by such actors, Poland perceives itself as the one who would have to face the Russian aggression as a frontline state. Therefore, Poland's strategy during this conflict is partly based on threat awareness and compensation of geographic vulnerability. The border with the Kaliningrad exclave requires special attention and could be considered a factor that has driven Poland's defense and security policy since military development in Kaliningrad has seen an increase after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Tulun, 2017, as cited in Pitney, 2023, p.11). It could be argued that

Poland has placed its geopolitical condition at the core of understanding European security and the definition of its role in it.

2.3. Energy Dependence

European countries have become more motivated to reduce their energy dependence on Russia as it is not a reliable energy supplier, particularly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the EU sanctions on Russia (Erbil & Tanrısever, 2024, p.68). Poland is one of these European state who had the motivation to reduce dependency on Russia for a long time. Unlike the case of Hungary, Poland's energy policy seems to have been based on the absence of effective Russian manipulation since the main objective was to reduce dependency on Russia. The remaining parts of this section explore the realization of this objective.

Historically, Poland's energy need has been characterized by its dependence on Russian energy. In the background of this dependence, historical, economic and geographical factors seem to be present, making Russia the primary supplier. However, as this heavy dependence had increased to the level of creating a strategic vulnerability, Poland started to pursue energy diversification efforts before the breakout of the war in 2022. This strategic vulnerability displayed itself in the geopolitical tensions and the recurrent disruptions of supply after February 2022. The first instance was Gazprom's announcement of halting natural gas flow to Poland and Bulgaria with the excuse that they did not accept to pay in Russian rubles, which could stabilize the currency if they did, and this halting of deliveries was perceived as Russia's "weaponization" of the gas supplies, which further motivated the diversification efforts (Hess, 2025).

Even though Poland had been working to diversify its energy supply, the breakout of the war was a turning point that accelerated these efforts to diversify and reduce dependence on Russian energy. There have been diversification actions such as the Baltic Pipe Project that transmits gas from Norway, capacity expansion of the Świnoujście LNG terminal, ban on Russian coal and shift to domestic coal as well as importing Colombian and Australian coal, and diversification of crude oil suppliers.

Overall, Poland's heavy reliance on Russian energy has steadily decreased after the breakout of the war. For instance, 2021 data shows that over 50% of the natural gas used in Poland was imported from Russia, and as of March 2022, 20% of the natural gas Poland used was imported from Russia, and what is more significant is that by 2023, Poland ceased all natural gas imports from Russia (Maj, 2023, p.16). In order to accurately understand Poland's energy policy and diversification efforts, the new initiatives for diversification and its energy needs in different supply materials, that are natural gas, crude oil and coal need to be analyzed.

2.3.1. Natural Gas

The main pipeline responsible for the flow of Russian gas to Poland was the Yamal Pipeline, which also transported gas to Germany, through Belarus. This pipeline shut down at the end of 2022, but even before Russia's unilateral halting of the gas supply, Poland had already been in the process of taking tangible steps to end its reliance on Russian gas through diversification of its energy sources. In other words, even if Russia did not halt the gas flow through the Yamal pipeline, the contract between Poland and Russian state-controlled energy company Gazprom was going to expire at the end of 2022. Previously, as Poland had announced that it would not renew it, the Russian cutoff did not affect Poland in a negative way since it already had been strategically planning (Wilczek, 2022).

Similarly, while Poland was already in the process of conducting energy diversification policy talks, the Russian gas cut off to Ukraine in 2014 impacted the Central and Eastern European region, and the high gas prices in 2020 together with the costs of the pandemic harmed particularly Poland. It is clear that Poland's diversification efforts have become more intense over time due to Russia's aggression in various regions like Crimea and Ukraine. In addition, these efforts have shown that strong and reliable alternatives are necessary, which puts initiatives like the Baltic Pipeline Project and Świnoujście LNG Terminal in even more critical positions.

2.3.2. Baltic Pipeline Project

Baltic Pipeline Project is not only important for Poland's long-term energy policy, but also for the future of the wider Central and Eastern European region. It is considered a strategic turning point in Poland's energy policy for the long-term to ensure its energy security. What makes this project even more significant is the prolonged influence of its Soviet history. Poland was dependent on the infrastructure inherited from its Soviet era, which made it dependent on Russia for a long time. However, Poland has been seeking ways to diversify its energy sources to decrease its vulnerability in energy security. Thanks to this new pipeline project, Poland has materialized these efforts.

Baltic Pipeline Project is a strategic infrastructure project that connects Poland to Norwegian gas, allowing Poland to diversify its energy sources and reduce dependence on Russian gas. Its objective is to position Poland as a regional gas hub, who could store, import and even re-export gas to its neighbors such as Czechia, Ukraine, Lithuania and Slovakia in the Central and Eastern European region (Voytyuk, 2022, p.98). Russia had been a monopoly in this region for decades through Gazprom. It could control the terms and prices for gas, which left the states in this region at the mercy of these terms and prices. The energy supply was utilized by Russia as a tool for political pressure. This new project is considered as a response to this hierarchic dynamic, and it redefines Poland's position as a regional hub, instead of a mere consumer that does not have a say in the circumstances.

While this is significant for Poland regarding its ability to meet the domestic demand, it is also significant for the wider CEE region as Poland would be able to function as a regional gas hub, together with its expansion of the LNG infrastructure. This could be a factor resulting in Poland to strengthen its potential position as a geopolitical leader in the region.

The Baltic Pipeline is also parallel with the wider energy transition goals of Poland, which focus on cleaner energy sources and reducing coal consumption. The project is related to the elimination of coal mining over time, which defines the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040, and it aims to eliminate coal consumption first in individual heating in the cities by 2030 and replacing the source with electricity (Kochanek, 2021,

p.4). However, the possibility of cleaner energy sources is not the only benefit of it. This project allows Poland to decrease its dependency on Russian coal, too. As Poland mobilized for more alternatives such as access to Norwegian gas, the possibility to replace coal, and specifically Russian coal, became the reality. Ultimately, Poland banned coal imports from Russia in 2022 and replaced it with supplies from Indonesia, South Africa, the United States and Colombia, while it had imported more than 8 million tonnes of Russian coal in 2021 (“Poland to subsidise coal”, 2022). However, it needs to be noted that Norwegian gas may not be sufficient in the long-term as the gas production in Norway seems to be declining by 2030 under all forecasts (Söderbergh et al., 2009, p.5053).

In brief, the Baltic Pipeline Project serves Poland’s interests by contributing to securing its energy independence, positioning it as a regional energy hub, supporting its transition to a coal-free energy policy and reducing Russia’s political pressure in the CEE region.

2.3.3. Swinoujście LNG Terminal

As mentioned before, Poland has been dependent on natural gas imports from Russia for an extended period of time, due to its insufficient gas reserves. By the early 2010s, energy dependence of Poland had become clearly visible as the 9 billion m³ out of 11.25 billion m³ of gas used in Poland was coming from Russia (Kamola-Cieślik, 2015, p.279). This amount is equal to approximately 80% of the imported gas to originate from one state. According to Kamola-Cieślik (2015, p.270), this amount exceeds the accepted threshold, that is 30%, for a state to define itself as possessing energy security. In other words, gas security would be obtained when a state limits its amount of import from a single exporter to under 30%. When compared with the reality in 2012, 80% from a single exporter would lay the ground for Russia to use its supply as a tool for political pressure. In order to solve this problem, Poland has located Świnoujście LNG terminal as the center of its energy diversification strategy.

This terminal, located on the Baltic Sea, began its operations in 2015. It allowed Poland to improve its capacity for importing liquefied natural gas from crucial

exporters like the United States and Qatar. By opening the way for accessing a variety of sources in the international market for natural gas, Poland's energy market competition was expected to improve (European Commission, 2017). With this new infrastructure, Poland would be able to bypass Russian pipelines and widen its access to international markets. As a result, the level of Russia's strategic leverage on Poland would be reduced.

Another benefit of this LNG terminal, on top of providing diversity of supply, is that it allowed Poland to have bargaining power during the pricing negotiations with Russia. Kamola-Cieřlik (2015, p.278) argues that expanding the capacity for LNG would lower the cost of Russian gas sold to Poland. Before this, Poland's sphere of movement was limited due to the amount of gas imported from Russia. However, with this new infrastructure, Poland gained the opportunity to secure better pricing as Russia was not the monopoly anymore. In early 2025, Poland announced that it had increased the capacity of the terminal by 33.87%, from 6.2 billion cubic meters to 8.3 bcm, improving the level of energy independence (Kovács, 2025).

It could be argued that the Świnoujście LNG terminal has been valuable for Poland's energy security. It directly works to resolve the dependence on Russian gas, providing alternative sources of energy. The level of diversification with this terminal positively impacted Poland's efforts to reduce energy vulnerability, giving Poland negotiating power for gas prices and improve its geopolitical endurance.

2.3.4. Oil

For a long period of time Poland's oil imports came from Russia, which created an energy security risk since over-reliance on a single supplier would make Poland vulnerable to Russia's potential unexpected actions. On top of this, Poland does not have large domestic oil deposits to be sufficient for its high consumption, which suggests that it is necessary to import oil. That is why, an effective oil import strategy for energy dependence became a critical issue.

Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia supplied the majority of Poland's crude oil, with an amount of over 60%, as could be seen in Figure 2.3.

(Zaniewicz, 2023). Around 2020, because of limited oil supply diversification, the supply risk factor reached a high level of 2.3, which would not be accepted within the normal range since it needs to be under 0.9 (Kamyk et al., 2020, p.6). Poland had been fully dependent on Russian oil in 2014 (Jakóbiak 2024), which it managed to drop to 65% in 2020 (Olszewski, 2022), and to 10% in early 2023 that led to a zero import of Russian oil (Jakóbiak 2024). However, this was Russia's decision as they argued that Poland failed to pay, but the de facto reason was responding to the sanctions regime towards Russia (Zaniewicz, 2023).

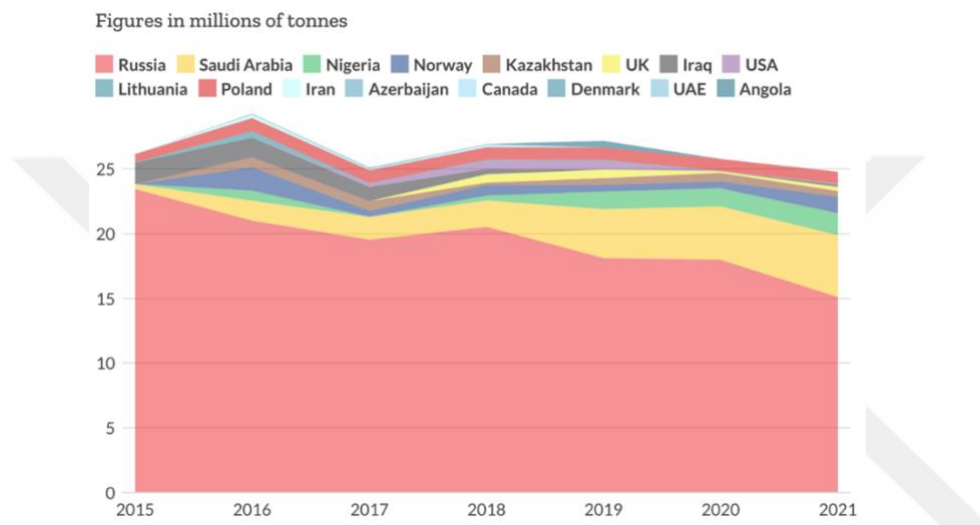


Figure 2.3. Crude oil processed in Polish refineries by country of origin (2015–2021). Retrieved from POPiHN, as cited in Forum Energii (2023).

The invasion caused an alteration in Poland's approach to oil imports. It started to seek other sources such as Saudi Arabia, and the United States for oil supply diversification. Kamyk et al. (2020, p.7) argues that crude oil is necessary for Poland's security, and when the role of crude oil in national defense and security is considered, the vitality of this late diversification becomes more salient. These diversification efforts present an objective of securing its energy supply in order to achieve political and national security, especially in the context of Russian aggression.

2.3.5. Coal

Poland could be labeled as a heavy consumer of coal and it was highly dependent on Russian coal prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the coal demand in Poland is at a significant level, Poland being Europe's largest coal producer does not save it from being dependent on Russian coal. The outbreak of the war in 2022 caused national security concerns and led Poland to decide to reduce and eventually eliminate this dependence. In 2020, Poland imported 12.3 million tonnes of coal, 8 million tonnes of which was imported from Russia ("Over 60% Polish coal imports", 2020). On top of being a coal producer, between 2018 and 2021, Poland received 22 to 29% of the total coal exported by Russia to all the EU member states, which positions Poland as an important market (Stala-Szlugaj & Grudziński, 2022, p.46). The reason why Russian coal was necessary was because Poland's local mining sector's production capacity was not sufficient in providing the necessary quality and competitive prices for the market. In that case, Russian coal contributed to the coal sector in Poland since it was cheaper and readily available.

However, as mentioned before, Russia uses energy exports as tools for geopolitical pressure (Baran, 2007, p.136), which is highlighted in the context of the invasion of Ukraine. Seeing the dangers of this dependency in a tangible sense, Poland seems to have recognized the necessity of diversifying the incoming coal imports. Poland introduced a ban on the Russian coal as fast as less than two months after the breakout of the war, even before the EU sanctions were in effect. It was the fifth EU sanctions package that banned the import of coal from Russia in August, 2022.

This decision came with its challenges. Immediately after the ban, Poland faced price increases and shortages in the household heating sector, which specifically relied on coal imported from Russia. In order to relieve this challenge, Poland introduced five alternative sources such as Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, the United States and Colombia, which brought issues such as higher prices, logistical difficulties, and quality and content differences (Stala-Szlugaj & Grudziński, 2022, p.36). Cernoch et al. (2024, p.5) state that while coal was expected to be a stabilizing aspect in Poland's energy sector, the Russian coal embargo only revealed the scope of the heavy dependence, displaying Poland's inadequacy in meeting the demand. Poland's

historical dependence on coal imports from Russia presented geopolitical and security risks. Despite the negative implications of the decision to ban Russian coal, Poland was able to diversify its sources with the introduction of alternative exporters.

In conclusion, it could be understood that Poland was heavily dependent on Russian supplies, that are natural gas, oil and coal. Even though lowering high levels of dependency was a challenge for Poland, it has been successful in eliminating a significant portion of its reliance on Russian supplies. Through the introduction and capacity increasing of new infrastructure projects like the Baltic Pipeline Project and Świnoujście LNG terminal, and alternative exporters, Poland created alternative routes to diversify its energy sources. These efforts carry national security concerns within themselves. Russia holding the power of supplying energy and possessing the potential of using it as a tool for political pressure would have negative implications especially during the ongoing war. Poland's objective through diversification was to ensure an absence of external manipulation by Russia.

2.4. National Identity

While investigating Poland's identity and its role in its response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is crucial to understand its main foreign policy principles since its independence from the USSR in 1989 (Klatt, 2011, p.62). After the invasion that started in February 2022, Poland has displayed itself as an actor that is committed to the EU solidarity, especially in the participation to the sanctions regime. It has joined the implementation of EU's common foreign and security policy towards Ukraine and Russia, and positioned itself a forerunner of European security and a defender of NATO's eastern flank. However, this pro-EU stance of Poland has not always been static. Especially 2015 onwards, a more national-conservative and Euroskeptic agenda that is defined by less emphasis on core EU values such as democracy and the rule of law was employed by PiS (Law and Justice Party) (Folvarčný & Kopeček, 2020, p.173). However, in the 2023 elections, a pro-EU leader Donald Tusk has been elected.

In order to clearly comprehend which elements of Polish foreign policy have been influential in shaping Poland's response, Chappel's list of key Polish foreign policy

principles that are actively reflected in Poland's diplomatic actions and its identity are referred to:

Atlanticism, skeptical multilateralism (except the EU and NATO), pro-EU, a focus on regional security and territorial defense, pro-active regarding the use of force, nothing about us without us, being a reliable ally, acting as a bridge between East and West and supporting countries' self-determination (Chappell, 2021, p. 235, as cited in Dyduch & Gora, 2024, p.303).

2.4.1. Atlanticism

The first and foremost principle of Poland's foreign policy principle, especially regarding security, is Atlanticism. Poland has underwent economic and political transformations after its independence and had a pro-American position, that resulted in it to be considered a "potential regional leader" and a potential ally for the US as "America's new model ally" (Dunn, 2022, p.63, as cited in Jureńczyk, 2022, p.54). Poland strongly emphasizes its role in the transatlantic community and its intra-organization and bilateral relationship with the US in NATO. Poland considers the US as its most important ally in the region (Sharp, 1992). Poland's national security is heavily dependent on NATO, due to its ability to create Russian deterrence that requires US military involvement on its territory (Gajauskaitė, 2013, p.64.). This orientation of Poland could be understood in a historical security context, as an attempt to protect itself from Russian influence and interference as a post-Soviet country. In the post-communist period, it is clear that Poland's goal was to not be influenced or manipulated by Russia. In addition, the geopolitical location of Poland made Russia the dominant security problem that threatens its existence, and as a result, Poland has made deterrence and prevention of being invaded a main aspect of its strategic culture (Doeser, 2018, as cited in Komarnytsky, 2023, p.311). This fear is also due to Russia's geographic proximity despite the presence of a former buffer zone, that was Ukraine.

The Cold War that ended with the collapse of the USSR has broken the bipolar security dynamic, positioning the US as a potential and stronger ally and Russia as a weaker state at the time. Therefore, Poland has employed a pro-US stance and strived to be a part of Western institutions like the EU and NATO. It perceives NATO and especially

the military presence of the US in Europe as the most reliable guarantors of its national security. Following 1989 when the end of the communist rule began, the Polish political elite agreed on the idea that European and Euro-Atlantic integration are crucial for protection from the Russian threat, after having security guarantees and the implementation of socio-economic policies for development (Komarnytskyy, 2023, p.311). This perception has made Poland support NATO enlargement, and the US to such an extent that Poland supported US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan despite negative reactions from other EU member states. Currently, Poland promotes strong transatlantic relations within the EU, and is considered to be acting as a bridge between the EU member states and the US.

2.4.2. Skepticism of Multilateral Organizations

In general, Poland is considered as skeptical of multilateralism and approaches global multilateral structures like the UN with caution (Chappel, 2012, as cited in Dyduch & Gora, 2023). This is especially the case where there is non-Western and Russian influence present, such as the UN Security Council. The EU is region-specific and narrower in scope, and NATO, which has a more cohesive membership is, again, narrower in scope. That is why Poland does not extend this skepticism to these organizations, which it views as vital for its Western identity, prosperity, and national security (Dyduch & Gora, 2023, p.303). Especially within the EU and NATO, Poland presents itself as a dependable and reliable ally. In contrast, it could be said that Poland does not value its presence in the UN as it could dilute its security concerns, as much as it values other Western alliances.

2.4.3. A Pro-EU Stance

Poland's pro-EU stance requires a close overlook of its history in the USSR and the aftermath of its fall. The collapse of communism resulted in political, economic and social implications in the Eastern European region. In Poland, this was more than a starting point of a revolution in a domestic sense since it was the beginning of a reorientation towards the West. First, with an attempt to reject Soviet-style

communism, Poland focused on democratic reforms and Western political values, such as liberal democracy, rule of law and human rights. From 1989 onwards, Poland pursued policies aiming to distance itself from its Soviet past and align with European and Transatlantic allies.

Second, Poland transitioned to a market-based economy from a central one with the objective of economic growth and modernization based on the principle of “return to Europe”, that aligned with the economic models in Western Europe (Lipton et al., 1990, p.78). From the beginning, Polish leaders were clear in that their objective is to bring Poland back to Europe and to the West in order to make Poland a European and Western country (Klatt, 2011, p.9). With EU membership becoming the ultimate goal, Poland joined the union 15 years later, in 2004, making its political and economic integration to the West official. Third, Poland’s historical experience as a state “squeezed between a Russian rock and a German hard place” led to a deep reliance on the US with a belief that the US could be a trustworthy power (Sharp, 1992, p.64). In other words, it could be stated that historically a country that is sandwiched between Russia and Germany, Poland felt the necessity to integrate into the transatlantic security framework for its sovereignty and security.

10 years after its first non-communist government, and 5 years before its EU accession, Poland joined NATO and achieved security guarantees, whose value is highlighted especially in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine today. Briefly, the vision was to attain a secure position within the West, with reforms and memberships. This strategic decision made in the beginning influences today’s Poland’s identity and directs its response to Russia. Despite certain issues between the former government of Poland and the EU, Poland views its membership central to its identity and sees the potential to become a regional leader in Eastern Europe by shaping Europe’s security agenda. As these three principles mentioned so far are considered together and given the US’s sui generis influence in NATO, it is visible that valuing EU and NATO memberships, being an Atlanticist and pro-EU have been valuable in supporting Ukraine’s cause.

2.4.4. Regional Security and Territorial Defense

Another element of Polish foreign policy that displays Poland's identity is its focus on regional security and territorial defense. Considering its history of invasions, especially by Germany and Russia, the emphasis on territorial defense is highly reasonable. Due to the extended border with Ukraine and Belarus, Poland puts significant emphasis on this and is more wary than its counterparts in the EU (Konieczny, 2022, as cited in Pitney, 2023, p.12). Poland presents itself as a pioneering ally in the Eastern European region and contributes to the alliance by enhancing its military modernization process and increasing its defense spending, as well as calling other NATO members to do the same (Dyduch & Gora, 2023, p.301). This focus is also reflected in the Bucharest Nine, the Visegrad Group and Three Seas Initiative, which aim to improve security cooperation in the region. Its presence in various regional initiatives shows Poland's goal to be involved in decisions affecting its security and the regional security. In other words, Poland seeks seats at tables that concern Eastern Europe. This is a condition specific for Poland due to its former government's claim for being undervalued in Europe, as the government of PiS presented the slogan "Rising from our knees" as a reflection of their belief that on the international scene, European powers attempt to suppress Poland (Balcer and Blusz, 2015; Balcer et al., 2016; Cadier and Szulecki, 2022; Sus, 2025, p.9).

Poland's history of invasions and geopolitical location are other factors that lead it to focus on territorial defense. Therefore, it favors the use of force when strategic interests are at stake. It values military capability and readiness as they deter aggression. Lastly, Poland forms an identity on its support for the self-determination of states, which has been clearly visible in its support for Ukraine, not only from the start of the invasion but since Ukraine became an independent state in late 1991. Its support started towards Ukraine's democratization first, and then moved on to supporting the democratic reformers in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 (Petrova, 2014).

In conclusion, it could be argued that Poland's tough response to Russia and its support for Ukraine stems from its priorities, whose base is its national identity. It also signals that Russia's desire to maintain its sphere of influence in post-Soviet states eventually

failed in Poland considering the current government's stance. Poland's Western orientation that became effective with the first non-communist government in 1989 has become stronger through time. This orientation is related to Poland's history of being under invasion and domination, which made it commit to elements like security, sovereignty and self-determination for all states. Its emphasis on the importance of US as an ally stems from its complex history with the USSR and its primary successor Russia. Therefore, Poland turns its face to the West as much as possible.

2.5. Conclusion

The response by Poland to the invasion could be defined with aspects such as identity, geographic strategies and historical experiences. Poland does not consider the Russian aggression as a distant conflict taking place in its own course. Rather, it sees it as a direct threat to its security, which has driven it to be an active supporter of Ukraine. On the other hand, Poland's energy diversification efforts could be understood as a way to reduce Russian influence in the region since Russia could use the energy supply to threaten Poland's energy supply security. That is why, Poland had started its diversification efforts at least ten years ago.

Poland's identity is understood through its foreign policy principles that present a national identity based on the emphasis on territorial sovereignty and solidarity with other nations. The specific emphasis is due to Poland's history of foreign domination and shared history with Russia, which leads Poland to be highly aware of any Russian threat emerging. On top of this, its historical support for Ukraine has been another factor driving it to stand firmly against Russia. Despite certain periods of Euroskepticism, Poland has not been under Russian manipulation, allowing it to act in freedom. Being largely free from Russian influence, it was able to act decisively in support of Ukraine.

