

POLINA KHMILEVSKA

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Krakowska Akademia im. Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego

ORCID: 0000-0001-8434-8116

The European Union in the face of Russia's war with Ukraine

Introduction

Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine shook Europe and the whole world dramatically, as no one could believe in such a cynical, bloody war in the 21st century, when the topics of peace and security had been discussed and enhanced by so many organizations, treaties and unions. Nevertheless, it would be absolutely wrong to tell, that Russia carried out some different politics before that war. The whole world saw how Russia, since gaining its statehood in 1991 in the new world order, constantly has been refusing to accept the rules of the game, continuously has been breaking the international and humanitarian law. However, the collective West and other international political players were choosing to ignore the alarming signs and have been treating crimes of Russian Federation as something remote and out of their scope. World leading countries were continuing to build economic and political bridges with Russia, motivating that by argument that isolationism is not the answer to the problem and integration of Russia is the only way to suppress and re-educate it.

This strategy, as we see now, turned out to look like feeding the greedy beast, that is wanting more and more, time after time getting more insidious and arrogant. Or another life example is chronic abuser, who had not been suppressed from the first time of his abuse and who will be going further to break the boundaries of the victim. Unfortunately, this story can be compared to the history of World War II and Nazi Germany, although the history never repeats itself exactly the same, but looks like humankind still did not learn fully the lessons of the past. Connivance of other countries towards aggression of Nazi Germany and Russia now, motivation and strategies of Hitler and Putin, usage of same narratives and propaganda, all that is scarily similar to those who knows the history and is interested in politics.

Going back to nowadays, current war emerged as a threat to security of Europe and that is why many of European states finally started to do something beyond expressing their concern, despite the war in Ukraine started not on February 24, 2022, but in 2014 with annexation of Crimea – a sovereign territory of Ukraine and Russian invasion of Donbas, that Kremlin disguised under different ridiculous arguments created by propaganda. This time the full-scale war made European states realize the real face of Russia and real threats that it brings. Especially, this threat became vivid to those, who had already been under Russian occupation in one way or another: Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania. They understand exactly that the problem is not only in Putin's regime, but also about Russian mentality and history, it is about Russian socio-political structures

and paradigms, it is about Russia, that understands only power, as their society is on such a stage of development, that cannot be related to the European one.

That is why we see now so much support to Ukraine from some countries on the governmental level, and on the contrary see the disappointing passive attitude of the other powerful states, that are still hesitating while Ukrainian people die every single day from Russian army, rockets and bombs. The lack of unanimity among the EU member states is observed not for the first time, which rises the questions of existence of the EU and its initial purpose. If the European Union was created to prevent the new war in Europe, what is their purpose now if they failed to do so? What the recent admission of Ukraine as an official candidate to the EU means? Why some states as Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia do anything they can to support Ukraine in military, humanitarian and economic terms, while some states like Germany, France and Hungary only formally support Ukraine, but on the other hand playing their own game?

For the research mainly empirical methodology will be used, as the topic is very recent and ongoing – observation and description, including analysis, synthesis, classification, induction and deduction. Mostly the resources consist of reports of the think tanks, articles of the reputable newspapers and magazines, academic monographs are very few due to the freshness of the topic. To analyse the EU's approach to this war the article will firstly focus on official response of the EU as a whole, as an intergovernmental supranational organization and then two groups of countries will be taken in order to research their attitude and contributions. First group – Germany, France and Hungary will be taken as an examples of passiveness and neutrality (or not sufficient articulation of their positions), especially taking their historically paramount roles in politics and economics, as well as military aid potential. Second group – Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia are taken as an example of absolute support of Ukraine in this war, despite the fact of their smaller impact in the EU and global politics and economy, but also significantly smaller military potential.

Response of the EU to the Russian-Ukrainian war

First of all, it is important to mention that Russian invasion did not happen that suddenly as it might seem, as American intelligence seem to know the plans of Russia very much in advance, possibly even half of year or more. However, these warnings had been received sceptically by many EU states and by some with equanimity.

Russia began massing troops near Ukraine's borders in what it says were training exercises as early as spring 2021, the situation had already been not stable. In November 2021 satellite imagery showed a new build-up of nearly 100,000 of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine. In December 2021 Russia suddenly demands from Ukraine guarantees that it will not join NATO, and even demands NATO to withdraw troops and weapons from eastern Europe, which was obviously just formal and fake excuse for them to exploit later on (Reuters, 2022). This same month US intelligence continued to share their findings and were assuring that Russian attack is inevitable, despite Russian officials' constantly denying any accusations of future invasion. However, this time the Russian armed forces already counted 175,000 along with armour, artillery and equipment (The Washington Post, 2022).