CHAPTER 3

ROMANIA'S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

3.1. Introduction

Romania's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine needs a multi-faceted analysis covering various factors such as its communist and post-communist history, strategic location in Black Sea, self-identification and foreign policy principles. Evaluation of its response to the invasion clarify that Romania had adopted a cautious stance while supporting Ukraine and standing against Russia. Its communist and post-communist history seems to have pushed it to be highly alert to Russian threats (Tismaneanu, 2008, p.167). Therefore, it acted with the intention to not directly confront Russia. However, Romania still supported Ukraine through its clear discourse and humanitarian support, as well as through limited military support. In this process, Romania's relatively lower energy dependence on Russia has been convenient since this lower dependency functioned as a protector from the Russian strategy to utilize its energy supply as political leverage. However, it could not be claimed that consideration of Russia has been fully absent in Romania's response. Despite being limited when compared to Hungary, Russian influence did shape Romania's response.

3.1.2. Condemnation of the War

Romania's initial response to the invasion was its condemnation of Russia because of its aggression in Ukraine, which could be defined by its emphasis on and commitment to international law. The rhetoric of the condemnation is mostly based on the former President of Romania Klaus Iohannis's statements regarding Ukraine's right to self-determination and the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine. The official stance of the country stated by the President was that Ukraine should be the one to determine the

terms of any potential peace negotiations and these negotiations could only start in the aftermath of Russian forces withdrawing from Ukraine's territory. This position is evident in Iohannis's statement of "Ukraine will decide on its own when, what and how it will negotiate", in October 2022 (Całus, 2022). On the first day of the Russian invasion on February 24, 2022, in an extraordinary meeting of the UN Security Council, Iohannis claimed that Russia had chosen an unquestionably unlawful path by leading "mass military violence against an independent and sovereign state" (Gerasymchuk, 2022).

After an instance of Russia violating Romanian airspace in September 2024, Romanian Ministry of Defense underlined the importance of the international law and defined Russian aggression as "unjustified and in serious contradiction with the norms of international law" ("NATO member Romania says", 2024). A documentary called "Russia. Kremlin. Putin. 25 years" has been broadcasted in Russian state television Rossiya-1, in which Russian President Vladimir Putin accuses Romania, as well as Bulgaria, for contributing to the factors leading to the current war because they allowed US bases in their territories ("Putin accuses Romania", 2025). Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to this accusation by rejecting them and highlighting that Romania's NATO accession was no more than a sovereign decision that does not pose a threat, and Russia is the only threat in the region because of its illegal war, the war crimes it commits and disinformation campaigns (Kostina & Shumilin, 2025).

These statements display Romania's official stance towards Russia. However, it needs to be noted that Romania's condemnation of the Russian aggression is partly due to Romania being directly impacted by it instead of solely due to supporting Ukraine. In other words, while supporting Ukraine's cause and considering Russia as an aggressor in an unlawful war, Romania also feels the necessity to employ a rhetoric of condemnation due to the direct implications of the war that threaten its national security and the stability of the region.

3.1.3. Humanitarian Aid

Romania's humanitarian response is at such a significant level that it could be considered the strongest component of its overall response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the start of the invasion in February 2022, Romania has hosted more than 80,000 Ukrainian refugees and ensured their access to services like healthcare, education and simplified legal employment. As soon as six months into the conflict, Romania had spent approximately 60 million euros for the services provided to the refugees (Całus, 2022). This could be considered a reflection of Romania's financial commitment to supporting Ukrainian refugees as a responsible neighbor. Moreover, Romania cooperated with Moldova and various non-governmental organizations to provide humanitarian assistance.

Romania began receiving refugees from the first day of the invasion due to its border with Ukraine. According to a UNICEF report written eight months after the breakout of the war, Romania had received 1.6 million Ukrainians with more than one million going back to Ukraine and approximately eighty three thousand people staying in the country (UNICEF, 2022). This number has increased to approximately one hundred and eighty three thousand people as of May 2025 (UN Refugee Agency, 2025). The refugees entering Ukraine were provided with basic services that allow them to use public transport, have shelter, access to food, healthcare and education in the following periods.

Suceava Hub constitutes an important component of Romania's overall humanitarian assistance for Ukrainian refugees (Damian et al., 2023, p.27). It is located near the Ukrainian border and it functioned as a center for facilitating humanitarian logistics for effective aid distribution. It was established as part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to coordinate aid processes such as receiving, storing and redistributing food, medicine and equipment deliveries from the EU member states and other countries (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2022). Suceava hub is located at a strategic point that is close to the Siret border crossing area in which refugees entered Romania most. This center could be considered a key transit point for international aid, facilitated by Romania and supported by other states.

Non-governmental organizations have been vital in reinforcing Romania's humanitarian response. Universal and specialized establishments such as UNICEF and UNHCR has operated in Romania to assist local authorities and the Romanian government in their support for Ukrainian refugees. In addition, various Red Cross societies such as the Romanian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and British Red Cross were mobilized to provide humanitarian aid.

While Romania's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is multifaceted, its humanitarian aid aspect seems to be the strongest pillar. This could be understood through a simple comparison with Romania's direct military support for Ukraine, which remains low in visibility and scale, and its diplomatic support, which seems to be limited to the scope of its EU and NATO membership responsibilities. The reason behind such a caution could be an underlying objective of not provoking Russia but also not risking the US trust at the same time. This cautious stance indicates that Russia's implicit threats and dominance in the region influenced Romania in such a way that it limited the visibility of its military and diplomatic efforts.

3.1.4. Diplomatic Efforts

Romania's diplomatic position towards Ukraine and Russia locates it as a key regional actor in Black Sea. This position could be summarized through Romania's commitment to its alignment with Euro-Atlantic norms, supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, standing against Russian aggression in the region, upholding regional security of Black Sea and collective security norms. It could be argued that the center element of Romania's position is to give no concessions to Russian revisionism and to not allow a Russian sphere of influence in the Black Sea (Ghincea, 2025, p.4). This position could be interpreted as an attempt to resist Russian manipulation both for itself and for the security of the Black Sea.

It needs to be noted that Romania's solidarity with Ukraine was in contrast to the historical tensions between Romania and Ukraine. Between the two states, there have been disagreements about territory and minority issues particularly in Northern Bukovina and Snake Island regions, both of which belong to Ukraine's territory.

Romania has historically considered Northern Bukovina as a lost territory which originally belongs to Romania, but is part of Ukraine. While Romania officially recognizes the integrity of Ukraine's borders, it has been expressing its concerns about the Romanian minority living there, which led to the bilateral relations between the two states witnessing weak points, especially in comparison with the period after 2022 (Pieńkowski, 2021). Snake Island was another subject of territorial dispute over the resource rights and maritime boundaries in Black Sea (Stan, 2025, p.182). The dispute was resolved by the International Court of Justice, which ruled that Snake Island could not be considered a base point that would extend Ukraine's claims regarding maritime boundaries and Romania was given approximately 80% of the disputed maritime area (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, 2023). As a NATO member and a neighbor which has close proximity to Ukraine, Romania has not presented these territorial and historical disputes as excuses for not supporting Ukraine. It needs to be noted that Snake Island had been subject to Russian aggression after February 2022 and it is only forty five kilometers from Romanian soil (Williams & Kirby, 2022). This indicates that Romania has witnessed the war from a short distance, which could have contributed to its heightened sense of cautiousness.

A significant factor contributing to Romania's diplomatic position is its geographic location. Romania shares an undeniably long border length of more than 600 km with Ukraine. As discussed in the Geopolitics section of this chapter, this location makes Romania a member state in the eastern flank of NATO. This could mean that a sovereign and protected Ukraine would benefit Romania regarding its territorial security. This is clearly expressed in the statement that "the security of Ukraine is integral to the security of European continent and a wider Euro-Atlantic region, and thus that security of Ukraine and security of Romania are closely linked", in the introduction of the Agreement on Security Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine (The Official Website of the President of Romania, 2024).

Another factor contributing to Romania's diplomatic position is a Western-oriented formulation of its national identity, which locates Russia as a close threat due to its history with the Soviet Union. In other words, after the last communist regime in Romania had fallen, it started to seek ways to integrate with the Western institutions

such as the EU (Light & Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997, p.39). This objective de facto required Romania to distance itself from its Soviet past and its successor state Russia. Therefore, Romania's response after February 24, 2022 reflects attempts to contain Russian influence, resist manipulation, decrease escalation and contribute to the Euro-Atlantic unity.

Since the outbreak of the war, the Romanian government maintained regular communication with the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The Romanian President Klaus Iohannis expressed his stance towards Ukraine and Russia through the following statement in the opening of the Special Summit of the Bucharest Nine Format, and on the one-year anniversary of the war:

We, the leaders of the Eastern Flank, have the duty to stand firm in defence of our peace. We must continue to stand firm in delivering on our commitments to support Ukraine, for as long as it needs, to win this war. This is what Romania will continue to do. We are not alone in this endeavour. Our effort is one of transatlantic scale and scope.”(The Official Website of the President of Romania, 2023).

This statement could be evaluated as a verbal display of the value Romania attaches to the transatlantic unity and its responsibility in it. Through hosting NATO presence in its territory and supporting Ukraine's NATO aspiration, Romania clearly expressed the crucial role of NATO in the context of the war. This is particularly important due to the controversy of a Ukrainian membership of NATO since it has been problematized from the beginning and Ukraine is still a party to a war. About the membership, Romanian President reassured Ukraine on the continuation of support and assistance for its EU and NATO memberships.

While Romania's official position was in alignment with the Western policies, there was also an element of cautiousness in certain areas. For instance, unlike Poland, Romania has not assumed a leading role in delivering weaponry to Ukraine. Instead, it mostly chose to coordinate the delivery efforts through NATO and EU mechanisms. This choice could be interpreted as a strategy to avoid a direct confrontation with Russia. Moreover, Romania has maintained open communication with Moldova, which could be labeled as a vulnerable neighboring state, in order to prevent a potential

regional spillover if Russian belligerence threatens them directly and more tangibly (Necsutu, 2025).

3.1.4.1. Solidarity Lanes

Romania's efforts were extended to the Solidarity Lanes of the EU support framework. The EU launched the Solidarity Lanes initiative since secure alternative paths for Ukrainian agricultural products had become necessary. Approximately 90% of Ukraine's agricultural products were exported through its seaports and Russian Navy's blockade of these Ukrainian ports required a way to minimize the risks to the global food security (Beluhova-Uzunova et al., 2024, p.1). Romania played a crucial role in the logistical and diplomatic senses for Ukrainian grain to be exported from its ports during the Black Sea blockade by Russia. The European Commission (2023) labeled this initiative as "key for global food security" and a "lifeline for Ukrainian economy".

After Romania and Ukraine had signed the Memorandum of Understanding to make the grain movement easier, Romania's access to waters such as the Constanța Port and the Danube River became the major central points for Ukrainian grain to move. The Danube River is a critical component of the Solidarity Lanes initiative. Ports such as Izmail, Reni and Ust-Danube contributed to the flow of Ukrainian grain. While these ports contributed to the maintenance of the trade flow, they were not sufficient on their own when the goal was to avoid a global food crisis (Diakun, 2022). That is why, the Constanța Port carried more importance due to its strategic location. The Constanța Port is not only the largest port of Romania but also the main port of the EU in the Black Sea, and it connects Central and Eastern Europe, the Caspian region, Central Asia, Mediterranean, Middle East and the Far East regions ("Port of Constanța Transport Events", 2024). This port hosted Ukrainian grain that arrived the port by road and railways, which then departed for global markets. This way, Romania proved the vitality of its geographic position that is mainly defined by its proximity to Ukraine and access to Black Sea in the context of the war.

The port is in a highly strategic position as it has connections with the highway roads, rail networks and the Danube River. In the second half of 2023, it was announced by

Klaus Iohannis that approximately 60% of Ukrainian grain exports had transited through Romania to reach the global market (Court, 2023). However, the high volume of grain going through Romania made Romanian farmers demand a unilateral ban on Ukrainian grain as the imports made the local grain prices fall and disrupted the usual flow of local markets (“Romanian Farmer Association”, 2023).

In conclusion, it could be argued that Romania’s diplomatic position in its response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine presented a consistent pattern coherent with the Euro-Atlantic unity. While it could not be defined as a pioneer in the region regarding its response to the war, Romania has become a reliable partner for Ukraine. This reliability is clear in its political support and its expression of the necessity of Ukraine to be sovereign for Romania’s security. In other words, Ukraine’s sovereignty being threatened by a regional actor might have security implications for Romania. Romania would not wish the presence of such threat unless it becomes an ally of Russia and if it were not members of the EU and NATO.

3.1.5. Military Aid

Romania differs from its neighboring states such as Poland in its supply of military aid to Ukraine. It has preferred to act under a low-visibility principle in its assistance, instead of being bold in movement and expression. Romanian authorities have acknowledged that military aid has been provided, and this is clearly understood from the Agreement on Security Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine of 2024, which consists of the plans for cooperation. (The Official Website of the President of Romania, 2024). However, the details and amount of the aid are not openly available to the public. This confidentiality could be considered a signal that Russia achieved the ability to influence Romania to a certain extent.

This agreement of cooperation consists of Romania providing the Patriot air-defense system and facilitating the transit of military equipment through its territory. Moreover, Romania declared its support for the F-16 pilot training center in which Ukrainian air-force capabilities would be improved. Providing support to develop Ukraine’s defense industry and its reconstruction, cooperation on intelligence and

counterintelligence, cybersecurity, information security, humanitarian demining and joining sanctions were the other elements of the agreement (The Official Website of the President of Romania, 2024).

Since the beginning, Romania has delivered ammunition, fuel and military equipment as well as allowing the maintenance and repair of the equipment on Romanian territory. Romanian Ambassador to the United States Andrei Muraru confirmed that Romania supplied armored personnel carriers, multiple rocket launcher systems, Soviet-standard Howitzers, two types of artillery shells, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns, and “many other items”, whose details are not disclosed (“Romania officially reports”, 2024). Romania has become the primary fuel supplier for Ukraine, by providing a third of Ukraine’s petrol, diesel and liquefied gas imports (“Romania continues to provide comprehensive and strong support to Ukraine “, 2024).

One of the challenges Romania has been facing since the outbreak of the war in 2022 is its official responsibilities as members of two Western institutions and its history with Russia. It has been difficult to balance its commitments to NATO and the EU and its responsibility arising from its geographical proximity to the conflict, with its avoidance of provoking Russia in a scenario where it openly provides military aid to Ukraine (Plate & Marc, 2025). Its position on military aid delivery seems to be based on operational discretion.

Instead of focusing on military aid, Romania preferred to help in other ways to help Ukraine sustain its war efforts, through more diplomatic actions such as sending humanitarian assistance, allowing the transit of military supplies from other states through its territory and facilitating the movement of Ukrainian grain.

Despite being a NATO member, Romania has maintained a cautious stance in its rhetoric towards Russia since 2022. It could be understood from the rhetoric about the war that Romania mostly expressed Russia as a violator of international law and a danger to the regional stability, instead of openly shaming it with a more brutal language. This and its reluctance to provide direct military aid and/or not disclosing the details of the aid seem to be strategic steps to not provoke Russia.

3.2. Geopolitics

Romania is located at the junction of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. It shares borders with five countries that are Moldova to the east, Ukraine to the north and east, Hungary to the west, Bulgaria to the south and Serbia to the southwest. These shared borders position Romania as a bridge between Western Europe and post-Soviet space through Moldova and Ukraine that shares a border with Russia. In other words, Romania is located both as a bridge and barrier between the Euro-Atlantic area that refers to the EU and the US, and the Euro-Asiatic area that is Russia, which are two different geopolitical entities (Marcu, 2009, p.410).

Romania's eastern border is at the Black Sea, which allows it to access maritime trade routes and be a geopolitical actor in Black Sea security, especially in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, its proximity to Ukraine and Russia directly affects it due to fear of Russian aggression spillover and the immediate necessity of hosting refugees as well as functioning as a military logistics hub. Marcu (2009, p.412) indicates that Romania is a "lid state" positioned between the West and the East, a term coined by Kjellen (1920), and defines "lid state" as a small country that is between major powers. It could be thought of as similar to the concept of "buffer zone", which is used more commonly. This volatile position between Russian aggression and Western Europe increases Romania's supportive and defensive responsibility in the conflict.

Romania hosts various topographical structures that ultimately contribute to shaping its security and defense strategies. A section of the Carpathian Mountains is located at the north and center of the country, reaching around 1850 meters in altitude ("Carpathian Mountains", 2025). These mountains could offer potential defensive shields through altitude and challenging terrain. There are also the Transylvanian Plateau and the Wallachian Plain, which are flat and open terrains close to the Carpathian Mountains. In general, it could be claimed that these areas might make Romania vulnerable to conventional military forces. In addition, the Moldavian Plateau located in Eastern Romania consists of a terrain with hills along the Ukrainian and Moldovan borders, which might offer defensibility to an extent due to not being as flat as the other plateaus and plains. Albu (2020, p.65-66) considers the central

terrain of Romania defined as being mountainous, the Danube River and Black Sea presence as strategic aspects for the defense and connectivity in Romania, and considers Romania as one of the three countries (Poland and Türkiye) that would need to stand against pressures from the Eurasian steppes.

The Danube River, on the other hand, provides a navigable waterway and forms into the Danube Delta where the water is emptied into the Black Sea. Black Sea is a strategic aspect of Romania's geopolitical location since it allows Romania and NATO to reach the wider Black Sea region (Grigorescu, 2023, p.97). This access locates Romania as a critical country at the eastern flank of NATO that hosts NATO troops and could host more NATO military presence in regional crises. For example, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 led to increased NATO presence such as the Deveselu Missile Base and Mihail Kogălniceanu Base, due to increased threat perception (Albu, 2020, p.67). Romania has become a frontline defense state after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Therefore, these bases gained a more crucial status with NATO positioning more forces there to secure Southeastern Europe. In addition, hosting a NATO base with US majority in leading it signals a strategic security reliance on the US.

In addition, Black Sea access is vital in maritime trade and energy transit, from which Romania benefits. This benefit is not limited to Romania since it facilitated the Ukrainian grain exports through the Constanța Port, which displays it as a reliable actor with an important role in regional stability. Constanța Port is located on the west of the Black Sea coast, is one of the largest ports in Europe, and is the largest port on the Black Sea ("Constanța, Romania", 2024). It is connected to Central Europe through land and water, with railways and the Danube-Black Sea Canal. This port has strategic importance in Black Sea logistics and security and could be a target in regional escalations, as it hosts NATO activities.

In conclusion, Romania's geography and its geopolitical implications present that Romania functions as a bridge between the Euro-Atlantic region and zones of instabilities in the east. While there are topographical structures that provide natural defense and connectivity, some of them leave it vulnerable to military actions. Its Black Sea access allows Romania to have naval and commercial advantages, as well

as an important role in NATO's eastern flank. Briefly, Romania is a vital actor for Euro-Atlantic defense due to its geopolitical position.

3.3. Energy Dependency

It is clear that most Central and Eastern European states have developed energy dependence on Russia to a certain extent, which mainly supplied an important portion of the oil and natural gas needs of the region. While other states like Poland and Hungary experienced higher levels of energy dependency on Russia, Romania seems to be a partial exception in the region. Despite being reliant on Russian energy imports, Romania was one of the states that retained a comparatively low level of dependency. In light of this, it could be said that Romania's energy policy partially free from Russian dominance signals a limited Russian manipulation.

There are various factors behind this exception, which are Romania's domestic resources, its diversification efforts, strategic investments in nuclear energy infrastructure and renewable energy sources. However, these efforts did not result in it to not be affected by the energy related vulnerabilities in the regional supply dynamics.

3.3.1 Intensity of Dependence

Romania's energy sources were split into two aspects, that are a mixture of its own domestic sources and imports, on which dependence was selective. While it does possess domestic oil and natural gas reserves, Romania also benefits from its hydroelectric capacity, which allowed it to protect its energy security to an extent. However, this did not insulate it fully from the potential energy vulnerabilities caused by the tension Russia created since there was approximately 48% increase in Romania's energy dependency as its rate increased from 21.39% to 31.65%, displaying increased import demand (Toro, 2023, p.134). What is more significant is that over 80% of these imports of natural gas was from Russia (Ciot & Butișcă, 2025, p.976).

In this period, while it could be claimed that the level of energy dependency of Romania on Russia was not as severe as its neighbors, such as Hungary and Bulgaria, it was still significant, as could be seen in Figure 3.1. below. Romania was an advantageous state in the strategically important Black Sea region, particularly regarding natural gas due to it being able to obtain a high proportion of its consumption thanks to its domestic production, positioning it as the one possessing the lowest level of dependence on imported natural gas among its neighbors in the region (Scutaru, 2024, as cited in Ciot & Butișcă, 2025, p.976).

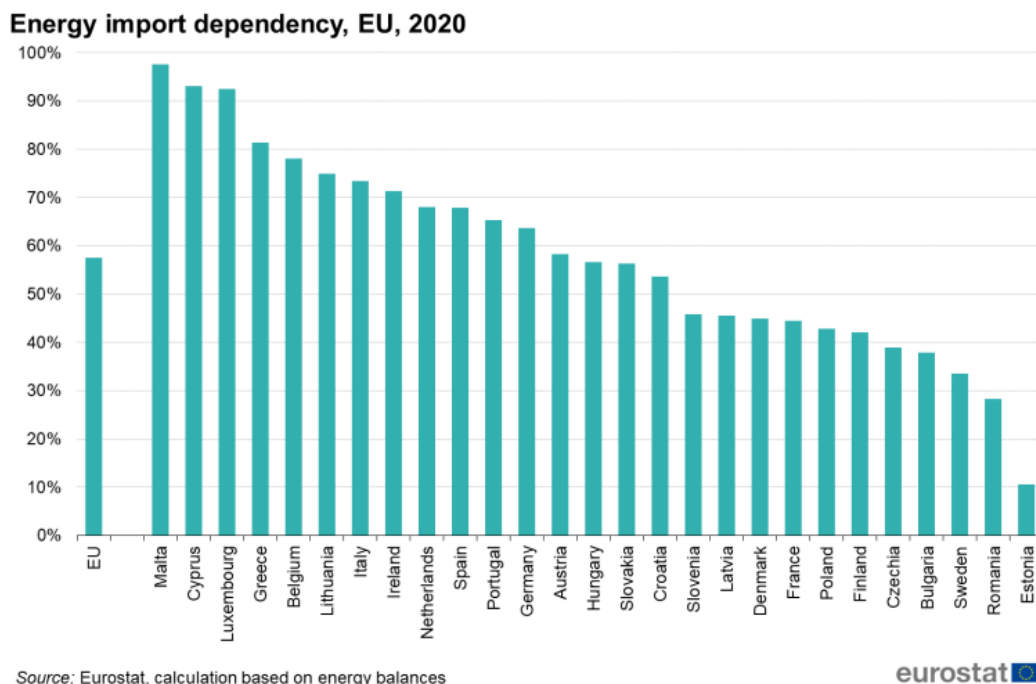


Figure 3.1. Energy import dependency of the EU in 2020. Retrieved from Eurostat (2022).

However, Romania's history of technological and infrastructural connection with Russia, due to the period of interdependency in the Soviet Union era, caused a level of dependency. Despite being the largest natural gas producer in the EU in the first half of 2024 (Ernst, 2024), its energy market was not diversified enough to not be dependent on Russian gas imports (Pociovălișteanu et al. 2010; Stet 2017, as cited in Ciot & Butișcă, 2025, p.986).

3.3.2 Diversification Efforts

The Russian invasion of Ukraine led to a shift in European energy politics and pushed the EU member states to diversify their energy sources with the objective of reducing dependency on Russian imports. Romania was in such a position that it could respond to this shock by utilizing its relatively resilient energy base. In addition, it was able to produce the majority of its energy in the Black Sea through its domestic sources. Despite this resilience, as the implications of the war were at a global scale, Romania was affected by the spike in energy prices, too. That is why, it focused on price regulation of consumption areas such as electricity and gas with priority, for households and businesses. Despite the high prices, Romania was able to maintain its supply security thanks to mild winters, ongoing diversification efforts and reduced consumption (Murafa, 2023, p.7). As the EU sanctions against Russia progressed and the REPowerEU strategy established, Romania aligned itself through adopting this agenda to its national energy policy (European Commission, 2022).

3.3.2.1. National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan

In responses to the changed dynamics because of the conflict in the region, Romania has accelerated its efforts to diversify its energy supply. Especially renewable energy, infrastructure modernization and nuclear capacity expansion was prioritized by the Romanian Energy Strategy and the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) (Fortea et al., 2022, p.52). This plan is part of Romania's energy strategy and is a requirement by the EU. It focuses on increasing renewable energy consumption, improving energy efficiency, and reduction of greenhouse gases. Ultimately, these improvement areas would contribute to the internal energy market and the overall energy security of Romania. A European Commission report (2018) on NECP indicate that this plan emphasized retaining a diverse energy mix consisting of various sources including nuclear energy, so that Romania would achieve energy independence through operationalization of its domestic sources.

After the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Romania accelerated these diversification efforts through various strategies. First, it expanded its domestic gas

production in Black Sea through the Neptun Deep Project, which would supply Romania with the gas necessary to reduce Russian gas imports. This domestic gas production is considered a transition fuel on the path to cleaner energy.

Second, Romania accelerated the completion of the BRUA pipeline that connects Bulgaria and Hungary with Romania, which allows access to alternative sources such as Azerbaijani gas thanks to the Southern Gas Corridor (Dudău, 2014, p.7). Lastly, Romania emphasized the regulation of domestic energy use. For example, as the objective of the NECP is to improve supply security, Romania increased its gas storage as a precaution to potential import disruptions, especially during the winters. In addition, Romania implemented price caps of electricity and gas, limiting the prices that energy suppliers could charge consumers with, along with requiring domestic gas producers to provide a portion of their production at a price that is below-market and fixed. However, this was contested by the EU as the European Commission warned Romania, arguing that Romania's requirement from domestic gas producers would disrupt "effective market functioning" (Abnett, 2025).

3.3.2.2. Neptun Deep Project

The Neptun Deep Project is one of the most significant developments in Romania's efforts for energy independence. It is a strategically significant project operated by the partnership of Romgaz and OMV Petrom.

This project is planned to begin producing gas by 2027 and is expected to provide up to 100 billion cubic meters of gas, which could create the potential that Romania would be the largest natural gas producer in the EU (Ciot & Butișcă, 2025, p.976). Having this status would not only benefit Romania regarding its domestic energy security but also position it as a potential supplier for the neighboring countries. Namely, this pillar of Romania's energy diversification strategy would improve its maneuvering capacity in regional energy diplomacy. It also holds significance because offering a potential source of natural gas could mean reducing the dependence on Russian gas in the whole region. This is parallel with the EU's objective of phasing out Russian fossil fuels by 2027 under the REPowerEU plan. In the context of expected bans on Russian fossil

fuels, the Neptun Deep Project represents an opportunity for Romania to transform from a partial importer into a regional energy hub.

3.3.2.3. The BRUA Pipeline

BRUA is an acronym for Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria. This pipeline is a component of the Southern Gas Corridor, which is an infrastructure project whose goal is to improve energy security and diversification in Central and Southeastern Europe. Essentially, as could be seen in Figure 3.2., the corridor consists of four projects that are South Caucasus that goes through Azerbaijan and Georgia, Trans-Anatolian that goes through Türkiye and Trans Adriatic pipeline that lay across Greece, Albania and Italy.

The gas supply to the BRUA countries is provided through interconnectors from the countries that host the main pipeline. It aims to reduce the region's dependence on Russian gas by providing access to alternative sources. The main supply source of the pipeline is Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz field in the Caspian Sea. Moreover, it needs to be noted that this pipeline could function by allowing interconnection with potential Black Sea pipelines that could carry natural gas and liquefied natural gas in the future (Dudău, 2014, p.994). For instance, the Neptun Deep pipeline is expected to connect to the BRUA pipeline, widening its capacity and diversifying the gas source. This pipeline carries strategic significance due to it bringing Caspian gas to the region, creating an alternative as a non-Russian source. This is an opportunity to reduce dependency on Russian gas, which would mean a disruption in Russia's energy monopoly in the region.

In conclusion, Romania's energy dependency on Russia seems to have been evolving from a moderate reliance to banning Russian energy imports. While Romania was a country that maintained a relatively lower level of dependency on Russian energy, it made it its objective to fully stop importing Russian gas directly after the Ukraine crisis. Its efforts to diversify its energy sources carry the potential to strengthen its position in the regional energy diplomacy scenario.



Figure 3.2. Southern Gas Corridor. Retrieved from Dupont, C., & Oberthür, S. (2012).

3.4. National Identity

One of the ways that Romania identifies itself lies in its Latin ancestry. This identification is a soft way that Romania defines itself, with the awareness of being located in Eastern Europe, which signifies Slavic presence. This cultural identification could be considered a way to set Romania apart from its neighbors, who are mostly Balkan and Slavic. A Romanian historian Lucian Boia (2001, p.36) states that Romania is “a Latin island in a Slavic sea” (as cited in Seniuc, 2018). This way of self-identification could be a way to assume a unique position in the Eastern European region, and a way to locate itself as one of the Western European states, at least ethnically and culturally if not geographically. In other words, this identification could mean a separation from the East and saying that they are different from their neighbors.

For Romania, this abstract separation is a way to connect with Western Europe, particularly France and Italy, with whom Romania shares the same language family. It needs to be noted that belonging to the same language family meant a common understanding of a Latin civilization, which was operationalized under the name of “Latin Union” that is defunct as of today, between thirty six countries that are mainly Italy, France and Spain, as well as countries from various continents, including Romania. Through such attempts to connect with Western Europe, Romania seems to have resisted Russian manipulation to a certain extent.

Alexandrescu (1998) claims that Romania is “an island of Latinity lost in a great mass of Slav and Hungarian” and argues that Romania does not fit in the identities of Balkans, Central Europe or Eastern Europe, which creates “the belonging paradox” (as cited in Gherman, 2023). This observation reflects the options that Romania could choose for itself in order to belong to a regional identity. In other words, out of various options, Romania chose to define itself as a European state with an emphasis of its Latin background. It could be argued that the potential of an identity fragmentation has driven Romania to show its eagerness for integration with the West through NATO and the EU.

In addition, emphasizing this Latin identity was considered a path to preserving national identity throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and this emphasis continued after Romania’s accession into the EU, and especially relations with the Latin West aimed to be strengthened (Andrei, 2024). This desire to highlight the Latin background of the country reflected Romania’s aspirations for Western integration and good relations with other so-called Latin countries, which resulted in its accession to both NATO and the EU.

In order to understand Romania’s national identity and its foreign policy schema, the trauma that the Romanian society underwent under communist rule needs to be examined. While the communist past left a deep impact on Romania, the regime change allowed the possibility for Romania to redefine itself as a state that could align with the West.

It could be claimed that the last communist leader of Romania Nicolae Ceaușescu’s rule was one of the most repressive one in the Eastern bloc (Petrescu, 2003). Despite the support it received in the domestic sense due to being able to distance Romania from the Soviet Union a few years after he rose to power, his rule came to be defined with intense dictatorship, economic issues and surveillance, creating a fear-based system in the society (“Ceaușescu and the Soviet Invasion”, n.d.). Approximately ten years before the collapse of the communist rule, basic needs of people were provided through rationing, leaving living standards at a level that Romanian citizens were denied dignity and prosperity. After decades of repression under his rule, he was executed in the 1989 Revolution.

It was after this revolution that Romania started its journey of democratization and integration into the Western world. However, this process was defined by political instabilities and economic issues more than its post-Soviet counterparts, due to former communists retaining power even after the collapse, as the National Salvation Front, which was the successor of the Romanian Communist Party, was elected (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2002, as cited in Tatar, 2016, p.89). After the revolution, unlike its counterparts like Poland and Hungary, there was not a “reform-oriented faction” in the party who could facilitate an enlightened transition (Tismaneanu, 2011). Through this process, aligning with the West was an unchanged vision of Romania’s post-communist identity. NATO and EU memberships that came consecutively were important turning points for Romania’s journey on a new path. It could be stated that these memberships represented a relief after the disruption of communism. Moreover, this West-ward orientation could be an attempt to resist Russian influence during the post-communist period.

Instead of considering a Slavic or Balkan model of governance, Romania saw Western Europe as a model and emphasized Romania’s Latin history and European heritage (Petrescu, 2003). On top of this, it highlighted democratic values and the rule of law, which are considered the building pillars of Western Europe, but the implementation in reality remained weak. Nevertheless, Romania’s commitment to the Western institutions displays that it considers these institutions as guarantees for its sovereignty, which is a response to the trauma of the communist rule.

Romania’s identity could also be defined by its determination to have a responsibility in the Black Sea security due to its location. This determination becomes a central element in its foreign and security policy under the presence of Russian aggression in the region. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 marked the occurrence of increased perceived threats by Russia, which led to concerns about the security of Black Sea.

Wezemov and Kuimova (2018, p.5) indicate that Romanian defense ministers, Gabriel Benjamin Leş in 2017 and Mihai Fifor 2018 respectively, were as direct as openly stating that there were more challenges and risks because of Russia’s aggression and assertiveness and this led to a necessity of improvement in the naval capabilities of

Romania. It could be understood that Romania perceives Russia to be an existential threat to both its own sovereignty and the stability of the region. Therefore, Romanian leaders maintain an irrevocable stance of not allowing Russian revisionism and a Russian sphere of influence in Black Sea (Ghincea, 2025, p.4).

This perception of Russia led Romania to seek Western cooperation. Romania views NATO as a key guarantor of its security (Calus, 2022), which means that it is important to receive from and contribute to NATO at the same time. However, it is not only NATO but also the US that is perceived as vital to Romanian security. The Strategic Partnership between the US and Romania is considered a privilege and “the only certitude for Romania to survive as a state and preserve its entire territory” (Gabor, 2022, p.229). While Romania’s location led it to perceive Russia as a direct threat, it also positioned it as an important actor in NATO’s defense architecture, transforming it from an ordinary actor to an important component of NATO’s eastern flank. In other words, this new role assigned to Romania turned it into a contributor to and coordinator of security in the Black Sea, from a mere consumer of security. In 2000, Romania’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Petre Roman (2011) stated that countries that have proximity to conflict areas that cause security risks, such as Romania, could assume an important responsibility to hinder the spread of the conflict. It needs to be noted that this statement was made before Romania’s accession to NATO, possibly with an objective to highlight Romania’s potential to contribute to the Black Sea security in the context of Russia’s presence. Moreover, this statement could confirm Romania’s perception of the US as the most important pillar of its security due to its fragile location. In addition, under this contribution objective, Romania cooperates with the US through rotational and permanent troops in key bases, shared training programs and expansion of military infrastructure in order to create strategic alignment in NATO, as well as to support Ukraine.

This becomes a way that Romania’s defines itself, as it employs a pro-Western identity. It considers institutions like NATO, and the EU, as vital communities that would provide Romania with protection and prosperity, instead of seeing them as ordinary institutions it belongs to (Iliescu, 2011). This stance results in Romania to be identified as a bridge between the East, an unstable neighborhood, and the West that is fighting

against it. Overall, Romania could be considered a frontline defender of European security due to its proximity to Russia and its consideration of NATO presence as vital.

It could be argued that various factors such as Latin ancestry, integration into Western institutions, a communist history and a role in Black Sea security present Romania's identity. Romania's Latin roots are functionalized to express itself as a unique actor in Eastern Europe and to connect with the West. On the other hand, its communist history and troubling experiences under the Soviet Union's influence resulted in Romania to participate in democratization. This difficult period pushed Romania to integrate with the West in order to achieve democracy and prosperity. This background has become a central aspect of its position as a state, and it resulted in increased wariness from any threats by Russia. In addition, Romania's motivated stance in Black Sea security forms the strategic aspect of its identity. It displays its eagerness to act as a responsible member of NATO and a frontline state for the sake of the Euro-Atlantic area. Its efforts to strengthen regional cooperation make it a reliable ally. It needs to be noted that these efforts are not mere responses to the long existing Russian aggression but are symbols of Western alignment and regional responsibility.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, it could be argued that Romania's location on NATO's eastern flank and its shared border with Ukraine made it arise as a strategic frontline state. Romania has been highlighting its commitment to the Euro-Atlantic unity, and it has shown solidarity with Ukraine through diplomatic and military support, even though the latter has been limited and the overall response was based on a cautious stance. Its energy dependence on Russia was another dimension of Romania's response. Even if it was relatively less dependent on Russian energy, it has shown efforts to diversify its energy supply through new projects and capacity expansions. Its national identity profile, defined by its Latin heritage, aspiration for a full participation in the European community and its opposition to Russian revisionism, contributed to its stance against Russia and support for Ukraine, despite a few historical disputes. Overall, it could be argued that Russia's influence on Romania has impacted its response to the invasion, which could be understood from its cautious approach.

CHAPTER 4

HUNGARY'S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

4.1. Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine represents a geopolitical challenge to the European Union with a significant impact on its foreign policy dynamics, and it has served as a vital “test case” for its ability to be an effective foreign policy actor and its cohesion of internal dynamics (Müller & Slominski, 2024, p.111). While the EU has acted in support of Ukraine and against Russia, Hungary, with the leadership of Viktor Orbán, has adopted a differing position than that of its EU partners. The Hungarian government could be described as having adopted a more cautious and sometimes even an obstructive approach. This chapter examines the multifaceted response from the Hungarian government to the invasion.

Before the beginning of the large-scale invasion, the Hungarian government has articulated its concerns regarding the escalation in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. The primary threat that was perceived was Hungary's geographical position and the risk of being involved in a conflict of the “East and West”, which was signaled with descriptions of drawing parallels with the Cold War period and stressing a strong necessity of avoiding a similar environment (kormany.hu, 2022; Magyar Nemzet, 2022, as cited in Göransson, 2025, p.7). Hungary's foreign minister Péter Szijjártó has expressed that the Cold War period had been a “nightmare” for central Europe, and underlined the vitality of preventing its return (“FM Szijjártó: Impairment of Hungarian communities”, 2022). The Hungarian government has presented itself as an actor of rationality who protects the Hungarian citizens from the negative consequences of the invasion as its foremost priority. The Hungarian government has also underlined the situation of the ethnic Hungarian minority residence in Ukraine's

Transcarpathian region, whose population is around one hundred and fifty thousand people and which has been a cause of dispute between Hungarian and Ukrainian governments and could cause Hungary to support Ukraine if the changes in the security dynamics harm the minority there (Göransson, 2025, p.7). This region functioned as an active hub where Hungary could express its reluctance to support Ukraine with a display of a valid reason, concerning its minority population.

In the sanctions regime, Hungary could not be considered a cooperative member state of the EU. While it seemed to be supporting the sanctions in a formal sense, it has delayed their adoptions and sought exemptions for itself, especially in the energy sector. Viktor Orbán even argues that a prolonged war should be expected since the US and EU support of weapons and money for Ukraine are countered by a limitless reserve by Russia in terms of personnel and weaponry (The Official Website of the Prime Minister of Hungary, 2022b).

4.1.1. Condemnation of the War

On the day that Russia has officially started its invasion of Ukraine, Viktor Orbán has immediately expressed a condemnation of Russia. He explicitly stated that “together with our EU and NATO allies, we condemn Russia’s military attack” (“PM Orbán: “Together with Our EU and NATO Allies”, 2022). This expression seems to be an indication that Hungary is not acting unilaterally, but within the framework of its responsibility as a member state of both of these alliances, at least on the surface. In addition, Orbán’s inclusion of these organizations in his expression may be an attempt to avoid directly antagonizing Russia, highlighting its member status. Hungary has supported collective NATO actions strengthening the eastern flank’s deterrence and views NATO as the ultimate guarantor of European security, with a consideration that the EU is an organization that is complementary to NATO (Varga, 2023, p. 191). Despite continuing relations with Russia, US presence in Europe constrained Hungary’s ability to act in freedom.

Orbán has explicitly expressed that “while we condemn Russia’s armed attack and we also condemn the war, we will not allow Hungarian families to be made to pay the

price of the war”, with a focus on oil and gas sanctions (The Official Website of the Prime Minister of Hungary, 2022a). As much as there seems to be an attempt to act in verbal cooperation with the other partner member states, he shifts the focus to national interest with the objective of maintaining strategic ambiguity that requires verbal and formal alignment but still maintaining ties with Russia, especially for supply of energy. This strategic ambiguity could be interpreted as the way that Russia manipulated the condition of Hungary’s energy dependence on it, which ensures that Hungary is partially removed of its freedom to be fully in line with its EU counterparts. Moreover, even if Orbán has voted in favor of the sanctions earlier, he had condemned them, too. He stated that not only Russia “has not fallen to its knees” but also the economic conditions have worsened for the European people as a result of the sanctions (Than & Komuves, 2022).

Foreign minister of Hungary, Péter Szijjarto has indicated that Hungary will continue to express support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, and condemned the war with an emphasis on the importance of peace in international politics (Kholina, 2024). This expression aligns with EU and NATO expectations, but the consistent blocking of aid packages and reluctance on joining the sanctions, as well as Viktor Orbán’s rhetoric on how Ukraine’s borders are not clear and its status as fully sovereign is not valid deem this expression not genuine.

4.1.2. Humanitarian Aid

Hungary has provided humanitarian aid in various areas like refugee support, material assistance and financial aid. It has welcomed as much as 600,000 refugees from Ukraine and Romania, and some of them even received temporary residence permits, accommodation, food, healthcare and education as early as April 2022 (“What assistance has Hungary provided”, 2022).

It has also been providing humanitarian aid involving medical supply, food and hygiene products, as well as construction materials for Ukraine and decided to allocate 187 million euros for the macro-financial assistance program of EU for Ukraine, on top of providing 3.5 million dollars to transport ten thousand tonnes of Ukrainian

wheat to Africa (“Hungary has been providing humanitarian aid”, 2024). Between January and September 2024, there were 61,246 Ukrainian people registered in Hungary, 20,675 of which were issued residence permits and 37,986 were granted temporary protection status (“UNHCR Hungary Assistance Dashboard”, 2024).

In addition, Hungary has provided 239.8 million euros of funding to Ukraine since the beginning of the invasion for the refugees coming from Ukraine (“State Secretary: Hungary has provided 98.5 billion HUF”, 2024). With the amount of assistance forming the basis, Hungary’s State Secretary Tristan Azbej has expressed that Hungary has launched the largest humanitarian assistance for Ukrainian refugees, therefore cannot be accused of lacking solidarity (“State Secretary: Hungary cannot be accused”, 2024). This expression by the State Secretary could signal an attempt to deflect accusations of obstruction of EU aid to Ukraine.

Moreover, Hungary has participated in the decision of the Visegrád group of Prime Ministers to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine and support Ukrainian refugees in the V4 countries via the International Visegrád Fund (Visegrád Group, 2022, as cited in Akgul-Durakcay, 2023, p.11). These numbers and the amount of humanitarian aid seems to be a reflection of Hungary’s fulfillment of its humanitarian obligations.

4.1.3. Sanctions Regime

Hungary, under the leadership of Viktor Orbán, has been a keen critic of the EU sanctions on Russia. It has been repeatedly attempted to delay or soften the EU sanction packages especially in areas of nuclear cooperation, energy and sanctions on individuals. While the first two areas have been aimed to be justified to be exempted due to Hungary’s claim of maintaining energy security, the process of sanctioning individuals has not been participated in by Hungary through blocking or delaying decisions to blacklist certain Russian entities or individuals. With Orbán’s framing of the country’s stance as pro-peace, he has been calling for a ceasefire since the beginning of the war and blaming his European counterparts for prolonging the war through diplomatic, financial and military support. Accordingly, he stated that “Today, the West favors war and Hungary favors peace. We demand an immediate cease-fire

and peace talks instead of continuing and deepening the war” (Öztürk, 2022). Schmidt and Glied (2024, p.258) also indicate that Hungarian government has persistently advocated for peace with the argument that peace should come because neither side can win, and stopped criticizing both sides by starting to criticize only EU, NATO and the US.

The adoption of the sixth sanctions package by the European Union could be considered a formal beginning of Hungary’s attempts to be qualified as an exempt and differing actor. The package consisted of various fields like oil, finance, media and exports. According to the package, the oil sanctions include:

- crude oil and refined products from Russia would be banned which would affect a combined import value of 71 billion euros,
- seaborne oil imports would be phased out with crude oil allocated a six-month transition and refined petroleum products allocated an eight-month transition
- pipeline oil imports of heavily reliant countries would be exempted temporarily
- exempted countries would be barred from reselling the oil
- Bulgaria and Croatia were granted special derogations
- EU operators for oil transport services will be prohibited from conducting the transport (European Commission, 2022c).

About this package, Viktor Orbán has warned the head of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen that it would be a “historical failure” to accept them and stated that these sanctions would cause more harm to Hungary than it would do to Russia (“Hungary opposes sanctions”, 2022). Péter Szijjarto, the Hungarian foreign minister, has argued that completely modernizing the energy infrastructure of Hungary would cost between €15bn and €18bn euros and claimed that it would be legitimate to expect from the EU to provide a plan and the European Commission to provide a proposal for this (Rankin, 2022). Ultimately, Hungary joined the sixth sanctions package against

Russia, by securing a significant amount of concessions with the justification of its national energy interests. Hungary, along with Slovakia and Czechia that receive their oil through the Druzhba pipeline, have been exempt from the embargo, accounting for the %10 of the total sanctions that could not be achieved (Abnett et al., 2022). This would allow them to continue receiving Russian oil through the existing pipelines temporarily, until a solution such as diversification or alternative paths could be implemented. With this securing of pipeline oil exemptions, Viktor Orbán made use of Hungary's veto power as political leverage under the justification of domestic economic interests, potentially weakening the EU unity on Russia. Through the exemptions, the EU was able to protect the union from a total deadlock by achieving to cut off at least %90 of Russian oil imports.

On top of delaying the sixth package and using it as political leverage, the adoption of the eleventh package has also been problematic. This sanctions package against Russia include:

- Restriction of exports to countries that are suspected of helping Russia bypass the sanctions (anti-circumvention tool)
 - Prohibition of high-tech materials passing through Russia to other countries
 - Importers to prove that the iron and steel goods that come into the EU do not contain materials originating from Russia if they are processed in a third country
 - Entities in Russia, Iran, China, UAE, Syria, Armenia and Uzbekistan to face stricter export controls
 - Restrictions to EU ports for ships who conduct suspicious ship-to-ship transfers to evade price cap and breach the Russian oil ban
 - Germany and Poland to stop importing pipeline Russian oil
- (European Commission, 2023a)

As these measures are considered from Hungary's perspective, there are many reasons to not adopt the eleventh package. First, with the new anti-circumvention tool, Hungary would be forced to monitor and control the transits more closely which could

impact its trade relations with non-EU countries like Serbia, a bordering country. Second, Hungarian businesses that export goods via Russia to Central Asian countries or the Caucasus region might be affected, causing potential disruption and increased costs in logistics. Third, proving that imported processed iron and steel goods' materials do not originate from Russia would mean a disruption in Hungary's import flow necessary for certain domestic operations such as the Budapest metro. Fourth, expanding the list of entities that would face stricter export controls would concern Hungary in its Eastern Opening period. Hungary has been seeking stronger economic relations with the listed countries, and has adopted a less confrontational stance toward countries like Iran and China. Lastly, ending the pipeline oil imports from Russia to Poland and Germany could mean Hungary to draw greater attention to its ongoing energy policy that depend heavily on Russia. As a result, this could lead Hungary to be more deeply isolated within the EU and have more pressure on itself too, for an ultimate phase out of the Druzhba pipeline.

Hungarian foreign minister Péter Szijjártó has indicated that the government would block a further €500 million from the European Peace Facility that functions to reimburse military aid supplying member states of the EU, unless Ukraine removes OTP Bank of Hungary from its war sponsors list (Rankin, 2023). Previously, Ukraine had added OTP Bank to its list of war sponsors with the claim that the bank was facilitating loans that support the Russian state indirectly, to which Hungary responded by arguing that this move was politically motivated and by threatening to withhold the support of the EPF fund which would benefit the contributing EU members. Moens et al. (2023) argue that the list and the sanctions package are not linked and Hungary is aiming to remove their companies from Ukraine's list by using the sanctions package as political leverage. Szijjártó has referred to Ukraine revoking licenses of fourteen medicines of Richter, a Hungary based pharmaceutical company, for no reason, and calling Ukraine to halt the "witch hunt" targeting Hungarian companies (Leitner, 2024).