Preceding weeks before invasion UN Security Council had several meetings and briefings, including the open meeting that was requested by Ukraine, with support from several Council members – including Albania, France, Ireland, Norway, the UK, and the US. Kyiv explained that it is requesting the meeting in response to Moscow's decision on Monday afternoon (21 February) to recognise the independence of the breakaway regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine and cited the “ongoing aggravation” of the security situation on the Ukrainian border. As the meeting report says, only some Council members chose to condemn Russia explicitly for its actions, all members stressed the need to strengthen dialogue and diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict. That itself sounds ridiculous, given the context of the future events and poses not novel serious questions about the uselessness of the UN Security Council, but also Russia's permanent seat in it (Security Council Report, 2022).

The UN Permanent Representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya develops very accurate statement, that in fact, Russia's permanent membership in UN Security Council is not valid from the legal point of view, as officially the USSR had this seat and after the collapse of the Soviet Union Russian Federation made the decision on its own that it will be the successor and should inherit its rights (UN Ukraine, 2022).

While Russian officials were constantly calling the claims of the US, Ukraine and their allies as “hysteria” and “fairy tales”, in the early hours of February 24th, Russia launched a broad attack on Ukraine, with multiple reports of explosions in cities across much of the country, including the capital, Kyiv. Preceding these horrific events, there was president Putin's “recognition” of the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (administrative regions) in Ukraine as independent entities and the decision to send Russian troops into those areas. Even though it sounds like complete non-sense, yet vote by the Russian State Duma gave the formal purpose for the aggression. The reaction of the EU expressed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was vocal: “The recognition of the two separatist territories in Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law, the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the Minsk agreements. The EU and its partners will react with unity, firmness and with determination in solidarity with Ukraine.” The condemnation also was expressed by separate European Union member states' spokespersons like Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Emmanuel Macron, German Finance Minister Christian Lindner, etc. They generally characterised Russia's move as break of the international law, act of aggression towards Ukraine and lack of interest in diplomatic ways out of conflict (Aljazeera, 2022a).

The reaction of the European Union as an entity is primarily expressed through the sanctions related to economic and diplomatic spheres. On February 23, 2022 the EU released new package of sanctions that was a response to the recognition of the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. They included:

- targeted sanctions against the 351 members of the Russian State Duma and an additional 27 individuals;
- restrictions on economic relations with the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts;
- restrictions on Russia's access the EU's capital and financial markets and services.

For the moment being the EU has already adopted six packages of such sanctions, which are designed to weaken Russia's economic base, depriving it of critical technologies and markets, and significantly curtailing its ability to wage war (European Council official site, 2022a).

As the war has been evolving, the sanctions were getting more harsh and disruptive, ones they were targeted at specific groups of officials, politicians and diplomats, but then they started to affect large scales of Russian citizens, their social and economic aspects of life. For example, the third package of sanctions adopted on 28 February and 2 March 2022 involves closure of EU airspace to all Russian aircraft, prohibition on transactions with the Russian Central Bank, SWIFT ban for seven Russian banks. Forth package of sanctions approved on 15 March 2022 introduced the ban on imports from Russia to the EU of iron and steel, and fifth package included more prohibitions of imports like coal and other solid fossil fuels. Furthermore, closure of EU ports to all Russian vessels and prohibition on Russian and Belarusian road transport operators from entering the EU complicated further any transitional imports for Russia (European Council official site, 2022a).

Finally, the sixth package of sanctions (3 June 2022) introduced:

- prohibition on imports from Russia of crude oil and refined petroleum products (with limited exceptions);
- SWIFT ban for an additional three Russian banks and one Belarusian bank;
- suspension of broadcasting in the EU for Rossiya RTR, RTR Planeta, Rossiya 24, Russia 24 and TV Centre International.

It goes without saying, that ban on import of Russian crude oil and refined petroleum products means a lot for undermining of the Russian economy, that is built mainly on the exports of these goods. Although this decision has been difficult for the EU member states, it will play a very important role in the disintegration of the Russian economy and as a result to the braking of the military actions.

Apart from that, there are list of other actions, taken by the EU in support of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people:

- reception of refugees,
- protection of children,
- humanitarian aid,
- civil protection support,
- support for member states,
- economic assistance,
- support for the Ukrainian armed forces,
- support in the prosecution of war crimes.

Of course, each of these points has directive character and is being adopted in each country in different manner. Nevertheless, the EU from the first days of war opened their borders to Ukrainian refugees, giving guidelines on the EU civil protection mechanism for Ukraine and its bordering countries. "On 4 March 2022, the EU activated the temporary protection directive. The objective is to alleviate pressure on national asylum systems and to allow displaced persons to enjoy harmonised rights across the EU. These rights include:

- residence,

- access to the labour market and housing,
- medical assistance,
- social welfare assistance,
- access to education for children”.