In a similar case related to a bank, the US sanctioned the International Investment Bank (IIB) controlled by Russia and accused it of "engaging in intelligence activities"

(Gizińska & Sadecki, 2023, p.2). While other Eastern European states such as Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania withdrew their shares from the bank, Hungary relinquished its shares (25 percent) in the bank later on since it was placed under spotlight due to the relocation of the bank's headquarters from Moscow to Budapest (Gizińska & Sadecki, 2023, p.2).

The minister has also claimed that the sanctions were not based in common sense and they were sacrifices that could not bring peace (Leitner, 2023). At the end, Hungary has been exempted from the ban of imports of iron and steel goods whose materials originate from Russia. Hungary Today has written that the government “stands up for and helps Budapest in times of need”, highlighting the securing of the exemption of importing Russian materials for the M3 metro line in Budapest (“Government fights in EU”, 2023). Metrovagonmash, a Russian company which has been sanctioned in the first sanctions package and also the only manufacturer of the Budapest metro cars' parts was allowed to deliver the necessary products to Hungary, who will use them to maintain and operate its M3 metro line (Bráder, 2023). This could be interpreted as one of the ways that Russia exploits the infrastructural dependency of Hungary on Russia, and Hungary prioritizes the exemptions from the sanctions as a result.

January 29, 2024 marks the first instance of the two foreign ministers of Hungary and Ukraine, Péter Szijjártó and Dmytro Kuleba meeting. In the meeting in Uzhhorod, Ukraine, the two counterparts have discussed Ukraine's language law, about which Kuleba expressed receptiveness to changes, and Hungary's support for Ukrainian sovereignty, but there were no concrete outcomes about the aid package since Szijjártó indicated that it should be discussed in Brussels due to it not being a bilateral issue (“Ukraine and Hungary hold “constructive” talks”, 2024). The aid package previously vetoed by Orbán, has been agreed on three days after the meeting, involving €50 billion for the three year period between 2024 and 2027, to be used in reconstruction, civil servants, hospital staff and requirements for EU membership (Government of Netherlands, 2024).

This stance of Hungary that consist of delaying decisions and exploiting the unanimity rule of the EU could be a reflection of its transactional approach to the EU solidarity.

Even when it means weakening a united EU stance, it seems to be prioritizing its own economic and political interests. This could potentially harm a unified EU image, especially in the eyes of Russia, since this shows that the EU is not a monolithic union. In the domestic scene, Viktor Orbán presents these exemptions as wins to display strength and claims that this is a defense of the Hungarian interests against the “Brussels”.

4.1.4 Blocking of Arms Shipment

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Hungary has drawn attention to itself for its often controversial stance within its Euro-Atlantic allies in the EU and NATO. One of the earliest signs of these continuing controversial actions has come a few days after the invasion. Hungary had announced that it would not allow military aid to pass through its territory. There were mainly two justifications for the blockage on the early days of the invasion. First, the government has mentioned their concerns for the ethnic Hungarians living in the Transcarpathia region of Ukraine (“Hungary demands Ukraine”, 2024). Second, they also framed this blockage as a measure to prevent the conflict from escalating in order to protect their national interests. This position was fully and legally within Hungary’s rights. However, it still received criticism from several European partners who argued that this was an attempt to obstruct collective support from reaching Ukraine.

As early as February 28, 2022, the Hungarian foreign minister Péter Szijjártó expressed that the decision to not allow the weapons delivery to transit through Hungarian territory was a matter of national security and it is necessary to ensure the security of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia region in Ukraine (Bayer, 2022). On the same day, Viktor Orbán has announced that they were providing humanitarian aid but not lethal aid since the deliveries might become “hostile military actions” targets, adding that Hungary should avoid any participation in the war under no condition (“PM Orbán: Hungary will not allow lethal aid”, 2022). While the ban on the shipment seems to be compatible with the overall positioning of Hungary towards Russia and Ukraine, there might be certain concerns which might cause a state to be reluctant to provide military support for Ukraine. The most salient reason for this could

be the risk that Russia might perceive the military support to Ukraine as an act of aggression, which may make retaliation come to mind (Landale, 2022, as cited in Hamilton, 2022, p.637). Hamilton (2022, p.637) lists potential repercussions of supplying military aid to Ukraine such as increase in transnational crime, a rise in unintended harm to civilians due to increased deployment of explosives, threatening regional stability and prolonging the existing conflict, the risk that weapons may be captured by Russian groups or terrorists, as well as disinformation such as claiming that the war crime allegations for Ukraine are true to cause controversy (Reality Check & BBC Monitoring, 2022).

These concerns, ranging from humanitarian aspects to legal dimensions have several matching points with the argument of Szijjártó, who argues that ethnic Hungarian minority might be under threat if Hungary is used as a transit for lethal aid. Also, Orbán's argument that the aid might become an object of "hostile military action" is compatible with the list of potential concerns for not wanting to provide lethal supply to Ukraine.

After almost a year later, Szijjártó stated that:

Any decision that could lead to a prolongation or potential escalation of the war is contrary to our interests and we do not consider a good idea to increase arms transfers, but we will not prevent the implementation of the European Union's decision in this regard (Permanent Representation of Hungary to the European Union, 2023).

The perspective of the Hungarian government that adopts the idea that arms transfer is worsening the conflict and regional stability is also visible in this statement. However, that the government is not going to prevent the EU from implementing the decision on arms transfer appears to be a strategic compromise since Hungary avoids confrontation as much as possible with its partners while maintaining its differing position as a sovereign state. In addition, this stance functions to continue its relations with Russia as an EU member state with responsibilities. In other words, Hungary continues to have a degree of alignment with its EU partners and distances itself from the military aid to Ukraine at the same time to continue the balance it aspires to have. In line with the peace motivated statements, Szijjártó announced at the tenth month of

the war that Hungary will not participate in the EU training mission for Ukrainian soldiers since it would cause the conflict to be heightened, adding that they are committed to peace rather than war (“Hungary refuses to train Ukrainian servicemen”, 2022). As recent as March 2025, blaming the European Commission for being pro-war, Szijjártó heavily criticized the EU plan of an additional €20 billion for Ukraine, citing Hungarian taxpayers as their money would not be used for financing Ukraine’s ammunition needs (Fornusek, 2025).

To sum up, Hungary’s explicit opt-out from the training mission with emphasis on a potential increase of conflict escalation displays Hungary’s general avoidance of direct military contribution to the conflict. This opt-out could be examined in the scope of the ethnic minority consideration of the Hungarian government as a justification, as in the case of not allowing the arms transfer through its territory. Any direct military involvement from Hungary’s side could be perceived as a matter warranting confrontation with Russia, which Hungary aims to avoid. If Russia perceives a provocation from Hungary due to any direct military involvement like training Ukrainian troops or sending lethal aid, Hungary might be drawn into the conflict, which it strongly aims to avoid. This avoidance is visible in many of Orbán’s statements about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which involves frequent calls for peace. Another inference from this avoidance could be that Russia’s manipulative role is present in it.

4.2. Geopolitics

Hungary is located in Central Europe, and more specifically in the Carpathian Basin. It has no access to coastlines, which makes it dependent on neighboring countries for maritime trade. It shares borders with seven countries that are Austria, Slovenia, Ukraine, Serbia, Slovakia, Romania and Croatia. The are four main geographical formations in Hungary’s landscape that are the Great Hungarian Plain, Transdanubian Hills, North Hungarian Mountains and Little Hungarian Plain, as could be seen in the Figure 4.1. below. The Great Hungarian Plain, also known as Alföld is located on the

eastern and southeastern of the country and provides little natural protection. This openness makes the region more easily accessible and visible with military vehicles and troops as seen during the World War II (CIA, 2013). The Eastern Front of the war saw the Soviet forces to advance rapidly on this plain. In general, it may be a scene to a corridor of invasions, especially from the East.

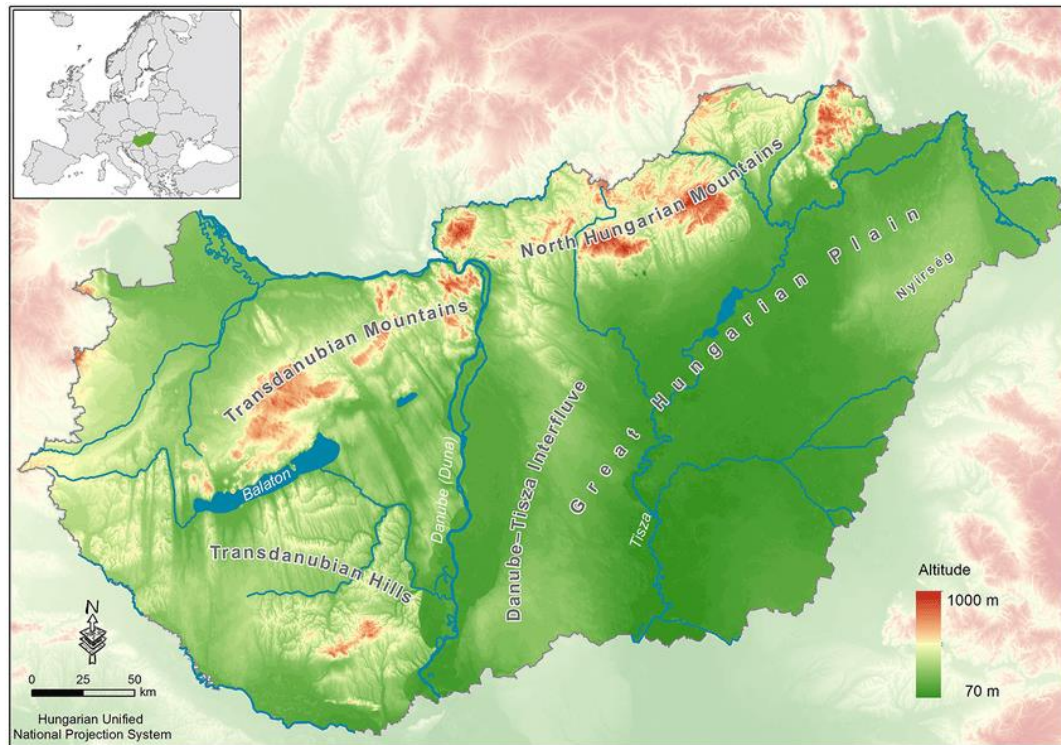


Figure 4.1. Hungary's general geographical conditions. Retrieved from Pásztor et al. (2016, p.2424).

The Great Hungarian Plain, on the other hand, is located in the northwestern part of the country close to the Austrian and Slovak borders and the Danube River. It presents a similar vulnerability in terms of its location and openness, but its closeness to the Danube River could be a logistical advantage. The North Hungarian Mountains in the north close to the Slovakian border is characterized by its forested landscape and moderate height. As a forested mountain, it does not carry similar vulnerabilities with the plains, providing natural cover and natural protection from enemy troops and limited movement routes. Lower than the North Hungarian Mountains, Transdanubian Hills are also characterized similarly. Shulyk et al. (2024, p.89) argue that the impact of having or not having natural barriers is significant regarding military activity and

defense capabilities. In light of these geographic conditions, it could be said that the vulnerability of the plains and lack of natural buffer zones might make the borders more difficult to defend.

Hungary's geographic position in Central Europe is often labeled as crossroads of Europe due to it bordering seven countries. This strategic position could function as a tool of political leverage, as seen in the case of blocking the transit pass of military aid from its territory to Ukraine. On top of its geographical position, its membership status in the EU and NATO, its observer status in the Organization of Turkic States, its Eastern Opening Policy and relations with Russia locate it as a bridge between the East and the West. In other words, this position as a bridge is not only confined to its physical location as this bridge status encompasses the economic and cultural aspects of Hungary. This could be seen in a press statement by Viktor Orbán, as he states that "...Hungary is, in its origins, an Eastern nation: we belong to the West, but we come from the East. ("Press Statement by Viktor Orbán", 2024). This condition is also described as Hungary as the most Eastern of the West and the most Western of the East, in the context of its observer status in the Organization of Turkic States (Açıkalın, 2024).

Mearsheimer (2001, p.71) claims that geographic position and features of a state would define its constraints and abilities. He argues that mountains, large bodies of water and proximity to great powers are factors that shape a state's foreign and defense policies (2001, p.24). In that case, Hungary could be an example of a state which would need to increase defense capabilities because of its very little natural protection and to adopt a suitable foreign policy for the aggressor in the region, that is currently Russia. Despite this geographic exposure to an existing threat, Hungary's increase in defense spending does not represent a strong threat perception. It is clear that Hungarian government does not call for a stronger European defence, and it does not identify Russia as a primary threat to European security (Varga, 2023, p.191), nor to itself.

From a geopolitical perspective, Hungary would be expected to increase its defense capabilities against Russia due to its border with Ukraine at a more significant level. It could be understood that there was only an insignificant amount of increase in military expenditure percentage in Hungary's GDP after Russia's annexation of

Crimea. While it had been 0.85781 in 2014, it increased to 0.90472 in 2015, presenting a 5.47% increase (“Hungary - military expenditure (% of GDP)”, 2025). Comparatively, it has risen from 1.83566 in 2022 to 2.12784 in 2023, which displays a 15.91% increase in military expenditure. However, the increase between 2015 and 2022 is also noteworthy. This difference in the amount of increase signals the invasion’s salience and wider dimension (“Hungary - military expenditure (% of GDP)”, 2025).

4.3. Energy Dependency

Hungary’s energy outlook is shaped by the realities of history, geopolitics and internal resources. It continues to receive a significant portion of its energy from Russia, despite the broader shifts in European energy policies and market diversification efforts. This reliance has its traces in the USSR period, in which the currently used infrastructure was built, and the historical-political ties which have been established. As energy security constitutes a significant concern for Hungary, it focuses on securing stable and affordable energy supply which seems to require maintaining active relations with Russia. This chapter explores Hungary’s strategies for energy security and the balance it aims to maintain internally and externally.

4.3.1. Dependence on Russia

Hungary’s access to energy is significantly dependent on external sources, with Russia at the top of the list. The conditions surrounding Hungary do not seem to result in self-sufficiency in terms of energy for a long time in the future scenarios. A high proportion of Hungary’s natural gas supply comes from Russia. Russian fossil fuel imports consist of the two-thirds of all primary energy sources of Hungary (Járosi & Kovács, 2018, p.70). This high percentage of energy dependence on Russia could be considered a display of the socialist era’s historical legacy which, to this day, could not be removed from Hungary’s policy areas like energy. Hungary’s external dependency stood at 49.7% in 2013, rising to 61.7% as of 2023 (Statista, 2025). The pipelines Druzhba and Bratstvo, meaning Friendship and Brotherhood, are Soviet-made energy connections

that are still in use today in Hungary since 1962 and 1975, respectively (Szabo et al., 2020, p.4).

This everlasting dependency on Russian energy has transformed into a patron-client relationship between the current government of Hungary and Russia (Madlovics & Magyar, 2023, p.7). In addition, this inference has proven to be valid after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the comparatively softer reaction of Hungary presents a relationship which is so indispensable that any harm to this relationship could mean an energy catastrophe for Hungary.

4.3.2. Energy Security

Ensuring energy security for Hungary is an important driver for Hungary's energy policies and is a dominant goal. Russia is considered the main source for accessing energy that is not expensive. The Hungarian government prioritizes that the Russian raw material reaches Hungary "under any circumstances", and it sees Russian gas as the key to achieving energy supply security (Járosi & Kovács, 2018, p.74). The Hungarian government has initiated certain attempts to maintain its energy security, like increasing control over the energy sector by acquiring state ownership in infrastructure and vital market operators that are important for supply security (Járosi & Kovács, 2018, p.74). It could be said that Hungary views that increased control over the incoming processes of energy, as well as positive political relations is vital for energy security. Szabo et al. (2020, p.2) uses the term "nationalization of energy asset" as a part of the supply security. This term refers to tighter state management of the energy sector in order to control the utility prices to consolidate political power.

However, the difference between energy security and energy independence, or energy self-sufficiency should be reminded. Energy security in the general sense is an umbrella term that refers to two different aspects of a state's energy sources. While the first aspect is security of supply, which refers to stable and uninterrupted flow of energy from an external source to the state, the second aspect is self-sufficiency which refers to a state's ability to provide itself with the necessary amount of energy to maintain the energy-requiring consumption sectors like industry and households.

While it is worthwhile to underline that Hungary prioritizes its energy independence, it accepts that this is not likely to happen in the near future. It does not put an impossible objective of achieving complete self-sufficiency soon, but it aims to secure itself in security of supply and reduce external dependency as much as possible.

4.3.3. Paks II Nuclear Power Plant Project

In an attempt to partially achieve a decrease of external dependency, Paks II Project has been agreed on. Paks II refers to the additional construction of two new nuclear reactors, to the existing Paks Nuclear Power Plant, near Budapest. Hungary aims to reduce its overall dependence on energy, and also the dependence on fossil fuels. Járosi and Kovács (2018, p.79) state that Hungary views itself as an energy deficient country and considers this new power plant indispensable for its ability to provide electric supply to its public even if it is coming from a controversial and external source, presenting it as having no other realistic alternative. In addition, they also indicate that in The National Energy Strategy of Hungary, it aims for an electricity sector based on nuclear, coal and renewable sources as attempts to the security of supply that is considered under the pillar of national interest, and competitiveness (2018, p.74).

This project, being developed in cooperation with the Russian nuclear company Rosatom, is significantly financed by a Russian loan. A €10 billion Russian loan has been expanded to the full amount, that is €12 billion. It was initially planned as a 20-year contract, but later reduced to a 10-year exclusive fuel supply contract as a result of EU intervention.

Russia's support both in finance and energy infrastructure creates a controversy. The controversy is that regardless of Hungary's objective of reducing energy dependence, this project in itself could contribute to the existing dependence on Russian energy. This contribution might result from the fact that the path to energy independence still passes from Russia. Therefore, it could be argued that Hungary could not progress in its attempts for energy independence as long as the infrastructural support is still coming from Russia. This detail about the project displays that it is likely that energy independence could not be achieved in a realistic sense. The Paks II project carries the

potential of forming even stronger diplomatic and economic bonds between Hungary and Russia, transforming the nature of the relations to a power-based clientelism (Madlovics & Magyar, 2023, p.22). That Hungarian President Orbán pushed the agreement in the parliament for a faster process and made the related documents classified for thirty years could be considered evidence for the power-based clientelism where Russia is the dominant party.

4.3.4. Balancing the East and the West

Hungary is the only EU member state to increase its cooperation with Russia and continues it, while the other member states are steadily and significantly reducing it. Madlovics & Magyar (2023, p.31) state that this process requires positive, or at least neutral relations with Russia for achieving Hungarian energy policies, which are framed as material self-interests that are more important than solidarity with Ukraine. They also indicate that the Hungarian government has linked the rising energy prices and inflation to the EU sanctions by using phrases like “war inflation” or “sanction inflation” (2023, p.30). These phrases could have been used as a justification to shape public opinion for the ongoing energy cooperation with Russia. In addition, in an attempt to delegitimize solidarity with Ukraine, Orbán has considered the Russian invasion of Ukraine as a Slavic internal affair by stating that “We have never been involved in the debate about how many states the great Slavic sea to the east of us actually consists of...” (The Official Website of the Prime Minister of Hungary, 2022c, as cited in Madlovics & Magyar, 2023, p.26).

While discussing Hungary’s dependence on Russia and its energy security, two aspects should be considered, that are internal diversification and security of supply. Internal diversification refers to Hungary’s attempts to reduce its reliance on natural gas by seeking alternative sources like nuclear power and coal. On the other hand, security of supply means stable and undisrupted access to energy both by diversifying the suppliers and widening the existing connections. Historically, Hungary has been dependent on both Russia and the EU energy markets in an indirect sense. To this day, it could be said that dependence on Russian gas continues, but attempts to reduce this

has started as early as 2009 when Russia-Ukraine gas crisis caused a major disruption in Hungary's energy supply, resulting in an unavoidable vulnerability. In light of this, it could be argued that while Hungary seeks to continue its own supply diversification strategies, such as improving ties with Russia, it actually benefits from the infrastructure provided by the EU thanks to the market access it provides with affordable prices that come from market competitiveness and solidarity (Weiner, 2017, p.5). For example, Hungary could benefit from shared strategic gas reserves in Europe if it needs them in emergency situations, and could also purchase gas from the internal market. However, it still chooses to diversify its energy supply through a state that is perceived to be controversial by the EU member states. This two-faceted approach could be a reflection of Hungary's broader foreign policy compared to its energy policy.

This is also evident in Hungary's objective of balancing integration with the EU by implementing Eastern Opening Policy. This policy could also be explained by Hungary's geopolitical strategy that aims to avoid overreliance on the EU. Hungary's attempts in energy diversification strategy could not be thought of as only about minimizing dependence or securing energy supply. Rather, it seems to be about maximizing political and strategic autonomy within the EU mechanisms. In other words, it could be argued that Hungary's reluctance to identify itself as a European actor, and that it does not seem to have established a trust-based relationship with the EU contributes to its eagerness to secure itself in terms of energy by also integrating with the East, that is mainly Russia (Végh, 2015, p.48).

In conclusion, Hungarian approach to energy security displays a controversial scene of balancing its own objectives with navigating the obligations of being an EU member state. While the Paks II nuclear plant project signals partial diversification and reducing dependency attempts, Russian dependence only becomes more entrenched in Hungarian energy policy. This is a benefit to Russia as it keeps Hungary close to itself. Hungary's position in the EU becomes more complicated with its patron-client relationship with Russia (Madlovics & Magyar, 2023). This attitude and attempts for diversification create a dichotomous and a two-faceted image. High dependency on Russian energy and also benefiting from the alternative energy markets of the EU

present a dichotomy as maintaining both results in tensions. On the other hand, the two-faceted approach that rely on internal diversification through nuclear energy and maintaining diverse external sources presents a less discrete image.

4.4. National Identity

In a general sense, national identity is shaped by various factors such as geography, culture, language and collective memory. While it could be said that some European countries might find their identity in a shared sense of shared Western history and values, Hungary does not seem to be one of them. It presents itself with a departure from this understanding with its unique position resulting from its location, history and self-perception. Hungary has developed an identity for itself, that consists of both European and Eurasian elements. One of the Eurasian elements is its linguistic difference. Hungarian language belongs to the Uralic language family, rather than the Indo-European language family to which most languages spoken in Europe belong. Another Eurasian element is its prolonged period under Ottoman Empire's rule, resulting Hungary to be neither fully Western nor fully Eastern. It displays a hybrid image, creating a mixed background that leads to a wider maneuvering capacity.

In today's Hungary, this mixed background highlights Hungary's non-European image and it manifests itself in its political and cultural expressions. Primarily Viktor Orbán, Hungary's President, emphasize the country's divergence from dominant Western liberal models in an attempt to present Hungary as a distinct and sovereign entity that do not belong to the Western state society. Other Hungarian political leaders have also underlined Hungary's distinctiveness by highlighting issues like national sovereignty, migration, culture and value preservation. This is also evident in its search for new partnerships beyond Europe and its desire to protect its heritage as an independent entity from the EU. Korkut (2017, p.3) indicates that opening to the east stemmed from an economic necessity but later transformed into an evolved political identification for Hungary.

4.4.1. Identity Politics

In the process of exploring Hungary's departure from a European identity, it is important to evaluate the role of identity politics. If the definition presented by Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2024) were to be applied to the Hungarian context, it would be possible to locate the Hungarian people as a group, and the European Union or European actors as the creators of the dominant expectations, to which the Hungarian politics respond with identity politics².

Khorishko and Horlo (2021, p.11) argue that while national identity focuses on collective values, regional identity focuses on the regional interests of the community, that has a narrower scope. In that case, it could be claimed that it would be less likely for any member state of the EU to apply the same values since they would need to be related to a member state's national identity that is based on a more local understanding. To act collectively, only the common interests of the regional community would be the driving factors.

Castells (2004) provide three forms of identity that could help understand identity politics implemented by political elites:

1. legitimizing to rationalize domination,
2. resistance to avoid underestimation,
3. projective identity to build a new identity with a different position in society (as cited in Khorishko & Horlo, 2021, p.11).

The first form of identity politics could be visible in Péter Szijjártó's "no war, no migration, no gender" slogan that he repeats frequently in his visits where he gives speeches and press releases (" 'No war, no migration, no gender' ", 2024). In the general discourse of Orbán, it is possible to see expressions that reinforce conservative values, such as limiting LGBTQ+ rights, calls for peace for Ukraine even if it means Ukraine losing territory and anti-migration statements claiming Hungary's sovereignty in deciding with whom they will live. The second form is evident again in Orbán's

² See page 7.

definition of Hungary as “a conservative island in the liberal ocean of Europe” (Kovács, 2024) and “an illiberal democracy” (Suleiman, 2021, p.1).

After facing criticisms from the EU, Orbán has adopted a defensive stance that resists external pressures. Compatible with its characterization of the EU institutions as liberals and threats to the Hungarian sovereignty, he underlined that Hungary is an illiberal democracy with an aim to distance itself from the rest of Europe. This way, it could be possible to gain domestic support as a defender of the Hungarian state and public against the perceived external threats, and become an active protector from perceived foreign interference.

The “Let’s Stop Brussels” campaign could be an example to the distancing attempts of the Hungarian government from the European Commission, which it portrays as an “alien” and “distant power” that aims to “attack” and “interfere” (Koller, 2024, p.75). Lastly, projective identity could be considered parallel with the changes in educational, cultural and demographic policies in Hungary with an attempt to create a new Hungarian identity based on nationalistic and conservatist values.

Fukuyama (2018b, p.92) presents a similar but different definition for identity politics by stating that it is a political approach that adopts the recognition of dignity of specific groups as a priority along with their national and ethnic identities, which might be marginalized or disrespected. In other words, identity politics might arise when certain groups, or the leaders of those groups believe that their unique experiences are not recognized, leading them to demand respect for their distinctiveness.

In light of this definition, it could be possible to claim that, especially after 2010, the Hungarian government has started to express its desire for more respect for its different experience and needs, as well as more political recognition and autonomy as a sovereign state. Viktor Orbán has been promoting a national identity rooted in conservatist values based on a Christian traditional understanding. His portrayal of the Hungarian nation under threat from immigration, gender propaganda, globalization efforts outside of trade and the liberal understanding in general signals a loss of dignity and undermining of national heritage. Koller (2024, p.129) indicates that a strong nation-building requires the popularization of the memory of a common ethnic past

and symbols rooting from a shared history, and this forms the national identities of individuals, as ethno-symbolists argue. This means that it may not be likely for an individual to adopt the identity of even its own nation without the cultural and historical components. On top of this, it is also argued that, without these aspects that could be defined as a “common ethnic past”, identity formation could not be possible in environments like the European Union (Smith, 1986;1991, as cited in Koller, 2024). In that case, it could be stated that since the EU naturally does not and cannot provide its member states with an ethnic or common history and a shared culture, member states adopting an EU-based national identity would only be adopting a pseudo-identity because of the missing aspects. This pseudo-identity could be a risk factor contributing to the existence of different aspirations and interests of the member states, as in the case of Hungary.

Another perspective to this issue is brought up by Risse (2005), who indicates that it may not be accurate to think that an intensified European identity would directly mean a decrease in a member state’s loyalty to its national community (as cited in Koller, 2024, p.131). In the present case, it seems that the Hungarian government, despite not distancing itself fully from the EU, does not believe in the possibility of the two identities, Hungarian and European, coexisting equally together.

Table 4.1. below provides an analysis to present how the Hungarian government frames identity-related problems with four types of problems that are threat, deprivation, loss and unreasonableness. It is visible that Hungary constructs the perceived threats as external factors either causing intervention or discrimination. In other words, Hungary views the threats its perceived either as things that risks its internal dynamics or as tools that function to discriminate it in systems such as the EU. Another thing that could be interpreted is that the Hungarian government perceives the EU and globalization as threats to Hungary’s sovereignty.

It could also be argued that conservatist values like Christianity, traditional family values are essential pillars of Hungarian identity, which is perceived to be in danger. The solution seems to be adopting internal reinforcements through involving religion in politics. It could also be said that a systematic political strategy is being followed through framing external pressures as existential threats and employing these to justify

internal nationalistic and conservatist policies. As a result, an “us versus them” discourse occurs and authoritarian governance is justified as it is portrayed as necessary for survival (Panizza, 2017, p. 366., as cited in Bán, 2022, p.19).

Table 4.1. Framing analysis of the identity problem in Hungary.

Frame of the problem	Interpretation What is the problem?	Rationalization Why is this a problem?	Reaction to the problem What should be done?
Threat, disaster	EU intervention in state affairs; economic crisis; dependence on foreign investors.	National elite loses subjectivity in the reform process; low level of welfare of citizens compared to other EU members.	"Economic Liberation War"; consolidation of society based on cultural and religious values; strengthening of identification with the political system.
Deprivation of rights, oppression, discrimination	Uneven conditions for receiving subsidies and funding; IMF intervention; ignoring the role of religion in shaping European values by the EU; the impact of migration processes on the national unity.	Use of the resource potential of a state by MNC; weakness of domestic producers among other EU countries; change in the content of family values; reducing the level of cultural identification.	Introduction of a tax on the activities of "big business"; strengthening the influence of religious and national values in the formation of public consciousness; introduction of quotas for migrants.
Loss	Deprivation of sovereignty in economics and politics; blurring of national and religious identity.	MNCs lobby their own interests, staying away from state problems; lack of a clear power vertical; reducing the importance of Christian values in the formation of national identity.	Tax pressure on MNCs; centralization of power; strict defence of the interests of the state; amending the Constitution on the role of religion in the formation of political and national identity.
Unreasonableness	Liberal reforms form economic dependence; why fight for sovereignty if it had to be given to the EU.	Dependence of state policy on EU decisions; discrepancy between EU and national interests.	Clear awareness of national interests; strict defence of country's positions within EU structures; putting pressure on the EU within the Visegrád Group.

Developed by Khorishko and Horlo, 2021 (p.14), based on Lukianov, F. (2017) and Orbán V. (2017).

Hungary's unique identification and de-Europeanization through various efforts could be a factor shaping its response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Distancing itself from the liberal democratic norms and values, reasserting national sovereignty, focusing on identity politics in the domestic scene and creating a rhetoric reflecting these display its efforts to justify its divergent stance towards Russia and Ukraine. Hungary does not identify as a fully European state that adopts values associated with the EU. Instead, it emphasizes conservative values, sovereignty and national interest,

which allows it to explicitly prioritize pragmatic decisions in its foreign policy, especially when it comes to energy security and economy. As a result, Hungary overrides collective EU solidarity and commitments to liberal democratic values.

4.4.2. Global Opening

Since the early 2010s, with the new government, Hungary has signaled a significant departure from its Euro-Atlantic integration emphasis influenced by the post-Cold War period. This departure could be considered a reflection of Hungary's objective of recalibrating itself to a wider and multipolar international system with an expansion of its political, economic and even cultural ties beyond the borders of European Union and NATO (Tarrósy & Vörös, 2014b, p.144). The Global Opening would mean a deepening of engagement with other states from Asia, Middle East, Africa and Latin America with a search for new markets, geopolitical partnerships and investment opportunities. However, the strongest emphasis was on the Visegrád group since Hungary does not position itself as distant as it is to the rest of the EU member states. The timing of this initiative is worthy of consideration since this shift has coincided with the period of tensions with the EU institutions about democratic governance and the rule of law issues. Alongside with the national identity politics and small-scale de-Europeanization efforts, this shift signaled a major counter to Western norms. This could be interpreted as Hungary's efforts of presenting itself as a capable state who could act autonomously and outside of Europe, with an emphasis on an interest-driven foreign and trade policy.

A brief look at Hungarian history after 1989 signals a return to the international community as an independent state with its own values and objectives. There were three core pillars of building Hungary as a new independent state: EU accession, joining NATO, and neighborhood policy for Hungarian communities abroad (Tarrósy & Vörös, 2014a, p.273).

As accession into the European Union was the top priority, and it required not only fulfilling the criteria which was defined by the Treaty of Maastricht, and then by Copenhagen criteria, but also drawing a European image for itself. Therefore, Hungary

aimed to distance itself from its Soviet background with less and less relations with Russia.

Tarrósy and Vörös (2014a, p.294) argue that Hungary aimed to reposition itself in an interpolar world, in which power is diffused among different rising actors. They continue to argue that while this opening is displayed as a necessity of a globalized world, it also reflects a broader ideological base and a departure from Western liberal norms and constraints posed by the EU, that is visible especially in Hungary's relations with China and Russia with economic and political opportunities (2014, p.280).

Hungary has aimed to engage deeply with the BRICS states with its objective of diversification of partnerships beyond the Euro-Atlantic axis. While Hungary draws an image of an actor who is pursuing pragmatic relations, it is argued that this claimed pragmatism has become uneven and ideology-based, especially visible in its close ties with Russia and China, which might result in the risk of isolation (Tarrósy et al., 2024, p.63). This claim of pragmatism could challenge Hungary's interest-driven foreign and trade policy as ideological interests and domestic political objectives could harm its image. In addition, having closer ties with perceived controversial actors like Russia and China could be contributing factors to harming its image in the EU, resulting in a risk of isolation, even if the objective is to reduce dependence on the EU and NATO.

Tarrósy et al. (2024, p.64) argue that Hungary's foreign policy has moved from true pragmatism to a one that could be defined as "anti-western" foreign policy characterized by criticism of Western actors along with its close ties with Russia and its failure to genuinely condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which results in the consideration that Hungary's changing foreign policy and seeking of new partnerships could be an ideological preference. Otherwise, it may not have been controversial that Hungary is building new partnerships outside of the EU since this action could signal a multipolar understanding of the world.

4.4.3. Eastern Opening

The Eastern Opening presents another indication of the ideology-based foreign policy. Furthering relations with countries like Russia and China might be a factor in making

Hungary's image as an illiberal state stronger. Viktor Orbán's repetitive expressions of a "Western decline" is a contributing factor to infer an ideology-based foreign policy. For example, Orbán claimed the traditional Berlin-Paris axis of power is replaced by a new London-Warsaw-Kyiv axis, with Baltic and Scandinavian countries being involved, too (Cieslar, 2024). In this expression, while undermining the Franco-German influence on the EU, he seems to be highlighting the new position of Ukraine in the EU after the Russian invasion. This expression could also mean that Orbán views the EU as a place where power has started to be more dispersed, which would mean the creation of more equal standards, whose existence he does not believe in.

This belief in a Western decline and a need for a policy of opening to the East is visibly displayed in the expression that "We sail under the Western flag, but the wind is blowing in the East of the world economy", by Orbán ("Opening to the East May be More Successful", 2024). It was in 2014 that he has used the expression "illiberal state" by admitting that his government is building one, which was not a surprise due to the domestic measures taken between 2010 and 2014, but still received strong reactions because of its explicit manner (Juhász, 2014). After 15 years of being in power, explicitly or implicitly, the objective of making Hungary an illiberal state does not seem to have changed. Greilinger (2023, p.4) comments that Hungary's new ideological model and its new focus on its foreign policy are compatible with each other, and even the former supports the latter. While this ideological model is consistent with its close relations with Russia, it needs to be underlined that Hungary is at a "greater risk of political influence" from Russia, which seems to be related to improving Russia's economic presence in Hungary (Conley, 2016, p.10).

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, while factors such as national interest based on energy security and identity perceptions has been influential, its vulnerable geopolitical position has not been a significant element in Hungary's divergent position on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Hungary's energy dependence on Russia, and its utilization of this dependence as justification for its position has created a motivation that makes

Hungary avoid antagonizing Russia. Instead, it prioritized stable bilateral relations with Russia. It could be interpreted that Russian manipulation is also at play as Russia benefits from Hungary's dependence on and closeness with Russia. Moreover, Hungary's identity emphasizing national sovereignty, Eurasian background and illiberal democracy displays its departure from a collective European vision. Despite Hungary's geographical position and features that make it vulnerable, its ongoing relations with Russia and its proximity to the active war zones do not seem to present an emergency or a necessity for military capability enhancement. When these factors are examined together, they could explain Hungary's resistance to support Ukraine and opposition to sanctions on Russia.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis is to present, analyze and compare the varying responses of Poland, Romania and Hungary to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which is considered a critical issue regarding European security architecture. The primary research question asks the reason why these states diverge in their responses despite their similar histories and common institutional memberships. The sub-questions are about the role of geopolitics, energy dependence and national identity.

Throughout the three chapters so far, the different reactions of these three states, who are immediate neighbors of Ukraine, have been explored. Their responses have been shaped by three important factors that are geopolitics, national identification and energy dependence that ultimately influenced their foreign policy orientations, ultimately due to their vulnerability to Russian influence. These factors altogether present a picture in which Russia's role, described as either manipulative or having limited influence, becomes important in shaping these states' behavior. This chapter compares the diverging responses from these three states with the objective of revealing the underlying reasons for their positions.

Hungary's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine could be summarized by mentioning its strategic ambiguity and overall divergence from its EU counterparts. While it participated in a formal condemnation and initially underlined its commitment to its EU and NATO responsibilities, the policies implemented by Hungary strongly deviated from the EU stance and response. The discourse about the war has been mainly about how Hungary should not be negatively affected by this conflict, how this conflict is irrelevant to them and how the EU is to be blamed for prolonging the war. The most two significant actions by Hungarian leaders were their expectations of exemptions from the sanctions and the ongoing relations with Russia.

In contrast, Poland emerged as a strong supporter of Ukraine by being vocal about the war, providing extensive military and humanitarian aid, as well as functioning as a logistical hub for the aid provided by other states thanks to its strategic location. Poland's policies throughout the war clearly displayed its Atlanticist orientation that it adopted after the collapse of the communist rule and its increased awareness of Russia as an existential threat in the region and the globe. Ukraine losing its buffer state status from Poland's perspective contributed to Poland's sense of vulnerability. Therefore, Ukraine to be secure and sovereign again gained more importance as Ukraine's security would function as a shield between the European states and Russia, which had been the case until 24 February 2022. In addition, Poland's energy diversification efforts which have started long before the outbreak of the war allowed it to respond firmly to Russia. Overall, Poland's response seems to have been informed by a strong identity as a frontline NATO member and an EU state, which led it to act as an actor responsible for European security.

Romania, on the other hand, seems to have emerged as a more cautious actor compared to Poland, retaining a tendency to support Ukraine and resisting Russian aggression. Romanian leader condemned Russia's actions, described them as violations of international law on many occasions, and underlined the vitality of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Despite having a complicated history with Ukraine due to territorial disputes that were resolved in favor of Ukraine, Romania did not present this as an excuse to not support Ukraine. Instead, it viewed Ukrainian sovereignty as a prerequisite for its own security, with concerns for a potential spillover. The most significant support of Romania was facilitating the export of Ukrainian grain through its ports. However, it did not make the details of the military aid it provided to Ukraine public. This is considered an attempt to balance its commitments for EU and NATO, and Russia with the objective of not provoking a direct hostility. As an important actor of Black Sea security, navigating carefully between the two sides emerged as a serious task.

Geopolitics is an important aspect in understanding the varying responses of these three states. All three states are immediate neighbors of Ukraine, and are located in vulnerable regions that provide them very little natural barriers in case of an escalation

of the war to their territories. These geographic conditions making them vulnerable also made them increase their awareness of potential military threats. However, despite their similar vulnerabilities, their reactions have diverged. Poland, with its proximity to Belarus, a strong ally of Russia, and Kaliningrad, an exclave of Russia, perceived Russia as a direct threat and a long-lasting source of danger, which resulted in in to improve its defense policies and assume a regional leadership role. Romania, located on the Black Sea and positioned as a bridge between the conflict zone and the Euro-Atlantic area, maintained a more cautious stance but functioned as a host of NATO activities thanks to its strategic location. Hungary appeared to be the most divergent state among the three states as it has not been as responsive to the threat due to its ongoing relations with Russia which might have reduced a perceived risk from Russia, despite its proximity to the conflict zone.

Energy dependency occurs as another point of divergence. While Hungary seems to be heavily reliant on Russian energy, and particularly on gas supply and nuclear infrastructure support, Poland emerges as not dependent on Russian energy. At a first glance, for Hungary, it could be said that its client-patron relationship with Russia dominates its foreign policy orientation in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, when compared to Poland, a similar level of energy diversification could have been possible for Hungary, too, if it chose to do so. That is why, the energy dependence of Hungary on Russia could be serving as a justification for its divergent and limited response. In Poland's case, the long-term diversification efforts allowed Poland to act in freedom while responding to Russia and Ukraine since Russia's use of energy supply as political leverage diminished significantly. Similar to Poland, Romania, as one of the least dependent states on Russia, benefited from its relatively resilient domestic energy supply. On top of possessing domestic energy sources, Romania's energy diversification efforts contributed to its ability to respond to Russia and Ukraine, even if it was limited. Its low energy dependence allowed it to possess the autonomy to position itself in the way it sees fit.

National identity is another factor contributing to the changing responses of the three states. It is clear that the national identity principles of these states were influential in shaping their responses as certain principles were entrenched in their foreign policy

inclinations. First, Hungary's foreign policy seems to be majorly influenced by its new governance model based on illiberalism, built by Viktor Orbán. The emphasis on illiberalism is in strong contrast with core EU values. Orbán's ideological distance from the liberal democratic understanding of the EU, and its Eastern Opening policy are parallel conditions. These display a de-Europeanization trend and a skepticism towards a common European identity that could work as a cooperative ground for unity. Therefore, Hungary searches for alternative actors with whom it could cooperate and locates Russia as one of them, resulting in it to not respond firmly.

On the other hand, Poland's response to Russia and Ukraine seem to be mainly stemming from its pro-Western stance. This stance is considered to have its roots in the objective to remove itself from Russian influence during the post-communist period. Poland's alignment with NATO and the US, as well as the EU in this period became ingrained in its national identity as a European state, which influenced its foreign policy principles that are mainly Atlanticism and being pro-EU. In addition to this stance, Poland has been a strong advocate of Ukraine with support for its integration into the Western institutions, which could weaken Russian influence in the region, creating a more secure Ukraine. Being pro-EU and an Atlanticist does not allow for a neutral or inactive position.

Lastly, Romania's identity is based on two main pillars that are its pro-European stance and its communist legacy. First, its pro-European stance consists of its emphasis on coming from a Latin ancestry, which contributes to its identification as a European state, and its NATO membership which establishes it as a crucial Black Sea security actor. Second, its communist history pushes it to be constantly aware of a potential Russian threat in the region, similar to Poland. That is why, on top of being aware, Romania maintains a cautious stance in order not to provoke Russia to avoid a potential spillover. The challenge is to maintain the balance between its EU and NATO commitments and its objective to not provoke Russia. To achieve this balance, it employs a cautious stance that condemns Russia and supports Ukraine in a limited sense.

After an analysis of these three factors, it could be argued that their implications could be understood through the lens of Russian manipulation of each state. Hungary's

energy dependence on Russia seems to have made it particularly susceptible to Russian dominance and leverage. This caused Hungary to reorient its policies, which led to a disrupted EU cohesion. The disrupted EU cohesion due to the diverging responses of these states could signal that EU coherence is not as stable as to result in similar responses. Poland, by contrast, remained mostly resistant to Russian influence and manipulation through building a national identity which does not include a pro-Russia stance. Despite experiencing Euroskepticism in certain periods, it did not become susceptible to Russian influence. Romania, on the other hand, seems to have a middle position in comparison to the other two states. Its geopolitical concerns in the Black Sea and its adoption of a cautious diplomatic stance present that it is highly aware of the Russian threat in the region but does not maintain close relations with Russia. This awareness seems to lead it to resist Russian influence through a West-ward orientation. These cases present that Russia's role functions as a thread that connects these three factors together, regardless of Russia being a manipulative actor or having limited influence.

In conclusion, it could be claimed that Poland, Romania and Hungary responded to the Russian invasion of Ukraine through perspectives unique to each. First, while geopolitics has been an important factor for Poland and Romania, it has not been for Hungary due to its low threat perception from Russia. Second, national identity has been a shaping factor for all three states as they responded compatible with their previous inclinations towards Russia and Ukraine. Lastly, energy dependence has been another important factor that was taken into consideration while responding to the invasion, with the exception of Hungary who might have used its energy dependence on Russia as an excuse for being a divergent actor.

This thesis based on comparative analysis presents the diverging responses of Ukraine's neighbors. It could be inferred that these classical variables are still relevant in understanding state behavior. As the war continues to reshape European security architecture, understanding frontline state objectives remains necessary to foresee the direction this security architecture will be likely to take.

REFERENCES

- Abnett, K. (2025, May 7). EU warns Romania to remove gas price cap or face legal action. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/eu-warns-romania-remove-gas-price-cap-or-face-legal-action-2025-05-07/>
- Abnett, K., Strupczewski, J., Melander, I. (2022, June 1). EU agrees Russia oil embargo, gives Hungary exemptions; Zelenskiy vows more sanctions. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/best-we-could-get-eu-bows-hungarian-demands-agree-russian-oil-ban-2022-05-31/>
- Açıkalın, Ş. N. (2024, November 13). Hungary's increasing role in the Organization of Turkic States. *Daily Sabah*. <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/hungarys-increasing-role-in-the-organization-of-turkic-states>
- President of the Russia. (2021, February 24). Article by Vladimir Putin "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians". <http://en.kremlin.ru/misc/66182>
- Affek, A. N., Wolski, J., Zachwatowicz, M., Ostafin, K., & Radeloff, V. C. (2021). Effects of post-WWII forced displacements on long-term landscape dynamics in the Polish Carpathians. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 214, 104164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2021.104164>
- Albu, R.M. (2020). Geopolitics of Romania and Poland in 20th and 21st century. *European Journal of Geopolitics*, 8, pp. 53-75.
- Alexandrescu, S., & Brînzaru, S. (1998). *Paradoxul român*. Univers.
- Andrei, V. (2024, February 21). *The Re-Latinization of Romania. The Conservative*. <https://www.theconservative.online/the-re-latinization-of-romania>

Armstrong, J.A. (1982). *Nations before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Aszódi, A. (2022, September 2). *A nuclear safety expert's view on the crisis at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant*. Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. <https://thebulletin.org/2022/09/a-nuclear-safety-experts-view-on-the-crisis-at-the-zaporizhzhia-nuclear-power-plant/>

Balcer, A., Buras, P., Gromadzki, G., & Smolar, E. (2016). Change in Poland, but what change? Assumptions of Law and Justice party foreign policy. *Stefan Batory Foundation*, 1-18.

Bán, I.Z. (2022). *Viktor Orbán's Hungary: Interaction between Rhetoric and Political System* [Master's thesis, Aalborg University].

Baran, Z. (2007). EU energy security: time to end Russian leverage. *Washington Quarterly*, 30(4), 131-144.

Barnett, M. N., & Finnemore, M. (1999). The politics, power, and pathologies of international organizations. *International organization*, 53(4), 699-732.

Bayer, L. (2022, March 1). Hungary refuses to allow weapons transit to Ukraine. *Politico*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-foreign-minister-peter-szijarto-weapon-transit-ukraine/>

Beluhova-Uzunova, R., Mann, S., Prisacariu, M., & Sadłowski, A. (2024). Compensating for the Indirect Effects of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine—Varied approaches from Bulgaria, Poland and Romania. *EuroChoices*, 23(1), 11-18.

Boia, L. (2001). *Romania: Borderland of Europe*, Reaktion Books.

Bráder, Á. (2024, January 9). EU adopts newest sanctions package against Russia, Hungary achieves exemption. *Hungarian Conservative*. https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/current/eu_sanctions_package_russia_hungary_exemption_metro/

Brzeziński, B. (2023, September 14). Poland's conservatives need the rural vote to stay in power. Will it hold up? *POLITICO*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-mateusz-morawiecki-conservatives-need-the-rural-vote-to-stay-in-power-will-it-hold-up/>

Cadier, D. & Szulecki, K. (2022) Populism, historical discourse and foreign policy: The case of Poland's Law and Justice government. *Historical Memory and Foreign Policy* 57(6): 49–70.