Also, €20 billion was granted to support member states hosting refugees, €2.2 billion in macro-financial assistance to foster stability and €2 billion to support the Ukrainian armed forces. Also, €348 million in humanitarian aid has been granted for Ukraine and Moldova (since it is not the EU member state) (European Council official site, 2022b).

The other very sensitive and important topic during any war and armed conflict is children suffering from it, as at least 243 children have been killed in Ukraine since fighting began, with another 200,000 forcefully taken to Russia since the start of the invasion and around 2.2 million children are refugees in neighbouring countries. According to UNICEF almost two out of every three children in Ukraine have been displaced because of the war (Euronews, 2022). With regards to that, On 8 June 2022, the Council adopted conclusions on the EU strategy on the rights of the child, with a particular focus on the protection of children's rights in crisis or emergency situations. The Council encouraged member states to:

- provide free legal aid and free access to health care services to displaced Ukrainian children;
- inform unaccompanied and separated children travelling from Ukraine of their rights;
- take all possible measures to ensure high-quality reception for the children;
- ensure that all unaccompanied and separated children are fully integrated into national child protection systems;
- support access to quality education and care (European Council official site, 2022c).

The other measures also include humanitarian aid (funds for basic needs like food, water, shelter, healthcare), as well as EU civil protection mechanism, which means that all EU countries, as well as Norway and Turkey, are offering concrete assistance to Ukraine, including medical supplies, protective clothing, shelter items, firefighting equipment, power generators, water pumps (European Council official site, 2022c).

Aside economic sanctions against Russia, Ukraine surely needs constant economic support to sustain the economy and state to be able to effectively defend and fight back. In order to do that, on 24 May 2022, the Council adopted a regulation for a period of one year allowing for temporary trade liberalisation and other trade concessions with regard to certain Ukrainian products. Moreover, EU has been granting the macro-financial support in the form of loans: in February 2022 €1.2 billion was granted to foster stability in the country and On 12 July 2022 the Council adopted a decision to provide € 1 billion of additional macro-financial assistance (MFA) to Ukraine, as a matter of urgency (European Council official site, 2022c).

EU also supports the Ukrainian Army through the European Peace Facility for the total amount of €2 billion, as Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy said: “to support EU member states” supplies of military equipment to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. This support is just one part of European efforts to help Ukraine defend itself. The EU and its member states are determined to continue. We have done it since the beginning of the war and we will continue until the

end.' That means, that the EU itself does not possess the actual military equipment and facilities, but gives financial support to the member states, so they can grant it to Ukraine (European Council official site, 2022d).

Finally, very substantial and historical development is that on June, 23 EU leaders have granted Ukraine and Moldova candidate status. Taking into account how long and difficult the path to EU membership is, this candidacy status becomes a record in the history of the EU. This is a key point in the history of Europe as Ukraine created a precedent, showing its readiness for changes and reforms, its loyalty to democratic values and decisiveness to fight for its rights and its future. Moreover, the war has shown how Ukraine's agriculture is crucial for the food security of the rest of the world. Russia is constantly targeting agricultural facilities, fires up the crops and blocks the Black Sea ports, which disables commercial shipping operations (European Council official site, 2022b). There is an evidence, that Russian forces in occupied areas of Ukraine have been systematically stealing grain and other produce from local farmers and sells it to other countries like Turkey and Syria as its own goods (BBC, 2022a).

However, unfortunately, this is not the most terrible and cynical war crime that Russia committed, as the whole world became aware of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Bucha, Irpin and many other cities that we even do not know yet about. Ukrainians are facing literally genocide not only on occupied areas, but also on the free territory of Ukraine, suffering from missiles and rockets hitting civilian objects in the middle of the day like it was in Odesa, Kremenchuk, Vinnytsia, etc. Russia is taking lives and health of Ukrainian people – women, children, elderly, commits atrocities, sexual crimes, tortures, executes, steals and robs (Aljazeera, 2022a). Nevertheless, despite all the benefits of the 21st century with internet, social media, satellites, etc., it is extremely important to hold Russia accountable for these crimes, so it is needed to investigate, gain proofs and punish the perpetrators. In democratic civilized world we need to keep the procedures.

While The International Criminal Court in Hague is already working on the cases, the EU fully supports it and provides strategic advice and training to Ukrainian authorities to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any international crimes, as well as donates funds or equipment to Ukrainian authorities and will cooperate closely with the International Criminal Court and with Eurojust, the EU agency for judicial co-operation in criminal matters. In May 2022 the Council adopted new rules allowing Eurojust to store and preserve evidence related to war crimes, including satellite images, photographs, videos, audio recordings, DNA profiles and fingerprints; process and analyse this evidence and share it with the relevant national and international authorities. This support will mean a lot for the successful investigation and prosecution (European Council official site, 2022c).

Positions of Germany, France and Hungary during first months of invasion

However, the joint position of the EU not always and not fully supported by all the member states, as generally they informally became divided into two camps – those who are fully pro-Ukrainian and those who are “neutral”, but given the situation are even rather pro-Russian. For the purpose of research, the closer look will be taken on

Germany, France and Hungary, as they have shown the most ambiguous and controversial position in the whole situation. As already mentioned above, the Council only grants the money from its budgets and releases the directives, that can be adopted by the member states in various ways.

Starting from Germany, this country has been considered as a EU leading member state, having powerful economy, impact, but also historical memory of German nation, surviving the WWII as the state aggressor. That is why, much has been expected from Germany and the critics and disappointment were tremendous when German government turned out to be passive and somewhat indifferent to what was happening from the very beginning, when the situation was escalating before the invasion – Germany sent 5,000 helmets to Ukraine refused to send more help to the Ukrainians. Moreover, “the German government responded to Ukraine’s persistent arms demands with a weak argument that Germany does not want to become a party to conflict zones by sending arms”, which sounds invalid taking into account the fact that Germany has supplied weapons to the Afghan army and the Peshmerga in Iraq under the name of fighting against Daesh (Daily Sabah, 2022) and how Germany has been exporting the products of dual-use to Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 despite the earlier EU export controls, which turned out to be the parts of military equipment produced in Russia (DW, 2002b).

Such hypocrisy of Germany can be easily explained by just several reasons. And the first one is surely energy and fossil fuels dependency. Decades of resource depletion, increasing energy demand and decolonization led Europeans to turn to Russian energy and this dependence was accentuated by twenty years of German-Russian gas cooperation that led to the creation of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, as well as the continuous German governmental support to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline despite the 2014 annexation of Crimea, the war in Donbass and EU opposition to that project (Pellerin-Carlin, 2022). For decades Germany has been loyal to the strategy of Russia’s economic engagement, which was believed to help Russia not feel isolated and integrate in Europe and consequently European agenda and values. However, this strategy turned out to be similar to feeding the beast, that was just using profits from trade with Europe for growing its military might and not contributing anything to the development of Russian economy and the wealth of Russian citizens.

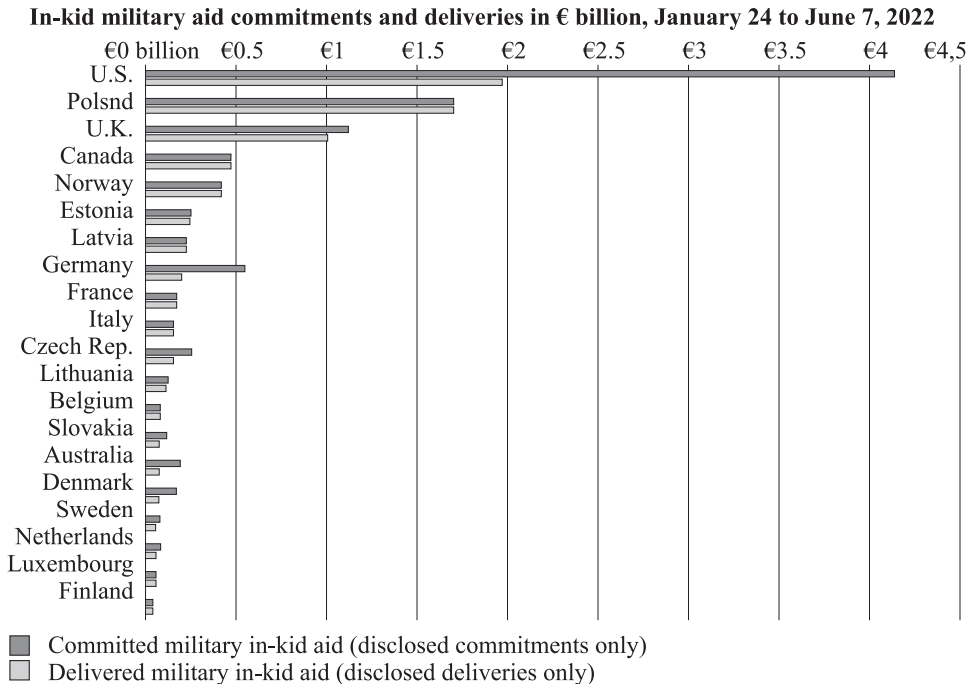
In addition to that, Germany used to conduct high volumes of trade with Russia, according to 2019 data, Germany exports \$30 billion to Russia and imports \$19 billion from Russia. Although, we should not deny the fact of deeper roots of Russian-German friendly relations, as starting from the Tsarist era German and Russian nations were heavily connected (many Russian emperors were partly or entirely of German ethnicity like Catherine the Great). Then, as highlighted by Yale’s Timothy Snyder, the blind belief in Germany’s sole guilt completely erased the fact, that Adolf Hitler’s aim was always the occupation and enslavement of the “bread basket” of Ukraine rather than of Russia and initially soviet Russia was an aggressor itself (Die Zeit, 2022). Moreover, the historical perspective shows that it is Russia who repeatedly was occupying Ukrainian lands and trying to destroy any ambitions of Ukrainian nation to become a state.