Całus, K. (2022, October 14). *Extremely cautious: Romania's approach to the Russian invasion of Ukraine*. Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW). <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2022-10-14/extremely-cautious-romanias-approach-to-russian-invasion-ukraine>

Carpathian Mountains (2025, June 15). Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Carpathian-Mountains>

Casier, T. (2011). The rise of energy to the top of the EU-Russia agenda: From interdependence to dependence?. *Geopolitics*, 16(3), 536-552.

Castells, M. (2004). *The power of identity*. Malden MA: Blackwell.

Ceaușescu and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: The Early Years of Dealing with a Dictator. (n.d.) Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training <https://adst.org/2021/01/ceausescu-and-the-soviet-invasion-of-czechoslovakia-the-early-years-of-dealing-with-a-dictator/>

Černoch, F., Lehotský, L., & Konvalinová, A. (2024). Navigating Russia's war and energy transition: Poland's coal challenge. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 113, 103548.

Chancellery of the Prime Minister. (2023). *Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki: We are not leaving farmers to their own devices*. <https://www.gov.pl/web/primeminister/prime-minister-mateusz-morawiecki-we-are-not-leaving-farmers-to-their-own-devices>

Chappell, L. (2012). *Germany, Poland and the common security and defence policy: converging security and defence perspectives in an enlarged EU (2012th ed.)*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- CIA (2013). *Fundamentals of Military Geography*.
<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp81-01043r002400130005-2>
- Cieslar, J. Š. (2024). Tomáš Pojar: Europe needs a strong American president who will not have Congress against him. *Czech Army and Defence Magazine*.
<https://www.czdefence.com/article/tomas-pojar-europe-needs-a-strong-american-president-who-will-not-have-congress-against-him>
- Ciot, M.-G., & Butișcă, L.-M. (2025). Challenges to energy policy in the context of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict: An overview of the case of Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2025.2472637>
- Conley, H. A., Mina, J., Stefanov, R., & Vladimirov, M. (2016). *The Kremlin Playbook: Understanding Russian Influence in Central and Eastern Europe*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Connolly, K., & Wintour, P. (2022, April 5). Pressure mounts on German ministers to embargo Russian energy. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/04/pressure-mounts-germany-embargo-russian-energy-imports>
- Constanta, Romania - Intercultural city. (2024, October 15). Intercultural Cities Programme. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/constantat>
- Court, E. (2023, October 10). *Iohannis: Almost 60% of Ukrainian grain exports transit through Romania*. *The Kyiv Independent*.
<https://kyivindependent.com/iohannis-almost-60-of-ukrainian-grain-exports-transit-through-romania/>
- Damian, N., Mitrică, B., Săgeată, R., & Roznoviețchi, I. (2023). The cross-border effects of the Ukrainian refugees' crisis. Evidence from the Romanian side. *Europa XXI*, 45, 37-59.
- Diakun, B. (2022). *Ukraine's Danube ports increase activity to boost grain trade*. (2022, June 13). *Lloyd's List*.
<https://www.lloydlist.com/LL1141204/Ukraine%e2%80%99s-Danube-ports-increase-activity-to-boost-grain-trade>

- Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) (2022, March 10). *Ukraine: EU continues providing emergency aid as Commissioner Lenarčič visits Romania*. European Commission. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/ukraine-eu-continues-providing-emergency-aid-commissioner-lenarcic-visits-romania-2022-03-10_en
- Doeser F. (2018), Historical experiences, strategic culture, and strategic behaviour: Poland in the anti-ISIS coalition. *Defence Studies*, 18, No. 4, DOI:10.1080/14702436.2018.1502038.
- Dudău, R. (2014). Romania's Energy Strategy Options: Current Trends in Eastern Europe's Natural Gas Markets. *EPG Analysis*, 2.
- Dumont, G.-F., & Verluise, P. (2016). A Singular Geographical Space. In *The Geopolitics of Europe: From the Atlantic to the Urals* (2nd ed.). Diploweb.
- Dunn, D. H., (2002). Poland: America's new model ally. *Defence Studies*, 2:2, 63-86, DOI:10.1080/14702430208405026
- Dupont, C., & Oberthür, S. (2012). Insufficient Climate Policy Integration in EU Energy Policy: the importance of the long-term perspective. *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 8. DOI:10.30950/jcer.v8i2.474.
- Durakcay, F. A. (2023). Hungary's Position on The Russia-Ukraine War and Its Implications For Cooperation in The Visegrad Group. *Eurasian Research Journal*, 5(4), 7–26. <https://doi.org/10.53277/2519-2442-2023.4-01>
- Duszczyk, M., & Kaczmarczyk, P. (2022). Poland and war refugees from Ukraine—beyond pure aid. *CESifo Forum* (Vol. 23, No. 04, pp. 36-40). München: ifo Institut-Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung an der Universität München.
- Dyduch, J. & Góra, M. (2023). Polish Reactions to Russian Aggression Against Ukraine. In *Polarization, Shifting Borders and Liquid Governance* (pp. 301–319). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-44584-2_18
- Ehlinger, M., & Knight, M. (2023, September 23). *Never 'insult Poles again,' Poland's prime minister tells Ukraine's Zelensky*. CNN.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/23/europe/morawiecki-ukraine-zelensky-insult-poland-intl-hnk>

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2025, August 10). *Foreign policy | Definition, Objectives, & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-policy>

Erbil, E., & Tanrısever, O. (2024). Energy Regionalism in Wider Europe: Sub-Regional Energy Dynamics and the EU's Eastern Partnership. *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 23(1), 67-100.

Ernst, I. (2024, October 28). *Romania became EU's largest natural gas producer in Q2. Romania Insider*. <https://www.romania-insider.com/romania-eu-largest-gas-producer-q2-2024>

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2025, January 13). *Ukraine*. https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/europe/ukraine_en

European Commission (2017). *Poland's liquefied natural gas terminal increases Europe's energy security*. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/poland/polands-liquefied-natural-gas-terminal-increases-europes-energy-security

European Commission (2022a, June 23). *Von der Leyen on granting Ukraine and Moldova candidate status*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ac_22_4125

European Commission (2023a, June 23). EU adopts 11th package of sanctions against Russia for its continued illegal war against Ukraine. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3429

European Commission (2023b). *EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes*. https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-assistance-ukraine/eu-ukraine-solidarity-lanes_en

European Commission (2024, December 16). *EU adopts 15th sanctions package against Russia*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ov/ip_24_6430

European Commission (2025a). *EU sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine*.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/attachment/881067/Factsheet_EU_Sanctions_against_Russia_EN.pdf

European Commission. (2019, June). *Romania – Summary of the Commission assessment of the draft National Energy and Climate Plan 2021–2030* (NECP Fact Sheet). Directorate-General for Energy.
https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-06/necp_factsheet_ro_final_0.pdf energy.ec.europa.eu

European Commission. (2021). *The European Green Deal*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

European Commission. (2022b). *Commission Opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union*.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3790

European Commission. (2022c, June 3). EU adopts 6th package of sanctions against Russia. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2802

European Commission. (2022d). *REPowerEU Plan*.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_3131

European Commission. (2025b). *EU military support to Ukraine*.
https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-solidarity-ukraine/eu-assistance-ukraine/eu-military-support-ukraine_en

European External Action Service (2025). *European Union Military Assistance Mission Ukraine (EUMAM)*. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-union-military-assistance-mission-ukraine-eumam_en?s=410260

Eurostat. (2023, May). *Energy dependence in the EU*. Statistics Explained.
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/SEPDF/cache/104551.pdf>

Eurostat. (n.d.). Glossary: Energy dependency rate. Statistics Explained.
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Energy_dependency_rate

Evans, T., & Wilson, P. (1992). Regime theory and the English school of international relations: A comparison. *Millennium*, 21(3), 329-351.

Feliksiak M. & Rogulska B. (2022). Polacy wobec rosyjskiej inwazji na Ukrainę. *Komunikat z badań*.
https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2022/K_038_22.PDF

FM Szijjártó: Impairment of Hungarian communities' rights in Ukraine "Unacceptable." (2022, January 10). *Hungary Today*.
<https://hungarytoday.hu/szijjarto-ukraine-nato-ukrainian-hungarians/>

Folvarčny, A., & Kopeček, L. (2020). Which conservatism? The identity of the Polish Law and Justice party. *Politics in Central Europe*, 16(1), 159-188.

Fornusek, M. (2025, March 17). 'We won't be dragged into this' — Hungary opposes \$22 billion EU aid package for Ukraine. *The Kyiv Independent*.
<https://kyivindependent.com/hungary-vows-to-oppose-22-billion-eu-aid-package-for-ukraine/>

Fortea, C., Zlati, M.-L., Antohi, V.-M., Ionescu, R.-V., & Cristea, D.-S. (2022). Analysis of the energy status in Romania from the sustainable development perspective in the current geopolitical context. *Annals of "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, Fascicle I. Economics and Applied Informatics*, 3, 53–60.
<https://doi.org/10.35219/eai15840409287>

Fukuyama, F. (2018a). Why national identity matters. *Journal of Democracy*, 29(4), 5-15.

Fukuyama, F. (2018b). Against identity politics: The new tribalism and the crisis of democracy. *Foreign Aff.*, 97, 90.

Furmankiewicz, M., Potocki, J., & Kazak, J. (2019). Land-Use conflicts in the Sudetes, Poland. *IOP Conference Series Materials Science and Engineering*, 471, 092033. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899x/471/9/092033>

Gabor, G. (2022). *US-Romanian Relations—Strategic Partnership*. In *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference Strategies XXI. Volume XVIII* (pp. 229-235). Carol I National Defence University Publishing House.

- Gajauskaite, I. (2013). Strategic partnerships in foreign policy: comparative analysis of Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnerships. *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, 11(1), 189.
- Gebhard, C. (2017). The problem of coherence in the European Union's international relations. In C. Hill, M. Smith, & S. Vanhoonacker (Eds.), *International relations and the European Union* (3rd ed., pp. 123–142). Oxford University Press.
- Genç Yılmaz, A. (2019). Review of the book Foreign policy analysis: A toolbox, by J. F. Morin & J. Paquin. *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 16(62), 155–158. <https://doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.588962>
- Gerasymchuk, S. (2022, May 19). *Reaction of the neighbouring countries to the Russian attack*. Prism Ua. <https://prismua.org/en/russian-attack/>
- Gherman, N. (2023, April 28). *Romania and its dual identity*. 3 Seas Europe. <https://3seaseurope.com/romania-identity-latin-orthodox-slavic-balkan/>
- Ghincea, M. (2025, July 1). *Making Waves: Romania's Black Sea Balancing Act*. IPS Journal. <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/foreign-and-security-policy/making-waves-8094/>
- Gizińska, I. & Sadecki, A. (2023). Hungary's strained relations with the US: betting it all on Trump. OSW Centre for Eastern Studies. <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2023-11-16/hungarys-strained-relations-us-betting-it-all-trump>
- Government fights in EU for operation of Budapest metro line. (2023, June 30). *Hungary Today*. <https://hungarytoday.hu/government-fights-in-eu-for-the-operation-of-budapest-metro-line/>
- Government of Netherlands. (2024, February 6). *Ukraine: €50 billion in extra support from the European Union*. <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2024/02/06/ukraine-50-billion-euros-in-extra-support-from-the-european-union>
- Greilinger, G. (2023). Hungary's Eastern Opening Policy as a Long-Term Political-Economic Strategy. *Austria institute fur Europa-und sicheheitspolitik*.

Grigorescu, L. (2023). The Strategic Importance of the Danube in the Context of a Future Romanian Maritime Security Strategy for the Black Sea. *Romanian Military Thinking*, (2), 96-115.

Hamilton, T. (2022). Defending Ukraine with EU weapons: arms control law in times of crisis. In *European Law Open* (Vols. 1–635, pp. 635–659). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/elo.2022.35>

Hess, M. (2025, April 22). *How Eastern Europe overhauled its natural gas market*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/04/how-eastern-europe-overhauled-its-natural-gas-market?lang=en>

Hungary - military expenditure (% of GDP)2025 data 2026 forecast 1970-2023 historical. Trading Economics. (2025). <https://tradingeconomics.com/hungary/military-expenditure-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html>

Hungary demands Ukraine reinstate pre-2015 rights for Hungarians in Transcarpathia. (2024, January 29). *TASS*. <https://tass.com/world/1738817>

Hungary has been providing humanitarian aid to Ukrainians since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. (2024, February 23). Dnipropetrovsk Investment Agency. <https://dia.dp.gov.ua/en/hungary-has-been-providing-humanitarian-aid-to-ukrainians-since-the-beginning-of-the-full-scale-invasion/>

Hungary opposes sanctions against Russia. (2022, May 10). Three Seas Local Government Initiative . <https://congress.lubelskie.pl/en/hungary-opposes-sanctions-against-russia/>

Hungary refuses to train Ukrainian servicemen — diplomat. (2022, December 5). *TASS*. <https://tass.com/world/1546089>

identity politics. (2025). Cambridge Dictionary <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/identity-politics>

Iliescu, I. (2011, July 7). *Romania's Return to its Western Identity: Internal Reforms and International Security Contribution*. Wilson Center.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/247-romantias-return-to-its-western-identity-internal-reforms-and-international-security>

Jakóbik, W. (2024, August 10). Fact-check: is “hypocritical” Poland still buying Russian oil as Orbán claims? *Notes From Poland*.
<https://notesfrompoland.com/2024/08/06/fact-check-is-hypocritical-poland-still-buying-russian-oil-as-orban-claims/>

Járosi, M., & Kovács, P. (2018). Energy policy of Hungary. *Polgári Szemle: Gazdasági És Társadalmi Folyóirat*, 14(Spec.), 67-80.

Juhász, A. (2014, August 21). Announcing the “illiberal state.” Heinrich Böll Stiftung.
<https://www.boell.de/en/2014/08/21/announcing-illiberal-state>

Jureńczyk, Ł. (2023). Changing the Importance of Poland in the Security Policy of the United States in the Context of the war in Ukraine. *Przegląd Politologiczny*, (1), 53-64.

Kaczmarek, K., Karpiuk, M., & Kostrubiec, J. (2025). Security of the Eastern Border of the European Union: The Politico-Legal Aspects. *Revista Jurídica Portucalense*, 1(38), 190-205.

Kamola–Cieślik, M. (2015). LNG terminal in Świnoujście as an element of Poland’s energy security. *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, 44(1), 268–282.
<https://doi.org/10.15804/ppsy2015018>

Kamyk, J., Kot-Niewiadomska, A., & Galos, K. (2020). The criticality of crude oil for energy security: A case of Poland. *Energy*, 220, 119707.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.energy.2020.119707>

Keohane, R. O., & Martin, L. L. (1995). The promise of institutionalist theory. *International security*, 20(1), 39-51.

Kholina, M. (2024, January 29). We must redouble our efforts so that people in Ukraine can live in peace - Szijjártó. *RBC-Ukraine*.
<https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/news/we-must-redouble-our-efforts-so-that-people-1706547898.html>

Khorishko, L., & Horlo, N. (2021). National identity in the discourse of political elites of Poland and Hungary. *Revista Amazonia Investiga*, 10(40), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.34069/ai/2021.40.04.1>

Kjellén, R. (1920). *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik*. S. Hirzel.

Klatt, M. (2011). 'Poland and its Eastern Neighbours: Foreign Policy Principles', *Journal of Contemporary European Research*. 7(1), 1–16. <http://www.jcer.net/ojs/index.php/jcer/article/view/242/233>

Kochanek, E. (2021). Evaluation of Energy Transition Scenarios in Poland. *Energies*, 14(19), 6058. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.3390/en14196058>

Koller, B. (2024). Hungarian and European at the Same Time: Exploring the Connections between National and European Identities. In T. Navracsics & B. Tárnok, *The 2024 Hungarian EU Presidency*, 127.

Komarnytskyy, M. (2023). From Policy to Practice: Interpreting Polish Strategic Culture Amidst the Russian Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine. *Przegląd Strategiczny*, 13(16), 309-320.

Konieczny, M. (2022). Border crime in the aspect of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland: Przestępczość graniczna w aspekcie wojny hybrydowej Białorusi z Polską. *Studia Prawnoustrojowe*, (57). <https://doi.org/10.31648/sp.7748>

Kononczuk W (2023) The Polish-Ukrainian Bond Is Here to Stay, Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe. Brussels: Strategic Europe.

Korkut, U. (2017). Resentment and Reorganization: Anti-Western Discourse and the Making of Eurasianism in Hungary. *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, (38), 71-90.

Kormany.hu. (2022). Orbán Viktor éwertékelő beszéde [Viktor Orbán's annual review speech]. <https://kormany.hu/beszedekek-interjuk/miniszterelnok/orban-viktorevertetekelo-beszede-20220212>

Kostina, I., & Shumilin, O. (2025, May 7). *Romania responds to Putin's claim that Bucharest was partly to blame for war in Ukraine*. *Ukrainska Pravda*. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2025/05/7/7511047/>

- Kovács, R. (2025, January 28). Poland's LNG Terminal increased its capacity. *Ceenergy News*. <https://ceenergynews.com/lng/poland-lng-terminal-capacity/>
- Kovács, Z. (2024, November 1). PM Orbán: “Hungary is a conservative island in the liberal European ocean.”. <https://abouthungary.hu/blog/pm-Orban-hungary-is-a-conservative-island-in-the-liberal-european-ocean>
- Kvasha, K. (2025, March 6). “Security, Europe!”: Poland’s rise as NATO’s defense spending leader. Wilson Center. <https://gbv.wilsoncenter.org/article/security-europe-polands-rise-natos-defense-spending-leader>
- Kvasha, K. (2025, March 6). “Security, Europe!”: Poland’s rise as NATO’s defense spending leader. Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/security-europe-polands-rise-natos-defense-spending-leader>
- Landale, J. (2022, March 3). Ukraine: How might the war end? Five scenarios. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60602936>
- Leitner, A. (2023, May 17). Szijjarto: Hungary not to approve next EPF tranche to Ukraine unless OTP removed from war-sponsors list. *The Budapest Times*. <https://www.budapesttimes.hu/hungary/szijjarto-hungary-not-to-approve-next-epf-tranche-to-ukraine-unless-otp-removed-from-war-sponsors-list/>
- Leitner, A. (2024, April 23). Szijjarto: ‘Witch hunt’ against Hungarian companies ongoing in Ukraine. *The Budapest Times*. <https://www.budapesttimes.hu/hungary/szijjarto-witch-hunt-against-hungarian-companies-ongoing-in-ukraine/>
- Light, D., & Dumbraveanu-Andone, D. (1997). Heritage and national identity: Exploring the relationship in Romania. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 3(1), 28-43.
- Lipton, D., Sachs, J., Fischer, S., & Kornai, J. (1990). Creating a market economy in Eastern Europe: The case of Poland. *Brookings papers on economic activity*, 1990(1), 75-147.

- Lukianov, F. (2017). Viktor Orbán: From ultraliberalism to Euroscepticism. The evolution of the political leader. Urgent problems of Europe. *Eastern Europe: Political processes and public sentiment*, num. 3, pp. 12-39.
- Magyar Nemzet. (2022). Orbán Viktor: Nem fogjuk engedni, hogy Magyarországot bárki belesodorja ebbe a háborúba [We will not let anyone draw Hungary into this war]. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/kulfold/2022/02/orban-viktor-nem-fogjukengedni-hogy-magyarorszagot-barki-belesodorja-ebbe-a-haboruba>
- Maj, M. (2023). *Energy Without Russia: The case of Poland. The consequences of the Ukraine War and the EU sanctions on the energy sector in Europe*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/20475.pdf>
- Marcu, S. (2009) The Geopolitics of the Eastern Border of the European Union: The Case of Romania-Moldova-Ukraine. *Geopolitics*, 14:3, 409-432. DOI: 10.1080/14650040802693796
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault: the liberal delusions that provoked Putin. *Foreign Affairs*, 93, 77.
- Meunier, S., & Vachudova, M. A. (2018). Liberal intergovernmentalism, illiberalism and the potential superpower of the European Union. *JCMS: Journal of common market studies*, 56(7), 1631-1647.
- Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. (2025, February 18). The NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Centre (JATEC) has opened in Poland. *MoD News*. <https://mod.gov.ua/en/news/the-nato-ukraine-joint-analysis-training-and-education-centre-jatec-has-opened-in-poland>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania. (2023). *MFA welcomes the 14th anniversary of the judgement of the International Court of Justice in the Black Sea Maritime Delimitation case*. <https://www.mae.ro/en/node/60973>

- Moen, B., Barigazzi, J., & Kijewski, L. (2023, May 30). New sanctions against Russia stuck in limbo over Greek-Hungarian protest. *Politico*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/new-sanctions-against-russia-stuck-limbo-greece-hungary-protest-ukraine-war>
- Moravcsik, A. (2010). Europe, the second superpower. *Current History*, 109(725), 91-98.
- Morgenthau, Hans J., (1985). *Politics Among Nations*, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson. New York: Knopf.
- Morin, J.F. & Paquin, J. (2018). *Foreign Policy Analysis A Toolbox*. London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Müller, P., & Slominski, P. (2024). Hungary, the EU and Russia's war against Ukraine: the changing dynamics of EU foreign policymaking. In *The War Against Ukraine and the EU: Facing New Realities* (pp. 111-131).
- Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2002). *Politica după comunism: structură, cultură și psihologie politică*. Humanitas.
- Murafa, C. (2023). *Energy without Russia: The consequences of the Ukraine war and the EU sanctions on the energy sector in Europe*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/20487.pdf>
- NATO member Romania says Russian drone violated its airspace. (2024, September 8). *Voice of America*. <https://www.voanews.com/a/nato-member-romania-says-russian-drone-violated-its-airspace/7775995.html>
- Necsutu, M. (2025, July 7). *Romania, Moldova, Ukraine forge closer links in Russia's dark shadow*. Balkan Insight. <https://balkaninsight.com/2025/07/07/romania-moldova-ukraine-forge-closer-links-in-russias-dark-shadow/>
- 'No war, no migration, no gender' – Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó in New York. (2024, February 9). *Clevelandimagyarokert*. <https://clevelandimagyarokert.org/no-war-no-migration-no-gender-hungarian-minister-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade-peter-szijjarto-in-new-york/>

Olszewski, M. (2022, August 23). *Poland and the energy costs of the Russian war in Ukraine*. Energy Transition. <https://energytransition.org/2022/09/poland-and-the-energy-costs-of-the-russian-war-in-ukraine/>

Opening to the East May be More Successful than Previously Expected. (2024, January 18). *Hungary Today*. <https://hungarytoday.hu/opening-to-the-east-may-be-more-successful-than-previously-expected/>

Orban allows deployment of NATO troops in western Hungary (2022, March 7). *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/7/pm-orban-allows-deployment-of-nato-troops-in-western-hungary>

Orbán, V. (2017) Battles with Brussels on migration and economic issues are expected. Magyar Hírlap. Retrieved from: https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/belfold/Orban_Viktor_Migracios_es_gazdasagszervezesi_kerdeseekben_varhatok_csatak_Brusszellel

Over 60% Polish coal imports from Russia: ministry. (2020, February 4). Warsaw Business Journal. <https://wbj.pl/over-60procent-polish-coal-imports-from-russia-ministry/post/125761>

Öztürk, T. (2022, September 26). Hungary says West in favor of Russia-Ukraine war. *Anadolu Agency*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/hungary-says-west-in-favor-of-russia-ukraine-war/2695370>

Panizza, F. (2017). “Populism and Identification”. In *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*. ED Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser et al.: 362- 379. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pásztor, L., Négyesi, G., Laborczi, A., Kovács, T., László, E., & Bihari, Z. (2016). Integrated spatial assessment of wind erosion risk in Hungary. *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, 16(11), 2421–2432. <https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-16-2421-2016>

Péczeli, A. (Ed.). (2019). *The relations of central European countries with the United States*. Budapest: Dialóg Campus.