Merkel, former German chancellor, has been accused of her trade-based diplomacy with Russia, generally characterizing her whole approach as an error. Criticism has come from some of Merkel’s closest aides, including her former defence minis-

ter, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who has condemned Germany’s “historical failure” to bolster its military over the years. “After Georgia, Crimea, and Donbas, we have not prepared anything that would have really deterred Putin,” she tweeted in March (France24, 2022). Only now at the end of June, after four months of bloody war Ukraine received the first batch of heavy weapons from the German government, while chancellor Olaf Scholz admitted that it was the right thing to do and stressed out the right of Ukraine for existence (DW, 2022a).

Similarly, France has been extremely vague in its position and statements, as its official position is condemning Russian aggression, it involved itself only in humanitarian aid and economic sanctions, any military aid is not officially advertised, that gives an impression of France being afraid to be vocal about it (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France official site, 2022). Other proofs of that passive and remote attitude is president Macron’s statements like it was vital that Russia was not humiliated over its invasion, which was smartly appealed by Dmytro Kuleba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine when he said allies should “better focus on how to put Russia in its place” as it “humiliates itself” (BBC, 2022b). Taking into account the statistics below, it is ridiculous to discover that such countries like Latvia and Estonia are contribution more, than Germany and France in military terms, not saying that leaders of these countries made their very first visit to Ukraine only after four months of war – maybe the visit of Irpin made leaders to draw some conclusions, as Macron also said that: “It’s both

Fig. 1. Military aid of different countries to Ukraine



Source: Wall Street Journal, *Who’s Really Sending Aid to Ukraine?*, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/whos-really-helping-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-france-emmanuel-macron-russia-11655410110>, 3.07.2022.

a heroic town because it is here that, amongst other places, the Ukrainians stopped the Russian army that was descending on Kyiv, so you have to imagine the heroism of the army but also of the Ukrainian people.” However, France continues to look rather childish when a French diplomatic official told reporters that once Russia’s war is over, “a dialogue” between Moscow and Kyiv “will be needed to find out how we build a sustainable peace,” with security guarantees for Ukraine (Politico, 2022).

Such a naïve prepossession, that it is worth and useful to conduct a dialogue with the state aggressor, that broke international law many times and commits crimes against humanity, has been also demonstrated by president Macron himself, as he repeatedly tried to conduct negotiations with Putin before the invasion and after it started. Such strategy has already failed several times and does not look sustainable or reasonable, as it reminds the negotiations with terrorists. “We are not at war with Russia. We work as Europeans for the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. For the return of peace to our continent. We will be there to rebuild Ukraine, as Europeans, always”, Macron said in a tweet (Euractiv, 2022a). Such rhetoric is just a substitution of notions and shows France’s fear of Putin, which just makes him feel more powerful. This psychological aspect of Russian government, that western Europeans are just not getting: Russia would only respect hard power and intimidation, other means of “soft” diplomacy would just make them more hungry for power.

In the chart above Hungary is completely absent, as since the beginning of Russian-Ukrainian war Hungary became the most Russian-friendly NATO and European Union member. Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban had already previously expressed his politics of non-intervention into what was happening between Russia and Ukraine, as Hungary’s economic interests were above it. Approximately 80 percent of gas and more than 50 percent of oil is imported from Russia. So now since the active stage of war in Ukraine started, Hungary condemned it, but still was blocking some of EU sanctions like Russian oil and gas. Hungary has also refused to suspend the expansion of the Paks Nuclear Plant, which Russia’s state-owned nuclear power supplier Rosatom finances. Additionally, Budapest has opposed sending arms to Ukraine and forced the EU into not sanctioning the head of Russia’s Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill. By doing so, Hungary is choosing to observe the developments and hopes not to become the target of Russian aggression in future, but rather to cooperate with it (Aljazeera, 2022c).

What is more concerning is that such position helped Orban even to gain impact domestically, as in April, the Hungarian leader’s party Fidesz secured a fourth term in a landslide re-election. Such flourishing of illiberal populism in Hungary and sympathy to Putin’s regime will likely in the future make Hungary an advocate for the dialogue with Moscow.

Positions of Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia during first months of invasion

Poland turned out to be the biggest supporter and friend of Ukraine among its neighbours and among all EU member states. This support comes not only from the government, but from civil society organizations, volunteering clubs, Poles mobilized themselves literally from the first days of war.

The support of Polish state was visible long before the infamous date of February 24, 2022, but from 2014, when Russia initially started the war in Ukraine. In December–January 2021–22 before the full-scale invasion, Ukraine and Poland were conducting a series of meetings and negotiations among representatives and presidents Duda and Zelensky themselves. This enhancement of the relations has been also reassured by the “JOINT STATEMENT by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the President of the Republic of Poland and the President of Ukraine”, where parties acknowledged that the recognition of the restoration of Independence of Ukraine by the Republic of Poland, as the first country in the world, confirmed their commitment to democracy, freedom, further cooperation and solidarity (President.pl, 2022a).

Mutual respect and recognition seem to be translated as well to very warm personal relations of two presidents, as Duda visited Kyiv many times before and after the invasion, while his speech in the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) is truly monumental and will be for sure minted in the history books. Duda was greeted with applause, all people deputies were standing, that was for sure the expression of endless gratitude and respect not only to Polish government, but to all Polish nation. And as president Zelensky mentioned, just the one day of February 24 became a turning point for the relations of Ukrainians and Poles; all historical arguments and misunderstandings became not important, as the basis of new relations has been put (President.pl, 2022b).

The terror of Russia made Ukraine and Poland remind themselves about similarities of their nations, history and cultures and forget about dark pages, as both nations had been occupied by Russia, both nations remember Russian wick and remember how hard was to get their independence. Also, for that reason Poland, along with Baltic states understand better the mentality and strategy of Russian, the conditions appropriate for dialogue and have no compromise towards the aggressor. So, as Francis Fukuyama said, “theories of politics are built on top of theories of human behaviour”, each individual and subsequently the nation strives for recognition and have their dignity (Fukuyama, 2019, pp. 12–13). This is what happened to Ukraine and Poland, and what hopefully will create the great foundation for further cooperation and friendship.

As visible from the chart above, Poland’s contribution on military equipment concede only to the US one. So far it is known that Poland has provided arms and other military equipment to Ukraine worth at least \$1.7 billion, but also remaining the biggest logistics point of military equipment from Europe and US to Ukraine. Poland has given Ukraine over 200 T-72 tanks, 18 Krab self-propelled tracked gun-howitzers, and a large number of Piorun portable surface-to-air missiles, among other equipment. In terms of all forms of aid (military, humanitarian and financial) in relation to population, Poland had given more than any country other than Estonia and Latvia. The Polish government has also sought to step up military procurement, after passing a new Homeland Defence Act in March that increases the defence budget to 3% of GDP, one of the highest levels in NATO. Moreover, Poland also announced a deal to sell additional Krab howitzers to Ukraine, in what is believed to be the country’s largest-ever arms export deal (Notes from Poland, 2022a).

Another big topic is Ukrainian refugees’ reception in Poland, as according to UN the latest statistics say that Poland hosts 1,194,642 Ukrainians for the moment being.

Polish authorities not only just let the people in, but as early as March 2022 the Special Charter for Ukrainian refugees has been adopted, that legalized the stay of Ukrainian nationals, systematized their registration, ensured the access to labour market, organized the financial aid, etc. That means that Polish government does everything to ensure the smooth integration of Ukrainian refugees and make the transition from refugee to immigrant faster. Surely, such number of refugees plus already a big number of Ukrainian immigrants' diaspora before the war made a major impact in many areas of society, including employment, education and the real estate market, where the number of vacancies countrywide has dropped by two thirds since the invasion began (Notes from Poland, 2022b).

Moreover, the huge support is being organized by civil society organizations or even quickly improvised volunteering clubs. Polish people and Ukrainian diaspora in Poland have been doing a fascinating job in humanitarian help for Ukrainians both in Ukraine and in Poland, there are many examples of such organizations like Ukrainian House in Warsaw (Nasz Wybor Foundation), Rescue Foundation (Fundacja Ocalenie), Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH), Recipe for Independence Foundation (Fundacja Samodzielność od kuchni) and many others, working in different spheres of influence (Center for Leadership, 2022).

Additionally, many private companies and organizations are contributing in many ways, taking even the example of specially dedicated page for Ukrainian refugees in Poland called "Help Ukraine" ("Pomagam Ukrainie"), where many types of help are represented: transport, materials, work, healthcare, accommodation, etc. (Pomagam Ukrainie, 2022). The opinion of Polish people is also seems to be unambiguous: over 90% of Poles believe that Ukrainians fleeing the ongoing war should be accepted into Poland. "Approximately 58% of respondents to the survey agree that all refugees from Ukraine should be welcomed into Poland, while 35% believe that only those most at risk and 'in need' should be accepted. 3% of respondents are in favour of the creation of refugee camps in Ukraine, and just 1% are opposed to both accepting refugees into Poland and offering them any kind of support. These data demonstrate that Poles, regardless of their political beliefs, strongly support helping war refugees fleeing Russian aggression" (European Commission official site, 2022).