Permanent representation of Hungary to the European Union. (2023). Hungary will not participate in the arms transfers to Ukraine. <https://eu->

brusszel.mfa.gov.hu/eng/news/hungary-will-not-participate-in-the-arms-transfers-to-ukraine

- Petrescu, D. N. (2003). The Alluring Facet of Ceaușescu-ism: Nation-Building and Identity Politics in Communist Romania, 1965-1989. *New Europe College Yearbook*, (11), 241-272.
- Petrova, T. (October 16, 2014). *Polish democracy promotion in Ukraine*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2014/10/polish-democracy-promotion-in-ukraine?lang=en>
- Pieńkowski, J. (2021). *Romania's Relations with Ukraine: Cooperation Despite an Impasse*. The Polish Institute of International Affairs. https://pism.pl/publications/Romanias_Relations_with_Ukraine_Cooperation_Despite_an_Impasse
- Pitney, T. (2023). Poland and the Ukraine War: A Geopolitical Analysis. *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 3636. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3636
- Plate, K. C., & Marc, M. (2025, March 18). Romania: Political and social impact one year after the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*. <https://www.kas.de/en/country-reports/detail/-/content/rumaenien-politische-und-gesellschaftliche-auswirkungen-ein-jahr-nach-kriegsbeginn-in-der-ukraine-1>
- PM Orbán: "Together with Our EU and NATO Allies, We Condemn Russia's Military Attack. (2022, February 25). *Hungary Today*. <https://hungarytoday.hu/Orban-russia-attack-condems-aggression/>
- PM Orbán: Hungary will not allow lethal aid across Hungarian-Ukrainian border. (2022, March 1). *Hungary Today*. <https://hungarytoday.hu/Orban-weapons-ukraine-guns-soldiers-lethal-aid/>
- Pociovălișteanu, D. M., Thalassinou, E., Tirca, A., & Filho, W.L. (2010). Trends and Challenges in the Energy Sector of Romania in the Post-Accession to the European Union. *International Journal of Environmental Technology and Management* 12 (1): 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJETM.2010.029957>

Poland and Lithuania say Ukraine deserves EU candidate status due to “current security challenges. (2022c, February 23). *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-lithuania-say-ukraine-deserves-eu-candidate-status-due-current-security-2022-02-23/>

Poland to subsidise coal for households as shortages hit. (2022b, June 14). *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/poland-subsidise-coal-households-shortages-hit-2022-06-14/>

Poland’s Geographic Challenge. (2015, January 23). Stratfor. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/article/polands-geographic-challenge>

Poland’s Geographic Challenge. (2015, January 23). Stratfor. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/article/polands-geographic-challenge>

Polish foreign minister denounces Russian aggression: “Don’t you have enough land?” (2025, April 23). *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/poland-sikorski-russia-ukraine-foreign-policy-f708bb2d66dca0487d241b7572531e92>

Port of Constanța Transport Events (2024). Maritime Ports Administration Constanta <https://www.transporevents.com/presentations/constant2024/PortofConstanta.pdf>

Press Statement by Viktor Orbán Following His Meeting With the Prime Minister of Vietnam. (2024, January 18). *About Hungary*. <https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/press-statement-by-viktor-orban-following-his-meeting-with-the-prime-minister-of-vietnam>

Putin accuses Romania of escalating the conflict in Ukraine. (2025, May 7). *The Romania Journal*. <https://www.romaniajournal.ro/politics/putin-accuses-romania-of-escalating-the-conflict-in-ukraine/>

Rankin, J. (2022, May 16). Hungary ‘holding EU hostage’ over sanctions on Russian oil. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/16/hungary-sanctions-russian-oil-embargo-eu>

Rankin, J. (2023, May 19). Hungary steps up threat to block EU weapons aid for Ukraine. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/19/hungary-steps-up-threat-to-block-eu-weapons-aid-for-ukraine-peter-szijarto>

Reality Check & BBC Monitoring. (2022, March 30). *Does video show Russian prisoners being shot?*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/60907259>

Risse, T. (2005). Neofunctionalism, European Identity, and the Puzzles of European Integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(2), 291–309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760500044033>

Roman, P. (2011, July 7). *Romania's Evolving Role in the Euro-Atlantic Community: Challenges, Change, Perspectives*. Wilson Center.
<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/193-romania-s-evolving-role-the-euro-atlantic-community-challenges-change-perspectives>

Romania continues to provide comprehensive and strong support to Ukraine. (2024, October 11). Dnipropetrovsk Investment Agency.
<https://dia.dp.gov.ua/en/romania-continues-to-provide-comprehensive-and-strong-support-to-ukraine/>

Romania country profile. (2024, December 18). *BBC News*.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17776265>

Romania officially reports of provided weapons to Ukraine, but T-72 tanks or MIG-29 aircraft are not mentioned. (2024, June 24). *Defence Express*.
https://en.defence-ua.com/news/romania_officially_reports_of_provided_weapons_to_ukraine_but_t_72_tanks_or_mig_29_aircraft_are_not_mentioned-10453.html

Romanian farmer association asks country to ban Ukrainian grain imports after EU restrictions lifted. (2023, September 16). *The Kyiv Independent*.
<https://kyivindependent.com/romanian-farmer-association-asks-country-to-ban-ukrainian-grain-imports-after-eu-restrictions-lifted/>

Schmidt, A., & Glied, V. (2024). Pragmatic foreign policy of Hungary in the shadow of the Russian-Ukrainian war. *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 15(Special Issue), 247–267. <https://doi.org/10.47743/ejes-2024-si12>

Scutaru, G. (2024). Black Sea's Offshore Energy Potential and Its Strategic Role at a Regional and Continental Level. Bucharest: New Strategy Center.

Seniuc, E. R. (2018, March 23). *Romania: Historical and present accounts of national identity*. FOMOSO. <https://www.fomoso.org/en/mosopedia/background-knowledge/romania-historical-and-present-accounts-of-national-identity/>

Sharp, J. M. O. (1992). Security options for Central Europe. In B. Crawford (Ed.), *The future of European security*. University of California Press.

Shulyk, V., Shevchenko, L., Cherniyavskiy, V., Davydov, A., & Boborykin, O. (2024). About the Concept of Improving Border Defense Lines By Means of Landscape Architecture. *Proceedings of the Latvia University of Agriculture: Landscape Architecture & Art*, 24(24), 89-96.

Siemaszko, C. (2022, September 7). *Nuclear inspectors' report on Zaporizhzhia power plant indicates nuclear standards were violated*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/un-nuclear-watchdog-calls-security-protection-zone-russian-held-zapori-rcna46446>

Sliwa, Z. (2018). Poland: NATO'S East European frontline nation. In N. Vanaga & T. Rostoks (Eds.), *Deterring Russia in Europe: Defence strategies for neighbouring states*. Routledge.

Smith, A. D. (1991). *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books.

Smith, A.D. (1986). *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Söderbergh, B., Jakobsson, K., & Aleklett, K. (2009). European energy security: The future of Norwegian natural gas production. *Energy Policy*, 37(12), 5037–5055. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.06.075>

Speech by H.E. Mr. Andrzej Duda, the President of the Republic of Poland at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. (2022, September 22). *The America Times*. <https://www.america-times.com/speech-by-h-e-mr-andrzej-duda-the-president-of-the-republic-of-poland-at-the-77th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly/>

- Stala-Szlugaj, K., & Grudziński, Z. (2022). Alternative directions of coal supply to Poland as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war. *Gospodarka Surowcami Mineralnymi-Mineral Resources Management*, 31-47.
- Stan, G.I. (2025). Snake Island – a Short History and Its Legal Status over the Years. *Black Sea Region at the Crossroads Of Civilizations*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.61671/bsrcc.v2i2.8682>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2024, November 1). *Identity Politics*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/>
- State Secretary: Hungary cannot be accused of lacking solidarity. (2024, May 8). *About Hungary*. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/state-secretary-hungary-cannot-be-accused-of-lacking-solidarity>
- State Secretary: Hungary has provided 98.5 billion HUF to Ukraine since start of war. (2024, November 25). *About Hungary*. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/state-secretary-hungary-has-provided-98-5-billion-huf-to-ukraine-since-start-of-war>
- Stet, M. (2017). *Characteristics of the Romanian Energy Market*. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science & Engineering 200:012067. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/200/1/012067>
- Suleiman, S. R. (2021). Anti-Democratic Politics in Hungary: Viktor Orbán and “Illiberal Democracy.” Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs. <https://bush.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Suleiman-Paper-No.-20.pdf>
- Sus, M. (2025). Status-seeking in wartime: Poland’s leadership aspirations and the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481251329767>
- Szeptycki, A. (2024). Polish Assistance for the Ukrainian Refugees: Current State and Perspectives of Research. *Studia Migracyjne-Przegląd Polonijny*, (2), 53-73.
- Tarrósy, I., & Vörös, Z. (2014). Hungary’s global opening to an interpolar world. *Politeja*, (28), 139-162.

- Tarrósy, I., & Vörös, Z. (2014a). The Foreign Policy of ‘Global Opening’ and Hungarian Positions in an Interpolar World. *European Integration: Perspectives and Challenges: How “Borderless” Is Europe?* (pp. 273–296). Publikon. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/300880499.pdf>
- Tarrósy, I., & Vörös, Z. (2014b). Hungary’s global opening to an interpolar world. *Politeja*, (28), 139-162.
- Tarrósy, I., Trabelsi, H., & Vörös, Z. (2024). Hungary’s Relations with the BRICS in the Context of the Changing World Order. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, 18(4), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.51870/bpgr3349>
- Tatar, M. I. (2016). Democratization and political alienation: the legacies of post-communist transition in Romania. *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 10(2), 85-108. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/49385>
- Tatar, M. I. (2016). Democratization and political alienation: the legacies of post-communist transition in Romania. *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 10(2), 85-108. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/49385>
- Than, K., & Komuves, A. (2022, September 26). Hungary PM Orbán says EU sanctions on Russia have “backfired.” *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungary-pm-Orban-says-eu-sanctions-russia-have-backfired-2022-09-26/>
- The Official Website of the President of Romania. (2023, February 22). *Statement by the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis in the opening of the Special Summit of the Bucharest Nine Format*. <https://www.presidency.ro/en/media/statement-by-the-president-of-romania-klaus-iohannis-in-the-opening-of-the-special-summit-of-the-bucharest-nine-format>
- The Official Website of the President of Romania. (2024). *Agreement on security cooperation between Romania and Ukraine*. <https://www.presidency.ro/en/media/agreement-on-security-cooperation-between-romania-and-ukraine1720707048>

The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland. (2022a, February 24). *Message from the President of the Republic of Poland*. <https://www.president.pl/news/message-from-the-president-of-the-republic-of-poland,49387>

The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland. (2022b, May 18). *Poland and Ukraine – thirty years of partnership and friendship – Poland in South Africa*. <https://www.gov.pl/web/southafrica/poland-and-ukraine---thirty-years-of-partnership-and-friendship>

The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland. (2022c, February 26). *An express path for Ukraine's membership in the European Union*. <https://www.president.pl/news/an-express-path-for-ukraines-membership-in-the-european-union,49514>

The Official Website of the President of the Republic of Poland. (2025, February 23). *Poland's aid to Ukraine*. <https://www.president.pl/news/polish-aid-for-ukraine%2C93908>

The Official Website of the Prime Minister of Hungary (2022a). We will not allow Hungarian families to be made to pay the price of the war. <https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/we-will-not-allow-hungarian-families-to-be-made-to-pay-the-price-of-the-war/>

The Official Website of the Prime Minister of Hungary, (2022c). Interview with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the Hír Televízió programme “Daily Update Extra” <https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/interview-with-prime-minister-viktor-Orban-on-the-hir-televizio-programme-daily-update-extra/>

The Official Website of the Prime Minister of Hungary. (2022b). Hungarian government is first in Europe to ask people about sanctions. <https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/hungarian-government-is-first-in-europe-to-ask-people-about-sanctions/>

Tilles, D. (2023, January 26). *Poland slams “unacceptable German attitude” on Ukraine and aims to build own tank coalition*. Notes From Poland. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2023/01/23/poland-slams-unacceptable-german-attitude-on-ukraine-and-aims-to-build-own-tank-coalition/>

- Tismaneanu, V. (2008). Democracy and memory: Romania confronts its communist past. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 617(1), 166-180.
- Tismaneanu, V. (2011, July 7). *Romania's first Post-Communist decade: From Iliescu to Iliescu*. Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/225-romanas-first-post-communist-decade-iliescu-to-iliescu>
- Toro, G. (2023). Energy dependency in the European Union and Romania. *Conference Proceedings of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies*, 12(13), 131–136. <https://doi.org/10.24818/CAFEE/2023/12/13>
- Tulun, T. E. (2017). Front Line And Powder Keg Of The New Cold War: The Baltic Sea Region, Baltic Countries, and Kaliningrad (Preprint 2017 / 9; pp. 1—6). Center for Eurasian Studies. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/acn6h>
- Ukraine and Hungary hold “constructive” talks before EU summit on aid package. (2024, January 29). *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungarian-foreign-minister-visits-ukraine-before-eu-summit-aid-package-2024-01-29/>
- UN chief regrets Russia's decision to withdraw from grain deal (2023, July 17). *UN News*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1138752>
- UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council (2022, April 7). *UN News*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115782>
- UNHCR Hungary Assistance Dashboard, January - September 2024. (2024). UNHCR Operational Data Portal (ODP). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112811>
- UNHCR. (2025, May 31). *Ukraine refugee situation: Romania*. UNHCR Operational Data Portal. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10782>
- UNICEF. (2022). *UNICEF support in Romania for refugee children, women and families coming from Ukraine*. UNICEF Romania. <https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/unicef-support-romania-refugee-children-women-and-families-coming-ukraine>

- Varga, T. C. (2023). A Reluctant Supporter: The Hungarian Perspective on European Strategic Autonomy. In Česnakas, G., & Juozaitis, J. (Eds), *European Strategic Autonomy and Small States' Security: In the Shadow of Power* (pp. 182-195). Taylor & Francis. DOI: 10.4324/9781003324867-13
- Végh, Z. (2015). Hungary's "Eastern Opening" policy toward Russia: ties that bind?. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, 24(01-02), 47-65.
- Visiting Kyiv, leaders of Poland and Baltic states condemn Russia. (2022, April 13). *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/leaders-poland-baltic-states-head-kyiv-2022-04-13/>
- Voytyuk, O. (2022). The Baltic Pipe and its impact on energy security in Central and Eastern Europe. *Polityka Energetyczna-Energy Policy Journal*, 89-108.
- Weiner, C. (2017). Managing energy supply security and gas diversification in Hungary: Putting theory into practice. *SSRN 3214556*.
- Wezeman, S. T., & Kuimova, A. (2018). *Romania and Black Sea Security*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/romania-and-black-sea-security>
- What assistance has Hungary provided to Ukraine so far? (2022, April 13). *About Hungary*. <https://abouthungary.hu/blog/what-assistance-has-hungary-provided-to-ukraine-so-far>
- Wilczek, M. (2022, February 21). *Poland better prepared for Russia cutting off gas than others in Europe, says deputy PM*. Notes From Poland. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/02/21/poland-better-prepared-for-russia-cutting-off-gas-than-others-in-europe-says-deputy-pm/>
- Williams, S. & Kirby, P. (2022, May 11). Ukraine war: Snake Island and battle for control in Black Sea. *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61406808>
- You are Ukrainians. You are not refugees. You are our guests – President of Poland said during his speech in Verkhovna Rada. (2022, May 22). *Lb.ua*. https://en.lb.ua/news/2022/05/22/15235_ukrainians.html

Zaniewicz, M. (2023). *Russian oil disappearing from Europe*. Forum Energii.
<https://www.forum-energii.eu/en/russian-oil-disappearing-from-europe>

Zieliński, M., Dopieralska, J., Królikowska-Ciągło, S., Walczak, A., & Belka, Z. (2021). Mapping of spatial variations in Sr isotope signatures ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$) in Poland — Implications of anthropogenic Sr contamination for archaeological provenance and migration research. *The Science of the Total Environment*, 775, 145792. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.14579>



APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Bu tez Macaristan, Polonya ve Romanya'nın Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline verdiği yanıtları jeopolitik, ulusal kimlik ve enerji bağımlılığı üzerinden incelemektedir. İlk olarak, jeopolitik, büyük bir gücün, Rusya'nın, güçlü bir etki alanını sürdürme hedefiyle egemen olduğu bir bölgede devlet davranış analizinin kaçınılmaz bir yönüdür. Bu üç devlet, sadece Şubat 2022'den bu yana değil, daha öncesinde de Rus saldırganlığının etkilerini doğrudan yaşayan devletlerdir. Bu bağlamda, ilk olarak, devlet davranışlarını şekillendirmede jeopolitiğin önemi, Morgenthau'nun (1985) jeopolitiğin "ulusların kaderini" şekillendirmede ana faktör olan coğrafyadan kaynaklandığı iddiasında açıkça görülmektedir.

İkinci olarak, bazen ulusal kimlik olarak da adlandırılan kimlik, belirli tarihsel anlatıların, kökleşmiş korkuların ve ideolojilerin anlaşılabilceğı bir bakış açısı sağlar. Bu çalışmanın odağını oluşturan üç devlet, çeşitli perspektiflerden incelenen farklı ulusal kimliklere sahiptir. Bu farklı bakış açılarındaki dinamizm, her bir devlete özgü belirli özelliklerin onların farklı tepkilerini şekillendirmede etkili olduğu fikrinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Üçüncü olarak, enerji bağımlılığı her bir devletin farklı tutumlarını açıklamada hayati bir konudur. Rusya'nın enerji kaynaklarının merkeziliğı ve bu merkeziliğı Doğı Avrupa bölgesinde kırılganlıklar yaratan siyasi bir baskı aracı olarak kullanma kabiliyeti mevcuttur. Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgali bu durumu daha da açığa çıkarmış ve her üç devleti de enerji çeşitlendirme stratejileri aramaya yöneltmiştir.

Bunun yanı sıra, AB'nin tutarlılığının her üye ülke için benzer iç koşullar yaratmadığı da görülmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, üye ülkeler büyük ölçüde ulusal egemenliklerini korumakta ve iç siyasi baskılar nedeniyle AB düzeyinde alınabilecek ortak kararlara

direnebilmektedirler (Gebhard, 2017, s. 110). Bu devletlerin Rusya ile benzer tarihleri, mevcut Sovyet sonrası statüleri ve ortak kurumsal üyelikleri göz önüne alındığında, aynı olmasa da en azından bu kadar farklı tepkiler vermemeleri beklenirdi. Bunun yerine, devletleri savunmasız bırakabilecek olan Rus etkisidir. Rusya'nın Doğu Avrupa'daki etkisi, hedef devletlerin stratejik ekonomik sektörünü domine ederek kapitalizmi suistimal etmek ve siyasi bölünmelere yol açmak ve siyasi sistemleri aşındırmak için iki yola dayanmaktadır (Conley, 2016, s. 10). Bölümler boyunca, devletlerin Rusya'nın etkisine nasıl savunmasız hale geldikleri ve nihayetinde stratejik amaçlarla Rusya ile uyum sağlamak veya ona direnmek için pozisyonlarını nasıl değiştirdikleri görülecektir.

Devletlerin verdikleri tepkiler incelenirken, her ülkenin jeopolitiği, ulusal kimliği ve enerji bağımlılığı araştırılmaktadır. Ancak ana soru ülkelerin Rusya'ya karşı zafiyetlerine dayanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

Ana Soru:

1. Neden Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan benzer tarihleri olmasına ve ortak kurumsal üyeliklerine rağmen Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline karşı birbirinden farklılaşan tutumlar sergilemişlerdir?

Alt Sorular:

1. Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın jeopolitik koşulları işgale verdikleri tepkileri nasıl etkilemiştir?
2. Ulusal kimlik Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın işgale verdiği tepkileri ne şekilde etkilemiştir?
3. Enerji bağımlılığı Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın işgale verdiği tepkileri şekillendirmede ne ölçüde önemli olmuştur?

Bu çalışma, Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline verdikleri tepkileri incelerken nitel ve betimleyici bir araştırma yaklaşımı benimsemektedir. Genelleştirilebilir ve istatistiksel olarak yönlendirilmiş sonuçlara

ulaşmayı amaçlamamaktadır. Araştırma, birincil analiz birimleri olarak hizmet eden bu üç devletin karşılaştırmalı bir çalışması olarak yapılandırılmıştır. Bu birincil birimler, Ukrayna'ya coğrafi yakınlıkları, Ukrayna'nın yakın komşuları olmaları ve savaşın ilk etkilerini yaşayan başlıca devletler olmaları nedeniyle seçilmiştir.

Bu çalışma temel olarak dört grup altında tanımlanabilecek çeşitli birincil ve ikincil kaynaklara dayanmaktadır; haber medyası raporları ve akademik makaleler ikincil kaynaklar ve resmi yazışmalar ve uluslararası kuruluşların raporları birincil kaynaklardır.

Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgali, Rusya Savunma Bakanlığı tarafından kullanılan "özel askeri operasyon" terimi altında 24 Şubat 2022 tarihinde resmen başlamıştır. İşgal, Rusya ve Ukrayna arasındaki çatışmalı ilişkilerin nihai bir sonucunun temsili olarak değerlendirilebilir ve kışkırtılmamış bir saldırganlık eylemi olarak tanımlanabilir. Ayrıca İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın sona ermesinden bu yana kıta Avrupası üzerinde en ölümcül sonuçları doğuran savaş olma niteliği de taşımaktadır. İşgal, küresel güvenlik dinamiklerini, başta enerji, gıda ve askeri altyapı olmak üzere ekonomiyi, demografiyi, jeopolitiği ve daha birçok unsuru olumsuz etkilemiştir. Bu tür küresel etkileri nedeniyle savaş bölgesel bir statüye sahip olarak nitelendirilmemektedir.

Ukrayna'nın 1991 yılında Sovyetler Birliği'nden bağımsızlığını kazanması, Rusya ile Ukrayna arasındaki çatışmalı ilişkilerin başlangıç noktası olarak kabul edilebilir. Ukrayna'nın bağımsızlığının ardından, Sovyetler Birliği'nin birincil ardıl devleti olan Rusya, Ukrayna'yı kendi etki alanının bir parçası olarak gördüğünü gizlememiştir. Rusya Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin, Ukrayna ve Rus halklarının "tek bir halk, tek bir bütün" olduğuna inandığını açıkça ifade etmiştir ("President of Russia", 2021). Bu ifade ve aynı anlama gelen varyasyonları Putin tarafından uzun bir süredir başka birçok vesileyle kullanılmaktadır. Hatta daha ileri adımlar atarak Ukrayna'nın Sovyet döneminde kurulmuş "yapay bir devlet" olduğunu ve Ukrayna topraklarının tarihsel olarak bugünkü Ukrayna'ya ait olmadığını savunmuştur (Vock, 2024). Savaşın patlak vermesine yol açan önemli olaylar Turuncu Devrim, Euromaidan Devrimi, Kırım'ın ilhakı ve Donbas çatışması olarak sıralanabilir. Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgalinin başlamasından önce Macar hükümeti, Ukrayna'nın Donetsk ve Luhansk bölgelerindeki tırmanışa ilişkin endişelerini dile getirmişti. Algılanan birincil tehdit,

Macaristan'ın coğrafi konumu ve Soğuk Savaş dönemiyle paralellikler kuran ve benzer bir ortamdaki kaçınmanın güçlü bir gereklilik olduğunu vurgulayan açıklamalarla işaret edilen "Doğu ve Batı" çatışmasına dahil olma riskiydi (Göransson, 2025).

Macaristan, mülteci desteği, maddi yardım ve mali yardım gibi çeşitli alanlarda Ukrayna'ya insani yardım sağlamıştır. Ukrayna ve Romanya'dan 600.000 kadar mülteciye ev sahipliği yapmış ve bunlardan bazıları Nisan 2022 gibi erken bir tarihte geçici oturma izni, barınma, gıda, sağlık ve eğitim hizmeti almıştır ("What assistance has Hungary provided", 2022).

Viktor Orbán liderliğindeki Macaristan, AB'nin Rusya'ya yönelik yaptırımlarını şiddetle eleştirmektedir. Özellikle nükleer işbirliği, enerji ve belirli kişilere yönelik yaptırımlar alanlarında AB yaptırım paketlerinin ertelenmesi ya da yumuşatılması için defalarca girişimde bulunmuştur. İlk iki alan Macaristan'ın enerji güvenliğini sağlama iddiası nedeniyle muaf tutulmaya çalışılırken, bireylere yönelik yaptırım sürecine Macaristan, belirli Rus kuruluşlarının veya bireylerinin kara listeye alınması kararlarını engellemek veya geciktirmek suretiyle katılmamıştır.