Of course, Poland is not the only country, that came up with such advanced and versatile aid, but Poland is practically the country that hosts the biggest number of refugees, not including Russia. According to UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), the biggest number of individuals recorded in Russia, but this statistic cannot analyse if persons were evacuated by their will, but also if they did not return to Europe through Russia and Belarus, as the only way out of some occupied territories line Kherson oblast and Donbas is only through Russia (UNHCR official site, 2022).

Another country, that is a true ally of Ukraine and has been so for many years is Lithuania. Historically Lithuania has been one of the main advocates of Ukraine in the European Union, well before the Russian invasion – in July 2021 – Lithuania called for Ukraine to be given Nato membership and was also among the first EU states to request that Brussels provide funding for Ukrainian refugees. Now, together with Poland, Lithuania has common border with Russian enclave Kaliningrad region, which

poses also a potential threat to these countries. Nevertheless, recently, when the sixth round of EU sanctions on Russia came into effect on June 17, Lithuania announced that sanctioned Russian goods to Kaliningrad would be banned from transit through Lithuania. The sanctions affect oil and refined oil products, and any technology that could be used for military purposes. Other products on the list were cement, construction materials and metal goods. That move represents an important stand by Lithuania against Russia (The Conversation, 2022).

Fig. 2

Number of Ukrainian refugees hosted in different countries

Country	Data Date	Refugees from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes	Refuges from Ukraine recorded in country	Border crossings from Ukraine*	Border crossings to Ukraine*
Russian Federation***	19.07.2022	1,745,800	Not applicable	1,745,800	Data not available
Poland	19.07.2022	1,234,718	1,234,718	4,787,154	2,751,289
Republic of Moldova	19.07.2022	86,240	Not applicable	341,323	171,803
Slovakia	19.07.2022	85,964	85,771	610,201	342,055
Romania	19.07.2022	84,527	45,530	870,241	528,256
Hungary	19.07.2022	26,932	26,932	995,637	Data not available
Belarus	19.07.2022	10,351	Not applicable	16,677	Data not available
Total		3,274,532	1,392,951	9,567,033	3,793,403

*** The figure for individual refugees recorded in the country is an estimate as potential further movements or returns cannot be factored for the time being.

Source: UNHCR official site, *Ukraine Refugee Situation*, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>, 15.07.2022.

Similarly to other Baltic states like Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania sent considerable numbers of military aid to Ukraine – more than €115 million since the beginning of Russian invasion and actually started shipment of military equipment ahead of Russia's invasion at the end of February (Euroactiv, 2022b). On July 23 the Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen has been organized in Kyiv as an initiative of the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska and it is a very meaningful diplomatic move that wives of presidents of Lithuania and Latvia joined the summit in Kyiv in person (Novynarnia, 2022). The fact that solidarity to Ukrainians is high among Lithuanians is also strengthened by the poll: 59% of Lithuanians believe Ukraine will win the ongoing Russia-launched war, 79% said they followed only Ukraine's provided information about the war (European Parliament, 2022).

Finally, Slovakia, that is relatively small in size and economy has been in the vanguard of the countries most involved in providing military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine: Bratislava donated its Soviet-era S-300 air defence system to Ukraine, has expelled 35 Russian diplomats, has closed several pro-Russian websites and intensified the activity of the secret services targeting collaborators of Russian intelligence. Contrary

to that, “the opposition, which leads in the polls, is calling for Slovakia to return to the policy of avoiding ‘superpower conflicts’ and is taking increasingly open pro-Russian positions. This way it meets the mood of a large section of the Slovak public who are distrustful of the US.” Nevertheless, Slovakia’s government continues the direction of development of the relations with the US – the US Secretary of Defence visited Bratislava for the first time in 20 years on 17 March (Center for Eastern Studies, 2022).

According to the poll from April 2022 62% of Slovaks perceive NATO as a guarantor of independence and territorial integrity, 61% support the deployment of NATO troops at the eastern border (in 2019, they were only 54% thinking so) (The Slovak Spectator, 2022). Although, Slovakia has internally different opinions, much of the population is deeply concerned rather about economic consequences of the cut off of Russian raw materials, Slovak government remains extremely loyal to its initial position: total support of Ukraine and sanctioning Russia. That is why, the government needs to address strategic dilemmas regarding the long-term maintenance of support for Ukraine and its policy against Moscow.