Ülkesinin duruşunu barış yanlısı olarak tanımlayan Orbán, savaşın başından bu yana ateşkes çağrısında bulunmakta ve Avrupalı muhataplarını diplomatik, mali ve askeri destek sağlayarak savaşı uzatmakla suçlamaktadır. Macaristan'ın kararları geciktirmek ve AB'nin oybirliği kuralını istismar etmekten ibaret olan bu tutumu, AB dayanışmasına yönelik işlevsel yaklaşımının bir yansıması olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bütünleşik bir AB duruşunu zayıflatmak anlamına gelse bile, kendi ekonomik ve siyasi çıkarlarına öncelik veriyor gibi görünmektedir. Bu durum, AB'nin yekpare olarak nitelendirilen bir birlik olmadığını gösterebileceğinden, özellikle Rusya'nın gözünde bütünleşik bir AB imajına potansiyel olarak zarar verebilir.

Ülke içinde ise Viktor Orbán bu muafiyetleri güç gösterisi için kazanılmış zaferler olarak sunmakta ve bunun "Brüksel"e karşı Macar çıkarlarının savunulması olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Macaristan'ın coğrafi koşulları, ovaların savunmasızlığı ve doğal tampon bölgelerin eksikliği, sınırların savunulmasını daha zor hale getirebilir. Macaristan, çok az doğal korumaya sahip olması nedeniyle savunma kabiliyetlerini arttırması ve bölgedeki saldırganı, yani şu anda Rusya'ya, uygun bir dış politika

benimsemesi gereken bir devlet olarak görülebilir. Ancak mevcut bir tehdide ve bu coğrafi maruziyete rağmen Macaristan'ın savunma harcamalarındaki artış güçlü bir tehdit algısını temsil etmemektedir.

Macaristan'ın enerjiye erişimi önemli ölçüde dış kaynaklara bağımlıdır ve bu bağımlılığın başında Rusya gelmektedir. Macaristan'ı çevreleyen koşullar, gelecek senaryolarda uzun vadede enerji açısından kendi kendine yeterliliğe sonucunu getirmeyecek gibi görünmektedir. Macaristan'ın doğal gaz arzının büyük bir kısmı Rusya'dan gelmektedir. Rusya'nın fosil yakıt ithalatı, Macaristan'ın tüm birincil enerji kaynaklarının üçte ikisini oluşturmaktadır (Járosi & Kovács, 2018). Rusya'ya olan bu yüksek enerji bağımlılığı oranı, Sosyalist dönemin tarihsel mirasının bir göstergesi olarak değerlendirilebilir ve bu miras, bugüne kadar Macaristan'ın enerji gibi politika alanlarından silinememiştir.

Ulusal kimlikte Macaristan'ın Avrupalı olmayan imajı vurgulanmaktadır. Öncelikle Macaristan Cumhurbaşkanı Viktor Orbán, Macaristan'ı Batı devletler toplumuna ait olmayan farklı ve egemen bir varlık olarak sunma çabasıyla ülkenin baskın Batılı liberal modellerden farklılığını vurgulamaktadır. Diğer Macar siyasi liderler de ulusal egemenlik, göç, kültür ve değerlerin korunması gibi konulara vurgu yaparak Macaristan'ın farklılığının altını çizmişlerdir. Bu durum, Avrupa'nın ötesinde yeni ortaklıklar arayışında ve AB'den bağımsız bir varlık olarak mirasını koruma arzusunda da kendini göstermektedir. AB kurumlarını liberaller ve Macar egemenliğine yönelik tehditler olarak nitelendirmesiyle uyumlu olarak, Macaristan'ın kendisini Avrupa'nın geri kalanından uzaklaştırmayı amaçlayan liberal olmayan bir demokrasi olduğunun altını çizmiştir. Tarrósy ve diğerleri (2024), Macaristan'ın dış politikasının gerçek pragmatizmden, Batılı aktörlerin eleştirisi ile Rusya ile yakın bağları ve Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgalini gerçekten kınamaması ile karakterize edilen "Batı karşıtı" dış politika olarak tanımlanabilecek bir politikaya doğru ilerlediğini ileri sürmektedir ki bu da Macaristan'ın değişen dış politikasının ve yeni ortaklık arayışlarının ideolojik bir tercih olabileceği düşüncesine yol açmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, enerji güvenliğine dayalı ulusal çıkar ve kimlik algıları gibi faktörler etkili olsa da, kırılğan jeopolitik konumu Macaristan'ın Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgali konusundaki farklı tutumunda önemli bir unsur olmamıştır. Macaristan'ın Rusya'ya

olan enerji bağımlılığı ve bu bağımlılığı kendi pozisyonu için bir gerekçe olarak kullanması, Macaristan'ın Rusya'yı kışkırtmaktan kaçınmasına neden olan bir kısıtlama yaratmıştır. Bunun yerine, Rusya ile istikrarlı ikili ilişkilere öncelik vermiştir.

Dahası, Macaristan'ın ulusal egemenliği, Avrasya vurgusu ve liberal olmayan demokrasiyi vurgulayan kimliği, kolektif bir Avrupa vizyonundan uzaklaştığını göstermektedir. Macaristan'ın coğrafi konumu ve onu savunmasız kılan özelliklerine rağmen, Rusya ile devam eden ilişkileri ve aktif savaş bölgelerine olan uzaklığı, askeri kabiliyetlerin geliştirilmesi için acil bir durum ya da gereklilik arz etmiyor gibi görünmektedir. Bu faktörler birlikte incelendiğinde Macaristan'ın Ukrayna'yı destekleme ve Rusya'ya yönelik yaptırımlara karşı çıkma konusundaki direnci açıklanabilir.

Savaşın patlak vermesinden bu yana Polonya, Rusya'ya karşı kolektif ve daha güçlü yaptırımlardan yana olmuş ve Ukrayna'nın Batı kurumlarına üyeliğini savunarak Ukrayna'nın sadık bir müttefiki olmuştur. Polonya, hem AB düzeyinde hem de bölge düzeyinde (CEE) AB yaptırımlarının öncüsü rolünü üstlendi. Rusya'ya karşı durmanın ve Ukrayna'yı desteklemenin yanı sıra Polonya, lider bir pozisyonla diğer aktörleri de destek vermeye motive etmiştir. Savaşı başından beri kınamış, insani ve askeri yardım sağlamış ve Ukrayna'yı diplomatik alanda ve söylemleriyle desteklemiştir.

Ukrayna ve Rusya'ya yakın konumda eski bir Sovyet ülkesi olarak, Rus enerjisine bağımlı olmamak için enerji çeşitlendirme sürecini 2022 işgalinden çok önce başlatmıştı. Sovyet geçmişi ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkan Batı yönelimli kimliği, Polonya'nın NATO ve AB üyeliklerine ve ABD ile işbirliğine değer vermesine yol açan bazı dış politika ilkelerini benimsemesine neden olmuştur. Bu ilkeler özellikle Rus saldırganlığı karşısında önemini kanıtlamıştır.

Polonya, 24 Şubat 2022'den bu yana Ukrayna'dan gelen mültecilere insani yardım sağlama konusunda büyük bir kararlılık göstermiştir. Polonya halkı, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya karşı yürüttüğü savaşı "kendi savaşları" olarak görmüştür (Kononczuk, 2023, aktaran Sus, 2023). Kapsamlı ve acil insani yardım müdahalesi Polonya'nın Ukrayna ile dayanışma içinde olduğunu göstermiştir. Polonya ayrıca diğer Batılı

aktörleri Rusya'ya karşı daha sert yaptırımlara katılmaya ve Ukrayna'ya daha fazla yardım sağlamaya zorlama sorumluluğunu da üstlenmiştir. Örneğin, Rus enerjisinin yasaklanması konusunda Polonya, isteksiz olarak gördüğü Almanya'yı Rusya'ya karşı daha güçlü yaptırımların uygulanmasını engellemekle suçlamış, Polonya (eski Cumhurbaşkanı Mateusz Morawiecki, Almanya'nın daha güçlü yaptırımları engelleyen "en büyük engel" olduğunu belirtmiştir (Connolly & Wintour, 2022).

İnsani yardım sağlamanın, mültecilere ev sahipliği yapmanın ve diplomatik sahnede Ukrayna'yı savunmanın yanı sıra Polonya, Ukrayna'nın savunma kapasitesinin güçlendirilmesinde ve dolayısıyla Avrupa güvenliğinin şekillendirilmesinde önemli bir aktör olmuştur. Polonya sürekli olarak Ukrayna'ya askeri yardım sağlayan en önemli ülke olmuştur ve aynı zamanda Ukrayna'ya askeri yardım sağlamaya başlayan ilk ülkelerden biri olmuştur.

Savaşın patlak vermesinin ardından Ukrayna'nın Karadeniz limanlarına erişimi kısıtlandı ve tahılını Polonya gibi alternatif güzergahlar üzerinden ihraç etmek zorunda kaldı. İlk başta amaç Ukrayna ticaretine yardımcı olmak ve genel küresel gıda güvenliğine katkıda bulunmaktı. Ancak sonuçta bu Polonya'daki yerel çiftçilere zarar verdi çünkü Ukrayna tahılı daha ucuzdu ve diğer pazarlara ulaşmak için Polonya'dan transit geçmesi beklenirken Polonya'da kaldı. Bu durum yerel pazarda bir fazlalığa yol açarak Polonyalı çiftçilerin özellikle Ukrayna tahılı nedeniyle daha az gelir elde etmesine neden oldu. Çiftçilerin protestolarının ardından Polonya, diğer tarım ürünleriyle birlikte Ukrayna'dan tahıl ithalatını da tek taraflı olarak yasakladı. Ukraynalı lider Zelenskyy bu tahıl anlaşmazlığının "siyasi bir tiyatro" olduğu yorumunda bulunmuş, dönemin Polonya Başbakanı Morawiecki ise buna Polonya halkını koruma görevinin altını çizerek ve bu şekilde aşağılanamayacaklarını söyleyerek karşılık vermiştir (Ehlinger & Knight, 2023).

Polonya'nın coğrafi koşulları ve konumu, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline karşılık vermede Polonya'yı bu kadar merkezi ve iddialı bir rol oynamaya iten faktörlerden biridir. Sadece NATO'nun doğu kanadında yer almakla kalmıyor, aynı zamanda doğrudan Rus eksklavı Kaliningrad ve işgalin başından beri kendisini Rusya'nın yakın bir müttefiki olarak sunan Belarus ile de sınır paylaşmaktadır. Bu aktörler tarafından kuşatılmış olması nedeniyle Polonya kendisini Rus saldırganlığıyla cephe devleti

olarak yüzleşmek zorunda kalacak bir ülke olarak görmektedir. Bu nedenle, Polonya'nın bu çatışma sırasındaki stratejisi kısmen tehdit farkındalığına ve coğrafi kırılganlığın telafisine dayanmaktadır.

Polonya'nın geçmişte doğal gaz, petrol ve kömür gibi Rus kaynaklarına büyük ölçüde bağımlı olduğu görülmektedir. Yüksek bağımlılık seviyelerini düşürmek Polonya için zor olsa da, Rus kaynaklarına olan bağımlılığının önemli bir kısmını ortadan kaldırmada başarılı olmuştur. Baltık Boru Hattı Projesi ve Świnoujście LNG terminali gibi yeni altyapı projelerinin hayata geçirilmesi ve kapasitelerinin artırılması ve alternatif ihracatçılar sayesinde Polonya, enerji kaynaklarını çeşitlendirmek için alternatif rotalar yaratmıştır. Bu çabalar kendi içinde ulusal güvenlik kaygıları taşımaktadır.

Rusya'nın enerji sağlama gücünü elinde bulundurması ve bunu siyasi baskı aracı olarak kullanma potansiyeline sahip olması, özellikle devam eden savaş sırasında olumsuz sonuçlar doğurabilirdi. Polonya'nın çeşitlendirme yoluyla hedefi, Rusya'nın dış manipülasyonuna maruz kalmamaktır. Polonya'nın kimliğini ve Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline verdiği tepkideki rolünü araştırırken, 1989'da SSCB'den bağımsızlığını kazanmasından bu yana temel dış politika ilkelerini anlamak çok önemlidir.

Şubat 2022'de başlayan işgalin ardından Polonya, özellikle yaptırım rejimine katılım konusunda AB dayanışmasına bağlı bir aktör olarak kendini göstermiştir. AB'nin Ukrayna ve Rusya'ya yönelik ortak dış ve güvenlik politikasının uygulanmasına katılmış ve kendisini Avrupa güvenliğinin öncüsü ve NATO'nun doğu kanadının savunucusu olarak konumlandırmıştır. Polonya, Rus saldırganlığını kendi rotasında gerçekleşen uzak bir çatışma olarak görmemektedir. Aksine, bunu güvenliğine yönelik doğrudan bir tehdit olarak görmekte ve bu da onu Ukrayna'nın aktif bir destekçisi olmaya itmektedir. Chappel (2012), Polonya'nın diplomatik eylemlerine ve kimliğine aktif olarak yansıyan Atlantisizm ve AB yanlılığı gibi temel Polonya dış politika ilkelerinin bir listesini sunmaktadır. Bu ilkeler Polonya'nın sadece dış politikasını şekillendirmekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda kimliğinin de birer parçası haline gelmiştir. Öte yandan, Polonya'nın enerji çeşitlendirme çabaları, Rusya'nın enerji arzını Polonya'nın enerji arz güvenliğini tehdit etmek için kullanabileceğinden, bölgedeki Rus

etkisini azaltmanın bir yolu olarak anlaşılabilir. Bu nedenle Polonya enerji çeşitlendirme çabalarına en az on yıl önce başlamıştır. Polonya'nın kimliği, toprak egemenliği ve diğer uluslarla dayanışma vurgusuna dayalı bir ulusal kimlik sunan dış politika ilkeleri aracılığıyla anlaşılmaktadır. Bu vurgu, Polonya'nın farklı ülkelerin egemenliği için de yaptığı vurgusu ve Rusya ile ortak geçmişinden kaynaklanmakta olup, Polonya'nın ortaya çıkan herhangi bir Rus tehdidinin son derece farkında olmasına yol açmaktadır. Bunun da ötesinde, Ukrayna'ya verdiği tarihsel destek, onu Rusya'ya karşı sağlam bir duruş sergilemeye iten bir başka faktör olmuştur.

Romanya'nın Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline verdiği tepki, komünist ve komünizm sonrası tarihi, Karadeniz'deki stratejik konumu, ulusal kimliği ve dış politika ilkeleri gibi çeşitli faktörleri kapsayan çok yönlü bir analiz ile tanımlanmaktadır. İşgale verdiği tepkinin değerlendirilmesi, Romanya'nın Ukrayna'yı desteklerken ve Rusya'ya karşı dururken temkinli bir duruş benimsediğini açıklığa kavuşturmaktadır. Komünist ve komünizm sonrası geçmişi, onu Rus tehditlerine karşı son derece farkında olmaya itmiş gibi görünmektedir. Bu nedenle Rusya ile doğrudan karşı karşıya gelmeme niyetiyle hareket etmiştir. Ancak Romanya yine de açık söylemi ve insani desteğinin yanı sıra sınırlı da olsa askeri desteğiyle Ukrayna'yı desteklemiştir. Bu süreçte Romanya'nın Rusya'ya olan enerji bağımlılığının nispeten düşük olması önemli olmuştur çünkü bu düşük bağımlılık, Rusya'nın enerji arzını siyasi bir koz olarak kullanma stratejisine karşı bir koruyucu işlevi görmüştür.

Romanya'nın insani yardım müdahalesi önemli bir seviyededir ve hatta Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline verdiği genel tepkinin en güçlü bileşeni olarak kabul edilebilir. Şubat 2022'de işgalin başlamasından bu yana Romanya 80.000'den fazla Ukraynalı mülteciye ev sahipliği yapmış ve bu kişilerin sağlık, eğitim ve basitleştirilmiş yasal istihdam gibi hizmetlere erişimini sağlamıştır.

Romanya'nın Ukrayna ve Rusya'ya yönelik diplomatik pozisyonu, onu Karadeniz'de kilit bir bölgesel aktör olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Bu pozisyon, Romanya'nın Avrupa-Atlantik normlarına uyum sağlama, Ukrayna'nın egemenliğini destekleme, bölgedeki Rus saldırganlığına karşı durma, Karadeniz'in bölgesel güvenliğini ve kolektif güvenlik normlarını koruma taahhüdü ile özetlenebilir. Romanya'nın

pozisyonunun merkez unsurunun Rus revizyonizmine taviz vermemek ve Karadeniz'de bir Rus etki alanına izin vermemek olduğu söylenebilir (Ghincea, 2025).

Romanya, Ukrayna'ya askeri yardım sağlama konusunda Polonya gibi komşu devletlerden farklılık göstermektedir. Hareket ve ifadede cesur olmak yerine yardımlarında düşük görünürlük ilkesiyle hareket etmeyi tercih etmiştir. Romen yetkililer askeri yardımın yapıldığını kabul etmişlerdir ve bu durum, ortak savunma planlarını içeren 2024 tarihli Romanya ve Ukrayna Arasında Güvenlik İşbirliği Anlaşması'ndan açıkça anlaşılmaktadır (Romanya Cumhurbaşkanı Resmi Web Sitesi, 2024). Ancak yardımın detayları ve miktarı kamuoyuna açık değildir.

Romanya'nın coğrafyası ve bunun jeopolitik etkileri, Romanya'nın Avrupa-Atlantik bölgesi ile doğudaki istikrarsızlık bölgeleri arasında bir köprü işlevi gördüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Doğal savunma ve stratejik bağlantı sağlayan topografik yapıları olsa da bunlardan bazıları ülkeyi askeri eylemlere karşı savunmasız bırakmaktadır. Romanya'nın Karadeniz'e erişimi denizcilik ve ticari avantajların yanı sıra NATO'nun doğu kanadında da kendisine önemli bir rol sağlamaktadır. Kısaca, Romanya jeopolitik konumu nedeniyle Avrupa-Atlantik savunması için hayati bir aktördür. Romanya, nihayetinde güvenlik ve savunma stratejilerinin şekillenmesine katkıda bulunan çeşitli topografik yapılara ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Albu (2020), Romanya'nın dağlık olarak tanımlanan merkezi arazisini, Tuna Nehri'ni ve Karadeniz'in varlığını Romanya'nın savunması ve stratejik bağlantıları için önemli unsurlar olarak değerlendirmekte ve Romanya'yı Avrasya steplerinden gelen baskılara karşı durması gereken üç ülkeden (Polonya ve Türkiye) biri olarak görmektedir.

Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgali Avrupa enerji politikalarında bir değişime yol açmış ve AB üye ülkelerini Rusya'ya olan bağımlılığı azaltmak amacıyla enerji kaynaklarını çeşitlendirmeye itmiştir. Romanya bu şoka nispeten dirençli enerji tabanını kullanarak yanıt verebilecek bir konumdaydı, ayrıca enerjisinin büyük bir kısmını Karadeniz'deki yerel kaynakları aracılığıyla üretebiliyordu.

Latin kökenleri, Batı kurumlarıyla bütünleşmesi, komünist geçmişi ve Karadeniz güvenliğindeki rolü gibi çeşitli faktörlerin Romanya'nın kimliğini oluşturduğu söylenebilir. Romanya'nın Latin kökleri, kendisini Doğu Avrupa'da eşsiz bir aktör

olarak ifade etmek ve Batı ile bağlantı kurmak için işlevselleştirilmiştir. Öte yandan, komünist geçmişi ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin etkisi altındaki olumsuz deneyimleri Romanya'nın demokratikleşme sürecine katılmasına neden olmuştur. Bu zor dönem Romanya'yı demokrasi ve refaha ulaşmak için Batı ile bütünleşmeye itmiştir. Bu arka plan, bir devlet olarak konumunun merkezi bir yönü haline gelmiş ve Rusya'nın herhangi bir tehdidine karşı artan bir ihtiyatla sonuçlanmıştır. Buna ek olarak, Romanya'nın Karadeniz güvenliği konusundaki motivasyonlu duruşu kimliğinin stratejik yönünü oluşturmaktadır.

Özetle, Romanya'nın NATO'nun doğu kanadında yer alması ve Ukrayna ile ortak sınıra sahip olmasının onu stratejik bir cephe devleti olarak ortaya çıkardığı söylenebilir. Romanya, Avrupa-Atlantik birliğine olan bağlılığını vurgulamış ve sınırlı da olsa diplomatik ve askeri destek yoluyla Ukrayna ile dayanışma göstermiş ve genel olarak temkinli bir duruş sergilemiştir. Rusya'ya olan enerji bağımlılığı Romanya'nın tepkisinin bir başka boyutudur. Rus enerjisine nispeten daha az bağımlı olsa da, yeni projeler ve kapasite artırımları yoluyla enerji arzını çeşitlendirmek için çaba göstermiştir. Romanya'nın altını çizdiği Latin mirası, Avrupa topluluğuna tam katılım isteği ve Rus revizyonizmine karşıtlığı ile tanımlanan ulusal kimlik profili, Ukrayna ile olan bazı tarihi anlaşmazlıklara rağmen Rusya'ya karşı duruşuna ve Ukrayna'yı desteklemesine katkıda bulunmuştur.

Bu tezin amacı, Avrupa güvenlik mimarisi açısından kritik bir konu olarak kabul edilen Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın farklı tepkilerini sunmak ve analiz etmektir. Şimdiye kadarki üç bölüm boyunca, Ukrayna'nın yakın komşusu olan bu üç devletin birbirinden farklı olan tepkileri incelendi. Tepkileri, nihayetinde dış politika yönelimlerini etkileyen jeopolitik, ulusal kimlik ve enerji bağımlılığı gibi üç önemli faktör tarafından şekillendirildi.

Sonuç olarak, Polonya, Romanya ve Macaristan'ın Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgaline her birinin kendine özgü bakış açılarıyla karşılık verdiği iddia edilebilir. İlk olarak, jeopolitik Polonya ve Romanya için önemli bir faktör olurken, Rusya'dan kaynaklanan düşük tehdit algısı nedeniyle Macaristan için önemli bir faktör olmamıştır. İkinci olarak, ulusal kimlik her üç devlet için de Rusya ve Ukrayna'ya yönelik önceki eğilimleriyle uyumlu olan yanıtlar verdikleri için şekillendirici bir faktör olmuştur.

Son olarak, enerji bağımlılığı, Rusya'ya olan enerji bağımlılığını AB birliğinden ayırık kaldığı için bir bahane olarak kullanmış olabilecek Macaristan haricinde, Polonya ve Romanya'nın düşük enerji bağımlılığı seviyeleri de değerlendirildiğinde, işgale yanıt verirken dikkate alınan bir diğer önemli faktör olmuştur. Nihayetinde, bu faktörlerin önemi ülkelerin Rusya'ya karşı zafiyetleri üzerinden anlaşılmaktadır.

Karşılaştırmalı analize dayanan bu tez, Ukrayna'nın yakın komşularının farklı tepkilerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu klasik değişkenlerin devlet davranışını anlamada hala geçerli olduğu sonucuna varılabilir. Savaş Avrupa güvenlik mimarisini yeniden şekillendirmeye devam ederken, cephedeki devletlerin hedeflerini anlamak, bu güvenlik mimarisinin ne yönde ilerleyeceğini öngörebilmek için gerekli olmaya devam etmektedir.

B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences** ☐
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences** ☒
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics** ☐
- Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics** ☐
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences** ☐

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : ÇAĞLAYAN
Adı / Name : Pelin Nur
Bölümü / Department : Uluslararası İlişkiler / International Relations

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English): DIVERGING NEIGHBORS: RESPONSES OF POLAND, ROMANIA AND HUNGARY TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans / Master** ☒ **Doktora / PhD** ☐

- Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.** ☒
- Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of two years. *** ☐
- Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for period of six months. *** ☐

** Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. / A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.*

Yazarın imzası / Signature

Tarih / Date

*(Kütüphaneye teslim ettiğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)
(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)*

Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.