Possible future scenarios and conclusions

Meanwhile, Ukraine is fighting for its sovereignty and independence every single day, Ukrainian soldiers are sacrificing their health and lives at the scale that is not even descriptive now, as death tolls are not being fully revealed due to obvious reasons. In early June, a senior Ukrainian presidential aide told BBC News 100–200 Ukrainian soldiers were dying in the Donbas region every day, which sounds terrific for the war in 21st century in the middle of Europe. What is more, Russian forces are aiming civilian objects, making this war a terror, or in other words a genocide, as there is practically no safe place in Ukraine nowadays, no place where Russian missile would not reach: shopping malls, kindergartens, downtowns of cities, recreation centers. Russia wants to target as many civilians as possible at ones, which proves, that Russia is a terrorist state, not a party to have negotiations with (BBC, 2022c).

Despite that, Western political elites and thinkers still somehow think that diplomacy is the way out and that it is possible to bargain with Russia under different conditions: some say Ukraine should give up Donbas and refuse any ambitions to return Crimea, or that private meetings between senior civilian and military officials of Western countries and Russia should resumed, etc. And the more Western the elites are, the more naïve they are about the diplomacy in case of Russia and that can be explained. Of course, the remoteness from the hot spot makes the electorate less concerned about the ongoing war, as long as it is somewhere far away and distant. That in turn makes political leader be afraid of taking unpopular decisions and “taking care of other country affairs”. That is why, the popularization of the topic, raising awareness of regular people are same important as helping Ukraine with military and humanitarian aid. Russia is a real threat not only to Ukraine, but to other European countries, as it claimed several times to invade Poland and Baltic states.

Moreover, the whole world is going through litmus test right now because we all are in the great clash of democracy, liberal values, progress versus dictatorship, propa-

ganda and degradation. It has to be clear to everyone should stop to treat this war as the war of Ukraine. This is Ukraine that fights for the rest of Europe and constrains Russia from going further, sacrificing its people, infrastructure, crops and normal life. And it should be clear, that Russia will not stop even if Ukraine gives up Donbas, Crimea, the south of Ukraine, etc., and if Ukraine does so, all Ukrainians on these territories will face genocide and terror on the basis of their ethnic identity. It is easy to understand, if Ukraine stops to defend itself, it will stop its existence, if Russia stops to fight, the war will be ended.

The world has already been excusing Russian law violations and crimes too many times and now it should be understood that the problem is not only in Putin's regime that is carrying out such policies. Behind it there is the whole Russian nation that was being poisoned by propaganda for many years, the majority of these people are living in conditions close to poverty and are very different from what Europeans consider normal or basic, which makes any progressive thinking or protesting impossible. Putin's regime understands and respects only hard power and Putin's bluff and ambitions are definitely outweighing any hardships that his nation would have to live through. That is why, the victory of Ukraine and the whole world on Russia depends not only on overthrowing the Putin's regime, but on disintegration of Russia as federation to separate democratic republics, which will be under protectorate of other democracies. Any reparations or prosecutions will not work if Russia remains in the same status, it will always come back to its imperialistic ambitions.

As we may conclude from the research not all states understand that and prepare for the scenario of Russia's disintegration, some impactful European states still have some hopes for dialogue with Russia and president Putin in particular, which actually looks absurd. Russia's state has to be recognized as a terrorist, all its actions are dictated purely by their imperialistic ambitions and desire to threaten everyone. No negotiations should be carried out with Russia until entire liberation of Ukrainian territories and change of the regime in Russia.

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Summary

The brutal reality of barbarian aggressive war in the middle of Europe demands the full mobilization and unification of powers not only of Ukraine, but also of such important actors as European Union member states. However, unfortunately it turned out that European Union again faces internal arguments and lack of unity, despite such unambiguous situation. The articles analyses the number of EU member states according to their position in the Russian-Ukrainian war and discusses what might be the reasons and consequences.

Key words: Russian-Ukrainian war, European Union, Germany, France, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia

Unia Europejska w obliczu wojny Rosji z Ukrainą

Streszczenie

Brutalna rzeczywistość barbarzyńskiej agresywnej wojny w środku Europy wymaga pełnej mobilizacji i zjednoczenia sił nie tylko Ukrainy, ale także tak ważnych podmiotów, jak państwa członkowskie Unii Europejskiej. Niestety, okazało się jednak, że mimo tak jednoznacznej sytuacji Unia Europejska ponownie boryka się z wewnętrznymi argumentami i brakiem jedności. Artykuł analizuje liczbę państw członkowskich UE w zależności od ich stanowiska w wojnie rosyjsko-ukraińskiej i omawia przyczyny i konsekwencje.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska, Unia Europejska, Niemcy, Francja, Węgry, Polska, Litwa, Słowacja

